



Young Muslims in Prison

Challenges and Opportunities for a Successful Integration

Information on the Project

The number of Muslims in youth prisons in Germany is increasing. To research the effects on the institutions, this project has been launched in 2018. It is taking place in eight juvenile prisons in four federal states of western Germany.¹ The aim is to find out which role religion plays for the juvenile inmates, particularly for those of Islamic belief, and which possibilities are given to practice religion in the prisons. Another focus lies on religious counselling and the importance for the juvenile prisoners. Using a survey, we reached a total of 766 inmates.

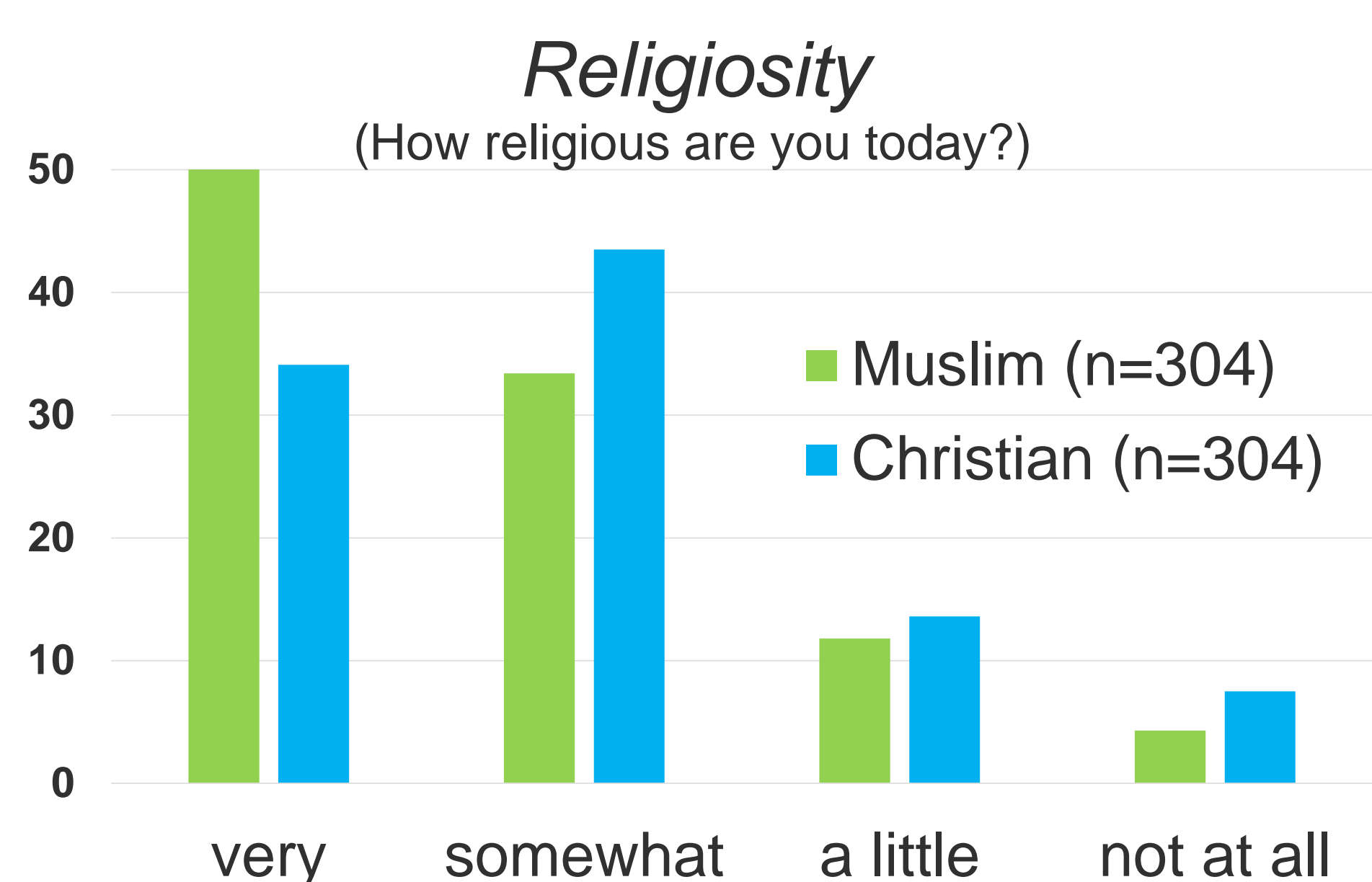
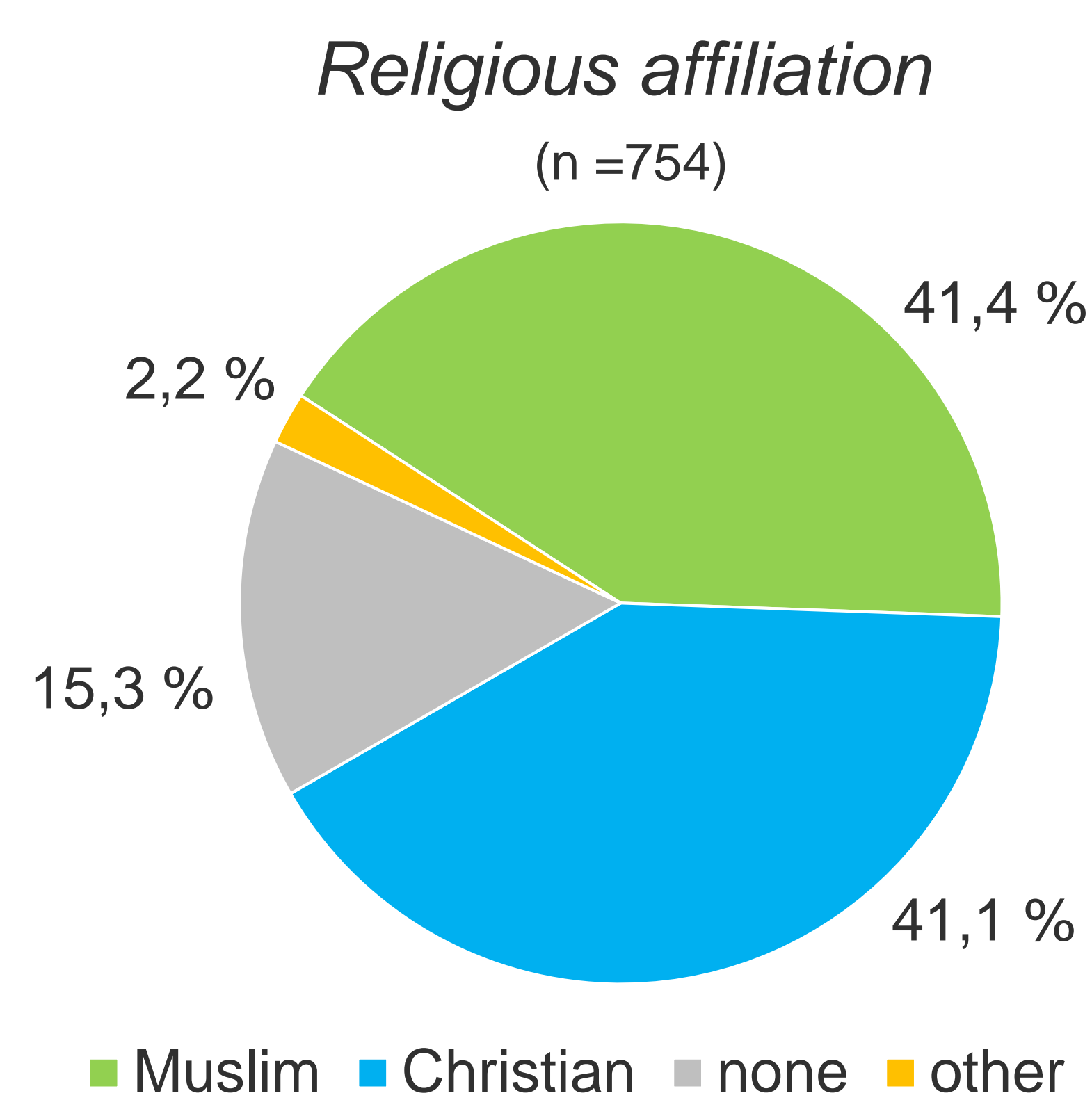
Nationalities within Muslims (%)	
German	39
Turkish	13
Syrian	8
Afghan	6
Moroccan	5
Algerian	3
Kosovar	3
other	17

Muslim Population

The inmates show a high variety of different nationalities, all over 60. Almost 2/3 of the participants have German citizenship, within the Muslims more than 1/3. 15% of all inmates came to Germany within the last five years (77% of those are Muslims), their most common countries of origin are Syria, Afghanistan and the Maghreb states.

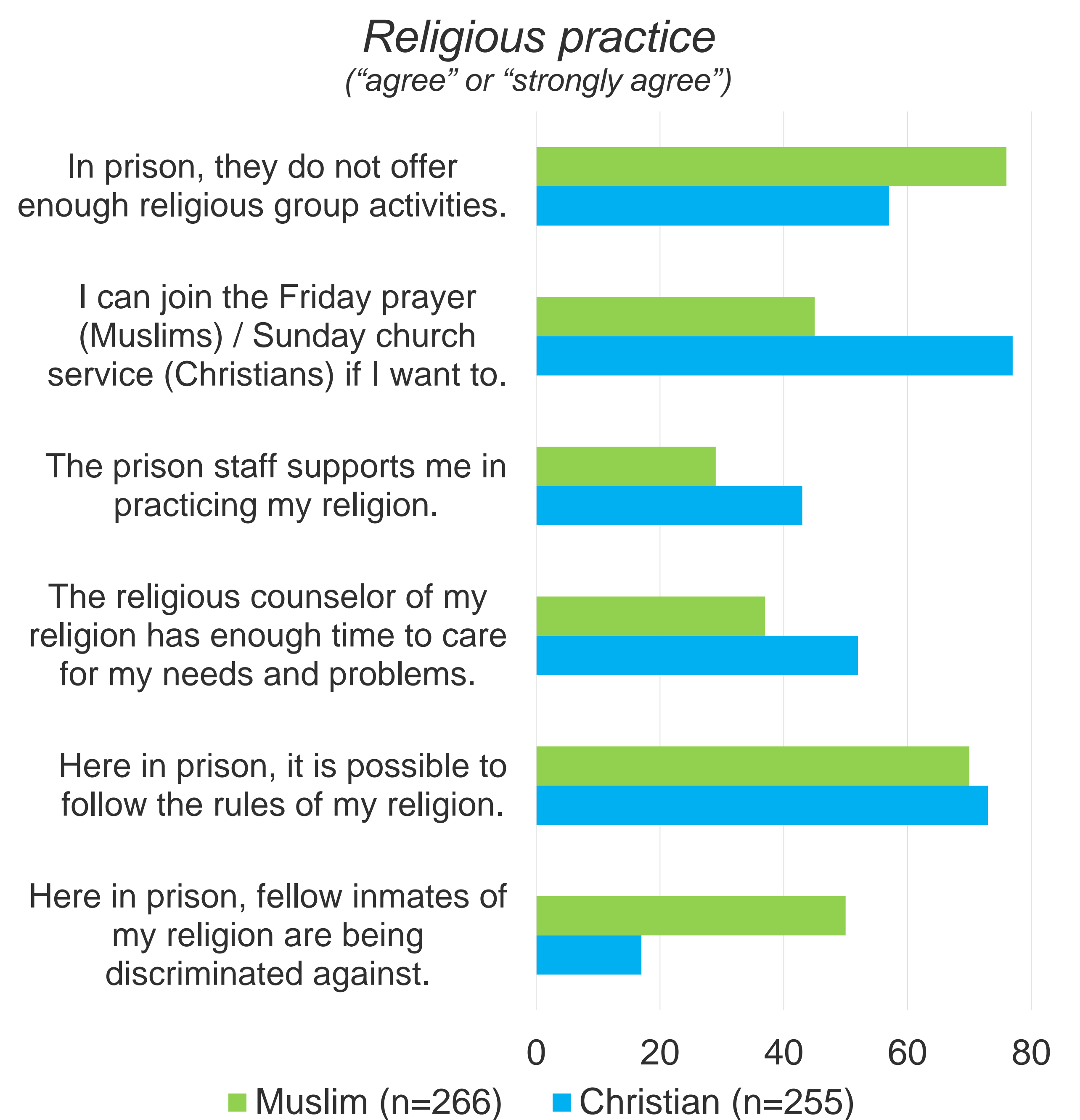
Religious Affiliation and Religiosity

41% of the inmates affiliate themselves with Islamic belief, the same number with Christian belief. Muslims and Christians represent by far the two biggest religious groups. Another 15% affiliate with no religious community. The majority of Muslims (66%) are of Sunni denomination.



The many of the Christian and Muslim participants see themselves *very* or *somewhat religious*, however the Muslims (\bar{x} 3,3) state a little higher means than Christians (\bar{x} 3,1).

Religious Practice



Most Muslims and Christians agree that they can follow the rules of their religion in prison. Other than this, there are remarkable differences. Less than 50% of Muslims state that they can attend the Friday prayer. The biggest disparity is visible in respects of discrimination. Only 30% of Muslims state that they are supported by the prison staff in practicing their religion, 50% declare that fellow inmates that share the same belief are being discriminated against.

Conclusion

The population of German youth prisons is characterized by a high variety of different nationalities and migration backgrounds. With regards to religion, more than 1/3 affiliates with Islamic belief. The clear majority of all Muslims (84%) and Christians (78%) see themselves as either *very* or *somewhat religious*. Therefore, religion and religious practice are of high importance for most juvenile prisoners. The possibilities of religious practice vary strongly within the different institutions, and differ a lot for Christian and Muslim inmates. Moreover, the group of Muslim inmates are characterized by a high diversity in nationality and religious practice.

More information on <https://www.jura.uni-tuebingen.de/einrichtungen/ifk/forschung/strafvollzug/muslime>

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¹ One for female and one for male youth prisoners in each of the four federal states, namely Baden Württemberg, Hesse, Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia.