ATTITUDES TOWARDS NATIONAL IDENTITY, IMMIGRATION, AND REFUGEES IN GERMANY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

JULY 2017

sci Social Change Initiative   PURPOSE   Ipsos   More in Common

About More in Common

More in Common is a new effort to build communities and societies that are stronger, more resilient and more open. The More in Common initiative took shape from work undertaken since 2015 to understand why advanced democracies failed to respond more effectively to the refugee crisis and its impact on domestic politics.

The refugee crisis was a harbinger of what happens when the forces of right-wing populist hate and division gain the upper hand, and those in favour of open and diverse societies do not come together in defence of those values. If the battle for hearts and minds is lost to authoritarian populists, advanced democracies will not be able to respond adequately to such profound collective challenges as climate change, inequality, technological disruption of the job market, population ageing and global public health threats. Holding diverse and inclusive societies together will become increasingly difficult.

More in Common's objective across its different streams of work is to build closer and more inclusive societies, which are resilient to the appeal of xenophobia and authoritarian populism. We aim to support the efforts of civil society and key influencers who share the values of open and inclusive societies, and help catalyse other new initiatives that advance these values.

More in Common is a non-profit organisation with teams in France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. Purpose builds and supports movements to advance the fight for an open, just, and habitable world. The co-founders of More in Common are Tim Dixon, Mathieu Lefevre, and Gemma Mortensen.

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Executive Summary

At a time of major political disruptions and a widespread public sense of frustration with the political status quo, Germany stands out from other European countries. Its political leadership has remained stable, it has championed internationalist values and it has led northern European countries in their response to the global refugee crisis. The world has more refugees than at any time since the Second World War, yet only a few of the world's high income economies have significantly increased their refugee intake. Germany has come to embody the values behind the international system of refugee protection after welcoming an estimated one million refugees during 2015 alone. This also made Germany an attractive target for right-wing populism. For example, in January 2017, President Donald Trump described Chancellor Merkel's decision to welcome refugees as a "catastrophic mistake" that is "ruining Germany."

The perceived success or failure of refugee integration – measured perhaps more than anything else by the judgment of Germans themselves – will therefore have a major influence on the global refugee debate and the future policies of many countries. Since 2015, the German public's response to the large refugee intake has been a regular subject of media reports. In September 2015, Germans initially welcomed refugees with an enthusiasm reminiscent of the excitement around German reunification a quarter of century earlier. While that excitement could never be sustained, media reports have portrayed contrasting pictures of public opinion trends. Some reports have suggested that the public remains strongly supportive of the refugee intake, while others have pointed to signs of rising public anxieties and regret. Integrating the large number of refugees has posed many challenges, resulting from gaps in language skills, cultural differences and the psychological damage suffered by many refugees. The far-right, anti-immigrant party Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland*, AfD) won 92 seats in the Bundestag in the 2017 elections, campaigning on an "anti-politics" and anti-immigration platform, capitalising on public anxieties and on incidents such as the Christmas market attack in late 2016. The AfD's strong presence in the Bundestag poses a threat to the traditionally consensus-oriented, centrist nature of German political debate.

A better evidence base is needed to understand public opinion in Germany, both to provide a context for sometimes conflicting evidence and to provide practical guidance for efforts to foster the successful integration of refugees and social inclusion. This report aims to contribute to building this evidence base. By better understanding the values, concerns and priorities of different segments of German society, those with a voice in the public debate in Germany can become more effective in their communication efforts. In particular, they can counter the increasingly well-organised and coordinated forces of the far right, who pose a serious threat to democratic norms and to the values of open and inclusive societies, more effectively.

The Limitations of Existing Public Opinion Research

This report aims to fill a gap in the body of public opinion research that has been published in Germany to date. The existing body of survey data has many limitations. Firstly, many studies ask only a small range of direct questions, which provide some understanding but little explanatory insight. Others go further by making associations with social and economic issues, or demographic and psychographic factors such as values and levels of awareness. Few have attempted to build a more complete picture of how views

on specific issues come together in the minds of Germans, or to explore the interconnected nature of attitudes towards German national identity, immigration and the refugee intake.

Media coverage often focuses on Germans at the opposite ends of the spectrum - those with cosmopolitan values who have enthusiastically participated in the "welcoming culture" (*Willkommenskultur*) and others who advocate closing Germany's borders and support far-right parties such as the AfD. Much less attention has been paid to the large number of Germans who hold mixed views about their country's refugee intake, its immigration policies and Germany's place in the world. This report suggests that the majority of Germans belong to groups with mixed views (sometimes described as the "conflicted middle" or "anxious middle"). Furthermore, many are open to changing their views if presented with persuasive arguments – but existing research has not identified the populations that are most open to changing their views, the messaging that would be most persuasive, or the most trusted messengers.

Research Methodology

This study employs a population clustering segmentation analysis method that draws on a range of attitudinal characteristics of the German public. This form of segmentation provides a rich composite picture of how a population is divided in its views, going beyond basic demographic factors to show how networks of attitudes and opinions are connected. It identifies the profile of the population segment most ready to take action to support refugees and immigrants; the profile of those most hostile; and the profile of the groups with mixed views, including the sub-group of those who are most open to change their minds.

Although the research was conducted in 2016, in our experience research of this kind remains accurate for several years because of the extent to which it shows longer term attitudes and values. The first phase of the research was undertaken through an online survey from the 20th to 27th of September 2016, with a representative sample of 2,002 adults. Respondents answered questions relating to their demographic characteristics, including gender, age, geography, educational level, income, ethnicity, religious identity, and media consumption habits. They were then asked questions relating to the issues of greatest concern to them, their political views and affiliations, familiarity with refugee and immigration issues, their understanding of different terminology in the refugee and migration debate, their personal experience with refugees and their responses to different policy approaches and messages. As an experimental phase, the study included an innovative Implicit Association Test with the term "refugees," which is explored in depth in the appendix. In the second phase of research, two focus groups conducted among key segments identified in the poll were undertaken in Berlin in December 2016. The focus groups allowed for the direct observation of personal responses to messages and policy initiatives.

Detailed cross-tabulation of the survey results has identified five "segments" of opinion with common perspectives within the population. This provides insights into the connections between different influences on public opinion ranging from basic socio-demographic factors, to attitudes towards a wide range of issues. A similar segmentation methodology was used in the 2011 and 2016 Fear and Hope reports[1] in the United Kingdom, which grouped the English population according to their attitudes towards immigration.

While this research has value in contributing to a better understanding of public opinion on a complex set of issues, we recognise that it has some limitations. Further research is needed to test many of the inferences from the data. We plan to conduct more qualitative research among the segments identified in

[1]Ford, Robert / Nick Lowles (2011, 2016): Fear and Hope: http://www.fearandhope.org.uk, last access 06.03.2017.

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the report, and hope that a similar study can be conducted again in the future to track changes in public attitudes over time. Most of all, however, our goal is to provide practical guidance to those making the case for an open, inclusive society that values diversity and embraces humanitarian values, including the protection of refugees.

More in Common acknowledges the generous support of Social Change Initiative and the Human Dignity Foundation in making possible this research, and the support of Purpose, the organisation that has incubated More in Common. We thank Ipsos MORI for the excellent work reflected in this report, and look forward to collaborating on similar reports in other countries. The study has been undertaken in collaboration with Professor Marc Helbing at the University of Bamberg, and with valuable advice and input from German civil society groups.

Findings: Nuance and Opportunity beyond "For and Against"

In overall terms, the survey highlighted nine key findings:

1. **More Germans are optimists than pessimists**. Most feel that their personal situation has remained largely unchanged in recent years, and around half expect it to remain the same in the future. Those expecting an improvement outnumber those expecting deterioration by a margin of 29 to 17 per cent.

2. **Immigration ranks high among the most important issues** facing Germany today (cited by 45 per cent of those surveyed), **but poverty and social inequality rank even higher** (at 50 per cent).

3. **Anti-immigration sentiment is present in Germany, but it is not strong**. Only 8 per cent of Germans regard the impact of immigration on Germany as "very negative" and those who believe that it has had a positive effect outnumber those who believe it has had a negative effect by 31 to 28 per cent. 40 per cent said that its overall impact has been neither positive nor negative.

4. **An overwhelming number of Germans believe in the obligation of countries to accept refugees**. 69 per cent believe that people should be able to seek refuge in other countries, including Germany, to escape war and persecution, and only 8 per cent reject this view.

5. **One of the greatest concerns among the public is whether refugees will integrate successfully into German society**. 46 per cent of Germans are not confident that refugees will integrate successfully, whereas only 23 per cent say they are confident of successful integration.

6. **Germans have reservations about the compatibility of German culture with the values of the Muslim faith**. For example, 49 per cent believe that most Muslims in Germany would prefer to live by Sharia law than according to German law (and only 19 per cent disagree).

7. **The most convincing messages are those that build on values of shared humanity and inclusive patriotism**.

8. **The overwhelming majority of German people see themselves in the political centre**, even if they back the AfD. Around two thirds of Germans can identify with a political party.

9. **Most Germans feel a need to help refugees**. 40 per cent have helped refugees over the course of the last year, mostly through the donation of clothing and food. Most expressed interest in offering additional support if barriers to help were set lower.

Segmentation Analysis

The segmentation analysis, based on people's attitudes towards immigrants and refugees, identified **five distinct segments in Germany** (see Figure 1). These segments are located between two extremes: one containing respondents who are strongly opposed to immigration and the welcome of refugees, and another that includes respondents with the most liberal attitudes. The three remaining segments can be distinguished according to the respondents' assessment of the economic and cultural effects of immigration. Segments can also be differentiated when considering Germans' sense of moral obligation towards refugees.

FIGURE 1: OVERVIEW OF THE SEGMENTS
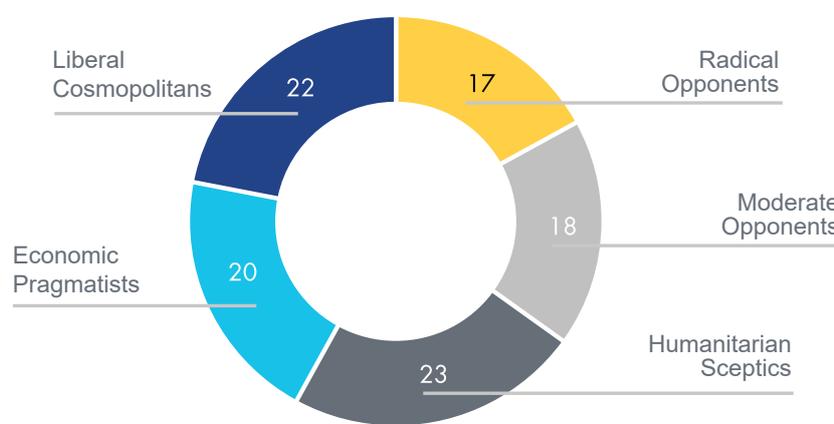
The Outliers

Liberal Cosmopolitans ("Liberale Weltbürger") - 22 per cent

Liberal Cosmopolitans represent 22 per cent of the German population. They are more open-minded, pro-refugee and supportive of immigration than other segments. They perceive immigration as good for both the economy and cultural life in Germany. They believe immigrants are willing to integrate and that refugees will successfully integrate into German society. These convictions lead the Liberal Cosmopolitans to be more active than any other group in volunteering to provide practical assistance to refugees (21 per cent volunteer). They believe that refugees should be allowed to live permanently in Germany.

Demographics: Liberal Cosmopolitans come from all age groups and are most often found in larger cities such as Berlin and Hamburg. They are generally highly educated and often hold university degrees or are still studying. Liberal Cosmopolitans identify with the Social Democratic Party (SPD), the Green Party, the Left Party and the Pirate Party. Many come from families that have a recent history of migration.

Radical Opponents ("Radikale Gegner") - 17 per cent

At the other end of the spectrum, Radical Opponents constitute 17 per cent of the German population. They are the group most opposed to refugees and migration. Radical Opponents believe that letting refugees into Germany is a security risk and will encourage many more to come to Europe. They are convinced that most refugees are not really refugees, but come for economic reasons. They do not think that most immigrants are willing to integrate into German society and, as a result, believe that refugees should not be permitted to live permanently in Germany.

More generally, Radical Opponents reflect many of the characteristics of the "left behind" groups identified as the most likely supporters of far-right populist parties around the world. They believe that globalisation has had a negative impact both on themselves and Germany. They perceive immigrants as a burden on public services and feel strongly that Germany's identity is disappearing. They demand a closure of the borders.

Demographics: Radical Opponents are a somewhat older subset of the population, with medium and lower levels of education and lower incomes. They identify with the far-right AfD, the National Democratic Party (NPD) or no political party at all. They are more often found in smaller communities, especially in East Germany, as well as in the states of Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate. They tend not to identify with any religious denomination.

The Conflicted Middle

Economic Pragmatists ("Wirtschaftliche Pragmatiker") - 20 per cent
Economic Pragmatists make up 20 per cent of the German population. They take pride in their identity as Germans and generally have a positive outlook for their future. A high proportion of them believe that immigration makes Germany more open to new ideas and cultures. However, they are also concerned about the compatibility of the Islamic faith with German culture. They do not think that refugees should be permitted to live permanently in Germany.

Demographics: Economic Pragmatists can be found across age groups. They are more commonly found in the east of Germany and in the state of Saarland. They tend to have medium educational levels and medium to high incomes. A relatively high proportion of people who were not born in Germany or whose parents were born abroad belong to this group. Economic Pragmatists are affiliated mostly with one of the two major parties, the Christian Democratic Union / Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) and the SPD.

Humanitarian Sceptics ("Humanitäre Skeptiker") - 21 per cent
Humanitarian Sceptics make up 21 per cent of the German population. They see accepting refugees as an obligation and a matter of principle, perhaps especially due to Germany's history. However, they have reservations and conflicted feelings about the integration of refugees. They believe that European countries are in part responsibile for the wars in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq and their consequences. Yet, they doubt whether most refugees will successfully integrate into German society. Therefore, they are less likely to believe that refugees should be permitted to live in Germany on a permanent basis. Humanitarian Sceptics do not see the closure of borders as an option.

Demographics: Humanitarian Sceptics are the oldest segment in Germany, with many of them in their 60s or older. They are more likely to live either in medium-sized cities such as Bremen, or in the state of Hessen. While they are highly educated, many have low incomes. They identify most with the CDU/CSU, the Free Democratic Party (FDP) and Left Party.

Moderate Opponents ("Gemäßigte Gegner") - 18 per cent

Constituting 18 per cent of the German population, Moderate Opponents have deep reservations about Germany's refugee intake. They question whether refugees arriving in Germany are genuinely fleeing war. They also believe there are security risks associated with accommodating refugees and they also worry that immigrants benefit from public services disproportionately. They hold negative views towards Islam, and think refugees should not be permitted to live in Germany permanently. A significant proportion of them support the closure of the German border. While they share many of the same views as the Radical Opponents, they do not hold those views with the same levels of intensity.

Demographics: Moderate Opponents are found among all age groups, although with a higher number of retired and self-employed people. They tend to live in medium-sized communities and have an intermediate educational level. A high proportion of Modersate Opponents live in the states of Baden-Württemberg, Hamburg and Bremen. They often have low incomes. Most Moderate Opponents do not feel close to any particular political party, although some identify with the AfD and NPD.

Substantive Differences: German Landscape, Immigration, Muslims and Refugees

German Landscape

A clear finding from the segmentation exercise is that attitudes towards the refugee crisis are part of a much broader debate about how Germany ought to engage with the outside world. In general, those who favour the status quo of integration with Europe and participation in a globalised economy are supportive of assisting refugees. Conversely, those who are sceptical of globalisation see refugee policy as a part of a flawed system that has made them – and the country – worse off.

Firstly, support for refugees is related to attitudes towards the economic impact of globalisation. Two-thirds of Radical Opponents (65 per cent) believe that the economic consequences of globalisation have been "very negative" for Germany. Meanwhile, only about one in five (18 per cent) of Liberal Cosmopolitans and Humanitarian Sceptics (21 per cent) agree. The other segments fall between these two extremes.

Secondly, these economic concerns translate, albeit to a lesser extent, to Germans' perception of their own future. When asked about how they expect the next five years to affect them personally, about half of Germans across all segments reply that they expect their personal cirucmstances to be "about the same." However, the Liberal Cosmopolitans are twice as likely (38 per cent) as Radical Opponents (19 per cent) to say that they expect to be personally better off over this period. Conversely, Radical Opponents are about three times as likely (30 per cent) as Liberal Cosmopolitans (11 per cent) to say that they expect to be personally worse off in five years time. Oncemore, all conflicted middle groups fall in between these scores.

Thirdly, fears and "feelings of loss" are felt beyond economic matters. A significant portion of the public are concerned that Germany's openness to outside cultures is impacting its cultural life. An overwhelming majority of Radical Opponents (84 per cent) and a substantial majority of Moderate Opponents (62 per cent) agree that "Germany's identity is disappearing nowadays." But there is no consensus on this question: Economic Pragmatists are evenly split (51 per cent agree) and lower numbers of Humanitarian Sceptics (42 per cent) agree. Only one-quarter of Liberal Cosmopolitans (24 per cent) express agreement with this observation.

Finally, asking Germans about the most important issues facing the country provides insight into their differing perceptions of the refugee crisis and migration more generally. Almost half of the German population (45 per cent) rank "immigration" as a top concern. This is especially true for Radical Opponents, two-thirds (67 per cent) of whom cite it as one of Germany's top three issues. By contrast, only about one-fifth (22 per cent) of Liberal Cosmopolitans view it as a leading concern. For Liberal Cosmopolitans, it is not the newcomers who pose a challenge, it is the German response that is problematic: 56 per cent of them cite rises in "racism and discrimination" as a leading concern. Just 8 per cent of Radical Opponents agree that racism and discrimination is a top concern. On this matter, Liberal Cosmopolitans hold the fringe opinion: while 45 per cent of all Germans cite "immigration" as one of the top three issues facing Germany, just 28 per cent list "racism and discrimination."

FIGURE 2: MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES

Question: Which three of the following do you see as the most important issues facing Germany today?
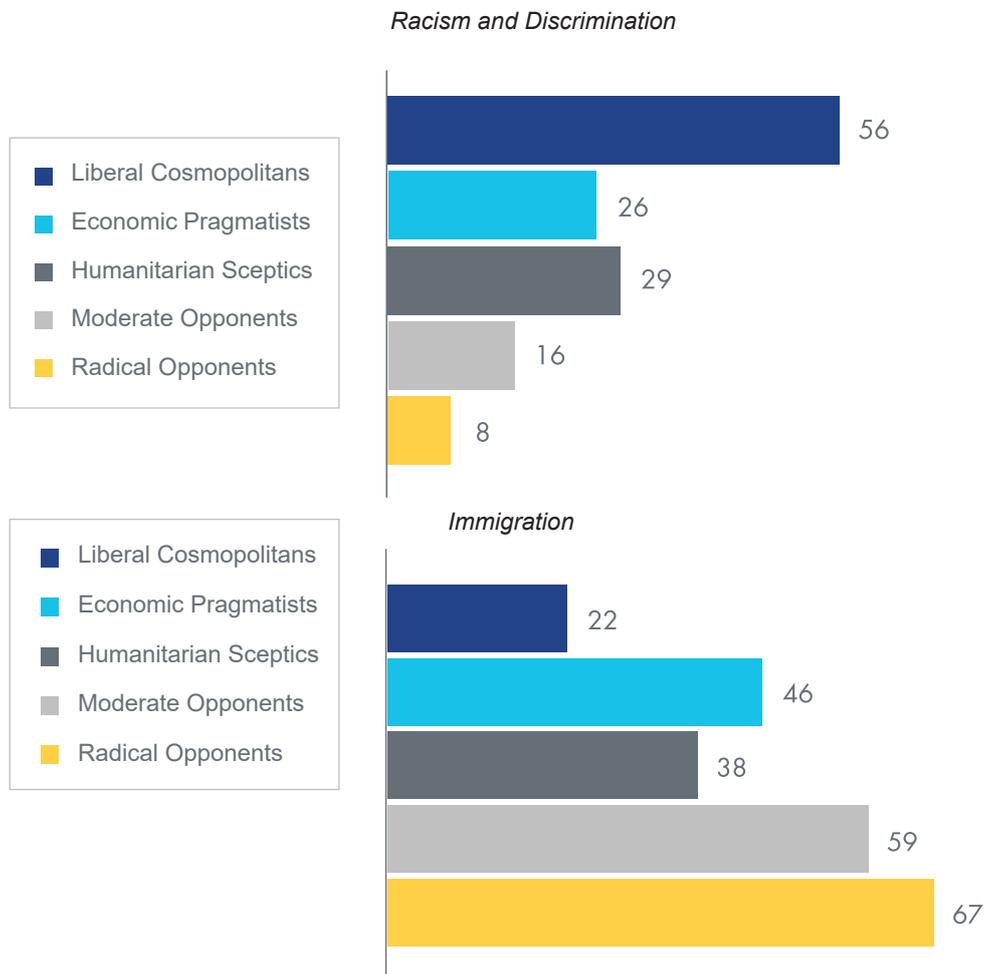
Racism and Discrimination

Liberal Cosmopolitans
Economic Pragmatists
Humanitarian Sceptics
Moderate Opponents
Radical Opponents

- 56
- 26
- 29
- 16
- 8

Immigration

Liberal Cosmopolitans
Economic Pragmatists
Humanitarian Sceptics
Moderate Opponents
Radical Opponents

- 22
- 46
- 38
- 59
- 67

Representation of the Top 2 boxes (strongly agree / tend to agree) in per cent.
Basis: Sample size = 2,002.

Source: Ipsos poll commissioned by More in Common.

Taken together, these findings make it clear that communications around refugee policy must be understood as forming part of a broader economic and social debate about Germany's openness to Europe and the world beyond.

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Views on Immigration

By definition, refugees are distinct from immigrants in that they have fled their home country as a result of war or persecution. Given this distinction, one might expect that refugees would be understood and received differently from the broader category of immigrants, who enter a new country for a range of motivating factors. This is not the case in Germany. Across all relevant questions, attitudes to immigrants correlate strongly with views on the incoming refugee population.

General attitudes towards immigration in Germany are mixed. When asked about the impact of immigration's impact on their country, Germans are split three ways: positive (31 per cent), neither positive nor negative (40 per cent), and negative (28 per cent). Liberal Cosmopolitans are an outlier again on this question, with 69 per cent expressing the view that immigration has been positive. Humanitarian Sceptics, Moderate Opponents, and Radical Opponents are all of the opposite view, with just 19 per cent, 8 per cent, and 6 per cent reporting positive views, respectively. Economic Pragmatists are caught in the middle, with 46 per cent believing that immigration has had a positive impact.

At least two factors contribute heavily to negative and positive perceptions of immigrants. The first is whether immigrants are considered to make an effort to integrate. Here, both Liberal Cosmopolitans (80 per cent) and Economic Pragmatists (76 per cent) agree that immigrants try hard to integrate into German society. By contrast, less than one-third of Humanitarian Sceptics (32 per cent), Moderate Opponents (20 per cent), and Radical Opponents (9 per cent) agree. This is important, as efforts to integrate can be interpreted as signs of respect and gratitude for the hosts and their culture.

A second critical factor in shaping how Germans perceive immigrants is whether they primarily see them as contributing value or extracting value from society. When asked whether immigrants "claim benefits and use public services even though they've contributed nothing in return," Radical (74 per cent) and Moderate Opponents (72 per cent) tend to overwhelmingly agree. However, in contrast to views of integration, Humanitarian Sceptics (30 per cent) are aligned with the Liberal Cosmopolitans (11 per cent) and Economic Pragmatists (23 per cent) in having low levels of agreement with this claim. These questions reveal the ambivalence and uncertainty felt by Humanitarian Sceptics about immigration, which extends to refugees.

These findings likely indicate that refugees are not always perceived as a distinct population from immigrants, but rather are considered part of a collective group of newcomers, which are treated with a mixture of appreciation, concern, and resentment.

FIGURE 3: INTEGRATION EFFORTS

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Generally, immigrants make efforts to integrate into German society.
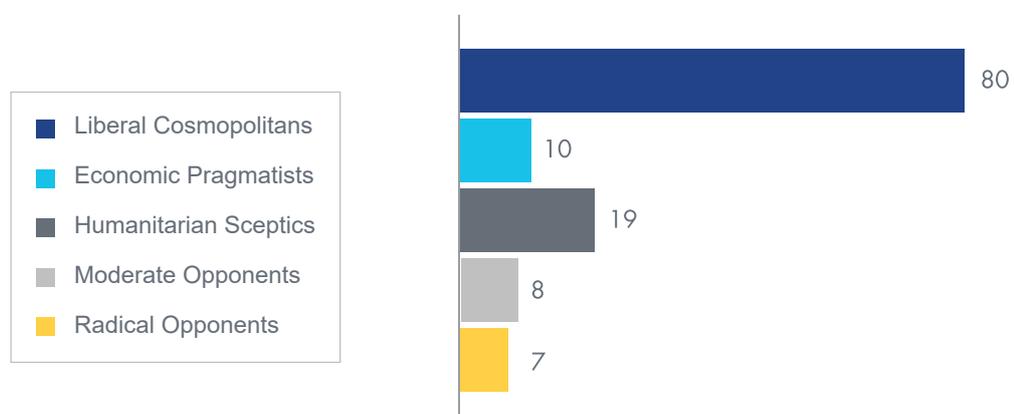
■ Liberal Cosmopolitans	80
■ Economic Pragmatists	10
■ Humanitarian Sceptics	19
■ Moderate Opponents	8
■ Radical Opponents	7

Representation of the Top 2 boxes (strongly agree / tend to agree) in per cent.
Basis: Sample size = 2,002.
Source: Ipsos poll commissioned by More in Common.

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Perception of Muslims

With refugees entering Germany from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, among other countriese, Germans' perceptions of refugees are inherently related to their perception of Muslims more generally. A clear pattern becomes evident: Liberal Cosmopolitans have a positive and confident view of Muslims, Humanitarian Sceptics show high levels of uncertainty and ambivalence, while Economic Pragmatists, Moderate and Radical Opponents voice high levels of concern.

This division is clearly seen on the subject of whether most Muslims in Germany would rather live under Islamic or Sharia law, than under German law. Overall, nearly half of Germans (49 per cent) believe that this is the preference of most Muslims in Germany, with an additional one-third reporting that they either don't know (11 per cent) or have no opinion (21 per cent). The outlier in this case is the Liberal Cosmopolitan group, of whom only 14 per cent believe Sharia law is preferred by most Muslims. The other segments feel quite differently about the question, with majorities agreeing among the Economic Pragmatists (64 per cent), the Moderate Opponents (59 per cent), and the Radical Opponents (83 per cent).

Similar trends are visible on the critical subject of whether Islam and German society are "incompatible." The division here is even starker, with just one in eleven Liberal Cosmopolitans (9 per cent) believing that the two are incompatible, compared to 84 per cent of Radical Opponents. More fundamentally, when asked if "Muslims hold similar values to me personally," only Liberal Cosmopolitans answer in a positive sense. While 71 per cent of Liberal Cosmopolitans believe that Muslims share values with them, less than 20 per cent of each of the other four segments agree (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 4: VALUES OF MUSLIMS

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Most Muslims hold similar values to me personally.
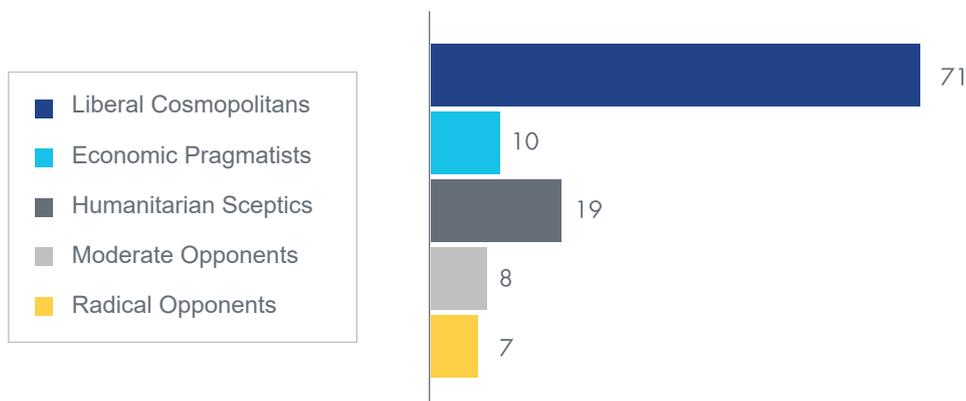
- Liberal Cosmopolitans — 71
- Economic Pragmatists — 10
- Humanitarian Sceptics — 19
- Moderate Opponents — 8
- Radical Opponents — 7

Representation of the Top 2 boxes (strongly agree / tend to agree) in per cent.
Basis: Sample size = 2,002.
Source: Ipsos poll commissioned by More in Common.

The debate surrounding refugees and their integration into German society cannot be fully understood without taking into account perceptions of Muslims. Unfamiliarity with Muslim beliefs and practices, and fear associated with their differences and perceived possible threats to Germany, are likely to act as an obstacle to a broad consensus to fully embrace the current population of refugees. These concerns are also likely to continue being exploited by far-right political forces.

Attitudes towards Refugees

Survey results suggest that most Germans do not have simplistic attitudes towards the incoming refugee population. Instead, responses reflect a complex combination of feelings of obligation, scepticism, fear, empathy and guilt.

Germans are divided on whether their country is doing enough to help the refugees that are entering the country. The number of those who believe that the government should be doing more (35 per cent) is nearly equal to the number who believe that it is currently doing enough (37 per cent). Just 18 per cent believe that the government should be doing less. A majority (60 per cent) of Liberal Cosmopolitans believe more should be done, a view held by a range of 19 to 35 per cent of the other segments.

A central question here is whether Germans believe that they have a duty or obligation to help incoming refugees. Indeed, two-thirds (69 per cent) of Germans believe that "people should be able to take refuge in other countries, including Germany, to escape from war or persecution." This obligation can be conceived in several forms, relating to the severity of refugees' circumstances, according to Germany's traditions, or due to its capacity to provide for those in need. Each one of these options was tested, and the strongest frame activated was: "European countries are responsible for the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. They should therefore play their part by accepting refugees." A majority of Germans agreed with this message (56 per cent), including a notable 43 per cent of Radical Opponents.

However, underpinning this desire to assist newcomers there exist several strongly held concerns that are specific to the refugee population. One is the popular belief that "most foreigners" entering the country are not genuine refugees, but actually "just want to come for economic reasons." This is a view held by a majority of both Moderate Opponents (64 per cent) and Radical Opponents (84 per cent). Another major concern is that welcoming refugees "will encourage many more people...to move to Europe also." This ubiquitous concern is held by 68 per cent of Germans, including a majority of all segments, with the exception of Liberal Cosmopolitans - of which a sizable 45 per cent agreed.

FIGURE 5: NOT REAL REFUGEES?

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Most foreigners who want to get into my country as a refugee really aren't refugees. They just want to come here for economic reasons, or to take advantage of our welfare service.
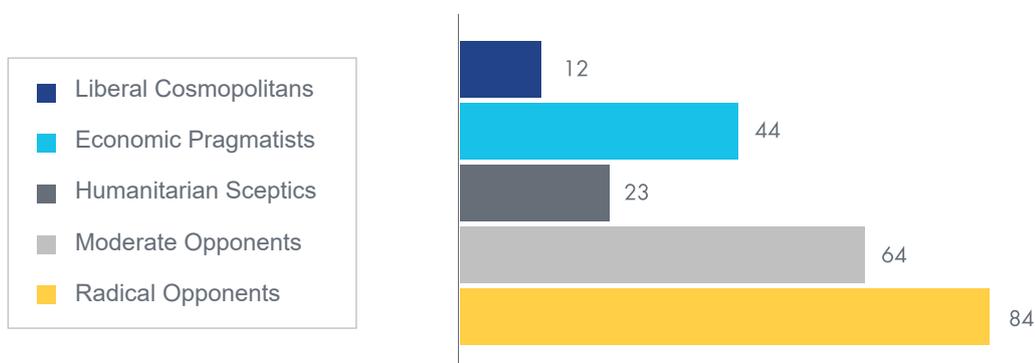
Representation of the Top 2 boxes (strongly agree / tend to agree) in per cent.
Basis: Sample size = 2,002.
Source: Ipsos poll commissioned by More in Common.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The goal of the research study and this report is to help support efforts to build more effective public communications, whether in government, business or in civil society and, ultimately, to effectively counter the appeal of authoritarian populism. We believe that the research methodology of population segmentation produces new, valuable and actionable insights into public attitudes on a complex range of issues about identity, immigrants and refugees. In particular, the fact that over 50 per cent of Germans belong to one of three "conflicted middle" groups highlights the need to focus communications efforts towards those groups, and not to make assumptions about their views or beliefs.

In terms of specific strategies:

- **Liberal Cosmopolitans are the group most ready to engage and be mobilised to take action in support of refugees.** However, given the significant differences in the values and outlook of the Liberal Cosmopolitans compared to other segments, they may not be the most effective vehicle for persuading other population groups to alter their position.

- **Economic Pragmatists need reassurance that the government is controlling the refugee intake and integration process.**

- **Humanitarian Sceptics will be responsive to both appeals to moral obligation and examples of refugees integrating successfully into German society.**

- **Moderate Opponents demonstrate less extreme views and behaviours than the Radical Opponents.** This group is unlikely to be an early target of communication efforts, since they are hard to reach and persuade. However, this group is the softest target for far-right forces that want to expand the pool of Radical Opponents. Therefore, greater efforts are needed to reduce the allure of extremism and hate to the Moderate Opponents in ways that reach this segment and speak to their genuine concerns.

In terms of larger-scale communications, this research suggests that there are several messages that can be effective in reaching mainstream audiences, especially those that emphasise shared humanity and culture. On the other hand, economic arguments are less effective and were only rendered as effective by 38 per cent of those surveyed.

This research was commissioned by More in Common. The More in Common initiative involves conducting a series of similar population segmentation studies in other countries. Within Germany, we plan to build on the findings in this report with a program of ongoing qualitative research and support for civil society groups. We also plan to apply many of the insights from this research to content development and campaigning efforts.

[End of Executive Summary]