

Survey on the Admission of Refugees (April 7, 2017)

Abstract

An opinion poll shows the great difference between West and East German views on the reception of refugees in the country, with fear of immigrants being more widespread in the lower income brackets and in the East German federal states.

Source

A Study Shows the Country is Split over Its Welcoming Culture

Despite the record numbers of refugees arriving in 2015 and 2016, according to a study Germany—still—presents itself as an open and mature society of immigration. Welcoming culture has proven stable, as the analysis of survey data by the Bertelsmann Foundation shows.

When asked how welcome the population felt immigrants or refugees to be, a clear majority answered “very or quite welcome.”

Of those surveyed, 70 percent stated that immigrants were welcome among the population, while the figure for refugees was 59 percent. The development with regard to immigrants has been positive since 2012: From 49 percent five years ago to 59 percent in 2015. In 2012 and early 2015, that is, before the start of the refugee crisis in Europe, the survey did not yet ask about refugees. The study thus cannot make any statements about this development.

More people demand a fair distribution of refugees in the EU

The mood changed, however, after the country took in some 1.2 million refugees. “Many feel that a breaking point has been reached. The willingness to take in more refugees is falling significantly,” states the study presented on Friday in Gütersloh. 54 percent of those surveyed say that a maximum capacity has been reached; two years ago, only 40 percent did so.

Meanwhile, the number of people calling for a fair distribution within the EU has increased by five percentage points to 81 percent. “People in Germany look back with self-confidence at having given so many refugees a friendly reception. But they also say: Now it is the turn of other countries too,” says foundation chairman Jörg Dräger.

Clear difference between East and West Germany

As in earlier studies, welcoming culture exhibits a clear East/West divide. According to the study, this divergence has even increased: In the eastern states, 53 percent believe that immigrants are welcome. In the West, the figure is 74 percent. The gap between East and West is even larger when it comes to welcoming culture for refugees: In the East, only 33 percent believe that the population welcomes refugees with open arms, while in the West nearly twice as many— 65 percent—do so.

The number of refugees has fallen markedly in recent months. Study author Ulrich Kober therefore believes that the topic is less emotionalized now. “The smoke has cleared somewhat. People no longer answer from a position of personal disquiet,” Kober says of the study’s findings.

Andreas Zick of the University of Bielefeld, a scholar of conflict, is not surprised by the results of the

study. The professor presented a similar report in the summer. According to his research, a majority of the population approves of accepting refugees, but many reject the idea of allowing them to stay permanently.

Source: "Studie zeigt: Bei der Willkommenskultur geht ein Riss durchs Land", *Focus Online*, April 7, 2017

https://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/willkommenskultur-in-deutschland-mehrheit-heisst-fluechtlinge-weiterhin-willkommen_id_6910422.html

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