To me, every Scout is half a Muslim, and every Muslim is half a Scout:

Creating a home and sense of belonging in the German Muslim Scout Organization.

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Abstract

In this research master thesis, I investigate the sense of belonging in members of the German Muslim Scout organization (BMPPD), founded 2010. The role of the youth organization as well as the construction of a German Muslim identity in a context that often presents Islam and Germanness as mutually exclusive offers new insights in the creation of safe spaces, coping mechanisms, and an active self-empowerment of those who are othered to claim their space in a society. Four semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted, and three podcasts co-hosted by a group leader of the BMPPD were analyzed with the purpose of understanding the sense of belonging and the role of the BMPPD for an individual and society at large. The analysis shows a construction of a German Muslim identity through social engagement and participation in German society as well as a sense of belonging strengthened through the creation of safe spaces without othering and exclusion. I conclude that safe spaces are necessary if there is discrimination, i.e., the very thing the BMPPD counteracts (exclusion) demands a form of self-separation to affect change in the German society.

Key words

Muslim Germans, Scouts, Sense of Belonging, Identity, Safe Spaces, Marginalized Groups

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Home can have a very different meaning to everyone – a feeling, a dish, a smell, a person, an instrument… Feelings of home and belonging are likely as different as humans themselves. But what if what one considers home – at least in part – signals to one that one does not belong because of skin color, sex, faith, or language? Constructing a sense of belonging in such an environment can be challenging. Some think of a country as home, but discrimination can prevent this from fully working for some marginalized groups, for instance, for Muslims in Germany. Discrimination against religious groups occurs daily and research on those who face discrimination is necessary to protect minoritized groups. 6.6 % of the German population are Muslim.[1] These are millions of people who experience instances of discrimination. How the members of a Muslim German youth organization deal with discrimination can teach us about coping, othering, and exclusion, because these individuals – in some cases – grew up in Germany, some have German passports, and others speak German as a first language. Consequently, it is very insightful to study sense of belonging in those who experience instances of othering.

In my research, I aim to address the question: How do members of the German Muslim Scout organization (BMPPD) make sense of a German Muslim identity and how do they create a sense of belonging in an environment where public discourses present "Germanness" and Islam as mutually exclusive? The collection of findings is aiming to yield answers to the following subquestions:

1. How was the BMPPD formed and what where the motivations behind its founding?
2. What activities does the BMPPD organize and what are the purposes of those events?
3. Who does the BMPPD network with? In what networks does the BMPPD operate?
4. Who are the members of the BMPPD and who are their parents? What defines their identity?
5. Which role does the German Muslim scout organization play in the members' sense of belonging?

Possibly, having the German Muslim scout organization as a member in the Ring of German scouts (RdP) is a step towards less othering and more acceptance of Muslims in Germany. What this organization and its acceptance into the Ring of German scouts mean was investigated in this study. It, thereby, may contribute to the understanding of identity construction and development of Muslims (with a migration background) in a white, Christian country such as Germany. Moreover, I am interested in their experiences as Muslim scouts in Germany: Does discrimination or exclusion occur? How does the German majority society react to the BMPPD? The image of a Muslim and the image of a scout in Germany may not be identical, sometimes even contradictory. This may create problems for group leaders in the BMPPD. I researched how German Muslims relate to Germany, how they make sense of German Muslim identity, and which problems they encounter as a minoritized group. These problems could include identity crises due to suggestions from the mainstream discourses that "Muslim" and "German" are two opposing identities, but they can also be based on islamophobic or racial discrimination.

To answer these questions, I conducted qualitative, open-ended, semi-structured interviews. I met with 4 volunteers of the BMPPD individually and analyzed three podcasts in which one participant of this research project chooses an active approach to participate in the media itself. In the interviews I aim to understand group leaders' self-perception as the ones actively structuring the BMPPD, the German Muslim Scouts in Germany.

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[1] Katrin Pfündel, Anja Stichs, Kerstin Tanis, Executive Summary of the study "Muslim Life in Germany 2020": 3

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Connecting Methods and Research problem

According to Mills and Birks, the choice of a methodology is strongly linked to the desired outcome of a project.[2] To investigate how members of the BMPPD develop a sense of identity and belonging, a qualitative approach is appropriate as both are an understanding of our "self". This understanding of our "self" is often subconscious or conscious only in parts, ambivalent, fluid, changing, and even contradictory. I interviewed individuals about their own ideas, and their rootedness as German Muslims in Germany. To learn about individuals, I needed to speak to them directly. Therefore, individual, qualitative interviews were sensible. They were semi-structured to ensure that while keeping track of my focus they were flexible enough to allow for detours and for the exploration of topics that came up during the interview. With topics such as identity and sense of belonging, likely, one does not know all the answers when asked directly. Because they often are extremely self-evident part of one, one may not deem them worth mentioning.

To gain data on the sense of belonging and identity of the volunteers of the German Muslim scout organization, I conducted four qualitative interviews. Open-ended, semi-structured qualitative interviews made it possible to approach each individual interviewee as a person with different views, stories, and narratives.[3] Participants were between the ages of 22 and 29. In this age range BMPPD volunteers act as group leaders, organize camps, and actively contribute to the scout organization. Therefore, my participants not only participate in the BMPPD but actively decide what the BMPPD and its activities look like.

At first, it seemed reasonable for me to focus on female members of the BMPPD because gender is performed and defined differently in each culture.[4] Identifying as a woman myself, focusing on women and girls in the BMPPD, I thought, would allow me to understand the participants' positions. Early in the research process, however, I decided to interview both male and female members of the BMPPD because this would enlarge my sample. Being a scout myself, I realized that I was already considered somewhat of an insider. When I called the official phone number of the BMPPD, the recipient already used sentences such as "You are a scout, you know how it is". For the interviews to be semi-structured, I prepared an extensive interview guide, and I used an mp3 recorder to save the interviews.[5]

By reaching out to the BMPPD and emphasizing that I am a scout, too, I was able to establish the first contact. Sadly, no interview opportunities arose from this first contact but using the scout network, I scheduled my first two interviews in early April with Janin and Abudi. Later, in early May, I was able to have two more interviews after Ramadan had ended with Sanae and Omar. Two of the interviews were online, and two of them in person. The interviews I conducted in person were both longer and more in-depth. The two interviews I conducted online, nonetheless, offered more insights and added more voices to this thesis. Together with the three podcasts I analyzed in chapter four, this research project benefited from the triangulation of two in-person interviews, two online interviews, and three podcast episodes. In my first phone call with the BMPPD I was informed that there are only no camps before the summer. Therefore, I planned to visit weekly group activities of the different troops to approach individual group leaders for interviews. Since no group activities occurred during Ramadan, this was not possible either. I was invited to join the summer camp in July, but the time frame of this project does not allow me to use that future visit for this thesis. Originally, I planned to use participant observation, too, which would have allowed me to spend time with the volunteers of the BMPPD in a less artificial setting. An interview, however relaxed it may be, is an organized conversation. Participant observation would have allowed me to expand my understanding of the individuals in the BMPPD and their role as volunteers in this German Muslim organization.

[2] Jane Mills, Melanie Birks. *Qualitative Methodology: A Practical Guide.* Sage. E-Book 2014: 32
[3] Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter, and Ajay Bailey. *Qualitative Research Methods*. 2E ed. Los Angeles: Sage. 2020: 110
[4] Femke Stock. *Home and Migrant Identity in Dialogical Life Stories of Moroccan and Turkish Dutch*: 304
[5] Ibid: 113

Members of the BMPPD appeared to be very hesitant in volunteering for an interview with me. This may be because, as Sanae expressed in one of the four interviews, they do not want to be seen as special or different, and therefore do not want to be interviewed about their faith and their Muslim identity. The participant observation could have fixed this problem. I instead decided to analyze three podcasts through which Janin participates in public discourse and represents the BMPPD to the public. It was interesting to compare her way of presenting the BMPPD on the podcasts to her way of presenting the BMPPD to me, a fellow scout, but nonetheless a white German. In the following section, I will briefly illustrate the philosophical approach to this research project, because as Mills and Birks write: "philosophical assumptions crucially shape research questions and the methods employed to address those questions."[6]

Philosophical Approach and Feasibility

Ethnography as such has been influenced by many different schools of thought.[7] I approach this ethnography and interview research project from the perspective of social constructivism. This means that people and groups of people construct their social worlds "through their interpretations and the actions stemming from such interpretations"[8]. As Mills and Birks point out, in the context of qualitative research that means that the researcher (me) and the participants (volunteers of the BMPPD) construct a research product together.[9] I, as a German female research master student with a background in minority studies, ask these questions from my perspective and I approach it from a certain angle, too. While perspective and angle are both academic, it is still not a universal or neutral approach. The participants brought their unique and individual perspectives shaped by their lives, contexts, friends, families, and interests to the research and thereby co-constructed the research product. In my analysis I answer my research questions based on academic concepts and, of course, based on my findings and data from the interviews and the podcast analysis. My positionality allowed me to be viewed as an insider during my research which became visible when comparing my interview findings to the way Janin portrays the BMPPD in the podcasts. I had the privilege to learn just a little bit more than what was shared with the public. At the same time, my positionality as a white German woman turns me into a representative of the category that typically discriminates Muslims in Germany. This may have caused limitations to this project. Therefore, I was both an insider and an outsider.

My personal interest in this case study should be explained, too. It accounts both for my interest as well as the feasibility of this research project. I have been active in the German scout organization "Bund der Pfadfinderinnen und Pfadfinder" (BdP) since 2013 as a volunteer. The BdP is the only official scout organization in Germany that does not associate itself with any specific religion. Next to the BdP and the BMPPD, there are also the VCP ("Verein christlicher Pfadfinder") and the DPSG ("Deutsche Pfadfinderschaft Sankt Georg"). The former is a Protestant organization, the latter is Catholic. My personal interest originates in the question of why the BdP is not welcoming for all Muslim children and teenagers who want to become a Scout. Most Muslim German children seem to join the BMPPD rather than the BdP. Is the BdP not as secular as it thinks itself? Or is a secular environment simply not sought by the Muslim German children, teenagers, and their parents? These are topics of interest to me.

My knowledge of scouting and scout activities helped me in visualizing group activities of the BMPPD. Yet, I attempted to be careful as differences between the BMPPD and the BdP might be new and strange to me, but that should not mean that any such differences are either negative or positive. Moreover, these differences are not necessarily relevant to this study or the participants in it. I hope, however, that my experience allowed me to be more sensitive towards the differences and nuances making me more reflective on the specific scout culture in the BMPPD.

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[6] Jane Mills, Melanie Birks. *Qualitative Methodology: A Practical Guide.* Sage. E-Book 2014: 91
[7] Ibid: 91
[8] Ibid: 91
[9] Ibid: 91

The VCP (Protestant), the DPSG (Catholic), and the BdP (secular) have been in the official Ring of German scouts (RdP) for decades. While there are many different small other scout organizations within Germany, the BMPPD is the only one which was admitted to becoming a member of the Ring of the German scouts. Considering German history, this becomes even more interesting. More than a hundred years ago, around 1900, Jews in Germany covertly attempted to be viewed as a "*Konfession*" by the majority.[10] A "*Konfession*" in German describes an existing church within Christianity, for example, Catholicism, Protestantism, or the Lutheran church. In this case study, the Muslim scout organization in Germany has been acknowledged by the Ring of German scouts as the only organization next to the Catholic, the Protestant, and the secular organization.

These questions and personal interests explain the relevance of this specific case study within German history. The BMPPD is an excellent case study because most of its members presumably belong to the 6.6 % of the Muslims in Germany with a background in Muslim-majority countries. What has changed in Germany? What has changed in the scout organization? What does the existence of the BMPPD mean when viewed in the context of recent German history? The outcome of this research project may contribute to answering these questions.

Data Analysis

In an analysis, the goal is to find patterns, irregularities, and explanations.[11] My data is textual in the form of interview transcripts and recordings. After I collected this textual data, I first analyzed it by coding it. Sorting through the recordings, listening, and relistening to them, I interpreted my findings and sorted them accurately. This sorting of the data into relevant categories and units helped me in analyzing the data in small steps.[12] Janin volunteered to send me three podcasts she participated in and agreed to me using her real name. The other three participant names are synonyms. More on these ethical concerns will follow later.

Research Limitations and Problems

While the first contact I established with the BMPPD was very friendly and welcoming, I anticipated early that I may encounter problems because there were not as many camps before the summer as I expected. I found a suitable solution discovering that Janin has participated in three podcasts and therefore participated actively in public media discourse as a volunteer of the BMPPD. Yet, the dimension of participant observation is missing in this study and should be conducted in future research. Additionally, my previously elaborated positionality turns me into an outsider as a white German woman. Nonetheless, this limitation may be overcome to a certain degree by the fact that I am a scout myself which allowed me to be viewed as an insider. Despite the problems I encountered, qualitative interviews and media analysis are the most feasible methods for this research project. I attempted to be aware that merely because I know one scout organization, I should not presume too much of what is normal and self-evident to me as a member of the BdP.

Ethical considerations

Based on the chapter "Ethics" by Boellstorff et al., I will now mention some ethical considerations relevant to my research project. I want to protect participants from any potential harm by adhering to the principles of research ethics described in the formerly mentioned chapter.

Informed Consent

In my research, I used oral consent on the recordings of my interviews rather than written consent forms as written consent forms can be disruptive and discouraging in an interview. Boellstorff

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[10] Till van Rahden. *Vielheit: Jüdische Geschichte Und Die Ambivalenzen Des Universalismus*. 2022: 80
[11] Jane Mills, Melanie Birks. *Qualitative Methodology: A Practical Guide.* Sage. E-Book 2014: 97
[12] Ibid: 97

et al. point out that it is important to "maintain ongoing dialogue about our purposes".[13] I informed participants about my study before conducting an interview. Boellstorff et al. write that as ethnographers, we are obligated to do as much as possible to inform our participants about the nature and purpose of our research. [14] Before each interview began and after it ended, I explicitly asked and encouraged questions the interviewees may have.

Destruction of Field notes

As soon as the research project is finished and I received my final grade for the research master thesis, I will destroy all field notes related to this project to protect the participants in this research.

Anonymity

Keeping participants' identities anonymous is especially difficult in ethnographic research in which the participants know each other. I paid special attention to not revealing identities and confidential information in the process of my research as well as in my final thesis. The process of my research may present me with some challenges there because, as Boellstorff et al. write: "While altering informant names is not particularly difficult, it is less easy to consistently maintain anonymity within a particular group with whom we interact."[15] The authors argue that careful judgment and attention are the only solutions to these challenges because full anonymity was not always possible in these contexts. When in doubt, I refrained from including potentially harmful information in my thesis. The special case of Janin and the use of her real name only became necessary and possible during the research. She explicitly allowed me to use her real name as she used it in the podcasts I analyzed, too.

Accurate Portrayal

An accurate portrayal is what ensures the quality of ethnographic research.[16] Therefore, I portrayed my interviews as closely to their phrasing as possible, yet I interpreted the data in the context of literature, other data, and studies. The analytical comments, consequentially, may contextualize and put into perspective what individuals brought up in an interview. Participants were informed about this process beforehand. This includes making my research accessible to those who are not experts in this field.

The Right to Withdraw

Participants were informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study. After an interview, I did not use the recording and the gathered data for three days. In these three days participants had the opportunity to reach out to me to tell me that they do not wish me to use the data gathered in this interview. This was explained in the information about the study. Moreover, I repeated this information at the end of each interview to remind the participants that they are in no way obligated to participate if they do not feel comfortable with it.

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[13] Ibid: 135

[14] Boellstorff, T., Nardi, B., Pearce, C., & Taylor, T. L. "Ethics". In T. Boellstorff, B. Nardi, C. Pearce, & T. L. Taylor (Eds.), *Ethnography and virtual worlds: A handbook of method.* 2012: 133

[15] Ibid: 137

[16] Ibid: 150

Creating Distance by Selfing and Othering – Islam and 'Germanness'

Introduction

In this chapter, I contextualized my research project with academic literature. Firstly, I located this study in the field of sociology, specifically the fields of belonging, home, migration, diaspora, selfing and othering. While my focus was on sociological and anthropological sources from the last 20 years as they offered insights in recent studies as well as analytical tools I did not find in older works, I also included one source from 1991 by Salman Rushdie. I found his essay on imaginary homelands particularly insightful and informative. Salman Rushdie, an American-British-Indian author writes about diaspora: "Having been born across the world, we are translated men".[17] He points out that we create pictures and fictions by looking at our own past. We create our own imaginary homelands by associating home with the past and the strange with the present.[18] Displacement of any kind may cause humans to idealize the past and former homelands. Rushdie's words show that those living in a diaspora are confronted with questions of identity and belonging more frequently than those staying where they were born and raised. A diaspora can only exist in the context of a group – in this case the group of the 5.3 to 5.6 million German Muslims with a background in Muslim-majority countries. They are dispersed from the Muslim majority culture.[19] And most members of the BMPPD belong to this group of Muslims with a background in Muslim-majority countries.

My research project is concerned with identity, belonging, and making sense of a German-Muslim identity in a potentially hostile discourse. Identity and belonging of migrants and descendants of migrants have already been topics of interest in anthropology. Especially, the context of migration and islamophobia creates many social conflicts, problems, and research questions. Besides the field of sociology and anthropology other research areas such as political studies and psychology may overlap with the topics of home and belonging, as well as selfing and othering.

In this thesis, I included a small overview of recent German history to contextualize the scout organizations. As Jennifer Miller writes in her book titled *Turkish guest workers in Germany*, "In German history specifically and European history generally, historical backdrops are inescapably significant".[20] Historical sources on Germany's recent history (i.e., 20th century) of antisemitism have shown to be relevant as they contextualize both islamophobia in Germany as well as the meaning of the acknowledgment of the BMPPD in the Ring of the German scouts. More on that will follow later in the chapter.

Discrimination and Public Discourse in the Media

German mass media suggest that "Islam" does not belong to what appears to be "the German identity". Making sense of Muslims as part of German social life is made difficult by these discourses. Public discourse creates distance between those identifying as Muslims and those who do not.[21] The result is discrimination in the media against Muslims and people with roots in Muslim-majority countries.

Hengameh Yaghoobifarah writes about the looks they experience as a queer non-binary person with roots in Iran living in Germany in the book *Eure Heimat ist unser Albtraum*. These looks are rooted in racism and the white gaze: the supposedly "neutral" white perspective in Europe on society, news, politics and especially on those who are "other".[22] This white gaze creates distance between whiteness

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[17] Salman Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands: essays and criticism*. 1991: 17

[18] Ibid: 12

[19] Katrin Pfündel, Anja Stichs, Kerstin Tanis, Executive Summary of the study "Muslim Life in Germany 2020": 3

[20] Jennifer A. Miller. *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany: Hidden Lives and Contested Borders*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018: 9

[21] Emily Frazier-Rath. "Sexualized Violence and Racialized Others: Syrian Refugee Activism and Constructions of Difference Immediately After Cologne." 2021: 84-85

[22] Fatma Aydemir, Hengameh Yaghoobifarah. *Eure Heimat ist unser Albtraum.* Berlin: Ullstein Fünf. 2019: 75

(Germanness) and non-whiteness (Muslims with roots in Muslim-majority countries). Nadia Shenadeh further expands on the white gaze in her chapter "Gefährlich" in the same book: she explains how criminals often are "ethnicized, arabicized or muslimized" by the media.[23] By using these words she points out that the media and the public discourses in Germany are the ones who are actively othering those of a different ethnicity, those from an Arabic background, those who identify as Muslim.

As many other studies have mentioned before, the terrorist attacks on the 11[th of] September 2001 in the US and their aftermath changed drastically how Muslims are perceived in Europe. Politically, the integration strategies of European states changed.[24] Riots in France and the murder of Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands put even more pressure on politicians to take action.[25] In a comparison in his book *Localizing Islam in Europe*, Yükleyen observed that the Muslim organization Milli Görüs was cooperating with the Dutch government in 2010 while the German government institutions categorized the very same organization as endangering Germany's security.[26] The author concludes that the Dutch integration policy facilitates Muslim participation in society more than the German government does.[27] This emphasizes the relevance of this research project in 2023 because in 2010, Muslims in Germany were not yet encouraged to participate in society as much as they were, for instance, in the Netherlands. This may have changed and the BMPPD may be a part of this change.

In my research, I observe just a small subculture (the Ring of German Scouts), but this subculture has created a different context for the members of the BMPPD. Even though the BMPPD's context is the described public, exclusionary discourse, it has become a safe space in an otherwise discriminating environment. At the same time the BMPPD itself can be read as discriminating, as in the BMPPD discriminates and differentiates between Muslim Scouts and Scouts in general. This discrimination is necessary, however, in creating a safe space for young Muslims in Germany. More on these thoughts will follow in my analysis.

What is the diasporic context?

Above, I mentioned that by using the term "diasporic context" I refer to a transnational idea of home and belonging. But diaspora means more than just transnationality. Living in a diasporic context means having more than one home, it means feeling at home and belonging in more than one nation-state, and it can mean that home, belonging, and identity of an individual are conflicting and sometimes even opposing. Demelza Jones, in her book on *Superdiverse Diaspora*, explains the origin of the word diaspora: Greek for 'scattering of seeds', it was used to described exiled Jews in Babylon.[28] Nowadays, the term diaspora can be applied to different dispersed populations, according to Jones, and these have "varying relationships and degrees of attachment to the homeland".[29]

In other words, a diasporic situation forces people to be in a long-distance relationship with one of their two or more homes. In my research, it will be interesting to find out whether this is still the case for volunteers in the German Muslim scout organization. This organization combines Islam with Germany; it combines dimensions of two different homes. What, then, does that mean for the relationships to each of these homes? Members of the BMPPD may have new, similar, or different relationships with Germany and the country their ancestors were born in. The discussion of a German Muslim identity among the members of the BMPPD may change and reinvent the sense of belonging. As Buitelaar and Stock write in their article "Making homes in turbulent times": "[O]thers have a voice

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[23] Ibid: 126

[24] Ahmet Yükleyen. *Localizing Islam in Europe: Turkish Islamic Communities in Germany and the Netherlands.* Religion and Politics. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press. 2011: 153

[25] Ibid: 153

[26] Ibid: 153

[27] Ibid: 153

[28] Demelza Jones. *Superdiverse Diaspora: Everyday Identifications of Tamil Migrants in Britain*. 2020: 25

[29] Ibid: 25

in where and with whom we feel at home."[30] Whether one belongs is debated internally and externally, as is identity. The groups one interacts with changes one's perception of the self. The context of the volunteers in the BMPPD influences their sense of identity and belonging. If they experience a lot of discrimination, for instance, they will likely have a lower sense of belonging in Germany.

In a diasporic context, home is tied to more than one country. The home which is only visited on vacation and special occasions can mean coziness and comfort for a limited amount of time. Femke Stock's interviews with Dutch Moroccans showed that some participants enjoyed staying in Morocco if there was a clear time of departure, too.[31] This entails that individuals do not feel comfortable at the prospect of staying in either of their homes forever. More on Stock's notes on home and belonging will follow in the next section. Her findings lay a foundation for how I understand home and belonging in my thesis. Yet, other authors are writing about feeling at home and belonging in a diasporic context. One of these authors is Kübra Gümüsay. Being a German-Turkish author living in the UK, she describes the role of those rooted in more than one culture at the same time in the following way: "We live on both sides of the wall and switch back and forth, hoping that those on one side can see what is happening on the other".[32] Gümüsay is a Muslim author, a mother, and an activist for the rights of Muslim women in Germany. As a child of parents in a diasporic context to their Turkish home, she experienced pressure to justify that she is "at home in [the German] language" although German is the language she knows best.[33]

Altogether, the diasporic context of migrants presents those with roots in Muslim-majority countries with questions about belonging. An individual's sense of belonging is challenged as soon as this individual identifies as Muslim. "Germanness", whatever that may be, does not generally include non-white, non-Christian members of society.

What does it mean to belong and how does it intersect with a feeling of home?

The members of the BMPPD often are descendants of migrants and therefore rooted in more than one culture and country. In an online conference on Mapping Belonging as a Study, the director of the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS) (Jan Willem Duyvendak) stated that belonging has not been investigated sufficiently in academic research due to a scholarly lack of attention for emotions.[34] He explained that, as belonging is a silent emotion, it is difficult to study.[35] Duyvendak presents belonging in four categories influencing senses of belonging in the NIAS conference in 2021: borders and mobility; identity, inequality, and politics; the community and the individual; and practices of belonging (culture).[36] In the same conference, Fenneke Wekker differentiates between home and belonging when she observes that one can only feel at home when one belongs.[37] Therefore, Germany can only feel like a home to those who can belong in Germany.

Another scholar who investigated senses of home and belonging in Dutch Moroccan migrants is Femke Stock who I already mentioned in the section on diasporas.[38] She observes that family influences one's identity as well as one's sense of belonging. Therefore, according to Stock, this can result in internal loyalty struggles and conflicts of identification with one or the other culture.[39] As a consequence, the role of home, identity, and belonging varies within the cultural and family context.

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[30] Marjo Buitelaar and Femke Stock. "Making Homes in Turbulent times Moroccan-Dutch Muslims Contesting Dominant Discourses of Belonging" in *Muslim diaspora in the West: Negotiating gender, home and belonging*, H. Moghissi & H. Ghorashi, Farnham, 2010: 167

[31] Femke Stock. *Home and Migrant Identity in Dialogical Life Stories of Moroccan and Turkish Dutch*. Leiden: Brill, 2017: 77

[32] Kübra Gümüsay. *Speaking and Being: How Language Binds and Frees us*: 25

[33] Ibid: 24

[34] SPUI 25, "Mapping Belonging as a Study: NIAS Talk", Minute 12:15.

[35] Ibid, Minute 13:33.

[36] Ibid, Minute 19:44.

[37] Ibid, Minte 23:34.

[38] Femke Stock. *Home and Migrant Identity in Dialogical Life Stories of Moroccan and Turkish Dutch*. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

[39] Ibid: 307

But family is not the only dimension of home relevant to this study. Time and space matter, too. Home can be tied to many different locations at once, even though the nation-state generally assumes that only one nation equals home. As Ostergaard-Nielsen writes in her book *Transnational Politics*:

> *Yet, increasingly all types of migrants and refugees are no longer assumed to make a sharp break with their country of origin. Air travel, electronic communication, satellite television, and the Internet render geographical distances relatively insignificant.*[40]

In the introduction of this chapter, I have cited Rushdie, explaining that migrants may idealize their homelands. It would be interesting to study how this idealization is changed by digitalization and globalization in another work.

One participant of the study is rooted in Turkey. According to *the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung* (national center for political education), there are 1.5 million people with Turkish citizenship still living in Germany, today.[41] We can assume that there are even more Germans with Turkish roots because in a 2021 article in Euronews stated that "Only a tiny proportion, 7 %, of Germans of Turkish descent actually have German and Turkish passports".[42] Germany is a nation-state understanding itself to consist of Germans. Public discourse in nation-states often excludes those belonging to more than one nation-state. In recent decades a hostility towards Islam has emerged in Europe which inspired a binary discourse presenting Islam and the West as mutually exclusive. A nation-state, according to the *Sage Handbook of Nations and Nationalism*, generally assumes that the people within this nation consist of a homogenous group whose identity is, to a large extent, devoted to this nation-state.[43] This illustrates the conflict Muslim Germans are presented with: Islam is not usually considered to be a part of Germany, so being both German and Muslim may lead to an identity conflict. German Muslims are not included in any general images and discourses about Germans or Muslims. The absence of a discourse including Muslim Germans can lead to a challenged sense of belonging.

A sense of identity and belonging changes throughout a lifetime. It can be ambivalent and is experienced differently by everyone. Gümüsay nicely demonstrates this when she lists the meaning of different languages to her:

> *For me, Turkish is the language of love and melancholy. Arabic is a mystical, spiritual melody. German is the language of intellect and longing; English is the language of freedom.*[44]

A little later she explains that another author has a very different relationship to her English as for her it is the "language of the majority that decides who is and isn't included.[45] To every one of us, a language has different meaning. Languages and cultures are associated with different memories, feelings, and people. Therefore, each interviewee in my study could associate "Germanness" – whatever that may be – and Islam with different memories, feelings, people, languages, and cultures. In this study, I want to acknowledge the interviewee's individuality. In my thesis I approach identity, home, and a sense of belonging as fluid, non-static concepts.

It can be summarized that to belong means to be included. Belonging is necessary to feel at home. Being a German Muslim may present participants with challenges and there are likely many

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[40] Eva Ostergaard-Nielsen. *Transnational Politics: The Case of Turks and Kurds in Germany*. Routledge. 2003: 1

[41] Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. *Ausländische Bevölkerung nach Staatsangehörigkeit*. 2022. Accessed 10th March 2023. https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/zahlen-und-fakten/soziale-situation-in-deutschland/61631/auslaendische-bevoelkerung-nach-staatsangehoerigkeit/

[42] Alexandra Leistner and Orlando Crowcroft. *Disenfranchised and unheard, Germany's Turks remain an island*. 2021. Euronews. Accessed 10th March 2023. https://www.euronews.com/2021/09/25/disenfranchised-and-unheard-germany-s-turks-remain-an-island

[43] Sage Publications, and Sage eReference (Online service). *The Sage Handbook of Nations and Nationalism*. 2006: 58

[44] Kübra Gümüsay. *Speaking and Being: How Language Binds and Frees us*: 20.

[45] Ibid: 21

strategies to cope with these challenges Outside of the Muslim German scout organization, there is a public discourse and discrimination which influence an individual's sense of belonging.

The Story of the Scouts in Germany

To contextualize the history of the scouts in Germany, I used the book *Die Pfadfinder in Deutschland: 1909-2009* by Piet Strunk.[46] It portrays the history of scouts in Germany in a time span of 100 years. Since Piet Strunk is not an academic author but merely an enthusiastic scout, I relied on Todd Weir's *Secularism and Religion in Nineteenth-Century Germany* to add historical facts and contexts.[47]

It seems sensible to explain what a *Konfession* means as it is a significant category in German scout history. Weir defines *Konfessionalismus* in the 19th century as "the sectarian division of society and nation, the insistence that the state retain a Christian foundation with privileges for the established churches, and a narrow-minded dogmatism in Christian belief and practice."[48] Opponents of this *Konfessionalismus* fought for a secularization of Germany. Weir writes that Jews in Germany at the time probably would not have consented that they were a fourth *Konfession*, but factually they aspired to be treated as one. A reason for this is that, as Weir explains, the term *Konfession* was the tool to negotiate religious identities, rights, and conflicts in the nineteenth century Germany.[49] To understand the necessity of these identity negotiations, I cite Weir's definition of the 19th century secularism in Germany:

> *Nineteenth-century secularism understood itself to possess an immanent and totalizing worldview validated by natural science. Secularism was praxisoriented and justified its social and political interventions with a eudemonistic ethical system. It not only considered the metaphysical aspects of religion intellectually irrelevant and psychologically harmful – secularism was structurally anticlerical. That is, the forms of its religious community and its political practice were to a large extent structured by an antagonistic relationship to the state churches.[50]*

This definition illustrates the urgency and pressure religious groups experienced. *Konfessionen* allowed these groups to define themselves. There were two *Konfessionen* in Germany until 1918: Catholicism and Protestantism. In his epilogue, Weir summarizes that in 1918 and 1919 a deconfessionalization occurred allowing Jews to hold state office and to have the same rights as Catholics and Protestants. This deconfessionalization, however, was reversed by the Nazis in 1933.[51] As mentioned in the introductory chapter, German Jews in the early 20th century attempted to gain respect by being viewed as another *Konfession* next to the Protestant and the Catholic *Konfession* in Germany.[52] In the time between 1918 and 1933, they effectively had equal rights to Catholics and Protestants and therefore achieved this aim. The *Konfession* plays a crucial role both in German history as well as in the history of the German scouts. There are *interkonfessionelle* scout organizations and *konfessionslose* scout groups. "*Interkonfessionell*" can be understood as between the *Konfessionen.* It includes both the Catholic and the Protestant *Konfession.* "*Konfession*slos" means without a *Konfession*, so neither Catholic nor Protestant. In the current scout organizations, it is used interchangeably with non-religious (as in "We are *konfessionslos* so we do not pray") but in the original sense of the word it meant secular as defined by Weir ("immanent worldview, practical ethics, and anticlericalism"[53]).

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[46] The BMPPD was founded in 2010 and is therefore not covered in Strunk's book. This increases the relevance of investigating the BMPPD.

[47] Todd Weir. *Secularism and Religion in Nineteenth-Century Germany: The Rise of the Fourth Confession*. 2014.

[48] Ibid: 1

[49] Ibid: 1

[50] Ibid: 4

[51] Ibid: 274

[52] Till van Rahden. *Vielheit: Jüdische Geschichte Und Die Ambivalenzen Des Universalismus*. 2022: 80

[53] Todd Weir. *Secularism and Religion in Nineteenth-Century Germany: The Rise of the Fourth Confession*. 2014: 4

Robert Baden-Powell founded the Boy Scouts in Great Britain in 1907.[54] The first official German scouts, the Deutsche Pfadfinderbund (DPB), founded itself in 1911.[55] Strunk defines scouts as follows: "They are, first of all, children of their time and they arrange their personal life and the life of the group according to the current circumstances."[56] Moreover, Strunk explains that: "Being a scout means, up to this day, to dare walking on unknown paths."[57] In his 400-page book, he summarizes the history of the scouts in Germany, the founding of different Scout organizations, the origin of Christian scouting, and the suppression of the scout organizations during the national socialist regime starting in 1933 and ending in 1945.

The Founding of Scout Organizations (1909-1914)

The first experimental scouting groups were founded in Berlin in 1909. Inspired by Robert Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts in the United Kingdom, in the summer of 1909, the first scout groups started to emerge.[58] Scouting became more popular in pre-World-War I (WWI) Germany. In 1911, the first Christian scout book was published, linking scouting in Germany officially to the Christian religion. In the same year, the DPB was founded as a general German Scout organization.[59] But already in this first year of official scout organizations, it was recognized that there are many different scouts in Germany, and an organization uniting all other organizations was founded in November of 1911, called the *Bund Jungdeutschland*.[60] In January 1912, the German scout organization for girls was founded which was known as *Bund deutscher Pfadfinderinnen* after 1913.[61]

The influence of WWI on Scouting in Germany (1914-1918)

The German *Kaiserreich* ended with WWI in 1918. In their book *Bildung und Konfession*, Huber and Lauer describe that in the Protestant *Kaiserreich*, the division of the *Konfessionen* was crucial. Socialists and women generally were not able to gain access to education, and Catholics and Jews suffered when attempting to go through the education system.[62] Catholicism and science were viewed as mutually exclusive.[63] Since the secularist *Kaiserreich* prioritized progress in science over religious beliefs as described by Weir, it so happened that Catholics, too, were discriminated against as backward and different. This societal division in *Konfessionen* explains the division of different scout organizations in *Konfessionen*. *Konfession* was the main tool to negotiate the German identity and therefore it became important in many different aspects of society, for instance, the scouts. During WWI many older scouts fought in the war and did not return, writes Strunk.[64] No events occurred between 1914 and 1918.

Scouting in the Weimar Republic (1919-1933)

After WWI, new organizations were founded especially in Saxony in the East of Germany.[65] As of 1919, the scout organization was reinvented, more binding; something identity-defining for members in the scout organizations.[66] Many of them joined the *Ringpfadfinder*, which was the umbrella

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[54] Piet Strunk. *Die Pfadfinder in Deutschland: 1909-2009*. Neckenmarkt: Novum pro. 2011: 7
[55] Ibid: 8
[56] Ibid: 11
[57] Ibid: 13
[58] Ibid: 347
[59] Ibid: 348
[60] Ibid: 348
[61] Ibid: 348
[62] Huber, Martin and Lauer, Gerhard. *Bildung und Konfession: Politik, Religion und literarische Identitätsbildung 1850-1918*. Berlin, New York: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1996: 108
[63] Ibid: 108
[64] Ibid: 349
[65] Piet Strunk. *Die Pfadfinder in Deutschland: 1909-2009*. Neckenmarkt: Novum pro. 2011: 7: 350
[66] Ibid: 167

organization of some other existing German scouts (nowadays the RdP).[67] This organization then grew consistently in the 1920s. Other organizations were the DPB which was mentioned above, but also the CP (*Christliche Pfadfinderschaft Deutschlands*).[68] German scouts continued to be divided, multifaceted, and tied to *Konfessionen* to different degrees in the 1920s.

The first Catholic scout organizations emerged in the second half of the 1920s. As Catholics generally were not as accepted and were somewhat suppressed in the German *Kaiserreich* (1870-1918), they may not have had the chance to found a scout organization beforehand.[69] As explained in the previous subsection, Jews were given more rights and equality in the 1920s, as were Catholics. However, Adolf Hitler, in 1927, accused the Catholic Center Party of alliancing with Marxists, atheists, and Jews, arguing that the NSDAP would consist of better Christians than *das Zentrum*.[70, 71] Even though no Jewish scout organization emerged in the 1920s, Jews in Germany experienced a decade of more equality and opportunities before Adolf Hitler gained power, and established the Third Reich in Germany.

In 1928, the international scout bureau asked the German scouts for a representative which led to a shared scout bureau for foreign affairs.[72] In 1929, the *Deutsche Pfadfinderschaft St. Georg* (DPSG) was founded which exists to this day.[73]In October of 1929, the DPB, the CP, the Reichspfadfinder, the *Ringgemeinschaft*, and the German *Pfadfinderschaft* all shared the office for foreign affairs. They shortened their joined organization as DPV for *Deutscher Pfadfinderverband*.[74]

Scouting under the National Socialists (1933-1945)

In 1933, Adolf Hitler became the Reichskanzler of a totalitarian Germany.[75] The totalitarian regime brought the office for all German youth organizations under its power in April 1933 and had access to all data regarding young active Germans.[76] The newly founded *Großdeutscher Bund* was forbidden in June of the same year.[77] In fact, in late June all "*interkonfessionelle*" youth organizations aside from the *Hitlerjugend* were forbidden, and the *Bund deutscher Pfadfinderinnen* became the national socialist *Bund deutscher Mädel*.[78] The Protestant scout organization (CP) was only forbidden in 1937 because the institution of the church was able to protect them for a longer time.[79] The DPSG was tolerated but it changed its name in 1937 to *Gemeinschaft Sankt Georg* (GSG) excluding the word *Pfadfinder* (scout) from its name.[80] Only after World War II (WWII) ended in 1945 did the scout organizations revive.

Not only youth organizations were forbidden, but minoritized groups were discriminated against in this era. Genocide was committed against German Jews and all others who were not viewed as Aryan. The ambitions of Jewish organizations in the early 20th century to be viewed as a *Konfession* in Germany and therefore as equal to Protestants and Catholics were destroyed and rendered moot by the crimes of the Nazis (deportation and concentration camps).

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[67] Ibid: 352
[68] Ibid: 352
[69] Ibid: 353
[70] Todd Weir. *Secularism and Religion in Nineteenth-Century Germany: The Rise of the Fourth Confession*. 2014: 273
[71] An explanation of the different German political parties can be found in Appendix 1.
[72] Ibid: 353
[73] Ibid: 353
[74] Ibid: 354
[75] Ibid: 354
[76] Ibid: 355
[77] Ibid: 355
[78] Ibid: 355
[79] Ibid: 356
[80] Ibid: 356

Scouting after WWII (1945-1989)

After the end of WWII in 1945, the first (then still illegal) scout groups were founded in Western Germany.[81] In September, the Protestant scouts (CP) held a *Nachkriegslager* (an after-war camp).[82] Alexander Lion then received a license to refound the scouts in Rosenheim (Bavaria) after he has already illegally done so in August of 1945. The *Bund Deutscher Pfadfinder* (BDP) was founded in 1946. The French officially permitted scouts in their section of Germany in the summer of 1946. The DPSG which still called itself *Gemeinschaft St. Georg* at that time had its first camp after the war.[83] Interestingly, the BDP, CP and DPSG founded the German Scout Ring Bavaria in 1947.[84] This is particularly interesting because nowadays the Ring of German Scouts (RdP) has four members: the BdP, the VCP, the DPSG, and now the BMPPD. As we will learn later, the BdP with a small "d" stems from the former BDP and the VCP developed out of the CP. The *Ring deutscher Pfadfinder*innen* which included BDP, BCP (formerly CP), and PSG (Pfadfinderinnen St. Georg), was founded in 1947 in the US American part of Germany.[85] In 1949 it was recognized in all three parts of Western Germany.[86] This *Ring deutscher Pfadfinder*innen* (RdP) became a member of the world scout organizations in 1950.[87]

Scout organizations flourished in Western Germany. In Eastern Germany, the GDR, scouting remained illegal. Even today, scouts are not as represented in the former GDR as they are in the West. In 1971, the BDP split into the BDP (Bund Deutscher Pfadfinder) and the BdP (Bund der Pfadfinder) due to political differences within the organization.[88] The *Verein christlicher Pfadfinder* (VCP) was founded in 1972 and some groups of the BCP joined the VCP.[89] The BdP officially changed its name to *Bund der Pfadfinderinnen und Pfadfinder* in 1975 to specifically include female members in its name.[90] The DPSG and the PSG officially became one shared Catholic scout organization in 1978.[91] In sum, the BdP (secular), the DPSG (Catholic), and the VCP (Protestant) have existed and been united in the RdP for several decades. This fact renders it even more interesting that in the 21st century, the Muslim German scouts joined these established German scout organizations with such long histories.

As many Turkish migrants (often but not exclusively Muslim) arrived in Germany between the late 1950s and 1980s, it can be assumed that these Turkish Muslim Germans were still adjusting to a new society and environment when the three big scout organizations established themselves.[92] Moreover, the Turkish migrants (often called guest workers), according to Miller, were crucial in times of the cold war as "Western European countries continuously relied on extra-European labor to shore up their industry against the Eastern Bloc".[93] This would suggest that they were also very busy with their labor in the industries.

Miller points out that not all guest worker families fit into the prominent guest worker narratives.[94] This narrative presents the Turkish migrants as excited, expectant, generally happy workers.[95] Miller writes: "Guest workers fit uncomfortably into existing analytic categories (e.g., diaspora, immigrant, and working-class) while still overlapping with these groups. Any coherent

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[81] Ibid: 356
[82] Ibid: 356
[83] Ibid: 357
[84] Ibid: 357
[85] Ibid: 357
[86] Ibid: 358
[87] Ibid: 359
[88] Ibid: 362
[89] Ibid: 363
[90] Ibid: 364
[91] Ibid: 365
[92] Jennifer A. Miller. *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany: Hidden Lives and Contested Borders, 1960s to 1980s*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018: 5
[93] Ibid: 6
[94] Ibid: 8
[95] Ibid: 59

narrative of "guest workers" will be a constructed fiction because paradoxes abound."[96] Consequently, the were confronted with a presumptuous narrative which likely demanded for them to develop coping mechanisms for such discrimination.

Germany, then, witnessed the so-called *Wirtschaftswunder* in the post-war era.[97] While the so-called guest workers were – among other things – the reason for this economic boom, this economic growth also inspired many guest workers to become permanent immigrants. Germany's financial wealth was a promising prospect for those who had a significant role in building this wealth.[98] Before the *Wirtschaftswunder*, many Turkish Muslims in Germany may not have been planning their future in Germany and may therefore have engaged less in society. Many members of the BMPPD are likely to have parents who were confronted with this guest worker narrative when they came to Germany. Some of their family histories are likely to be shaped by the experiences of those who contributed to Germany's wealth and have then been othered as the migrants, the strangers who came to Germany. To this day, Aydemir argues, the prosperity of Germany would not be possible without the former guest workers.[99] Working hard and then being excluded by the German society is likely to create trauma and leave marks on those who experience this exclusion as well as their descendants, i.e., on some of the members of the BMPPD.

Both in the history of German literature as well as in the history of research, the term "Turks" has since then been used interchangeably with the word "foreigners", "guest workers", and other words for migrants. This is suggesting that all guest workers are a homogenous group.

Scouts in the 1990s and 2000s

With the reunification of Germany in 1990, scout organizations spread in the former GDR again for the first time after 60 years.[100] Yet, in the former GDR, few scout groups were founded. Throughout the 1990s the scout organization grew in Western Germany, many different projects started, and territories and campsites were acquired by different organizations.[101]

Scouting today

In 2010, the Muslim German Scout organization (BMPPD) was founded. It has been acknowledged by the Ring of German Scouts as the only organization next to the Catholic and Protestant, and the secular organization. The latter three have been in the official Ring of German Scouts for decades. While there are many different, small other scout organizations within Germany, the BMPPD is the only one which was admitted to becoming a member of the Ring of the German Scouts.

Conclusion: Literature Review

This chapter aimed to contextualize and inform about the concepts home, belonging, identity, and diaspora. They are intertwined, fluid, and changing. In my research project, I was only able to capture a temporary sense of identity, home, and belonging as it is ever-changing. A longitudinal study would permit to monitor changes throughout a lifetime but as the time frame of this project is limited, this study will be limited to a momentary picture. Yet, participants do reflect on changes in their sense of belonging which allowed me to grasp these changes to a certain degree. The concept of diaspora ties into the concept of home. The meaning of home is different for everyone; especially those living in a diasporic context are likely to have more than one home and therefore more than one sense of belonging. In building a sense of belonging, however, the public discourse, the exclusion, and the

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[96] Ibid: 74
[97] Ibid: 12
[98] Ibid: 12
[99] Fatma Aydemir, Hengameh Yaghoobifarah. *Eure Heimat ist unser Albtraum.* Berlin: Ullstein Fünf. 2019: 28
[100] Piet Strunk. *Die Pfadfinder in Deutschland: 1909-2009.* Neckenmarkt: Novum pro. 2011: 7: 367
[101] Ibid: 368-369

discrimination in Germany presents an obstacle for those identifying as Muslims, for those who do not merely identify as German, and for those who are not white or white-passing.

Especially in the context of the German scout's history it seems an unexpected development that the BMPPD is now a member in the Ring of the German Scouts. It shows that there has been a change in how a religious and partly ethnic minority is accepted within Germany – or at least within this subculture – as there has never been, for instance, a Jewish scout organization. In the following chapters I will analyze the findings of my research which may explain more about these new developments. It may be observed now that at least in this subculture, the German Muslims have acquired a status of a *Konfession* in the Ring of German Scouts.

The Struggle of Belonging

Introduction

We belong to Germany, and we belong to the scouts in Germany.[102] *– Omar*

If one is othered, excluded, and discriminated by public discourses and popular narratives in the (social) media it can be difficult to establish a sense of belonging. I wrote in chapter two, to belong means to be included. In this chapter, I present and analyze the findings of the four interviews with volunteers of the Muslim German scout organization I conducted for this research project.

I will introduce some key characteristics of the interviewees in the first section. I will then retell the story of how the BMPPD was founded, how it developed, and where it aims to be in the future. In the third section, I will summarize the events of the BMPPD. Afterward, in section four, I will explore the network and the context of the BMPPD a bit further. This network is limited by a very relevant factor, the *Verfassungsschutz*, the German Office of Protection of the Constitution. How this relates to the BMPPD can be found in section five. The members of the German Muslim Scout organization face challenges identifying with both Germany and Islam. These challenges are unwrapped in section six of this chapter. Finally, the role of scouting in the participants' sense of belonging will be presented in section seven. The findings are analyzed in the context of the literature discussed in chapter two. There, I cited Fenneke Wekker who states that one can only feel at home if one belongs. In this chapter, the main aim is to answer the question of whether the participants of this study developed a sense of belonging in Germany.

1) Who are the participants of my study?

The participants of my project are four German Muslims in their twenties. All of them are active, socially engaged, motivated people. Janin, for instance, works for an association of democratic education, and Abudi teaches seminars about racism. All four of them use a lot of their time to build, broaden, and strengthen the BMPPD. All the participants are lateral entrants, i.e., they began scouting as adults to support the BMPPD as the organization is still too young (thirteen years old) to have leaders who were members as children. Both women I interviewed do not wear hijabs and grew up in Germany. Both men were born in Syria and came to Germany as young adults in 2015 and 2016. In the following paragraphs, each participant will be introduced to the reader.

The first participant of this study is Janin, a 29-year-old woman, a member of the board of the BMPPD, in the function of direction and childcare (animation) in the camps, and very enthusiastic about the BMPPD. She has inhabited any function one can have in the BMPPD, she says and laughs. She heard of the BMPPD through her bachelor in Islamic studies.[103] When visiting a course on how to be a group leader, she thought for the first time: "Wow, how amazing are the scouts, this is what I live and think"[104], and she became a member of the BMPPD. Janin is originally from Berlin and lives in the South of Germany now (Rhineland Pfalz). My interview with Janin was almost two hours long and her stories delved deeply into the subjects of this study. Janin is a very open and talkative person which is why her interview is cited more often than any other interview in this section.

The second participant, 29-year-old Abudi, is a student of electrical technology. He works, organizes courses, teaches seminars about racism, and translates from Arabic to German. He tells me he had to stop being a math teacher recently because he was too busy. Next to all these activities he is a scout leader, as well. He used to be active in the BdP, and later became a member of the BMPPD. Abudi has lived in Germany for seven years at the time of the interview. He is now a German citizen. Abudi tells me the story of how he became a member of the BdP after he arrived in Germany in 2015:

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[102] Omar, 35:00
[103] Janin, 11:30
[104] Janin, 11:30

> *When I first came to Germany, it was a difficult time, in Syria we were in a good place, financially. My father had a shoe company, we had two cars, I had everything I could want, and then I started studying electrical technology in Syria and then I could not continue studying, it was dangerous, and we all flew to Jordan where I kept studying for two years, again the same study program, I never switched. Yes, and then we heard: Europe, Germany, there you can study, it is good, so I came here, to Germany. In the refugee accommodation I saw people and I met people who were very different from me, you know? I am not like them. I am not saying they are bad people or good people, but… Here, I was told, you are a refugee just like the other person, but I am not like this person, I am very different. This is not how I grew up; I really became depressed and the first two months I lay in bed and only in bed and I did not do anything else, and I had my laptop and I only chatted with my old friends, I did not want to go outside. And to learn the German language, it was a challenge, it was not easy, yes. Yes, and then I found the scout group and it was so different because I found friends again. I brought my brother along and the children of my cousin. And now I am a scout.*[105]

At the scouts, Abudi felt welcome. He became active in the BdP in Kassel and went outside again. Later, he started an initiative to bring more children with a migration background to the BdP. Eventually, he realized that he wanted to join the BMPPD to let Muslim children participate in scouting.

Omar, the third participant, is 26, and grew up in Syria where he was a scout, already. He came to Germany in 2016. One day in Gießen, he attended a city festival where the BMPPD had a booth handing out flyers. He was surprised to see scouts in Germany; he did not know that scouts were that international. He asked whether he could join at his age, and he got to know scouting in Germany through the BMPPD. Omar has other hobbies such as dancing and kickboxing.[106]

Lastly, Sanae (22) was happy to join the BMPPD when she was 18. She grew up in Wiesbaden and has always liked the idea of scouting. The combination of the religious aspect with the scouting ideology appealed to her: "You know, that spirit you feel when all scouts arrive at a campsite, it is incredible."[107] Sanae tells me that she benefited from youth organizations in her childhood. A small youth organization in her hometown gave her confidence and opened the doors to journeys abroad she and her parents could not have afforded otherwise. Next to school and sports, it meant a lot to her to have young group leaders who were interested in her.[108] This is what she wants to give to the members of the BMPPD now that she is a group leader herself. Being outside, in the woods, learning about nature protection, creating an awareness of the environment, and politics – this combination offered by the scouts is what Sanae appreciates.

2) The Story of the BMPPD

> *To me, every scout is half a Muslim, and every Muslim is half a scout.*[109] *– Janin*

The BMPPD was founded in 2010. It is a German Muslim Scout organization, and as the opening quote of this section shows, the categories "scout" and "Muslim" go hand in hand for Janin. Janin tells me that no other organization in Germany aims to attract Muslim children and adolescents.[110] While this is not entirely true as there are some (but few) Muslim youth organizations, it is true for the scout organizations in Germany. The BMPPD offers a new focus and a new opportunity for Muslim German children in the German scouting context.[111] The BMPPD was inspired by the French Muslim scouts.[112]

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[105] Abudi, 28:25
[106] Omar, 2:00
[107] Sanae, 04:40
[108] Sanae, 06:15
[109] Janin 2, 27:00
[110] Janin, 04:15
[111] Janin, 18:40
[112] Janin 2, 18:40; Sanae, 30:23

Members of this French organization told the founders: "Do it for your children and their children and all the children in Germany who do not yet have access to scouting in Germany."[113] Some leaders of the French Muslim scout organizations had relatives in Germany, according to Janin. These transnational connections between French and German Muslims have led to the emergence of the BMPPD.

Janin who was not a founding member but is now a passionate board member explains that in the beginning years, the BMPPD showed itself in public to demonstrate that there are peaceful Muslims, that they want to live together with all others, that they want the rest of society and Muslim Germans to complement each other. The volunteers of the organization felt the need to prove that they are peaceful, suggesting that they felt that society at large would assume that they are not peaceful.

Another board member, Sanae, who grew up in Germany her entire life, always admired the scouts but never became a member when she was a child. She thought about joining the DPSG when she was around the age of 10, but her father did not want her to join because of their name:

> *Simply because the name included that they were Catholic scouts, I think he thought that*
> *we would be in church all day and pray, I don't know, somehow, he didn't like that idea*
> *and he said no, and I didn't bother to ask again.[114]*

Sanae's sexplanation points out the lack of activities for Muslim German children: Sanae did not have the opportunity to join the scouts because the local scouts were Catholic, and her father felt uncomfortable at the idea of her being "in church all day". When I ask Sanae directly about her thought on activities for Muslim German children in Germany, she responds:

> *I look at it ambivalently, because many mosques just as the churches are active in youth*
> *work, but, I mean, this is always connected to the mosque just as it is with youth work*
> *from the church, but independent organizations such as we are one now because, I*
> *mean, we do not work with a mosque or any mosque related organization, we are not*
> *funded by them, even though many seem to think so, but no, there are too few*
> *organizations in my opinion, it is slowly coming, but independent organizations are*
> *few.[115]*

Sanae concludes that there are too few organizations for Muslim German children, but she hesitates in her answer, suggesting that Sanae does not demand such organizations as a given. This modesty may be what Sanae assumes I want to hear as a white German. Public discourses discussed in chapter two would judge Sanae for demands to a society that often considers her an outsider.

In the BMPPD, a safe space from this exclusionary discourse has been established. Everyone is welcome in the BMPPD, Sanae tells me. But most children are not white or Christian:

> *I always say we found our niche and the majority of our members are Muslims and they*
> *often have a migration background because most people who call themselves Muslim in*
> *Germany have a migration background. The members are of all ages. […] Most parents*
> *have migration backgrounds, and it depends on the group: sometimes many children are*
> *from lower social classes, sometimes it is the opposite, mostly it is mixed.[116]*

The fact that Sanae used this phrasing (*the majority of our members*) indicates that some members are not Muslim. When asked, she says that all members she knows are of Muslim descent or Muslim themselves but not all are actively involved in their faith. The BMPPD has members with backgrounds in many countries, says Omar. Morocco, Turkey, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, and Afghanistan –

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[113] Janin 2, 18:40
[114] Sanae, 08:21
[115] Sanae, 36:50
[116] Sanae, 26:50

and the lingua franca is German. Even with other Arabs Omar speaks German to avoid excluding others, he explains.[117] Language is an important identity marker and language is often intertwined with culture. Using the German language amongst each other likely functions as a stimulator for identification as Germans and German Muslims. To the members of the BMPPD, it thereby becomes more self-evident to speak about Muslim faith, Muslim rituals, and Muslim culture in German making it easier to comprehend that being Muslim in Germany is not only possible but a reality they share.

This stimulation of a shared German Muslim identity would not be possible in the secular scout organization. In Abudi's local group in the BdP, he attempted to change the structures, wanting to gain more members with a migration background, but his ambitions failed. He praises the members of the BdP for being considerate: he and his siblings did not eat pork, so the entire scout group stopped eating meat at the camps. But Abudi wanted to encourage children with parents of Arabic and Turkish backgrounds to join the BdP. He applied for fundings, and the municipality was interested and funded his efforts. However, the project remained unsuccessful. After this discouraging experience, Abudi withdrew somewhat from the scouts. He does not seem happy about this: he looks at me and says, "It was not always easy in the BdP".[118] But after a while, Abudi received a call asking him whether he wanted to be active in the BMPPD. He reacted skeptically: "Muslim scouts?", he thought: "I do not want to give Islamic lessons; I study electrical technology. I want to do scout work."[119] After this hesitant beginning, however, Abudi got to know the BMPPD. He realized that it did exactly what he tried to do with his smaller project. He could not carry it out on his own, but the combined efforts of an entire organization of Muslim scouts could create a safe space for Muslim German children and volunteers.

All my interviewees emphasized that what they do is normal youth organization work. They seemed to want to present themselves both as normal and as equal to all other scout organizations in Germany. "Scouts are everywhere in the world," says Abudi:

> They are in Syria, they are here, they are in more than one country of the world. It is
> youth work. And there is a social stratum in our society that does not have real access to
> this youth work. This is the target group of the BMPPD.[120]

This correlates with Janin's and Sanae's observations that Muslim children do not have access to youth work as much as Christian or secular German children. The BMPPD, as any other scout organization, works with theater pedagogy, costumes, group hours, games, and crafts. The BMPPD does exactly what the BdP does, says Abudi.[121] The only difference he points out is the age of the group leaders in the BMPPD, which is generally older than the group leaders' age in the BdP.[122] Abudi considers changing these hierarchies of age in his BMPPD group a little bit since both approaches have merit, he explains.

When asked what they want for the BMPPD in the future, all participants answered that they hope for the BMPPD to grow. Omar says, they would like to have a troop in every city.[123] Moreover, Sanae describes that she hopes that the organization can fight Islamophobia, by saying:

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[117] Omar, 28:00
[118] Abudi, 5:00
[119] Abudi, 5:00
[120] Abudi, 15:48
[121] Abudi, 15:48
[122] Abudi, 33:45
[123] Omar, 30:45

> *Hey, look, this is how Muslim life in Germany could look, and hey, look, we are no dangerous bomb-builders or whatever. The people think of the wildest things, we are a completely normal part of society and life here just as you are, just as I am, and we only want to live together with others, peacefully, we do not want to harm anyone, [and I want] that this strangeness of Islam and the fear of the unknown and the undefinable diminishes.[124]*

Later, Sanae explains that she wants the people in Germany to see that they are all the same. She wants the BMPPD to be an established organization in Germany so that people are no longer surprised when they hear "Muslim German Scout organization" but that it is considered the most normal fact that they belong to the German scouts:

> *When we are as big as the DPSG one day, for example, that would be cool, then we could reach so many people, and we could simply contribute to fighting this Islamophobia and that people see, here, you and I, we are the same, there is no difference between us, or that we are maybe different but what differentiates us makes us special, but it is nothing negative that we should fear or that we should feel negative about and, um, that we can simply be a very, very fixed part of Germany, or that when someone thinks, it is rather banal, when you think of scouts that you think of us self-evidently, and that nobody even looks interested or surprised, yes of course they exist, that is normal, that they are scouts, too, that there are Muslim scouts.[125]*

Sanae goes on to mention the image the media create of Islam. She hopes that the BMPPD changes this image of terror attacks.[126] Abudi has similar ambitions for the BMPPD as he wants to change society not only for himself but for the next generation. Children today still must cope with racism, he says. The BMPPD starts to be portrayed in German media, Abudi explains, which will help change the way people view Muslims.[127]

The greatest difficulties the BMPPD faces today are to find locations that are close to nature and yet accessible and affordable, to get fundings and financial support from municipalities, to gain the trust of the parents, and especially to find group leaders.[128] The reason for this biggest problem, the absence of group leaders, according to Sanae, lies in a certain feeling of obligation even though they do voluntary work.[129]

Janin tells me that other scouts sometimes ask her why Muslim scouts must be separated from other scouts. She understands where this question originates from, and that she, too, sometimes wishes for a huge organization of all the scouts combined. But she feels that there would be prejudices, peer groups, and separation within that organization. Moreover, Muslim parents tend to trust a Muslim organization more than a Christian one, she says.

In sum, the BMPPD's target group are children who do not fit into the other scout organizations. The organization uses what participants deem the typical scouting methods and it aims to be viewed as more normal, as a part of the German scouts, as an organization belonging to Germany. The biggest challenge the BMPPD is currently facing is the lack of volunteers for group leading. In the next section, I will explain more about the activities one can do in the BMPPD.

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[124] Sanae, 24:20
[125] Sanae, 41:51
[126] Sanae, 24:20
[127] Abudi 53:50
[128] Sanae, 31:40
[129] Sanae, 13:27

3) Attending an Event: What does the BMPPD do?

Activities in the BMPPD

Janin explains to me that every local group in the BMPPD is a little different, some might have slightly different rituals and locations. There are camps of the different groups, and a nation-wide camp in the summer. There is no hiking yet because right now the priority is on the weekly group hours. Additionally, the BMPPD offers educational training for group leaders where they can learn the basic skills and methods of the organization such as the scouting methods, the scouting history, Islam and scouting, the spiritual concept of the BMPPD, first aid, prevention of sexual abuse, practice (building tents), making fire, teambuilding, and games.[130] As mentioned above, many participants emphasize the normality of their work. Abudi describes that one would rarely realize that this was Muslim scout work as opposed to other scout work.[131] The emphasis on their normality suggests a desire to belong to German society as a self-evident component.

One defining characteristic of the BMPPD is their praying tent. They pray three times a day as they are travelling. Attendance is not mandatory, but non-Muslim guests are often surprised that all the children participate voluntarily in the praying ritual. According to Janin, this is a big difference between the BMPPD and the Christian scouts where the children do not all participate in the praying rituals.[132]The pride in Janin's voice when she tells me about all the children praying even though they are not forced to suggests that it is important to her that the children pray out of their own volition. A reason for this could be that people sometimes assume the opposite, that the BMPPD forces children to participate in Islam, for instance. Another could simply be that Janin is proud of how the group leaders and volunteers in the BMPPD bring across the meaning of both scouting and Islam.

The praying tent itself is a calm tent where one can reflect, sit in peace, and pray.[133] Abudi describes that it is a nice feeling to pray together in this tent. When children have questions about Islam, they have one reference person, someone who feels capable to answer questions about religion, Islam, and theology. This one member of the BMPPD is at most of the bigger camps. The group leaders, therefore, do not have to answer questions about religion and faith.[134]

Of course, there are many different branches of Islam that come together in the BMPPD. Janin explains that they are focusing on the values taught by Islam; the cultural background is not important. On this occasion, Janin takes a detour in our interview, explaining that Christian values and Muslim values are factually the same and that saying Muslim values feels unnecessary to her:

> *It is mainly about values, cultural backgrounds are not important and Konfession isn't*
> *either, different schools of thought do not play a role, Islamic values sound weird to me*
> *because they are the same as they are in Christianity, general universal values,*
> *underlined by verses from the Quran, which are included in our activities in playful ways,*
> *no matter what we do it is Islamic and spiritual. We show the children what they are*
> *allowed to and can do, not what they are not allowed to do.[135]*

At the BMPPD, they underline these values with Suras from the Quran. Sanae reports that most of their members are Sunnis, and that there are very few Shiites and Alevis.[136] All in all, the activities and events of the Muslim German scout organization are similar to those of other scout organizations, but they are broadened with elements of Islam and verses of the Quran.

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[130] Janin 2, 03:15
[131] Abudi, 44:30
[132] Janin, 9:45
[133] Abudi, 44:30
[134] Omar, 23:40
[135] Janin 2: 28:35
[136] Sanae, 29:00

Performing the Muslim German Identity as a Group

The BMPPD consists almost entirely of German Muslims. Through their events and activities, they perform and negotiate their group identity as German Muslim scouts. In this subsection, I want to analyze how and why they create a safe space for Islam in their organization. To do so, I will begin with their leadership training which includes courses called "Islam and scouting", and "the spiritual concept of the BMPPD". The fact that the BMPPD discusses Islam and scouting emphasizes their open discourse, their philosophy, and their aims. Uniting all branches of Islam in one organization illustrates the diversity and inclusiveness of all Muslims in the BMPPD. In a society that presents Muslims as a homogenous group those identifying as Muslims are united in this one similarity: they are viewed as a representative of this presumed homogenous group.[137] When all these victims of homogenization get together, they are creating an environment in which they are allowed to be diverse. They are allowed to be who they are, and it is self-evident that one shared characteristic with someone else does not make an individual the same person. This is why I conclude that the BMPPD functions a safe space for its German Muslim members. Therefore, the different branches of Islam in the BMPPD are not an obstacle: they offer individuality to a heterogenous group. Based on this observation, it can be concluded that the need for a safe space only emerges out of the discrimination in the first place, and those who may never have shared any similarities now share the similarity of needing this safe space. It is not self-segregation but self-protection that necessitates the existence of the BMPPD, i.e., necessitates the creation of a space that allows those who are othered and homogenized to be diverse.

In other words, some members of the diasporic group of liberal progressive German Muslims perform their identity in a self-created safe space called BMPPD despite the hostility in a public discourse of homogenization.

4) The Network of the BMPPD and its Challenges

The BMPPD is an organization that needs to network to gain publicity, support, and members. In this fourth section of the analysis, I will present the network of the BMPPD, the challenges of the German Muslim Scout organization in its network, the role of social media in the perceived public discourse, and the limited free-time activities for Muslim German children.

The Network of the BMPPD

The Muslim German Scout organization is strongly connected to the DPSG.[138] Especially in the beginning, almost every activity was held together. The other scout organizations were somewhat more skeptical, according to Janin. She expresses that she understands to a certain degree the skepticism of the other organizations. When I ask why she expresses understanding towards the more skeptical organizations, she explains:

> *When a random organization suddenly appears and says we want to join… Being Muslim*
> *is always a little difficult because one does not know what is behind it. One doesn't know*
> *it, one imagines something one has heard, and then one cannot really place it in one's*
> *head if one doesn't know it and it is always that way that to reduce stereotypes one has*
> *to get to know it, and yes, now it is normal between us and all other organizations.[139]*

When Janin voices that being Muslim is always a little difficult, she expresses that this part of her is considered strange, unfitting, and unknown. When talking about it she uses the neutral pronoun "one" (German "man") as in "One doesn't know it". She does not say them and us but neutralizes it by using such a generalizing term as "one". This creates emotional distance to the topic and could therefore be a manner of protecting herself by not emphasizing the exclusion, but also a manner of

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[137] Ibid: 80
[138] Janin 2, 05:41
[139] Janin 2, 06:50

protecting my feelings, as I am a white German interviewer in this conversation, one of those who may consider Islam as strange. The use of "one" instead of "I and you" could be a coping mechanism. Moreover, Janin expresses that she understands to a certain degree the skepticism of the other scout organizations. This could show that she is adopting the white islamophobic narrative of the majority here as it is described by Sara Ahmed.[140]

The BMPPD visited the educational courses and camps of the DPSG. "We were shaped by the concept of the DPSG, and we took their concept and made our own", Janin says.[141] But within the scouting universe, the BMPPD also networks with the VCP.

> *We want that the children understand that we are not only Muslims here and that we are not alone, that they should have respect for other children, and it should motivate them, too.[142]*

Therefore, Omar held a summer camp together with the VCP Grünberg and the BMPPD Gießen. In Wiesbaden, Sanae tells me, they had a camp with the DPSG in 2019, and generally nation-wide there were some camps for different scout organizations to get to know each other.[143]

Another network the BMPPD joined is the official Ring of the German scouts, the RdP. Previously, the RdP only allowed the BdP, VCP, and DPSG to be an official scout organization in Germany until 2010. I asked Janin why that is, and she explained that every organization accepted into the RdP needs a specific feature. Theirs, says Janin, is the Muslim feature: a second Catholic organization would not be accepted into the RdP. Janin also expresses that she believes that the RdP was skeptical toward the BMPPD, but the DPSG formed a coalition with the BMPPD.[144] It seems that the support of the Catholic scouts, in parts, made it possible for the BMPPD to become such a successful organization. The Catholic scout organization (DPSG) welcomed the BMPPD, maybe because they are the most devoted to their religion and therefore have more in common with the members of the BMPPD. Another reason could be that Catholics in Germany were othered and excluded in the German *Kaiserreich* in the early 20th century and may therefore be more empathetic to the German Muslim's situation. The DPSG also played a part in the BMPPD becoming a member of the RdP. There are hundreds of scout organizations in Germany with characteristics of their own, but the DPSG lobbied for the BMPPD to get into the RdP. This suggests that the Catholic scout organization was the most sympathetic and open towards the new Muslim organization.

The Muslim community also reacts to the existence of the BMPPD. Janin observes skepticism here, too. Some may think they are too liberal, she says, because they do not separate boys and girls, all activities (except sleeping in tents) can be done together, and all events are co-educative, so some individuals in the Muslim community may disapprove. Those, she assumes, are the conservative Muslim Germans, and others may simply be skeptical because they think "they are only doing this to please Germany, so the state and the politics, I have heard that before".[145] Janin says that this may be sad, but that those who think differently do not have to participate or support them: "We don't want to have a member who says 'no, that one eats pork, I don't want to talk to them'." The BMPPD does not want conservative members who, in Janin's words, think in black and white. The BMPPD generally does not network and does not accept funding from mosques. They want to be independent from mosques; they want to be their own organization as Janin says. Another reason is that Muslim organizations generally need to support themselves. Omar points out that, unlike the church in Germany, mosques are not supported by a tax.

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[140] Sara Ahmed. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham: Duke University Press. 2012.
[141] Janin, 05:41
[142] Omar, 33:00
[143] Sanae, 14:20
[144] Janin 2, 06:33
[145] Janin 2, 24:50

> *"Because Muslim organizations need support themselves, I observed in Gießen, because
> […] the Muslim community itself does not have the big money, they need to support
> themselves."*[146]

This again shows the heterogeneity of the German Muslim community with conservative and liberal branches. Just as in any other community, there are different streams and directions of Islam in Germany. But, to a certain degree, the BMPPD distanced itself from the Muslim community as it specifically does not want to network with mosques or Muslim organizations. But not only do they not want to, the *Verfassungsschutz* limits their networking opportunities with other Muslim organizations. More on that follows in section five.

Furthermore, the local scout groups of the BMPPD collaborate with different organizations to get access to locations, funding, and support. One of those is the Piano e.V. in Kassel. In Gießen, the BMPPD does not get funding from the municipality (yet). Omar tells me that they are trying to apply for funding. Before the lockdown due to the global pandemic in 2021, they were allowed to use a location for free. In Wiesbaden, the BMPPD receives a lot of funding from officials and the municipality. Money does not seem to be an issue, just the absence of group leaders.[147] Some participants told me that they get funding and locations easily; others are forced to hand in request after request and must overcome many bureaucratic barriers. These local differences from city to city are similar in other scout organizations. Some municipalities may disapprove of scouting or Muslim scouting, while others may not have the money or have different priorities, and some might have other reasons for not funding the scouts.

All in all, the network of the BMPPD consists of the DPSG, the VCP, the RdP, the municipalities, and some other organizations. Mosques and other Muslim organizations are explicitly excluded from the network of the BMPPD. While Janin first said that the sole reason for this was the aim of independence for the BMPPD, I will explore the role of the state's policy on Muslim organizations in the next section.

Challenges to the BMPPD

The BMPPD and its members are constantly acting in the context of the predominantly white, German nation-state. The BMPPD had to establish themselves as peaceful before being accepted in German society (or at least they felt the need to do so). Abudi says that he wants to show that he and his scout group are "normal and humans, too". This shows that Abudi feels a dehumanization of Muslims in the popular German discourse as he needs to prove that he is normal and human. The fact that all participants in this study emphasized how normal their work in the BMPPD is shows another assumption, that I, the researcher, may expect to find something "unnormal" in their work. This emphasis on normality is almost like an ambition to belong, to be considered self-evident, to not be questioned. This is precisely what Sanae describes when she explains her wishes for the BMPPD. She struggles with the stereotype of "Bomb-builders" and wants to fight this stereotype with the BMPPD. This wish for normalcy is indicating that the BMPPD and its members are not yet viewed as normal, self-evident, and belonging to Germany. The way people view Muslims has presented Abudi with obstacles and he, too, opted to actively fight these obstacles through his work in the BMPPD. The Muslim German scouts also face challenges every new youth organization faces, such as finding locations, ensuring funding, and finding volunteers.

The Role of (Social) Media

The public discourse in Germany is, often, a discourse presenting Islam as foreign and different. The sense of belonging in the participants of this study is challenged by the national image of what a German ought to be. The participants cope differently with these stereotypes and labels. Omar, for

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[146] Omar, 25:18
[147] Sanae, 16:26

instance, prefers to be asked himself over people assuming that what they read in the (social) media is the only truth. Yet, he explains that he is asked about Iran, Afghanistan, and Sudan even though he is from Syria. He keeps up to date with Arabic news, and he tells me that the German news are delayed and one-sided. But Omar also emphasizes that Syrian news, for instance, do the same, presenting the country as peaceful and safe now but when he talks to his sister, he finds out that she only has electricity four hours a day. To him, asking the people themselves is the best source and therefore he likes being asked questions by those he calls "the Germans". Of course, he others himself by calling the native white Germans "THE Germans", but that, too, might be a reaction to their questions about the Arabic world to Omar. Omar reading Arabic news may not feel like an obligation to him, but him describing how he explains the situation in Afghanistan, Iran, and Sudan to Germans even though he is originally from Syria shows how he, in these situations, is expected to understand all Muslim-majority countries. Muslims are viewed as a tight-knit homogenous group in this narrative, yet there are many different Muslim-majority countries. Gümüsay explains that to be successful in a white majority society, the "Others" acquire skills and responses to fit in:

> *It's the 'other' children, other people's children, who don't fit the norm. They have to learn to answer questions like that from a very young age, and their success in society depends on how nice and satisfactory their answers are. So they acquire the necessary knowledge and perfect their responses, which grow more eloquent over time, more inhibiting, more demeaning.*[148]

Yaghoobifarah and Aydemir call this tokenism. Omar is asked to explain the politics and events in Muslim-majority countries he has never been to because he is a Muslim. To Omar, this is not problematic and yet, it is absurd to imagine that a German should be able to explain all the political events in all other Christian-majority countries.

(Social) media, evidently, plays a role in Omar's experience with people's stereotypes. The meaning-making and worldview some people he interacts with gain through such media appear outdated or untrue to him, and his reaction is to inform those who are listening to him. This, too, is one way to cope with discrimination. Al-Ajarma and Buitelaar, in the *Journal of Muslims in Europe,* write about the differing social media representation of Dutch Moroccan and Moroccan pilgrims.[149] They write: "The Internet provides a virtual platform where individuals and communities can produce a presence that might be denied to them in the offline world".[150] Omar criticizes the public media, and engages in the act of producing a presence in social media. He criticizes social media for its incorrect facts about Syria, too. Al-Ajarma and Buitelar cite several studies which revealed that marginalized groups, such as German Muslims, often use social media (the Internet) as a platform to create a new discourse about themselves.[151] Omar is a member of a marginalized group who attempts to correct misrepresentation of his own group (Muslims) in Germany by explaining what he knows about other Muslim-majority countries. In order to correct this misrepresentation, he reads Arabic news about many countries, not only his native country, Syria. It can be assumed that he, thereby, challenges German images and understandings of Syria, and other Muslim majority countries. Al-Ajarma and Buitelaar obvserve this in their Dutch Moroccan interview participants: "in their online self-presentations, Moroccan-Dutch girls challenge both limiting conceptions in the dominant Western image of Muslim women, as well as those that circulate among citizens with Moroccan backgrounds."[152] With these actions, Omar challenges the image of the Muslim men in Germany.

But, likely, these actions are not merely targeting a German or white audience, but a non-German audience, too. Al-Ajarma and Buitelaar write that social media platforms provide room for the

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[148] Kübra Gümüsay. *Speaking and Being: How Language Binds and Frees us*: 73
[149] Khouloud Al-Ajarma, Marjo Buitelaar. 'Social Media Representations of the Pilgrimage to Mecca. Challenging Moroccan and Dutch Mainstream Media Frames.' 2021.
[150] Ibid: 156
[151] Ibid: 156
[152] Ibid: 156

performance of identity which may be lacking elsewhere. It allows "alternative self-narratives".[153] Revealing to the German public that one is a practicing German Muslim may meet admiration within the marginalized Muslim community, but the white German majority may hinder this self-representation with a negative gaze, as Al-Ajarma and Buitelaar describe.[154] Yet, Omar performs his Muslim German Syrian identity openly and prefers to be asked about news from Muslim-majority countries. Perhaps due to the absence of a platform for German Muslims in dominant public discourse does Omar (mostly) prefer to be a representative of all Muslim-majority countries rather than an individual Muslim German Syrian man without a platform for what he has to say.

5) Practices of Belonging: Islam in Germany

This section further explores the context and environment of both the members of the BMPPD as well as the BMPPD itself. Beginning with the free-time activities for Muslim German children in Germany, I will present my finding that Germany lacks safe spaces for Muslim German youth. Thereafter, I will present one of the most relevant findings of my interviews: The threat of the *Verfassungsschutz*.

Limited options for Muslim German children

Sanae's story about how she was not allowed to join the Catholic DPSG suggests that there used to be a clear lack of opportunities and free-time activities for German Muslim children, both in scouting and in Germany as a whole. Muslim German children often have Muslim parents who may react just as Sanae's father. In the south of Germany, the secular BdP is not very present. But even if it was, a safe space for Muslim children gains the trust of Muslim parents and offers the children a space in which they can learn that they are normal, even if they are not the majority in Germany. It is a space that shows the children that they are not alone, that they belong to Germany so much so that there is a scout organization that calls itself both German and Muslim.

As Abudi's attempt to include more children of immigrants from Muslim-majority countries in the BdP showed, the Muslim German children simply did not stay in the BdP, but they do stay in the BMPPD. This points to the BdP simply being structurally white/Christian and not as inclusive as it would like to be, even though it does not have the words Christian or Catholic in its name and defines itself as secular.

The Threat of the Verfassungsschutz

Many Germans react with surprise when they hear about the German Muslim scouts. The term "surprised" was used by every single interviewee to describe the reactions of people. "Some are completely deterred by the M in our name, there is this mistrust, because there are enough organizations under the *Verfassungsschutz*."[155] *Verfassungsschutz* describes the Office for the Protection of the Constitution which has the power to observe individuals and organization it deems suspicious. The data privacy of these individuals or organizations is then removed. Janin continues:

We always suffer from these prejudices a little bit, the M in our name, but there are also enough people saying, 'Oh cool, I didn't know that scout work is for Muslims, too, or I thought it was only Christian', they are usually very interested, how it fits together, that is always quite cool. [156]

So, one may wonder, why are the *Verfassungsschutz* and its actions at all relevant to this research project. When Abudi was first asked whether he wants to be a group leader in the Muslim cout organization, he was invited to an interview. There was another person interested in joining the BMPPD

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[153] Ibid: 156
[154] Ibid: 156
[155] Janin, 45:15
[156] Janin, 45:15

in Kassel. This other person was very conservative and was invited to an interview, too. After the interviews, the board of the BMPPD decided that they would be delighted to have Abudi join their organization. However, they rejected the more conservative applicant. This was not an either-or situation, and yet, they only chose Abudi. The reason for this, Janin explains, is because conservatives do not fit in with the BMPPD, which is at least partly due to the *Verfassungsschutz*. This also in part explains the problem of finding group leaders, due to this process adding another barrier and decreasing the pool of people available.

The BMPPD, without question, is a very liberal and progressive organization open to many different people. This is not only by chance but due to these interviews during which they filter the conservatives and do not let them join the organization. This is a process other scout organizations do not go through. For other scout organizations the *Verfassungsschutz* does not present a threat.

Janin tells me the story of the Muslim Youth Germany (Muslimische Jugend Deutschland, MJD). This organization is a youth organization that peaked in 2011. Then, one individual who was quite conservative joined the MJD and later came to be under surveillance by the *Verfassungsschutz*. As they were a member of the MJD, the entire organization was then watched by the *Verfassungsschutz*. This surveillance by the state ruined the organization as it cannot expect funding, support or even respect after being under surveillance, and as Janin explains it would ruin the BMPPD, too, at least for a decade. For this reason, the BMPPD cannot network with mosques and other Muslim organizations, as it would present a risk to the BMPPD if one of them would be watched by the *Verfassungsschutz*.[157] If one of their members would be under surveillance and they would continue working with the mosque they would come into contact liability: they all would be under general suspicion. Muslim organizations are in more trouble than any other organization when they are under surveillance, Janin explains, because the *Verfassungsschutz* fears Islamist terrorism ever since 2001. "As soon as we would get into that you could throw the BMPPD in a bin, then we would be history", she says.[158] As a consequence, the BMPPD must watch more closely than any other scout organization who they let into their midst because their existence could depend on it.

The *Verfassungsschutz* is an external reason for challenges and therefore differs from the others because the BMPPD could not change it even if they attempted to. This, therefore, is discrimination against Muslim Germans by the state. The fact is that more terrorists' attacks have been committed by right wing extremists than by Muslim extremists in 2020,[159] and yet the BMPPD and all other Muslim organizations are facing this threat of ruin through the observation by the *Verfassungsschutz*. This externally created problem is carried deep into the structures of the liberal and progressive BMPPD.

In chapter two I briefly discussed the example of the organization Milli Görüs which was under surveillance by the *Verfassungsschutz* in Germany in 2010. The author Yükleyen concluded that Germany discouraged Muslim participation in society by surveilling this organization.[160] In my research I learned that the *Verfassungsschutz* still observes Muslim organizations more closely than any other organizations according to Janin. This could show that the state still does not encourage Muslim participation in society in 2023.

6) What it means to be a Muslim German

Constructing an individual identity in an environment that often assumes one belongs to a homogenous group can create challenges and obstacles. German Muslims, as described by Gümüsay, are sometimes expected to explain the entire Muslim world to the white Germans who view them as

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[157] Janin 2, 56:00

[158] Janin 2, 59:00

[159] University of Maryland (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism). "Search Results: 1437 Incidents". *Global Terrorism Database*. 25th May 2023.
https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?expanded=no&search=Germany&ob=GTDID&od=desc&page=1&count=100#results-table

[160] Ahmet Yükleyen. *Localizing Islam in Europe: Turkish Islamic Communities in Germany and the Netherlands.* Religion and Politics. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press. 2011: 153

tokens or representatives of their faith. In my interview with Janin, I found that age can play a crucial role in the identity and sense of belonging of German Muslims. Janin told me about how earlier in her life she was not read as a German because she was Muslim, but it changed because she now views herself differently than she used to:

> As an adolescent, I thought that, because as an adolescent one is more likely to have identity crises, one asks who am I, where am I from, what is the sense of life, and by now I am more consolidated in what I am, who I am, and that I can show this to the outside world and that is not a problem. Depending on what vibe one gives out, it is reflected by the world.[161]

Another reason is that prejudices are generational. The older the contemplator, the more difficult it is in Janin's experience. She thinks that her parents and grandparents who were guest workers had more difficulties than her. Inside, being Muslim and being German are no opposites, but on the outside, it sometimes feels like it, Janin explains.

As explained in chapter two, identities, homes, and senses of belonging change throughout a lifetime. Identity crises certainly can be intertwined with age. In Janin's case, as an adolescent, she felt more insecure. In her experience the expectations she emits changes how people treat her, and whether they consider her to be German. Moreover, the older generations tend to view her as a foreigner not belonging to Germany more than the younger generations. This could be a sign of a more diverse and changing mindset within the German society. Omar, Abudi, and Janin all emphasize that "it gets better". While this could be true, they may also change the manner of dealing with discrimination, or cope with it by stating that the general sentiments towards Islam change. Other studies should investigate this in the future.

Yet, this possibly changing society in Germany cannot compensate for the lack of safe spaces to pray and practice Islam in Janin's life. In public such safe spaces are slim. In her university there used to be such a space, but in malls and other places, they do not exist. This room at her university, the room of silence, was where everyone could go and enjoy the silence, pray, meditate, or do yoga exercises. This is what Janin would want in public, too. Sanae described what the lack of safe spaces looks like in her life as her colleagues ask questions about Ramadan or call her a foreigner even though she has lived in Germany her entire life. Society at large does not seem to signal to the participants of this study that they and their needs are welcome. Sanae receives comments in school or at work, but she thinks that people are curious.[162] She recalls many positive and friendly encounters and says that she was just lucky and did not experience a lot of discrimination. When she answered the people's questions, they usually accepted her. But Sanae also tells me about one of her colleagues. She works as a paramedic and her colleague refused treatment of a patient who did not speak German fluently. Afterwards, she turned to Sanae and said that she knows that she was a foreigner, too, but at least Sanae would speak German. Yet, Sanae was born in Germany and has always had German citizenship.[163] She reported this incident but emphasizes that she did so for the patient's sake, mostly.

The German environment creates challenges for the Muslim faith. Nonetheless, all participants seem to emphasize that they are lucky, that they do not face that much discrimination, and that others (friends, family, older generations) are facing worse. This could be a coping mechanism, too, as all of them have some stories to tell after first establishing that they rarely face discrimination. It may, again, also be an attempt to protect my feelings as I am a white German, a representative of the category that typically discriminates.

Omar calls himself lucky as he feels that he encountered fewer instances of discrimination than others. In the beginning, it was hard for him because he did not speak German. But he was not shy, he tells me, he wanted to talk, and so he quickly learned the language. Nonetheless, he often heard of

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[161] Janin, 14:00
[162] Sanae, 38:18
[163] Sanae, 19:40

other Muslims in Germany encountering problems. A friend of his was attacked on the street. He did not call the police but just fled with his wife because he did not know what else to do.[164] Omar was often asked "Do you like it in Germany? Is it your new home?", and he wondered what the people wanted to hear. While he has developed a bond with Gießen, his family still is in Syria to this day. But when they ask him whether he wants to come back he does not think so even though he would like to see his family. His relationship with his home in Gießen is ambivalent.[165]

Abudi, who teaches seminars about racism in his free time, tells me that he has had bad experiences, yet he thinks it is much harder for women who are visibly Muslim, who wear the hijab. They are always visible, while Abudi can hide when he wants to pray. But Abudi, too, believes that it gets better because those who came to Germany in the so-called refugee wave, the men and women from Syria who came to Germany, "they are so smart, they bring so much capacity with them and they can change society", says Abudi. They are finished with studying and learning now and, he thinks, they will now be able to actively change society. They can be role models, and show society, children, and friends what a Muslim German is. This is what Abudi tries to do, he explains.[166] In the first section of this chapter I cited Abudi telling the story of how he became a scout. There, he described how it was assumed that all refugees were a homogenous group and how that had such a negative influence on his mental health. This, too, was an instance of homogenization and discrimination towards refugees and Muslims as a group. Homogenization and reductivity can cause an individual to lose motivation. This happened to Abudi when he first arrived in Germany. In search of an environment that views him as an individual, he then found the scouts. For him, the BdP was inclusive enough, more inclusive than the other encounters he had in the time when he did not speak German yet, but the BdP was not inclusive enough to offer a safe space for the Muslim children or children with a migration background. The scout organizations, therefore, may be more inclusive than the general society, the bureaucratic institutes and ministries in Germany, and the malls that do not offer a praying room, but are not as inclusive and safe as the BMPPD is for German Muslims. This is the simple answer as to why there is a need for the BMPPD and why the BdP, the VCP, and the DPSG are not sufficient, even though they are more tolerant and accepting than other parts of society.

Sanae, a very matter of fact, clear-headed young woman, shows emotions for the first time in our interview when she tells me about how she was asked her opinion on terror attacks:

> *Of course, it is self-evident that we all think terror is bullshit, so I do not understand why I, just because I look this way or just because I have a name such as mine, have to actively explain that I, too, find it bad and that I don't find it good that some idiot somewhere does something and then says it would be in the spirit of Islam. This is reprehensible and untrue.*[167]

German Muslims are confronted with many prejudices and asked to justify actions of others. According to Abudi, women wearing a hijab are hit even harder by racism and discrimination. (Social) media seem to intensify the discrimination. Janin's experience shows that discrimination is often issued by older generations. So, how are Muslim Germans supposed to feel at home in a country with such a hostile discourse? How do they build a sense of belonging? And which role does the BMPPD have in this sense of belonging? These questions will be turned to in the following section of this chapter.

7) Scouting and the Sense of Belonging

> *For me, [the BMPPD] is a family.*[168] – Janin

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[164] Omar, 13:50
[165] Omar, 38:55
[166] Abudi, 48:30
[167] Sanae: 46:00
[168] Janin, 14:30

In the BMPPD, all the participants in this study found some sort of meaning. What the organization means to the different interviewees and how and why it has meaning will be explored in this section. Janin describes that in society she often feels neither here nor there. When she is in Lebanon she feels like the German, in Germany, she is generally viewed as the Lebanese or the Muslim or both.[169] The message of the BMPPD, according to Janin, is:

> *Hey, you can be anything, Muslim, and Moroccan, and Lebanese, Afghan, Turkish, it does*
> *not matter, because you are the way you are, and it is combinable.[170]*

Children, she says, should know their rights and should learn to have an opinion. To Janin personally, the BMPPD resembles stability, friendship, fun, pride, learning by doing, and good values.[171] It feels good, she elaborates, to be active for society and her religion at the same time. She understands the BMPPD to be a good counterpart to parents and mosques where children learn how to be religious and about what is haram and what is halal. In the BMPPD, children can simply enjoy Islam during a free time activity. Islam offers opportunities and so many things are halal: that is what the BMPPD wants to emphasize.[172] The BMPPD, she says, celebrates the diversity of Islam.

Janin believes that scouting in general strengthens in an identity crisis, as an adolescent, in the search for like-minded people.[173] She understands the BMPPD as a second home where problems can be addressed which sometimes cannot be addressed with parents. Simply being at a place where many others are like you, gives one strength in one's thoughts, in one's being, Janin says. And at the same time the BMPPD can open insights into other cultures and other branches of Islam.[174]

Abudi feels discrimination in the university, on the bus, in the supermarket.

> *One feels their weird looks, or they treat me differently, because they think I am different.*
> *At the scouts I never had this feeling. There I am a scout, just a scout. Others look at me*
> *and say 'hey, look, it is Abudi', that was always nice.[175]*

Through his work with the BMPPD, Abudi wants to change the society in Kassel.[176] To Abudi, scouting belongs to his life forever now and he will send his children to the scouts, too. When I ask him what scouting means to him nowadays, he tells me the following story:

> *When I was little, I had many friends and we watched football, you know? Playing*
> *football, doing sports… That is not my thing, I hated it, but I did not know what my thing*
> *was, I sat, and I watched football because everyone watched it. They played cards, I*
> *played with them. I did not find it cool, but I also do not want to stay home, you know?*
> *And I did not know what my thing is… And then I was at the scout camp, at the first*
> *camp, the first camp where I was, and wow I found my group, I found my people, yes, I*
> *had so many friends, really, I perfectly remember this moment and that I have not been*
> *this happy for eternities.[177]*

This was when Abudi first joined the BdP. The children, he says, did not care that his German was not perfect yet. He then attended his first singing circle at the scouts, he learned how to play guitar and now he can sing his own songs. When he is at the scouts, he does not feel that he is different anymore because he has always been treated the same:

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[169] Janin, 05:45
[170] Janin, 06:30
[171] Janin 2, 14:30
[172] Janin 2 00:00
[173] Janin 2, 39:10
[174] Janin, 42:10
[175] Abudi, 48:30
[176] Abudi, 53:50
[177] Abudi, 25:30

> *This is how I fell in love with the scouts. Everyone there says, 'You are one of us, no matter what your skin color or religion is.' I never felt a disadvantage there or that I was different.[178]*

Omar has a different story. He was a scout in Syria and was glad to find the scouts in Germany, again:

> *It was surprising to me because as I said I was new in Germany, and I did not speak German that well […] and it motivated me to continue.[179]*

Scouting is one of his hobbies, his first-ever hobby. It means fun and being in nature to Omar. Scouts help each other, he says.[180] Omar tells his story of how he became a scout in Germany, too:

> *During my flight from Syria, I never thought I could continue with this hobby. But then there was the BMPPD in Gießen. I decided to be a Muslim scout because I am a Muslim and I want to support the Muslim community in Gießen. […].[181]*

Omar's continuation of his hobby may be a coping strategy for having to seek refuge in a foreign country. Omar's freedom of mobility is restricted as he does not have a German passport as opposed to all other participants. Duyvendak mentioned borders and mobility as a possibly determining factor of belonging.[182] Within the German nation state, all participants including Omar can move freely without consequences, but outside of it, Omar's freedom of movement is limited. This is likely to complicate his establishment of a sense of belonging.

In Germany, public discourse rarely allows Muslim Germans to simply enjoy and explain the positive sides of Islam. The diversity of Islam celebrated in the BMPPD, as Janin phrased it, contributes to the safe space in the organization. The BMPPD offers the volunteers to be active in German society in a Muslim context, a rare opportunity in a Christian-majority country such as Germany. The safe space that the BMPPD came to be changes the sense of belonging the Muslim German members can develop. In a society that so often presents them with hostility and mistrust, such a safe space is needed to acquire a sense of belonging. Janin even calls the BMPPD a second family, a second home, that allows members to be in the context where "others are like you". This phrasing alone shows that Janin feels that sometimes she is "unlike" the German majority. In the BMPPD, she is "like" the majority.

Abudi, too, feels that scouts will belong to him and he to the scouts for the rest of his life. The welcome he received at the scouts and the open-mindedness meant and means a great deal to him. He found his people and he was able to leave his feeling of depression behind and be active in German society through the scouts. To Omar, too, the scouts enabled him to continue with his hobby that he had back in Syria. They gave him opportunities to support the Muslim community in Germany and the scouts. They gave him a hobby in a strange country with a foreign language. Duyvendak calls these actions the BMPPD facilitates "practices of belonging".[183]

In sum, the participants of this study generate a sense of belonging through the Muslim German Scout organization because the BMPPD offers a safe space for many German Muslims who can feel united, understood, and normal at the events of the organization.

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[178] Abudi, 48:30
[179] Omar, 03:34
[180] Omar, 05:35
[181] Omar, 07:55
[182] SPUI 25, "Mapping Belonging as a Study: NIAS Talk", Minute 19:44.
[183] SPUI 25, "Mapping Belonging as a Study: NIAS Talk", Minute 19:44.

Conclusion: Interview Findings

In my research, I found out that the four members of the BMPPD I interviewed are all very active and engaged in society in general. Education, democracy, and equality are values they not only support at the scouts but also in other parts of their lives. The BMPPD is a liberal, progressive Muslim youth organization, but while it focuses mainly on Muslim German children, everybody is welcome at their events and their activities. The idea for such an organization has existed for over 30 years, but only in 2010 the BMPPD became a reality.

The participants of this study share the ambition to be viewed as normal and belonging in Germany. Their existence as German Muslims, ideally, should be a self-evident part of Germany. Such self-evidence is hindered by the (social) media in Germany and the public discourse these media sustain. The *Verfassungsschutz*, too, impedes the carefree life of the BMPPD as it targets specifically Muslim organizations, according to Janin. The BMPPD, therefore, is forced to be careful regarding the political aims and intentions of their volunteers. In the future, all participants hope for the BMPPD to become bigger, and to even become an example to German society of how peaceful, beautiful, and diverse Islam can be. Different interviewees share the idea of becoming an idol, an image, a representative of what Muslim life in Germany could look like. Moreover, I found that the network of the BMPPD mainly consists of events with the DPSG, the Catholic scout organization. Since their very early days, the DPSG has helped the BMPPD.

To make sense of their identity as Muslim Germans, the participants all went through different processes as described in section six. All participants view themselves as people who have not encountered a lot of discrimination, yet all of them encounter problems in daily life such as finding no spaces to pray in public or being asked uncomfortable questions by colleagues.

All interviewees have a special connection to scouting. It certainly does play a role in their sense of belonging and their feeling of home. In this chapter, I introduced the members of the BMPPD, the BMPPD itself, the events in the BMPPD, its network, the struggle with the *Verfassungsschutz* and the Muslim youth organizations, and the conflict German Muslims face in Germany.

The analysis through the four categories suggested by Jan Willem Duyvendak has shown that the participants of this study established a sense of belonging as German Muslims in Germany by creating a safe space in the Muslim German Scout organization. The BMPPD offers Muslim Germans a space to feel normal in an otherwise discriminating environment. At the same time the BMPPD itself differentiates between Muslim scouts and scouts in general. This self-chosen exclusiveness may be necessary, however, in creating a safe space for young Muslims in Germany.

In chapter two, I cited Piet Strunk defining scouts as "children of their time and they arrange their personal life and the life of the group according to the current circumstances"[184]. The BMPPD, certainly, is an organization of its time. Having been founded in 2010 and having grown massively over the last 13 years, now is the time for many young people in the Muslim community, men and women, to change society, just as Abudi says.[185] The BMPPD is a product of the current circumstances and exclusions and therefore fits perfectly in Strunk's definition of the scouts. It is also very common in the German history of scouting that in time, the RdP changes, the German scouts change, and a new organization that defines itself to a certain degree through its religion has joined the German scouts. So, has the Muslim German Scout organization factually acquired the status of a different *Konfession* in the Ring of Scouts? It certainly has acquired equality with the DPSG, the VCP, and the BdP in the RdP. In scouting, Muslim Germans have been acknowledged to belong to Germany and the scouts in Germany. This cannot be said for German culture, generally, but the acquisition of this status within a German subculture that has existed for over 100 years is certainly a step towards such an acknowledgement. Yet, it must also be acknowledged that within the subculture of the scouts, those

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[184] Piet Strunk. *Die Pfadfinder in Deutschland: 1909-2009*. Neckenmarkt: Novum pro. 2011: 11
[185] Abudi, 48:30

identifying as Muslim, and those with a migration background still are othered and in need of a safe space.

Members of the German Muslim Scout organization make sense of Muslim German identity by creating spaces for themselves and others like them. As others influence our sense of belonging, it is natural that social interaction with people just like oneself (other Muslim German) can strengthen confidence and a sense of belonging. The creation of such a sense of belonging in an environment where public discourses present "Germanness" and Islam as mutually exclusive is possible due to the existence of safe spaces and exchange among those who are othered.

Changing Public Discourse and Public Discourse Changing us

Introduction

Media are powerful tools to create, contradict, or support a public discourse. In 1998, Margaret Morse wrote that:

> *While discourse as conversation and even public speech is usually characterized by the reversibility of "I" and "you," discourse simulated on television is presented as if it were direct and permeable, when it is actually one-way and irreversible. Or rather, it just seems that way. Depending on the extremity of the circumstances, the tables will turn— subject becomes object—and the valence of power and fame can shift from plus to minus in a matter of seconds. The electronic spectacle that makes or breaks celebrity is equally capable of sanctioning or undermining the dictatorial power of a Marcos or Ceausescu in a matter of hours. Extreme situations also highlight the potential for twists and reversals in what can never be a simple or straightforward speech-act.* [186]

What was then true for television is still true for the media but, as Rambe and Madichie point out, the media format has changed and is more accommodating to the consumer. The podcasts Janin participated in are accessible to everybody on the platform Spotify, they can be listened to anytime at any place. Public discourse can be changed through media presence, as Morse explains, and by participating in podcasts and by making them publicly accessible, Janin and others may change this discourse. The fact that there is a platform, a consideration of her and the BMPPD in public media shows that the Islam and Janin as a Muslim German are not overlooked.

Yet, there is more than the power of changing discourse: Media can create fictions, too. Schatz and Amber explain in their book on media representations regarding the errors of what they call fictional disability, i.e., the representation of disabled people in the media.[187] Those with disabilities are victimized or presented as evil.[188] Interestingly, a similar discourse exists when talking about the Muslim or the refugee in German media. Either they are presented as victims, helpless individuals that can only be saved by the white German prosperity, or they are presented as a threat.[189] One way of counteracting this fiction could be through participation and representation of Muslims and refugees in the media.

In this chapter, I will analyze Janin's media presence in three different podcasts and compare her representation of the BMPPD in the different podcasts and in my interview. Analyzing podcasts targeting a broader audience adds another angle to this research project and allows me to pose and answer different questions related to the research question. Janin's portrayal of the BMPPD to different audiences illustrates the dynamics between the majority society and her as a member of a marginalized group. The perspective this analysis adds is elaborated on in the following section.

Podcasts, according to Rambe and Madichie who analyzed South African campus radios in the course of their research, are "audio files that can be downloaded onto a desktop computer, iPod or other portable media devices for playback".[190] The listener is in control of when the medium can be consumed and no geographical and temporal factors restrain the listener.[191] The broadcaster, Janin and the podcast hosts, take on different roles dependent on the target audience. In *Rating the Audience*, authors Balnaves, O'Regan and Goldsmith write about the role of the target audience in creating

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[186] Margaret Morse. *Virtualities: Television, Media Art, and Cyberculture*. 1998: 48

[187] JL Schatz and George E. Amber. *The Image of Disability: Essays on Media Representations*. 2018: 34

[188] Ibid: 34

[189] Tim Heinkelmann, Daniel Beck, and Alexander Spencer. "Heroes Welcome: An Exceptional Story of 'Good' Refugees in the German Tabloid Discourse." 2019: 220

[190] Patient Rambe, Nnamdie O. Madichie. "Sustainable Broadcasting in Africa: Insights From Two South African Campus Radio Stations." 2020: 194

[191] Ibid: 194

advertisements. Their observations can, however, be applied to the creation of any media content as an audience does not only respond to advertisements but to media contents in general:

> *The audience, however, remains one of the most important, if not the most important, player in the audience measurement. Its consent is still sought and needs to be sought. Its reactions to how it is represented are still important in decisions made about them. There have been several trends that are affecting the position that audience consent has in the audience-ratings convention.*[192]

This audience's consent is sought in any podcast. Janin and the podcast hosts, consequentially, seek the approval. The decisions they make in creating contents reveal what they expect to be the audience's views, feelings, and assumed expectations.

The Podcast Angle: Research Questions and Chapter Relevance

The podcasts I am analyzing in this chapter are the following:

- *Und, Du so?* "Janin Bassal – Bund Muslimische Pfadfinder*innen", November 2020 (Abbreviation: *UDS*)
- *Wovon träumst du eigentlich nachts?* "Folge 5: Muslimische Pfadfinder*innen", April 2021 (Abbreviation *WTDN*)
- *Primamuslima* "#06 Janin – Der grüne Islam", August 2021 (Abbreviation: *PM*)

The first podcast *UDS* is hosted by a male non-Muslim host. It is funded and published by a youth organization in Mainz, a city in Southern Germany. *WTDEN* is a podcast by ufuq.de, an organization for the study of migration. It is hosted by two non-Muslim female hosts. Lastly, *PM* is a podcast by the Bavarian radio with a female Muslim host. It may be interesting to compare the podcasts and my interview with Janin (conducted in 2023) as her answers may have changed and her discourses may have developed over the years, too. Time, audience, and setting have been different for each of these podcasts and my interview. Janin has already had a lot of experience with interviews when I interviewed her for this research project. Her answers in the first podcasts she co-hosted may reveal new and different information. Additionally, Janin's participation in these podcasts makes an example of interaction between the individual (Janin) and the community (on the one hand the Muslim German community, on the other hand the non-Muslim German society). This relationship between community and individual is, according to Duyvendak in the NIAS conference, one dimension of belonging.[193]

To understand how Janin participates in public discourse about German Muslims on these three podcasts, I analyzed the three podcasts *UDS*, *WTDEN* and *PM*. The latter is somewhat different as it is a podcast by a Muslim German woman who is already participating in public media discourse through her podcast. *PM* offers specifically interesting opportunities for a comparison to both *UDS* and *WTDEN,* as well as my own interview with Janin. I want to answer the following question to contribute to my overarching research question: How does Janin represent the BMPPD to differing audiences, and how does Janin change the image she creates according to different target audiences?

This question can contribute to this project exploring German Muslim scout's sense of belonging in Germany. Janin is a German Muslim scout creating her own discourse in the media. Al-Ajarma and Buitelaar write that members of marginalized groups who encounter exclusion can articulate specific narratives about their groups on social media[194]. In this case, Janin articulates these narratives in the three podcasts. The three main identity markers in the name of the BMPPD are "scout", "Muslim", and "German". Therefore, the following subquestions, which will be addressed in the analysis, are structured around these three labels the organization gave itself.

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[192] Mark Balnaves, Tom O'Regan, and Ben Goldsmith. "The Audience." 2011: 215

[193] SPUI 25, "Mapping Belonging as a Study: NIAS Talk", Minute 19:44.

[194] Khouloud Al-Ajarma, Marjo Buitelaar. 'Social Media Representations of the Pilgrimage to Mecca. Challenging Moroccan and Dutch Mainstream Media Frames.' 2021.

a) How is the "scout" ("Pfadfinderinnen und Pfadfinder") label represented in the podcasts? What does that mean?

b) How is the "Muslim" ("Muslimische") label represented in the podcasts? What does that mean?

c) How is the "German" ("Deutschlands") label represented in the podcasts? What does that mean?

d) How do the questions addressed by the podcasters differ? Does the Muslim German podcaster ask different questions than the other two white German podcasters?

e) How do Janin's responses differ to those she gave me in our interview for this research project? What does that mean? How do my findings compare? What is the difference and why and what does that mean?

Analysis: How Janin represents herself and the BMPPD in different Podcasts

Scout work – you can talk about it a lot, but you can feel it only when you experience it.[195]

In the following three subsections I will analyze how Janin discusses the Muslim, the German, and the scout identity in each podcast. I paid particular attention to Janin's reactions to the different podcast hosts. I determined whether and how her stories depend on her target audience. Moreover, I compared the presentation of the BMPPD in the three podcasts to my own findings, especially those based on my interview with Janin.

a) "Scout" as an Identity Marker

Janin is asked to explain the scouts in general in each podcast. She explains the different tasks for different age groups within the scout organizations, beginning at the age of seven, and describes what a camp is like. The podcast *UDS* is created by the *Stadtjugendring Mainz* (a local youth organization of the city Mainz) and is particularly interested in the ten children who became members in Mainz. *UDS* was recorded in November 2020. In this podcast, the host asks Janin whether they are the "muslimische Pfadfinder". Afterward, Janin corrects him, emphasizing that they are called "Pfadfinderinnen und Pfadfinder" (emphasizing that their name includes female scouts). Janin seems to be proud that the BMPPD is inclusive and mentions both female and male members in their name.

In UDS, a podcast with a male non-Muslim host, Janin emphasizes the similarities between scouts and Muslims, underlining that the BMPPD is a democratic youth organization, that it is fighting for peace and the reduction of prejudices. The host then asks about the gender roles and task divisions between genders in the BMPPD. Before Janin answers, he expresses his assumption that there would likely be few women in leadership positions since they would usually only work with the children. Janin, a female member of the BMPPD's board, responds:

In our board, there are two women, just the two of us.[196]

To this, the host responds that this is "almost progressive" in surprise.[197] The host did not expect female board members, but Janin does not react to his surprise. Whether the host's surprise is connected to the BMPPD being a Muslim or a scout organization cannot be determined in this work. What can be observed, however, is Janin's emphasis of women in leadership positions in the BMPPD, and her stoic choice to ignore the surprise in the host's voice. She presents the BMPPD as progressive and empowering for Muslim German women, conveying to the target audience that women are equals and in leadership positions in the BMPPD.

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[195] Und, du so? „Janin Bassal – Bund Muslimische Pfadfinder*innen" 2020: Minute 11:00
[196] Ibid: Minute 33:25
[197] Ibid: Minute 34:00

In *WTDEN*, hosted by two women, Janin explains that the BMPPD offers entertainment to Muslim German children through a collectively shared feeling of community. Again, Janin emphasizes that they are quite strict about not letting boys and girls sleep in the same tent as she did in my interview with her.[198] This introduces the topic of gender differences in this podcast, too. Janin's representation of the BMPPD differs in the podcasts *WTDEN* and *UDS.* In *WTDEN*, the hosts signal understanding, causing Janin to explain why a safe Muslim environment for girls in the BMPPD is necessary:

> *That's always a topic among us Muslims, that girls, unfortunately, are sometimes not*
> *allowed to go on school trips or similar activities. Nowadays, it may not be as strict as it*
> *was 10 or 20 years ago, but the issue still exists.[199]*

This is something we have touched upon in the interviews for this research, too, when participants indicated that the trust of Muslim German parents must be gained to offer scouting events to Muslim German children. Janin explains this, too, in the podcast *WTDEN*. It is likely that the understanding expressed by the female hosts of *WTDEN* encouraged Janin to openly discuss the topic. She continues to explain the lack of free time activities she has also mentioned in the research interview:

> *The offerings in terms of Muslim-specific activities are currently a bit limited.*
> *Additionally, when it comes to nature, many children spend their time in front of screens,*
> *playing video games all day, and hardly venture outside. Their parents often wish for*
> *them to go out and engage in outdoor activities, and they find that opportunity with*
> *us.[200]*

Janin discusses the gender separation and the topic of a gender difference in the BMPPD more openly on *WTDEN* than on *UDS*. This may be caused by the hosts' phrasing of the questions, their responses, and/or their genders. In *PM*, the topic focuses on Islam more than on scouting. Analytical comments on *PM* follow shortly.

b)   "Muslim" as an Identity Marker

In the podcast *UDS*, the host asks Janin whether the work of Muslim scouts is different from that of Catholic or Protestant scouts. Janin responds:

> *We are called Muslim scouts, but I would say that 90 % of our work is identical [to other*
> *organizations]. We go on camps just like any other scouts, we have group meetings just*
> *like them. What sets us apart are, of course, the prayers. We try to establish our five*
> *Islamic prayers during the camping trips. Also, our rituals are a bit different. They are*
> *based on the Quran and the actions of Prophet Muhammad.[201]*

This description is congruent with what I found in my interviews. Janin openly discusses Islam and faith in front of the host, who asks again how religion comes into play when sitting at a campfire. Janin responds confidently and in depth:

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[198] Ibid: Minute 08:57
[199] Ufuq.de. "Folge 5: Muslimische Pfadfinder*innen" 2021: Minute 10:00
[200] Ibid: Minute 12:30
[201] Und, du so? „Janin Bassal – Bund Muslimische Pfadfinder*innen" 2020: Minute 02:23

So, during our group meetings, it may not be explicitly evident that we are Muslim scouts, but there are some important aspects. We always start with a recitation from the Quran, and we always end a meeting with it as well. During these meetings, we can also address Islamic topics, such as the Ramadan month, which is our fasting month. We can use that as a great theme and even create a Ramadan calendar, similar to an Advent calendar. However, it is more pronounced during camps where we have a designated prayer tent and announce the prayer times for everyone to come voluntarily. We don't force anyone; it's all optional. In terms of games, it can also have an impact. We sometimes incorporate role-playing activities related to specific prophets. But as I mentioned earlier, the Islamic aspect is not the central focus. It's also about upholding certain principles, like abstaining from alcohol or having separate sleeping arrangements for boys and girls in the tents. These are some of the things that distinguish us, more or less. Like any other scouts, we also strive to promote justice, engage in youth politics, and instill these values in the children during our group meetings. It's about taking responsibility and taking action, which is crucial. In the current generation, these values are increasingly being lost, and we want to empower the children and remind them that they are part of this society. Even if they have a migration background, they are still German, and if they want to belong to this society, they need to contribute to it.[202]

Emphasizing political engagement and peaceful aims, justice, and contributions to society is similar to what Janin told me. Again, she seems to feel the need to prove that Muslims can be peaceful and that they can be democratic, i.e., she seems to expect that interviewers think this unlikely. Janin accentuates that no children are forced to say their prayers. Above, I cited Heinkelmann explaining how refugees are often represented as victim or as evil. Janin may fear that to fit the BMPPD in such a dominant narrative, children could be viewed as the victims of a suppressive religion. By emphasizing that no children are forced to participate, she prevents this possible attempt. She emphasizes this absence of force in the podcasts as well as the interview for this research project. It is, therefore, likely that Janin's supposed fear of the victim-suppressor narrative is part of every conversation she has with a representative of the category of discriminators (white Germans). The hosts of *UDS*, *WTDEN*, and I as a researcher all represent this category.

Another excerpt of the podcast shows Janin's explanation as to why the BMPPD supports the annual Catholic and Protestant Church Days. The host of the podcast *UDS* asks Janin why the BMPPD as a Muslim organization is involved in these Church Days and she responds:

We are in close exchange and communication. In the Ring of German scouts, we meet at least twice a year. There are also projects organized by the RdP in which all organizations participate. One example is the Peace Light project, where a light from Bethlehem is brought to Austria, and many scouts from Germany travel to Austria to bring the light back to Germany. It is then distributed everywhere. We also participate as helpers at the Protestant Church Day and the Catholic Church Day, although our presence is not as strong at the Catholic Church Day. Next year, there will be an ecumenical Church Day in Frankfurt, and we will also lend our support there. Why? Because we are scouts and we support each other.[203]

This interreligious exchange is important in the BMPPD, she explains. In my interview with her she did not emphasize this to such a degree and neither did she in *PM*, the podcast with a female Muslim host. Yet, Janin did told me about the similarities of Muslim and Christian values, emphasizing that it feels unnecessary to differentiate between these. For the Christian-majority culture in Germany, it seems hard to grasp that Islam and Christianity share many perspectives and values. This surprise at

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[202] Ibid: Minute 06:10
[203] Ibid: Minute 14:00

the similarities may be rooted in dominant discourse about Islam as a suppressive religion. The question by the host of *UDS* expresses the wonder and surprise in German society when Muslim scouts participate in Church Days. This constant assumption that Islam and Christianity are unlike one another may also contribute to the participant's repeated emphasis that the BMPPD is normal, not extraordinary, and similar to other scout organizations in my other interviews.

In none of the podcasts did Janin mention the surveillance by the *Verfassungsschutz* we discussed in depth in our interview. Even when she was asked by the host of *UDS* what the prerequisites for group leaders in the BMPPD are, she said:

> *Actually, there are no specific requirements for us except for enthusiasm, endurance, and strength [in terms of motivation]. You just need to set aside one week for the leadership training.*[204]

Clearly, the information about the *Verfassungsschutz* is not supposed to be published in public media. The purpose of these podcasts seems to be gaining publicity, attracting new members (both participants and volunteers), and changing the public discourse on Muslims in Germany. But revealing the danger a state institution presents to the BMPPD may also cause trouble, negative press, and may even endanger the BMPPD's reputation. The organization could be portrayed as worthy of investigation. Being associated with the *Verfassungsschutz* in the media is not desirable as it challenges the BMPPD's credibility. The German majority may not understand this struggle with the *Verfassungsschutz* without context and may be more inclined to side with the official state institution. These factors are likely to contribute to Janin's decision not to mention the restrictions of the BMPPD.

In the podcast *WTDEN* the two female hosts ask Janin, too, how Islam and scouts work together. Sympathetically, Janin answers:

> *Well, first of all, I can assure you that these stereotypes exist all over the world. In fact, it's true even in America, where the scouts are known for selling cookies. But scouting is much more than that. And I agree with you. At first, I was also puzzled by the idea of Muslim scouts and how it all fits together. However, it actually works very well because there are numerous parallels between scouting and Islam. It starts with the scout laws and principles. Let me mention three of them. First, there is the responsibility towards oneself, others, and God. This can be wonderfully aligned with Islam. We are encouraged to take care of ourselves while also looking out for others, all the while serving and remaining loyal to God. We strive to live by these principles. On the other hand, there is the aspect of nature. As Muslims, if we believe that God is the creator and has created everything, it naturally follows that we should love and respect His creation. Our Prophet also lived a simple life in Medina and Mecca, even in the desert with very few possessions. It may be hard to fully imagine, but we aim to convey this lifestyle to children as well. During our camping trips, we minimize the use of technology, electricity, and water, emphasizing a more nature-oriented experience.*

She explains how Islam and scouts fit together for her and how she learned about it. Her reaction in *WTDEN* differs from the one in *UDS*. In the former, Janin expresses understanding for the hosts' stereotypes about scouts as one host expresses her insecurity about the correctness of these stereotypes herself and then explains why her faith fits in with scouting; in *UDS* Janin emphasizes why Islam is not the focus of the work in the BMPPD and that nobody is forced to participate. The phrasing of the hosts and the expressed self-awareness of their privileges (hosts *WTDEN*) are likely to change Janin's responses.

In the podcast *PM* a Muslim hijabi German woman interviews Muslims about their lives and views on society. She, too, asks Janin how Islam and scouting fits together. Janin explains the similarities between all scout organizations as she did in *WTDEN* I noticed that instead of saying "we

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[204] Ibid: Minute 16:43

want to be true to God", to this Muslim host Janin speaks about her love to God. The word choice here may be a more comfortable one than in the podcast recorded with two non-Muslim women as there is no/less need to explain to a fellow Muslim woman what her faith means to her. She can speak from a shared perspective.

Interestingly, Janin explicitly targets Muslim audiences when she appeals that love for nature can be a part of Islam in this podcast, while in the other podcasts she mainly targeted members of the white non-Muslim audiences. The targeting of non-Muslim audiences shows, for instance, in explaining what a Sura is. In *PM*, however, she appeals that other Muslims should remember, how important nature is in their faith and that being outside, and camping is very much in the sense of the Muslim religion in her opinion. Of course, she never appeals to Muslims or non-Muslims exclusively, but based on her word choice it can be assumed that she targets different majority audiences. After this appeal, the host asks Janin whether there is any political headwind in the Muslim community towards the BMPPD. Her response:

> *None.*[205]

This is interesting as in my interviews I have learned from Janin that some more conservative Muslims do not approve of the BMPPD. When appealing to a Muslim German audience she may not want to offend any members of the Muslim community and, therefore, refrain from discussing this disapproval.

The host of *PM* shows surprise that faith – while part of the BMPPD – is not the main focus. Janin responds:

> *It does play a role. The founder of scouting, Robert Baden-Powell, was a believer, himself, and incorporated that belief into his scouting principles. He stated that a scout should be religious, but the crucial point is that he did not specify a particular religion. He emphasized the importance of faith. His theory and the idea of scouting were so revolutionary at the time that they resonated worldwide and spread rapidly. As you mentioned, it doesn't matter what one believes in; even people who are not particularly religious, they can find their faith in nature.*

To Janin, Baden-Powell's aim was not for all scouts to be Christian. Feeling the spirit in the forest, she says, is enough to be a good scout. The liberal views on religiosity are touched upon in all the podcasts and my interview with Janin.

c) "German" as an Identity Marker

Janin likes to emphasize the shared German identity of the BMPPD rather than their migration backgrounds, showing the diversity and inclusivity of the BMPPD. In *UDS,* the host asked Janin whether most children in the BMPPD have a migration background:

> *I always struggle with the term 'migration background.' Of course, most of the children have parents from other countries. We have many from Morocco, but also from Afghanistan. Personally, my parents are from Lebanon. We also have some Turks among us, so there are Germans with Turkish migration backgrounds as well.*[206]

In *WTDEN*, she focuses on their shared language rather than their differences:

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[205] Primamuslima. "#06 Janin – Der grüne Islam" 2021: Minute 20:00
[206] Und, du so? "Janin Bassal – Bund Muslimische Pfadfinder*innen" 2020: Minute 08:00

> *German is indeed the language that connects us all. We have the 'D' in our association's name for a reason, so that all children, regardless of their migration background, can feel comfortable. We emphasize that while we are all Muslims, it doesn't matter what background you come from. We use German as the language of communication to ensure that no one feels excluded.[207]*

German as a lingua franca was mentioned by Omar, too. The BMPPD provides a safe space for all nationalities, all backgrounds, all German Muslims. In *PM*, she explains why safe spaces are even important for the Muslim German scouts:

> *I always like to promote all scouting associations. To me, it doesn't really matter where one becomes a scout; the main thing is to become a scout. However, in Germany, the historical context has contributed to the existence of Catholic scouts, Protestant scouts, and even interkonfessionelle scouts. Sometimes people prefer to stay within their own bubble or peer groups, where they can identify more closely with the values and ideals. In our organization, we have certain rules such as no consumption of pork, no alcohol, separate sleeping arrangements for girls and boys, and we have our prayer tent. However, these elements are voluntary, of course. These specific Islamic aspects make it easier for parents to trust and prefer sending their children to our organization compared to Catholic or Protestant scouts.[208]*

This explanation of identifying with the same values and ideas is part of why the BMPPD offers what the BdP, VCP, or DPSG cannot: a place to be normal as a Muslim German. This detailed explanation was only put forth in *PM*, hosted by a Muslim woman targeting a Muslim audience. Janin further expands on this when asked what she wants for her own child as a mother of a Muslim German daughter with Lebanese roots and whether her motherhood was the reason for her to start scouting:

> *Well, I started with the scouts before becoming a mother because I believe in the goodness of people and I want children and young people, especially from the Muslim community, to be more engaged in society or feel more accepted here in Germany. That was one of my motivations. Children and young people are our future, and every generation can say the same. And, of course, I want to instill in my daughter the understanding that she is a part of this society. She can be Muslim, German, and have a migration background, and all these aspects can coexist. She doesn't have to hide any part of her identity. She doesn't have to hide being Muslim, being German, or in my case, being of Lebanese descent. It doesn't matter. But I also want her to be aware of her role in the present, to take responsibility for climate protection, nature, and understand that her actions have consequences, whether on nature, on her fellow human beings, or on God. I want her to act consciously, and the best way to do that is by setting an example. For example, I pray five times a day, and she's two years old. Sometimes she comes and gives me a scarf to wrap around my head because she wants to imitate me. And then she stands there for a few seconds and then runs off. Sometimes she jumps on my back, sometimes she crawls around. It's all beautiful. It's important to live it and set an example without any force. That's the most important thing for me, and it's the same in scouting. The children can participate. We have prayer tents where they can come in and pray. If they don't want to, they can continue playing, no problem. That's how we can convey it. When you truly love something and live it authentically, the people around you sense it. They understand it and either want to experience it themselves or leave it be.*

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[207] Primamuslima. "#06 Janin – Der grüne Islam" 2021: Minute 15:35
[208] Ibid: Minute 11:59

Germanness, to Janin, does not depend on different migration backgrounds. The label "migration background" likely feels like being put in a cage (as described by Gümüsay in an earlier chapter), being prejudged, and being robbed of individuality. Janin attempts to convey in the context of the podcasts that being German, a scout, and a Muslim is not mutually exclusive. She participates in public media where she meets the assumption of such an exclusivity not only with white German hosts. The positionality of the hosts considerably influenced her responses. The existence of a BMPPD, for now, still seems to be considered out of the ordinary in the media discourse.

Taking Stock

Addressing more than one Target Audience

Buitelaar and Al-Ajarma, in their article on self-representation of (Dutch-) Moroccan, conduct an analysis on addressing different target audiences. Dutch Moroccan pilgrims address audiences differently than Muslim pilgrims "negotiating amongst themselves the meanings of the hajj".[209] Both Moroccan and Dutch Moroccan Muslims after returning home "attune their stories to the sacredness and ideal image of Mecca".[210] Marginalized groups, according to the authors, use media and internet platforms such as podcasts to change and influence the narratives about themselves. [211] Janin's representation of the BMPPD on the podcasts may differ just as much dependent on the target audiences as that of Dutch Moroccan pilgrims differs from other Moroccan's representation of the hajj. The two groups (Dutch Moroccans and Moroccans) have a different target audiences and different aims. One Dutch Moroccan participant aims to "empower [Dutch Moroccan] youths to insert themselves in Dutch society and feel confident to reach out to others by being solidly rooted in the specificities of their Moroccan background."[212] This aim is not shared by those Muslims living in a Muslim-majority country as they are not discriminated against by a majority based on their Muslim identity marker. It is likely that Janin aims to encourage Muslim listeners to a similar insertion in German society.

Moreover, Janin is also likely to appeal to German majority members. The Dutch Moroccan participants in Buitelaar and Al-Ajarma's article address both a Muslim and a non-Muslim audience: "Mixing an inward and outward orientation, they insert themselves as Muslim Dutch citizens in mainstream online public space".[213] Similarly, Janin uses the podcasts, in part, to translate and explain Islam to broader German audiences, to counteract the misrepresentation of a violent Islam by explaining that Islam is peaceful, and that nobody is forced to pray but rather enjoys the space to express their faith in Germany. She conveys this message to Muslim Germans and other Germans. She addresses these inward and outward groups to different degrees dependent on the assumed target audience of the podcast. In *PM*, both groups are addressed but Janin clearly appeals to Muslim Germans directly when arguing for the love of nature. In the other two podcasts, she generally appeals somewhat more to the outward group, i.e., white Germans, by explaining Islam to the audience.

Combining multiple Discourses in one

Janin explains to different podcast host and me how Islam and scouts complement rather than oppose each other. This adequate combination and translation of different cultural discourses into one another may have developed over time, too, as she has started giving interviews about the BMPPD in 2020. In her article "'I am the Ultimate Challenge'", Buitelaar writes:

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[209] Khouloud Al-Ajarma, Marjo Buitelaar. 'Social Media Representations of the Pilgrimage to Mecca. Challenging Moroccan and Dutch Mainstream Media Frames.' 2021: 154.
[210] Ibid: 154
[211] Ibid: 156
[212] Ibid: 158
[213] Ibid: 161

> *Having to respond to essentialist images of 'the Muslim' in the Netherlands has a strong*
> *impact on how intersectionality is experienced by those who, among other*
> *identifications, perceive themselves as Muslims.*[214]

Janin responds to essentialist images of "the Muslim woman", but also to the images of the scout, and the German. All these different labels demand to be combined despite the different discourses surrounding them. By explaining how and why Islam fits perfectly into the scout discourse, and by emphasizing that Muslim values are not different from Christian values, Janin successfully integrates these discourses into one another.

Comparing Podcasts and Research Findings

There is a lot of overlap between the podcasts and my research interview with Janin regarding the framework, content, structure, and factual descriptions of the BMPPD. Moreover, the emphasis of the BMPPD being a peaceful organization is made in *UDS*, my research, and WTDEN. *PM* is hosted by a Muslim woman not representing this dominant German majority discourse.

The emphasis on boys and girls sleeping in different tents in the BMPPD while they do not in other scout organizations is part of *WTDEN* and the research interview for this study. But with the two female hosts at WTDEN she explores in depth the struggles of Muslim girls who are not allowed to participate in activities without a gender division. The division of boys and girls serves the purpose to make the BMPPD more accessible to Muslim German girls. Why Janin did not choose to share this with any other podcast is hard to say, it may have been a comfortable environment created by the hosts or simply something that Janin did not deem worth telling later. Of course, she may have regretted telling it once if she had gotten bad feedback. These are mere speculations, however.

Moreover, the normality of Muslim scouts is emphasized in *UDS* and *WTDN*, as well as in my interview with Janin. It can be assumed that Janin feels a need to prove this normality because public discourse often assumes that Islam is different to the average German. Consequently, Janin underlines this normality both in the podcasts as well as the research interview. In *PM*, Janin does not feel the need to emphasize normality to the same degree. It is the non-Muslim audience she targets when conveying this normality. Additionally, the participation in the Protestant and Catholic Church Day was only subject in UDS, where Janin explained at length why Muslim scouts participate in Christian events. German majority members often seem to be surprised when Janin emphasizes the similarities between Islam and Christianity. This surprise is likely rooted in the public discourse. Janin translates the shared values in her media presence by explaining to a non-Muslim target audience that Muslim scouts help at the annual Church days.

The topic of the *Verfassungsschutz* is absent in any of the podcasts. As mentioned above, the *Verfassungsschutz* as an institution of the German state is unlikely to be viewed as an injust or discriminating actor. The *Verfassungsschutz*, to the majority, is a protector. The German majority is likely not to have an interest in learning about their protector being a perpetrator at the same time. Moreover, Janin may be protecting the BMPPD's public relations and reputation by not mentioning the threat the *Verfassungsschutz* poses on public media.

A similar finding is that of German as a lingua franca, the German culture being what links all the members together. Janin's command of German and her emphasis on German as the language of the BMPPD may turn her into an insider to the listeners. She may become "one of us" to the German listeners: a fellow German who is active in a youth organization for fellow German children. Therefore, it is logical that Janin discusses this openly, targeting both the German majority audience as well as all Muslim German listeners, showing that in the BMPPD nobody is excluded for not speaking Turkish or Arabic, and demonstrating that the German Muslim identity is embraced in the BMPPD.

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[214] Marjo Buitelaar. "'i Am the Ultimate Challenge': Accounts of Intersectionality in the Life-Story of a Well-Known Daughter of Moroccan Migrant Workers in the Netherlands." 2006: 260.

Conclusion: Podcast Analysis

Through patient explanations of the BMPPD's identity labels, its commonalities, its inclusivity, Janin shows to different hosts in different contexts what scouting, being Muslim, and being German at the same time means. She translates her reality of the BMPPD into a language a broader German audience can imagine. It is interesting how she speaks of the "M" and the "D" in their name, resembling Muslim and German as identity markers. All hosts were quite respectful and asked questions to understand the structures in the BMPPD – not unlike I did during this research project. But for all the podcasts and this project it can be said that the existence of the BMPPD clearly is not viewed as normal or self-evident (yet). The more media presence the BMPPD acquires, however, the more normalized will its belonging to German society become.

This excursion into Janin's experiences with media presences suggests that the topics of conversation and their phrasing change depending on different target audiences and different environments. Janin may attempt to change the public discourse because public discourse has influenced her own reality: Discrimination through media, lacking media presence of German Muslims, and the very questions Janin answers in her attendance of these podcasts may cause Janin to feel a necessity to change public discourse. Muslim Germans are othered. In these podcasts, Janin has found a platform to participate in and thereby change the mediascape in Germany. Muslim immigrants, as explained, first came to Germany in larger groups in the 1950s – in other words, larger groups of Muslims have been a part of Germany for over 70 years, and yet, in 2023, their participation in public discourse is still a recent phenomenon. It seems that the past decades have been necessary to establish the platform that can now be used by Janin to change the very same public discourse that has changed her.

Conclusion

The BMPPD and the members' sense of Belonging

In this research project, it became clear that German Muslim volunteers in the BMPPD belong to Germany, that Germany is a home to them, and yet, it has not always welcomed them in its dominant public discourse. The latter has repeatedly signaled to Janin, Omar, Sanae, and Abudi that they are different due to their faith and their skin color.

In this thesis, I aimed to understand how volunteers of the German Muslim Scout organization (BMPPD) make sense of a German Muslim identity and how they create a sense of belonging in an environment where dominant public discourse presents a fictional Germanness and Islam as mutually exclusive. Many times, both during my interviews and in the podcast analysis, I have heard that people showed surprise that scouting and Islam fuse. The participants of this research project have, successfully, established a Muslim German identity, partly in their social engagement in voluntary work at the scouts, partly elsewhere. Omar dances and raises money for Syrian refugees, Abudi volunteers in teaching racism seminars, and Janin works for an organization educating about democracy. Sanae chose to become a paramedic, a career path that contributes to individuals' health and safety. The construction of a German Muslim identity may include an over-average effort and contribution to society born from the need to earn public respect and approval. This remains to be researched. It can be observed, however, that a sense of home and belonging is likely intertwined with this social (voluntary) work.

The BMPPD was founded to include Muslim German children in scouting and German social life. A French Muslim scout had relatives in Germany and inspired them to found the Muslim scout organization as they had already founded one in France. The BMPPD has, therefore, been established, founded, and built by Muslims in Europe who took an active role in their integration in social life. In Germany, the DPSG (Catholic) helped the BMPPD at building a scout organization based on scout structures and scout traditions. Small differences such as Suras in the beginning of each group activity create a safe space for Muslim Germans.

Activities in the BMPPD are weekly group meetings and summer camps. The purposes of these events are simple: entertaining children, getting together as scouts and German Muslims, offering free time activities for Muslim children in Germany, and normalizing and gaining respect for Islam in Germany. Additionally, these group activities (covertly) create a shared sense of belonging as they signify that Muslim Germans are not the exception, that they are not alone, and that they are a part of Germany.

The members of the BMPPD have different migration backgrounds/parents or grandparents from differing Muslim-majority countries. Many members are multilingual, but they share the German language as a lingua franca. This German language, the Germanness that binds these Muslims together, is the reason for what Janin calls the "D" in the BMPPD. They do not want to exclude any members by speaking Arabic or any other language, as Omar explained. Their shared identity is the German Muslim characteristic. In the BMPPD, all Muslims are welcome. They respect their differences and live together in peace, pray, laugh, camp, and do voluntary work.

Within the scouting culture, the BMPPD networked most with the DPSG, the Catholic organization. In the *Kaiserreich* before 1918 the Catholics were discriminated against as religious and backwards. Protestants were the majority population; Catholics were not viewed as typically German. This may now show in the Catholic scout organization supporting the othered Muslim German scouts in building a free time organization for those children who experience exclusion nowadays as the DPSG may relate to the BMPPD. The secular BdP certainly takes pride in its independence from the church, but the DPSG was, based on these findings, the more sympathetic and supportive scout organization to the BMPPD. As Abudi's experiences show, the BdP is inclusive enough for one Muslim individual to feel comfortable, but Abudi was not successful in inviting children with a migration background into

the BdP. The BdP, consequently, is likely less inclusive than it thinks itself. Structural whiteness, Christian influences, and high-class education are still the norm, necessitating the existence of the BMPPD.

Whilst the BMPPD networks with other organizations and municipalities, it does not network with mosques or any other Muslim institution or organization for three reasons: 1) their ambition to remain independent, 2) the mosque's lack of means to support the BMPPD as they often struggle financially themselves, 3) the *Verfassungsschutz* which presents a real threat to the BMPPD's existence. The state's Office of Protection of the Constitution (*Verfassungsschutz)* observes many Muslim organizations closely. Janin's stories about entrance interviews for voluntary group leaders showed how the "M" in the BMPPD as an identity marker causes an exclusionary treatment by a state institution.

So, what role does the German Muslim scout Organization have in the volunteers' sense of belonging? Each volunteer I interviewed finds a different meaning in being a scout, in organizing events, sharing a safe space, and spending time with other Muslim Germans – but they all seem to find meaning in them. This meaning, likely, does not account for the participants' sense of belonging to Germany, but it is likely to strengthen it as the BMPPD was described as a safe space, a place where participants feel understood, and an organization that feels like family to the volunteers.

Reflection on the research Process

Effectiveness of Methodology

To research belonging, I needed an approach that would allow me to understand complex ideas, thoughts, and feelings. I was able to interview and understand four volunteers of the BMPPD with different hobbies, interests, and workplaces. The additional podcast analysis provided me with useful data on participation in media discourses, as well as how Janin changes her speech according to her target audiences, and how she translates her identity, and the labels of the BMPPD into the language of the German majority population. By listening, coding, and analyzing the data, I was able to understand the establishment of a sense of belonging by Janin, Omar, Abudi, and Sanae. Therefore, the choice of method was effective, and yet the topic could certainly be explored in more depth as the participant observation would add another lens by visiting a scout camp of the BMPPD.

Limitations of research

As this research project was tied to a strict time frame, only four interviews have been conducted. A visit to a BMPPD summer camp was not possible, either, as the BMPPD only holds such camps in the summer holidays. One of the main limitations of this project was the missing dimension of the participant observation. Interviews, no matter how open, are still artificial settings. This remains for future studies to do as participant observation sadly was impossible in the time frame of this project. This participant observation could also be conducted with other Muslim German youth organizations and even more othered youth organizations such as Jewish or Catholic ones.

Recommendations for future work

Based on the conclusions of this research project, it could be interesting to tend to the following topics: the social engagement of German Muslims as a coping mechanism with exclusion and discrimination, coping mechanisms of discriminated German Muslims, the role of youth organizations in a sense of belonging, and youth organizations as coping mechanisms.

In the introduction of this chapter, I have cited Rushdie, explaining that migrants may idealize their homelands. It would be interesting to study how this idealization is changed by digitalization and globalization Omar, Abudi and Janin all emphasize the frequency of exclusion and discrimination is decreasing. It could be investigated whether this is the case. Lastly, internalized whiteness, and the way of speaking with words protecting the discriminators can be an interesting research topic.

Contribution to the field

In my problem statement, I explained how 6.6 % of the German population are Muslims with a migration background in Muslim-majority countries. These millions of people in Germany are excluded and othered. Throughout my research process, I found out about othering, coping, and self-empowerment of the members of the BMPPD. By founding, participating, and working in the BMPPD, Muslim German volunteers claim their place in German society. Instead of being victims of a hostile discourse, they change the discourse and become active members of the German society. Obstacles presented by the German state through the *Verfassungsschutz* pose difficulties to the participants. By carefully controlling who joins the volunteers in the BMPPD, they maintain the existence a Muslim German youth organization despite these obstacles. The BMPPD may, thereby, contribute to the reduction of othering and discrimination. At the very least it creates a safe space for those who identify as German Muslims. Through this safe space and shared sense of self as a Muslim German community the BMPPD strengthens the sense of belonging of its volunteers and likely also its members, in general. The obstacles the BMPPD faces are those very factors that create the need for its existence. A safe space is only needed when there is discrimination demanding such a safe space. The contribution of this research project was the exploration of the need of safe spaces, the understanding of coping mechanisms through active participation in German society, and the creation of a sense of belonging in the BMPPD.

The very existence of the BMPPD and its name with both the "D" and the "M" proves that Germanness and Islam are not at all exclusive. In fact, the combination of scouting, Islam, and the German language is the norm in the BMPPD. Throughout this research process, I learned about many shared characteristics and values of Islam and scouting. In the Muslim German scout movement, a sense of belonging to Germany and Islam simultaneously can be formed, and a shared Muslim German identity can be performed and negotiated. The Muslim German identity is nurtured, not hindered, as the BMPPD offers a safe space for the combination of both identity markers by facilitating a diverse, tolerant environment for its members and volunteers.

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Meret Janne Harjes
Research Master Thesis
To me, every Scout is half a Muslim, and every Muslim is half a Scout
June 2023

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Appendix

Appendix 1: List of Acronyms and Organizations

Acronym (if applicable)	Meaning/Name	If applicable English Translation/Explanation
Scout organizations that still exist nowadays		
BdP	Bund der Pfadfinderinnen und Pfadfinder e.V.	Secular Scout organization, founded in 1975
DPSG	Deutsche Pfadfinderschaft Sankt Georg	Catholic Scout organization, founded in 1929, called GSG between 1937 and 1945
VCP	Verein Christlischer Pfadfinderinnen und Pfadfinder e.V.	Protestant Scout organization, developed 51ut of the CP in 1947
BMPPD	Bund muslimischer Pfadfinderinnen und Pfadfinder Deutschlands e.V.	Muslim German Scout organization
RdP	Ring deutscher Pfadfinder*innnenverbände e.V.	Scout organization consisting of BdP, DPSG, VCP, BMPPD, founded in 1947
DPB	Deutscher Pfadfinderbund e.V.	Deutscher Pfadfinderbund founded in 1911 and still exists today, not a member of the RdP
BDP	Bund Deutscher Pfadfinder_innen – Bundesverband e.V.	Founded in 1946, later split into the BdP and the BDP out of political differences, not a member of the RdP
PSG	Pfadfinderinnenwerk St. Georg e.V.	Founded in 1947; joined DPSG in 1978
Scout organizations not existing anymore		
X	Bund Jungdeutschland	Founded in 1911, first version of the RdP, replaced in the 1920s
X	Bund deutscher Pfadfinderinnen	Founded in 1912, first organization for female members
X	Neupfadfinder	Scouts after a reform in 1925, as of 1933 known as the Bund deutscher Mädel
X	Ringpfadfinder	Replacement of Bund Jungdeutschland, combining different Scout organizations in one in the 1920s
CP	Christliche Pfadfinderschaft Deutschlands	Founded in the 1920s, forbidden between 1937 and 1945, later joined the VCP, also known as BCP in between
X	Reichspfadfinder	Official Scouts of the German Reich in 1929, later known as DPV for Deutscher Pfadfinderverband
GSG	Gemeinschaft Sankt Georg	The DPSG was tolerated but it changed its name in 1937 to Gemeinschaft Sankt Georg removing the word "Pfadfinder" because the Nazi regime was not keen on having Scout organizations in the German Reich

Political and historical acronyms		
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei	Political far-right party under Adolf Hitler, successful between 1933 and 1945
X	Das Zentrum	Conservative Catholic Party in Germany between 1871 and 1933
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Social democratic party Germany, founded in 1875, exists up to this day
Podcast acronyms		
WTDEN	*Wovon träumst du eigentlich nachts?* „Folge 5: Muslimische Pfadfinderinnen", April 2021	Political podcast by Ufuq.de about Islam in Germany.
UDS	*Und, Du so?* "Janin Bassal – Bund Muslimische Pfadfinder*innen", November 2020	Local podcast by the city of Mainz about events and organizations in the city.
PM	*Primamuslima* „#06 Janin – Der grüne Islam", August 2021	Podcast by the Bavarian *Rundfunk* by a Muslim woman interviewing Muslim Germans about aspects of their lives.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Key Topics:

Islam in Germany, Scouts, Identity, Belonging, Discrimination, Germany, Public Discourse, Othering

Introduction

This research is conducted in order to explore the sense of identity and the sense of belonging in members of the Muslim Scout organization (BMPPD) in Germany. I am especially interested in discussing experiences of discrimination, of othering and of belonging for Muslims in Germany. The questions I would like to ask are related to both the BMPPD and the general experience of Muslims in Germany. The outcome of this research will be a 25000 word thesis of my Research Master in "Religion, Conflict and Globalization".

Everything you tell me will only be used for this research project and it will not be shared outside and with others. I will not use your name so you cannot be identified later. I will record our interview and the recording will be used for research purposes only. You have already read the consent form. Do you have any questions about the form?

(After questions have been answered) If you have no further questions, could you please give oral consent on the recording?

Do you have any other questions before we start? Then I would like to ask if I can record our interview?

Background questions:

Interview Number:

Age:

Urban or rural residence:

Educational background:

Profession:

Parents or grandparents country of origin:

Opening questions

We will now begin with some opening questions. I will ask you a few questions concerning the BMPPD, Scouting in general, events and activities of the BMPPD and the networking within the Scout organization.

This will help me to understand your views and you as a person a little better. I will be able to put myself in your shoes with more background knowledge.

1. Can you tell me about the BMPPD? What is the Muslim Scout organization?

   Probe: Active, outside, Scouting, camping

2. How does a normal event or group activity go at the BMPPD?

   Probe: Chain of events at group activities:

> *organizer*: what kind of activities are organized for what reasons?
>
> *participant*: can you tell me about the most recent activity that you participated in? (What was it, what did you do, then follow up questions leading to evaluation, and then maybe ask for another activity they attended, etc. etc. Have them compare, etc.?

3. Can you tell me the story of how you became a member of the BMPPD

    Probe: Years ago, recently

4. What does the BMPPD mean to you personally?

    Probe: role of BMPPD in own identity

5. What motivates you to be a group leader in the BMPPD?

    Probe: Playing with children, free-time activities for Muslims in Germany

6. How would you describe the BMPPD to others? What is it?

    Probe: Meaning of BMPPD to member

7. What activities have you organized for the BMPPD?

    Probe: Events for children, events for adults, purpose of free-time activity, fun, integration, acceptance

8. What are the purposes of these events?

    Probe: Entertainment, fun, publicity, Öffentlichkeitsarbeit

9. Who does the BMPPD network with? In what different networks does the BMPPD operate?

    Probe: With other Scout organizations, Municipalities, Other organizations like mosques, religious organizations

Key questions:

Now we are going to delve deeper into the topics of belonging, discrimination, identity, Islam, and being a Muslim German/German Muslim. We will also talk about how being discriminated may affect the sense of belonging. The questions will become more personal an delve deeper into the subject matter of Belonging, Islamophobia, and the meaning and implications of the BMPPD. At any point you can say "I would rather not answer" or skip a question. You are still not obliged to answer anything.

10. What does being a Muslim German or a German Muslim mean to you personally?

    Probe: Being Muslim in Germany

11. What is the story of establishing the BMPPD and its aims? What are your experiences in taking the steps to build such an organization?

       Probe: Experiences, building a Scout organization

12. Have you had problems establishing your aims and goals as the BMPPD with others?
    Probe: Municipalities, Landlords, Other Scout organizations

13. Can you tell me more about the members of the BMPPD? Who are the members of the
    BMPPD and who are their parents?

    Probe: Muslims born in Germany, parents from Muslim-majority countries

14. What is the last event or activity you organized for the BMPPD? What steps did you take to
    organize it? What hurdles came across? How did you solve them? Who supports you when
    problems arise in organizing events?

    Probe: Other group leaders, the board of the BMPPD, the municipality

15. How do people react when they here "Muslim Scout Organization"? Have you ever
    experienced discrimination based on the fact that your Scout organization is a Muslim
    organization?

    Probe: surprised, (dis-)approving, supportive, discriminating, insulting

16. Is a Muslim German Scout organization perceived as a typical German Scout organization?
    How do people react when you say Muslim Scouts?

    Probe: Belonging, discrimination, Otherness, idea of Germanness, Islam as the "other"

17. How do you practice Islam in the BMPPD?

    Probe: rituals, combining different streams of Islam

18. How do you experience life as a German Muslim in Germany? How does islamophobia
    influence your own life?

    Probe: Personal experiences of discrimination, belonging, support, othering

19. What does the existence of the BMPPD mean for Islam in Germany? Especially since the
    BMPPD is part of the Ring of German Scouts (RdP)?

    Probe: Meaning of BMPPD in Germany, in RdP, in Islamophobia

20. In your opinion, is Islam a part of Germany (already)? How does that show or not show? Does
    it show in free-time activities enough?

    Probe: Islam in Germany, inclusion, belonging, acknowledgement

21. Can you live your faith openly in Germany? How?

Probe: reactions, positive, negative, neutral

22. What is the story of how the BMPPD was accepted into the RdP when so many small other organizations in Germany were not?

    Probe: Specialty of BMPPD, importance of Islam in Germany

23. Have you experienced people having presuppositions about the BMPPD?

    Probe: No female members, strict, not strict

Closing questions

We are now approaching the conclusion of our interviews. To finish the interview, we will now talk about the future of the BMPPD, Islam in Germany, and other Muslim youth organizations. In this section, there will be room for you to add whatever you have left to say, and we can speak about any additional thoughts regarding the topics of the interview.

24. What would you really like the BMPPD to be when it becomes bigger?

    Probe: A hobby for Muslim children, a sign of Islam belonging to Germany

25. What are the next steps for the BMPPD?

    Probe: Future of BMPPD

26. Personally, what do you think is the future of Islam in Germany? Do you think Islamophobia will persist?

    Probe: Islam as part of Germany, discrimination

27. Based on your views and experiences, what role should Islam have in Germany?

    Probe: Private, Public, visible, invisible

28. We have discussed several topics related to your views and experiences concerning Islam in Germany, Scouts in Germany, and Muslim Scouts. Are there any subjects that we have not touched upon so far but that you think is important for me to learn about too?

29. Do you have any further questions to me about my research project or the topic itself?

Thank you for the interview and your time!