

## Question in Project:

Islamist attitudes among young Muslims in Germany (English Version)

---

## Question Topic:

Religion & culture/ Worldview & religiosity

## Construct:

Religious affiliation

## General Information:

**\*Note: This item was tested in German, Arabic and Turkish. This is an English translation of the original German wording.\***

## Question Text:

May I ask you whether you feel you belong to a religious community (e.g. Christianity, Buddhism, Islam etc.) and if so, which one?

*[Darf ich Sie fragen, ob Sie sich einer Religionsgemeinschaft (z.B. Christentum, Buddhismus, Islam usw.) zugehörig fühlen und wenn ja, welcher?]*

## Answer Categories:

Yes, Christian religious. *[Ja, christliche Religionsgemeinschaft.]* community.

Yes, Islamic religious community. *[Ja, islamische Religionsgemeinschaft.]*

Yes, Jewish religious community. *[Ja, die jüdische Religionsgemeinschaft.]*

Yes, Buddhist religious community. *[Ja, buddhistische Religionsgemeinschaft.]*

Yes, Hindu religious community. *[Ja, hinduistische Religionsgemeinschaft.]*

Yes, other religious community. *[Ja, andere Religionsgemeinschaft.]*

Yes, but I do not feel I belong to any religion. *[Ja, aber ich fühle mich keiner Religion zugehörig.]*

No, I prefer to keep that to myself. *[Nein, das behalte ich lieber für mich.]*

## Cognitive Techniques:

General Probing, Comprehension Probing, Specific Probing.

## Findings for Question:

All test persons answer question 31 without hesitation or signs of discomfort.

As all test persons were recruited as belonging to Islam, it was expected that all would choose the answer option "Yes, Islamic religious community". However, one respondent did not do so, but chose "Yes, but I do not feel I belong to any religious community" (AR14). When asked by the interviewer, the test person declares that he was born and raised Muslim and continues to call himself a believer. However, he had to leave her home country because of radical Islamic threats. Since then he has had no "feeling" of belonging to the religious community which he associates with radicalization. Since the question asks about the feeling, he chooses this answer.

The phrase "feeling a sense of belonging" is associated by all test persons with at least one of the following aspects:

Most often, religious affiliation is associated with family membership and one's own origin (DE02, DE03, DE04, DE05, TR06, TR08, TR09, TR10, AR11, AR12): *"My dad is a Muslim. My brothers and sisters and I were brought up Muslim"* (DE05). A test person who grew up in Syria explains that she grew up *"in an Islamic family in an Islamic city"* (AR12).

A second association exists with everyday actions and rituals. Mentioned are regular visits to mosques and praying in the mosque (DE01, DE03, DE05, TR06, TR07), the Koran school and learning the Arabic language (DE01, TR06), as well as the ritual of circumcision (DE02).

The third association is the conscious adherence to the principles of faith and the personal, emotional attachment to faith and the corresponding conviction. One subject mentions personal religious beliefs, such as the view of what happens after death (AR11). Another one explains that one feels belonging to one's religious community when one's own views are in accordance with the teachings of religion (TR08). Also other statements take up this facet at least briefly:

- *"To feel comfortable in one's religious community."* (DE02)
- *" Following the teachings of Islam."* (DE04)
- *" Do not go partying and do not drink alcohol."* (TR06)
- *" How the own way of thinking is."* (TR07)
- *" Which religion you are convinced of."* (AR13)

Two Arabic test persons take a deeper look at the translation for "feeling like you belong". One of them notes that faith is less about belonging than about conviction (AR13). The other, who is skeptical about faith because of his history, explains that the question wants to know: *"How do you feel? But feelings have nothing to do with religion"* (AR14).

## Recommendations:

Question: The phrase "feeling like you belong" does not seem to be necessary for most of the test persons, and for some even irritating. We recommend the phrase "Do you belong to a religious community, and if so, which one?" [*"Gehören Sie einer Religionsgemeinschaft an, und wenn ja, welcher?"*]

Response Options: If the question is reworded, we recommend that the answer categories be adjusted accordingly. After the presentation of the religions, the answer categories "No, I do not belong to any religious community" (which replaces the answer "Yes, but I do not feel I belong to any religious community") and "I would rather keep this to myself". [*"Nein, ich gehöre keiner Religionsgemeinschaft an" (die die Antwort "Ja, aber ich fühle mich keiner Religionsgemeinschaft zugehörig" ersetzt) und "Das möchte ich lieber für mich behalten"*]