

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH



The TENT Tracker is a multi-phased study seeking to understand public opinion on the refugee crisis:

- Phase 1: Multi-territory quantitative research (via an online survey) with representative samples of the population in 11 countries across North America, Europe and Australia. The findings from this phase established keytrends in public opinion, and were also used to segment the population based on whether their attitudes were 'overtly positive', 'overtly negative' or 'mixed.'
- Phase 2: In-depth qualitative research (via online communities) to better understand the rationale behind, and to identify the strength of, trends highlighted in the surveys. This phase also tested the effectiveness of different types of call to action messages. Five countries were included: Canada, Germany, France, Sweden, Turkey, with approximately 40 participants in each, split across the three population segments identified in Phase 1 ('overtly positive', 'overtly negative' or 'mixed'). It comprised two rounds of research, in March and June 2016.

This report documents the findings from Phase 2 and focuses on the German Online Community.

Segment	Number
Overtly Positive	18
Mixed Views	15
Overtly Negative	9
Total	42

Social and Political Context:

- The first round of research was conducted during the week following regional elections in Germany, during and after which Chancellor Angela Merkel's faced considerable political pressure to change course in her refugee policy.
- The populist and xenophobic party Alternative für Deutschland gained state parliament representation for the first time and Merkel's CDU suffered losses in several regions.
- Still, while admitting the difficulties posed by here policy, she stuck to her position and insisted on the need for a common European agreement.
- For many of the participants in this community, refugee policy was not an overriding factor in their electoral choices.



OVERVIEW



Having previously conducted two quantitative surveys on public attitudes to the refugee crisis, this qualitative survey was in a strong position to draw on various segments and perspectives that exist within the German population. Representatives of the "overtly positive", "overtly negative" and a mainstream with "mixed views" were included in this community with a view to gaining greater insight into what shapes the process of opinion formation and the messages to which people were most responsive.

Over the course of the research, it became apparent that awareness of the refugee crisis was much higher among those who take an active involvement in their local community. In addition, such civically minded people were significantly less likely to hold overtly negative views.

Even though much of the research was conducted just after the elections, and the upset that had occurred after that vote, participants tended to insist that refugee policy did not have any major influence on their voting behavior. One interesting element was the extent to which center-left and left-wing voters expressed a begrudging admiration for Chancellor Merkel's strong attachment to a humanitarian position on refugees.

Knowledge varied widely on existing public information campaigns on the refugee crisis. Some attributed this to uneven reporting from mass media outlets in Germany and many accused the media of sensationalism and scaremongering. In terms of their own suggestions, there was often a preference for initiatives that would increase a sense of familiarity with the situation of refugees. This was further reflected when participants were asked to put together a narrative account of how they imagined the experiences of refugees both in transit and after arrival in Germany.

The perceptions of refugees articulated herein were for the most part respectful, even among those identified as "overtly negative". The empathetic nature of the exercises perhaps contributed to this and bears some lessons for future publicity campaigns. It was also evident throughout that there was a correlation between lack of familiarity and fear.

Finally, there is still an evident historically motivated discomfiture in Germany regarding appeals to nationalism. Many tend to prefer identification with their region or with international/cosmopolitan markers such as "European". Still, in this survey there was an understated pride at the progress Germany has made in becoming a more socially liberal, democratic and humanitarian society. Equally there was considerable frustration at the failure of EU partners to pull their weight in a coordinated fashion.

















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Awareness and experiences of refugees



The German political landscape



Awareness of existing publicity campaigns



Identity & opinion formation



Attitudes toward refugees





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AWARENESS AND EXPERIENCES OF REFUGEES



AWARENESS AND EXPERIENCES OF REFUGEES

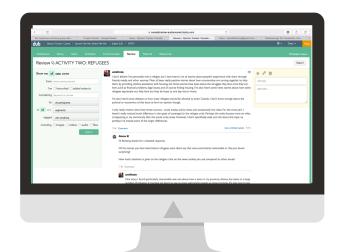


OBJECTIVES

This activity sought to understand participants' direct and indirect experiences with refugees, other means by which they attained their (varying levels) of knowledge on the issue, and experiences/perceptions of media coverage.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- Have you ever met a refugee yourself or heard any first hand stories about refugees?
- Have you heard anything in the news/media lately about refugees coming to Germany?
- Have you noticed any differences in the type of coverage of the refugee crisis depending on the media source?







CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Those who were more engaged in their local communities tended to have a higher level of knowledge of the situation and circumstances of refugees. They were more likely to have met refugees and to have been involved in initiatives to help them

"We have an integration meeting group in our borough, because we noticed that the city left the refugees out in the rain and didn't take care of them. It is not enough to give them accommodation and food. The young are traumatized and talk little about their story (often they don't speak English). The older ones tell their stories quite openly by now because they know that we don't have any prejudices."

Female, 35-44, Overtly positive

SUBJECTIVE INTERPRETATIONS

Attitudes to social media were deeply subjective, as seen from the two quotes on the right. The "overtly negative" saw social media as leftist while the "overtly positive" thought the opposite. Given that the distribution of positive-to-negative reflected the left-right spectrum in Germany, this is, perhaps, unsurprising.

"When I go on Facebook I see mostly left-wing ideas. The thing with the hate comments is true, but they come from both sides."

Male, 18-24, Overtly negative

"Social media like Facebook is full of right-wing extremist or right-wing ideas. You cant read Sächsicher Zeitung anymore - too many people are part of NPD α AfD. The online comments are full of hate comments and no one does anything."

Male, 35-44, Overtly positive





PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF MEETING REFUGEES OR HEARING THEIR STORIES

A number of the participants indicated that they had been involved in local initiatives to help refugees, or that they had sought to learn from refugees' stories. Even one "overtly negative" respondent indicated that she had donated some items to a refugee family, but focused on a subsequent negative experience.

Those with "overtly positive" or mixed views referred to more organized initiatives and appeared to be quite well informed and involved in their local communities and politics.

EXTENT OF NEWS COVERAGE

Across differing perspectives, there were comments about the ubiquity of news coverage of the refugee crisis. Some expressed exasperation at this while others focused on what was being said in the news.

Overtly positive respondents tended to comment on the closure of the Balkan routes and the impact this had had on the number of refugees coming to Germany

DIFFERING NATURE OF NEWS COVERAGE

Responses on media coverage tended to be very subjective, reflecting the participants' political views as well as their disposition vis-à-vis the refugee crisis. On social media, the "overtly negative" saw a barrage of leftwing ideas, while the "overtly positive" saw right-wing extremism out in force.

When it came to more traditional media, some newspapers and TV channels were seen as informative, others as manipulative, and others still as deeply inconsistent, changing their editorial stance from week to week. There is also an apparent overarching focus on right-wing parties capitalising on the crisis, while tabloids engage in to much polemic.





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"Through being involved in local politics, I get more information and know things earlier and of course I helped in the camp."

Male, 18-24, Mixed views

"You can't get around hearing about it.
On all media channels from print over TV to internet there are very different reports - the political and societal background as well as personal stories."

Male, 18-24, Mixed views

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"The media reports as they like it, if they don't like something one day, it is reported as negative, next day it could be positive. Our local media report as they like it, sometimes good, sometimes bad, though theoretically it is both times the same statement towards the paper. The same goes for TV, there is a talk and they are talking positive about a thing and then, same topic, same people in another show negative. I find the developments scary as it becomes polemic."

Male, 18-24, Mixed views

"I noticed that in social networks there are a lot of negative reports and even hateful comments."

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

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"Most media reports neutrally on the issue, they show progress as well as problems, inform mostly. However, there are also politicized media that spread very positive or negative [reports]. Neutral media are mostly the big TV channels ARD, ZDF and RTL or SAT1/Pro7 but also most of the daily papers (FAZ, Welt) and weekly magazines (Spiegel, Focus) aim at a balanced reporting. More positive are left papers like the TAZ or the Junge Welt. Openly right are e.g. the COMPACT or the Junge Freiheit"

Male, 18-24, Mixed views







THE GERMAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE



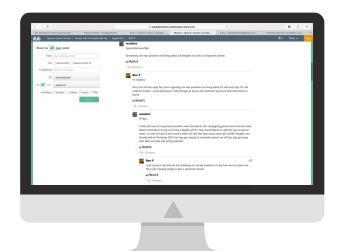
OBJECTIVES

This activity gathered views on the political landscape of each country in relation to the refugee crisis. For example, refugee and immigration policies.

It also examined the extent to which government actions on the refugee crisis **informed voter behavior**.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- Did you vote in the recent election?
- If you did vote, to what extent, if at all, did refugee and immigration policy have an impact on how you voted?
- How do you feel about the German government's policies concerning refugees?
- What do you think people in other countries think about Germany's refugee policy?







REFUGEE POLICY SEPARATE

Attitudes to asylum policy, views on immigration and reaction to the refugee crisis do not, on the face of it, appear to correspond explicitly to one's choice in electoral politics. This is in spite of the overarching concentration on the perceived growth of the populist and xenophobic AfD party in coverage of the regional elections that took place just before the online community took place.

"If there was going to be an election tomorrow, I would vote for a party that explicitly stands for the redistribution of wealth to where it is needed and not to anonymous bank accounts of some managers. That would give the government some room the put the willingness to integrate the refugees in a comprehensive way into action without damaging the infrastructure and without burden the already burdened society even more."

Female, 55-64, Mixed views

BEGRUDGING ADMIRATION FOR MERKEL

Still there are some indicators of an implicit influence of the refugee crisis. Pro-refugee people who do not vote CDU/CSU express a begrudging admiration for Chancellor Merkel's policies, while negative respondents show frustration.

"Merkel did the only right thing and I think it is good, that she has the courage to carry her policy through even against her own party. As little as I would vote CDU - I admire that woman."

Female, 35-44, Mixed views

"Although I didn't vote Angela Merkel, I think she does well." Female, 65-74, Overtly positive





REFUGEE CRISIS & VOTING INTENTIONS

While many (but not all) "overtly positive" and "mixed views" participants claimed that refugee policy would not affect their voting intentions, it was interesting to note center-left voters expressing admiration for Chancellor Angela Merkel. There were numerous references to her steadfast position even in face of opposition from within her own party.

"Overtly negative" participants were more likely to be influenced by refugee policy on the basis of disagreeing with Chancellor Merkel.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Again the mixed and positive respondents expressed admiration for the current position while disagreeing with the Merkel government on other matters. There is a perception that Merkel stands alone in her government though, while those who did criticize her cited naïveté and a failure to act earlier.

Negative respondents showed frustration and implied that the government's efforts to assist refugees came at the expense of German citizens.

EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

When questioned about what other countries thought of Germany's actions, participants indicated a level of pride that their country was doing its bit, referencing history here too.

Others expected frustration from EU member states that Germany had opened their borders and put pressure on its neighbors.

Others still were annoyed with EU neighbors who had refused to pull their weight and accept refugees according to a coordinated agreement.





"I would vote like I did on Sunday [13 March 2016]: Green. The refugee policy has little influence on my decision. Only so far that I wouldn't vote any party that is too far right and wants to chase all foreigners out of the country."

Female, 35-44, Mixed views

"No, the refugee policy doesn't have any influence on that. But I like Merkel since she has been pro refugee, I wonder what is up with me. I was against Merkel - not anvmore."

Male, 35-44, Overtly positive

"I think it is quite good that Germany shows this welcoming side. We caused enough war and misery."

Female, 35-44, Overtly positive

"Although I don't think much of the chancellor and her politics, I find her attitude towards the refugee question very good and I am amazed, how she deals with it, even though she hardly has any support particularly in her own party. I think Merkel's policy is realistic and human and therefore support it. When so many people in need come to Europe, we'll have to take them for better or worse. Although not only Germany! All the EU states have to take refugees appropriate to their economy. If not, there should be financial sanctions. "

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

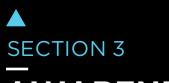
"I think most people admire our country and particularly our chancellor for our still comparatively liberal refugee policy. In contrast to many other countries we don't overlook the humanitarian problems and we kept a welcome culture quite long at least, which unfortunately is overlaid a little at the moment but wasn't here at all in other countries.."

Male, 18-24, Mixed views

"I think it is good that Mrs Merkel sticks to her principled position in spite of the sometimes exaggerated critique and also doesn't cave to the coalition partner CSU. He is definitely right, that the current problem can only be solved on an EU level."

Male, 18-24, Mixed views





AWARENESS OF EXISTING PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS



AWARENESS OF EXISTING PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS



OBJECTIVES

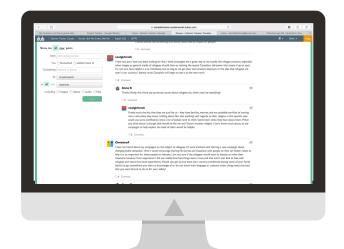
This activity looked in detail at the specific refugee-related campaigns (information and activism) that participants had been exposed to.

Participants were asked their general opinions on the campaign(s), including the tone, impact, likes, dislikes etc.

It also aimed to identify the most effective means to communicate to as wide an audience as possible, both in terms of content and dissemination channels.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- Have you heard about/ seen any campaigns on the subject of refugees?
- What do you think about the campaign(s)?
- If you were involved with starting a new campaign about changing public attitudes towards refugees, how would you go about it?







MEDIA RESPONSIBILITY

There were significant criticisms of the manner in which many broadcast and print media had covered existing campaigns. The perception prevails that it is not in the media's interest to provide them with significant coverage.

"I think it is thanks to the German press that such positive pictures don't serve as guidelines for the population. Business is better with the scaremongering."

Female, 55-64, Mixed views

"If [campaigns] have a big influence, I can't say, but it is important that people who are for the acceptance of refugees speak publicly and are noticed by the media. Not only those who scream the loudest."

Female, 65-74, Overtly positive

THE REALITY FOR REFUGEES

For many the focus still moves to the local level and on efforts to change hearts and minds in their communities. Most see direct exposure to refugees' reality as the best way to do this.

"We have to make clear to the people that the refugees are here because it is too dangerous at home and have to depict the situation in e.g. Syria better to create more sympathy."

Male, 25-34, Overtly positive

"If you pick [individual] people, you can reach much more through a snowball effect than by trying to force a certain picture into people's heads (see German reporting). I took an AfD supporter to an info event where refugees spoke abut their way to Germany. That gave him something to think about. But of course, you have to get people to go to such an event first ;)."

Male, 25-34, Overtly positive





KNOWLEDGE OF EXISTING CAMPAIGNS

Knowledge of campaigns on refugees varied between participants, and there was a slight correlation between knowledge of various types of campaigns and more positive views towards refugees.

Of those who did know of campaigns, local voluntary and municipal authority initiatives came to the fore rather than anything at a federal level. There were references to private sector initiatives from companies providing opportunities to refugees. Some also mentioned anti-refugee campaigns run by organizations like Pegida, as well as the counter demonstrations and police reactions to these.

PERCEPTIONS OF CAMPAIGNS

There were several utterances of frustration with the German press and the failure to adequately publicize campaigns to assist refugees. The underlying implication was that it is easier to sell papers through sensationalism and scaremongering.

Otherwise, respondents differed as to the efficacy of the various types of campaigns. The more pessimistic felt that people generally tend to stick to their views regardless of whatever initiatives take place. Optimists felt that while it was difficult to measure the results, campaigns to bring locals and refugees together were important nonetheless.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?

There were varying perspectives as to what could be done differently, broadly focusing on action, information and contact. Some felt that the money and resources spent on information campaigns could be better used for direct help. Contrary to this, plenty of respondents stressed the importance of improving public knowledge of the plight of refugees.

There were also those who would go further and encourage more interaction between locals and refugees. Some even had experiences of changing the opinions of people with somewhat anti-refugee perspectives through facilitating direct contact.





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"There are calls to donate things and many people in my area help with food collections etc. In my hometown there is a very big company that offers a taster course for future work, no matter if they have a permit of residence yet or not."

Female, 75+, Overtly positive

"I often see pages like "refugees welcome" or similar on social networks. Through friends I also heard some times that there are organizations that help refugees."

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

"I would rather address the discontent of German citizens to try to improve the mood."

Female, 45-54, Overtly negative

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for the acceptance of refugees speak publicly and are noticed by the media. Not only those who scream the loudest. [...] Apart from that I find activities particularly important that bring refugees and 'locals' together und that provide opportunities to get talking. I think, to get to know the strangers, is the best way to dissipate fears."

Female, 65-74, Overtly positive

"I think it is thanks to the German press that such positive pictures don't serve as guidelines for the population. Business is better with the scaremongering"

Female, 55-64, Mixed views



"I think it would be good to depict how well-integrated refugees are and what they have achieved for themselves and for society."

Female, 35-44, Mixed views

"I know two campaigns: http://www.welcome-to-cottbus.de/ and

http://osl.helpto.de/de."

Male, 35-44, Overtly positive







IDENTITY AND OPINION FORMATION



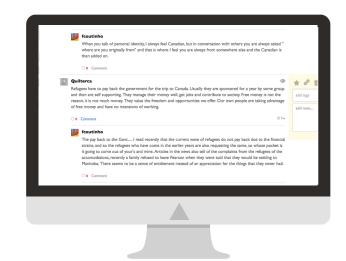
OBJECTIVES

This activity looked to uncover the influence of identity on opinion formation. It looked at both personal and national identity, and whether these framed participants' views in relation refugees.

A key objective was to ascertain whether people from particular sub-groups or holding certain worldviews are likely to be more **hospitable or hostile** to refugees.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- When thinking about your personal identity, do you talk in terms of local area, region, nationality or something else?
- What does being German mean to you?
- What do you think are the best and worst attributes of German society?
- Why do you think many refugees want to come to German above other developed Western countries?







COSMOPOLITAN IDENTITY

In the German online community, there was an undertone that it was unseemly to show an over-enthusiastic embrace of national pride. Several respondents made reference to the country's dark history and it was quite common for them to eschew national identification altogether, preferring European identity or city and regional loyalty instead.

"I am happy in this region, but also in our country, whose borders I don't feel here. Over the last years I appreciated the free borders and the unified money (€) very much on my travels. Therefore I wouldn't see myself located nationally oriented so much but more in Europe."

Male, 55-64, Mixed views

"I identify myself as a cosmopolitan; I am not particularly connected with any specific region."

Male, 35-44, Overtly positive

GERMAN PROGRESS

Still there was an underlying pride at Germany's outright embrace of European cosmopolitanism and at how far Germany has come in terms of politics, culture, economy and society.

"German society made some big steps within the last decades in the direction of openness and tolerance and left the narrow-mindedness of the nation state almost behind... but unfortunately not completely. I am a fan of regions - that also holds for other countries, that offers identity and living space and I reject the crude devotion to the national."

Male, 55-64, Mixed views



▲ TENT.ORG



PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION, LOCALE, REGION & NATIONALITY

This early phase tested the link between personal identity and opinion formation. The activity sought to see how various forms of identification impacted on German people's response to the refugee crisis.

Respondents in Germany were particularly conscious of the country's history and, as such, were reluctant to voice any major identification with German nationalism. Many preferred to identify with their city, region or with Europe at large.

Notably, those identified as "overtly negative" were slightly more likely to use German nationality as their primary identifier.

ATTITUDE TO GERMANY & GERMAN SOCIETY

When pondering what it means to be German, respondents here focused on shared values and integration as well as a perceived sense of privilege at growing up in a stable, well-resourced society.

Despite the lack of nationalism, there is a strong sense of pride at the strides Germany has made from its dark history in the first half of the 20th century to the open and tolerant society we know today. While there are some criticisms, many respondents tend to place Germany's problems relative to those of other countries.

WHY DO REFUGEES COME TO GERMANY?

Explanations offered by our respondents varied from the cultural to the structural. There were references to the "willkommenskultur", a German neologism meaning "a culture of being welcoming" (referenced in the quantitative report of the TENT Tracker in Germany).

Most, however, tended to focus on the attractions of a decent social system, economic stability, stable government and the relative freedoms enjoyed in Germany.





"I don't define myself through my nationality, but I like living in my region very much, in the south of Germany. I identify with my attitude towards things, towards my family. To be German isn't an achievement; I could have any other nationality. I see myself simply as a human."

Female, 45-54, Mixed views

"Not really. That I was born in Germany is, considering the current global economy, a lucky coincidence for me."

Male, 55-64, Overtly negative

"In my opinion someone is German, when they can identify with German values and integrate here."

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

"I feel strongly connected to my region; I am a 'Fischkopp' [person from northern Germany]. I often skip nationality in my mind and see my myself more as a European."

Male, 25-34, Overtly positive

"I identify completely with my nationality and I am proud to be a German citizen. I am generally very happy within my region."

Female, 45-54, Overtly negative



"To be German means to me to be able to lead a pretty secure life. In regard to education for example, stately support, health insurance, etc"

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

"I think refugees see Germany as a free country (which is true) and as a rich country [...] But many might have wrong perceptions about what expects them here."

Female, 65-74, Overtly positive



SECTION 5
ATTITUDES
TOWARD
REFUGEES



ATTITUDES TOWARD REFUGEES

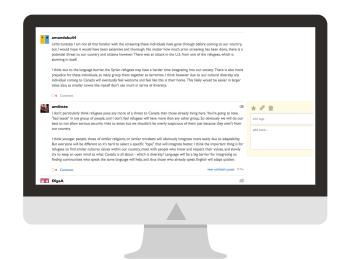


OBJECTIVES

This activity sought to establish the strength (if any) of negative sentiment towards refugees, as well as what drives it (e.g. fears and anxieties). It also looked at whether negative sentiment or prejudice was more common in relation to particular 'types' of refugees.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- To what extent, if at all, do you think refugees arriving to Germany pose a security threat?
- Do you think some groups of refugees are better than others at integrating into Germanlife?







"OTHERING" VS SUPPORTIVE INTEGRATION

The categorization used throughout this study (overtly positive, mixed views and overtly negative) was reflected quite succinctly during this activity. Negative respondents sought to "other" refugees, thus focusing on perceived cultural differences and utilizing a language of threat and fear. They would draw on their sense of ownership of their country and cite anecdotes to back up their perspectives.

"The minority of them pose a security risk. The majority is thankful to be here. One cannot generalize for a whole group, at least I don't want to, and there are black sheep everywhere"

Male, 25-34, Overtly positive

"Those who are in Germany with false passports or without any registration at all pose a security risk. Or those who don't integrate and are criminal. There is also the risk of a parallel society, especially in big cities."

Male, 18-24, Overtly negative

PREJUDICE & INTEGRATION

More positive participants and those with mixed views were more sanguine and tended to advocate for a supportive environment to facilitate integration. They were also more likely to find fault with narratives that criticized failings in other cultures while denying that German society possesses many of the same problems.

"I agree, the refugees have to adjust, and not us, we are in our country, we have our religion and worked and fought for everything ourselves. [_] We are hospitable, accept other religions and customs, but on out conditions in our country."

Female, 25-34, Overtly negative

"I find it astounding that New Year's Eve is mentioned all the time. Unfortunately, we don't "need" refugees/foreigners for women to be harassed in this country."

Female, 35-44, Overtly positive





SECURITY

Respondents tended to favor a more nuanced view when answering questions about security. Even the overtly negative avoided painting all refugees with the same brush, while more positive respondents saw the potential for some security risks but equated these to the same risks that can be found among any large group of people.

Still negative respondents were more likely to be drawn on this issue. There were references to the New Year's Eve events in Cologne which had been used by some xenophobic groups to mobilize against refugees.

INTEGRATION

Positive and negative respondents differed on whom the onus fell when it came to matters of integration. The negative view drew on a more nationalistic discourse about Germany being "our country" and some made direct reference to religious and cultural differences.

Positive participants were also keen to point out that German society had a responsibility to facilitate smoother integration. As such, this perception goes that when given adequate supports, refugees will find it much easier to build lives in Germany.

THE FEAR FACTOR

When it comes to perceptions of refugees, there is an apparent conflict between those who seek to know more about the situation. and to proceed accordingly, and those who are mobilized by fear.

The latter cited worries around criminality, insufficient registration processes for applicant refugees, and the formation of ghettoes ("parallel societies") in big cities. The language was couched in that of a society under threat and, unsurprisingly, these participants were grouped as overtly negative.

Positive respondents saw the overall process of integration as a two-way street and did not see security as a major concern if all else is done properly.





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"The refugees aren't a risk at the moment of their arrival. But when they are not integrated, when the don't get a chance to build a life, then they might become a risk. Because a lack of perspective can lead to criminal behavior, but that also happens with Germans."

Female, 35-44, Overtly positive

"I wouldn't call it a security risk. But in every group of people (independent of their nationality), who have just been through a flight and who then have to live in confined circumstances with others there are bound to be tensions, because the nerves are raw."

Female, 35-44, Mixed views

"There are criminals in all people, as well as men who don't respect women. It should be the exception that terrorists arrive via refugee routes. If refugees become criminals or terrorists once they are here might depend on their chances to build a secure life here?."

Female, 65-74, Overtly positive

"I do think it is easier for people with a higher level of education to integrate in a foreign country. It is probably also easier for people with a professional training. I think that hold independently of gender, age, origin and religion."

Female, 65-74, Overtly positive

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"People of every country of origin, religion etc. will integrate well if this is their wish and they are supported in that. No formation of ghettos but a good distribution would be important. Families with children will surly integrate well as well as everyone else if they have a prospect here."

Female, 45-54, Mixed views

"I think every refugee can be integrated in our country equally well, given the willingness and the possibilities."

Male, 45-54, Overtly positive







WALKING IN A REFUGEE'S SHOES



OBJECTIVES

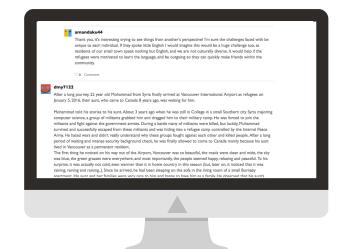
This activity looked to determine the extent to which participants could **empathize with refugees**, putting their stories into their own words.

Participants were free to write in the first or the third person and to base their story on wherever they felt appropriate.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

Create a story about a refugee's journey to Germany:

- Where did they come from?
- Why did they come to Germany?
- How are they finding life in Germany?
- What are their hopes for the future?







AN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION

Interestingly, even participants who were quite hostile to refugees in other activities and during the quantitative survey were quite capable of showing empathy for the refugees' situation when asked to build a narrative. Positive and mixed respondents focused on the journey at large and were especially likely to address the difficulties with people traffickers during their transit.

"Nobody can possibly imagine what these people have gone through in order to live in safety. They come from Syria because they want to save their own and there children's lives."

Female, 45-54, Mixed views

"First of all, a few facts: According to Google the route from Syria to Germany is 3487 km by foot and in the best case scenario takes 705 hours. When I try to imagine myself as a refugee fleeing the war and setting out on the difficult journey to Germany by foot, then I admire all those who have already made it here."

Male, 55-64, Mixed views

HUMAN NEEDS

Participants' attention invariably turned to the needs that refugees would endeavor to satisfy during such a dramatic transition in their lives. Things that Germans would take for granted, such as their children's schooling, and the ability to become comfortable enough to work in a new language came to the fore.

"Naturally they hope that they will find help here and be welcomed and for their lives to pick up as soon as possible, to find work, go to school, small wishes really."

Female, 45-54, Mixed views

"We are not lazy, we want to work and learn. Therefore, I will try to learn the language as quickly as possible, so I can find a good job. I hope that we can live live happily here in the future and feel at home. Actually there are many things I prefer here than in Syria."

Female, 45-54, Overtly negative





WHERE THEY CAME FROM AND WHY THEY CAME

This activity sought to determine the extent to which participants could empathize with refugees, putting their stories into their own words.

It will come as little surprise that most participants based their stories on Syrian refugees and drew considerable on narratives of families fleeing conflict there. Germany was seen as a safe haven and there was a widespread perception that it could provide a combination of sanctuary and opportunities to form a new life, at least while they await the end of the conflict in Syria.

LIFE IN GERMANY

There were mixed narratives regarding the experiences of refugees in Germany. Some participants described the groups of Germans greeting refugees at train stations and the everyday incidences of human kindness that can help the process of settling in.

It was interesting to note the extent to which some (usually) negative commentators engaged in this activity in a constructing manner. Indeed, they were more likely to address the sometimes hostile reception refugees had received and to voice refugees' exasperation at being treated as lazy or living in fear.

HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS

Stories varied in terms of how they reflected the aspirations of refugees in Germany. Some versions had their protagonists wishing to return to Syria once the war is over. Others simply wanted to have their asylum application granted and to be able to provide some stability for their families in terms of employment and gaining educational access for their children in a peaceful environment.

There were also those who reflected a more ambitious profile, aspiring to establish businesses and engage very actively with the German economy. These reflected different versions of how German respondents saw refugees.





"The little family (father, mother and 4 children) come from Damascus. The father worked in a hospital as a skilled doctor, but when it was destroyed and all other relatives were killed by the repeated battles, they decided to free all of their assets and money and set of on the dangerous journey to Europe. A small backpack with the most necessary things, papers and a cell phone was all they had when they arrived in Germany. On the way all their money had ended up in the hands of sketchy smugglers."

Female, 55-64, Mixed views

"We hope we can live here until there is peace in our country and we can return home. We hope that we will be able to work here, but that is very difficult due to the laws. Our future is uncertain, but safer than at home."

Male, 18-24, Mixed views

"I dream of living independently here in Germany soon and to get a job and be happy. I believe in myself and am no longer a victim of war and violence. I can look courageously into the future."

Female, 25-34, Mixed views

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"That they often encounter bitter winds from politicians (with guns to shoot people!!!), must be terribly frightening for them. They are in a way encountering the things they have fled again, this must be a horror for these traumatized people. It is good that there are also other people who try to help where they can, so they meet some friendly people. I can't come up with a story because I can't really put myself in the shoes of a refugee.

Female, 45-54, Mixed views





YOU'RE IN CHARGE: APPROACH TO POLICY



OBJECTIVES

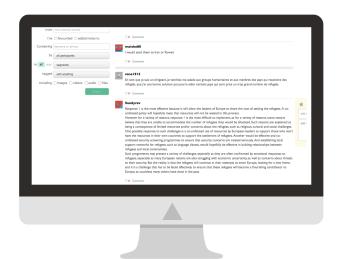
The primarily objective of this activity was to get participants to offer pragmatic ideas and solutions by getting them into policy makers' mind-sets.

To achieve this, it placed them in a position of substantial power but where they were also in the midst of bureaucracy.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

Imagine you are representing Germany at a world leaders' summit discussing the refugee crisis. The leader of another country presents you with a proposition: If the movement of refugees is effectively coordinated between all of the countries represented at the summit, it will be possible for each country to manage the incoming refugees effectively. If some countries do not constructively contribute and accept a fair quota of refugees, it will be left to just a few countries who will find it increasingly difficult to provide sufficient resources.

- What would you do and why?
- Are any of the other world leaders being particularly helpful or unhelpful?







EUROPEAN UNION VALUES

The European Union came up several times during this discussion. Overtly positive respondents appealed to European values and the spirit of humanitarianism that ought to be bound therein. Several (both negative and positive) participants advocated the use of Germany's pivotal position in the EU to exert pressure on EU partners.

"I think the EU should think about what it stands for, a community."

Female, 55-64, Mixed views

"Either we are a EU or not. That sounds to me as if they would 'want to buy themselves out'... along the lines of should the other take the trouble? You can't buy everything with money! That screams denial of assistance. Where is humanitarianism?"

Female, 45-54, Overtly positive

FRUSTRATION WITH FELLOW EUROPEANS

There was some recognition that not all countries have the same capacity but the assertion followed that all had a duty to contribute at some level. The undertone was one of general disappointment with EU neighbors. Interestingly, was little or no mention of non-EU member states during this discussion.

"In the current crisis there are many EU leaders that are absolutely unhelpful such as Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Croatia, Great Britain, etc. Basically, Germany stands quite alone with the Scandinavian countries."

Male, 45-54, Overtly positive





COORDINATED EFFORTS NEEDED

Across the spectrum of attitudes to refugees, there was a recognition that better coordination was needed between states, especially at European Union level.

They were keenly aware that if efforts to alleviate the refugee crisis were just carried out by a few countries it would quickly become too difficult for them to sustain.

CARROT AND STICK

Some did recognize that not all countries have the same economic or infrastructural resources as Germany to enable them to handle a large influx of refugees.

However, a measure of the frustration felt at the inaction of other countries emerged during this discussion. Both negative and positive participants advocated leveraging EU funds to pressurize those countries that have not taken their share of the responsibility.

POINTS OF FRUSTRATION

A narrative emerged from this discussion that Germany was one of the only countries contributing constructively to the efforts to deal with the refugee crisis.

Honorable mention was made of the Scandinavian countries too, while some respondents even named individual countries that were singled out for criticism.





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"My thoughts: I think that all EU states would probably help when you get them to do something that can stand for. I understand that some EU governments are against taking in refugees because they can't master the long-term consequences. Therefore, we have to define different forms of help, that all can take part in. Some can take in refugees, others can help financially or with personnel for the organization of new external camps or in diplomatic negotiations - to look for a quota is surely more difficult to impossible than to define aid-packages that everyone can support."

Male, 55-64, Mixed views

To increase the funds of the countries who are willing to take in refugees, they get as much money from the EU as is necessary to care for the refugees. In order not to debit the funds of the EU too much, the money is taken off the funding that used to be paid to countries not willing to take in refugees."

Male, 55-64, Overtly negative

"Of course, poorer countries can't do as much as richer ones. But a community shares. The poorer countries expect help from the richer ones, but they should also help themselves appropriately to their possibilities."

Female, 55-64, Mixed views



"It is difficult as some government leaders are very stubborn and haven't understood the idea of Europe. To them it is all about what is best for their own country. But Europe is supposed to be a community of shared values that takes action together and shares burdens fairly."

Female, 55-64, Overtly positive

"Maybe one could get the other states to go along if one points out the potential of the people in need."

Male, 25-34, Overtly positive



SECTION 8

POSITIVELY INFLUENCING PUBLIC OPINION



POSITIVELY INFLUENCING PUBLIC OPINION



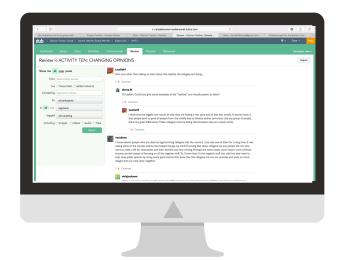
OBJECTIVES

The objective of this exercise was to establish the most effective types of discourse when seeking to positively influence public opinion towards refugees.

Participants were asked to imagine/ recollect their approach to convincing friends/ family to take a positive stance towards refugees.

DISCUSSION POINTS/ TASKS

- Can you think of a friend or family member who might disagree with you about the refugee crisis?
- How have you/ might you go about trying to change their perspective?
- How have/would you go about convincing people who are undecided or have no strong opinions?







EMOTION & EMPATHY

During this activity, respondents reflected the old adage of political communications that one should appeal to hearts and minds. Depending on preference (for strategy) some advocated simple rational explanation, while others sought to convince people through evoking empathy and an emotional response.

"I always try to argue that after the war we were refugees too and we were happy that we were helped."

Female, 75+, Overtly positive

"I tell everyone that it is about people and that everyone should try to take the point of view of those people to just get the slightest idea of what they are going through."

Female, 45-54, Overtly positive

INTELLECT & RATIONALITY

Interestingly, there were some who had been "overtly negative" during the quantitative phase who embraced a positive narrative during this exercise.

"I always try to inform about the past history of migration in Germany in the 60s and 70s and also about the background of the flight of most people. Most people who are sceptic towards refugees know to little about the background to be able to reasonably judge the current situation."

Male, 18-24, Mixed views





TALKING TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Moving away from mass media campaigns and direct contact with refugees, this exercise looked at the way in which people addressed complex issues like the refugee crisis among their families and friends.

As these are often the people who most influence one's perspective it was interesting to examine how people would approach those in their circles with whom they disagree.

Perhaps given the target, there was a strong tone of understanding and respect when making any approach to a difficult subject and not all were eager to engage on this.

UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER

It was apparent that there was a preference for getting to understand how the other person had reached their perspective first. Then participants would explain to their friends/family where they were coming from too.

They would supply their friends and family with an adequate knowledge base in order to be able to have a better informed opinion on the matter more broadly. Then they would argue rationally and sensibly.

DRIVING THE MESSAGE HOME

Still, beyond the more intellectual and rational approach, there was a perception that the message needed to be bolstered through emotional reinforcement.

Therefore, participants would drive their message home by invoking empathy and an appeal to emotion. They would remind their family and friends of the human side of the situation and of the suffering of the vulnerable and needy (children, in particular).





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"Would they have another opinion I would try to understand their point of view and give them an understanding of mine. I would try to evoke empathy, by telling them about the suffering of the people."

Female, 18-24, Overtly negative

"What I tried and achieved was getting someone I know to an info event, where refugees told their story. That gave him something to think about. So, an effort to bring together could help to get over prejudices and misinformation and could foster understanding."

Male, 25-34, Overtly positive

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"I tell everyone that it is about people and that everyone should try to take the point of view of those people to just get the slightest idea of what they are going through."

Female, 45-54, Overtly positive

"People without a strong opinion might be influenced by my perspective if I argue sensibly. An opportunity to convince would probably be the direct confrontation with refugees who tell their story."

Female, 45-54, Overtly negative



"It sometimes helps to just let people talk and to listen to them, but also to ask critical questions (Where did you get that information? Is that confirmed or just something that you heard from someone who heard it from someone else?)."

Female, 35-44, Mixed views

Female, 45-54, Overtly negative



