

## Question in Project:

German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) 2021 (English Version)

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## Question Topic:

Society & social affairs/ Attitudes to social groups

## Construct:

Racism

## General Information:

**\*Note: The item was tested in German. This is an English translation of the original German wording.**

## Question Text:

In Germany, different groups live side by side. What do you think about the following statement?

Based on my personal values, I believe it is wrong to be prejudiced against blacks.

*[In Deutschland leben verschiedene Gruppen Seite an Seite nebeneinander. Was meinen Sie zu der folgenden Aussage? Aufgrund meiner persönlichen Werte, glaube ich, dass es falsch ist, gegenüber Schwarzen voreingenommen zu sein.]*

## Answer Categories:

Completely agree *[stimme voll und ganz zu]*

Rather agree *[stimme eher zu]*

Rather disagree *[stimme eher nicht zu]*

Completely disagree *[stimme überhaupt nicht zu]*

Don't know *[Weiß nicht]*

## Cognitive Techniques:

General Probing, Specific Probing

## Findings for Question:

### 1. What do the respondents think about when answering these questions?

Most persons made two considerations when answering the question. The first was whether they themselves were biased against people with black or dark skin. The second consideration was whether such bias (in themselves or in other people) violated their personal value system.

With respect to the first consideration, two persons stated that they perceived bias in themselves and needed to correct it internally. One of these test persons agreed with the statement only "rather" because of this:

- *"When I meet people with a different skin color or also black people, [I notice] myself that, depending on the context in which you are, you are actually prejudiced. But I [then] also hit myself on the head at the same time and say, you can't do that. I have to actively reflect it."* (TP 05, response: completely agree)
- *"I have a bit of a problem with that, I'm already a bit older and have a learning process. You have spontaneous prejudices, that's just the way it is in this world. [...] It's wrong to be prejudiced, but it's a learning process that you shouldn't be prejudiced."* (TP 10, response: rather agree).

The other persons perceived themselves as free from prejudice: *"Whether I have something against black people, and it's not like that at all, because I think everyone is the same, whether black, whether white, whether yellow, [...] everyone is just the same."* (TP 02)

In relation to the second consideration, all ten persons agreed that being biased against people, regardless of skin color or other characteristics, was unacceptable:

- *"I was mainly thinking about whether it is wrong to be prejudiced against black people."* (TP 04)
- *"You shouldn't judge someone based on their race or their views. That's clear and should be at the forefront."* (TP 06)

Last, one subject reflected on the opening words "because of my personal values": *"For me it is clear that it is generally wrong to be prejudiced towards other groups of people [...]. I then thought about what this has to do with my personal values, whether it could be formulated differently. But it is clear that this has to do with the personal attitude, the value system. I just stumbled on it for a moment."* (TP 03)

### 2. How do the respondents feel about the term "black people"?

Six respondents (TP 01, 03, 06, 07, 08, 10) found the term "blacks" okay, at least in the context of the question, or had not noticed the term when reading it. They saw the advantage of the term in the fact that exactly what was meant was named. However,

individual respondents noted that the choice of term might no longer be up-to-date:

- *"I personally don't have that much of a problem with it. So, I don't think it's so bad, you know African-Americans are meant."* (TP 01)
- *"I don't find anything wrong with the term. The black people themselves might, I don't know."* (TP 07)

Four persons took offense to the term "blacks." Another one was bothered by the fact that the term was *"very limiting"* (TP 05), and one test person found the term racist: *"Quite bad. Because that's already very racist."* (TP 02).

As alternative phrases, persons suggested *"black people"* (TP 04), *"people with black skin color"* (TP T8), *"other skin color"* (TP 05), or *"dark-skinned people"* (TP 02). Two test persons used the English expression "people of color" in their explanations (TP 04, 06), but did not consider it familiar enough in German themselves.

## Recommendations:

Question: We recommend simplifying and shortening the question by omitting the introductory words "Based on my personal values, I believe [...]".

Although the question functioned as intended in the cognitive interviews, we also recommend reconsidering the use of the term "blacks" as it assumes white respondents in the context of this question. A possible rephrasing would be:

"It is wrong to be prejudiced against people of a different skin color."

Response format: No changes recommended.