

Zero-Sum Thinking and the Cultural Threat of Muslim Religious Rights

Comparative Political Studies

2025, Vol. 0(0) 1–37

© The Author(s) 2025



Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/00104140251369349

journals.sagepub.com/home/cps

Marc Helbling¹ , Elisabeth Ivarsflaten², and
Richard Traunmüller³ 

Abstract

Cultural threat is one of the main explanations for opposing immigrants. However, it lacks theoretical precision and suffers from measurement issues. To remedy these problems, we conceptualize cultural threat as a zero-sum problem and specify concrete cultural rights that Muslims receive. In two online experiments in Germany, we randomly assigned people to situations where Muslim cultural rights either replace majority rights (zero-sum) or they co-exist (non-zero-sum). The willingness to accommodate Muslims' cultural rights varies strongly by the logic of cultural threat, especially for respondents with an inclusionary mindset. They are protective of their own cultural practices, but do not perceive all gains in Muslim rights as inherently threatening. Respondents with an exclusionary mindset, however, respond less to variations in cultural threat. In contrast to people with an inclusionary mindset, they also react more negatively to Muslim than non-Muslim demands for change.

Keywords

migration, religion and politics, European politics

¹University of Mannheim, Mannheim, Germany

²Bergen University, Bergen, Norway

³University of Mannheim, Mannheim, Germany

Corresponding Author:

Marc Helbling, Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES), University of Mannheim, A5, 6, Mannheim D-68159, Germany.

Email: helbling@uni-mannheim.de

Data Availability Statement included at the end of the article

Introduction

Threat, whether real or perceived, is one of the main explanations for the opposition towards immigrants and their cultural practices (Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1983). While immigration may be viewed as an economic threat when natives fear to lose their jobs or increasing welfare costs, we speak of cultural threat when people fear to lose their cultural identity or way of life because they perceive immigrants as having distinct morals, norms and values (Stephan et al., 1998, p. 560).

In many Western countries, Muslims have constituted one of the major immigration groups for some time. In their seminal paper, Zolberg and Woon (1999) argued that “Islam in Europe” is like “Spanish in the US”. While Hispanic migration and related language issues has led to many controversies in the US, Muslim migration in Europe has led to many debates over the alleged incompatibility of their religious values and practices. Controversies have turned around the wearing of the headscarf (Gustavsson et al., 2016), building mosques (Schaffner, 2013) and minarets (Miller, 2016), the refusal to shake hands (Ivarsflaten et al., 2025) or Muslim religious education (Carol et al., 2015). Muslim immigrants are often denied such rights because their cultural norms allegedly collide with Western liberal norms (Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). They are seen as a cultural threat.

According to Hainmueller and Hopkins (2014, p. 227) the literature on cultural threat suffers from three important shortcomings: “(T)he cultural and symbolic approaches that are typically vindicated by empirical testing *lack the theoretical precision* of the self-interest approach. Moreover, many of the empirical tests *suffer from measurement and endogeneity concerns*, facts that may explain the persistence of the self-interest-based approach despite repeated empirical challenges.” (our emphases)

This study addresses all three shortcomings. Conceptually, we propose a new framework centered on variations in the logic of cultural threat. Drawing on literature in social psychology (e.g., Piotrowski et al., 2019; Różycka-Tran et al., 2015) we conceptualize cultural threat as zero-sum problems when minority rights replace the pre-existing cultural practice. They are non-zero-sum problems when minority rights can co-exist with, or be added to, the pre-existing cultural practice. Note though that the cultural threat is always to some extent present, since any cultural change may be perceived as threatening. The new question that our framework allows us to investigate is, whether non-Muslims respond to meaningful cultural threat attenuation (i.e. moving from a zero-sum to a non-zero-sum situation) or if they perceive any form of cultural change that increases the recognition of cultural rights for Muslims as inherently and equally threatening.

To solve the endogeneity problem, we introduce a new survey experimental procedure that first randomly assigns people to situations where

Muslim cultural rights constitute a zero-sum or a non-zero-sum situation to measure their independent effects. In a second step, we deepen the analysis by assigning one part of the sample to similar cultural change scenarios, but where the reason for change is not accommodation of Muslims' culture. This comparison allows us to see to what extent people react more strongly to Muslim related cultural changes.

To better measure cultural threat we propose a design that does not ask general questions about attitudes towards immigrants. In virtually all studies, so far, cultural threat has been equated with the size of the immigrant groups, their cultural distance or simply their presence (e.g., [Quillian, 1995](#); [Veit & Thijssen, 2021](#)). These approaches do not allow us to determine exactly what the perceived threat is. Instead, we specify concrete cultural rights that Muslims might get, that represent more or less obtrusive cultural changes (halal menu options in canteens and a Muslim public holiday), and that might be perceived as a cultural threat to the majority culture. In the second study, we contrast these rights with non-Muslim issues (vegetarian meal options to prevent climate change and an International Women's Day).

The results reveal that willingness to accommodate Muslims' culture and traditions varies strongly by the logic of cultural threat. The effects are large and robust. Tellingly, the strength of the effect, varies for people with an inclusionary and exclusionary mindset.¹ Both groups are opposed, even if to different degrees, to Muslims' religious rights in zero-sum situations. The difference appears in how the groups respond to the threat attenuation treatment.

People with an inclusionary mindset respond strongly and positively to the non-zero-sum proposals. Moreover, their responses are mirrored in the zero-sum proposal that is not associated with Muslims. This indicates that respondents with an inclusionary mindset are protective of their own cultural practices, but do not perceive all cultural change that leads to gains in Muslim rights as an inherent loss. For respondents with an exclusionary mindset, however, the effect of shifting the logic of the cultural threat is much less pronounced – they are generally opposed to all forms of cultural change to accommodate Muslim religious rights. Moreover, the effect of threat attenuation is smaller when the cultural change concerns accommodation of Muslims in comparison to a non-Muslim issue. Thus, their unwillingness to give up cultural rights is not only related to the logic of cultural threat, but to all forms of cultural change from which Muslims benefit. They perceive any gain by Muslims as a threat to their own culture.

Finally, in both studies we see a difference between the two policies: Shifting the logic of cultural conflict in the question of menu options succeeds to the extent that majorities are open to accommodating Muslim demands in the non-zero-sum situation. In the question of adding holidays in a country where most holidays are Christian holidays, a strong effect of shifting the logic

of cultural threat is present, but the levels of acceptance are considerably lower overall in the non-zero-sum situation. An additional joint holiday to celebrate Muslim culture and traditions is perceived as a lesser cultural threat than if the holiday were to replace an existing Christian holiday, but it is still largely opposed. So, while the first example encourages conceptualizations of cultural threat as situational—dependent on the logic of cultural change—the second example warns against taking that conclusion too far. Some forms of cultural change, in our study introducing Muslim public holidays, are so encompassing that they are perceived as threatening by the non-Muslim majority on a socio-tropic level, even if there strictly speaking is no egocentric loss of cultural rights (Christian holidays are not replaced).

In the next section we develop our theoretical framework and present our hypotheses. We then discuss why we selected halal meals and Muslim religious holidays as examples for Muslim religious rights before we present the data, experiments and results of the first and then of the second survey. The conclusion summarizes our results and discusses limitations of our study and further implications.

From Threat Perceptions to Zero-Sum Beliefs

According to one of the main arguments in the immigration literature, people oppose immigrants because they perceive them as a threat to their social position (Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1999). It is often argued that especially when immigration increases and the economy worsens competition over resources such as jobs and housing becomes more prevalent (Quillian, 1995). There might also be competition over cultural values and norms (Kinder & Kam, 2010). In these situations, not only group sizes but also cultural distances between majority and minority groups shape people's attitudes towards immigrants (Veit & Thijsen, 2021).

It has been shown that this competition does not primarily concern people's ego-centric self-interests but rather their socio-tropic concern for their country's economy and welfare-state system (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014). People are less concerned about losing their job than about the economic costs immigration imposes on their country (Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007, 2010). Thus, ethnocentrism or socio-tropic considerations play a more important role to understand opposition towards immigrants. This is also why some people are concerned that their country might lose its cultural characteristics when it becomes more diverse (Ivarsflaten, 2005).

Such arguments most often emerge in the context of debates over cultural rights. As Bobo (1983: 1197) argued already in his work on realistic conflict theory, threats do not only concern resources but also accepted practices. While the provision or non-provision of cultural rights or the acceptance or non-acceptance of new practices reflect different understandings of how to

accommodate and integrate minorities, it more broadly can shed light on how a society values cultural diversity as opposed to cultural unity. When what is at stake is the inclusion of new immigrant communities in a pre-existing national identity, varying perspectives on cultural change also matter (Ivarsflaten & Sniderman, 2022, ch. 5). Political and scientific debates on the importance or challenge of minority rights have been ongoing for a long time (Kymlicka, 1995). More recently, researchers have also started to focus on majority rights and to what extent societies have a normative right to keep their culture in the light of immigration (Orgad, 2015; Orgad & Koopmans, 2022). According to Bauböck (2022: 530) majority rights are invoked to warn against cultural threats coming from cultural minorities.

While immigration and migrants' claims for cultural rights are often depicted as a threat to the majority society, it is often unclear what exactly constitutes a threat. It is for example argued that Muslims constitute a particularly important cultural threat to Western societies (Sniderman and Hagendoorn, 2007). It is however rarely specified what the "Muslim threat" really is as Muslims can be opposed for different reasons: because they are from culturally distant countries, because they belong to a different religion or because they are more religious and have allegedly different values (Di Stasio et al., 2021; Helbling & Traunmüller, 2020). And even if one of these threat categories can be isolated it remains unclear why and how the logic of cultural threat influences non-Muslims' willingness to accommodate Muslim culture and traditions.

The literature on public debates has studied in detail which are the main claims by immigrants in general and Muslims in particular (Carol & Koopmans, 2013; Koopmans et al., 2005). While these studies identify key immigrant demands, we know less about whether and how they matter to non-Muslims' willingness to accommodate them (Carol et al., 2015). What we lack in particular is a precise understanding of the dynamics of cultural threats. Are all proposals that require cultural accommodation equally opposed by non-Muslims because they require recognition that Muslim culture and traditions are now part of the common culture and therefore constitute a cultural threat? Or does the logic of the cultural threat matter?

As Bohman et al. (2024: 48) have argued, "it remains unclear what happens to prejudice when the perceived "threat," whatever it is, dissipates or decreases." Or put differently, what happens if by design there is no ego-centric cultural loss for the majority when immigrants arrive? It might be that nothing changes as people still dislike migrants and feel a threat on a socio-tropic level irrespective of whether they have to give up anything for them. This would mean that cultural threats are different from other loss-situations.

To more precisely conceptualize and study cultural threat, we distinguish between conceptions where it is inherently understood as zero-sum, and conceptions where it is non-zero-sum. According to the inherent zero-sum

conception, state support of migrant group rights is often conceived of as a unidimensional continuum of unequal treatment of groups that results from government favoritism and identification with the majority culture and the accommodation of cultural minority rights corresponds to reducing this unequal treatment (Helbling & Traunmüller, 2016). Changes in policy are therefore essentially perceived as zero-sum games, where the majority loses what the minority gains. Inherent zero-sum thinking corresponds to a “general belief system about the antagonistic nature of social relations, shared by people in a society or culture and based on the implicit assumption that a finite amount of goods exists in the world, in which one person’s winning makes others the losers, and vice versa.” (Różycka-Tran et al., 2015, p. 526).

Piotrowski et al. (2019) have shown that the negative impact of nationalism on the acceptance of refugees is mediated through zero-sum thinking. Immigrants are perceived as competitors, and natives see themselves in conflict with them over cultural and economic resources (Stephan et al., 1998). Research has shown that people of the majority society perceive diversity policies often as zero-sum, even in cases where they lead to win-win outcomes (Brown & Jacoby-Senghor, 2021). Sometimes, speaking of affirmative action or pro-diversity values alone can lead to opposition even if it is not specified what these actions or values involve (Dover et al., 2016; Kuklinksi et al., 1997). People with a zero-sum mindset believe that resources are limited and that support of one group can only happen at the expense of another group (Dover et al., 2016). This is one reason why affirmative action policies are often opposed by majority members (Lowery et al., 2006).

Thus, if people perceive cultural accommodation of Muslims as a cultural threat by default, and thus as a zero-sum game, the fact that they are in a non-zero-sum situation should allay their concerns and lead to increased support for Muslims’ cultural rights. This leads to our first hypothesis:

Presenting cultural threat as a zero-sum proposal will lead to lower support for Muslim cultural rights, compared to a non-zero-sum proposal. (H1)

The next question then is whether people with an inclusionary or exclusionary mindset respond more strongly to the non-zero-sum situation. We thereby differentiate between people who think they have an obligation to treat Muslim immigrants without prejudice and who are motivated to try to do so and those who do not think to have such an obligation (Blinder et al., 2013; Ivarsflaten & Sniderman, 2022).

Immigration has become one of the most controversial issues in Western Europe among others as a result of increasing successes of right-wing populist parties that mobilize against immigration and especially Muslim immigrants (De Wilde et al., 2019; Dolezal et al., 2010; Schmuck & Matthes, 2019). Accordingly, we observe increased prejudices against Muslim immigrants that

are often more prevalent than prejudices against other immigrant groups (Bell et al., 2021). It is therefore of utmost importance to investigate to what extent people opposing or in favor of Muslim immigrants react to threat attenuation. By mitigating the cultural threat—moving from a zero-sum to a non-zero-sum situation—we might observe a widening or narrowing of the gap between these two groups of respondents.

On the one hand, it can be argued that the gap should be narrowing because people with an inclusive mindset are relatively open to Muslim accommodations, regardless of the specific regulations, and it is those with an exclusionary mindset who will be responding more strongly to learning about threat attenuation. The fear of losing their culture is greater among these respondents, and this fear is often used as an argument against migrants and their accommodation. Alleviating this fear and providing arguments as to why these fears are unwarranted could reduce their resistance to Muslim accommodation. This leads to the following hypothesis:

The increase in support for Muslim cultural rights in non-zero-sum situations (compared to zero-sum situations) is stronger for those with exclusionary mindsets than for those with inclusionary mindsets. (H2a)

On the other hand, it could be that the gap between people with the two different mindsets widens. If the cultural threat argument is only a pretext for the prejudiced to prevent the admission of Muslim immigrants, it should not matter to them whether their cultural rights supersede the rights of the majority or not. At the same time, the unprejudiced might respond to the non-zero-sum situation, since accepting Muslims does not necessarily mean that people are also willing to give up their rights. Verkyuten et al. (2020) argue that it is important to differentiate between prejudices and toleration of out-group practices and factors that reduce prejudices and increase tolerance.

As Kuklinski et al. (1997) have already shown, resistance to zero-sum affirmative action cannot be explained simply by prejudices against minority groups. Many more people oppose these actions than are prejudiced. It has also been shown that attitudes toward diversity measures can hardly be explained by political ideologies or group identities (Brown & Jacoby-Senghor, 2021; Dover et al., 2016; Lowery et al., 2006). It appears that people reject zero-sum policies regardless of other beliefs and even when they generally have pro-migration attitudes (Kuklinski et al., 1997; Roberts & Davidai, 2021; Sniderman & Piazza, 1993). While both groups may feel a strong attachment to their own culture and be unwilling to replace it, regulations that mitigate cultural conflict could lead to more support for adaptation among respondents with an inclusionary mindset, who are more motivated to act without prejudice. This leads to our last hypothesis:

The increase in support for Muslim cultural rights in non-zero-sum situations (compared to zero-sum situations) is stronger for those with inclusionary mindsets than for those with exclusionary mindsets. (H2b)

It needs to be emphasized that our arguments especially hold from an ego-centric perspective as the individual does not actually lose any cultural rights when Muslim cultural rights are accommodated in the non-zero-sum situation. From a socio-tropical perspective, however, the introduction of cultural rights for Muslims in the non-zero-sum situation may nevertheless be seen as threatening because it introduces cultural change to accommodate Muslims.

A distinction between zero-sum and non-zero-sum logics however also makes sense from a socio-tropic perspective. In a “world of migration”, cultural threat is always present to some degree for some people, as any cultural change can be perceived as threatening. The new question we can explore with our framework is whether non-Muslims respond to a meaningful mitigation of cultural threat (i.e., move from a zero-sum to a non-zero-sum situation) or whether they perceive any recognition of cultural rights for Muslims as inherently and equally threatening. This is the question that has not been tackled head-on before, and where our study makes an important original contribution.

While zero-sum constellations have been studied in the context of labor recruitment and student admissions policies, non-zero-sum constellations have not been studied in these contexts because it is simply not possible to have a non-zero-sum constellation when resources are limited. With a limited number of places, there is either a quota system/affirmative action policy or not. One cannot encourage the admission of minority students without discriminating against majority students. However, such an arrangement is possible when it comes to cultural rights, as it is not a limited resource: It is possible to grant cultural rights without giving up one’s own rights. In this sense, we make an important contribution to the general zero-sum literature, as it allows us to examine a wider variation of minority accommodation logics.

Two Examples of Muslim Religious Rights

Most studies on cultural threat base their analyses on the comparison of attitudes towards more or less culturally distant immigrant groups (Brader et al., 2008) or their degree of cultural integration (Sobolewska et al., 2017). Besides the difficulty of defining and measuring cultural distance and integration (McSweeney, 2002; Penninx, 2019), it is rarely defined or shown what exactly the migration threat consists of. While we know that immigration leads to emotional reactions and feelings of anxiety (Brader et al., 2008), we do not know to what extent people respond to differing logics of cultural threat.

We therefore propose to investigate our arguments by means of two concrete examples of cultural change involving accommodation of Muslim culture and religion that can be proposed in such a way as to alter the logic of conflict between cultures: The introduction of halal meals in canteens and the introduction of a Muslim religious holiday. In contrast to more common examples in the literature on affirmative action in the education system or the labor market ([Brown & Jacoby-Senghor, 2021](#)) these examples can easily be designed as either a zero-sum or a non-zero-sum situation. Offering more jobs or positions to one group when these are limited always comes at the expense of another group. It is therefore not possible to directly compare zero-sum and non-zero-sum situations. Halal meals and Muslim holidays can however be introduced in addition to other meals and holidays, or they can be proposed as replacements. In the case of a Muslim holiday, we can even add a material incentive in that also non-Muslims get an additional day off.²

To allow a zero-sum/non-zero-sum comparison we did not choose other religious rights such as the right to wear a headscarf, to run religious schools or build mosques and minarets or the allowance of ritual animal slaughtering. These rights are of course also highly contested ([Carol et al., 2015](#); [Gustavsson et al., 2016](#); [Schaffner, 2013](#)), but they do not require non-Muslims to give up their own rights or to adapt. We selected cultural change that affects public institutions as otherwise they might not be perceived as a threat. Moreover, these rights concern all religious (or at least most) Muslims and not just a minority such as the obligation to wear a burka or the refusal to shake hands with the opposite sex ([Carol & Koopmans, 2013](#), p. 175; [Ivarsflaten et al., 2025](#)).

Of course, adding a holiday to celebrate Muslim culture and religion can still be perceived as a cultural or symbolic threat, because adding a Muslim holiday means officially recognizing that non-Muslims should take part in celebrating Muslim culture and traditions. Adding a Muslim holiday therefore clearly represents a change to the majority culture on the socio-tropic level even if the ego-centric threat in the form of replacement of an existing holiday is avoided. In any case, however, the example does present two different logics of cultural threat (zero-sum and non-zero sum), even if both situations are instances of cultural change that favor Muslims.

While it is very difficult to decide which cultural rights are considered more fundamental and would lead to more opposition if they had to be abandoned to accommodate a minority group, we think that our two examples allow us to compare a relatively unobtrusive and a relatively obtrusive case of cultural change. Offering meals without pork in canteens could constitute a rather minor commitment as people could still choose other dishes and would not be required to take part in or celebrate Muslim culture and traditions. As a matter

of fact, in many canteens but also in other contexts such as for example catering on planes special meals for religious groups are already widely offered (Giorda, 2015). This does not mean that school canteen meals do not constitute controversial issues.³ As Maxwell (2019) shows for France, school lunch programs can be construed as part of a nation-building process where pupils learn about their national culture. Such a change from not offering to offering halal meals in school canteens is a form of public recognition of Muslim culture and tradition. Perhaps precisely for this reason, anti-Islamic extremist right-wing politicians are known to have intervened when halal meals were offered.⁴

In contrast to canteens that accommodate different religious needs, there are very few countries that officially celebrate holidays from different religions (e.g. India, Singapore), and when holidays for minority religious groups are proposed this can lead to strong controversies (Morier-Genoud, 2000). We are not aware of any Western country where a Muslim holiday is officially celebrated (Daskalovski, 2017). This absence demonstrates that adding a public holiday would constitute a major cultural change that goes beyond mere public recognition and respect for Muslim tradition but may imply an official public celebration (Ivarsflaten & Sniderman, 2022; Orgad, 2021). In any case, the introduction of additional official Islamic holidays is a topic of serious public debate.⁵

In sum, accepting halal meals is a way to acknowledge another religious group (recognition respect). Introducing a religious holiday is however much more about celebrating this religion, and especially when everybody gets a day off at a Muslim holiday it can even be seen as an encouragement to celebrate this religion (appraisal respect) (Ivarsflaten & Sniderman, 2022). Thus, these two examples allow us to test our arguments about the effects of attenuating cultural threats both when the cultural change is relatively unobtrusive and relatively obtrusive.

The First Experimental Sequence

Survey Experimental Setup

In the first sequence of trials, we confronted respondents with hypothetical propositions to introduce halal meals in canteens and a Muslim holiday. We randomly varied whether the cultural threat was accentuated or not. The Canteen Experiment was worded as follows:

Some people propose that canteens (no longer serve meals with pork [N = 1375, zero-sum]/serve meals without pork in addition to other meals [N = 1293, non-zero-sum]), to be considerate of Muslim religious rules.⁶

The Holiday Experiment had the following wording:

The state government⁷ proposes to introduce a Muslim holiday. (For this purpose, a Christian holiday is to be replaced by a Muslim holiday. [N = 929, zero-sum]/On this day, all Muslims have the day off, but have to compensate it with overtime. [N = 884, non-zero-sum]/On this holiday, all people in the state have the day off. [N = 855, win-win])

After each of the two examples, participants were asked to what extent they are for or against such a proposal (1 – “Fully against,” 2 – “Rather against,” 3 – “Rather in favor,” 4 – “Fully in favor”). Answers were recoded to range from 0 to 1.

In all conditions of the two experiments, there is cultural change in that Muslims gain recognition of their culture and traditions. What varies is the nature of the cultural accommodation required on the part of the non-Muslim majority. In one set of conditions, the zero-sum treatments, the gain in cultural recognition on the part of Muslims comes at a clearly defined ego-centric cost to established culture and traditions. Muslim tradition replaces the established culture in a country where most holidays are Christian holidays (with the exception of a few secular holidays). In the other conditions, the non-zero-sum treatments, the gain on the part of Muslims is kept constant, but the accommodation required in the established culture does not take the form of an ego-centric loss. Muslim tradition is added to the established culture. In the Muslim holiday experiment, we even added a material incentive as non-Muslims get a day off, which from an ego-centric point of view is a win-win situation: Everyone gains a day off. The experiment was placed in the middle of the survey questionnaire and preceded by other questions on Muslim integration (i.e., acceptability of new mosques and political rights) as well as political variables such as populism. Balance checks are provided in [Tables A9](#) and [A10](#) in the Appendix.

Data Collection and Sample

The two experiments were administered to a sample of over 2'600 respondents recruited from an online panel of the commercial survey provider *Respondi* in October 2021. Such convenience samples have been shown to generate results comparable to traditional probability-based survey samples ([Mullinix et al., 2015](#); [Coppock & McClellan, 2019](#)). Quotas were implemented to match the general German population in terms of gender, age, and education. Half of our respondents are female (50%) with an average age of 47 years (SD: 15 years). Some 23% have obtained the highest school level education (Abitur). The study was introduced to respondents in very general terms as researching “the attitudes of the population in Germany on various political issues.”

Attention Checks

We ran two (post-treatment) attention checks in which participants were asked to pick a specific answer category for an item in a battery of ten items and how often they do not take surveys seriously and instead give humorous or disingenuous answers to questions. In the first check participants were asked the following question for nine policies such as lower taxes, more severe prison sentences for criminals etc.: “What do you think of the following policy proposals?” Answer categories: Very bad proposal, rather bad proposal, rather good proposal, very good proposal. In lieu of a tenth item participants received the following message: “Please select “very good proposal” to show you are paying attention.” In the second check participants were asked the following question: “We sometimes find that people don’t always take surveys seriously and instead give humorous or disingenuous answers to questions. How often do you do this?” Answer categories: Never, rarely, once in a while, most of the time, always.

Respondents passed the checks when they gave the correct answer to the first and “never” to the second question (87% passed both checks). We run all analyses with the entire sample to avoid conditioning the analyses on a post-treatment variable and creating potential imbalances in unobserved covariates (Montgomery et al., 2018). We however also ran all analyses with the reduced sample of 2’381 valid observations. All results remain substantively the same (not shown).

Additional Measures

To differentiate between people with an inclusionary and exclusionary mindset we measure how internally motivated they are to control any prejudices they may have towards Muslims. The *Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice* (IMCP) index consists of four survey items: “I try to act without prejudice towards Muslims because it is personally important to me”, “I get angry with myself when I have a prejudiced thought”, “I try to act without prejudice towards Muslims due to my own convictions”, and “I don’t want to appear racist, not even to myself”. Answers were registered on a 5-point scale (1 – “Strongly disagree”, 2 – “Rather disagree”, 3 – “Neither agree nor disagree”, 4 – “Rather agree”, 5 – “Strongly agree”).⁸ We built an index of the four items (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.85$) and for some analyses (see Figures 2 and 4) we distinguish between people with low and high IMCP values, which corresponds to respondents that score below and above the midpoint of the scale.⁹ This indicator has been adapted from longer indices developed by social psychologists (see Blinder et al., 2013), and it has been used to predict reduction in tendency to discriminate Muslims (Blinder et al., 2019) and

likelihood of voting for the extreme right (Blinder et al., 2013; Hartevelde & Ivarsflaten, 2016).

To check that results are not contingent on the use of any one specific measure of the concept of interest, we also conduct analysis using more familiar measures of anti-immigrant sentiment. The following three items were combined into one index (Cronbach's alpha 0.92): "Would you say it is generally bad or good for Germany's economy that people come to live here from other countries?" (0 – "bad for the German economy" to 10 – "good for the German economy"); "And would you say that Germany's cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?" (0 – "undermines cultural life in Germany" to 10 – "enriches cultural life in Germany"); and "Is Germany made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries? (0 – "worse place to live" to 10 – "better place to live"). For some of the analyses, we differentiate between pro- and anti-immigration by splitting them into groups that score below or above the midpoint (5) of the respective indices. These items were taken from the European Social Survey (ESS) and have already been used in a large number of studies on attitudes towards immigrants (Drazanova et al., 2024).

The ESS index correlates with the IMCP measure at 0.63 as in many Western European countries immigrants from Muslim countries constitute one of the biggest immigration groups. In Germany around 6.5% of the population are Muslims (Pfündel et al., 2021). It does not surprise therefore that several studies have shown that the same factors have very similar effects on both anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes in Europe (Bell et al., 2021; Strabac & Listhaug, 2008).

Sequence I Results

Figure 1 indicates to what extent (0-1) people accept giving Muslims rights when the logic of the cultural threat changes from zero-sum to non-zero-sum (see also Tables A1 and A2 in the Appendix for detailed values; for regression results see Tables A5 and A6). Figure 2 differentiates between people with inclusionary and exclusionary mindsets, which equals to high and low IMCP values.

In the zero-sum condition, results are as expected from the cultural threat model. Non-Muslims broadly oppose the introduction of meals without pork or a Muslim religious holiday, only around 20% support them (Figure 1). The striking finding is how much the logic of cultural threat matters. In the non-zero-sum condition, around 60% support the introduction of meals without pork. The difference across conditions is at the order of 40 percentage points. In Model 1 in Table A5 in the Appendix we see that the difference between the zero-sum and non-zero-sum condition is statistically highly significant.

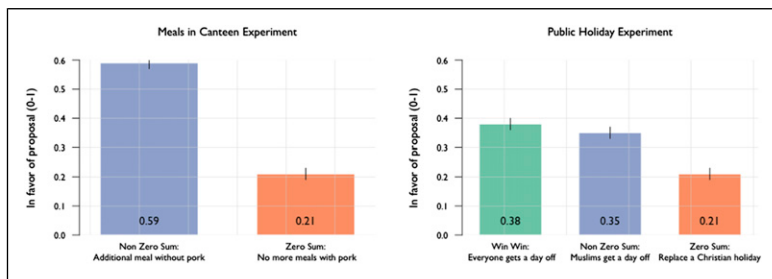


Figure 1. Barplots of main results of the Meals in Canteen Experiment (left) and Public Holiday Experiment (right). Mean comparisons (0-1). Error bars are 95% confidence intervals. See also [Tables A1](#) and [A2](#) in the Appendix.

The effect is in the same direction, but considerably smaller in the holiday experiment. This also appears in Model 1 in [Table A6](#). Around one third of respondents are in favor of a Muslim holiday if it does not replace a religious holiday. It hardly makes any difference whether non-Muslims would also get an additional day off or not. Thus, while shifting the logic of cultural threat leads to more accommodating attitudes, which supports our first hypothesis, the size of the effect varies between the two examples. The effect of the logic of cultural threat is much larger and more consequential when the cultural change required is moderate, such as in the canteen example. It is rather limited when the cultural change required is major, such as in the holiday experiment.

In a second step we like to know to what extent the effects vary across people with exclusionary and inclusionary mindsets and to what extent the gap between them is widening or narrowing. While both groups might not be willing to give up cultural rights when cultural conflict is accentuated (zero-sum regulations), both those with an inclusionary and an exclusionary mindset could respond more strongly to the attenuation of threat according to our Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

[Figure 2](#) shows the results of the halal meals in canteens (left) and Muslim holiday experiments (right) by the level of the Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice (IMCP). As we would expect, we see that those who score high, and are very motivated to control any prejudices, are generally more inclined to accommodate Muslim religious practices. As also appears in Models 1 in [Tables A5](#) and [A6](#), the average difference between the two groups are very similar across the two examples. Most importantly, we observe a widening gap between those who score high and those who score low on IMCP when we move from the zero-sum to the non-zero-sum situation, which confirms our Hypothesis 2b. This also appears in Models 2 in [Tables A5](#) and [A6](#) with the statistically significant interaction effects.

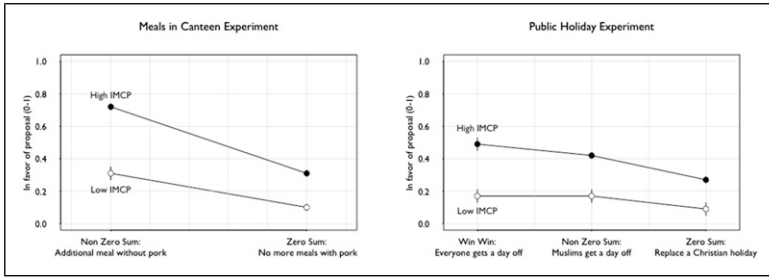


Figure 2. Results of the Meals in Canteen Experiment (left) and Public Holiday Experiment (right) by level of Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice (IMCP). Mean comparisons (0-1). Error bars are 95% confidence intervals. See also [Tables A1](#) and [A2](#) in the Appendix.

While only around 10% among respondents with an exclusionary mindset and 25% among respondents with an inclusionary mindset are willing to give up pork meals or a Christian holiday for Muslims, support increases if by design people are not required to give up their cultural rights. Respondents with an inclusionary mindset are however considerably more responsive to attenuation of threat. While respondents with an exclusionary mindset also respond to threat attenuation, the change is very small in the holiday experiment and much smaller compared to respondents with an inclusionary mindset in the canteen experiment. In the non-zero-sum condition, only around 30% among those who score low on IMCP would accept halal meals in canteens and less than 20% would accept an additional holiday; even if they also get an additional day off (win-win). Among those who score high on IMCP, over 70% would accept additional halal meals and 42% an additional holiday—49% if they also get a day off (win-win). In [Tables A1](#) and [A2](#) as well as [Tables A5](#) and [A6](#) we observe similar patterns when we differentiate between respondents who hold pro- and anti-immigration attitudes. This confirms that the reported results do not hinge on a specific measure of outgroup sentiment.

We thus see that both respondents with an inclusionary and exclusionary mindset are unwilling to replace their cultural practices (even though to different degrees). Non-zero-sum regulations do however lead to more support for adaptation among respondents with an inclusionary mindset. This widening of the gap between the two groups of respondents confirms to some extent that the cultural threat argument is a pretext for respondents with an exclusionary mindset as they hardly change their attitudes when the logic of the cultural threat changes.

The Second Sequence

The effects we found in the first sequence are without doubt substantial and strong support in favor of the hypothesis that not all accommodation to Muslim tradition and culture will be inherently perceived as equally threatening by all and therefore rejected. Also, when it comes to this form of cultural change, people respond to different logics of threat. When the culture changes according to a non-zero-sum logic, responses are more accommodating of Muslims than when the logic is zero-sum. To check if these findings replicate and to deepen the study we repeated the same experimental templates and added a new branch to them (Ivarsflaten & Sniderman, 2022).

The new branch will help in the interpretation of the size of the effects observed in the first sequence. It does so, by exposing a random subset of respondents to the same shifts in threat-logic when the cultural change is about something else. In the canteen experiment, we add a branch to measure responses to the introduction of vegetarian options to prevent climate change. In the holiday experiment, we add a branch to examine responses to the introduction of an International Women's Day.

This set-up allows us to probe if the results in the first sequence replicate in a second independent study, and to answer an additional question: Are people less responsive to shifts in the logic of cultural threat when the purpose of cultural change is to accommodate Muslims? We expect lower responsiveness based on the previous research reviewed above (e.g., Sniderman and Hagendoorn, 2007) and the widely acknowledged negativity in coverage of Muslims and Islam in the Western world (Bleich and van der Veen 2022). Still, we are not aware of any other study that has examined this with equally stringent control of extraneous and confounding factors, so empirically this question has not yet been directly examined.

Survey Experimental Setup

We again confronted respondents with propositions to introduce halal meals in canteens and a Muslim holiday and randomly varied whether these rights replaced a majority right or not. In addition, we also varied the reasons why such a proposition is made. In the canteen experiment participants were told that the proposition to no longer serve meals with meat aimed at being considerate of Muslim religious rules or slowing down climate change.¹⁰ In the holiday experiment people were asked to either accept a Muslim holiday or an International Women's Day (IWD).

Providing concrete alternatives instead of general categories make the examples more realistic and less abstract. Therefore, we have selected examples that already exist or have been debated in Germany. During the 2013 election campaign of the German federal election the Green Party

recommended to introduce a “Veggie Day” in public canteens to reduce meat consumption and protect the environment, which led to huge controversies.¹¹ As of the International Women’s Day, this was introduced as an additional official holiday in the state of Berlin in 2019 and in the state of Mecklenburg-West-Pomerania in 2023 and is one of the few non-Christian holidays in Germany. Such a holiday does not exist in other parts of Germany or even the European Union and we are not aware of any controversial debates about the introduction of such a holiday.¹²

Participants received the following texts:

Some people propose that canteens (no longer serve meals with meat to slow down climate change [N = 256, zero-sum]/add meals without meat to slow down climate change [N = 253, non-zero-sum]/no longer serve meals with pork to be considerate of Muslim religious rules [N = 255, zero-sum]/add meals without pork to be considerate of Muslim religious rules [N = 251, non-zero-sum]).¹³

The state government proposes to introduce (the International Women’s Day [N = 1134]/a Muslim holiday [N = 1140]) as an official holiday. (For this purpose, a Christian holiday is to be replaced [N = 575, zero-sum]/no mention [N = 1699 non-zero-sum,]).¹⁴

After both vignettes, participants were asked to what extent they are for or against this proposal (1 – “Fully in favor”, 2 – “Rather in favor”, 3 – “Rather against”, 4 – “Fully against”). Answers were again recoded to range from 0 to 1. Balance checks are provided in [Tables A11](#) and [A12](#) in the Appendix.

Data Collection and Sample

The online survey was conducted by the survey firm *Respondi* in August 2022 among more than 2’000 respondents. As in Study 1, the respondent pool was designed to match the German population in terms of gender, age and education. Half of our respondents are female and they are on average 46 years old (SD: 17 years). 31% have obtained the highest school level education (Abitur). The study was again introduced to respondents as researching “the attitudes of the population in Germany on current social and political issues.” The experiments were placed in the middle of the survey questionnaire and preceded by questions on immigration issues.

Attention Checks

In a pre-treatment attention check, respondents were asked the following question: “How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? $1 + 1 = 3$ ”. Answer categories: Fully agree, rather agree, strongly disagree, do

not agree at all. 90% passed the test and gave the answer “do not agree at all”. The main analyses were again run with the entire sample. The analyses with the reduced sample do not lead to substantially different findings (not shown).

Additional Measures

We use again the IMCP index that we used in the first sequence to differentiate respondents with an inclusionary and exclusionary mindset (Cronbach's alpha 0.93).

Sequence 2 Results

When we examine the results, we first of all see in [Figure 3](#) that the main results of the first trials are confirmed (see also [Tables A3](#) and [A4](#) in the Appendix for detailed values; for regression results see [Tables A7](#) und [A8](#)). The share of approvals of halal meals and a holiday for Muslims across the zero-sum and non-zero-sum contexts are almost identical to the findings in [Figure 1](#), which again supports our Hypothesis 1. In the Muslim branch (that corresponds to the conditions in the first study) we see that responses to the shift in the logic of threat is large in the halal meal example—acceptance rates increase from 29 to 54%—and, again, less pronounced in the holiday example where the increase is from 24 to 32%. While the share of people responding positively in the zero-sum condition is low and similar in both examples, a lot more people are willing to accept halal meals than a religious holiday in the non-zero-sum situation.

When we differentiate between people with inclusionary and exclusionary mindsets in the Muslim condition we also come to the same conclusions with very similar values as in Study 1. Only 17% of the people with low IMCP values would give up pork meals or a Christian holiday. This opinion hardly changes when they would not have to give up a Christian holiday to introduce a Muslim holiday (non-zero-sum, 19%), whereas a somewhat higher but still low share of 28% would be willing to accept halal meals in the non-zero-sum condition. Responsiveness to shifts in the logic of threat is therefore again found to be low among those who score low on IMCP.

Among those who score high on IMCP only around a third would accept to give up their current rights in both zero-sum settings. As we have already seen in the first study, moving from the zero-sum to the non-zero-sum logic leads to a widening gap between the two groups of respondents, which again confirms Hypothesis 2b. People with an inclusive mindset respond much stronger to a shift in the logic of cultural threat in questions that revolve around Muslims. This is the case in both examples, but again the responsiveness is higher in the canteen (62%) than in the holiday example, where support for accommodation remains tepid also in the non-zero-sum condition (42%).

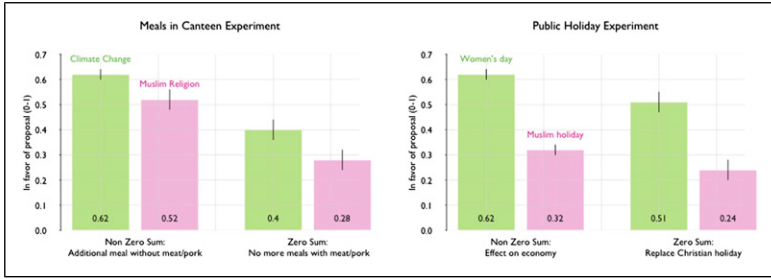


Figure 3. Barplots of main results of the Meals in Canteen Experiment (left) and the Public Holiday Experiment (right). Mean comparisons (0-1). Error bars are 95% confidence intervals. See also [Tables A3](#) and [A4](#) in the Appendix.

In the regression [Tables A7](#) and [A8](#) in the Appendix Models 1c and 2c replicate the Models 1 and 2 in [Tables A5](#) and [A6](#) from the first study. We see in Models 1c in [Tables A7](#) and [A8](#) that adding a meal or holiday for Muslims without replacing pork meals or a Christian holiday has a positive and highly significant effect on the acceptance rate, and this holds especially for people with high IMCP values. The positive and significant interaction effects in Models 2c confirm again the argument of the widening gap.

While study 2 confirms all findings from study 1, it also serves to widen our inquiry to cover cultural change which is not about Muslims. Descriptively, in [Figure 3](#), we first see that the acceptance of meals without meat or an additional holiday is higher if the purpose is *not* the accommodation of Muslims. Even though the requirement to give up all meat meals in the climate change condition (instead of only giving up pork meals in the Muslim condition) is stricter, 40% of all respondents would be willing to do that (instead of only 29% in the Muslim condition). And more than half of all respondents would accept replacing a Christian holiday with an International Women's Day (IWD) (instead of only 24% in the Muslim condition).

What stands out descriptively is the high levels of support for an IWD compared to a Muslim holiday in both conditions. This is consistent with observations outside of the study, where we have not seen any major debates around the introduction of an IWD in Germany. The evidence here is consistent with this form of cultural change being seen as positive and desirable by a large share of the population so that they do not perceive the change as threatening even in the zero-sum condition. This contrasts sharply with the introduction of a Muslim holiday, where the evidence is consistent with such change being perceived as undesirable and threatening by the largest share of the population.

That noted, across all non-zero-sum conditions the acceptance rates increase compared to the zero-sum. [Tables A7](#) and [A8](#) allow us to take a closer look at these findings to answer the main question motivating this second

sequence: Are people less responsive to shifts in the logic of cultural threat when the purpose is to accommodate Muslims? Models 1 and 2 correspond to Models 1 and 2 in [Tables A5](#) and [A6](#) from the first study. Models 1a and 2a display the same analyses but across both Muslim and non-Muslim conditions. In Models 1b and 1c as well as 2b and 2c the samples are split depending on whether respondents received the non-Muslim or Muslim examples. The interaction effects in Models 1d and 2d allow us to see to what extent differences between Models b and c are statistically significant.

First, we see in Models 1b and 1c that the non-zero-sum effect is similar in both Muslim and non-Muslim conditions, but, as should be expected, IMCP values play a more important role in the Muslim conditions. The respective interaction effects in Models 1d in [Tables A7](#) and [A8](#) are statistically significant in both the canteen and holiday examples. We thus see that inclusionary values play a more important role when the accommodation of Muslims is at stake. There is however no significant interaction effect for the non-zero-sum condition. It seems, then, that the willingness to give up rights does not depend on the specific reasons among all respondents.

The question then is whether or not we observe in both the Muslim and non-Muslim conditions a widening gap between respondents with an inclusionary and an exclusionary mindset when we move from a zero-sum to a non-zero-sum situation. In Models 2a we see that there is no significant interaction effect between non-zero-sum condition and inclusionary values. As we see in Models 2b and c this finding is driven by the non-Muslim conditions. In the Muslim conditions (Models 2c) we see again a statistically significant interaction effect as we did in study 1. Our Hypothesis 2b regarding the widening gap thus holds for Muslim but not non-Muslim issues.

This also puts into perspective our earlier finding that the non-zero-sum effect is the same for Muslim and non-Muslim issues. As we see in [Figure 4](#)

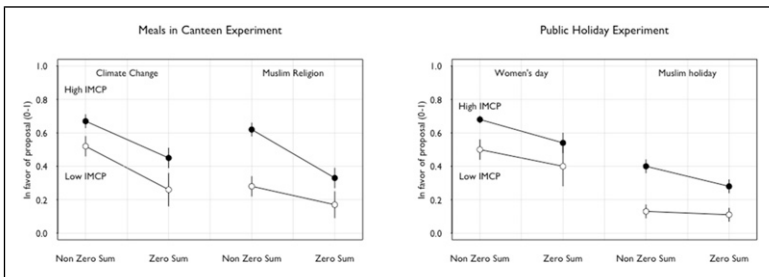


Figure 4. Results of the Meals in Canteen Experiment (left) and the Public Holiday Experiment (right) by level of Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice (IMCP). Mean comparisons (0-1). Error bars are 95% confidence intervals. See also [Tables A3](#) and [A4](#) in the Appendix.

and in [Tables A3](#) and [A4](#), this is true for people with high IMCP scores but not for those with low IMCP scores. The differences in acceptability between zero-sum and non-zero-sum situations for Muslim and non-Muslim issues are almost identical for high-IMCP individuals: 29 (Muslim, difference between 33 and 62) and 22 (non-Muslim, difference between 45 and 67) percentage points in the canteen example and 12 (Muslim, difference between 28 and 40) and 14 (non-Muslim, difference between 54 and 68) percentage points in the holiday example. People with an inclusive mindset are equally responsive to a shift in the logic of cultural threat when the cultural change involves Muslims.

The situation is different for the low-IMCP individuals. The differences between zero-sum and non-zero-sum situations are about 2.5 and 5 times as large for non-Muslim issues as for Muslim issues: 11 (Muslim) and 26 (non-Muslim) percentage points in the canteen example and 2 (Muslim) and 10 (non-Muslim) percentage points in the holiday example. Thus, people with an exclusionary mindset are largely opposed to cultural change to accommodate Muslims regardless of the logic of the cultural threat. In [Figure 4](#), we see that low IMCP people respond much less to shifts in the logic of threat in the Muslim conditions, while high IMCP people respond equally strongly or more strongly to these shifts in the Muslim conditions.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to go beyond existing research on the effect of cultural threat. We investigated support of Muslims and their group rights by proposing a more elaborate theoretical framework and a more thorough empirical design. While virtually all research so far has measured cultural threat through the size of immigrant groups and cultural distance, we have proposed direct experimental interventions to measure responses to different logics of cultural threat: the introduction of group rights that either replace the rights of the majority (zero-sum) or they don't (non-zero-sum). This approach allowed us to examine more precisely the effects of cultural threat that constitutes a key concept in migration and minority research in various fields such as sociology and political science but also to make a contribution to the zero-sum literature in social psychology. In contrast to studies on affirmative actions in the education system or the labor market that by definition always constitute zero-sum situations, we propose for the first time, to study the allocation of cultural group rights that can be designed as both zero-sum and non-zero-sum.

Our two studies have shown that the willingness to accommodate Muslims' culture and traditions varies depending on the logic of cultural threat and

that respondents with inclusionary mindsets are more strongly affected by such shifts. Furthermore, we have learned that for this group of respondents, the effect of shifts in the logic of cultural threat is of equal magnitude to that seen when the purpose of cultural change is not cultural accommodation of Muslims. For respondents with exclusionary mindsets, by contrast, we learned that their unwillingness to give up cultural rights is not only related to the fear of losing something but also to the fact that Muslims might get something. They respond to cultural change to accommodate Muslims as equally, or near equally, threatening regardless of the logic of threat.

In addition, shifting the logic of threat from zero-sum to non-zero-sum in the question of menu options succeeds to the extent that majorities are open to accommodating Muslim demands in non-zero-sum situations. Adding holidays to celebrate Muslim culture and traditions is largely opposed, even if it is an additional holiday rather than replacing an existing Christian holiday. The first example strongly encourages conceptualizations of cultural threat as situational, dependent on the logic of threat. The second example also supports this conclusion, but warns about some limits to it. Some forms of cultural change, such as adding a Muslim holiday, remains broadly opposed even in the non-zero-sum setting. Respondents with inclusive mindsets do respond positively to a holiday being added rather than replacing an existing one, but the largest number of respondents still oppose cultural change involving public celebration of Muslim holidays in Germany.

The findings, especially in the canteen example, imply that acceptance of cultural accommodation depend on the policy design and that people are not unconditionally opposed or in favor of Muslims' rights. There are ways to gain support for Muslim religious rights among non-Muslims if the design shifts the logic of cultural threat—and this holds across the board. As the policy feedback literature has shown, policy regulations shape citizens' attitudes and behavior among others by allocating resources and providing normative content (Mettler & Soss, 2004).

Using concrete rights instead of more generic variables such as group size to operationalize cultural threats bears the danger of idiosyncratic results as specific religious practices might be opposed for very specific reasons. This is why we examined two very different religious rights and could show that they lead to similar marginal effects, which allows us to generalize our findings across different contexts. Further research should nonetheless investigate other rights (also from non-Muslim immigrants or other religious groups) that can also be designed as zero-sum/non-zero-sum regulations to further generalize our results. There are many other cultural rights that play different roles in different contexts and that are measured, for example, using multiculturalism and citizenship policy indices (Banting & Kymlicka, 2013;

Koopmans et al., 2005, 2012). These comparative studies show that such policies have been implemented to different degrees in a large number of Western countries and across time. They measure several cultural (and also other) rights of immigrants at the policy level, the acceptance of which could also be measured at the individual level.

To put the cultural threat argument in a broader perspective we should also take into account the power symmetry between the group that feels threatened and the group that is seen as a threat as it might matter how (numerically or culturally) large these groups are in relation to each other (Carol et al., 2015). In the context of increasing immigration and demographic changes, the question is to what extent the majority society is willing to accommodate these new groups and their culture (Alba, 2020), and to what extent the majority has a right to keep their majority rights or not (Orgad & Koopmans, 2022). Abascal (2020) has shown that whites in the United States redefine the boundaries of social groups in more exclusive ways when informed of their demographic decline. However, Gereke et al. (2022) found no such effect in Germany (see also Gereke et al., 2025). As we have seen, the way in which the majority responds to these perceived threats depends on the way in which accommodation is regulated and the specific rights in question. Finally, attitudes toward Muslim rights might also depend on whether the majority group already has these rights or whether we are talking about rights that do not even exist for the majority religion (Statham et al., 2005).

Appendix

Table A1. Mean Values Acceptance Rates Canteen Experiment, Study I.

	All	Low IMCP	High IMCP	Anti-Immig	Pro-Immig
Non-zero-sum	0.59 (0.01)	0.31 (0.02)	0.71 (0.01)	0.43 (0.01)	0.73 (0.01)
Zero-sum	0.21 (0.01)	0.10 (0.02)	0.26 (0.01)	0.10 (0.01)	0.31 (0.01)

Note. Mean values in favor of proposal for all respondents, those with low and high IMCP (Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice) values (below and above the middle category 3) as well as pro- and anti-immigration respondents (above and below the middle category 5).

Table A2. Mean Values Acceptance Rates Holiday Experiment, Study 1.

	All	Low IMCP	High IMCP	Anti-Immig	Pro-Immig
Win-win	0.38 (0.01)	0.17 (0.02)	0.49 (0.02)	0.21 (0.02)	0.53 (0.01)
Non-zero-sum	0.35 (0.01)	0.17 (0.02)	0.42 (0.01)	0.24 (0.02)	0.44 (0.01)
Zero-sum	0.21 (0.01)	0.09 (0.02)	0.27 (0.01)	0.08 (0.01)	0.32 (0.01)

Note. Mean values in favor of proposal for all respondents, those with low and high IMCP (Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice) values (below and above the middle category 3) as well as pro- and anti-immigration respondents (above and below the middle category 5).

Table A3. Mean Values Acceptance Rates Canteen Experiment, Study 2.

	All		All	Low IMCP	High IMCP
Non-zero-sum	0.60 (0.01)	Climate change	0.62 (0.01)	0.52 (0.03)	0.67 (0.02)
		Muslims	0.52 (0.02)	0.28 (0.03)	0.62 (0.02)
Zero-sum	0.33 (0.01)	Climate change	0.40 (0.02)	0.26 (0.05)	0.45 (0.03)
		Muslims	0.28 (0.02)	0.17 (0.04)	0.33 (0.03)

Note. Mean values in favor of proposal for all respondents and those with low and high IMCP (Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice) values (below and above the middle category 3).

Table A4. Mean Values Acceptance Rates Holiday Experiment, Study 2.

	All		All	Low IMCP	High IMCP
Non-zero-sum	0.47 (0.01)	International Women's Day	0.62 (0.01)	0.50 (0.03)	0.68 (0.01)
		Muslim holiday	0.32 (0.01)	0.13 (0.01)	0.40 (0.02)
Zero-sum	0.36 (0.01)	International Women's Day	0.51 (0.02)	0.40 (0.06)	0.54 (0.03)
		Muslim holiday	0.24 (0.02)	0.11 (0.02)	0.28 (0.02)

Note. Mean values in favor of proposal for all respondents and those with low and high IMCP (Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice) values (below and above the middle category 3).

Table A5. Regression Analyses Canteen Experiment, Study I.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	IMCP		Immigration	
Ref.: replacing meal (zero-sum)				
Additional meal (non-zero-sum)	0.368*** (0.011)	−0.025 (0.040)	0.378*** (0.011)	0.245*** (0.022)
IMCP/Immigration attitudes	0.138*** (0.006)	0.084*** (0.008)	0.058*** (0.002)	0.044*** (0.003)
Additional meal*IMCP/Immigration attitudes		0.114*** (0.011)		0.028*** (0.004)
Constant	−0.628*** (0.026)	−0.074*** (0.028)	−0.441*** (0.0194)	0.002 (0.015)
N	2,636	2,636	2,636	2,636
R2	0.400	0.423	0.436	0.446

Notes: Models 1 and 2 include the IMCP (Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice) index and Models 3 and 4 the index on immigration attitudes. Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < .01$.

Table A6. Regression Analyses Holiday Experiment, Study I.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	IMCP		Immigration	
Ref.: replacing holiday (zero-sum)				
Additional holiday (win-win)	0.176*** (0.014)	−0.116** (0.053)	0.173*** (0.014)	0.082*** (0.029)
Additional holiday (non-zero-sum)	0.139*** (0.014)	0.049 (0.053)	0.139*** (0.014)	0.143*** (0.029)
IMCP/Immigration attitudes	0.125*** (0.006)	0.089*** (0.010)	0.055*** (0.002)	0.049*** (0.004)
Additional(win-win)*IMCP/ Immigration attitudes		0.085*** (0.015)		0.019*** (0.005)
Additional(non-zero-sum)*IMCP/ Immigration attitudes		0.026* (0.015)		−0.001 (0.005)
Constant	−0.223*** (0.023)	−0.098*** (0.037)	−0.049*** (0.014)	−0.021 (0.020)
N	2,636	2,636	2,636	2,636
R2	0.181	0.192	0.231	0.236

Notes: Models 1 and 2 include the IMCP (Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice) index and Models 3 and 4 the index on immigration attitudes. Standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$.

Table A7. Regression Analyses Canteen Experiment, Study 2.

	All (1a)	Climate (1b)	Muslim (1c)	All (1d)	All (2a)	Climate (2b)	Muslim (2c)	All (2d)
Ref.: replacing meal (zero-sum)								
Additional meal (non-zero-sum)	0.237*** (0.018)	0.230*** (0.024)	0.242*** (0.024)	0.230*** (0.024)	0.170*** (0.062)	0.273*** (0.086)	0.0695 (0.086)	0.273*** (0.086)
IMCP	0.119*** (0.008)	0.092*** (0.011)	0.144*** (0.011)	0.092*** (0.011)	0.107*** (0.013)	0.099*** (0.018)	0.111*** (0.019)	0.099*** (0.018)
Reason (Muslim = 1, Climate = 2)				-0.297*** (0.062)				-0.155 (0.098)
Additional meal*Reason				0.0118 (0.034)				-0.204* (0.121)
IMCP*Muslim				0.0522*** (0.016)				0.0123 (0.026)
Additional meal*IMCP					0.0188 (0.017)	-0.0120 (0.023)	0.0486** (0.023)	-0.0120 (0.023)
Additional meal*IMCP*Reason								0.0606* (0.033)
Constant	-0.083*** (0.032)	0.069 (0.045)	-0.228*** (0.044)	0.069 (0.045)	-0.039 (0.049)	0.042 (0.069)	-0.113 (0.070)	0.0422 (0.069)
N	1,504	758	746	1,504	1,504	758	746	1,504
R2	0.212	0.171	0.265	0.238	0.212	0.171	0.269	0.241

Notes: IMCP (Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice). Standard errors in parentheses, *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$.

Table A8. Regression Analyses Holiday Experiment, Study 2.

	All (1a)	Women (1b)	Muslim (1c)	All (1d)	All (2a)	Women (2b)	Muslim (2c)	All (2d)
Ref.: replacing holiday (zero-sum)								
Additional holiday (non-zero-sum)	0.109*** (0.017)	0.116*** (0.024)	0.0701*** (0.021)	0.116*** (0.023)	0.039 (0.063)	0.049 (0.089)	-0.098 (0.073)	0.049 (0.085)
IMCP	0.100*** (0.007)	0.073*** (0.009)	0.121*** (0.009)	0.073*** (0.009)	0.086*** (0.015)	0.059*** (0.021)	0.086*** (0.017)	0.059*** (0.019)
Reason (Muslim = 1, Women = 0)				-0.431*** (0.055)				-0.360*** (0.099)
Additional ^{IM} Reason				-0.046 (0.032)				-0.147 (0.115)
IMCP ^{Reason}				0.048*** (0.013)				0.027 (0.027)
Additional ^{IM} IMCP					0.019 (0.017)	0.018 (0.024)	0.048** (0.019)	0.018 (0.023)
Additional ^{IM} IMCP ^{Reason}								0.029 (0.031)
Constant	0.008 (0.030)	0.248*** (0.042)	-0.183*** (0.035)	0.248*** (0.040)	0.060 (0.054)	0.300*** (0.079)	-0.061 (0.062)	0.300*** (0.076)
Observations	2,234	1,111	1,123	2,234	2,234	1,111	1,123	2,234
R2	0.093	0.062	0.155	0.251	0.094	0.063	0.160	0.253

Notes: IMCP (Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice). Standard errors in parentheses, ***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05.

Table A9. Balance Check: Canteen Experiment, Study 1 (Means).

	Zero-sum	Non-zero-sum
Female	.50	.54
Age	47.9	47.7
Education	2.1	2.2
IMCP	3.4	3.5
Immigration attitudes	4.7	4.8
Left-right ideology	4.9	4.9

Notes: IMCP (Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice).

Table A10. Balance Check: Holiday Experiment, Study 1 (Means).

	Win-win	Non-zero-sum	Zero-sum
Female	.50	.52	.53
Age	48.4	47.6	47.4
Education	2.1	2.2	2.2
IMCP	3.4	3.5	3.5
Immigration attitudes	4.7	4.8	4.8
Left-right ideology	4.9	4.8	4.9

Notes: IMCP (Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice).

Table A11. Balance Check: Canteen Experiment, Study 2 (Means).

	Zero-sum: Climate change	Zero-sum: Muslim Religion	Non-zero-sum: Climate change	Non-zero-sum: Muslim Religion
Female	.51	.47	.52	.53
Age	44.8	45.6	45.9	46.5
Education	.24	.20	.22	.20
IMCP	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.8
Left-right ideology	5.0	5.1	5.0	4.8
Cultural conservatism	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.1

Notes: IMCP (Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice).

Table A12. Balance Check: Holiday Experiment, Study 2 (Means).

	Zero-sum: Women’s Day	Zero-sum: Muslim Holiday	Non-zero-sum: Women’s Day	Non-zero-sum: Muslim Holiday
Female	.48	.51	.48	.50
Age	44.6	44.6	45.6	46.8
Education	.22	.20	.22	.25
IMCP	3.9	3.7	3.8	3.9
Left-right ideology	5.0	5.0	4.9	5.0
Cultural conservatism	3.1	2.9	3.1	3.1

Notes: IMCP (Internal Motivation to Control Prejudice).

Acknowledgments

We like to thank Paul M. Sniderman for his invaluable contribution to the design of the “Schnitzel experiments,” as well as Sarah Carol, Susanne Veit and the anonymous reviewers for their feedback on earlier versions of this paper. We are also grateful for helpful comments we received at presentations at the Berlin Social Science Center in 2023, the 2024 International Conference of the Council for European Studies in Lyon, the 2024 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in Philadelphia, at meetings of the Citizens and Democracy Research Group at the Department of Government at the University of Bergen, and the 2024 Conference on Immigration in Frontline States in Chania organized by the Yale University Identity & Conflict Lab.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, publication of this article: This study is in part funded by the European Research Council’s Consolidator Grant INCLUDE (no. 101001133), the German Research Foundation (no. 416125278) and Norges Forskningsråd (287592).

ORCID iDs

Marc Helbling  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9672-4569>

Richard Traummüller  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9487-091X>

Data Availability Statement

Replication materials are available from the Harvard Dataverse: <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/43DQVR>, Helbling et al. (2025).

Notes

1. By inclusionary mindset we mean people who think they have an obligation to treat Muslims without prejudice and who are motivated to try to do so. By an exclusionary mindset we mean people who do not acknowledge that they have such obligations towards Muslims or who report not being motivated to try to be unprejudiced. Operationally, these motivations are measured by an internal motivation to control prejudice (IMCP) index (Blinder et al., 2013; Ivarsflaten & Sniderman, 2022).
2. It is important to bear in mind that besides the German Unity Day virtually all holidays in Germany are Christian holidays.
3. In 2018, a dispute over religiously correct lunches escalated at an elementary school in Hamburg. The chairman of the parents' council is said to have demanded that only "halal" meat, i.e. meat that is pure according to Islamic standards and comes exclusively from ritually slaughtered animals, be served. When numerous parents opposed the demand, an open dispute ensued which caused the Hamburg education authority to intervene. (<https://www.welt.de/regionales/hamburg/article181456908/Hamburg-Streit-ueber-halales-Mittagessen-an-Grundschule.html>, accessed 24 January 2025).
4. See for example: Le Bars, S. (2012). Le halal à la cantine, un fantasme loin de la réalité. *Le Monde*, 10 March.
5. The introduction of Muslim public holidays in Germany has been under discussion for some time. In 2013, for example, the Central Council of Muslims in Germany called for the federal states to introduce two fixed Islamic public holidays by law. In 2017, then minister of the interior Thomas DeMaizière from the conservative party (CDU), proposed the introduction of a Muslim public holiday which caused an intense debate. In the upcoming election, the left-wing party "Die Linke" even included state-protected Muslim public holidays in its election manifesto. (see: <https://www.katholisch.de/artikel/15138-sternberg-fuer-muslimischen-feiertag-in-deutschland>, accessed 24 January 2025). In fact, there are already some examples of statutory regulations for Islamic holidays at state level. In Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen, Muslim pupils have the right to a day off school. Employees have the opportunity to visit a mosque or pray at work. In Berlin, this applies to Ramadan and the Feast of Sacrifice, in Hamburg and Bremen also to Ashura Day (day of mourning and fasting). As recently as 2024 several major cities in Germany, including Cologne and Frankfurt, have introduced festive lighting on busy streets during Ramadan. This, too, is the subject of heated debate. (see: https://www.focus.de/panorama/welt/wirbel-um-ramadan-beleuchtung-in-deutschen-staedten-wo-die-aktion-herkommt_id_259751272.html, accessed 24 January 2025).

6. We additionally manipulated whether this right was simply “proposed” or “demanded”. This variation did not affect the results and is not studied in this paper.
7. In Germany religious matters are decided at the state and not the federal level. The determination of public holidays is also a matter for the federal states with the exception of the German Unity Day.
8. The measures have been asked after the experiment, but thanks to a buffer of general political questions, undue priming by the experiment is unlikely.
9. We thus exclude people who score 3 on average (midpoint), which corresponds to about 13 and 14% of the participants in the two studies. Although dividing respondents in thirds of the IMCP scores as suggested by Gelman and Park (2008) would render the results clearer, we did not want to discard even more participants from the analysis. In this sense, our results on the differences between low and high IMCP are conservative. For the regression analyses we use the continuous scale with all participants.
10. In a third condition, which we do not analyze in this paper (to make it comparable to the holiday experiment), we referred to “diverse preferences and concerns” without specifications. In an additional specification, we arbitrarily referred to the additional cost of 1 euro incurred when offering meatless meals. This leads to a decrease in acceptance rates among individuals with both inclusionary and exclusionary mindsets.
11. See for example: <https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2013-08/gruene-fleischkonsum-wahlkampf-kantine-veggie-day/komplettansicht> (accessed 24 January 2025). One year after the elections the Green party abandoned the idea of a Veggie Day: <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article134604516/Der-Veggie-Day-laeisst-die-Gruenen-nicht-los.html> (accessed 24 January 2025). The proposal had been around since 2010 and the federal state of Bremen, for example, and several university canteens had already implemented it nationwide. There have already been several similar proposals for a Veggie Day in many countries around the world: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meat-free_days (accessed 13 January 2025).
12. In Berlin this holiday was introduced, among others, because it had fewer holidays than other German states: <https://www.spiegel.de/panorama/gesellschaft/weltfrauentag-als-feiertag-in-berlin-darum-geht-s-am-8-maerz-a-1256162.html> (accessed 24 January 2025). It is also a national holiday in over 20 mostly African and Asian countries: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Women%27s_Day#Official_United_Nations_themes (accessed 24 January 2025).
13. To make the examples realistic we refer to meals without meat in the climate change conditions and meat without pork in the Muslim condition. If anything, the “without meat” condition constitutes the more restrictive regulation than the “without pork” condition (that still allows other meat dishes) and should therefore lead to more opposition. Since we expect more opposition towards Muslim than non-Muslim demands this should dampen the effect.

14. In additional conditions we randomly referred to the positive or negative effects an additional holiday can have on the economy. We detected no statistically significant effect (not shown).

References

- Abascal, M. (2020). Contraction as a response to group threat: Demographic decline and whites' classification of people who are ambiguously white. *American Sociological Review*, 85(2), 298–322. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122420905127>
- Alba, R. (2020). *The great demographic illusion: Majority, minority, and the expanding American mainstream*. Princeton.
- Banting, K., & Kymlicka, W. (2013). Is there really a retreat from multiculturalism policies? New evidence from the multiculturalism policy index. *Comparative European Politics*, 11(5), 577–598. <https://doi.org/10.1057/cep.2013.12>
- Bauböck, R. (2022). Cultural majority rights: Has multiculturalism been turned upside down? *Ethnicities*, 22(4), 527–546. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687968221085104>
- Bell, D. A., Valenta, M., & Strabac, Z. (2021). A comparative analysis of changes in anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes in Europe: 1990–2017. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 9(1), 57. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-021-00266-w>
- Bleich, E., & Maurits van der Veen, A. (2022). *Covering Muslims: American newspapers in comparative perspective*. Oxford University Press.
- Blinder, S., Ford, R., & Ivarsflaten, E. (2013). The better angels of our nature: How the antiprejudice norm affects policy and party preferences in Great Britain and Germany. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(4), 841–857. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12030>
- Blinder, S., Ford, R., & Ivarsflaten, E. (2019). Discrimination, antiprejudice norms, and public support for multicultural policies in Europe: The case of religious schools. *Comparative Political Studies*, 52(8), 1232–1255. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414019830728>
- Blumer, H. (1958). Race prejudice as a sense of group position. *Pacific Sociological Review*, 1(1), 3–7. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1388607>
- Bobo, L. D. (1983). Whites' opposition to busing: Symbolic racism or realistic group conflict? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 45(6), 1196–1210. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.45.6.1196>
- Bobo, L. D. (1999). Prejudice as group position: Microfoundations of a sociological approach to racism and race relations. *Journal of Social Issues*, 55(3), 445–472. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00127>
- Bohman, A., Eger, M. A., Gabriellsson, D., & Velásquez, P. (2024). Revisiting group threat theory using insights from stigma research. In L. H. Yang, M. A. Eger, & B. G. Link (Eds.), *Migration stigma. Understanding prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion* (pp. 45–57). The MIT Press.

- Brader, T., Valentino, N. A., & Suhay, E. (2008). What triggers public opposition to immigration? Anxiety, group cues, and immigration threat. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(4), 959–978. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00353.x>
- Brown, N. D., & Jacoby-Senghor, D. S. (2021). Majority members misperceive even “win-win” diversity policies as unbeneficial to them. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Advance online publication.
- Carol, S., Helbling, M., & Michalowski, I. (2015). A struggle over religious rights? How Muslim immigrants and Christian natives view the accommodation of religion in six European countries. *Social Forces*, 94(2), 647–671. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sov054>
- Carol, S., & Koopmans, R. (2013). Dynamics of contestation over Islamic religious rights in Western Europe. *Ethnicities*, 13(2), 165–190. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796812470893>
- Coppock, A., & McClellan, O. A. (2019). Validating the demographic, political, psychological, and experimental results obtained from a new source of online survey respondents. *Research & Politics*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168018822174>
- Daskalovski, Z. (2017). Public holidays and equality for Muslims in Western Europe. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 37(3), 332–343. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2017.1379692>
- De Wilde, P., Koopmans, R., Merkel, W., Strijbis, O., & Zürn, M. (Eds.), (2019). *The struggle over borders: Cosmopolitanism and communitarianism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Di Stasio, V., Lancee, B., Veit, S., & Yemane, R. (2021). Muslim by default or religious discrimination? Results from a cross-national field experiment on hiring discrimination. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(6), 1305–1326. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2019.1622826>
- Dolezal, M., Helbling, M., & Hutter, S. (2010). Debating Islam in Austria, Germany and Switzerland: Ethnic citizenship, church–state relations and right-wing populism. *West European Politics*, 33(2), 171–190. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402380903538773>
- Dover, T. L., Major, B., & Kaiser, C. R. (2016). Members of high-status groups are threatened by pro-diversity organizational messages. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 62, 58–67. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2015.10.006>
- Dražanová, L., Gonnot, J., Heidland, T., & Krüger, F. (2024). Which individual-level factors explain public attitudes toward immigration? A metaanalysis. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 50(2), 317–340.
- Gelman, A., & Park, D. K. (2009). Splitting a Predictor at the Upper Quarter or Third and the Lower Quarter or Third. *The American Statistician*, 63(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1198/tast.2009.0001>
- Gereke, J., Helbling, M., Kommol, A., Szafran, D., Ünal, Z., & Viss-er-Koomson, M. (2025). The effects of Muslim immigration and demographic change on group boundaries in Germany. *European Societies*, 27(4), 697–723. https://doi.org/10.1162/euso_a_00038

- Gereke, J., Hellyer, J., Behnert, J., Exner, S., Herbel, A., Jäger, F., Lajic, D., Mezensky, S., Anh, Vu N., Oglaza, T., Schabinger, J., Sokolova, A., Szafran, D., Tirolf, N., Veit, S., & Zhang, N. (2022). Demographic change and group boundaries in Germany: The effect of projected demographic decline on perceptions of who has a migration background. *Sociological Science*, 9(1), 206–220. <https://doi.org/10.15195/v9.a9>
- Giorda, M. C. (2015). Religious pluralism in school canteens. *Reset Dialogues. Electronic Publication*. <https://www.resetdoc.org/story/00000022564?r> (last accessed 31 October 2022).
- Gustavsson, G., van der Noll, J., & Sundberg, R. (2016). Opposing the veil in the name of liberalism: Popular attitudes to liberalism and Muslim veiling in the Netherlands. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(10), 1719–1737. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.1124126>
- Hainmueller, J., & Hiscox, M. J. (2007). Educated preferences: Explaining attitudes toward immigration in Europe. *International Organization*, 61(02), 399–442. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020818307070142>
- Hainmueller, J., & Hiscox, M. J. (2010). Attitudes toward highly skilled and lowskilled immigration: Evidence from a survey experiment. *American Political Science Review*, 104(1), 61–84. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055409990372>
- Hainmueller, J., & Hopkins, D. J. (2014). Public attitudes toward immigration. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 17(1), 225–249. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-102512-194818>
- Harteveldt, E., & Ivarsflaten, E. (2016). Why women avoid the radical right: Internalized norms and party reputations. *British Journal of Political Science*, 48(2), 369–384. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123415000745>
- Helbling, M., Ivarsflaten, E., & Traunmüller, R. (2025). Replication Data for: Zero-sum thinking and the cultural threat of Muslim immigrants' religious rights. *Harvard Dataverse*. <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/43DQVR>
- Helbling, M., & Traunmüller, R. (2016). How state support of religion shapes attitudes toward Muslim immigrants. New evidence from a subnational comparison. *Comparative Political Studies*, 49(3), 391–424. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414015612388>
- Helbling, M., & Traunmüller, R. (2020). What is islamophobia? Disentangling citizens' feelings towards ethnicity, religion and religiosity using a survey experiment. *British Journal of Political Science*, 50(3), 811–828.
- Ivarsflaten, E. (2005). Threatened by diversity: Why restrictive asylum and immigration policies appeal to western Europeans. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 15(1), 21–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13689880500064577>
- Ivarsflaten, E., Helbling, M., Sniderman, P., & Traunmüller, R. (2025). Value conflicts revisited: Muslims, gender equality and gestures of respect. *British Journal of Political Science*. (online first).
- Ivarsflaten, E., & Sniderman, P. M. (2022). *The struggle for inclusion*. Chicago University Press.
- Kinder, D. R., & Kam, C. D. (2010). *Us Against Them. Ethnocentric Foundations of American Opinion*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

- Koopmans, R., Michalowski, I., & Waibel, S. (2012). Citizenship rights for immigrants: National political processes and cross-national convergence in Western Europe, 1980–2008. *AJS: American journal of sociology*, 117(4), 1202–1245. <https://doi.org/10.1086/662707>
- Koopmans, R., Statham, P., Giugni, M., & Passy, F. (2005). *Contested citizenship: Immigration and cultural diversity in Europe*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Kuklinski, J. H., Sniderman, P. M., Knight, K., Piazza, T., Tetlock, P. E., Lawrence, G. R., & Mellers, B. (1997). Racial prejudice and attitudes toward affirmative action. *American Journal of Political Science*, 41(2), 402–419. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111770>
- Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural citizenship: A liberal theory of minority rights*. Oxford University Press.
- Lowery, B. S., Unzueta, M. M., Knowles, E. D., & Goff, P. A. (2006). Concern for the in-group and opposition to affirmative action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(6), 961–974. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.90.6.961>
- Maxwell, R. (2019). Everyone deserves Quiche: French school lunch programs and national culture in a globalized world. *British Journal of Sociology*, 70(4), 1424–1447. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12643>
- McSweeney, B. (2002). Hofstede's model of national cultural differences and their consequences: A triumph of faith - A failure of analysis. *Human Relations*, 55(1), 89–118. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726702551004>
- Mettler, S., & Soss, J. (2004). The consequences of public policy for democratic citizenship: Bridging policy studies and mass politics. *Perspectives on Politics*, 2(1), 55–73. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1537592704000623>
- Miller, D. (2016). Majorities and Minarets: Religious freedom and public space. *British Journal of Political Science*, 46(2), 437–456. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123414000131>
- Montgomery, J. M., Nyhan, B., & Torres, M. (2018). How Conditioning on Post-treatment Variables Can Ruin Your Experiment and What to Do about It. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62, 760–775. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12357>
- Morier-Genoud, E. (2000). The 1996 'Muslim Holidays' affair: Religious competition and state mediation in contemporary Mozambique. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26(3), 409–427. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713683586>
- Mullinix, K. J., Leeper, T. J., Druckman, J. N., & Freese, J. (2015). The Generalizability of Survey Experiments. *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, 2(2), 109–138. <https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2015.19>
- Orgad, L. (2015). *The Cultural Defense of Nations. A Liberal Theory of Majority Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Orgad, L. (2021). Forced to be free: The limits of European tolerance. *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, 34(1), 1–36.
- Orgad, L., & Koopmans, R. (2022). *Majorities, minorities, and the future of nationhood*. Cambridge University Press.

- Penninx, R. (2019). Problems of and solutions for the study of immigrant integration. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7(13), 13. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0122-x>
- Pfündel, K., Sticks, A., & Tanis, K. (2021). *Muslimisches Leben in Deutschland 2020: Studie im Auftrag der Deutschen Islam Konferenz*. Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge.
- Piotrowski, J., Tran, J.R.-, Baran, T., & Piotrowska, M.Ż.- (2019). Zero-sum thinking as mediator of the relationship of national attitudes with (un)willingness to host refugees in own country. *International Journal of Psychology*, 54(6), 722–730. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12538>
- Quillian, L. (1995). Prejudice as a response to perceived group threat: Population composition and anti-immigrant and racial prejudice in Europe. *American Sociological Review*, 60(4), 586–611. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2096296>
- Roberts, R., & Davidai, S. (2021). The psychology of asymmetric zero-sum beliefs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Advance online publication.
- Różycka-Tran, J., Boski, P., & Wojciszke, B. (2015). Belief in a zero-sum game as a social axiom: A 37-Nation study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 46(4), 525–548. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022115572226>
- Schaffner, B. F. (2013). Support at any distance? The role of location and prejudice in public opposition to the “Ground zero mosque”. *PS. Political Science and Politics*, 46(4), 753–759. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s104909651300111x>
- Schmuck, D., & Matthes, J. (2019). Voting “Against Islamization”? How anti-islamic right-wing, populist political campaign ads influence explicit and implicit attitudes toward Muslims as well as voting preferences. *Political Psychology*, 40(4), 739–757. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12557>
- Sniderman, P., & Hagendoorn, L. (2007). *When Ways of Life Collide. Multiculturalism and Its Discontents in the Netherlands*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Sniderman, P. M., & Piazza, T. (1993). *The scar of race*. Harvard University Press.
- Sobolewska, M., Galandini, S., & Lessard-Phillips, L. (2017). The public view of immigrant integration: Multidimensional and consensual. Evidence from survey experiments in the UK and the Netherlands. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(1), 58–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2016.1248377>
- Statham, P., Koopmans, R., Giugni, M., & Passy, F. (2005). Resilient or adaptable Islam? *Ethnicities*, 5(4), 427–459. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796805058092>
- Stephan, W. G., Oscar, Y., Martinez, C. M., Schwarzwald, J., & Michal Tur-Kaspa, M. (1998). Prejudice toward immigrants to Spain and Israel. An integrated threat theory analysis. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 29(4), 559–576. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022198294004>
- Strabac, Z., & Listhaug, O. (2008). Anti-Muslim prejudice in Europe: A multilevel analysis of survey data from 30 countries. *Social Science Research*, 37(1), 268–286. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2007.02.004>
- Veit, S., & Thijssen, L. (2021). Almost identical but still treated differently: Hiring discrimination against foreign-born and domestic-born minorities. *Journal of*

Ethnic and Migration Studies, 47(6), 1285–1304. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2019.1622825>

Verkyuten, M., Yogeeswaran, K., & Adelman, L. (2020). Toleration and prejudice-reduction: Two ways of improving intergroup relations. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 50(2), 239–255. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2624>

Zolberg, A. R., & LittWoon, L. (1999). Why Islam is like Spanish: Cultural incorporation in Europe and the United States. *Politics & Society*, 27(1), 5–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329299027001002>

Author Biographies

Marc Helbling is full professor at the Department of Sociology and the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES) at the University of Mannheim and a Research Fellow at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center. He is a member of the German Expert Council on Integration and Migration.

Elisabeth Ivarsflaten is Professor of Political Science at the Department of Government, the University of Bergen. She is the Principal Investigator of the ERC-funded project INCLUDE and Scientific Director of the Digital Social Science Core Facility (DIGSSCORE) at the University of Bergen.

Richard Traunmüller is Professor of Political Science and Empirical Democracy Research in the School of Social Sciences at the University of Mannheim. He is scientific director of the German Internet Panel.