



BAMF- Brief Analysis

Edition 02|2020 of the Brief Analysis by the Migration, Integration and Asylum
Research Centre at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees

2 | 2020

Religious affiliation, religious practice and social integration of refugees

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AT A GLANCE

- Among the refugees who came to Germany in the years 2013 to 2016 inclusive, the proportion of Muslims (around 71%) is significantly higher than in the rest of the population in Germany, while the proportion of Christians (around 17%) and those who do not belong to any religion (around 6%) is significantly lower.
- Among Christian refugees, the proportion of those who feel that they belong to an Orthodox Church is significantly higher, and the proportion of those who feel that they belong to the Protestant and, in particular, the Catholic Church is significantly lower than in the rest of the Christian population in Germany.
- The vast majority of Muslim refugees come from the Near and Middle East, whereas the rest of the Muslim population in Germany is of Turkish origin. It can therefore be assumed that the diversity of Muslim life in Germany will continue to increase due to the different local traditions.
- As regards their religious affiliation, refugees are not necessarily representative of their countries of origin. Rather, religious minorities, such as Christian refugees from Iran, are sometimes overrepresented.
- Faith and religion seem to be somewhat less important to Muslim refugees than to other Muslim religious communities in Germany. In this respect, they seem to correspond more to people of the Christian faith living in Germany. By contrast, faith and religion seem to be particularly important to Christian refugees.
- Refugees who participate in religious life are more socially integrated than refugees who do not. At the same time, frequent attendance of religious events also has a slightly positive impact on the time spent specifically with Germans. In other words, there is no indication that participation in religious life is associated with isolation from the host society.

Introduction

At the end of 2018, there were around 1.8 million people living in Germany who had arrived as asylum seekers (Federal Statistical Office 2019).¹ As such, the majority of asylum seekers come from predominantly Islamic countries such as Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2019: 73). Since the proportion of members of the Muslim religion among the population resident in Germany in 2015 was at most about 6% (up to 4.7 million people) (Stichs 2016), the influx of asylum seekers will also have an impact on religious life in Germany.

Not only has the number of members of the Muslim religion living in Germany increased, the diversity of Muslim life in Germany, in particular, is expected to increase as well. Although persons of Turkish origin still represent the largest group of origin among the members of the Muslim religion in Germany, their share had already declined noticeably by the end of 2015 due to migration to and from Germany (Stichs 2016: 31). The influx of migrants in the years after 2015 will continue to drive this development. In addition, refugees did not just come from predominantly Muslim countries.

¹ The terms refugees and asylum seekers are not used here in the legal sense, but as collective terms for persons who have filed an asylum application in Germany, regardless of whether or how the application was decided (for a detailed description of the population considered here, see: Kroh et al. 2016).

Accordingly, other religious denominations will also be influenced by the immigration of refugees.

In this context, however, it is important to note that refugees are not necessarily representative of their countries of origin in terms of their religious affiliation. On the contrary, it can be assumed that religious minorities are overrepresented, especially if they were persecuted in their countries of origin because of their religious affiliation. Furthermore, an influence on their respective religious life in Germany is only possible if faith and religion play a certain role in the lives of the refugees, if they practise their religion and participate in religious life accordingly. So far, however, hardly any findings have been made in this regard.

The integration of refugees into religious communities has the capacity to influence not only religious life in Germany, but also the integration of refugees in the host society in general (Müssig/Stichs 2012: 303–310). Participation in religious events and involvement in religious communities can possibly help to establish contacts with people in the host society, which can counteract social isolation. There is also the possibility that the social contacts made in this way may provide important information or concrete assistance in facilitating the process of integration in the host society.

Against this backdrop, this brief analysis will show whether refugees participate in religious life in Ger-

INFOBOX : THE IAB-BAMF-SOEP SURVEY OF REFUGEES

The IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees is a nationwide longitudinal survey of persons who came to Germany and filed an asylum application here between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2016 inclusive, irrespective of the course and outcome of the asylum procedure. The survey thus included persons in the asylum procedure (asylum seekers) and persons who had already been granted protection status – in particular persons entitled to asylum under Article 16a of the Basic Law and refugees under the Geneva Convention on Refugees as well as persons entitled to subsidiary protection. Furthermore, persons were interviewed whose asylum application had been rejected but whose departure or deportation had been suspended for various reasons and who had therefore been granted a suspension of deportation (Kroh et al. 2016). In addition, the household members of these persons are also interviewed. The Central Register of Foreigners (AZR) provided the basis for sampling. Using statistical weighting meth-

ods, the results obtained on the basis of the data are representative for the households of the population delimited above (for a detailed description of the sampling procedure: Kroh et al. 2016. Kühne et al. 2019; Jacobsen et al. 2019).

Information is available on 4,465 adults for the year 2016. For the year 2017, information is available on around 5,668 adults.

The survey programme is comparatively extensive (Kroh et al. 2016), allowing for a comprehensive analysis to be conducted of the living conditions of refugees. It is therefore possible to include a large number of relevant characteristics in the analyses, such as time of entry, gender, age, country of origin, level of education and residence status.

many and, if so, whether this is associated with their social integration. Therefore, the data gleaned from the second wave of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees (Kroh et al. 2016; Kühne et al. 2019; Info-box) in 2017, the areas of religion, faith and religious practice were examined in detail, is used. The study will begin by examining the religion to which refugees who came to Germany in the years 2013 to 2016 feel affiliated. Then the socio-structural characteristics of the members of the different religion will be examined before it is shown what importance religion and faith have for the refugees and to what extent they are already integrated into religious life in Germany. Subsequently, the social integration of members of different faiths will be discussed and it will be shown whether participation in religious events – as an indicator for participation in religious life – is related to social integration. The article will conclude with a summary and discussion of the key findings.

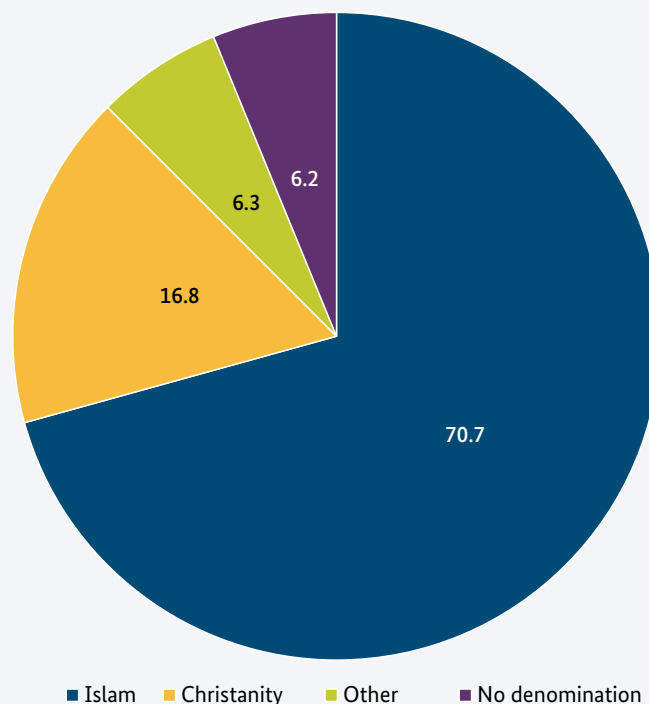
Religious affiliation of refugees

The vast majority of refugees (around 71%) are members of the Islamic faith (Figure 1). Christianity comes second by a wide margin, with around 17% of refugees saying they are Christian. The proportion of those who either feel that they belong to a different denomina-

tion or describe themselves as non-denominational is the same at around 6% each. This distribution corresponds largely to the distribution of asylum seekers' religious affiliations for the years 2014 to 2017 (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). Only persons who do not feel affiliated to any religious denomination are somewhat more strongly represented in the present analyses.

It becomes apparent that the religious affiliation of refugees differs significantly from the religious affiliation of the total population resident in Germany. In 2010, slightly more than 60% of the population in Germany identified as Christian. Around 30% were not affiliated to any church. Around 5% were Muslims and around 2% were followers of another religion or religious movement (Bertelsmann 2013: 32). Even though the religious structure in Germany has changed since 2010, persons who identify as Christians made up the largest group in Germany, even in 2017, when the data for the second wave of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees was collected, followed by persons not affiliated to any church. Hence, compared to the rest of the population in Germany, refugees identify more frequently as Muslims and less frequently as Christians, but they also identify far less frequently as having no religious affiliation.

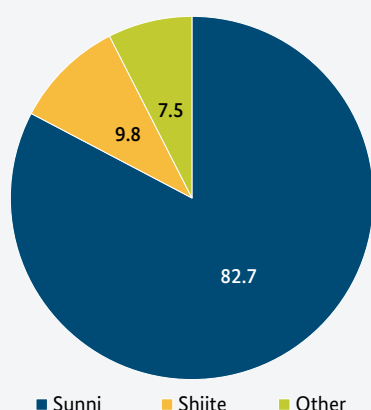
Figure 1: Religious affiliation of refugees, expressed as a percentage



N.B.: Data weighted.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees 2017, v34.

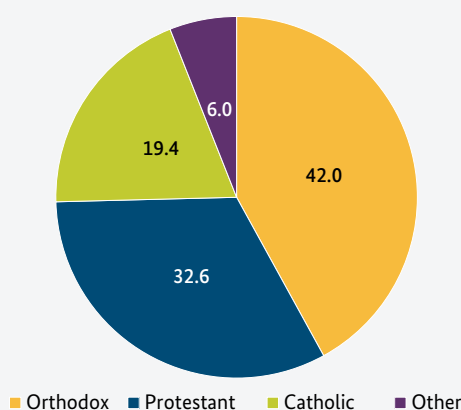
Figure 2: Religious denominations of Muslim refugees, expressed as a percentage



N.B.: Data weighted.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees 2017, v34.

Figure 3: Denominational affiliation of Christian refugees, expressed as a percentage



N.B.: Data weighted.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees 2017, v34.

With regard to affiliation to the respective religions or denominations, it can be seen that the majority (around 83%) of Muslim refugees are Sunnis (Figure 2). Around 10% describe themselves as Shiites and around 8% say they are affiliated to another Muslim denomination. This distribution thus corresponds roughly to the previous distribution of Muslim denominations in Germany (Haug et al. 2009: 97). Only Alevis, who account for about 13% of the members of the Muslim religion in Germany (Haug et al. 2009: 97), are hardly represented among refugees. This is due to the fact that Alevis are primarily to be found in Turkey. Turks, however, are hardly represented among the refugees surveyed in this analysis.

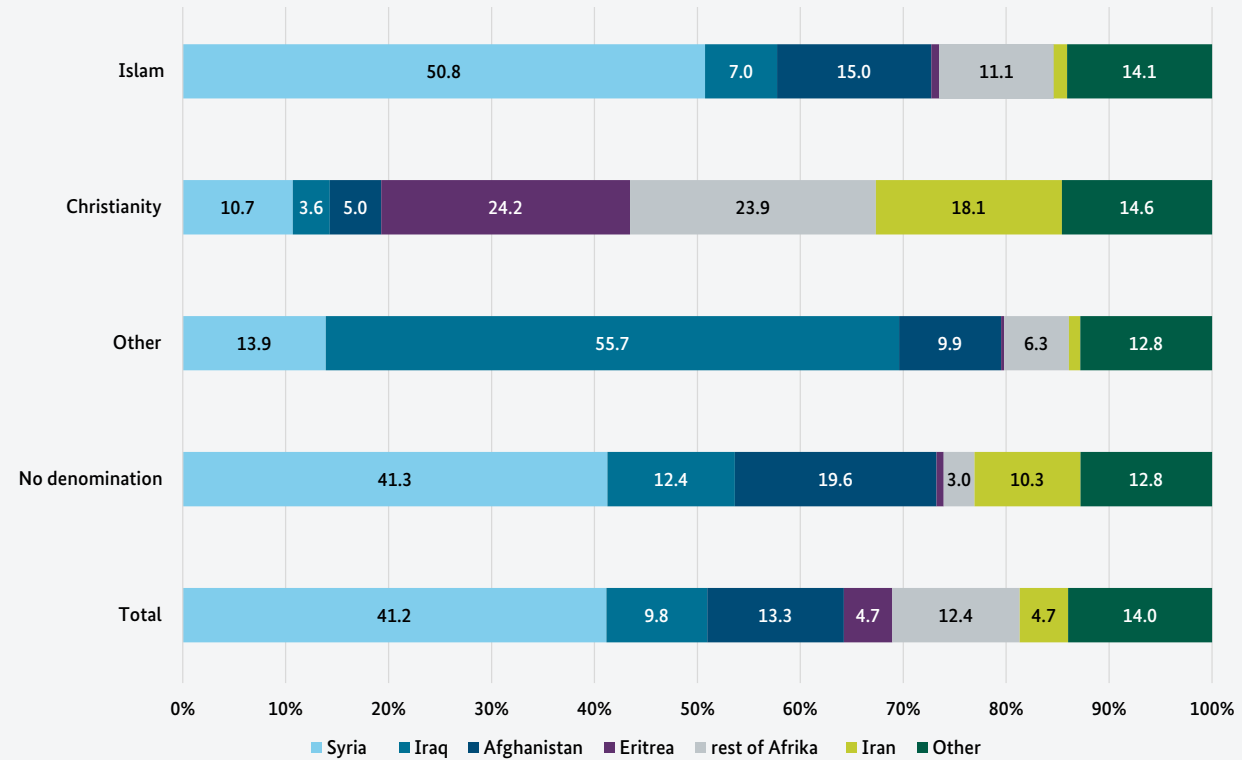
The majority (42%) of Christian refugees are members of the Orthodox Churches (Figure 3). One third (around 33%) of Christian refugees belong to the Protestant Church and one-fifth (around 19%) belong to the Catholic Church. 6% belong to a different Christian denomination. The denominational structure of Christian refugees thus differs markedly from the Christian population in Germany, where the proportion of persons identifying as Protestant and Catholic is almost the same at just under 50% respectively and the proportion of persons belonging to the Orthodox churches is low at just under 2% (Statistical Offices of the Federal Government and the Länder 2014). Other Christian denominations also play only a minor role among Christians in Germany.

Socio-structural characteristics of members of the different religions

Individual religiousness, religious practices and participation in (institutionalised) religious life can be linked to key socio-structural characteristics. For instance, Muslim men are more likely to participate in religious events than Muslim women. Among other cultural traditions, this is probably also due to the fact that participation in the common Friday prayer is a religious obligation for Muslim men, but not for Muslim women (Haug et al. 2009: 160). In order to be able to better classify the following findings on religiousness and integration into religious life, we will therefore first take a look at the socio-structural characteristics of members of the different religions. Age structure, gender relations and countries of origin will be examined in the following.

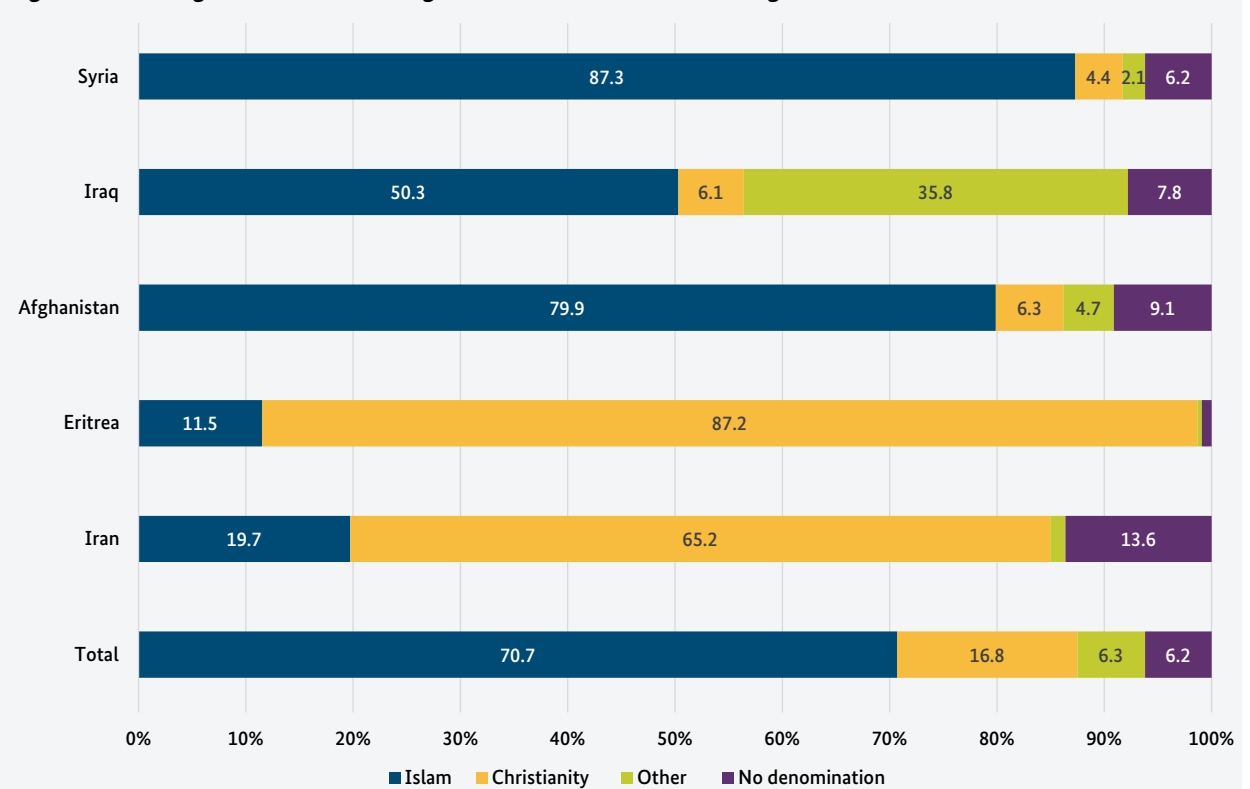
With regard to age structure, there are hardly any differences between members of the different religions. The average age of all refugees interviewed is about 31, which also applies to persons who identify with Islam or Christianity. Persons who feel that they belong to another religion or no religion are on average slightly older at 32 years of age.

There are also only minor differences in the gender ratio. Compared to the basic population, in which men account for around 70%, women are underrepresented among those who do not feel affiliated to any religion (no figure). This is also slightly evident among those who say they belong to Islam. By contrast, they are somewhat overrepresented among those who feel they belong to another, unspecified religion or Christianity.

Figure 4: Religious affiliation by nationality

N.B.: Data weighted. Proportions of less than 2% are not shown.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees 2017, v34.

Figure 5: Religious affiliation of refugees from selected countries of origin

N.B.: Data weighted. Proportions of less than 2% are not shown.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees 2017, v34.

With regard to origin, half of the members of the Muslim religion (around 51%) come from Syria and another 15% from Afghanistan (Figure 4). This means that Muslim refugees differ significantly from the remaining members of the Muslim religion in Germany in terms of their origin. The majority (around 51%) are of Turkish origin, while Muslims originating from the Middle East account for only about 1% (Stichs 2016: 31). Accordingly, the proportion of persons of Turkish origin among the Muslim population in Germany will continue to decrease, having already declined noticeably between 2008 and the end of 2015 (Stichs 2016: 31). This trend will probably mean the diversity of Muslim life in Germany will increase further due to the different local traditions (Stichs 2016: 32).

Two-thirds of Christian refugees, both male and female, come from Africa (together accounting for about 48%) and Iran (accounting for about 18%). Among those who feel that they belong to a different, unspecified religion, persons from Iraq dominate at around 56%, while the other groups of origin are clearly underrepresented here.

With regard to the distribution of religious affiliation within the largest groups of origin – Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iran – it is apparent that this is not representative of the distribution within the respective countries of origin. This is particularly striking for refugees from Iran, of whom almost two-thirds (around 65%) identify as Christians and only 20% as Muslims, while in Iran almost the entire population is Muslim (Figure 5; Maoz/Henderson 2013). Persons who do not feel affiliated to any religion are also comparatively strongly represented among those who fled Iran, at around 14%.

Compared to the population in their country of origin, members of the Christian religion are overrepresented among those who fled Eritrea and members of the Muslim religion are underrepresented. Among refugees from Eritrea, around 12% said they felt they belonged to Islam and around 87% to Christianity. By contrast, the ratio of Christians and members of the Muslim religion is almost on a par in the population of Eritrea (Maoz/Henderson 2013).

Significant differences are also evident among refugees from Iraq: while over 90% of the population in Iraq are followers of Islam (Maoz/Henderson 2013), the proportion of followers of Islam among Iraqi refugees is only about 50%. Accounting for a good one-third (around 36%) of the total, those who feel they belong to another denomination are clearly overrepresented. These are likely to be Yezidi, in particular (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2016: 25), who are being persecuted and murdered, above all in the North of Iraq, by the terrorist militia ISIS.

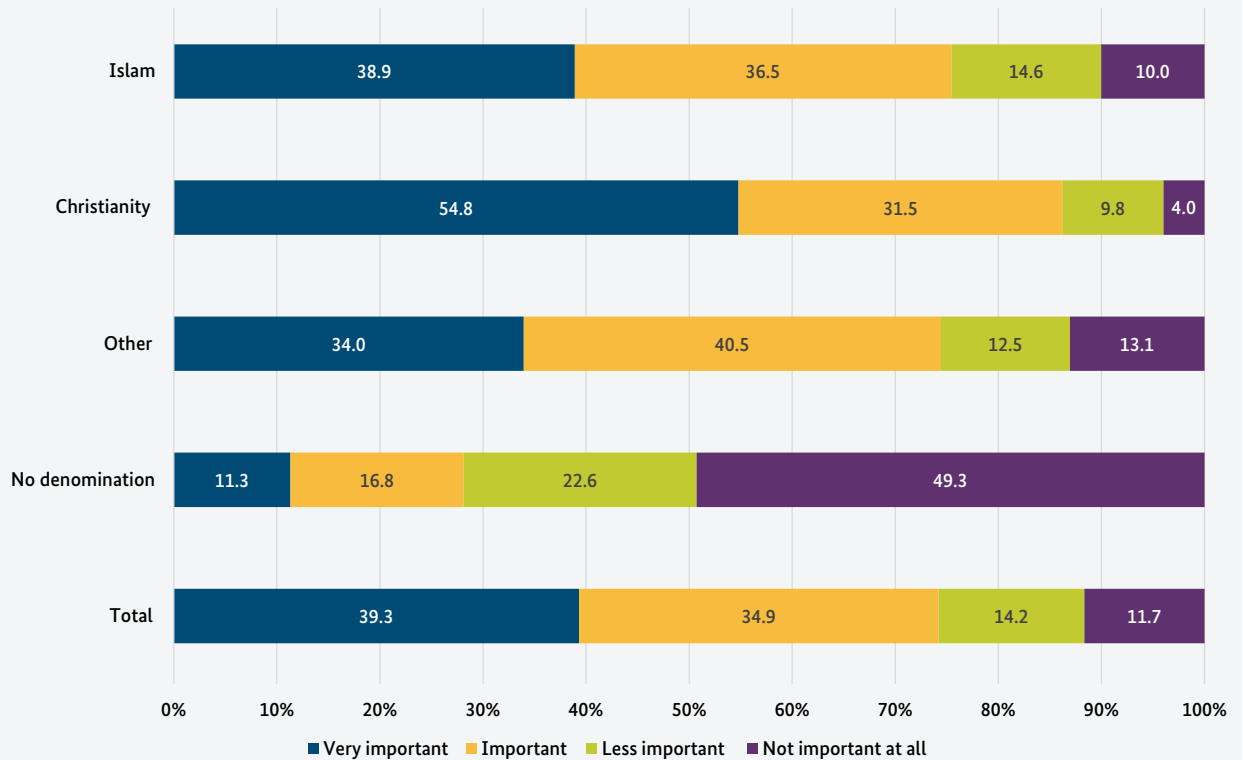
Compared to the society of origin, Sunni men and Sunni women are underrepresented among refugees from Afghanistan, whereas Shiites, but also Christians, members of other faiths and non-denominational groups, are overrepresented (Maoz/Henderson 2013). Finally, among refugees from Syria, Alevis are clearly underrepresented and persons of no denomination as well as members of other unspecified denominations are overrepresented (Maoz/Henderson 2013).

The importance of religion in the lives of refugees

Religion plays an important role in the lives of the majority of the refugees interviewed: just under three-quarters (around 74%) of the refugees stated that religion is important or very important for their happiness and well-being, while for around 12%, it is completely unimportant (Figure 6). Christian refugees were particularly likely to say that religion was at least important for their happiness and well-being (around 86%; totally unimportant: 4%), followed by Muslims (at least important: around 75%; totally unimportant: 10%) and those who feel that they belong to another, unspecified religion (at least important: around 75%; totally unimportant: around 13%). Unsurprisingly, those who do not feel affiliated to any religion were the least likely to say that religion is at least important for their happiness and well-being (around 18%), whereas almost half of them (around 49%) said religion was completely unimportant to them.

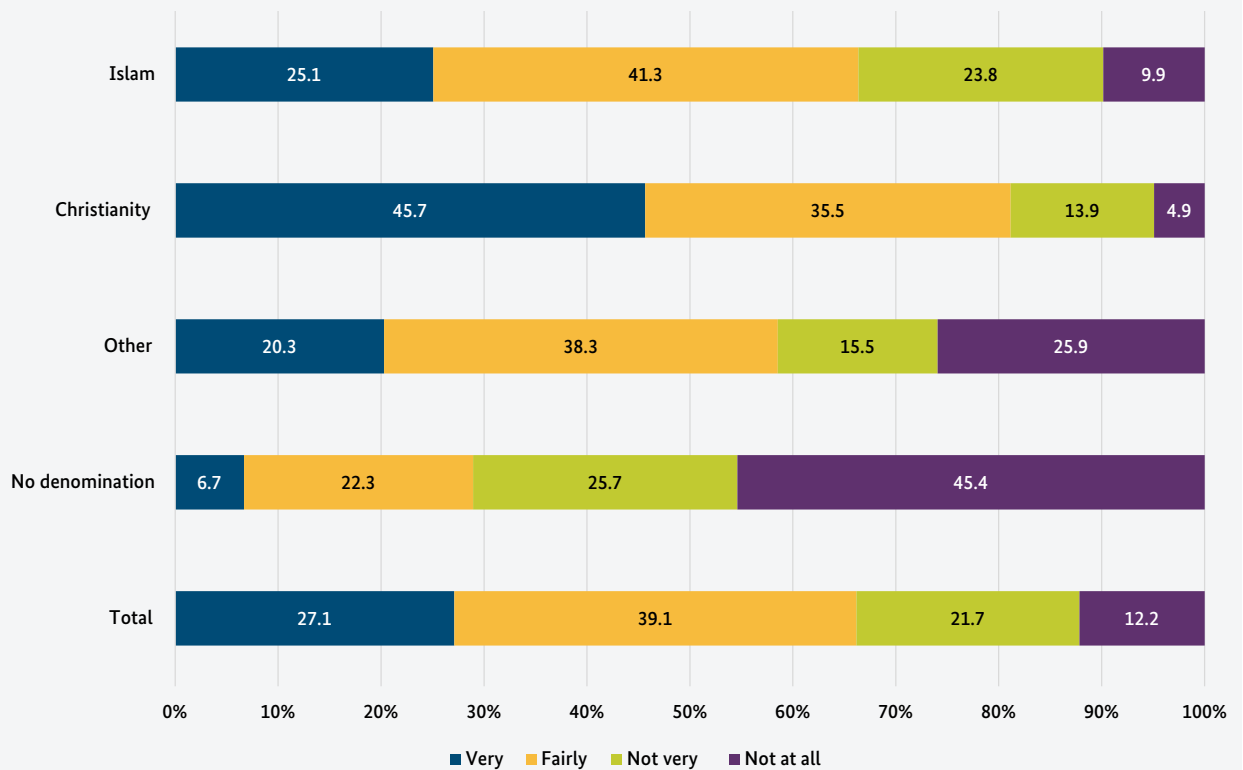
The results on subjective assessment of religiousness also suggest that religion and faith play a particularly important role for Christian refugees: about 46% of them rated themselves as very devout, a further 36% as fairly devout (together: about 81%) and only about 5% as not religious at all (Figure 7). As expected, those who feel no affiliation to any religion seem to be the least religious: around 45% consider themselves to be non-religious and around 29% to be fairly or very religious. Even among those who feel that they belong to another, unspecified religion, the proportion of those who describe themselves as being not religious at all is comparatively high, at around 26%.

Muslims considered themselves to be somewhat less devout than Christian refugees: two-thirds (around 66%) of them said they were fairly or very religious and around 10% said they were not religious at all. This means that Muslim refugees correspond relatively exactly to the average of all refugees, of whom two-thirds (around 66%) also considered themselves

Figure 6: Importance of religion for personal happiness and well-being according to religious affiliation

N.B.: Data weighted.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees 2017, v34.

Figure 7: Subjective assessment of religiousness according to denomination

N.B.: Data weighted.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees 2017, v34.

to be fairly or very religious and around 12% said they were not religious at all.

Comparisons with persons in the host society suggest that faith and religion are less important for Muslim refugees than for other members of the Muslim community living in Germany. In this respect, they correspond more or less to Christians living in Germany, whereas faith and religion seem to be most significant for Christian refugees. For instance, in a study conducted by Bertelsmann Stiftung, 39% of members of the Muslim religion living in Germany, 33% of Catholics and 21% of Protestant Christians classified themselves as very devout (Pollack/Müller 2013: 17). In the study “Muslim Life in Germany” (MLD) conducted in 2008, around 36% of the members of the Muslim religion interviewed considered themselves to be extremely devout (Haug et al. 2009: 141).

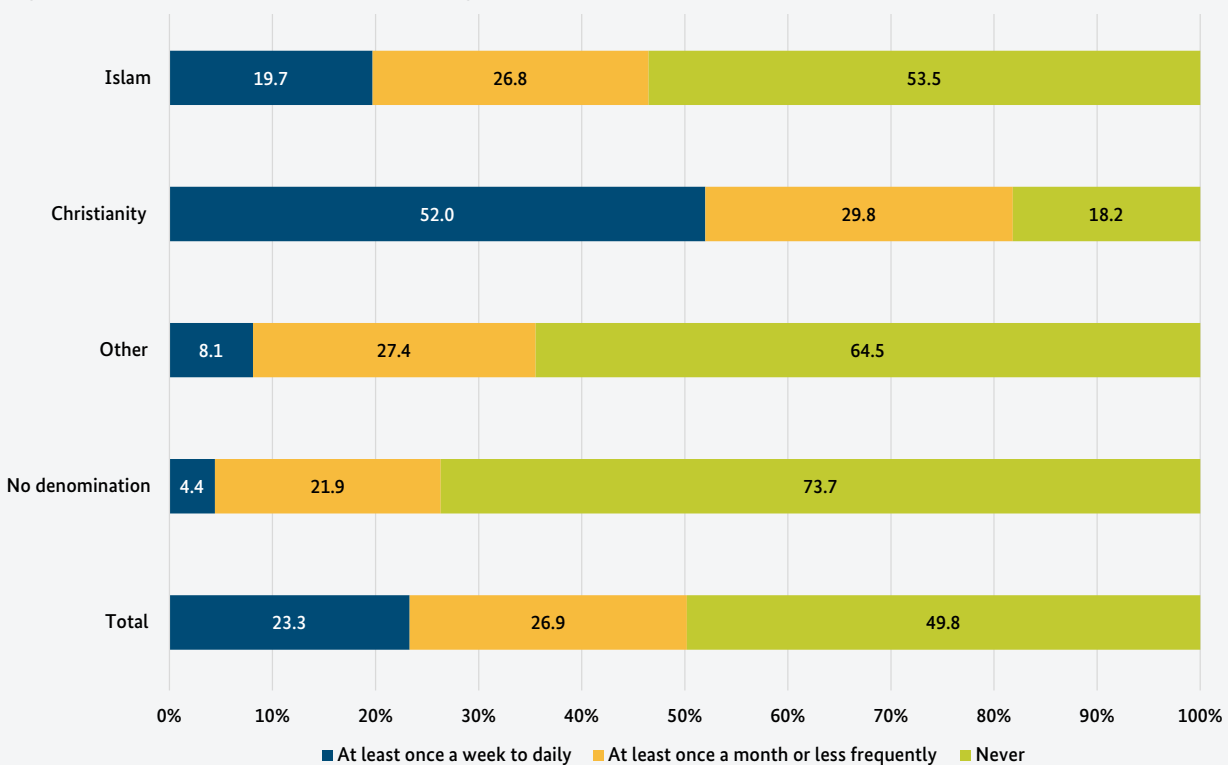
Participation in religious life

Just under a quarter (around 23%) of refugees took part in a religious event at least once a week, whereas half (around 50%) said they never did (Figure 8). By far the most frequent attendees of religious events were

Christian refugees (around 52% who said they attended at least once a week). The least frequent were people who had no religious affiliation (around 74% said they never attended a religious event). Of the Muslim refugees, just over half (around 54%) said they never attended a religious event, whereas one-fifth (around 20%) said they attended religious events at least once a week.

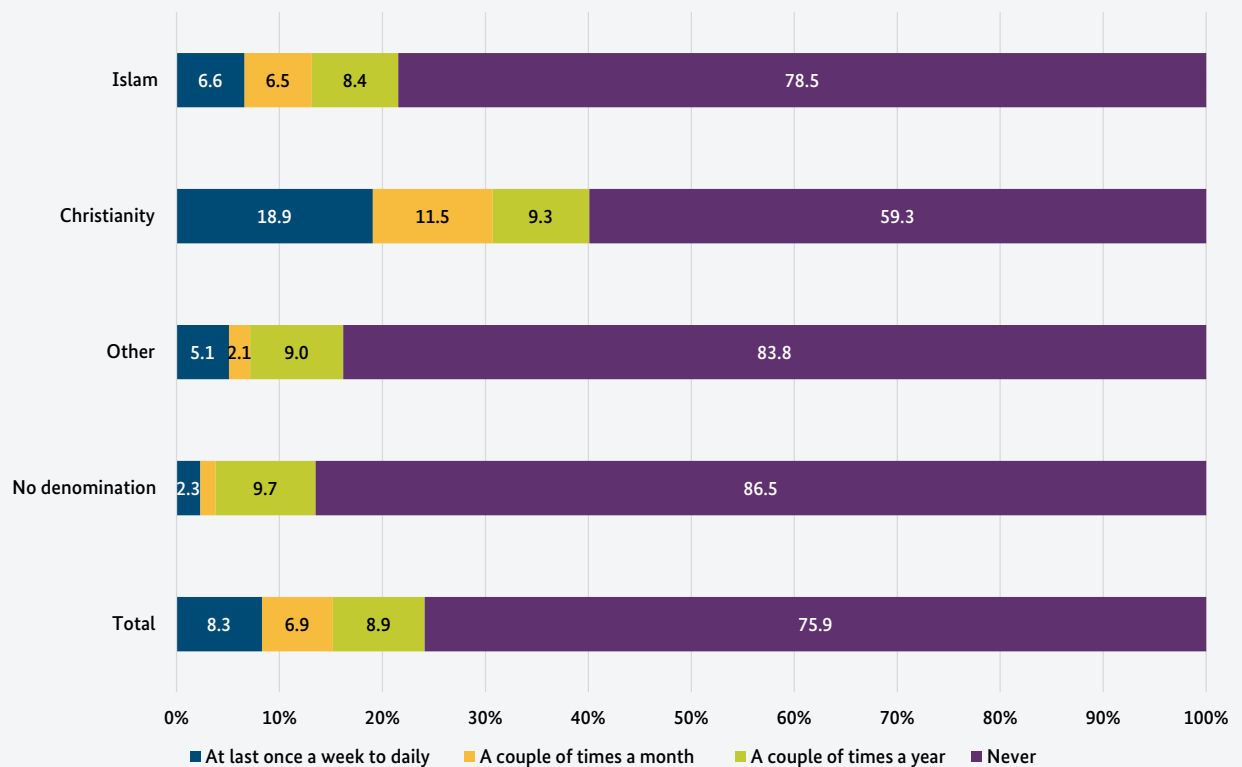
A comparison with persons in the host society shows that Muslim refugees attend religious events slightly less frequently than other members of the Muslim community or Catholic Christians in Germany, whereas Christian refugees attend much more frequently. In the 2008 “Muslim Life in Germany” study conducted in 2008, for instance, around 35% of members of the Muslim religion in Germany stated that they attended religious events at least a couple of times a month (Haug et al. 2009: 161). In the Bertelsmann Foundation’s “Religionsmonitor”, some 30% of members of the Muslim religion, around 33% of Catholic and around 18% of Protestant Christians stated that they visit a mosque or church at least once a month (Pollack/Müller 2013: 17). Around 28% of Muslim refugees said they attend a religious event at least once a month, whereas the figure for Christian refugees was 67%.

Figure 8: Frequency of attendance of religious events by denomination



N.B.: Data weighted.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees 2017, v34.

Figure 9: Frequency of involvement in religious communities and/or associations by religious affiliation

N.B.: Data weighted. Proportions of less than 2% are not shown,
Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees 2017, v34.

Only a minority of refugees were regularly involved in religious communities and/or associations: around 8% said they were involved at least once a week, and a further 7% a couple of times a month (Figure 9). Three-quarters (around 76%) said they never became involved. Around 87% of refugees who have no religious affiliation (who said they never became involved) and 84% who feel they belong to another, unspecified religion (who said they never became involved) were the least likely to become involved.

As with attendance at religious events, it is Christian refugees who are by far the most involved: just under one-fifth (around 19%) got involved at least once a week, around 12% a couple of times a month and around 9% at least a couple of times a year. However, here too, more than half (around 59%) said they never got involved. Of the Muslim refugees, around 7% said they got involved at least once a week and the same proportion a few times a month. Around 79% never got involved.

The reason for the comparatively infrequent involvement in religious communities and/or congregations could be that there is frequently (still) a lack of suitable religious infrastructure, such as an Arabic-speaking

mosque community or an Orthodox church community.

Social integration

As indicated in the introduction, religious communities can make settling into the host society easier, particularly for new immigrants (Müssig/Stichs 2012: 303–310). The reason is that in religious communities, they have the opportunity to establish contacts with persons in the host society, who in turn provide information and other assistance that is important for settling in. Furthermore, the contacts thus gained can counteract social isolation and loneliness on the part of new immigrants.

First of all, it is apparent that almost half of the refugees (around 46%) spent time with Germans at least once a week and slightly more than one-fifth (around 22%) never did so (Table 1; Siegert 2019). In this respect, there are hardly any differences between the members of the different religions. Only among refugees who belong to another, unspecified religion is the proportion of those who spent time with Germans at least once a week below the average at around

38%, and the proportion of those who never spent time with Germans above average at around 26%. In addition, among refugees who do not belong to any religion, the proportion of those who never spent time with Germans, at around 17%, is lower than among members of the other religions. However, the differences are not statistically significant and cannot be extrapolated from the sample to the population. This is also the case when, in addition to religious affiliation, the country of origin, gender, age, year of entry, form of residence (shared vs. single accommodation), an index of German language skills, employment, level of education and family structure are also taken into account statistically (results not shown here).

Table 1: Frequency of time spent with Germans, by religion (in%)

	Frequency of time spent with Germans		
	Once a week to daily	Rarely	Never
Islam	46.7	30.9	22.4
Christianity	46.9	33.1	20.0
Other	38.4	35.4	26.2
No denomination	44.3	38.9	16.8
Total	46.1	32.1	21.8

N.B.: Data weighted.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees 2017, v34.

With regard to frequency of attendance at religious events, it is apparent that refugees who never attended religious events were less likely to socialise with Germans than refugees who attended such events frequently (several times a week to daily) (Table 2). On the whole, however, it appears that refugees who attend religious events occasionally (once a month or less often) socialise the most frequently with Germans.

However, this pattern is not evident for the other religions, only for Muslim and Christian refugees, although the differences are somewhat more pronounced for Christian refugees than for Muslim refugees.² On the other hand, the pattern according to which refugees who occasionally attended religious events most often socialised with Germans is more pronounced among Muslim refugees than among Christian refugees. The difference between those who occasionally and those who never attended religious events is statistically significant among Muslim refugees. On the other hand, the difference between those who never attended religious events and those who often attended such events is statistically significant among Christian refugees.

A different picture emerges in respect of refugees who feel that they belong to a different, non-specified religion. Here it is particularly striking that refugees who said

² Since hardly anyone in the group of non-denominational refugees attends religious events, they have not been taken into account here.

Table 2: Frequency of time spent with Germans according to frequency of attendance at religious events and affiliation to a religion (in%)

	Attendance at religious events	Frequency of time spent with Germans	
		Once a week to daily	Never
Islam	Several times a week/daily	47.9	21.3
	Rarely	52.1	14.9
	Never	43.4	26.5
Christianity	Several times a week/daily	48.4	14.6
	Rarely	50.1	19.6
	Never	36.5	36.9
Other	Several times a week/daily	82.3	0.9
	Rarely	28.7	32.8
	Never	37.2	26.6
Total	Several times a week/daily	48.7	18.1
	Rarely	50.7	16.5
	Never	42.3	26.3

N.B.: Data weighted.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees 2017, v34

they never attend religious events were less likely to do anything with Germans than those who frequently took part in religious events. Those least likely to socialise with Germans, however, were refugees who occasionally attended religious events. However, the difference between those who never and those who occasionally attended religious events is statistically insignificant, whereas the difference relative to those who frequently attended religious events, on the other hand, is significant.

In order to rule out the possibility that the correlations found, according to which refugees who regularly attend religious events are more likely to socialise with Germans than refugees who never attend such events, are primarily attributable to socio-demographic characteristics, a multivariate analysis will be used in the following to examine whether the pattern found is still evident if, in addition to the frequency of attending religious events, key socio-demographic characteristics of refugees, namely gender, age, length of stay, employment situation, level of education, German language skills, nationality, household structure, residence status and type of accommodation (communal or private), are taken into account in the statistics.

Even when socio-demographic characteristics are also taken into account, the tendency remains the same as in the previous analysis (Table 2), although the differences between Muslim and Christian refugees are no longer statistically significant (Table 3). Only among members of other, unspecified religions did those who frequently attend religious events continue to spend a lot more time

with Germans than those who never attended religious events.

However, it needs to be borne in mind that, as has been shown, members of the Muslim religion and especially members of an Orthodox Christian church are comparatively rare in the German host society. Also, religious life in these religious communities in Germany is supported and shaped above all by persons with a migration background. However, it is not clear whether these persons with a migration background are counted based on the ratio of refugees to Germans. This means it is possible that although participation in religious events does not significantly increase the frequency of time spent with persons whom refugees identify as Germans, it certainly does strengthen the social networks of refugees because they are meeting other people in the religious communities (Haug et al. 2009: 165).

In order to take this possibility into account, the information on time spent with Germans, persons from the country of origin and persons from other countries has been summarised in an index ranging from the value 1 “never” to the value 6 “daily”. It was then analysed whether the frequency of attending religious events in general has an influence on the frequency of time spent with other people.

When time spent with others in general is taken into account, as expected, there is a clearer correlation with the frequency of attendance of religious events (Table 4). Muslim refugees who occasionally or frequently

Table 3: Time spent with Germans (Index: 1 “never” to 6 “daily”) – ordinal logistic regression

	Muslims		Christians		Other	
Influencing factors	Coefficient	Sig.	Coefficient	Sig.	Coefficient	Sig.
Attendance of religious events						
<i>Never (Ref.)</i>						
Occasional	0.222		0.364		-0.717	
Frequent	0.021		0.557		2.853	***
Controls	✓		✓		✓	
Number	4,803		4,803		4,803	

Comments: Unstandardized logit coefficients, data weighted, the estimate of standard errors took the survey design into account; results are derived from models with interaction effects; significances: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. The control variables not shown here are gender, age, length of stay, employment situation, level of education, German language skills, nationality, household structure, residence status, type of accommodation (shared or private). The complete results can be obtained from the author.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees 2017, v34.

Table 4: Time spent with other persons (Index: 1 “never” to 6 “daily”) – ordinal logistic regression

	Muslims		Christians		Other	
Influencing factors	Coefficient	Sig.	Coefficient	Sig.	Coefficient	Sig.
Attendance of religious events						
<i>Never (Ref.)</i>						
Occasional	0.366	***	0.491		-0.316	
Frequent	0.472	**	0.834	**	1.424	**
Controls	✓		✓		✓	
Number	4,781		4,781		4,781	

Comments: Unstandardized logit coefficients, data weighted, the estimate of standard errors took the survey design into account; results are derived from models with interaction effects; significances: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. The control variables not shown here are gender, age, length of stay, employment situation, level of education, German language skills, nationality, household structure, residence status, type of accommodation (shared or private). The complete results can be obtained from the authors.

Source: IAB-BAMF-SOEP Survey of Refugees 2017, v34.

and Christian refugees who frequently attended religious events spent statistically significantly more time with others than those who never attended religious events. On the other hand, in the case of refugees who feel that they belong to another, unspecified religion, only those who attended religious events socialised with others more frequently than those who never attended such events. By contrast, those who attended events only occasionally did so even less often. However, the difference between those who occasionally attended and those who never attended religious events is not statistically significant.

Summary and discussion

The distribution of religious affiliations among refugees differs both in terms of the distribution within their respective countries of origin and the distribution within the rest of the population in Germany. The latter, in particular, is leading to an increase in the diversity of religious life in Germany. Both overall and within the individual denominations. The reason is that the proportion of persons of Turkish origin, who have represented the majority so far, will continue to decrease among the members of the Muslim religion in Germany. Due to the different local traditions, this should in turn further increase the diversity of Muslim life in Germany (Stichs 2016: 32). Since Christian refugees feel affiliated to the Orthodox Church, and to a much lesser extent to the Protestant and especially the Catholic Church, Christian life in Germany ought to become more diverse as well.

Although religion and faith play a role in the lives of the vast majority of refugees, they seem to be less important to Muslim refugees than to the other mem-

bers of the Muslim religion in Germany. In this respect, they differ very little from the Christian population in Germany. Faith and religion seem to be particularly important for Christian refugees.

Against this backdrop and the result that almost half of refugees never attend religious ceremonies and only a minority is regularly involved in religious associations and/or communities, it can be assumed that the influence refugees have on religious life in Germany is rather limited. Furthermore, the reach of religious institutions in terms of refugees' social integration is also rather limited.

However, it has also been observed that refugees who regularly attend religious ceremonies spend more time with other people – Germans, persons from the country of origin and/or persons from other countries – than refugees who rarely, or especially never, attend religious ceremonies. Contacts specifically with Germans are, however, only fostered to a very limited extent by participation in religious events, which could be correlated to the different religions of refugees and the rest of the population in Germany, as described earlier. It is important to note in this context, however, that frequent attendance of religious ceremonies has a slightly positive, rather than a negative, correlation with the time spent with Germans. This means that there is also no evidence whatsoever of any tendency towards isolation.

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IMPRESSUM

Publisher

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge
Forschungszentrum Migration, Integration und Asyl
90461 Nürnberg

Version

05/2020

Layout

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Recommended citation

Siegert, Manuel (2020): Religious affiliation, religious practice and social integration of refugees.

Edition 02|2020 of the Brief Analyses of the Migration, Integration and Asylum Research Centre at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Nuremberg.

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