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Anti-Pluralism in Post-Migrant Germany:
An Inferential Statistical Analysis of Anti-Muslim Racism and
Collective Norm Erosions after the “Long Summer of Migration”

Anti-Pluralismus im post-migrantischen Deutschland:
Eine inferenzstatistische Analyse des anti-muslimischen Rassismus
und der kollektiven Erosion von Normen nach dem „langen Sommer
der Migration“

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Abstract

The bachelor thesis examines the phenomenon of *anti-pluralist norm reductions* – the phenomenon that Germans, who self-identify as believing in ostensibly universalist norms, actually contradict these very norms when they are applied to Muslim minorities in Germany. By analyzing data from the German social cohesion panel from 2022 and 2023 using a logistic regression model, the study investigates the factors and variables that contribute to the probability that the universalist norms in question will be reduced. The theoretical dimension of this study is grounded in an examination of cognitive dissonance among populations due to so-called democratic antinomies, a consideration of Germany's context as a post-migration society, as well as theory surrounding anti-Muslim racism. The research conducted here predicts average effects as well as probabilities to examine the effect of two key factors: anti-Muslim bias and pluralism aversion. Standard-demographic variables include education, gender, age and net income. While anti-Muslim bias and plurality aversion were both found to have a clear positive effect on the probability of anti-pluralist norm reduction, the effects of the standard-demographic variables showed much more ambiguity. The only variable that proves robust across different models is education, with more education having a negative effect on the probability that universalist norms will be contradicted in the context of opinions regarding Muslim minorities.

Key words: anti-Muslim racism, aversion of pluralism, social norms, universalism social psychology, democratic theory, logistic regression, German SCP

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1. Introduction

Can a person believe in a sociocultural norm and, at the same time, *not* believe in it? Can a norm apply *only* in specific instances and yet still be considered “universal”? When is universalism *not* universal? These questions may sound anthropological, even philosophical. As this study will show, however, they are in fact questions for the social sciences. Through an empirical approach to examining widespread attitudes in Germany, the study interrogates why everyday people espouse belief in universalist norms, yet contradict these values when they are applied to Muslims (Foroutan, 2021).

In contemporary Germany, Islam is a ubiquitous part of public life, having evolved from the construct of an imagined “other” into a concretely impactful contributor to the country’s cultural, social, and political fabric. With, according to the Federal Office of Migration and Refugees (2022), approximately 5.5 million Muslims living in the country, constituting nearly 6.5% of the total population, Islam is Germany’s second-largest religious group. This demographic significance highlights the reality of Germany as a multireligious society, where Islam shapes and is shaped by the broader cultural context (Teczan, 2023).

The organizational structures of Muslim communities have further cemented their role in German society. Since the establishment of the first Islamic umbrella association (*Dachverband*) in 1973, Muslim communities have diversified their work beyond religious services, offering language courses, social counseling, and educational support (Halm et al., 2012; Spielhaus, 2019). Such contributions create networks for people with similar struggles in Germany and, in turn, highlight the growing importance of Muslim actors in shaping Germany’s public life.

At first glance, flourishing Muslim cultural production and growing social relevance seem to be the product of social norms based in Germans’ firm belief in universalist, Enlightenment values, in particular the unconditional equality of all human beings. The empirical evidence tells another story, however. If Muslims have developed cultural and social power within Germany, it may be *despite* prevailing attitudes toward such seemingly “universalist” values. As the work of Naika Foroutan has demonstrated, social norms typically held up as unassailable and universal are, in practice, effectively reduced, abrogated, or ignored when it comes to Muslims (Foroutan, 2021). This makes German universalism, or the lack thereof, appear like a contradiction in terms. In this context, the dominant and overarching question of whether Islam “belongs” to Germany often becomes a backdoor to anti-Muslim debates and media coverage, rather than reflecting the lived realities of a *post-migrant society*.

The post-migrant framework (cf. chapter 4.2) underscores how the cultural and social contributions of Muslims transcend reductionist notions of “integration.” Debates about and demands of integration have, in different branches of theory – including Marxism, Post-colonialism, or post-structuralism – been critiqued for centering the dominant societal majority, who continues to wield the mechanisms of

power and control (Kaloianov, 2014). In light of this, German Muslims' active participation in cultural production and civic life can best be understood through the idea of the *counterpublic* (Fraser, 1990; Herding, 2013; Eckert, Chadha, 2013; Soliman, 2015). As Nancy Fraser conceptualizes, counterpublics are parallel arenas where marginalized groups create oppositional discourses to re-imagine their identities. In Germany, these spaces can be exemplified by initiatives such as the Green Mosque Movement, queer Muslim collectives, and platforms like *muslime.tv*, which carve out public space for diverse Muslim voices (Tezcan, 2023; Brinkmann, Sauer, 2016). Similarly, various forms of art, ranging from German-Muslim comedy to *nasheeds* and theatrical productions, serve as political intervention, critique, and spiritual exploration, reflecting the multi-layered identities and aspirations of young German Muslims (Werbner, 2004).

Understanding the friction between these two factors – the German public's rhetoric of universalist values, on the one hand, and the presence of Islam in German public life, on the other hand – is essential in examining why social norms are often abandoned when applied on Muslims. The overwhelming support of universalism seems to go beyond the limits of social determinants like gender, education, or age, emphasizing the significance of inquiry: How can *anti-pluralist norm reduction* (APNR) – meaning the anti-pluralist reduction of otherwise pluralist norms when applied to Muslims, as conceptualized by Naika Foroutan (2021)—be measured and analyzed? Next to a set of standard-demographic variables, this empirical analysis considers a generalized aversion against pluralism, anti-Muslim racism, and cognitive dissonance as crucial factors. On this basis, this paper seeks to examine what factors contribute to the probability and intensity of APNR. By examining these dynamics, the study seeks to illuminate some of the core dynamics of anti-Muslim racism, while underscoring the agency of Muslim communities in reshaping Germany's identity and challenging persistent structures of power.

2. The German Context

When analyzing the reduction of pluralist norms, it is first crucial to outline the context of their emergence and solidification into society. This section will address the legacy of Kant and the major influence of his deontological ethics, the resulting commitment to human rights and advocacy, and, lastly, present-day universalism in the face of racism.

2.1 Post-Kantian Universalism

From the Enlightenment period onward, Kantian notions of universalism have been the subject of widespread scholarly debate and social criticism, yet the persistent influence of universalist values on present-day Germany, its political culture and public life, is indisputable. Social philosophical concepts as Kant's famous categorical imperative, which proclaims validity for every individual, trans-culturally and in every context, remain at the foundation of German social consciousness (Vatter,

2020). Central to this philosophical framework is the concept of human dignity, which carries the value of the human condition itself, being “an intrinsic value inherent in the status of being human” (Tasioulas, 2013). It is not difficult to observe the continued significance of the idea of human dignity in German culture, as it makes up the first article of the German constitution. Notions of human dignity could hardly be more renowned and respected in the public discourse of modern Germany, where they set the very tone of much political debate (Apel, 1986): “Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar. Sie zu achten und zu schützen ist Verpflichtung aller staatlichen Gewalt“ (engl.: „Human dignity shall be inviolable. To respect and protect it shall be the duty of all state authority“, *Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany*). The articles that follow build upon this universalist idea of human dignity, extending to personal freedoms, equality before the law, freedom of faith and conscience, and freedom of expression.

The legacy of post-Kantian universalist values also extends beyond the Basic Law and the German philosophical canon. It is deeply embedded in the German social consciousness, to the extent that it constitutes a kind of “common sense,” around which shared norms about morality, society and humanity can crystallize. In this context, Naika Foroutan has shown that the majority of Germans strongly ascribe to this set of values (Foroutan, 2021; Wölfer, Foroutan, 2022). With empirical data from September 2018 until January 2019, Foroutan showed that 82.1% of Germans are convinced that it is important that religiosity be allowed free expression, 94.7% are of the opinion that no one should be discriminated against based on their origin, and even 98.8% reported that they found it important that all people be given the right to enjoy freedom of expression (Foroutan, 2021). This means universalist values like human dignity are not just a legal status, but also pre-associative norms, meaning that they enjoy broad societal support and are regarded as normatively respectable.

2.2 Universalism and the History of Human Rights Advocacy

The development of a discourse of “human rights” and advocacy is deeply intertwined with this commitment to universalism. Lora Wildenthal argues that, consequently, human rights advocacy is an important part of the German public imagination. Wildenthal traces the evolution of these ideas over the course of three historical waves of human rights activism in the Federal Republic (Wildenthal, 2008). According to her, the first wave unfolded in the early 1960s with the creation of significant organizations such as the West German branch of Amnesty International or the *Humanistische Union* (Humanistic Union). In the later years of that same decade, prominent activist groups like *Terres des hommes* responded to the Vietnam War and Biafran secession, marking the occurrence of the second wave. In the ‘80s, a third wave of activism centered specifically around the protection of human rights in Germany and abroad (Wildenthal, 2008).

The commitment to universalist values in Germany also has deep historical roots in the historical and cultural forces that shaped the country in the aftermath of the Nazi regime and the devastation wrought

by World War II. The systematic annihilation of millions in concentration camps, and the racially motivated extermination campaigns of the Wehrmacht, culminated in the resurgence of a global call for universal human rights, embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948. This declaration marked a critical moment, aiming to establish a moral and legal framework that transcends cultural, political, and ideological boundaries (Morsink 1999).

2.3 Contemporary Universalism, Immigration and Racism

This post-Kantian and humanist framework has been extended by 20th-century thinkers such as Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas, who applied these universalist principles to discourse ethics and the examination of the modern public sphere. Habermas, in particular, formulated a model of communicative action grounded in the idea of mutual understanding. This model demands the reciprocal recognition of responsible subjects, emphasizing universality by deliberately avoiding the imposition of any specific vision of the “good life” or a predetermined conception of humanity (Habermas 2019). Instead, it seeks to bridge diverse life worlds and competing value systems through reasoned dialogue and a shared commitment to equal respect.

In principle, an anti-racist commitment already inscribed within the very logic of universalism, especially when positioned in opposition to the explicitly racist ideology of National Socialism. In contemporary Germany, the existence of racism therefore would seem like a clear violation of these universalist principles. However, the situation is more complicated. Bassam Tibi (1996) observes that Western societies that witness large-scale immigration often give up on universalism and instead begin to engage in a value-relativism, meaning that values no longer appear as something that one must adhere to in all circumstances, but rather that they change depending on the categories of people involved. Such observations help account for the rise of right-wing extremism and racism, which are pressing issues in present-day Germany, as demonstrated by events such as the pogroms of the 1990s, the series of murders by the NSU terrorist group, recurring attacks on refugee accommodations, and the hundreds of lives lost to right-wing extremist violence over the last three decades (Foroutan, 2020). The right-wing terrorist assassination of Walter Lübcke in Kassel on June 2, 2019, the anti-Semitic and racist attacks in Halle on October 9, 2019, and the racially motivated killing of nine people in Hanau on February 19, 2020—alongside reports of right-wing extremist networks within security agencies, the Bundeswehr, and the police—have all increased awareness of the continued prevalence of racism in German society, revealing it as both an acute and systemic problem (*ibid.*). After years of minimization, the year 2020 saw a growing acknowledgment that right-wing extremism and racism pose a significant threat to Germany's democratic order (Foroutan, 2020). In summary, it is not only Germany's status as a post-migration society that demands a re-evaluation of the ideology of universalism, but the rising tide of (often anti-Muslim) racism writ large (anti-Muslim racism is explored in greater detail in chapter 4.3).

3. State of the Art

Whilst there exists a vast and diverse body of scholarship on the structure and dynamics of racism, the specific issue of anti-pluralism in Germany and, more specifically, the contradiction of universalist norms, has not been seriously addressed through an empirical, social-scientific lens beyond the foundational work of Naika Foroutan, who developed the concept of APNR. While the phenomenon of anti-pluralism, encompassing resistance and even aversion to diversity and marginalized groups, has been addressed more frequently, certain aspects remain still underexplored. Wölfer and Foroutan (2022) provide empirical evidence for what they call *plurality resistance*, a general aversion to perceived diversity, which accompanies xenophobia, racism, islamophobia, homophobia, and ableism. Their analysis shows that plurality resistance is rooted in missing cognitive bridges, which result from rising right-wing populism, stereotypes, and an inability on the part of individuals to process the complexities of diversity. The authors show that plurality resistance varies according to sociodemographic factors, beliefs, and values. This illustrates the multi-layered and multifaceted nature of this phenomenon and of anti-pluralism more generally. Wölfer and Foroutan's work examined variables that not only reflect oppression but are related to diversity in the broadest sense. These variables include attitudes toward pluralizing nutrition trends, which help reveal how plurality resistance goes beyond minority groups and permeates the broader structures of social organization and collective imagination. Despite these contributions, there is a significant gap in research addressing the specificity of norm reduction, where universalist values intended to count for everyone are selectively withheld when it comes to particular groups, in this case, Muslims.

Existing empirical and theoretical frameworks support the interconnectedness of attitudes toward various different marginalized groups. Scholars like Zick et al. (2014, 2017) demonstrate that the dominating societal majority often maintains negative attitudes toward multiple different marginalized groups at once, even though these groups have little in common other than being a societal minorities. This phenomenon is rooted in *generalized prejudice*, as outlined by Allport (1954), where attitudes toward one minority are often intercorrelated with attitudes toward others. Experimental evidence by Shook, Fazio, and Eiser (2007) further suggests that extreme negative attitudes toward one group increase the likelihood of attitude generalization. These findings align with studies by Pettigrew (1997), demonstrating that shifts in prejudice toward one group can trigger systemic changes across interrelated attitudes. This insight is crucial for this study, suggesting that an anti-pluralist tendency toward Muslims might indeed imply a broader undermining of universalist efforts toward *all* minorities. This idea echoes the scholarship of the Combahee River Collective and Black feminist thinkers, who have often emphasized that systems of oppression are interwoven and run deep to the core of society, arguing that if those who are most oppressed were free, then everyone would, in turn, be free (The Combahee River Collective, 1977).

The gap in academic literature on anti-pluralist norm reductions highlights the need for further investigation of how anti-Muslim attitudes may clash with universalist principles, uncovering deeper tensions or even incompatibility of the ideals of equality and the realities of oppression.

4. Theory

Three major theoretical perspectives come into play when approaching the issue of anti-plural norm reduction. First, according to Hidalgo “**normative antinomies**,” play a primal role in every democratic system and they, along with the dissipation of clear-cut categories, cause **cognitive dissonance**. Since we naturally strive for coherence and clarity, human beings consequently seek strategies to relieve this cognitive dissonance (4.1). **Second**, understanding APNR requires the premise and perspective that modern Germany is fundamentally a **post-migrant society**. Immigration has had a lasting impact over decades, resulting in a situation in which categories like “migrant” and “non-migrant,” which would otherwise indicate social racialization, have become more blurry. It is these historical circumstances that brings about the conditions for actors to emerge who, on the one hand, reduce plural norms, and, on the other hand, are themselves made subject to this anti-plural norm reduction—in particular, in the case of this study, Muslim minorities (4.2). And **thirdly**, following on this, the ubiquitous factor that causes majoritarian white society not to adhere to universalist norms when it comes to Muslims is, as many scholars have shown, the continued prevalence of **anti-Muslim racism** (4.3).

4.1 Democratic Antinomies and Cognitive Dissonance

In political theory, democracy implies not only institutional contradictions but also insoluble tensions or “antinomies.” Democracies do not so much *have* these fundamental incongruences, but rather they exist *because* of them (Hidalgo, 2019). These antinomies highlight “irreconcilable (democratic) principles in the strictest sense,” such as the tension between the individual and the collective, or between private interests and public good. Democracy mediates these opposing forces, fostering a dynamic interplay that sustains its own framework (*ibid.*). Examining these antinomies is essential for two reasons: First, the overarching question of how belief in universalism can coexist with its selective application is rooted in a central democratic antinomy, as developed by Hidalgo, namely the struggle between universalism and particularism. The reduction of norms might, therefore, be understood as a particular manifestation of an aspect of such antinomy. The second reason is that the antinomies, which basically function as opposing societal poles, cause cognitive dissonance. As Foroutan argues, such cognitive dissonance is a key factor in the reduction of universalist norms (2021).

It is noteworthy that the tension between universalism and particularism did not originate from democratic theory but from theological thought. However, it has influenced debates on the human condition and its relationship with society since the Reformation (Schmidt, 2024). Only later did this

opposition resurface in democratic theory. In today's modern constitution democracies, the question of the position of individual in relation to society, law, and each other has not forfeited any of its significance, in fact it is quite the contrary. It is vital to understand the multidimensional nature of these antinomies of universalism and particularism in order to analyze the complexities and challenges of an anti-racist struggle for justice.

By definition, universalism is an abstract principle, which generalizes a set of conditions posited to be valid for all humanity, regardless of time, place, or social context. This approach, while seeking inclusivity, has often been critiqued both for its Eurocentrism and paternalism. Seyla Benhabib (2007), however, argues that universalism can be reshaped by a more acute awareness of context in order to avoid such shortcomings. "Radical universalism," as described by Boehm (2023), posits an inviolable core of human dignity that precedes all other (legal) norms, echoing Kantian thought (cf. chapter 2.1). Milner critiques what she calls "imperial universalism," where adherence to a specific imperial way of life is framed as the benchmark for humanity, caching particularism by enforcing a universal application of what are, in fact, particularist interests. By contrast, "Paulinic universalism," as interpreted by Alain Badiou (2018), puts forward the argument that universalism needs to be "a tolerant indifference to differences".

At the same time, universalism and particularism are inherently intertwined, insofar as shared group identities influence the construction individual particularity, and vice versa – a process that is inherently political. Schubert and Schwiertz (2021) suggest that identity politics can transcend the immediate goals of a particular group, activating universal claims for equality and freedom and fostering solidarity by identifying commonalities among diverse struggles. Emancipatory movements inherently embody the antinomy of particularity and universality, as they press particular demands grounded in universalist principles, invoking recognition in the name of one's own, and yet also a shared, humanity. This and the overarching contradiction of universalism versus particularism aligns with Wölfer and Foroutan's analysis of a general aversion to plurality and the concept of anti-pluralist norm reduction, emphasizing the struggle for Germany to clarify which form of universalism is worth upholding and what sorts of interest are worthy of representation. Focusing on this antinomy opens space for understanding the shared nexus of all struggles for justice, since no matter whether a group fights against homophobia, sexism, or racism, the axis of universalism means that the dynamics are ultimately interchangeable. Hence, identity politics, when successful, can arguably inspire broader social change by reifying universalist principles and reinforcing democratic principles of equality.

The antinomy between the universal and the particular—the self and the collective—is not just a conflict in and of itself, but also causes distress on the psycho-social level of individuals. When a person's moral or social beliefs are in continuous conflict with their actions, the resulting cognitive dissonance creates a state of tension. This is driven by a fundamental human desire for consistency

and coherence between beliefs and actions (Aronson, Mettee, 1968). To ease the psychological discomfort caused by such dissonance, individuals engage in efforts to reconcile these contradictions and restore a sense of cognitive harmony. The experience of dissonance, therefore, leads to the urge to reduce it. This is called *dissonance reduction*, which, according to Haisch (2011) can be achieved in two ways: changing one's own behavior, in favor of the norm one believes in, or changing one's attitude towards the subject, often by reducing one's adherence to the respective norm. It is assumed that the more significant a subject is to an individual, the more intense the cognitive dissonance they will experience, and, consequently, the greater their effort at dissonance reduction.

As an expression of this overarching antinomy, Naika Foroutan (2021) examines the migration policies of the German federal government during the "long summer of migration in 2015", locating important normative paradoxes. For instance, the *Grenzöffnung* (opening of the border) by former chancellor Angela Merkel reflects the country's pluralist and, thus, universalist norms. Yet, in contrast, the Turkey Deal with the European Union served to externalize border control and reduce the numbers of refugees that reach European ground, which would seem in opposition to the notion of a welcoming universalism. This is only one example of a larger set of contradictions, which may underlie a sense of shared cognitive dissonance. Alongside pro-pluralist resource mobilization and anti-pluralist norm reduction as methods for dissonance reduction, Naika Foroutan suggests a third alternative: some individuals may simply accept the fundamental ambiguity that a post-migrant society implies (Foroutan, 2021).

4.2 Germany in the post-Migrant Analytical Framework

This term "post-migration society" (*postmigrantisches Gesellschaft*) originally stems from the performing arts and was first used by Shermin Langhoff in order to characterize the problem of artistic portrayals of migration, which often neglect the profundity of lived experiences, either fetishizing or ignoring migrant voices. This mirrors a larger tension, endemic to the societal struggles of migrants in Germany (Langhoff, 2011). Researchers like Naika Foroutan, Riem Spielhaus and Regina Römhild have taken up the term and developed a scientific framework around it.

The concept of a post-migration society is vital because it establishes a lens through which to analyze a society that no longer exists along clear divisions of "migrant" and "non-migrant." The prefix 'post' might evoke a sense of finality of immigration. However, it does not signify the historicity of migration but rather emphasizes a societal reality, the result of decades of immigration, in which those who were once "migrants" are now, simply, Germans; and conversely, what it means to be "German" could also encompass a personal or familial history of migration. (Foroutan, 2021). This makes it a vital parameter that touches upon all sorts of questions of the social sciences, including democratization, national belonging, social mobility, and identity. One potential pitfall of positioning migration as an explanatory meta-narrative is that it may become the scapegoat for a variety of

separate issues with quite different origins. The role of right-wing populism, for instance, must not be underestimated, especially when it comes to the externalization of questions of the re-distribution of wealth in a time of historic economic inequality, since these economic questions are often debated and negotiated at the expense of migrants (Alvaredo et al., 2018).

It follows that the issue of Muslims in Germany is not solely about religious or cultural difference. Rather, it reflects a deeper societal discourse about whether German society can be characterized by liberal, open, and progressive values or, conversely, by illiberal and anti-pluralist tendencies. This research situates this inquiry within a post-migrant analytic framework, exploring how these pluralizing and polarizing forces manifest in public debates and in the attitudes of Germans.

4.3 Anti-Muslim Racism

When viewed through the prism of a post-migrant society, the role of racism in the phenomenon of anti-pluralist norm reduction is deeply intertwined with historical, cultural, and epistemological structures that shape societal knowledge-production and public debate about Muslims. The work of Junaid Rana has been crucial in explicating Anti-Muslim racism. She writes that the racialized Muslim is “developed as a geographically external other, demonized through notions of the body, but also through the superimposition of cultural features onto Muslims and non-Muslim groups” (Rana, 2007). This ethnology of Muslims, as Rana argues, positions Islam not only as a religious (and political) identity but also as a racialized construct.

In this context, it is important to stress that racism is not only deeply historical, but also vice versa: history is itself structured and narrated in a way that perpetuates and reflects structures of racism (Asad, 1993). It is crucial to understand the role of history in providing an overall societal framework, but since history itself is re-produced and re-narrated through a discourse suffused by anti-Muslim attitudes, it is already encoded with an internal logic of anti-Muslim racism, influencing what we say about the past and how we say it. As Talal Asad writes about the relationship of history and racism: “All histories are selective, of course, but what they leave out and how they interpret what they select are more interesting than the mere fact of selection” (Asad, 2007).

Asad’s analysis of the War on Terror as a historical juncture of anti-Muslim racism illuminates how Western narratives essentialize Islam as inherently violent, tying it to terrorism in a way that renders Muslim identities perpetually suspect. This structuring of history by an internalized racism, Asad argues, positions Muslims as terrorists and adversaries, as well as perpetual outsiders, even when they are in fact citizens of liberal democratic states (2007). The framing of jihad as the ultimate symbol of Islamic fanaticism reinforces Western notions of Islam’s incompatibility with modernity, neglecting its historical and geographical entanglement with Europe. On this note, Asad expresses how the racist de-humanization of people is tied to the imbalance of global powers.

Scholars such as Schirin Amir-Moazami provide critical perspectives on how racism works within specifically anti-Muslim frameworks, where it is often disguised as cultural or religious critique. Amir-Moazami highlights how immigrants and their descendants are systematically marked as Muslims, reducing diverse identities to a singular, essentialized category—a process described as the "muslimization of Muslims" (Spielhaus 2011; Tezcan 2012; Brubaker 2013). In the specific context of Germany, discussions about religious and cultural plurality disproportionately center on Islam, reflecting a selective and racialized focus within public discourse. In liberal contexts, supposedly positive attributes like "enlightened" determine what are "good Muslims," in contexts that prioritize Western whiteness. This process is further enabled by the liberal-secular matrix of Europe, which, paradoxically, allows for the racialization of Muslims with the pretense of secular neutrality (Foroutan, 2023). This blending of anti-Muslim racism with secularism is one peculiarity of German discourse. German secularism is arguably even more significant a force than French *laïcité*, for instance in the case of the CDU's (Germany's strongest party) ostensible defense of Christian values.

What is revealed in this debate is that secularity is not about religion in general but the perceived illegitimacy of Islam as a religion. The selective application of secular principles exposes a double standard that justifies marginalization under the guise of cultural incompatibility. By essentializing Muslim identities and framing Islam as inherently incompatible with modernity, anti-Muslim racism creates the epistemological conditions that ultimately enable anti-pluralist norm reduction.

It bears noting that scholars in the anti-racist tradition have long criticized notions of normative universalism. In an excursus on wars conducted by Western democracies and their grounding in an international law built upon universalist values, Talal Asad writes about the neo-colonial way in which power is still distributed globally as well as the violence committed by the West in many parts of the world. This being the undertone of his work, his arguments center around a globalized reduction of universalist norms through which global hegemony is maintained.

While Asad is describing the perceived threat of Islamist terrorists, which might be sub-divided into a realistic fear and into an unrealistic racist fear, he is also speaking to the complex issue of racism in the face of violence committed by the West writ large, which reflects a globalized reduction of universalist norms through which global hegemony is maintained. His example illustrates how, in a tradition of anti-racist scholarship, the question of universalist values and racism is also a question of global justice, which ultimately boils down to a selective application of universalist values (Andrews, 2021). For this reason, APNR can only partly be explained through generalized anti-pluralist attitudes; in fact, specifically anti-*Muslim* attitudes play a significant role.

5. Research Design

5.1 Operationalization of anti-Pluralist Norm Reduction

The concept of “anti-pluralist norm reduction” (APNR) provides a framework for examining the conditional application of ostensibly universalistic values, particularly when these values are tested in relation to minority groups such as Muslims. This phenomenon can be operationalized as a dichotomous dependent variable, developed from a set of survey questions. These questions are subdivided into two clusters: Cluster 1 assesses adherence to universalistic values broadly, such as freedom and equality, while Cluster 2 measures the application of these values specifically to Muslim minorities. Thus, a person who responds positively to questions in Cluster 1 but negatively to those in Cluster 2 demonstrates a selective reduction of norms, reflecting an overarching anti-pluralist tendency as measured through APNR.

This framework allows for further exploration of the extent and “directionality” of norm reduction. For instance, “stronger” (type 2) norm reduction may occur when the inconsistency pertains to overlapping identity categories, such as gender or age, as illustrated by Naika Foroutan's research. Foroutan demonstrated that among those who profess support for children's right to self-determination, there are some who simultaneously oppose the right of Muslim girls to wear headscarves in schools. This contradiction emphasizes a more particularized normative violation of the universal principle due to its specificity to children. Similarly, APNR may show variance in the quantity of different social norms that are reduced, while patterns of norm reduction might exhibit directional tendencies. For example, one might observe individuals with strong universalistic values exhibiting isolated anti-Muslim sentiments, or conversely, individuals with weak expressed belief in universalism displaying pronounced anti-Muslim attitudes. The former could suggest the influence of intersectional biases, such as attitudes targeting Muslim women specifically, and not Muslims in general, while the latter may align with far-right ideologies, though this expression is less likely in the context of Germany, given widespread expressed support for values like freedom of expression (e.g., Foroutan's findings from 2021 with up to 98% approval).

The following table illustrates the operationalization of APNR.

“How much do you agree with the following statement:”	Agreement to cluster 1 questions - universalist norms	Agreement cluster 2 questions - application of universalist norms on Muslims	Contradiction (relative)
APNR, example	Women should not experience gender-based discrimination	Exercise of Islamic faith in Germany should be restricted	normal
APNR, example 2	Women should not experience gender-based discrimination	Women should not be able to wear headscarves if they work in the public sector	strong

Figure 1: Operationalization of APNR, own illustration

However, neither directionality nor normative or quantitative strength as factors for APNR play a role in the empirical literature on anti-pluralism. For this reason as well as data restraints, hypothesis 1 only focuses on the empirical occurrence and prevalence of APNR as a pattern generally:

Hypothesis 1: Germans predominantly express belief in universalist values but tend to reduce associated social norms when those values are applied to Muslims.

The analysis for this hypothesis proceeds in two main steps.

In a first step, the dataset is examined descriptively and with preliminary inferential statistics in order to situate the findings within the context of Germany as a pluralist democracy. This part of the analysis serves to highlight the thematically relevant aspects of the data, to document the broad support for pluralist and universalist norms across the population—irrespective of demographics—and to replicate key findings, including the societal presence of APNR already established by Foroutan.

In a second step, the insights gained from this descriptive exploration are used to construct a dichotomous variable (dummy variable, coded 0 and 1), which later serves as a dependent variable in the regression model. For this purpose, variable pairs are defined: (1) ppopul15 (agreement to acknowledgement of minorities) and pislamphob2 (agreement that Muslims belong to Germany), and (2) pbsjo05 (agreement to equity of opportunity) and pislamphob01 (agreement that immigration to Germany should be restricted for Muslims). From these, respondents who report adherence to the respective universalist norm are first extracted. To ensure analytic clarity, only those who selected the strongest agreement categories (4 or 5) are included, whereas “partial” agreement (category 3) are excluded. These respondents constitute the reference group (dummy = 0). These variables are suited to

examine APNR, because acknowledgement of minorities, a universal belief in the equal dignity of all human beings despite adherence to majority or minority, is undermined when respondents simultaneously believe that Muslims do not belong to Germany. The same goes for the second pair of variables: Equity of opportunity is undermined if Muslims are restricted of immigrating.

The second part of the procedure identifies individuals who, despite affirming the universalist norm in ppopul15, or pbsjo05, simultaneously express anti-Muslim views in the paired variable (pislamphob1 or pislamphob2). In practice, this means they either deny that Muslims belong to Germany or oppose policies facilitating immigration to Germany by Muslims. Therefore, the APNR-variable functions like a conditional probability in the later regression model, because non-compliance with norms is analyzed *under the condition* that these norms are professed to be believed in. Again, only responses coded as 4 or 5 (or 1 and 2 in the case of pislamphob02) – clear agreement – are considered. While a weaker professed adherence (3) could arguably already signal a partial reduction of the universalist norm, the analysis limits inclusion to strong responses in order to ensure analytic precision. These respondents are coded as possessing the attribute (dummy = 1). This operationalization prevents individuals who reject universalist norms altogether from being mistakenly classified as cases of APNR, thereby avoiding a distortion of the findings. While it is highly plausible that those who reject universalist norms also hold strong anti-Muslim views, their exclusion is necessary because their stance reflects a more general anti-pluralist worldview rather than a selective reduction of norms. Obviously, the creation of these APNR variables requires a sufficient case number.

Once these variables have been developed, inferential statistical measures such as the mean and confidence intervals (95% and 99%) are calculated. These serve to establish the statistical grounding of the APNR measure, to enable comparisons across groups, and to demonstrate that the effect carries broader societal validity.

5.2 Modelling APNR in a Logistic Regression Analysis

Since APNR is operationalized as a dichotomous variable with values of 0 and 1, a multivariate logistic regression analysis is well-suited to test for statistical associations with other anti-Muslim attitudes. Regression analysis, in general, seeks to relate a dependent continuous variable Y to one or more independent variables X, or to determine how much of the variance in Y can be explained by the variance in X (Kohler, Kreuter, 2016). Inference is typically based on the standard errors of the coefficients, allowing for an assessment of whether the equation permits conclusions about the population as a whole (Kühnel, Krebs, 2010; Bortz, Schuster, 2010).

In logistic regression specifically, the dependent variable Y represents the realization of the unobserved probability P, while the independent variables X are the influencing factors on P. The

observed dependent variable Y, the respective APNR, is transformed into unobserved probabilities P. The equation of probabilities is the following (Kohler, Kreuter, 2016):

$$P(X) = \frac{e^a \cdot e^{b_1x_{1i}} \cdot e^{b_2x_{2i}} \cdot \dots \cdot e^{b_kx_{ki}}}{1 + e^a \cdot e^{b_1x_{1i}} \cdot e^{b_2x_{2i}} \cdot \dots \cdot e^{b_kx_{ki}}}$$

Further, logistic regression relies on the transformation of probabilities into *odds ratios* and *logits*, which act as link functions between the independent variables and the dependent variable and can be derived from the equation above since they are different expressions of the same core idea. These link functions allow the model to estimate the relationship between the predictors and the probability of the outcome (Kohler, Kreuter, 2016), enabling a nuanced understanding of the factors that contribute to anti-pluralist norm relaxation in the context of anti-Muslim attitudes. A transformation into odds ratios and logits is necessary to extend the range of the probability of Y. Since the probability is modeled in an s-curve which reaches from the dummy variables' expressions 0 ("not present") to 1 ("present"), the range must be extended in order to account, among other things, for effects < 0. The transformation to logits allows for the latter. However, it is very difficult to interpret the coefficients of logits (the logarithm of odds ratios), which is why the model is transformed into odds ratios, also.

5.2.1 Probability of APNR along Aversion of Pluralism and anti-Muslim Bias

Insofar as the scholarly literature suggests a general plurality resistance or aversion, while anti-Muslim racism remains distinct and exists independently of homophobia, sexism, etc., it can be assessed that these two factors each contribute to the probability of APNR independently. This is tested by specifying anti-Muslim bias in the responses as a separate control variable from pluralism aversion.

In order to capture the latent dimension of anti-Muslim bias and pluralism aversion, an index could theoretically be employed; however, indices necessitate the researcher to determine a suited weight for each of the included variables. This runs the risk of arbitrariness rather than an empirically grounded distribution of weights. To overcome this limitation and to achieve empirically optimal weights for the variables contributing to pluralism aversion and anti-Muslim bias, two separate factor analyses are conducted. These are only performed if the correlation matrices indicate the existence of coherent factors and after careful inspection of additional reliability and validity measures such as Cronbach's alpha and Gamma.

Regarding the choice of variables, the data encompasses sets for variables based on attitudes towards Muslims as well as other minorities, like Jewish, homosexual, and queer people. In addition, there are also variables that reflect the inclusion of women in spaces like the labor market. The variables that relate to attitudes toward Muslims are used for the factor on anti-Muslim bias. To determine the specific variables for the factor analysis of pluralism aversion, the correlation matrix for all of the named variables is analyzed to find those with the highest correlation. This method involves using one

variable from each “category” (Muslims, Jews, queer people, women) in order to capture a holistic picture of pluralism aversion. In order to avert a tautological explanation of the variances, the variables that are used for generating the APNR-variable are excluded from this factor analysis. Due to the usage of multiple APNR models, new factors are developed according to each logistic regression model, omitting the respective variable on attitudes towards Muslims. Further, it is important to relate the norm reduction to anti-Muslim bias in order to show that APNR found in the data is not just arbitrary, but exists within the broader framework of anti-Muslim attitudes and cognition.

5.2.1.1 Development of Factors and Scoring

The two factor analyses are conducted using the principal factor method, which serves as the default extraction technique in this study. This method examines the correlation matrix of the variables, with factor loadings calculated on the basis of squared multiple correlations as estimates of communalities. Following extraction, an oblique rotation of the loading matrix is applied. Oblique rotation is chosen because it generally produces more interpretable factors with simpler structures than orthogonal rotation. This approach, however, requires certain specifications, such as ensuring a gamma value less than or equal to zero.

On the basis of the rotated factor solutions, factor scores are predicted for each case. These factor scores are then employed as independent variables in the subsequent logistic regression models. While the procedure could be elaborated in greater technical detail, it is sufficient here to outline the key steps, since the primary focus of this study lies on the modeling and regression analysis of APNR, rather than on the factors themselves.

Both phenomena in question – anti-Muslim bias in attitudes and pluralism aversion – have been empirically demonstrated to exist. However, given that pluralism resistance or aversion constitutes a more generalized attitude, it may arguably show a stronger influence on the probability of APNR. On this basis, the following hypotheses are formulated:

Hypothesis 2.1: A greater presence of pluralism aversion has a positive effect on the probability of APNR.

Hypothesis 2.2: A greater presence of anti-Muslim bias has a positive effect on the probability of APNR.

Both hypotheses can be assessed via the value of p of a Wald-test and the respective parameter. Via the value of p it can be determined whether the observed effect is significant and can thus be generalized for the population. Further, a likelihood-ratio test can be utilized in order to test whether the model that includes anti-Muslim attitudes (“full model”) reveals an increased probability of APNR in comparison to the model that incorporates only anti-pluralist attitudes as an explanatory variable (“reduced model”). This would clearly indicate that anti-Muslim racism goes beyond generalized

aversion against plurality, offering a significant basis for examining why the German population tends to reduce universalist norms when it comes to Muslims. Hence, significant LR-tests would confirm that the effect of both factors would extend even beyond a potential collinearity.

In case the value of p in the logistic regression model is significant, the respective parameter shows the degree to which the variables increase or decrease the probability of APNR.

5.2.2 Standard-Demographic Variables

The existing literature does not provide specific insights into the effects of standard-demographic variables on APNR. Their potential impact can therefore only be assessed indirectly, drawing on prior research addressing racism and attitudes toward pluralism more broadly. This, however, already points to the next analytical question: to what extent are such effects mediated by anti-Muslim bias, and to what extent can they be considered an independent influence of the demographic variables themselves?

For example, research has shown that living in a rural or an urban area is expected to be a significant determinant when it comes to racism. Not only because people who live in urban and densely populated areas show higher levels of social openness (Hummler, Ziller, 2024), but also because according to the hypothesis of contact, people tend to show higher levels of discriminatory cognition when they have little contact with the respective groups. In Germany, policies like the *Königssteiner Schlüssel*, used for allocating refugees according to factors like population size or economic capacity of the respective states, have impacted the social geography of the country, resulting in fewer migrants or perceived foreigners residing in rural areas. Consequently, contact by non-Muslim Germans with Muslims through acquaintances, friends or families is expected to influence attitudes toward Muslims more generally. Yet the literature does not address the question of how such attitudes specifically influence the phenomenon of contradicting social norms in which people would otherwise express strong belief, in particular when considering the case of attitudes towards Muslims. Theoretically a potential ambivalence emerges, since it could arguably be the case that living in a rural area itself has an negative effect on belief in universalist norms like diversity of lifestyles. This might suggest that people who express belief in such norms do so firmly and without any reduction when applied to minority groups. At the same time, the opposite could also be true: Perhaps people in rural areas believe in the norms as much as anyone in Germany, but life in a rural area still has a positive effect on anti-Muslim bias for other reasons, ultimately still leading to an increased probability of APNR. This example of the ambiguity surrounding how and why norms come to be reduced is discussed further in the interpretation section.

Unfortunately, the (mediated) effect of living in a rural versus in an urban area cannot be examined here. This is due to restraints which are linked to the panel structure of the data. Variables that are

required for the analysis of these control variables (geography and first-hand contact with Muslims) have been assessed in different waves and not the second, which is needed for its variables on Muslims. This is discussed more in the section of limitations of this work.

However, there exist standard-demographic explanatory variables, which are expected to be statistically significant, and which are part of second wave of the panel and therefore can be put to use. One of these is formal education. In numerous empirical papers, the association between education and racism has been empirically tested. Education levels have been shown to have consistent positive effects on awareness of discrimination against minorities (Wodtke, 2014). Variables like gender may also have an effect since women tend to show more pro-pluralist cognition and engage in pro-pluralist resource mobilization, such as a higher degree of volunteering in refugee contexts (see above). The effects of other standard-demographic variables like net income or age appear more ambivalent in the literature on anti-pluralism, but they are nonetheless included in the regression analysis.

Hypothesis 3: Possessing formal education has a negative effect while identifying as male has a positive effect on the probability of APNR.

This hypothesis is assessed similarly to the hypotheses 2: The Wald-test of the regression is used to determine the statistical significance, and the parameter and margins plot are used to analyze the magnitude of the effect of the variables.

5.2.3 The Role of pro-Pluralist Resource Mobilization

In the same work where Naika Foroutan develops APNR, another variable is analyzed that complicates the picture and yet might be very important for the analysis: Pro-pluralist resource mobilization (Foroutan, 2021).

Pro-plural resource mobilization refers to the activation of resources in support of pluralistic values, drawing on Bourdieu's concept of capital types. According to this framework, resources can be economic but also cultural, symbolic, or social in nature, all of which play a critical role in fostering inclusivity and countering anti-pluralist tendencies (Bourdieu, 1983; Foroutan, 2021). It is insofar relevant, as it is analyzed to be an alternative for the reduction of cognitive dissonance (Foroutan, 2021) that is caused by the post-migration society and democratic antinomies (cf. theory-chapter). To be more specific, when an individual experiences the cognitive dissonance through an increasingly diverse society, universalist norms that are promised by pluralist democracies, but also discriminatory societal structures, then these individuals can attempt to reduce the dissonance by, firstly, reducing the norm (cf. theory chapter) but also, secondly, by engaging in pro-pluralist activism or resource mobilization, or, lastly, by tolerating and accepting the ambiguity (Foroutan, 2021).

Pro-pluralist resource mobilization can be measured through a variety of factors like donating money to pro-refugee charity or volunteering for pro-pluralist or pro-Muslim initiatives. This form of mobilization could make up a distinct field of study due to the complexity of the initiatives and the diverse motivations behind them. In this regard, initiatives represent their own microcosms of society, mirroring the complexities that we otherwise know from the structural level, like women and the recognition of their (unpaid) work, for instance (Hamann, 2017).

In this regard, empirical studies like the ones conducted by Hamann et al. (2017) highlight key dynamics in voluntary work with refugees. These studies reveal that women tend to be more actively involved in such efforts, and in smaller towns especially, this engagement has significantly contributed to stronger social cohesion. Such findings align with Naika Foroutan's broader argument that many individuals are motivated by a desire to counteract the rise of right-wing populism and growing anti-pluralist sentiment.

Hamann's research emphasizes that those engaged in pro-plural resource mobilization perceive their work as beneficial not only for the refugees but also for themselves and for fostering overall social cohesion. One particularly positive aspect noted by volunteers was the explicit addressing of racism within their work, rather than avoiding or silencing such discussions. This openness was seen as crucial for meaningful engagement and progress (Hamann et al., 2017). Additionally, the composition of these volunteers is notably heterogeneous, encompassing a broad cross-section of society, including students, freelancers, retirees, recipients of social welfare, and even schoolchildren. This diversity emphasizes the inclusive nature of pro-plural mobilization.

The relationship between anti-pluralist norm reduction on the one hand, and pro-pluralist resource mobilization on the other should be analytically differentiated, since it is not quite straightforward to determine the effect that the one variable has on the other. One example of a possible effect is that individuals who engage in pro-pluralist resource mobilization, reduce their cognitive dissonance that way and show therefore a more universal application of their norms and do not reduce them. However, a such effect cannot be investigated further in this work. This is, again, due to data restriction. Whilst there is a set of variables that inquire an individual's forms of political participation (cf. chapter 7), these are general forms of activism like donation to a party. Therefore, it is not clear, whether these respondents have donated to a pro-pluralist party or, the contrary, to an anti-pluralist party.

Analyzing the interplay between pro-pluralist resource mobilization and anti-pluralist norm reduction might be a prospect for future research.

6. Data

This thesis uses data from the second wave (years 2022 and 2023) of the German Social Cohesion Panel (SCP), a representative longitudinal household survey established in 2021. The study is conducted by the Research Institute Social Cohesion (RISC) in cooperation with the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) at DIW Berlin (Steinwede et al., 2023). Its purpose is to provide a comprehensive empirical basis for the analysis of social cohesion and living conditions in Germany (ibid.).

The target population comprises all residents aged 18 and above in private households. Sampling during the first wave followed a two-stage, disproportionate design with oversampling of East Germany and Berlin to ensure sufficient case numbers. In the first stage, municipalities were selected as primary sampling units; in the second, individuals were drawn from local population registers. The gross sample included 37874 individuals in 253 municipalities out of which 16600 valid interviews constitute the data. For the second wave of the panel, 8509 valid interviews have been realized during the fieldwork conducted between September 2022 and January 2023

Data collection employed a mixed-mode design, combining postal questionnaires (PAPI) and online surveys (CAWI), available in German and English.

The data were processed according to established survey standards. Cleaned datasets include coding of open responses (e.g., ISCO-08 for occupations), assignment of missing values, and anonymization of sensitive information. To correct for unequal selection probabilities, design weights based on Horvitz–Thompson estimation were applied.

Overall, the SCP provides a high-quality, representative, and panel-based dataset that is particularly suited for the analysis of societal mechanisms, like anti-pluralism, in Germany.

The data is analyzed using the statistics software STATA.

7. Interpretation

7.1 Preliminary Exploration of the Dataset and Value Systems of Pluralistic Democracy

Naika Foroutan has already demonstrated the prevalence of the belief in values associated with a pluralist democracy; nonetheless, descriptive statistics will be used to replicate these findings for the data at hand.

Given that the SCP is a representative study with more than 8000 participants in wave 2, these findings are highly generalizable and it can be assessed that the parameters occur also within the ‘real’

German society like the following outline, as well. To begin with, people overwhelmingly believe in the most basic premises of democratic life, such as debating solutions to problems and, in that process, meeting others halfway. About 80 per cent of the participants believe that, in a democracy, it is vital to find compromises. Even more participants – almost 90 per cent – either rather or fully agree that, in a democracy, it is important to listen to other people's opinions. When asked about minorities, two-thirds state that, in their view, minorities must be acknowledged in a democracy.

Furthermore, the ideals of a pluralistic democracy are supported by a large majority of the population in Germany. Fewer than 3 per cent reject the notion of a meritocracy, and conversely, more than 80 per cent either somewhat or strongly oppose the idea that the status of one's family should grant a person advantages. Over 80 per cent support a needs-based conception of the welfare state (*Bedarfsgerechtigkeit*), and only about 6.5 per cent oppose the notion that equity of opportunity is just.

Interestingly, the population in Germany not only expresses support for a pluralistic democracy, but a large majority also actively shapes political life and contributes to a vibrant civil society through one or multiple forms of participation. These forms of participation include being a member of a political party, donating money to political organizations, contacting politicians, or participating in referenda (*Volksbegehren*). The histogram indicates that a majority of the population has engaged in at least one of these activities, and a considerable proportion has participated in more than one. The mean number of participation activities is 0.67, indicating that, on average, individuals take part in at least one form of political or civic engagement.

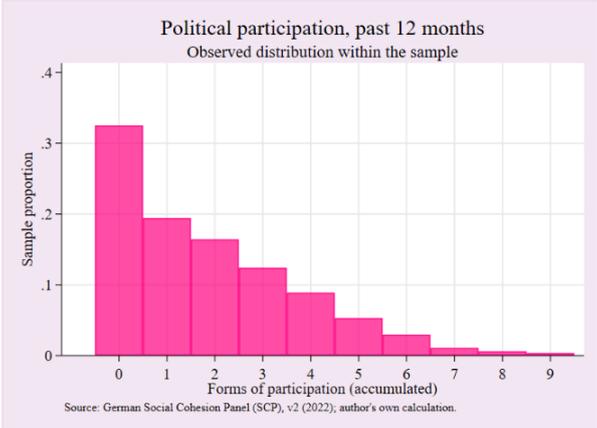


Figure 2: Histogram of Political Participation in Germany, own illustration

When examining public attitudes toward Muslim minorities living in Germany, an incongruence of thought shows. Notably, for many of the survey items concerning Muslims, an outside proportion of respondents tend to select the “middle category” (*teils teils*). This category represents neither full agreement nor complete rejection of a statement but rather a position somewhere in between.

However, when the statement in question involves generalizations about Muslims or Islam, selecting

the middle category indicates at least partial agreement and not full rejection. This, in turn, suggests the presence of at least some degree of anti-Muslim cognition.

To illustrate this: In response to the statement “Muslims should be forbidden from immigrating to Germany,” approximately 14 per cent of respondents express agreement, while an additional 25 per cent select this middle category. The picture becomes even more negative when participants are asked whether they believe Muslims belong to Germany: about 21 per cent explicitly reject this notion, and another 36 per cent choose the middle category.

Reductionist anti-Muslim generalizations clearly show in the data as well. When asked about Islam as a religion, 77 per cent either agree with or select the middle category in response to the statement that Islam is misogynistic. Similarly, 67 per cent either agree with or select the middle category in response to the statement that Islam is intolerant toward other religions.

Similar patterns can be observed when attitudes toward the so-called “long summer of migration” in 2015 are examined. While it is predominantly believed in German households that the country served as a positive example to other European states in managing high numbers of asylum seekers (73% partial or full agreement) and demonstrated a high degree of social cohesion (73% partly or fully), a simultaneous belief that control over the situation was lost prevails (69% partly or fully). Nonetheless, according to widespread belief, Germany itself is not perceived as responsible for the problems it is believed to have encountered (29% disagreement, another 31% partial disagreement). The logical conclusion, based on these premises, is that the perceived problems are attributed to the immigrants, majoritatively Muslims (The Federal Office of Migration and Refugees, 2015), themselves.

The data cracks open the fundamental empirical inconsistency, that is the main object of this work: It is difficult to reconcile the high levels of expressed support for the values of pluralistic democracies and universalist principles with the simultaneous endorsement of anti-Muslim (and anti-immigrant, which will not be delved into further) statements.

7.2 The Statistical Modeling of APNR

The modeling of APNRs in this work follows a similar iterative pattern: combining a variable that measures universalist or pluralist values with a variable that assesses anti-Muslim attitudes (cf. chapter 5). In order to verify the criterion of sufficient cases of norm reduction, tables like the following are examined:

Figure 3: Tabulation of Norm reduction, own illustration

1. Agreement to acknowledgement of minorities	2. Agreement that Muslims belong to Germany		
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Total
Somewhat agree	173	510	683
Strongly agree	135	192	327
Total	308	702	1010

The first variable of APNR shows a relatively high case number. The case count – defined here as the number of respondents who gave a positive response to the first variable (answers 4 or 5 on the scale) and a negative response to the second variable (answers 1 or 2)—is relatively high: 1010 people reduce the norm out of 5699 who express belief in it.

For argumentative clarity, **this is the central variable in this work** and used for the main models. The **second variable** of APNR is generated (cf. chapter 5), but the tables and graphs shown in this analysis are for **this APNR. The second variable serves as a means of comparison if the coefficients prove robust across different models.** The distribution of this as well as all the other variables mentioned and relevant to the logistic regression are shown in the tables in the Appendix (Figures 22-25).

The second operationalization of APNR is based on the items “belief in equity of opportunity” and “Muslims should be forbidden from immigrating.” The distribution of the second APNR category is as follows: 0 = 5,327 observations and 1 = 878 observations, corresponding to 14.15%.

Figure 4: Cross-Table of APNR1 APNR2

APNR1	APNR2		
	0	1	Total
0	3210	162	3372
1	463	267	730
Total	3673	429	4102

As the cross-table shows, for the respondents that do not have a missing value on either of the APNR, quite a considerable amount of respondents (267) reduce both socio-cultural norms, while others only reduce one of the norms (162 and 463).

A third option for APNR was considered for this work – it shows a very strong anti-Muslim contradiction: Approximately 4000 respondents somewhat or strongly agree that immigration to Germany should be facilitated. Out of these respondents, 190 state that immigration to Germany for Muslims should be more restrictive. This is a clear anti-Muslim reduction of a belief, but not sufficient of a reduction of a social universalist norm. For this reason, the choice was to only utilize the two operationalizations of APNR described above.

7.3 Inferential Statistical Prevalence of APNR

Several indicators suggest a notable prevalence of APNR in the German population. While the present method does not permit testing whether a substantial proportion of individuals' *entire* worldview is inconsistent or contradictory, it allows for the targeted examination of specific general norms concerning democratic coexistence. This, in turn, provides a meaningful approximation for assessing norm reduction, identifying societal factors and demographic groups with higher tendencies toward APNR.

For the first APNR variable, the observed frequency is 17.72%. Given that this proportion excludes individuals who do not express belief in the underlying pluralistic norm, the prevalence can be considered comparatively high. Inferential statistical analysis supports the generalizability of this finding: the 95%-confidence interval (CI) ranges from .167 to .187, and the 99%-CI ranges from .164 to .19, both of which closely approximate the observed value. For the second version of APNR, the coefficients are similar to the one observed for the main model – the 95% CI for the second APNR is: .133-.150. This strongly indicates that the observed prevalence is representative of the population for the norms under consideration and a generalizability of the finding.

Although there is no universally defined threshold for determining substantive significance, the consistency of the inferential estimates across models highlights that APNR constitutes a phenomenon of broad societal relevance.

Accordingly, **Hypothesis 1 is supported: The German population predominantly believes in universalist values and people tend to reduce these norms when they are applied on Muslims.**

7.4 Factor Analysis and Logistic Regression

For the second hypothesis, two factors are developed: one capturing anti-Muslim bias and the other capturing pluralism aversion.

The factor for anti-Muslim bias is statistically straightforward to construct. For the factor of the main model that includes the first operationalization of APNR (which is generated using *pislamphob02*), the items *pislamphob1*, *pislamphob03* (agreement to “Islam is misogynistic”) and *pislamphob04* (agreement to “Islam is intolerant toward other religions”) are used. For the second model of APNR, *pislamphob01* was used to generate the variable and therefore *pislamphob02* was included in a second factor of anti-Muslim bias in order to avoid a tautological explanation of variance (cf. chapter 5). An examination of the correlation matrix reveals high inter-item correlations among the three variables of views on Muslims, almost each exceeding .5. The internal consistency of the factor was confirmed by a high Cronbach's alpha (.83), indicating strong reliability.

The development of the factor for pluralism aversion is more complex and provides additional insights. The correlation matrix is constructed using variables across several domains – beliefs about

gender equality, rights for homosexual and queer individuals, antisemitism, and anti-Muslim attitudes. For the factor, one variable from each domain – selected based on the highest inter-category correlation – include pgendeq01, pgendeq04, pantisem02, and pislamphob01 (some of them reversed to ensure coding in the right direction). The inter-item correlations are shown in the matrix:

Figure 4: Matrix of correlations (variables concerning pluralism), own illustration

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) Gender quota for leadership position	1.000				
(2) Adoption right for same-sex couples	0.239	1.000			
(3) Legal recognition of a third gender	0.284	0.497	1.000		
(4) Jews have too much influence	0.044	0.328	0.290	1.000	
(5) Ban immigration for Muslims	0.111	0.377	0.399	0.429	1.000

Although the correlations are generally weaker than the correlations solely within the anti-Muslim dimension – as expected – they are nevertheless statistically meaningful. An exception is observed in the variables concerning women's equal opportunities in the labor market (here: variable 1), which shows disproportionately low correlations with the other variables. This suggests that, within the German context, support for gender equality in employment may not align as strongly with negative attitudes toward the inclusion of other marginalized groups. Consequently, pluralism aversion in Germany appears to incorporate attitudes toward women only to a lesser extent. An explanation for this might be that women generally enjoy more visibility than Jewish, Muslim or queer people do, which could be a relevant insight for any future research on the phenomenon of pluralism aversion.

Thus, the other variables within the matrix exhibit much stronger correlations, with homophobia and queerphobia, being part of the same broader LGBTQ-framework, showing slightly higher correlations with each other than with the other dimensions. Alongside, this pattern supports distinguishing misogyny, antisemitism, and anti-Muslim racism as statistically separate, though related, constructs. Correlations between categories consistently fall within the range of 0.3 - 0.5. Since attitudes toward women, as pointed out above, deviate disproportionately from attitudes toward the inclusion of other marginalized groups, the category of women’s representation is excluded from generating the factor.

The resulting factor demonstrates acceptable internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha indicating good reliability. Therefore, the rotation, extraction and scoring of the factors follows as described in chapter 5.

Following this, the logistic regression is calculated. In the final model, net income is excluded from the model, because this item drastically reduced the sample size (from 5399 to 3199) with an insignificant effect. For better interpretation, the model resorts to odds ratios and not to logits:

Figure 5: Logistic regression of APNR in odds ratios

	M1: Factors	M2: Standard- demographics
Anti-Muslim bias	3.143***	3.056***
	(.204)	(.202)
Aversion of pluralism	2.574***	2.537***
	(.168)	(.168)
Education		.908**
		(.035)
Gender: 0=woman, 1=man		.941
		(.08)
Age		1.002
		(.003)
_cons	.137***	.176***
	(.007)	(.037)
Observations	5399	5399
Pseudo R ²	.271	.272

Standard errors are in parentheses

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Model 1: Racism and Pluralism Aversion

In the first model, both anti-Muslim racism and pluralism aversion emerge as highly significant predictors of APNR. The Wald test confirms the high significance of both effects ($p < .001$). For anti-Muslim bias, the coefficient is 3.143, indicating that with each one-standard-deviation increase in the factor score, the odds of exhibiting APNR increase by a multiplicative factor of 3.143. The effect for the scored factor of plurality aversion is also highly significant, with a coefficient of 2.574. Thus, at first glance, the coefficient of the factor of anti-Muslim bias looks stronger. However, since the ranges of the factors vary, it is very important to examine the margins plots for this model (chapter 7.5).

Model 2: Standard Demographics

The second model includes standard demographic predictors. The coefficient for men is 0.941, which would suggest that identifying as male reduces the odds ratios of exhibiting APNR. However, since the p-value of the Wald-test is by far not < 0.05 , this finding is not statistically significant. This finding raises questions, not only because theory suggested otherwise, but particularly since a descriptive analysis shows that a larger proportion of men in the dataset exhibit APNR. Whilst fewer men believe in the norm (2.213 versus 2.433 women), actually *more* of them reduce the norm (527 versus 475 women).

Non-binary people have not been included in the analysis for their very little representation in the sample (17 participants in the entire dataset expressed to be non-binary, *divers*). However, it is also noteworthy that none of the 12 respondents who expressed belief in the norm and identify as non-

binary showed the APNR. This suggests that the probability for non-binary people might be lower than for men and women.

When analyzing the effect of age, the picture is similar as compared to gender: The coefficient is positive but the p-value does not reach statistical significance. Empirically, however, different age groups display different rates of APNR. For people aged 18-34 the rate is by far the lowest: 110 out of 1.218 respondents reduced the norm. For people in the age group of 65+, the rate is the highest with 411 out of 1.184 respondents. For the age groups between that, the rates are somewhere in between, which might be the reason why no statistically significant effect could be reached.

Education emerges as the only standard-demographic variable reaching statistical significance. The Wald-test is highly significant even ($p = 0.01$), and the coefficient demonstrates an effect <1 , indicating that higher levels of education decrease the probability of APNR.

The inherent ambiguity of APNR is also reflected in a degree of statistical ambiguity. Within this framework, the factors and education constitute the only variables that display a clearly identifiable inferential statistical effect. Although racism and pluralism aversion are likely to be negatively correlated with the endorsement of pluralist norms, it is nonetheless consistent that individuals, who do endorse in the norms *and* have high scores on these factors, exhibit a higher probability of reducing such norms. This relationship accounts for the size of the coefficients and the statistical significance of the p-values observed in the models.

In Model 2, the coefficients of the factors are slightly lower as compared to Model 1. For the set standard error, the coefficient is normally expected to increase and not to decrease. This is a scaling problem that is inherent to logistic regression analysis and makes it important to also examine the margins plot. In fact, a decrease can be observed and this implies an underlying mediation effect for education and both of the factors. Besides, the coefficients for the factor variables and education prove to be robust and even stronger in a regression model for the second APNR (cf. figure 26, Appendix). In this logistic regression that uses the second APNR-model as EV, age has a weak negative effect and the p-value just exceeds significance level. This weak and barely significant effect is consistent with the distribution of the first APNR among different age groups. Since the effect of age does not prove to be robust across models, it remains ambivalent and its importance questionable.

For these reasons:

Hypothesis 2.1 and 2.2 are supported since both variables, anti-Muslim bias and pluralism aversion, have a positive significant effect on the probability of APNR.

Hypothesis 3 is only partly supported. While the effect of education is significant and negative, the effect of age is weak and not robust across models. The one for gender, despite the variable showing a notable distribution in the population, is not significant in any of the models.

7.5 Average Marginal Predictions and Analysis of non-Linear Effects

Using the logistic regression model, average marginal predictions are calculated. This procedure involves reversing the transformation from odds to logits back into probabilities. To achieve this, the values observed for each independent variable are inserted into the probability equation, after which the resulting probabilities are averaged across all cases. In order to achieve more accurate marginsplots, age and gender are excluded from the model.

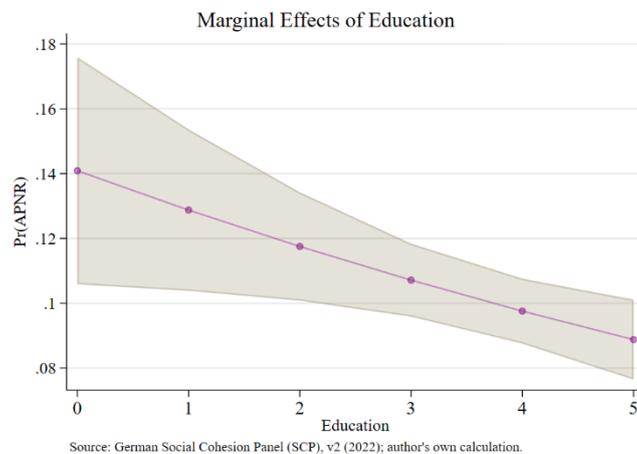


Figure 6: Scatterplot - Education, own illustration

Because margins plots use logits as the basis for probability calculations, the resulting effects appear as linear relationships. The margins plot for education is somewhat more complex as compared to the regression table, in parts due to the context-specific label categories of the German educational system (e.g., *Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, etc.). This is why numeric labels were resorted to. In this coding scheme, 0 indicates that a respondent is still in school or vocational training, while 5 represents the completion of higher education. As expected, the predicted probability of APNR declines steadily with increased education with very wide CIs.

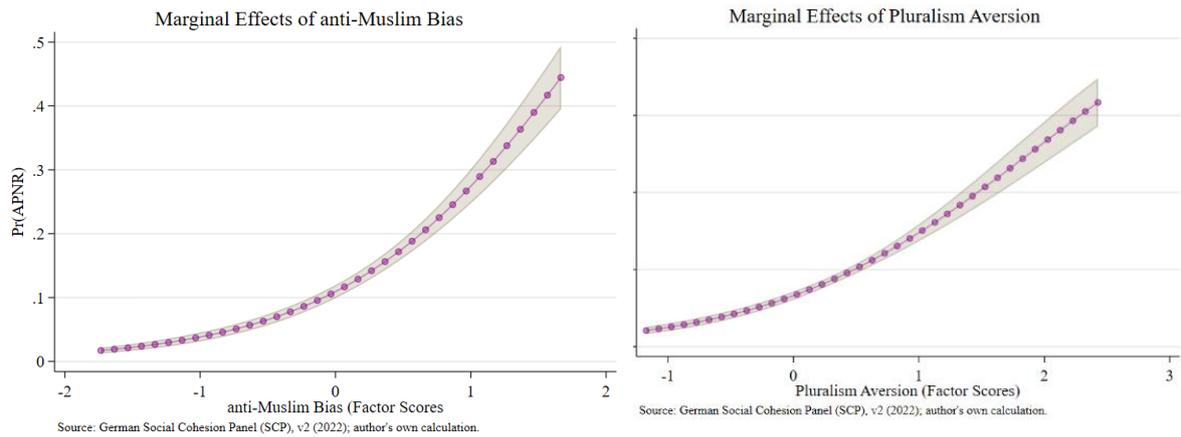
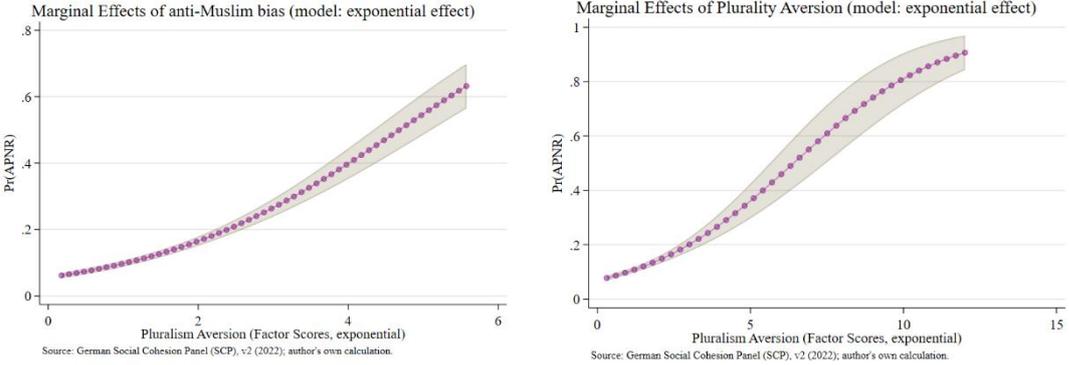


Figure 7: Scatter Plot - anti-Muslim Bias, own illustration; Figure 8: Scatter Plot- Pluralism Aversion, own illustration

When examining the models that incorporate the factor variables, the margins plots display patterns that differ from those observed for education. For plurality aversion, the slope of the curve is not constant but becomes visibly steeper once the factor score exceeds zero. In the case of anti-Muslim bias, the curve of the response function appears almost exponential in shape. To examine this more closely, exponential distributions are modeled statistically for both factors.

7.5.1 Exponential Effects in the Model + Discrete Marginal Changes

In order to model exponential effects, the respective independent variables become an exponential term within the equation.



Figures 9 and 10: Scatter Plots – exponential effects, own illustration

With exponential effects explicitly modeled, the results do not quite confirm the presence of exponential effects. Whilst LR-tests for some of the specified exponential effects slightly exceed the threshold to significance, the average marginal effects for plurality aversion do not

resemble an exponential distribution, and the widening of the 95% confidence intervals indicates reduced precision of the coefficient estimates. Similarly, the margins plot for anti-Muslim bias shows a flattening of the curve at higher values, suggesting that the effect is not truly exponential either. Nevertheless, the curvature remains more pronounced than for other predictors like education.

These findings can be explained by the inherent logic of logistic regression. While the logit is modeled as a linear function, the corresponding probability curve necessarily follows an s-shaped distribution. This transformation can produce the impression of exponential growth in the margins plots, even though the underlying effect remains linear in the logit. This can be underscored by examining the discrete marginal changes in probability.

For the calculation of discrete marginal changes in probability, a tangent slope is estimated at specific values of x . This approach builds on the calculation of average marginal predictions. Three relevant x -values are selected from the margins plot for anti-Muslim bias: $x = -1$, $x = 0.5$, and $x = 1.2$, since these seem important to understand the slope. At $x = -1$, the curve still shows only a very weak increase, at $x = 0.5$ the increase becomes more pronounced, and at $x > 0.5$ the curve begins to display the strong growth typical of exponential effects. The corresponding values are: at $x = -1$: 0.051; at $x = 0.5$: 0.16; and at $x = 1.2$: 0.22. This clearly indicates that the increase varies from a linear one.

However, when the model is estimated under the assumption of an exponential effect, a somewhat different picture emerges: at $x = 0.5$, the change is approximately 0.05; at $x = 2.5$, approximately 0.10; and at $x = 4.5$, approximately 0.13. While the relationship remains non-linear, the effect appears considerably flatter. This aligns with the analysis of the plots.

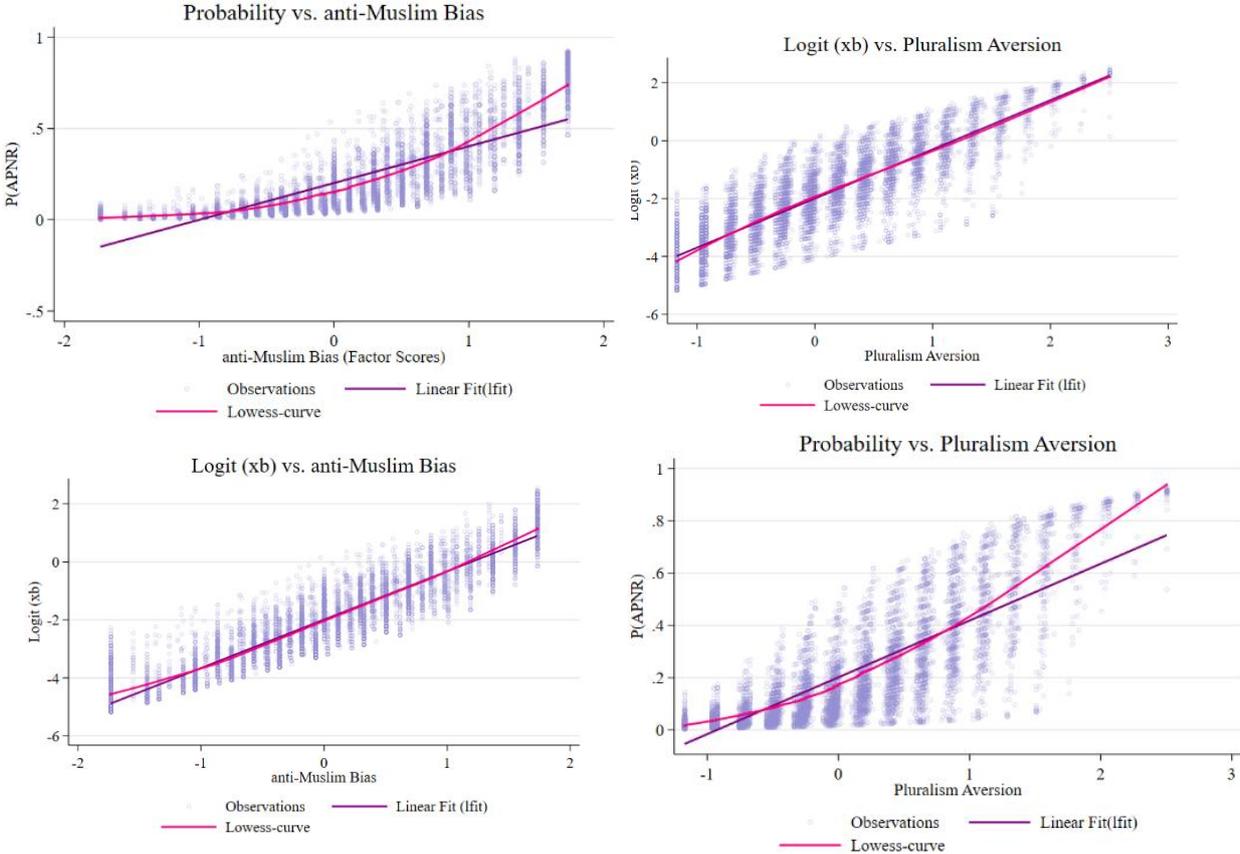
Finally, discrete marginal changes are also calculated for the exponentiated model of pluralism aversion, where the margins plot most clearly resembles an S-shaped curve. At $x = 1$, the marginal change is approximately 0.04; at $x = 6$, around 0.08; and at $x = 11$, it fell to around 0.05. This pattern aligns with the characteristic S-shaped distribution.

7.6 Comparison of the Effect via Predicted Probabilities and LOWESS Curve

Whilst this comparison approaches the topic of model fit and goodness, the curves developed shed additional light on the question of effect size and exponentiality, which is why the choice was to keep the section separated.

To compare these effects to the actual observations, scatter plots were generated that combine the observed values with the logit estimates of the model, alongside a LOWESS (Locally Weighted Scatterplot Smoothing) curve of the predicted probabilities against the dependent variables of the logistic regression – anti-Muslim bias and plurality aversion. The inclusion of the LOWESS curve adds an important visual and analytical dimension to the plot. By carrying out a locally weighted regression of the estimated probabilities on the independent variable, the method produces a smooth curve that highlights underlying patterns in the data without necessitating to be modeled in a strict functional form.

Because the regression is calculated at each individual data point, the LOWESS approach is non-parametric. This property makes it particularly well-suited for use in logistic regression models, which are inherently non-linear and do not rely on the assumptions of ordinary least squares. In this way, the LOWESS curves complement the logit estimates by offering an intuitive, data-driven visualization of the relationship between the predictors and the probability of norm reduction. Hence, its non-parametric nature allows the LOWESS curve to be applied even in logistic, non-linear regression models that do not rely on OLS.



Figures 11-14: Logit/Probability vs. Lowess curve, own illustration

What the lowess curve helps to show in general and also in this specific case are local deviations from linearity, which may not be visible in the standard logit estimates or the margins plot.

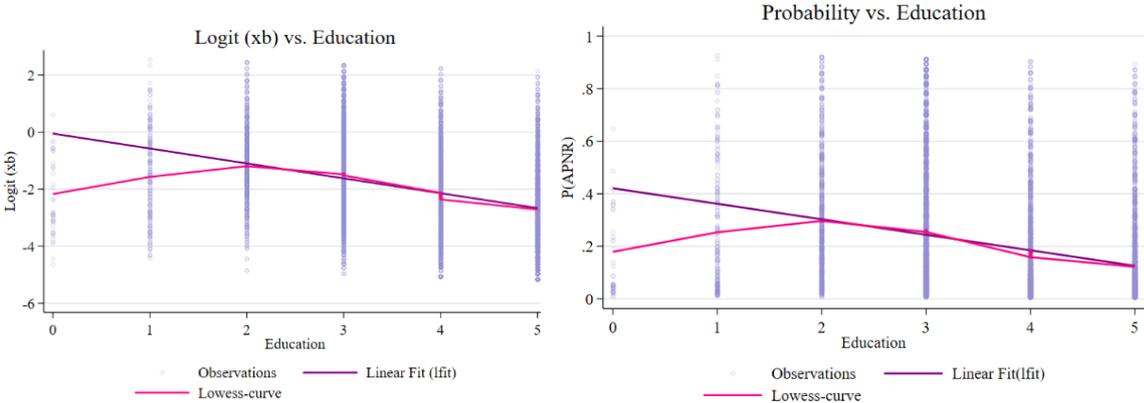
The apparent “exponential” effect observed in earlier models may not be an inherent property of the relationship itself but rather a function of the scaling of the factor scores, which cover a very specific range due to their standardization. Hence, there seems to be indeed an exponential property in the model, but only as a local deviation and not as the global effect. This interpretation is supported by the fact that, in the probability plots, the divergence between the model fit and the LOWESS curve is more pronounced for pluralism aversion. The statistical significance that shows in the likelihood ratio test might be a symptom of this. Besides, the substantive “exponential” effect size remains very small (as can be seen in the LOWESS curve), and the model fit actually deteriorates when an exponential version of the variable is introduced – R-measures are compared for this and a widening of the CIs in the margins plot can be observed.

Substantively, the margins plots suggest relatively similar dynamics for the two factors (cf. figures 7-8). With increasing pluralism aversion, the probability of supporting APNR rises only gradually up to factor scores around one. Beyond that point, however, the effect becomes strongly nonlinear: even small additional increases in aversion lead to disproportionately large increases in probability. Anti-Muslim bias exerts a similar effect, yet a little weaker: as bias levels rise, the probability of supporting APNR increases. However, the sharp “take-off” seen for pluralism aversion is weaker for anti-Muslim bias. This tipping-point character of the plot for pluralism aversion may also explain why the 95% confidence intervals in the margins plots for this variable widen toward the higher end of the scale.

In addition to the range of the factor scores, a substantive analysis helps to approach and clarify the effects observed. For values below zero, the effects of both plurality aversion and anti-Muslim bias remain similarly weak, which makes sense given that individuals in this range generally express pro-pluralist or pro-Muslim attitudes. In this group, the distinction between having a “normal” or a “strong” negative factor score is substantively negligible, since their overall probability of APNR remains very low. These individuals *already* score lower than the mean on these factors, so in general an increased openness toward pluralism and Muslims can be expected of these individuals. By contrast, in the range above zero, the size of the factor scores becomes more decisive. Here, a strong anti-Muslim bias disproportionately increases the probability of APNR compared to a weak bias, while the same steep differences do not exist among those holding weak or strongly negative biases. In summary, from both a substantial and a statistical standpoint, the local exponential increase of P(APNR) might be a symptom of the centered role that racism and anti-pluralism play in this work.

A final remark on the plots, which also anticipates the discussion of model fit, concerns the dispersion of the observed cases. Notable is the vertical dispersion around the factor scores that is larger for pluralism aversion than for anti-Muslim bias, both in the probability and in the logit representations. This dispersion suggests that the explanatory contribution of pluralism aversion is more dependent on additional variance than is the case for anti-Muslim bias. This underscores the explanatory power of anti-Muslim bias in the responses.

This curve is also calculated for the effect of education.



Figures 15-16: Logit/Probability vs. Lowess curve - education, own illustration

The linear fit, as indicated in the logistic regression, suggests a clear downward trend of educational attainment on the probability of APNR. Yet, the lowess curve reveals a more nuanced empirical reality. For values between 0 and 3, the curve initially rises slightly, although the effect is weak and of questionable robustness. This is particularly true for the category 0, which includes fewer than 100 observations and corresponds to respondents who are still in high school. The category itself is highly ambiguous, since the German school system differentiates between *Gymnasium*, *Realschule*, *Hauptschule*, and *Gesamtschule*, which offer distinct educational pathways and do not always represent the same number of years of schooling. For instance, in North Rhine-Westphalia, students can already acquire the *Mittlere Reife* (the degree that is obtained after a Realschule) after the 10th year of a Gymnasium, while in this scale *Mittlere Reife* is coded as 1, and 0 could still include Gymnasium students who continue their education after having obtained the *Mittlere Reife* and whose educational trajectory is arguably more advanced. This inconsistency renders the 0 category unreliable for meaningful analysis. A similar ambiguity arises between values 1 and 2. While category 2 represents individuals with vocational training (*Lehre*), those in category 1 often hold the *Mittlere Reife*, which is a comparatively higher school qualification than a *Hauptschule* degree. In classical terms of schooling, individuals coded as 1 may thus have slightly more education than those coded as 2, even though the

latter stand likely better chances in the labor market. This discrepancy may account for the small rise observed between categories 1 and 2 – an artefact of the data structure rather than of the model itself. Beyond these anomalies, however, the downward trend becomes clearer and more robust. From category 3 through 5, ranging from Mittlere Reife + vocational training (*Ausbildung*) to higher education, the relationship between education and APNR appears more linear, and both the linear fit and the lowess curve converge. This pattern strongly supports the substantive claim that higher levels of education reduce the probability of APNR.

7.7 Multicollinearity

Testing for Multicollinearity is typically part of checking regression assumptions. In this specific instance, it raises questions about the empirical nature of anti-Muslim bias and pluralism aversion.

7.7.2 Multicollinearity of anti-Muslim Bias and Pluralism Aversion

A first glance at the correlation matrix of the two factors suggests a substantive statistical association between anti-Muslim racism and pluralism aversion:

Figure 17: Matrix of correlations of factors, own illustration

Variables	(1)	(2)
(1) anti-Muslim bias	1.000	
(2) pluralism aversion 2	0.544	1.000

This makes it especially important to test for possible confounding, mediating, or moderating effects. Since the correlation between the two exists and is strong (0.544) but the phenomena are not the *same* ($c = 1$), the statistical as well as substantive relationship between the factors is difficult to determine. Particularly in the German context, it remains historically ambiguous whether anti-Muslim attitudes emerged first—for example, in relation to the Gastarbeiter generation or in response to the arrivals of 2015—or whether a more general aversion to pluralism, and the cognitive difficulty of coping with it, constitutes the overarching phenomenon from which subsequent forms of group-specific aversions derive and develop.

When logistic regressions are conducted with only one of the factors as EV at a time, both coefficients appear even stronger than in the full first model. This indicates that the effects of anti-Muslim racism and pluralism aversion can at least partially be explained by the presence of the other factor (cf. chapter 7.8). Linear regression models, using one of the factors as DV and in which the variance of each factor is regressed on the other, further confirm their statistical association (e.g., figure 27, Appendix). The results show that the variance of one factor can be explained to a highly significant degree by the variance of the other, and vice versa.

This raises the question of whether anti-Muslim racism and pluralism aversion might, in fact, represent the same underlying phenomenon. However, this possibility can be rejected on the basis of likelihood-ratio (LR) tests (cf. chapter 7.8). For both variables, the LR tests are highly significant, demonstrating that the inclusion of each factor to the model yields a statistically significant increase in the explanatory power of both the baseline model and the nested logistic regression model (Figure 5, Model 2).

Taken together, these findings suggest that part of the effect of anti-Muslim bias can be explained through pluralism aversion and vice versa. At the same time, the analysis clearly indicates that the two remain distinct phenomena, each contributing independently and significantly to the probability of exhibiting APNR. This conclusion holds consistently across the second modeled specifications of APNR, too.

7.7.2 Multicollinearity between Education and Pluralism Aversion

A negative correlation is observed between education and anti-Muslim bias: higher levels of education are associated with lower levels of bias. This raises the methodological question of whether one of the two variables might act as a mediator or confounder within the model. While such an interpretation cannot be entirely ruled out, likelihood ratio tests indicate that both variables independently contribute significantly to the explanatory power of the model.

7.8 KHB-Method and Mediation Effects

Ulrich Kohler describes the idea of the method KHB-method, named after its developers Karlson, Holm and Breen, as an extraction of the information of a control variable Z that is not contained in X by calculating the residuals of a linear regression of Z on X (Kohler, U., 2011; Karlson, A et al., 2011). This allows for a comparison of coefficients pre- and post-addition of the variable that is considered to have a mediating effect with additional LR-tests.

For the APNR model, the KHB-method is performed for anti-Muslim bias, pluralism aversion and education. The method was developed for linear models like logit models, which is why the logistic regression is transformed into from odds ratios to logits prior to usage of the khb method. As the section on multicollinearity has already indicated, all of the variables are found to have a partially mediating effect on one another. As the LR-tests are still significant, this underlines the significance of all three of the variables used in the logistic regression.

The following table is an illustration for these findings, using anti-Muslim bias as z -variable:

7.9.1 R²-measures

McFadden's pseudo-R² has a value of **0.272**, indicating that the model predicts the probability of APNR considerably better than the null model. **McKelvey and Zavoina's R²** is generally calculated by dividing the variance of the model predictions through the variance of the logistic density function – its calculation makes it similar to the R² typical of linear regression models (McKelvey, R.; Zavoina, W.; 1975). In this case the value for this **0.435**, suggesting that approximately 43.5 per cent of the variance in the unobserved latent propensity for APNR is explained by the predictor variables, which is decent. For the careful analysis of the classification table, neither the adjusted nor the regular Count R² are looked at here, since these two measures of a model's goodness require similar underlying calculations.

7.9.2 Influential Cases

In order to analyze influential cases, a leverage-versus-residuals plot is calculated:

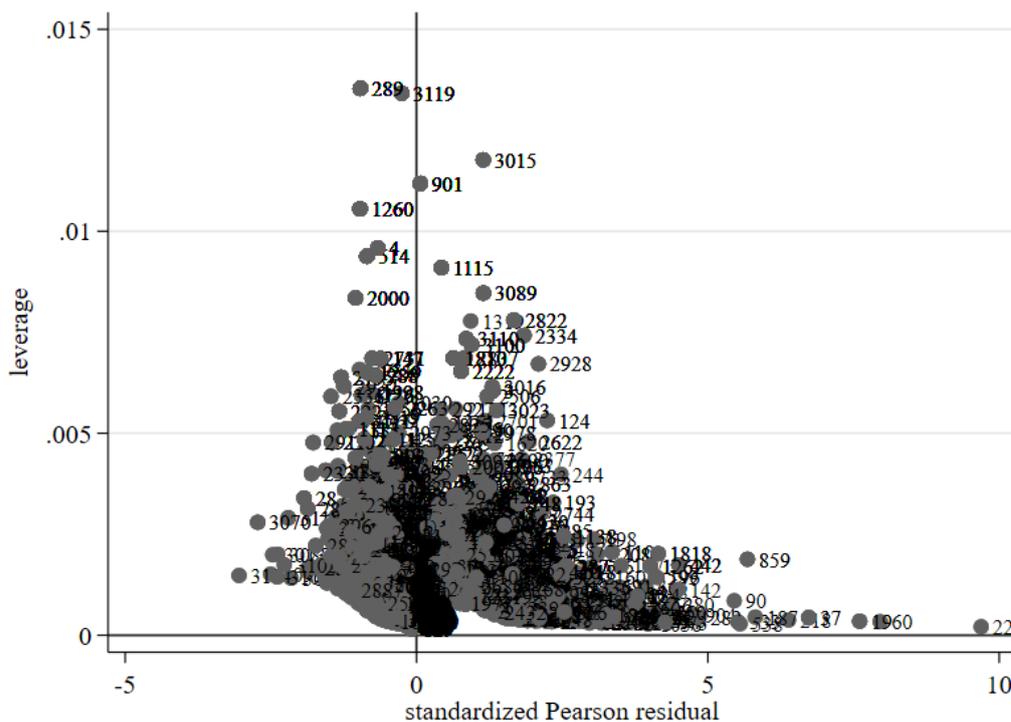


Figure 19: Leverage-versus-residuals plot, own illustration

Potentially influential observations are those with both high residuals on the x-axis and high leverage values on the y-axis. Leverage captures the extent to which a covariate pattern reflects unusual values on the independent variables or an unusual combination thereof. Residuals, plotted on the x-axis, indicate poor prediction of the dependent variable. Only when both conditions coincide—high

residuals and high leverage—does a covariate pattern become problematic, as it may exert undue influence on the model and distort the coefficients.

As an illustrative case, covariate pattern 3015 is examined in greater detail. This pattern comprises 4 respondents (e.g., cases 1940, 2881, etc.), all of whom share the same demographic profile: female, with average levels of education (Mittlere Reife + apprenticeship), and consistently high scores on anti-Muslim bias, but, oddly, negative values for pluralism aversion. These women, empirically speaking, are pro-pluralist but anti-Muslim. Based on this profile, the predicted probability of exhibiting APNR is 46.63 per cent. However, the majority of these respondents (3 out of 4) do, in fact, display APNR.

The combination of independent variables within this covariate pattern is not particularly unusual, and since no data errors are present, the pattern is not considered problematic. Because it does not simultaneously exhibit unusual leverage and residual values, the cases are retained in the model. More generally, it is important to consider to which population inferences can still be drawn if cases without data errors are excluded from the analysis. For this reason, the individuals associated with covariate pattern 3015 remain part of the final model.

7.9.3 Youden-Index and Classification Table

The classification table provides an overview of how well the model predicts whether respondents reduce the given norm. Based on the model, a specific probability is calculated for each observation. Respondents with a predicted probability greater than 0.5 are classified as “reduces the norm.” This prediction is then compared to the actual observed reduction of the norm. Correct classifications are represented along the diagonal of the table, while off-diagonal entries represent misclassifications both of people that did and did not reduce the norm.

Logistic model for APNRA

Classified	True		Total
	D	~D	
+	339	172	511
-	624	4298	4922
Total	963	4470	5433

Figure 20: Classification table, own illustration

For the model, 339 of the respondents that did, in fact, reduce the norm were correctly classified along with 4298 of the respondents that maintained the norm. Overall, the model achieves a high prediction rate, with more than 85% of cases correctly classified. However, this number is somewhat misleading, as sensitivity and specificity diverge. Sensitivity, which is the value for positively classified respondents under the condition that the norm was reduced, is 35.20%. Specificity, the value for the

correctly classified respondents who maintained the norm, is disproportionately high with 96.15%. This is likely due to the highly unbalanced classes in the data, which is consistent with the fact that the overall frequency of an APNR is only around 10%. In such a situation, a classifier that labels every single case as “does not reduce the norm” would already achieve a high number of correctly classified cases. To counter this imbalance, the Youden-Index can be used to determine the cutoff that maximizes both sensitivity and specificity. The Youden Index is calculated as sensitivity + specificity – 1, and its maximum indicates an empirical optimal cutoff value.

For the full nested model, the classification metrics, using 0.183 as cutoff-value calculated through the Youden-Index, are as follows:

Logistic model for APNR

Classified	True		Total
	D	~D	
+	749	1033	1782
-	214	3437	3651
Total	963	4470	5433

Figure 21: Classification table after Youden-Index, own illustration

In per cent, the values are: sensitivity ($\text{Pr}(+|D)$) = 77.78%, specificity ($\text{Pr}(-|\sim D)$) = 76.89%, and overall accuracy = 77.05%. By contrast, simpler models perform considerably worse. A model containing only education achieves 61.25% correct classification. When only plurality aversion is included, the accuracy improves to 74.41%, and with only anti-Muslim bias, it rises to 76.45%.

When gender is included in the full model, 76.62% of the cases are correctly classified. This confirms the former choice to exclude gender from the model.

These results demonstrate that, although the likelihood-ratio tests have already shown that all independent variables significantly increase the explanatory power of the model, the contribution of each variable to predictive accuracy varies. In terms of predictive information, the variables rank in the following order from highest to lowest: anti-Muslim bias, plurality aversion, education. The fact that the full nested model only slightly outperforms the model that includes anti-Muslim bias alone can be explained statistically. Respondents who already score high on anti-Muslim bias tend to surpass the cutoff derived from the Youden Index even without the additional predictors. While adding further independent variables can substantially increase the predicted probability of an APNR for these individuals, it does not necessarily push them beyond a new cutoff threshold. As a result, the overall predictive accuracy of the model does not rise, even though the predicted probabilities themselves

increase and come closer to the “real probabilities.” However, as already pointed out, the comparison of the models that each only contain one of the relevant independent variables, shows the difference in contributions by each variable.

8. Limitations of the Analysis

Several limitations of this analysis must be acknowledged, both with respect to the data and the methodological approach.

8.1 Data-Related Limitations

The panel structure of the dataset causes certain challenges for the analysis, particularly because not all relevant variables are included in the same waves. For example, important socio-spatial indicators such as an urban–rural distinction are missing in wave 2, the main wave of analysis here. Moreover, while the data allow for an inferential statistical picture of anti-Muslim racism in the aftermath of the “long summer of migration” in 2015, they were collected prior to the escalation of the conflict in Gaza, which, according to recent evidence, has markedly worsened the situation of Muslims living in Germany (CLAIM, 2025). A further limitation is that the number of items explicitly measuring anti-Muslim attitudes is relatively small. The analysis thus had to rely on only four variables, which constrained the conceptual and analytical differentiation.

8.2 Substantive Limitations

According to existing literature, one of the most profound and prevalent forms of anti-Muslim racism in Germany specifically targets women, particularly those wearing the headscarf, which is often constructed as a signifier of “anti-Western” or “anti-liberal” values (Jukschat, N.; Lehmann, L., 2020). However, the dataset did not include questions specifically addressing this group, nor did it allow for an intersectional analysis of multiple discriminations. Relatedly, groups such as Black people—who face some of the most severe forms of discrimination in Germany—were not directly addressed in the survey. This omission also prevents a nuanced analysis of Black Muslims, whose experiences would be statistically important for understanding anti-pluralism in its broader societal context. Moreover, certain sub-dimensions of anti-Muslim racism, such as anti-Palestinian or anti-Kurdish racism, were not captured in the dataset, further limiting the analytical depth.

8.3 Conceptual Limitations of the Iterative Approach

The methodological choice to rely on specific generalized norms and to detect their reduction through an iterative approach also presents challenges. This procedure creates analytical leverage but remains less robust than an approach that would examine individuals who consistently endorse (or reject) a comprehensive set of pluralist norms.

8.4 Limitations of Logistic Regression Modeling

Another limitation concerns the statistical modeling. The logistic regression models were based exclusively on individuals who had already expressed support for the relevant pluralist norm. This design raises the question of whether systematic factors shaping the outright rejection of pluralist norms were overlooked. Moreover, the dependent variable was modeled in binary terms (norm maintained vs. norm reduced). Theoretically, one could argue for a more nuanced ordinal distinction between the absence of a norm, the reduction of a norm, and the constant adherence to a norm. Such an approach might allow for a more racism-critical analysis, recognizing that "reduced norm" is not necessarily preferable to the outright absence of a norm. An alternative operationalization could focus on the internal consistency of a worldview; yet, this too introduces challenges, as consistency can be present in both anti- and pro-pluralist worldviews, and therefore might yield an outcome that relativizes and normalizes anti-pluralism. These considerations highlight that alternative dependent-variable specifications would require different analytical tools, since nominal or ordinal variables cannot be adequately modeled using standard logistic or linear regression.

8.5 Quantitative limits and the Need for Qualitative Research

Finally, the study remains limited by its quantitative design. While the analysis demonstrates empirically that norm reduction occurs, it does not capture the subjective experiences of those affected by these reductions or the political consequences of them. At the same time, this analysis does not account for psychological mechanisms that influence norm reductions. Future qualitative research is therefore essential to complement the statistical findings and to shed light on how these processes are experienced and contested in everyday life.

9. Summary of Findings and Conclusion

To conclude, **APNR is a societal reality, just as anti-Muslim bias and plurality aversion empirically exist within the population. Anti-Muslim bias and plurality aversion are related phenomena, as shown by their statistical correlation, yet they are not identical. The probability of individuals lowering their pluralist norms increases with higher levels of both anti-Muslim bias and plurality aversion, showing that norm reduction does not occur arbitrarily but as a part of a general anti-Muslim and anti-plural framework; in addition, it decreases with higher levels of education. The effects of gender and age on the probability show no statistical significance or do not prove robust across models while specific age groups (especially 65+) and men reduce the norm more frequently. Across all models, anti-Muslim bias emerges as the most important predictor. This suggests that while norm reduction is indeed an anti-pluralist phenomenon, it is even more specifically an *anti-Muslim* one.**

Other findings include that **pluralism aversion in Germany empirically comprises misogyny to a lesser degree than anti-Muslim racism, antisemitism, homophobia, and queerphobia**. Maybe this is because integrating women into the labor market feels to the respondents less like “pluralization” as the inclusion minorities like Muslims, Jews, and queer people does. In this respect, the analysis contributes to a more differentiated understanding of contemporary forms of racism and anti-pluralism as well as their implications for the stability of pluralist norms in German society.

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11. Appendix

The STATA do-file and the data are provided electronically by a USB stick.

Figure 22: Distribution of important variables for APNR 1 and 2, own illustration

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
APNR1	5699	.177	.382	0	1
APNR2	6205	.141	.349	0	1
pislamphob01	8542	2.258	1.159	1	5
pislamphob02	8534	3.309	1.103	1	5
ppopul15	8568	3.829	.877	1	5
pbsjo05	8589	3.882	.959	1	5

Figure 23: Distribution of Variables of Factor Analyses – anti-Muslim bias, own illustration

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pislamphob01	8542	2.258	1.159	1	5
pislamphob02 rev	8534	2.691	1.103	1	5
pislamphob03	8453	3.354	1.135	1	5
pislamphob04	8473	3.077	1.192	1	5

Figure 24: Distribution of Variables of Factor Analyses – pluralism aversion, own illustration

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
pgendeq01 rev	8585	2.961	1.228	1	5
pgendeq04 rev	8581	2.134	1.239	1	5
pgendeq06 rev	8557	2.741	1.415	1	5
pantisem02	8411	2.016	1.013	1	5
pislamphob01	8542	2.258	1.159	1	5
pislamphob02 rev	8534	2.691	1.103	1	5

Figure 25: Distribution of the standard-demographic variables, own illustration

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
edu	8469	3.712	1.117	0	5
age	8511	51.729	18.085	18	98
gender dich	8526	.501	.5	0	1
plabincnet	5013	2646.554	14872.946	0	1000100

Figure 26: Logistic regression for second APNR, own illustration

APNRC	Coef.	St.Err.	t-value	p-value	[95% Conf	Interval]	Sig
islamB	6.594	.567	21.94	0	5.572	7.804	***
pluraB	2.772	.206	13.74	0	2.397	3.206	***
edu	.826	.037	-4.30	0	.757	.901	***
Gender (binary) : ~n	1	.	.	.	.	.	.
Man	1.015	.1	0.15	.883	.837	1.23	
age	.994	.003	-2.23	.026	.988	.999	**
Constant	.119	.03	-8.59	0	.073	.194	***
Mean dependent var		0.135	SD dependent var			0.342	
Pseudo r-squared		0.377	Number of obs			5847	
Chi-square		1750.634	Prob > chi2			0.000	
Akaike crit. (AIC)		2899.495	Bayesian crit. (BIC)			2939.537	

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Figure 27: Linear regression: anti-Muslim bias, own illustration

islamf	Coef.	St.Err.	t-value	p-value	[95% Conf	Interval]	Sig
edu	-.053	.007	-7.31	0	-.067	-.039	***
age	.009	0	21.07	0	.008	.01	***

Gender (binary) :	0	.	.	.	.	.	.
~n							
Man	-.029	.016	-1.84	.065	-.059	.002	*
plurav	.579	.01	56.98	0	.559	.598	***
Constant	-.272	.038	-7.14	0	-.347	-.197	***
Mean dependent var	0.001	SD dependent var	0.890				
R-squared	0.398	Number of obs	8099				
F-test	1339.863	Prob > F	0.000				
Akaike crit. (AIC)	16991.683	Bayesian crit. (BIC)	17026.681				

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$