

Question in Project:

German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) 2021 (English Version)

Question Topic:

Politics/ Attitudes, appraisals, & ideologies

Construct:

Immigration opportunities for foreigners

General Information:

***Note: The item was tested in German. This is an English translation of the original German wording.**

Introduction:

Some want to make it easier for foreigners to immigrate, while others want to restrict foreigners' opportunities to immigrate.

[Manche wollen die Zuzugsmöglichkeiten für Ausländer erleichtern, andere wollen die Zuzugsmöglichkeiten für Ausländer einschränken.]

Question Text:

What is your opinion on the topic of immigration opportunities for foreigners?

[Wie ist Ihre Meinung zum Thema Zuzugsmöglichkeiten für Ausländer?]

Answer Categories:

1 Immigration opportunities for foreigners should be made easier *[Zuzugsmöglichkeiten für Ausländer sollten erleichtert werden]*

2

3

4

5

6

7 Immigration opportunities for foreigners should be restricted *[Zuzugsmöglichkeiten für Ausländer sollten eingeschränkt werden]*

Cognitive Techniques:

Specific Probing, Comprehension Probing

Findings for Question:

1. What do the respondents understand by "immigration opportunities for foreigners"?

When answering the question, half of the respondents (TP 02, 03, 05, 08, 09) thought of immigration opportunities in the context of labor migration as well as immigration in the context of asylum law:

- *"To be honest, I was thinking across the board right now, because I can think of quite a few things. That someone in old age might want to have another residence. But also a person who works, perhaps young refugees in politically difficult countries or labor migrants, also from the Mediterranean region in Europe. I had quasi very crosswise things in my head. "* (TP 03)
- *"This doesn't just mean refugees exclusively, but also non-refugees who come to Germany through their job or something. "* (TP 05)

In contrast, four persons (TP 01, 04, 07, 10) thought primarily of refugees when answering the question and one subject (TP 06) thought primarily of labor migration:

- *"At the first moment, I was currently thinking more about refugees. That was the first thing I thought of. "* (TP 10)
- *"First of all, I thought about skilled workers, because that's what the question should really be about. Everything else is seen as rather negative in this day and age. We need skilled workers, of course, also people who are qualified. "* (TP 06)

2. Which persons do the respondents think of when they read the term "foreigner"?

When asked, five respondents (TP 01, 02, 03, 04, 07) stated that they did not think of any specific groups of people when they read the term "foreigner", but rather thought of men, women and families with children in equal proportions:

- *"So, through my work I have come into contact with all kinds of refugees. Therefore I have thought of men, women, children, family, everything. "* (TP 01)
- *"Families, just generally everyone. "* (TP 02)

Three test persons (TP 08, 09, 10) associated with the term mainly young men, one test person young, educated men (TP 06) and another test person young people up to 40 years (TP 05):

- *"In that case, I have to say quite honestly, I was thinking of young men, because they've be-come more conspicuous here now." (TP 08)*
- *"So, actually, the professionals that you know like that are mainly male and educated." (TP 06)*
- *"Families or single people up to 40. I rather didn't think of older people." (TP 05)*

3. Which formulation is preferred: "foreigners", "[female and male] foreigners", "foreign persons" or "persons from abroad"?

The test persons were asked to compare the four formulations and to indicate which they found best and which they found worst. The majority of the test persons ($n = 6$) preferred the formulation "per-sons from abroad" because it was the most neutral and made it clearest that different groups of persons and backgrounds (asylum, labor migration) were meant. In contrast, the phrase "foreigners" was rated negatively ($n = 6$), as it was perceived as discriminatory and derogatory:

- *"Persons from abroad is the best wording for me. It doesn't sound so pejorative, I think. After all, many people have a direct dislike for foreigners and are negative no matter what. I think that 'persons from abroad' is the best way to formulate the question. [...] With 'foreigners' only men are directly thought of. I think that if you ask such a question, then you should cover all areas. That means male, female, in terms of age. That one thinks of everything and not only of foreigners, that is, of male refugees." (TP 01)*
- *"I like the last question the best, 'Persons from abroad', because there now not only female or male [is meant], I say now times, but generally every person, whether it is families, whether it is older persons, whether it is female or male persons. Just 'persons from abroad'. [...] 'Foreign-ers' somehow sounds so discriminatory." (TP 02)*

4. Would the use of an alternative term substantially change the question?

Seven of the ten test persons indicated that their answers to the question would not change if the term "foreigner" were replaced by one of the alternative phrases, even if they spontaneously associated different groups of people with the phrases (see previous guiding question). Three persons (TP 04, 06, 10) explained that their interpretation of the question would change depending on the wording:

- *"From my gut feeling, my interpretation would tend to change. With 'persons from abroad' I think of those who come here for professional reasons and refugees. But here I mainly have the feeling that it is more about people who move here for professional reasons, i.e. Swiss or Dutch. [...] With the other three formulations, I think, casually speaking, more of the eastern area." (TP 04)*

- *"I think if you ask the first one ['foreigners'], it comes rather with a negative connotation. The others are worded a little more openly. When you formulate the first one like that, the reservations are brought out more clearly again. With the other formulations, the reservations don't come through as much, I think." (TP 10)*

Recommendations:

Question: We recommend replacing the term "foreigners" with "persons from abroad".

Response format: No changes recommended.