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Welcome to episode two of the series "Religion and Worldview" on the topic "Heterogeneity of Muslim Religiosity". I am Fahimah Ulfat, Professor of Islamic Religious Education at the Centre for Islamic Theology at Eberhard Karls University in Tübingen.

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The learning objectives for today are as follows: You will gain a sense of the difference between findings of qualitative and quantitative research on Muslim religiosity, you will be able to understand and comprehend the heterogeneity of Muslim religiosity based on research results, and you will be able to draw conclusions about the consequences of perceiving or not perceiving religious heterogeneity.

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If you look at the religious and denominational distribution of the population in Germany between 1950 and today, it becomes clear that Germany has become a multi-religious country. In 1956, a total of 95 percent of the total population belonged to the Catholic and Protestant churches. At the end of 2019, the proportion for both churches together is 52 percent. Changes such as German reunification in 1990, labour migration from 1961 onwards, the immigration of ethnic Germans and refugees, changing values, fewer baptisms and other social developments have led to a reduction in the number of Protestant and Catholic church members.

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This means that in addition to the 52 percent of Catholics and Protestants in Germany, around 48 percent are non-denominational and of other faiths. The most recent projection of the number of Muslims in Germany is provided by the study "How many Muslims live in Germany?" by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, done at the end of 2015 - and according to this projection, between 4.4 and 4.7 million Muslims were estimated to be living in Germany in 2015, which means that 5.4 to 5.7 percent of the total population are of Muslim faith.

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And of course, the number has increased in the course of the refugee movement in 2014 and 2015, which is already included in this figure, so to speak. However, recording the number of Muslims is not easy. The problem with calculating the number of Muslims is that they cannot be recorded through membership of a mosque community because there is no formal obligation to be a member. There is no kind of church among Muslims here, and for those who would like more detailed information on how the number of people of Muslim faith in Germany is recorded, we recommend the report of the Media Service Integration from 2013, the exact citation can be found on the last slide.

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Muslims are often, and especially in quantitative studies, portrayed as a relatively homogeneous group of religious or highly religious people. For example, the study "Muslims in Germany" from 2007 states that - quote - "half of the general Muslim population can be described as religious or very religious. Among schoolchildren, almost two-thirds fall into this category, and among Muslim students 54.6 per cent" - end of quote. The Bertelsmann Foundation's Religion Monitor "Muslim Religiosity in Germany", published in 2008, showed

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among other things that Muslims in Germany differ significantly from the non-Muslim population in their religiousness. Quote: "90 percent of Muslims in Germany over the age of 18 can be classified as religious, 41 percent of them even as highly religious" - end of quote. The representative study "Muslim Life in Germany" from 2008, commissioned by the "Deutsche Islamkonferenz", also confirms the high significance of religion for Muslims.

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Further studies can of course be listed. The heterogeneity of faith and religiosity within Islam is perceived neither in the non-Muslim external perspective nor in the Muslim internal perspective. On the contrary, it is assumed by both sides that the majority of Muslims are religious to highly religious people and quantitative studies as well as public perception suggest a homogeneity among Muslims that does not exist in reality.

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However, both qualitative studies and Muslim self-expressions break down this picture and can show that a largely undiscovered heterogeneity is hiding behind the discourses of homogeneity. And again, you will find the references on the last slides.

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I would now like to present research on various forms of references to God by Muslim children in order to give an example of the heterogeneity of Muslim religiosity. Especially for educational fields of action, it is important to become aware of this heterogeneity of Muslim religiosity, which is obscured by various discourses of homogeneity. It is precisely the denial of this religious heterogeneity that entails considerable consequences - among other things, it can lead to social and religious self-exclusion and exclusion by others.

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The research topic of this research was the reconstruction of Muslim children's relationships with God.

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And the guiding research question was: What action-oriented relevance do their respective relationships with God have for Muslim children?

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For the reconstruction of a relationship with God, three aspects are of crucial importance, namely the children's experiences which they themselves interpret as religious,

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the conjunctive spaces of experience, which are the social spaces in which the children have their religious experiences

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and the individual relevance systems that give elements from the religious symbol system an individual weighting and meaning.

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If you are interested in this theoretical framework and the resulting findings that were significant for the research design, you can read more about it in my paper entitled "Muslim children's self-relation to God: An empirical study of Muslim children's relationships with

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God as a reflexive contribution to the didactics of Islamic religious education". You will also find the citation on the last slides.

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The interrelation between the three outlined dimensions of religious experience, conjunctive experience space and individual relevance systems of the children requires an open research design. Methodologically, a qualitative-reconstructive research design was used for the study. The data was collected by means of narrative interviews and analysed by means of the documentary method.

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In order to meet the demand of focusing on the individual relevancies of the children, the used data collection methods had to give the children interviewed the opportunity to articulate their relevancies.

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For this, methodological self-restraint is crucial, which is rarely applied consistently in religious research. From the moment the researcher introduces God or religious patterns of interpretation into the interview through his or her narrative and conversational impulses, there is no longer any possibility to differentiate whether the interview partners, when they make God or religious patterns of interpretation a subject of discussion, do so out of their own individual system of relevance or merely in reaction to the researcher's impulse.

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So if one wants to find out whether God or religious patterns of interpretation have a real biographical meaning for a Muslim child,

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the researcher must not touch on the topic under any circumstances.

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This is all the more so because every Muslim child has a stock of declarative knowledge about Muslim patterns of interpretation that he or she can update immediately if necessary, if he or she has the impression that the conversation partner wants it.

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The sample was selected according to the "Theoretical Sampling" procedure of Glaser and Strauss. Approximately 25 children were interviewed and after 15 evaluations the field was saturated.

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With the exception of two contrasting cases, the children all participated in Islamic religious education and were between 9 and 10 years old. This means that except for two contrasting cases, all children were at the end of grade four at the time of the interview.

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Eight girls and seven boys were interviewed, so the interviews with these eight girls and seven boys were analysed. Most of the children also participated in mosque classes and the group was further differentiated according to culture and language areas and according to religious upbringing in the family, community and school. For example, there were children from mystically oriented families, two children had the Shiite denomination and so on.

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I would now like to present the results to you. In a comparative analysis, I was able to reconstruct three types of references to God. I have brought a small interview excerpt for each type as an example, which you can see here. I called type A the "Relation of the Self to God in the Mode of Personalisation". Children who can be assigned to this type speak in the mode of an emotionally coloured construction of God. The perspective from which they construct God shows a closeness to God that is anchored in biographical experience. God is experienced as a You who is turned towards them and whose existence is not questioned.

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I have called type B "Relation of the self to God in the mode of moralisation and tradition orientation". Type B is characterised by the fact that children speak in the mode of orientation towards the religious-socially expected or tradition. This reveals a moralising and dichotomising perspective. The children discuss God in the dimensions and categories that the learned tradition prescribes to them. And beyond that, there is hardly any personal reference to God or religious content that guides their actions, as was shown by type A.

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I have called type C "Relation of the self to immanent dimensions in the mode of remoteness from God". In this type, God exists only on the periphery of the individual horizon, as an element of social reality. Apart from this, these children speak about God in a mode that is detached from any personal reference. Likewise, there is no reference to religious tradition and generally to transcendence-related questions. Instead, an immanent focus on the present and on interpersonal interactions and references dominate.

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From a methodological perspective, it cannot be emphasised often enough that the very visibility of type C is due solely to the methodological decision not to set any religious impulses at the beginning of the interview.

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The children of type C, who have both an at least average stock of religious declarative knowledge and are familiar with the situation of Muslim religiously framed conversations, would have simply updated their ability if religious impulses were or had been introduced by the interviewer at the beginning. However, their actual attitude would no longer have been perceivable behind their performance.

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The study clearly shows that children as young as around ten years of age have synchronous, relatively stable differentiated individual types of references to God, which are already markedly heterogeneous in this age group.

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So there is not "the" reference to God, but a heterogeneity of references to God. Type A illustrates that among Muslim-educated children there are personalities with an individual and mature relationship to God, which presumably enables them to live in religious and non-religious worlds that are typical for our present time.

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And these findings are supported by studies of young Muslims from the field of sociology of

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religion, for example by Julia Gerlach, Michael Tressat, Nikola Tietze, Yasemin Karakasoglu and others. Following this, it can be assumed that this type is able to autonomously frame religiosity for themselves in a highly individualised and plural society.

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Type B illustrates that among Muslim-educated children there are personalities with a relationship with God which is dominated by tradition, and which is likely not enabling them to live in non-religious worlds. Following research from the sociology of religion such as those mentioned earlier, it can be assumed that a relationship with God that does not go beyond a formulaic and moral religiosity and that tends to be reduced to the characteristic of belonging to a particular Muslim community is likely to lead to great difficulties in living religiosity constructively in an individualised and plural society.

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Finally, type C makes it clear that there are also Muslim-educated children with a lack of relationship with God and a distance to tradition. And here, the individual who is distanced from religion shows up as a form of ideological decision that represents a component of inner-Muslim plurality that still needs to be constructively acknowledged by Islamic theology and religious education.

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Now I will present the conclusion. The heterogeneity of faith and religiosity within Islam is perceived neither in the non-Muslim external perspective nor in the Muslim internal perspective. Rather, it is assumed by both sides, as I said at the beginning, that the majority of Muslims are religious to highly religious people.

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And here we can see that qualitative studies like the one I presented, but also others, show that a largely undiscovered heterogeneity is hiding behind these discourses of homogeneity.

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I have also listed some studies in the bibliography that reveal this heterogeneity.

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What research requires here is a sensitive perception of the heterogeneity of Muslim forms of belief and non-belief, especially research that does not stop at the discourse of homogeneity but looks beyond it and does not allow itself to be constricted by processes of self-exclusion and exclusion by others.

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The perception of religious heterogeneity, which - as shown - also shows up intra-religiously, leads to the development of a multi-faceted perception of social reality. Non-perception of this heterogeneity can lead to social and religious self-exclusion and exclusion by others. Appreciation of this heterogeneity can lead to the invalidation of selection mechanisms and prevent social exclusion of religious as well as non-religious Muslims, even within the Muslim community.

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Thank you for your attention. If you have any questions, please feel free to send me an email. Here you can see the literature I have listed. As I have already said, I have listed

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literature on the problem of recording Muslim religiosity, I have listed the quantitative studies on Muslim religiosity that I mentioned in the lecture. Then you can see qualitative studies on Muslim religiosity, including the book in which the results of my work are presented, which I have presented to you here, and I have also listed the literature on the methodology that I used in this study.

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Thank you very much for your attention and see you soon.