



TENT

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS

SWEDEN
JANUARY 2016



TENT

The TENT Foundation commissioned global research agency AudienceNet to conduct in-depth research into public perceptions of the refugee crisis.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES



SHIFTING PUBLIC OPINION

Watershed moments in the evolution of the refugee crisis can have a profound effect on public opinion.

The widespread dissemination of the photo of three year old Aylan al-Kurdi lying dead on a beach in Turkey provoked a profound surge in empathy and a desire to help, while terrorist attacks foment an atmosphere of fear and suspicion.

LONGITUDINAL PICTURE

AudienceNet's mixed-method research provides in-depth insights and tracks more generalized trends over time.

In this way, an evidence base is built for communications strategies and policy approaches that work best in proactively promoting progressive and humanitarian responses in the public.

BEYOND FEAR

This research project seeks to address the fears present among the public and to move beyond them. It examines the kinds of positive messaging to which people respond and tracks the evolution of this response over time.

It provides a basis for governments, international organizations and NGOs to show true leadership in bringing a message of solidarity to the public.

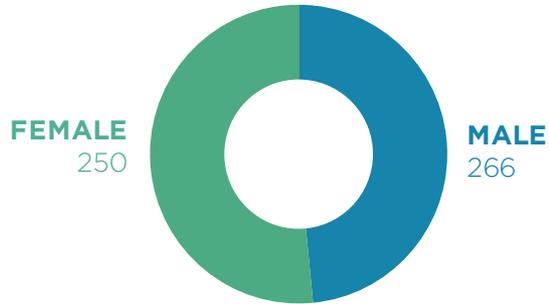
SAMPLE



TOTAL SAMPLE
6,433
(Nov'15: 11,128)

										
Australia 511 (1,019)	Canada 506 (1,057)	Germany 512 (1,037)	Greece 509 (1,063)	Hungary 493 (1,080)	Serbia 521 (1,070)	Sweden 516 (1,059)	Turkey 513 (1,059)	UK 512 (1,152)	USA 770 (1,583)	France 1,070 (N/A)

GENDER: SWEDEN



Following the terror attacks on November 13th in Paris TENT commissioned a re-contact survey in order to explore possible changes in perceptions of the refugee crisis. The re-contact survey is comprised of half of the respondents from the nationally representative surveys conducted in November 2015.

QUANTITATIVE PROFILING

AudienceNet ran an interactive online survey in each country identified by TENT.

The sample involved re-contacts at random with half of the respondents who took part in the original research.

The original research was statistically and demographically representative of the population above the age of 18 years, with strict quotas to ensure the correct representation of: age, gender, region and household income.

QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

We propose recruiting representatives of the key segments identified in Part 1 into a week-long interactive online community forum. The forum will comprise 40 respondents per country.

The forums will be moderated in the respondents' own language by AudienceNet's team of highly experienced qualitative researchers and will include a series of questions, discussion topics and research tasks to be agreed with TENT.

CONNECTED & INTERACTIVE

With round the clock operations from our London, Washington DC & Melbourne offices, genuine 24/7 dialogue is established with the target groups.

The steering group can observe the platform at anytime and to contribute to research tasks/discussion topics, in real-time, via direct links to the insights platform and moderators.

'Sleep mode' will be maintained beyond the initial phase of insights, at no cost to the client, i.e. the ability to wake the community up at any subsequent stage.

POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN SWEDEN

Sweden has accepted more refugees per capita than any other state in Europe and, for the most part, there had been cross-party consensus in support of welcoming those in need.

However, the time between the two surveys brought this under strain as there were reports of arson attacks on asylum centers and racially motivated stabbings of a teacher and students at a school near Gothenburg.

By mid-November, authorities had become overwhelmed and the army was called in to help manage the situation. By the end of that month, Sweden's open-door policy was eventually shut.

CATEGORIZATION

AudienceNet divided respondents into segments based on their perceptions of refugees relative to economic, security and financial matters as well as one's sense of responsibility to help.

This information was used to profile respondents as "overtly positive", "overtly negative" and the mainstream of those with "mixed views". These were combined with other demographic indicators of age, gender and income to get a full picture of public opinion. This was tracked between the November and January surveys and will continue to be followed as part of the Tent Tracker.

THE SWEDISH PUBLIC

In spite of the upheaval, Swedish respondents remained still the most "overtly positive" among all the countries surveyed although there was a slight increase in negative responses. Swedes were less likely to see refugees as a burden and more likely to recognize positive economic contributions of refugees.

There were some distinctions as to gender and income, with women, the young and those declaring high income holding more overtly positive views. There is also a clear linear relationship between political opinion on a left-right scale and one's positivity towards refugees. Progressives were more positive, while conservatives and centrists were more negative or mixed.

PERCEPTION OF REFUGEES

Overtly positive respondents were much more likely to identify war and persecution as the reasons refugees flee their homes, while negative respondents pointed to financial enticements.

Swedes were among the most accepting of the willingness of refugees to work hard rather than seek hand-outs.

A vast majority felt refugees should be treated equally regardless of religion or country of origin. A significant proportion, however, saw some virtue in giving priority to women and children.

RESPONSES TO VARIOUS MESSAGES

Those who had become more negatively predisposed cited economic concerns far more than security. There was still, however, a strong sense of duty towards refugees. This would indicate that Swedes may respond positively to better international coordination and financial management of the crisis.

The role of news media and increased public knowledge emerged as being particularly critical and influential in shaping people's attitudes towards the plight of the refugees – particularly in a more positive direction.

A NARRATIVE FOR NEXT STEPS

The Swedish population remains hospitable but their government has been a victim of poor international coordination. In a country that has prided itself on openness, utilizing the armed forces to manage the border is a drastic measure.

Still, Swedes are far more accepting than most of the idea of keeping refugees on a permanent basis and of living up to their international responsibilities.

Yet there is a risk of a backlash if Sweden continues to carry more weight than other states. The public needs to be kept informed and educated about the process so as to avoid reactionary backlash among xenophobic political entrepreneurs.



SECTION 1

RESPONDENT PROFILING



CHALLENGES OF CATEGORIZATION



BEYOND DEMOGRAPHY AND POLITICAL CLEAVAGE

Robust analysis of public perceptions of the refugee crisis involves a much more nuanced approach to categorization and segmentation than traditional polling and market research.

Demographics and political perspective are important but so are the truths behind other stated opinions.

A FULL PROFILE

AudienceNet has compiled the most important data from across Sweden. The results allow for cross analysis based on nationality, gender, age, household income and political orientation.

There is also significant intelligence on media consumption and personal preoccupations available in this report

REFUGEE CRISIS IN SHARP FOCUS

In spite of the wealth of other data available, these seemed insufficient for adequate categorization of survey respondents.

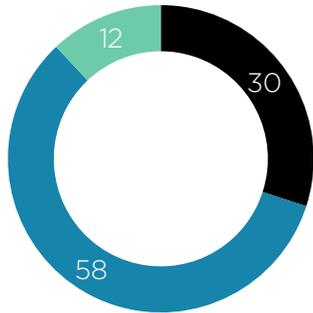
AudienceNet segmented respondents based on stated opinion in 4 categories: perceived responsibility to help refugees; economic considerations; security; and attitudes to types of financial assistance offered to refugees.

SEGMENTATION FACTORS

RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP

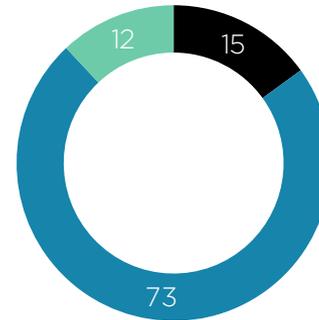


INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE



- My country has no responsibility to accept refugees
- I would be willing for my country to take in a quota of refugees
- I would be willing for my country to take in any number of refugees

SWEDEN



- My country has no responsibility to accept refugees
- I would be willing for my country to take in a quota of refugees
- I would be willing for my country to take in any number of refugees

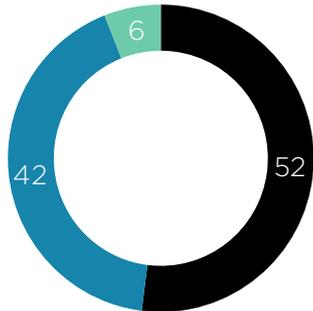
QUESTION: Which statement best represents your position? BASE: 6,433

SEGMENTATION FACTORS

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

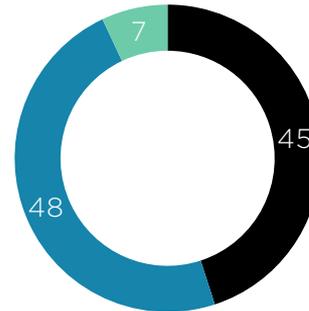


INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE



- Refugees are a burden on the economies of countries that accept them
- Refugees can positively contribute to the economies of countries that accept them
- New arrivals from other countries benefit our economy

SWEDEN



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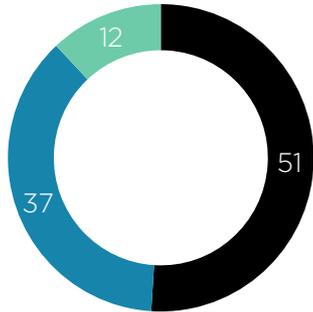
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SEGMENTATION FACTORS

SECURITY

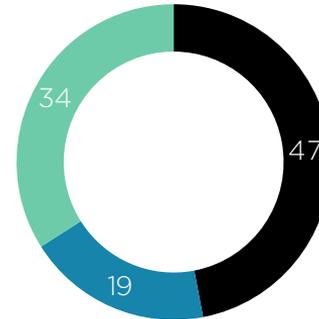


INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE



- The more refugees my country accepts, the greater risk to our security
- The risk from refugees is a legitimate concern but can be effectively managed
- Refugees pose no risk to my country's security

SWEDEN



- The more refugees my country accepts, the greater risk to our security
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- Refugees pose no risk to my country's security

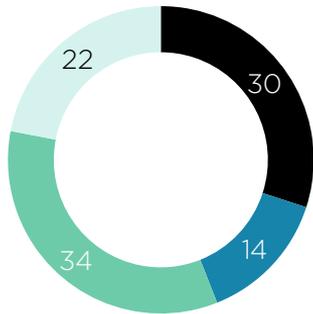
QUESTION: Which statement best represents your position? BASE: 6,433

SEGMENTATION FACTORS

FINANCIAL REASONS

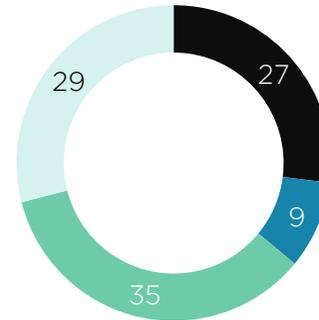


INTERNATIONAL AVERAGE



- Not willing to provide any financial support
- Willing to donate to charities, but not via taxes used by the government to support refugees
- Happy for the government to provide support for refugees, but not willing to donate to charities
- Willing to donate to charities in addition to support provided by the government

SWEDEN

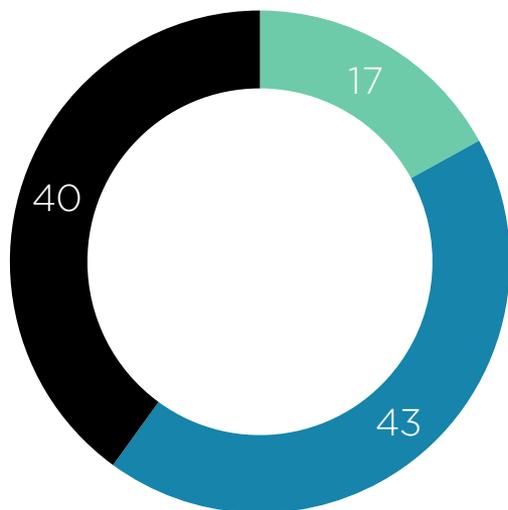


- Not willing to provide any financial support
- Willing to donate to charities, but not via taxes used by the government to support refugees
- Happy for the government to provide support for refugees, but not willing to donate to charities
- Willing to donate to charities in addition to support provided by the government

QUESTION: Which statement best represents your position? BASE: 6,433

ATTITUDES TOWARDS REFUGEES

SWEDEN



17% OVERTLY POSITIVE

Answered positioning questions positively or neutrally with no negative responses

43% MIXED VIEWS

Answered positioning questions negatively or neutrally with no positive responses

40% OVERTLY NEGATIVE

Mixture of positive, negative & neutral responses. The priority target audience

QUESTION(S): Based on a points system attributed to the answers in the position single choice questions (%) BASE: 516

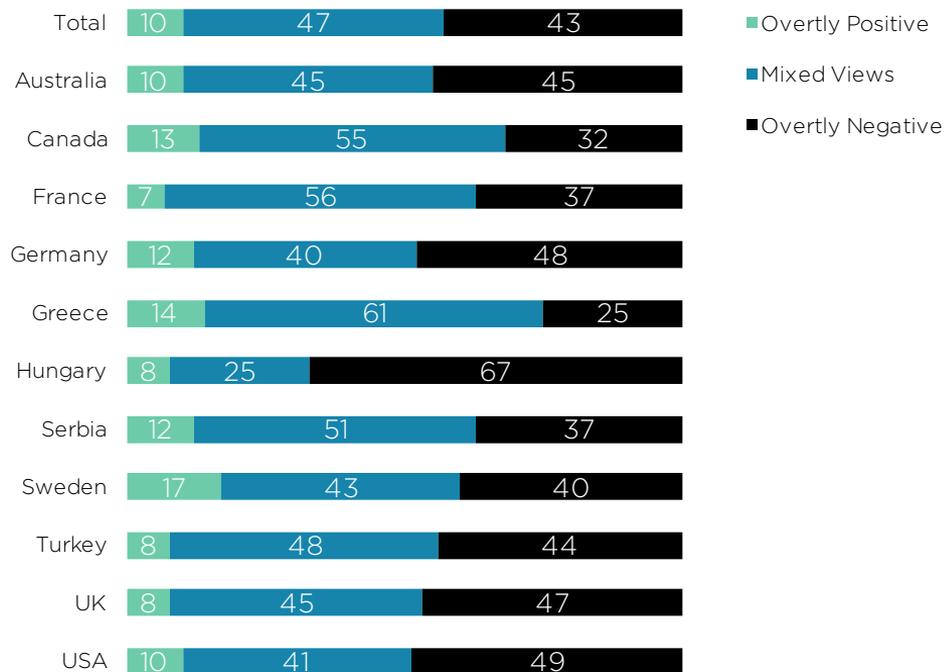
COMPARED TO OTHER COUNTRIES

ATTITUDES TOWARDS REFUGEES



Sweden still had the largest proportion of people with positive views in the second round of surveys conducted. However, there has been a 6% increase in those identified as “overtly negative” between November and January.

Other countries such as Germany and the US had become significantly more negative in their views since the first survey. The Greeks, meanwhile, were the least likely to be negative (25%).



QUESTION(S): Based on a points system attributed to the answers in the position single choice questions (%) BASE: 6,433

SEGMENTS BY GENDER AND AGE

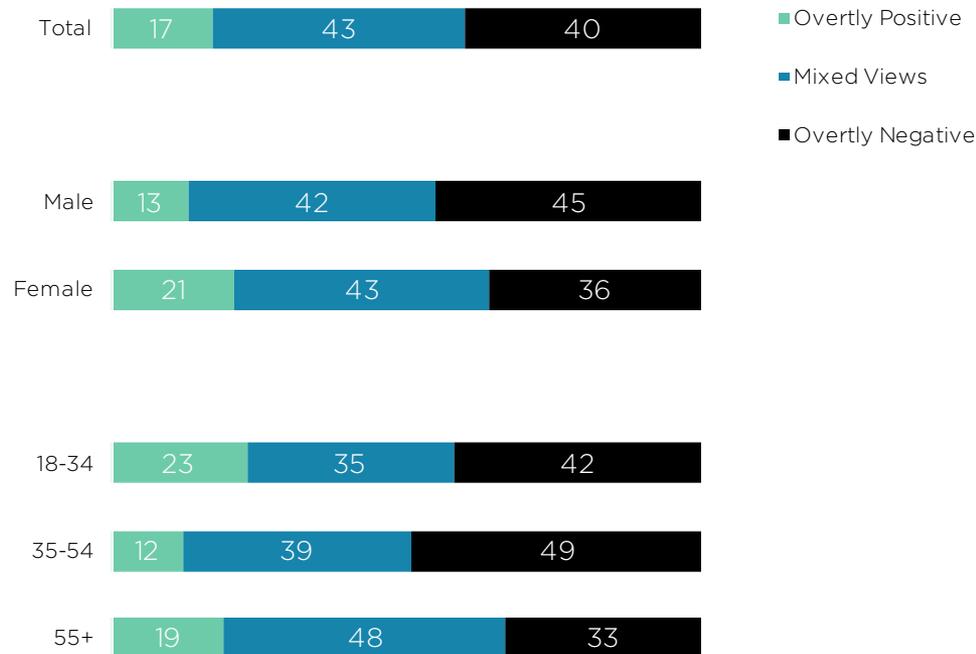
ATTITUDES TOWARDS REFUGEES



Swedish females were more positive towards refugees than Swedish males. More than a fifth of Swedish females were in the overtly positive category.

The youngest generation (Millennials) were most likely to hold overtly positive views (23%). The 35-54 year olds were the most negative group (49%).

Compared to other countries surveyed, Swedes were among the most positive towards refugees.

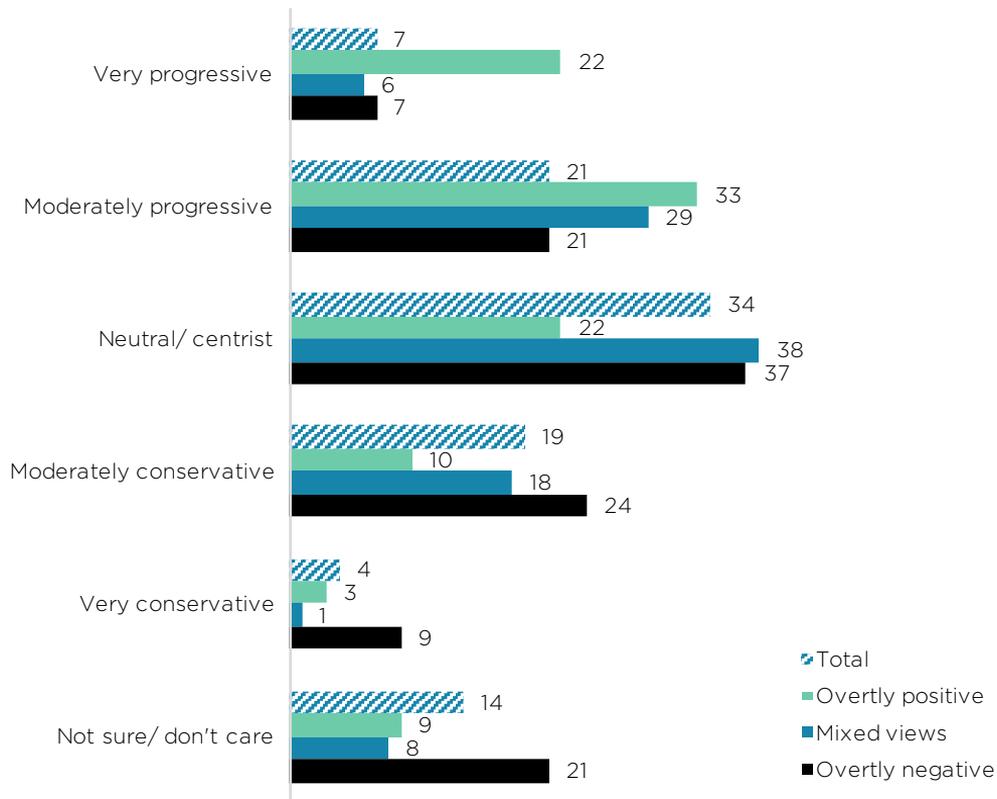


QUESTION(S): Based on a points system attributed to the answers in the position single choice questions (%) BASE: 516

POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Those overtly positive towards refugees were most likely to identify as moderately progressive or very progressive.

The majority of the moderately conservative and those with no political affiliation were in the mixed views or overtly negative category.

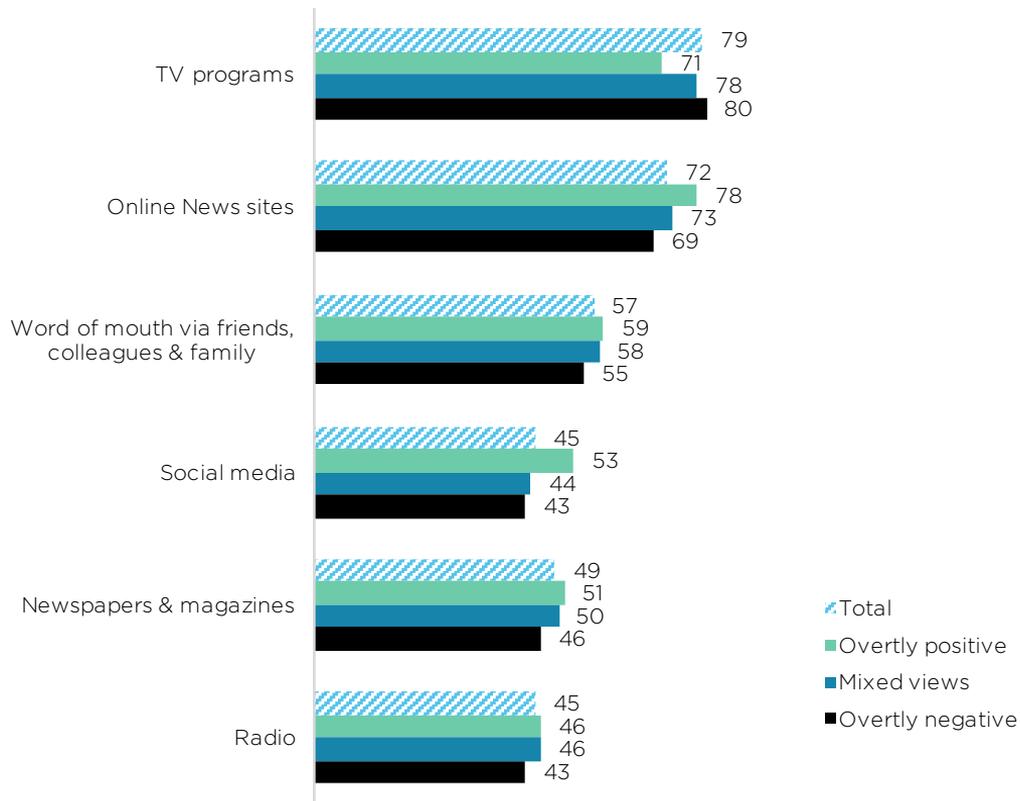


PREFERRED MEDIA SOURCES

Those with overtly positive views towards refugees were more likely to favor newspapers & magazines and TV programs as their news sources.

TV programs were also the top choice for those with mixed views. Online news sites were popular amongst those with negative views.

Traditional news sources, such as TV and newspapers were much more prevalent than online news sources in Sweden.

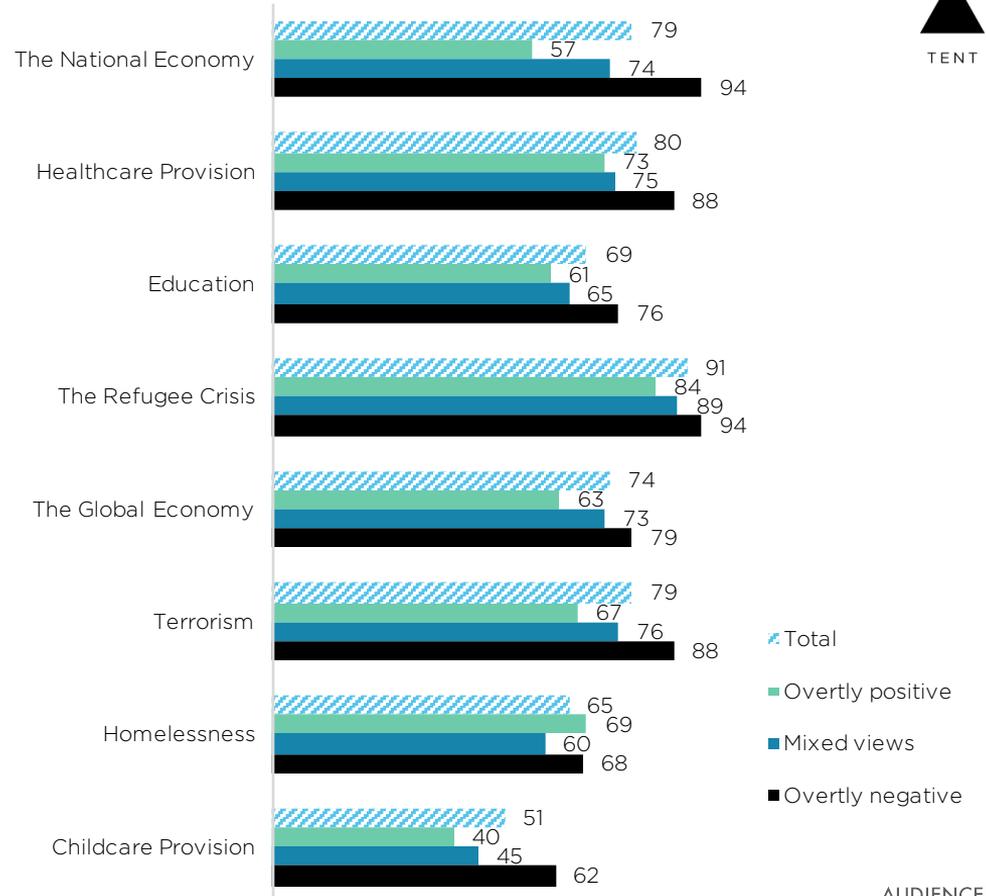


QUESTION(S): How frequently do you use each of the following as a means of keeping up with news/current affairs (%) BASE: 516

WHAT ARE THEY WORRIED ABOUT?

The refugee crisis was the issue that Swedes worried the most about, followed by the national economy, terrorism and healthcare provision. Levels of concern about most issues were broadly similar regardless of their attitudes towards refugees.

However, those with negative attitudes towards refugees have a stronger preoccupation with the health of the Swedish economy, as well as with homelessness and terrorism. Indeed, concern about terrorism has increased since the previous iteration of the survey, most notably among the overtly negative.



QUESTION(S): To what extent are you concerned or worries about the following issues? (data shows NET: Great deal / some extent %) BASE: 516



▲
SECTION 2
—
**PERCEPTIONS
OF REFUGEES**

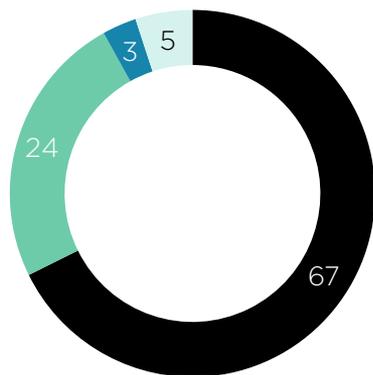


EXTENT AND CAUSES OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS

People in Sweden are well aware of the main causes of the crisis, while many acknowledge the scale of the situation in historical context.

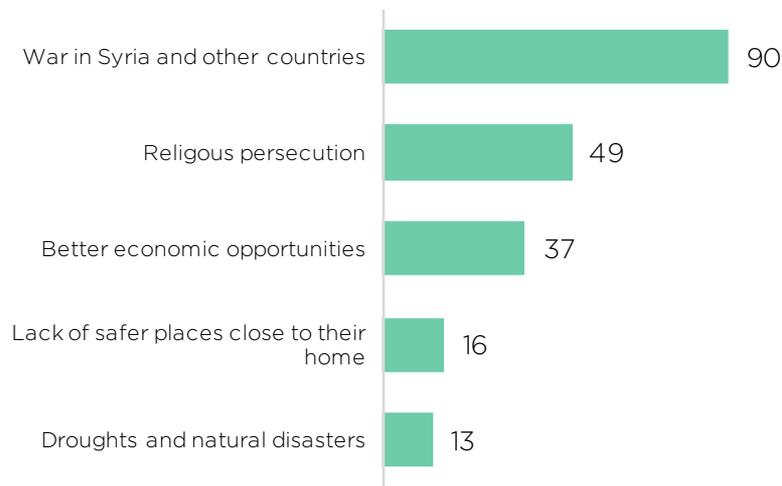


COMPARED TO OTHER CRISES



- The refugee crisis is the worst since World War II
- The refugee crisis is serious, but it is similar to other recent crises
- The refugee crisis is nothing out of the ordinary
- Don't know

CAUSES OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS



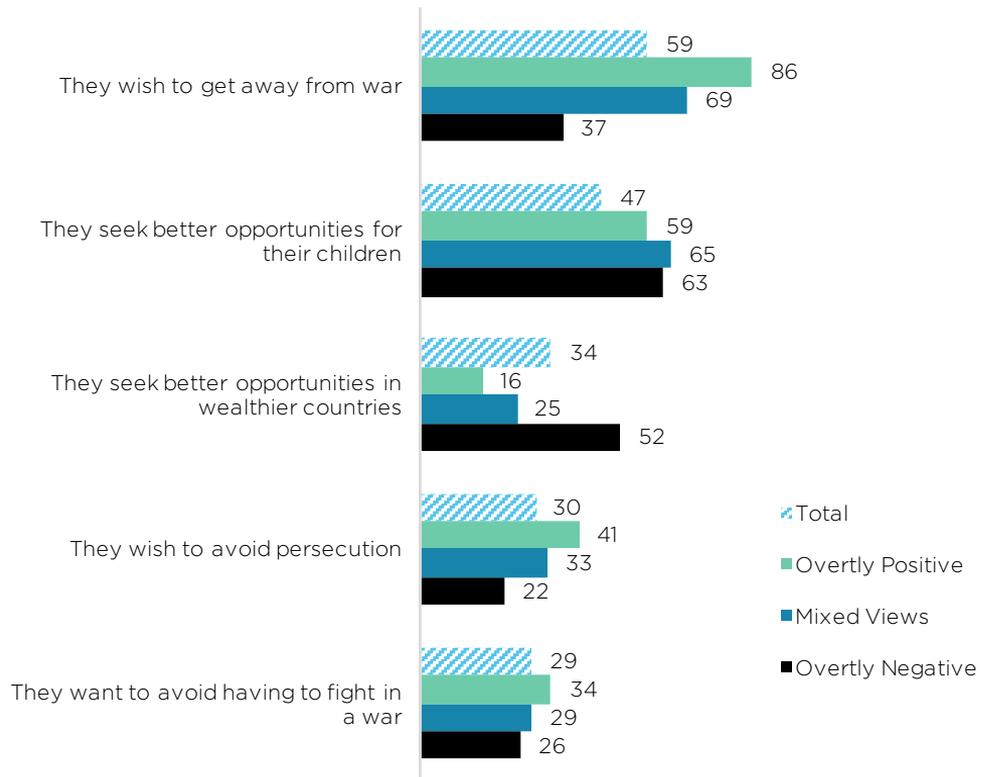
QUESTION(S): How would you describe the scale of the refugee crisis? What do you think has led to the refugee crisis? (%) BASE: 516



WHY REFUGEES ARE LEAVING THEIR HOMELANDS

There are mixed opinions on what motivates refugees to leave their home countries.

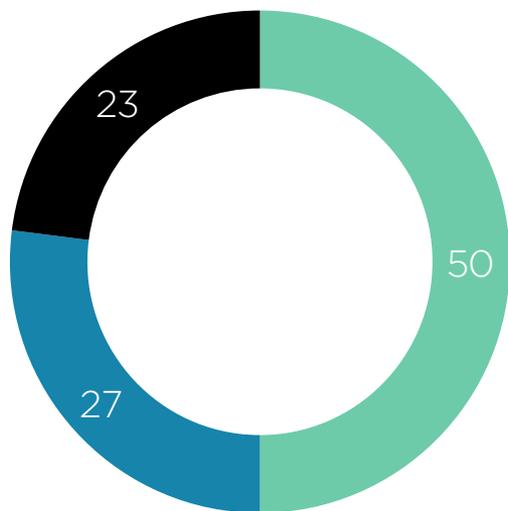
Overtly negative respondents had a tendency to favor economic motives while others recognize reasons of humanitarian concern.



QUESTION(S): To what extent do you think that each of the following motives apply to those who are currently fleeing their homelands? (%) BASE: 516

WORKING HARD VS SEEKING HANDOUTS

SWEDISH PERCEPTIONS



.....

50% WORKING HARD

50% think that the majority of refugees are “willing to work hard and try to fit into their new communities”

.....

27% HANDOUTS

27% think that the majority of refugees are “just looking for handouts”

.....

23% DON'T KNOW

“Don't Know / Not Sure”

.....

QUESTION(S): Do you think the majority of refugees are... (%) BASE: 516

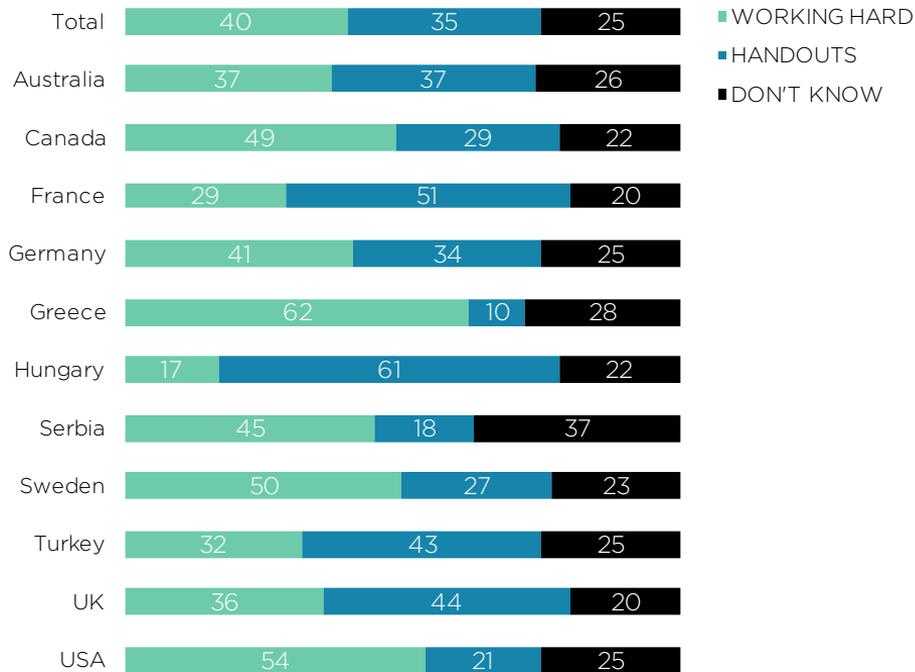
WORKING HARD VS SEEKING HANDOUTS SWEDEN COMPARED TO OTHER COUNTRIES

Swedes were slightly more likely than the average to think that refugees were willing to work hard.

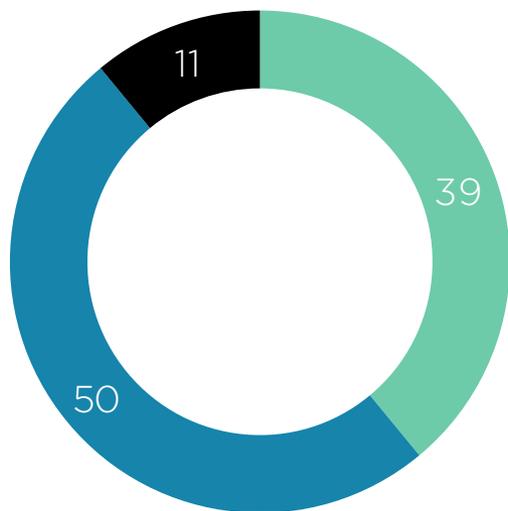
The Greeks were the most likely to think that refugees are willing to work hard and try to fit in (62%), followed by the USA (54%), Sweden (50%) and Canada (49%).

Hungary had the most negative attitude towards refugees with 61% believing that they were just looking for handouts. Serbians were, at 37%, the most likely to say 'Don't Know / Not Sure'.

THE MAJORITY OF REFUGEES ARE...



DURATION OF ASYLUM SWEDEN



39% TEMPORARY SHELTER

of Swedes think that the majority of refugees caught up in today's crisis are looking for... "Temporary shelter until it's safe to return to their homeland"

50% PERMANENT NEW LIFE

think that the majority of refugees caught up in today's crisis are looking for... "A permanent new life in a different country to their homeland"

11% DON'T KNOW

"Don't Know / Not Sure"

QUESTION(S): What do you think the majority of refugees caught up in today's crisis are looking for? (%) BASE: 516

DURATION OF ASYLUM COUNTRY BY COUNTRY

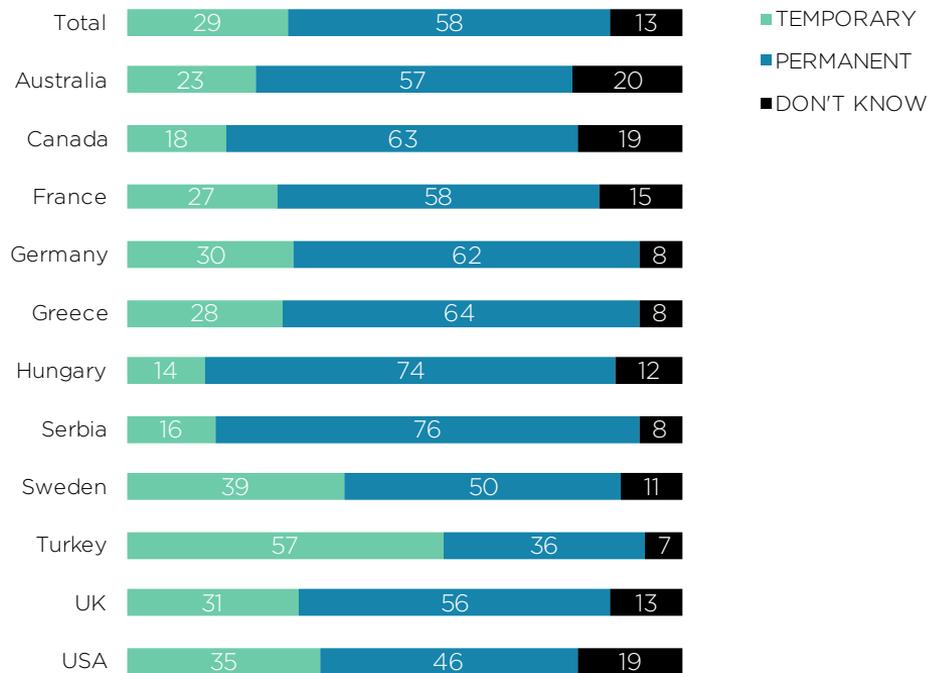
DO THEY THINK THE MAJORITY OF REFUGEES ARE...



As with their views about whether refugees were willing to work hard, Swedes were slightly more likely than most countries to think that refugees were just looking for temporary shelter.

Turkey, the country closest to major refugee origin countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Palestine, was the only country where over half (57%) thought that the majority of refugees are looking for temporary shelter.

Over three quarters of respondents in Hungary (74%) and Serbia (77%) thought that the majority of refugees are looking for a permanent new life.



QUESTION(S): What do you think the majority of refugees caught up in today's crisis are looking for? (%) BASE: 6,433

ARE REFUGEES VIEWED EQUALLY?

Or do respondents wish to show favoritism to some refugees?

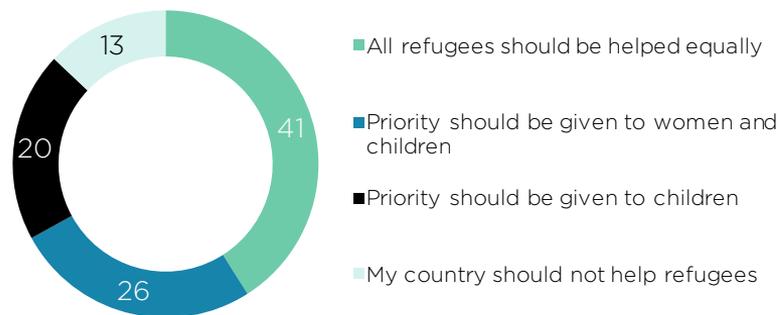


HIERARCHY OF NEED

Anecdotal evidence had emerged from the refugee-based NGO sector of public preferences for certain profiles of refugees. This was primarily focused on country of origin, but also on indicators such as age, gender and religion.

There were mixed views in Sweden about whether there should be positive discrimination for some groups of refugees. Nearly half of Swedes thought priority should be given to children and/or women, however 41% felt there should be no discrimination based on religion or region of origin.

AGE & GENDER



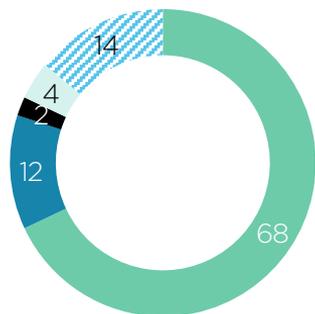
QUESTION(S): Which of the following statements comes closest to your views with regard to the level of help your country should offer refugees? (%) BASE: 516

ARE REFUGEES VIEWED EQUALLY?

Or do respondents wish to show favoritism to some refugees?

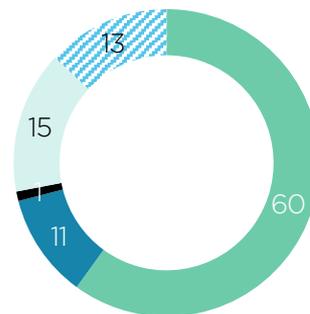


COUNTRY OF ORIGIN



- All refugees should be helped equally regardless of country of origin
- Priority should be given to migrants from Europe
- Priority should be given to people from sub-Saharan Africa
- Priority should be given to people from the Middle East & North Africa
- My country should not help refugees

RELIGION



- All refugees should be helped equally, regardless of religion
- Priority should be given to Christians
- Priority should be given to Muslims
- Priority should be given to groups that have faced religious persecution in their country of origin
- My country should not help refugees

QUESTION(S): Which of the following statements comes closest to your views with regard to the level of help your country should offer refugees? (%) **BASE: 516**



SECTION 3

RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP

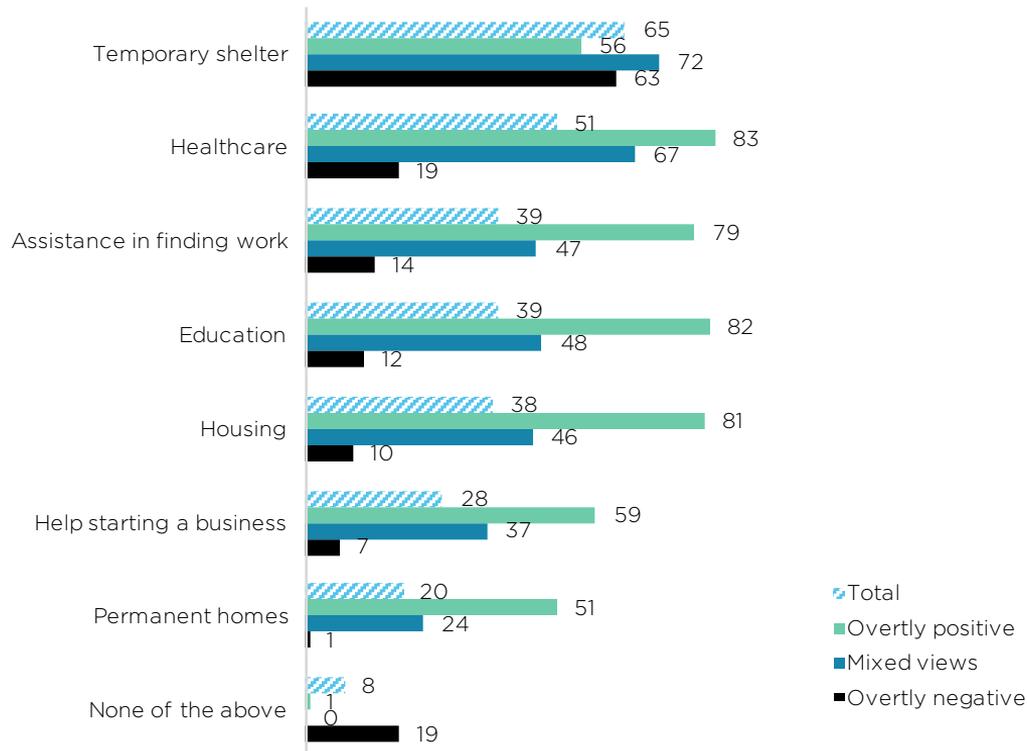


SUPPORT BY SEGMENT

There were big differences across the segments as to the amount of support that should be provided by Sweden and the international community. Those with overtly positive views were in favor of support across all categories, especially social factors such as healthcare, education, housing, etc.

Even amongst those with overtly negative views, nearly two thirds (63%) thought refugees should at least be offered temporary shelter. However, a fifth of those with overtly negative views thought no support should be provided for refugees.

WHAT SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE?



QUESTION(S): Based on a points system attributed to the answers in the position single choice questions (%) BASE: 516

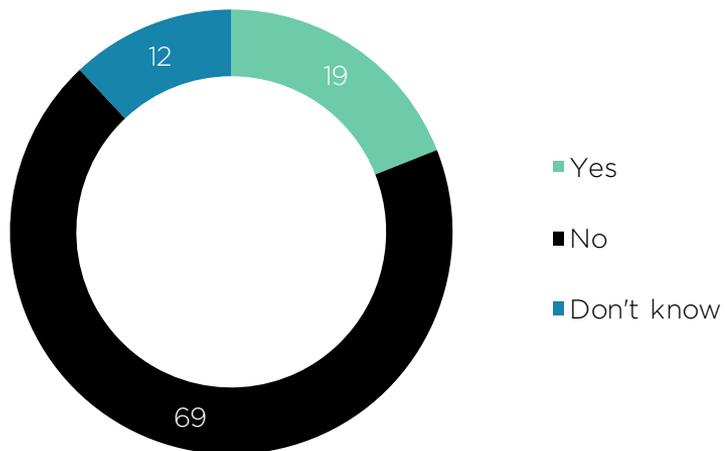
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SECTION 4
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**EVOLVING
PERSPECTIVES**



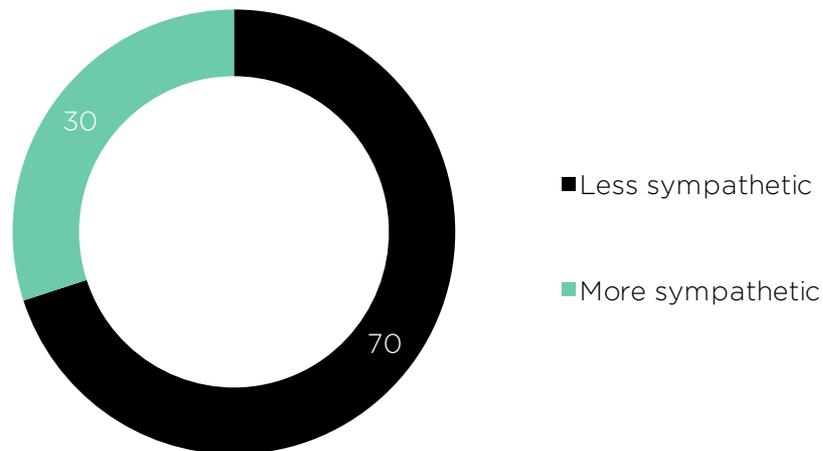
CHANGING OPINIONS



HAS YOUR OPINION ON THE REFUGEE CRISIS CHANGED IN RECENT WEEKS?



HAVE YOU` BECOME MORE OR LESS SYMPATHETIC TO THE SITUATION IN WHICH REFUGEES FIND THEMSELVES?



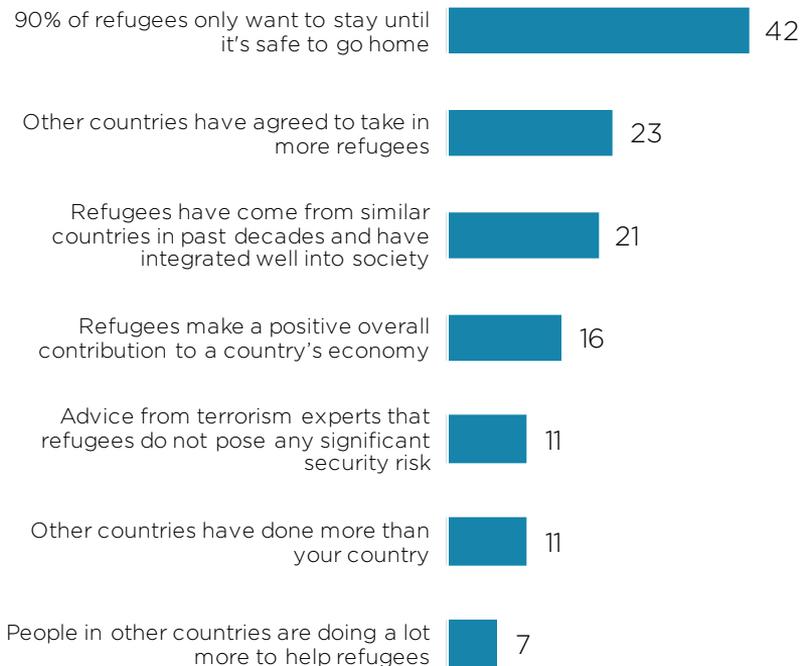
QUESTION(S): Has your opinion on the refugee crisis changed in recent weeks? (%) BASE: 516 Have you become more or less sympathetic to the situation in which the refugees find themselves? (%) BASE: 96



MESSAGING TO CHANGE MINDS



The message that 90% of refugees wanted to return to their home country was by far the most likely to change the minds of Swedes who were less sympathetic to the situation.

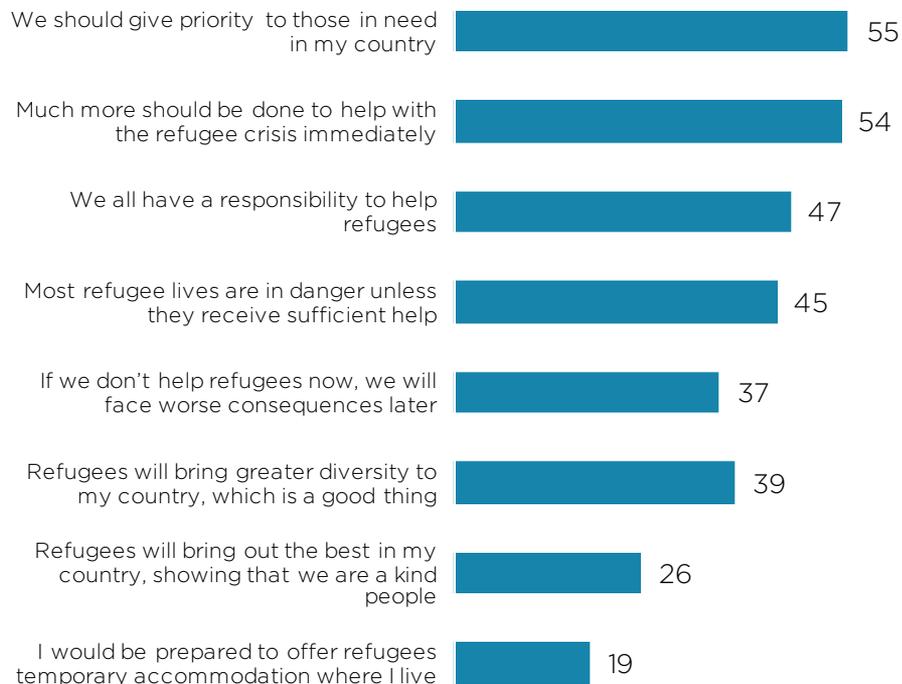


QUESTION(S): Would your opinion change if you were told that... ? | BASE: 108 (All who are less sympathetic to the situation)

MESSAGING TO CHANGE MINDS



More than half of Swedes thought priority should be given to those in need in Sweden, but more than half also thought that more should be done immediately to help with the refugee crisis.



QUESTION(S): To what extent do you tend to agree or disagree with each of the following statements? | BASE: 516



BUILDING A POSITIVE MESSAGE

Those who have moved in a more negative direction in their perspective on refugees have done so mainly out of security and economic concerns.

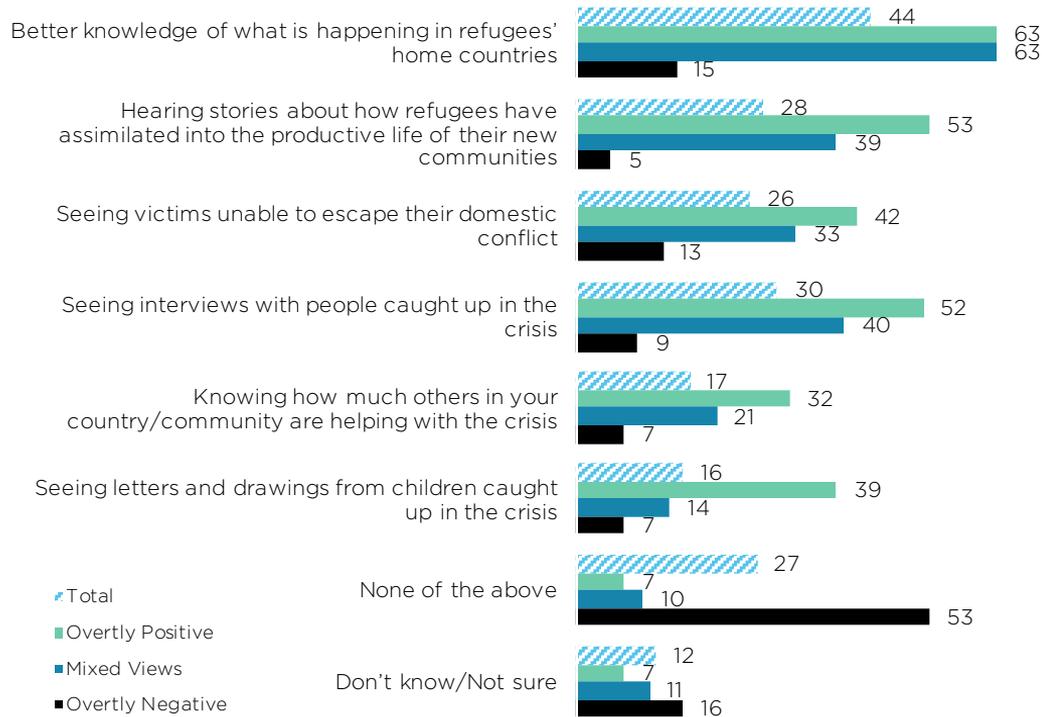
Meanwhile, there is a strong visual element to those who have become more open and sympathetic. Photographic evidence and human interest news reports appear to bring heightened empathy with the plight of the refugees.

ACCEPTING REFUGEES SEGMENT

A more informed public is the greatest asset to positive messaging around helping refugees. This points to a strong role for the media in Sweden.

After public education, factors that drive empathy emerge as hugely significant. Those with overtly negative views were least likely to think anything would make them change their mind, where those with overtly positive and mixed views were more open to change.

WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU PERSONALLY MORE OPTIMISTIC OR POSITIVE?



QUESTION(S): What would make you personally more optimistic or positive about accepting refugees in your country? (%) | BASE: 516

What do you think would help enable you to do more?

BETTER INFORMATION



“Possibility of asking questions directly to dedicated aid workers”

“Instructions”

“A better oversight over what kind of help is needed and where. As it stands at the moment, when you call the local municipality you are sent on to others several times before you get an answer.”

“Better charity campaigns”

“Clear information from the municipality I live in about what I can do.”



“If there was more information about what you can help with apart from money.”

“Simply, better organization of volunteer work and more information about how to help”

“More concrete information from the local municipality about what they need. For example: this week we need X amount of meals, X amounts of volunteers etc. Create opportunities to meet and get to know refugees ‘one to one’.”

“More information about how to help (and by that I don’t mean money to organizations)”



“Organizations should spread information about what is needed”

“If a charity, Red Cross for example, asked the people for help and told us what was needed.”

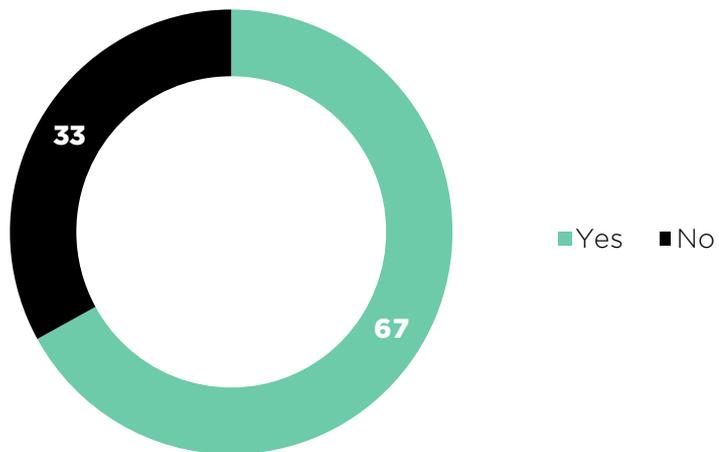
“Concrete information about HOW you can help in the best way. Who is it best to donate money to? What should donate, hygiene articles for example? What can a kind Swede do to be of most help to refugees?”

“Specific information about what little me can contribute with.”

ASSISTING REFUGEES



DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE AS MUCH AS YOU WOULD LIKE?



IF NOT, WHY?



QUESTION(S): Do you feel that you have been able to contribute as much as you would like? (%) BASE: 516 If not, why? (%) BASE: 172

What do you think would help enable you to do more?



MAKING IT EASIER/ MORE FLEXIBLE TO HELP REFUGEES/ IF I HAD MORE TIME TO HELP



“For example I could teach refugees Swedish in the evening, as I work during the day. There are opportunities for this in libraries, but only during the daytime.”

“If it was easier to donate things and more time”

“If I had more time, so I could volunteer”

“If I had a larger home I would have taken in an orphaned refugee child.”

“Doing fundraisers at work. Get to know the new people who move in to the community.”



“I’m a mother of three and have lots of clothes I could pack for [the refugees] but I haven’t had the time”

“If I was employed by the state to use my extensive teaching experience and teaching qualifications to teach young and adult asylum speakers Swedish”

“Giving your time instead of money, I don’t think financial contributions are spent in the right places”

“I would like to open my door to a refugee”



“A colleague and I went to the local municipality to hear if there were any groups we could join to help refugee families socially. We were told no such opportunities existed...”



TENT