

Presentation title:

Effects of the perception of human rights violations and protests in Iran on islamophobic attitudes towards muslims in Germany: Results of two representative surveys and a survey experiment

Speakers: Peter Wetzels and Katrin Brettfeld (University of Hamburg, Germany)

In November 2022 and February 2023 the Institute of Criminology at the University of Hamburg conducted two waves of the representative study "People in Germany: International". N=2,500 people were surveyed in each of the two waves. Central aim of this study is to analyse influences of internationally significant political events on political attitudes of people in Germany. Results of multivariate Analyses of the he first wave of the survey showed significant correlations between the subjective evaluations of the human rights violations in Iran and islamophobic attitudes towards Muslims in Germany. Interpreting developments in Iran as evidence of a general hostility of Islamic Religion toward human rights were associated with significantly stronger islamophobic attitudes towards Muslims in Germany. Furthermore islamophobic attitudes were significantly lower among respondents who interpreted protests in Iran as indicator of a social movement of muslims towards more political freedom and women's rights. Results of the first wave of the survey were based on crosssectional data. Therefore questions of causality cannot be answered sufficiently. To analyse whether interpretations of the events in Iran causally influence respondents' islamophobic attitudes a survey experiment was integrated in the second wave. Participants were randomly assigned to four groups. Groups 1 through 3 were first given a brief description of what was happening in Iran. Participants in groups 2 and 3 additionally asked about their agreement with statements that either conveyed a positive view of the protests in Iran and advocated German support for the protesters (group 2) or assessed the events in Iran as indicators of a general hostility of the islamic religion toward human rights and called for German sanctions against Iran (group 3). Group 4 (Control group) did not receive any information about developments in Iran. Results show causal effects of the interpretation of developments in Iran on islamophobic attitudes and prejudices towards muslims in Germany.