

# 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 -*

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# The Study „People in Germany: International“

## MiDInt

*Menschen in Deutschland: International*

### Research Questions:

*Effects of international political developments outside Germany on political extremism and xenophobia, antisemitism and islamophobia in Germany*

### Method:

Regularly repeated online surveys of persons aged 18yrs and older living in Germany

Quota-Sample (n= ca. 2.500) based on Online-Access-Panel (Germany: 300.000)

Cross-Sectional Trenddesign (six surveys per year)

- Study 1: November 2022 (n = 2429)
- Study 2: February 2023 (n = 2428)

# Iran, September 16<sup>th</sup> 2022: Mahsa Amini died in Police Custody in Teheran

Amini, 22, reportedly beaten by morality police in Tehran for not complying with hijab regulations



📹 Iranian newspapers reporting Mahsa Amini's death. She had been visiting Tehran with her brother when she was picked up by police and put into a van. Photograph: Abedin Taherkenareh/EPA



# September – November 2022: Worldwide Protests against Human Rights Violations in Iran

The New York Times

## *Tens of Thousands in Iran Mourn Mahsa Amini, Whose Death Set Off Protests*

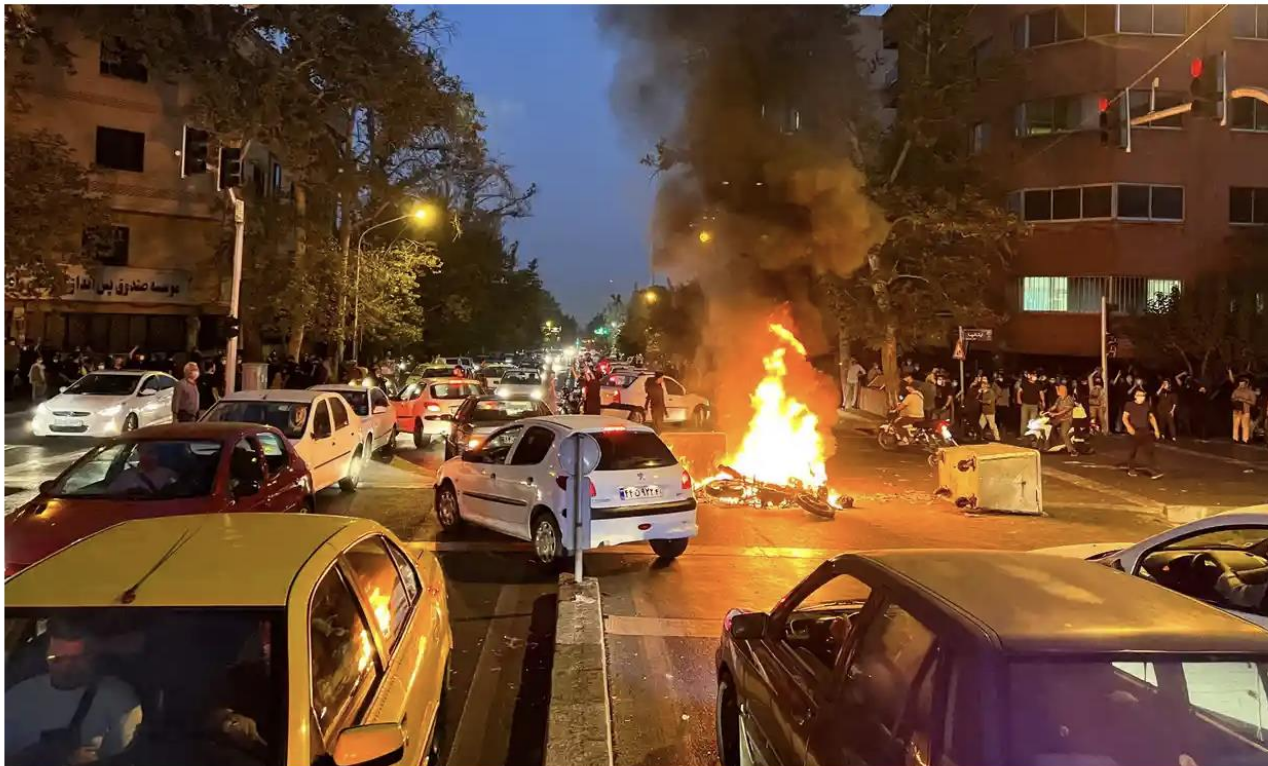




# November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022: First death sentence issued against a protester in Iran

## Iran issues first death sentence over protests

Unnamed person faces execution for alleged arson as part of crackdown on unrest triggered by death of Mahsa Amini



📷 A police motorcycle burns during a protest on Monday in Tehran over the death of Mahsa Amini, who died after being arrested by the morality police. Photograph: Wana News Agency/Reuters

ZEITUNG ONLINE

Iranische Protestbewegung

## Iran verhängt erstes Todesurteil im Zusammenhang mit Protesten

Wegen Brandstiftung, "Korruption auf Erden" und "Krieg gegen Gott" ist eine Person im Iran zum Tode verurteilt worden. Es ist die erste Todesstrafe mit Protestbezug.

# Study 1: Sample & Measure of Islamophobia (Dependent Variable)

Survey conducted from 11<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> of November 2022

Sample: n = 2 429 adults (18 +)

- age: mean=45.7 (sd=14.6)
- sex: male = 49.3%
- education: high = 35.3%

Islamophobia	strongly disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	completely agree	total		
					mean	sd	%>2.5
If we are not careful, Germany will become an Islamic country.	28.9%	27.7%	24.8%	18.7%	2.49	.99	41.8%
There are too many Muslims in Germany.	16.7%	27.2%	31.0%	25.1%			

## Results Study 1: Subjective Evaluations of the incidents in Iran 2022

***“In the Islamic Republic of Iran, a young woman was recently arrested by the Iranian morality police. In prison she came to death. In reaction to that mass protests emerged in Iran. The Iranian authorities responded with massive violence.”***  
***Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements.***

Negative evaluation of the incidents in Iran	strongly disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	completely agree	total		
					mean	sd	%>2.5
These incidents in Iran show that Islam is inhumane.	10.3%	21.7%	35.9%	32.0%	2.85	.83	58.9%
These incidents in Iran show that there can never be democracy in Islam.	9.7%	25.6%	38.4%	26.4%			

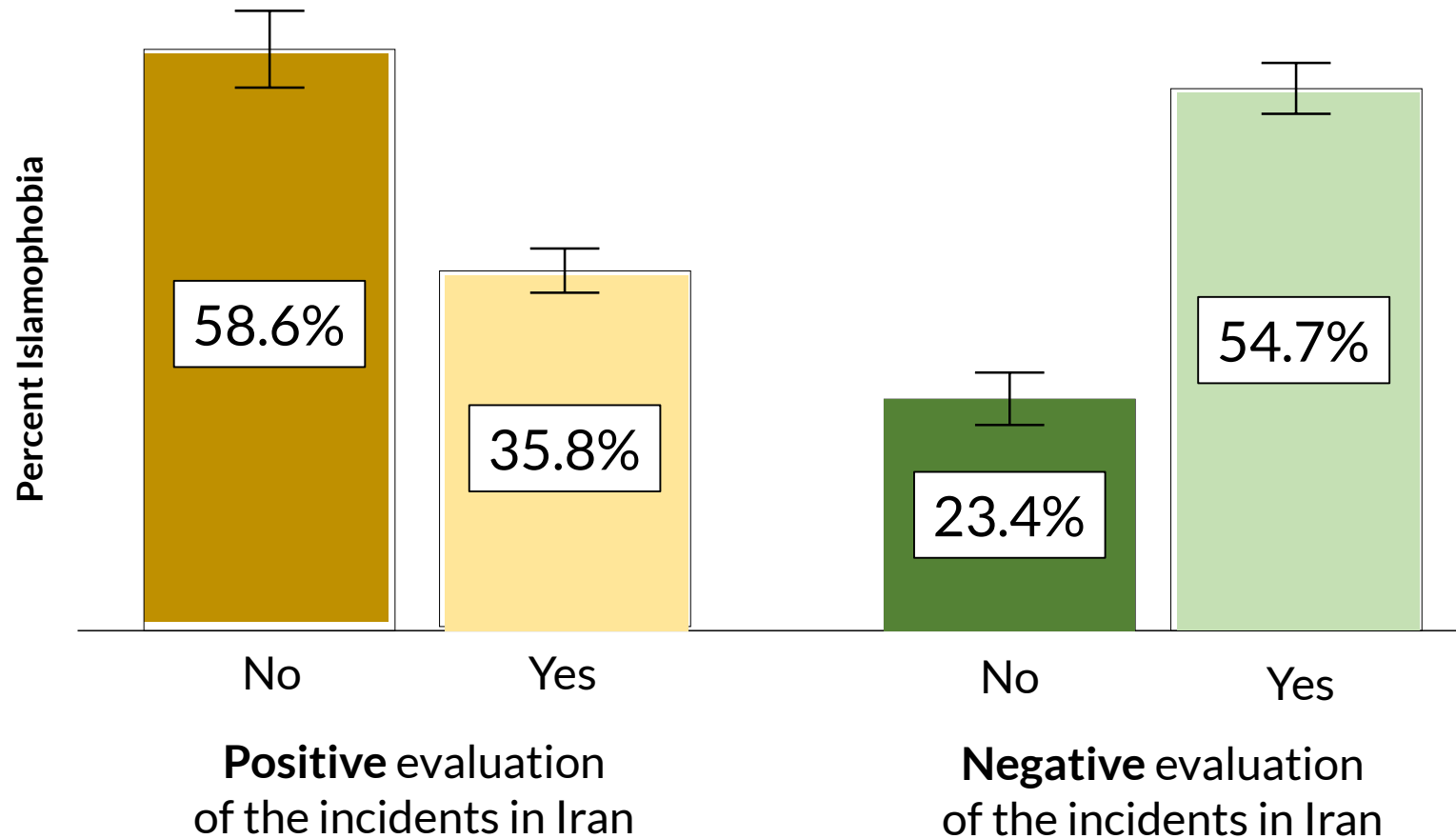
# Results Study 1: Subjective evaluations of the incidents in Iran 2022

Positive evaluation of the incidents in Iran	strongly disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agreee	completely agree	total		
					mean	sd	%>2.5
These protests show that Muslims also attach great importance to freedom rights.	6.2%	12.8%	47.8%	33.3%	3.05	.76	74.0%
The protests in Iran show that Muslims also stand up for women's rights.	5.6%	16.2%	48.4%	29.8%			

Negative evaluation of the incidents in Iran	strongly disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agreee	completely agree	total		
					mean	sd	%>2.5
These incidents in Iran show that Islam is inhumane.	10.3%	21.7%	35.9%	32.0%	2.85	.83	58.9%
These incidents in Iran show that there can never be democracy in Islam.	9.7%	25.6%	38.4%	26.4%			



# Results Study 1: Prevalence of islamophobia by subjective evaluations

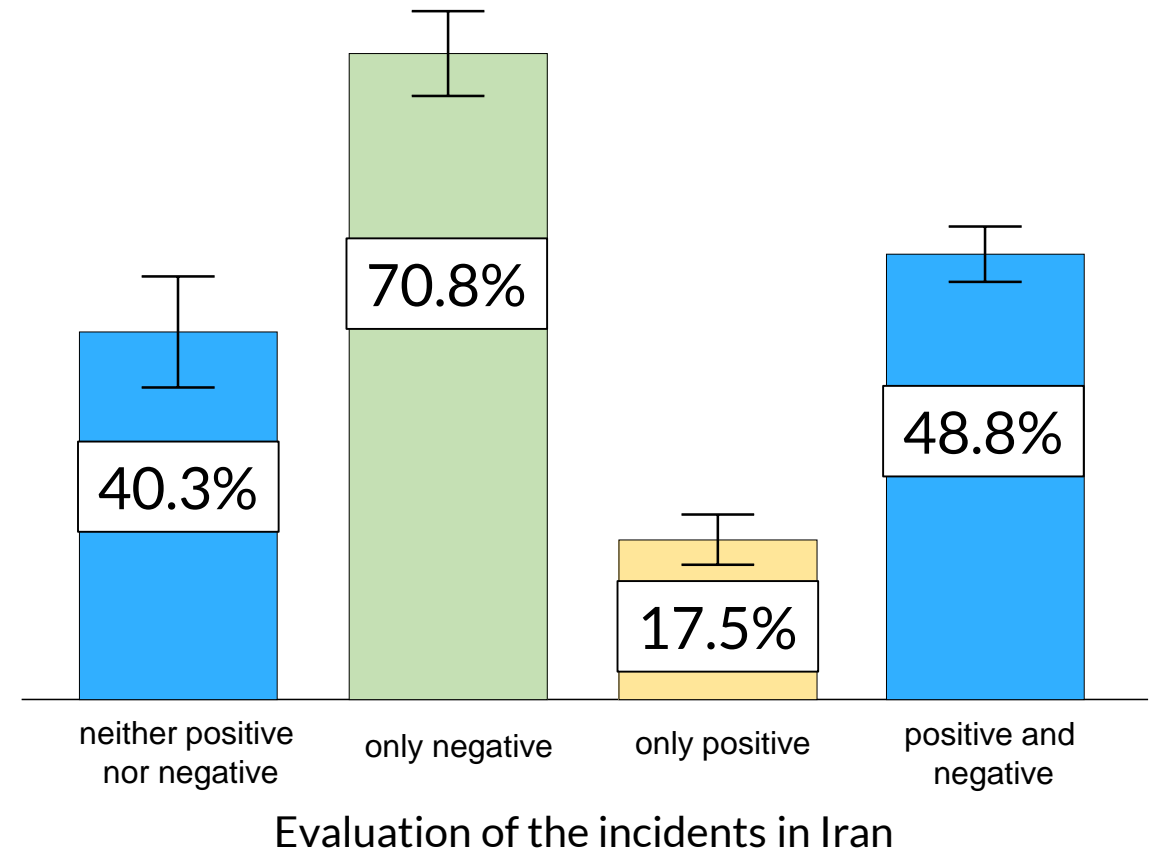


# Results Study 1: Overlap of positive and negative Evaluations

## Overlap of positive and negative Evaluations of incidents in Iran

- Agreement with positive and negative Evaluation: 43.6%
- Agreement with positive Evaluation only: 30.5%
- Agreement with negative Evaluation only: 15.3%
- Disagreement with positive and negative Evaluation: 10.6%

## Percent Islamophobic Attitudes by Overlap of positive and negative Evaluations



# Study 1: Conclusion

- A negative evaluation of human rights violations committed by State Authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran as indicating inhumanity and antidemocratic character of Islam in general is associated with higher islamophobia among people in Germany.
- The interpretation of these incidents in Iran as muslims fight for human rights and democracy is associated with lower islamophobia among people in Germany.
- These effects remain in multivariate regression analyses controlling for age, gender, education, migration background, place of living (East/West Germany and religious affiliation).
- **However, these are results of a crossectional correlational study.**

**Therefore it remains unclear, whether the perception of what has happened in Iran has causal effects on islamophobia among people in Germany.**

**To analyse potential causal effects of these incidents in Iran, experimental research is needed.**

# Study 2: Survey Experiment on Effects of Incidents in Iran

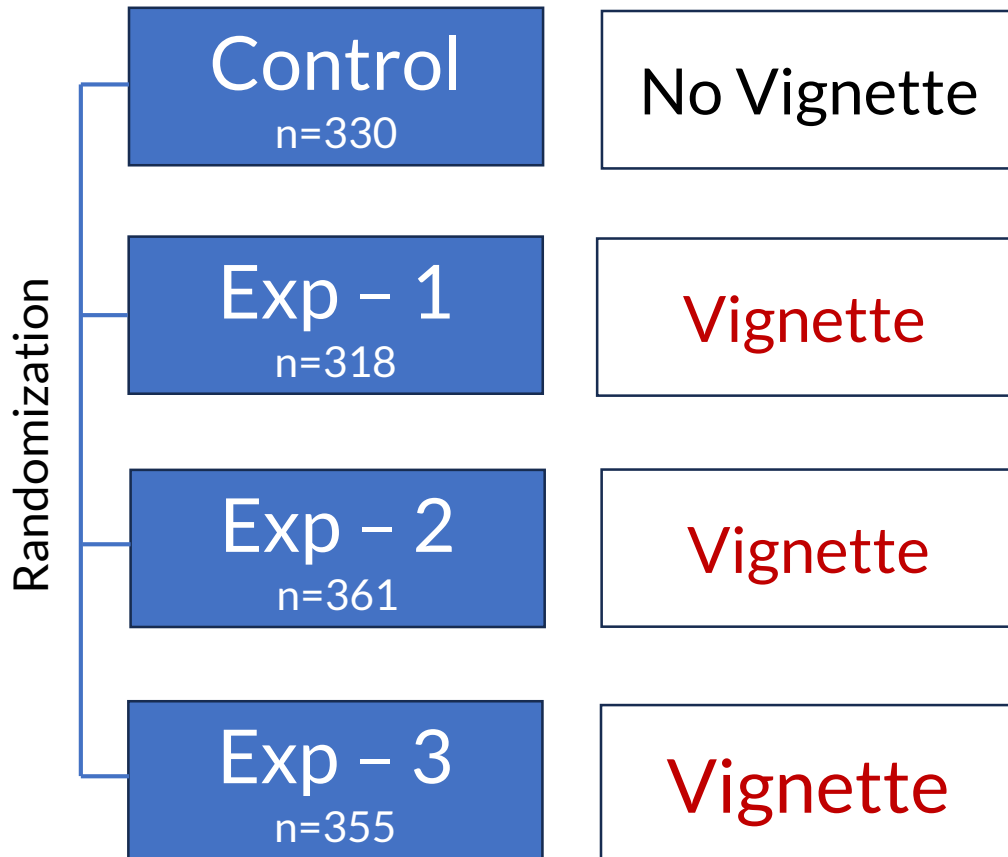
- Time of Survey: February 2023
- Sample:  $n = 2\,428$ 
  - age: mean=45.8 (sd=14.7)
  - sex: male = 48.7%
  - education: high = 35.4%



# Study 2: Hypotheses

- H 1: Confrontations with descriptions of human rights violations and violence committed by state authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran against protesters cause a significant increase in negative attitudes towards muslims in Germany.
- H 2: Effects of confrontations with human rights violations and violence committed by state authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran on islamophobia in Germany are dependent on the specific subjective evaluation of this incidences in Iran. (Moderatoreffect)
- H 2 a: If Incidents in Iran are interpreted as muslims fight for freedom and democracy (positive evaluation) there will be no increase of Islamophia .
- H2 b: If the Incidences in Iran are interpreted as proof of general inhumanity and antidemocratic character of Islam (negative evaluation) there will be a significant increase of Islamophobia.

# Study 2: Experimental Design



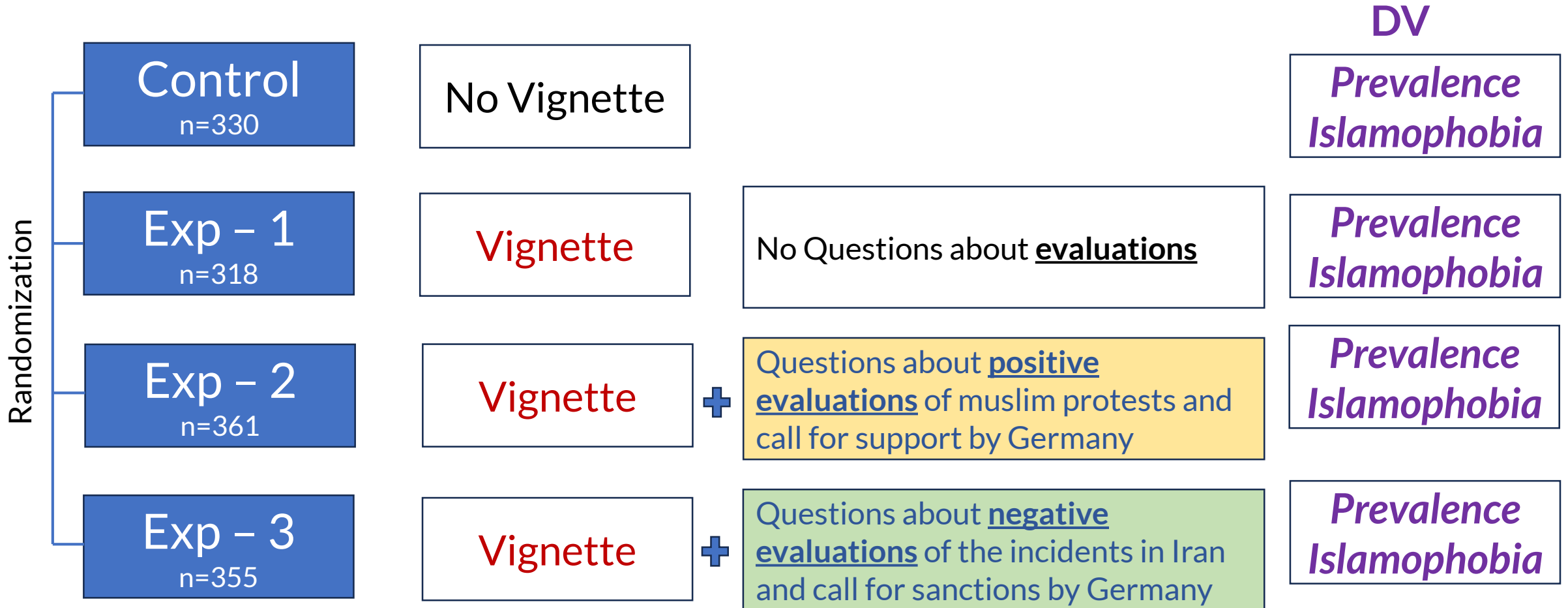
## *Vignette about Iran*

*A few weeks ago in the Islamic Republic of Iran, a young woman came to death after she had been arrested by the morality police for wearing non-Islamic clothing.*

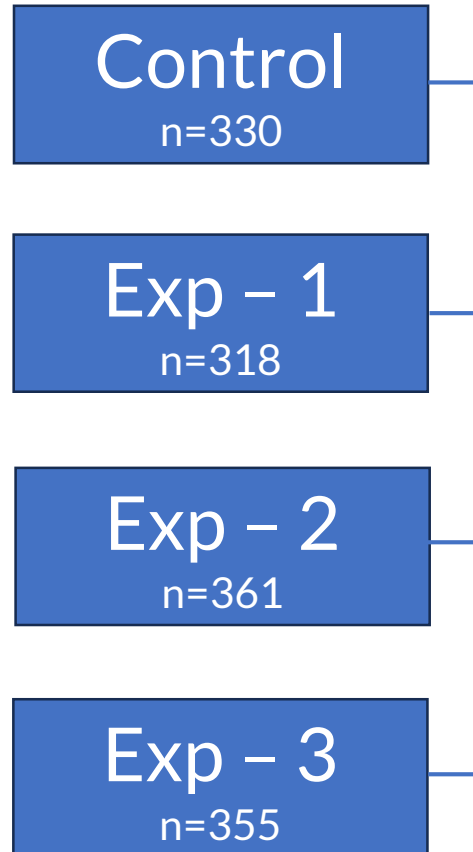
*In reaction to that demonstrations and protests erupted in Iran.*

*The Iranian authorities responded with massive violence and death sentences.*

# Study 2: Experimental Design

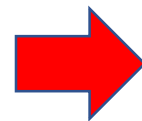


# Ex post Check of Randomization



**There were no significant differences between groups for:**

- Age
- Sex
- Level of Education
- Religious Affiliation
- Migration Background
- Xenophobia
- Antisemitism



**Randomization was successful!  
Causal inferences are justified.**



# Measure of Islamophobia (Dependent Variable)

Islamophobia	strongly disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	completely agree	Scale Total		
					mean	sd	%>2.5
If we are not careful, Germany will become an Islamic country.	23.8%	26.5%	27.5%	22.1%	2.57	.96	53.8%
There are too many Muslims in Germany.	18.4%	24.5%	29.8%	27.3%			
Muslims don't really fit in with us.	17.8%	29.4%	30.5%	22.3%			

# Results: Effects of Vignette on Rates of Islamophobia (H 1)

Control  
n=330

Exp – 1  
n=318

Vig

Exp – 2  
n=361

Vig

+

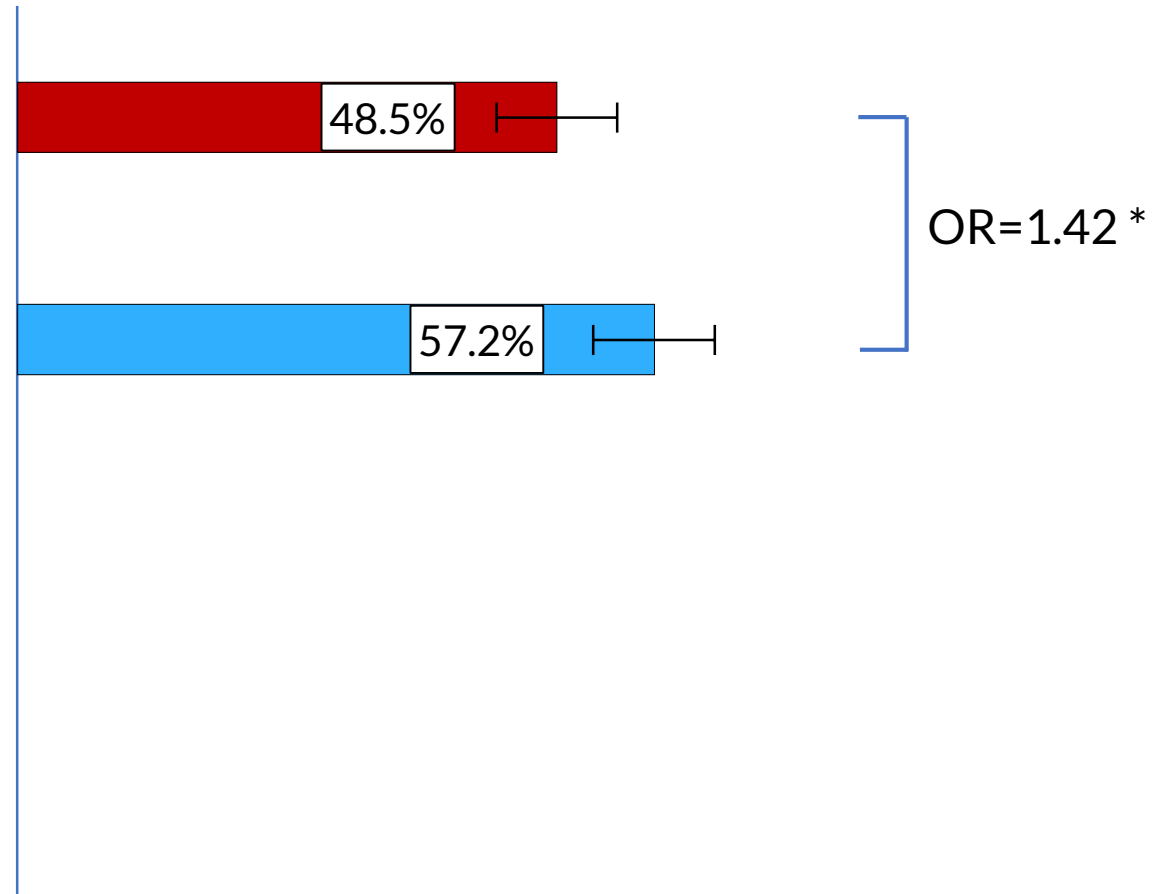
pos Ev

Exp – 3  
n=355

Vig

+

neg Ev



# Conclusion I

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**Hypothesis 1 could be confirmed.**

***Confrontations with human rights violations and violence against protesters committed by the State Authorities of the Islamic Republic Iran cause a statistical significant higher prevalence of islamophobia among people in Germany.***

# Moderator Variable 1: positive evaluations

Positive evaluation of the incidents in Iran	strongly disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agreee	completely agree
<b><i>Muslims fighting for freedom and women rights</i></b>				
These protests show that Muslims also attach great importance to freedom rights.	8.6%	10.6%	48.6%	32.2%
The protests in Iran show that Muslims also stand up for women's rights.	6.9%	10.2%	51.8%	31.0%
<b><i>Call for support for protesting muslims in Iran</i></b>				
Germany should show solidarity with the protesters in Iran.	16.9%	18.1%	39.7%	25.3%
Germany should take in people from Iran who are persecuted because of these protests.	18.6%	27.4%	36.3%	17.7%
<b>Scale: single-factor; <math>\alpha = .80</math>; mean = 2.84; sd = .75</b>			<b>&gt; 2.5: 64.3%</b>	



# Results H2a: Effects of Vignette on Rates of Islamophobia and positive Evaluations of Incidents in Iran (H 2a)

Control  
n=330

Exp – 1  
n=318

Vig

Exp – 2  
n=361

Vig

+

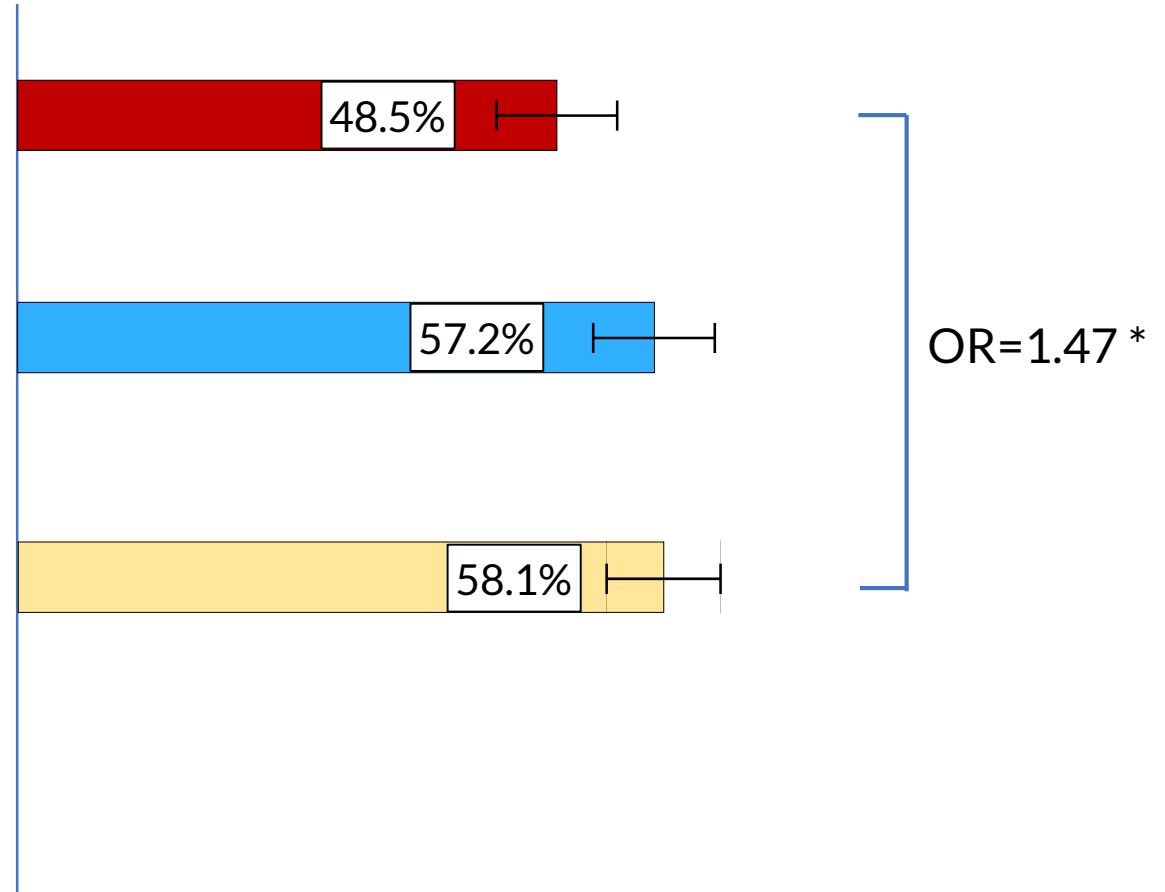
pos Ev

Exp – 3  
n=355

Vig

+

neg Ev



# Results H2a: Effects of Vignette on Rates of Islamophobia and positive Evaluations of Incidents in Iran (H 2a)

Control  
n=330

Exp - 1  
n=318

Vig

Exp - 2  
n=361

Vig

+

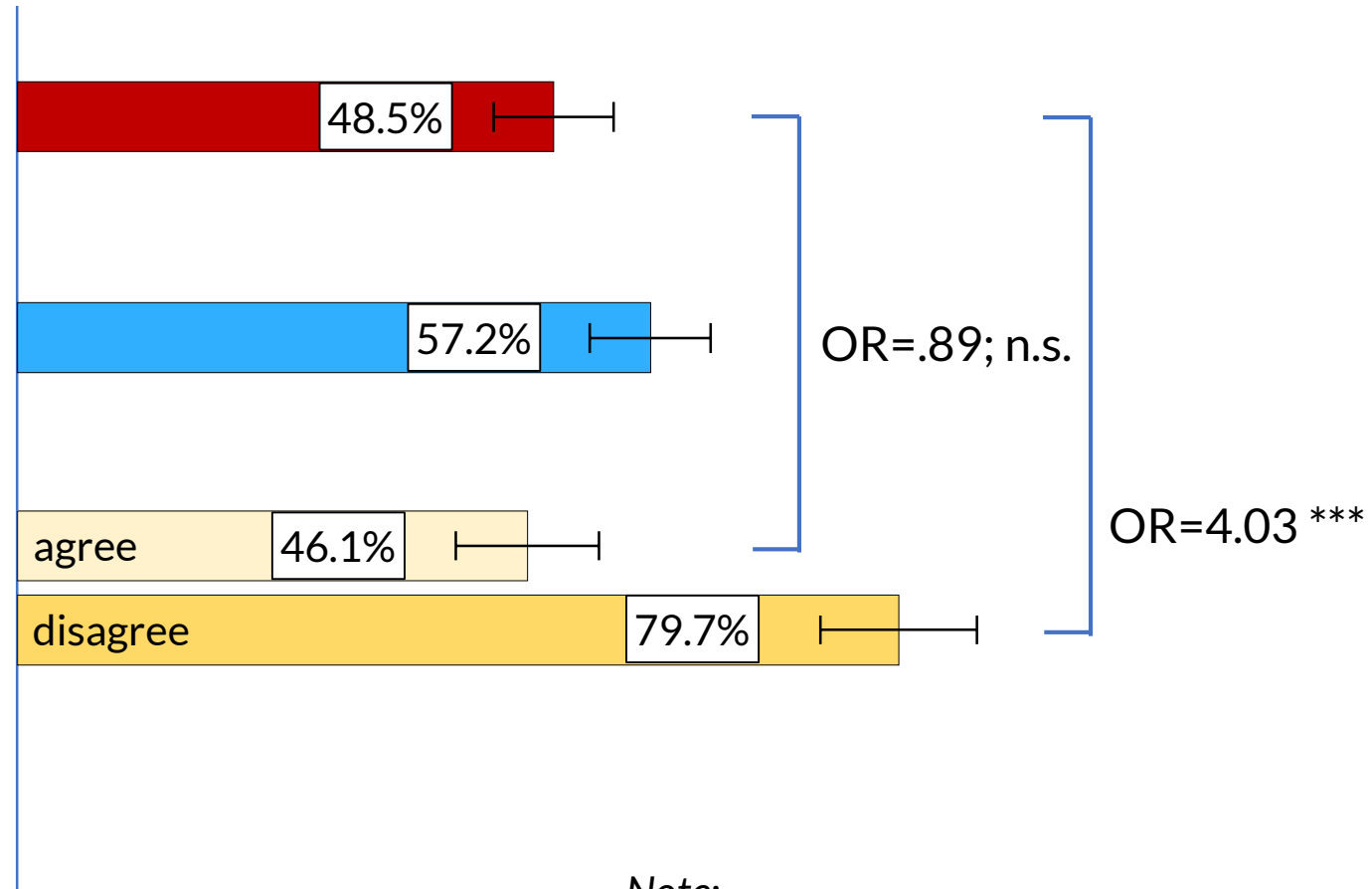
pos Ev

Exp - 3  
n=355

Vig

+

neg Ev



Note:

Effects of positive evaluations tested via multivariate logistic regression, controlling for age, gender and education.

# Moderator Variable 2: negative evaluation

Negative evaluation of the incidents in Iran	strongly disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agreee	completely agree
<i>Showing that Islam is generally inhuman and antidemocratic</i>				
These incidents in Iran show that Islam is inhumane.	8.7%	22.8%	33.2%	35.2%
These incidents in Iran show that there can never be democracy in Islam.	8.5%	18.6%	34.2%	38.7%
<i>Call for Sanctions against Iran</i>				
Germany should impose further sanctions against Iran.	6.5%	18.3%	40.3%	34.9%
Germany should expel all Iranian diplomats.	11.6%	39.4%	27.5%	21.5%
Scale: single-factor; $\alpha = .76$ ; mean = 2.90; sd = .70			> 2.5: 64.2%	

# Results H2b: Effects of Vignette on Rates of Islamophobia and negative Evaluations of Incidents in Iran

Control  
n=330

Exp – 1  
n=318

Vig

Exp – 2  
n=361

Vig

+

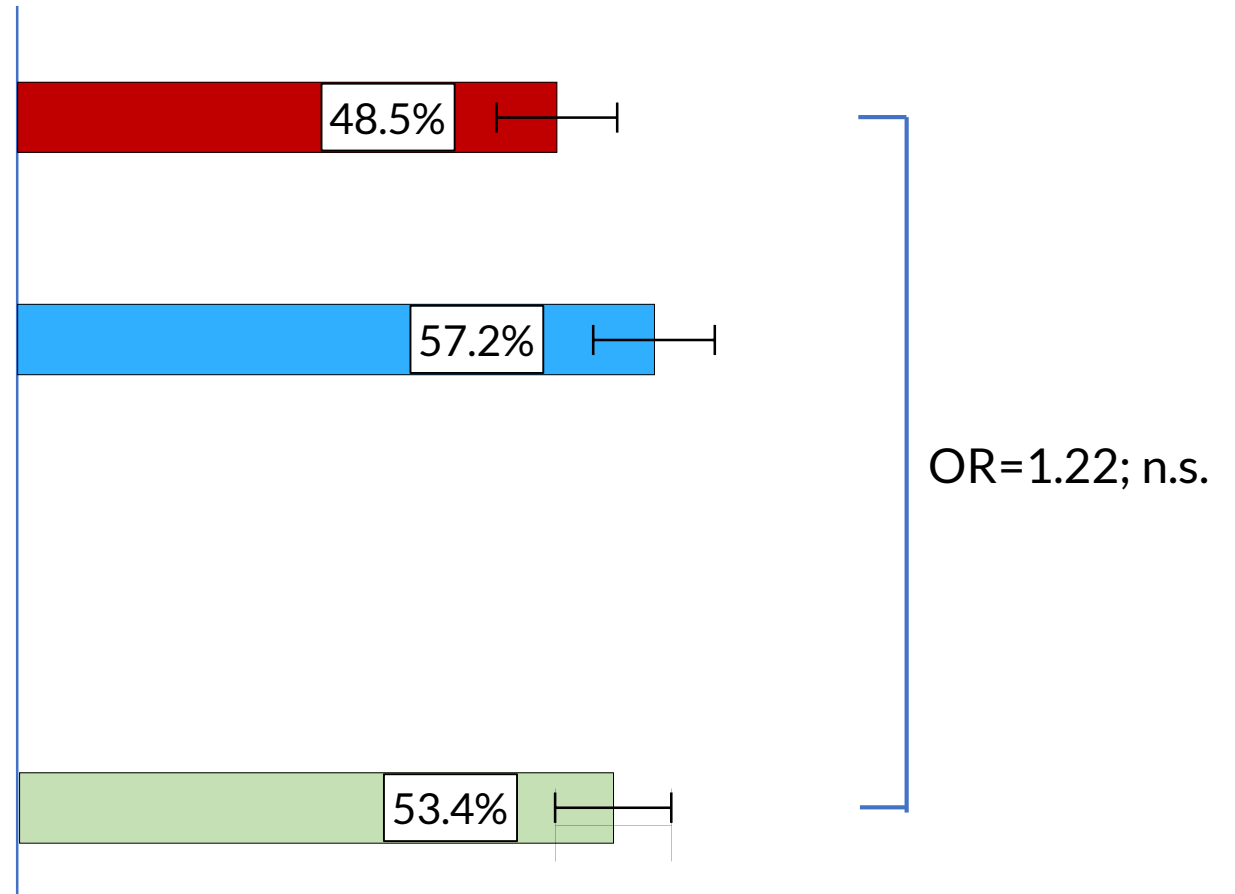
pos Ev

Exp – 3  
n=355

Vig

+

neg Ev





# Results H2b: Effects of Vignette on Rates of Islamophobia and negative Evaluations of Incidents in Iran

Control  
n=330

Exp – 1  
n=318

Vig

Exp – 2  
n=361

Vig

+

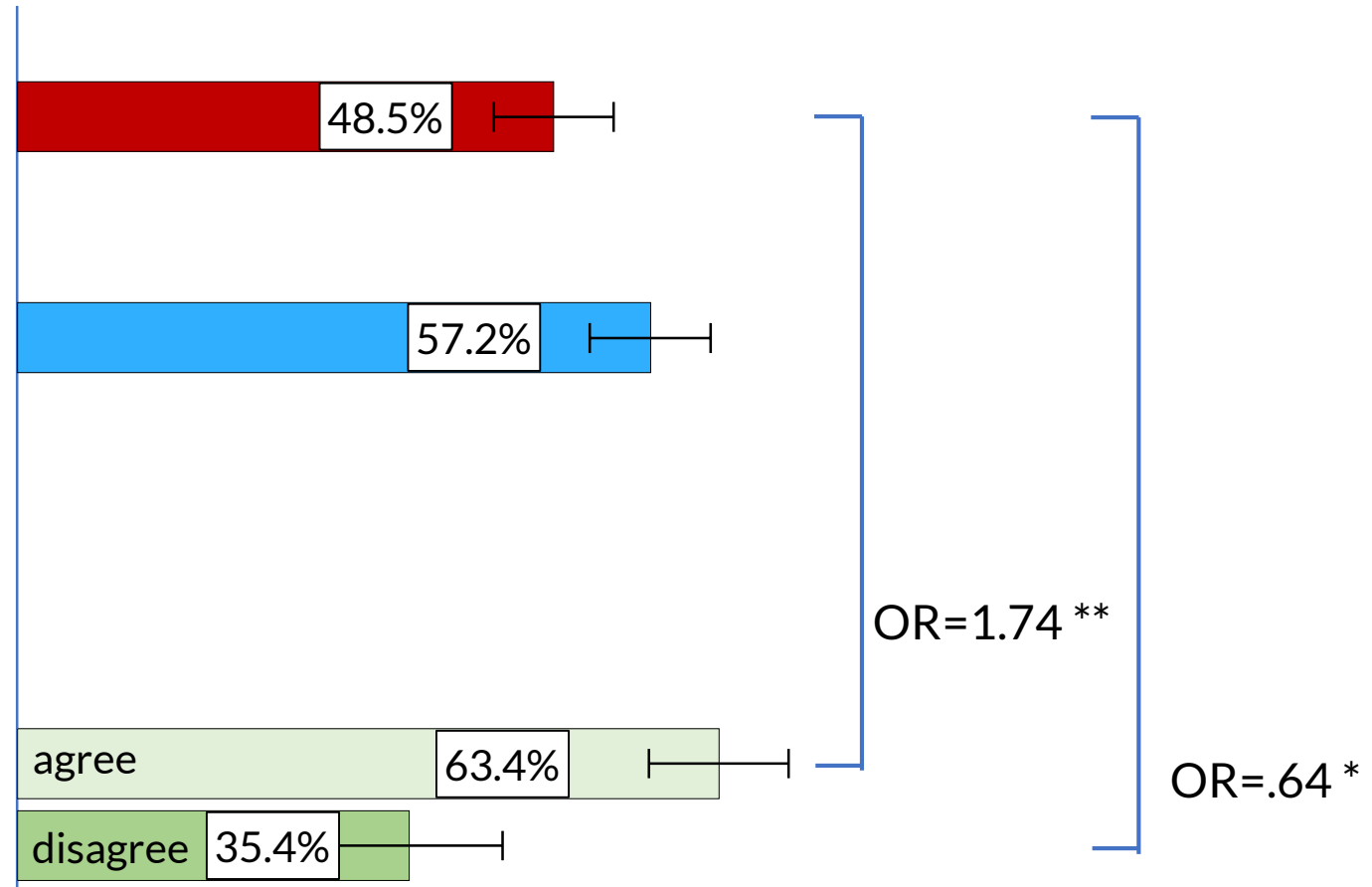
pos Ev

Exp – 3  
n=355

Vig

+

neg Ev



Note:

Effects of positive evaluations tested via multivariate logistic regression, controlling for age, gender and education.

# Conclusion II

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## Hypothesis 2 is confirmed:

*The degree and the direction of effects of confrontations with human rights violations and violence against protesters committed by State Authorities of the Islamic Republic Iran on islamophobia among people in Germany are dependent on subjective evaluations of these incidents.*

- Negative evaluations are associated with increases of islamophobia.

- Positive evaluations are not associated with increases of islamophobia.

**However: Positive Evaluations do not reduce islamophobia compared to people not confronted with the incidents in Iran.**

***Thank you for your attention!***

Study „MiDInt“  
<https://www.mid.uni-hamburg.de/mid-international/midint/midint-startseite.html>  
Research Consortium MOTRA  
<https://www.motra.info/>

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Endtricht, R., Farren, D., Brettfeld, K., Fischer, J.M.K., & Wetzels, P. (2023).  
*People in Germany 2021. First wave of the German national representative survey: Methodology, survey design and sampling.* [MOTRA Research Report No. 1.](#)  
<http://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.12244>

# Research Reports (available online)

## Forschungsbericht No. 7

Menschen in Deutschland: International (MiDInt)

Untersuchungsdesign, Stichprobe,  
Erhebungsinstrument und Codebuch zu Welle 1  
(Nov. 2022)

Katrin Brettfeld, Diego Farren, Janosch Kleinschnittger,  
Thomas Richter & Peter Wetzels



Institut für Kriminologie an der Fakultät für Rechtswissenschaft der Universität Hamburg

<https://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.11564>

## Forschungsbericht No. 8

Menschen in Deutschland: International (MiDInt)

Untersuchungsdesign, Stichprobe,  
Erhebungsinstrument und Codebuch zu Welle 2  
(Feb. 2023)

Janosch Kleinschnittger, Diego Farren, Katrin Brettfeld,  
Thomas Richter & Peter Wetzels



Institut für Kriminologie an der Fakultät für Rechtswissenschaft der Universität Hamburg

<https://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.11836>

## Research Report No. 1

"People in Germany 2021"

First wave of the German national representative survey:  
Methodology, survey design and sampling

Rebecca Endtricht, Diego Farren, Katrin Brettfeld,  
Jannik M.K. Fischer & Peter Wetzels



<http://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.12244>