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Dylan T. O'Neil
Gettysburg College

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Abstract

Refugees are among the most discussed and debated topics worldwide; the massive movement of refugees and asylum seekers facing the world today is the largest since the end of the second world war. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates the total number of refugees in the world to be almost twenty-six million people, while asylum seekers account for around three million. The concept of a refugee is formally defined by the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, which creates a legal status, and states that a refugee is a person who “faces well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion”. The issues surrounding refugees are vast and complex, with wide-reaching and long lasting effects. As the world continues to face massive human displacement as a result of fragile states, civil wars, and countless other factors, refugees and related issues will continue to be of vital importance. One key element to the issue of refugees is the question of resettlement and even further the issue of integration.

Keywords

Anthropology, Refugees, Germany

Disciplines

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Comments

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Refugee Resettlement and Integration in Germany: Analysis of Media Discourse

Dylan T. O'Neil

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Refugees are among the most discussed and debated topics worldwide; the massive movement of refugees and asylum seekers facing the world today is the largest since the end of the second world war. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates the total number of refugees in the world to be almost twenty-six million people, while asylum seekers account for around three million.¹ The concept of a refugee is formally defined by the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, which creates a legal status, and states that a refugee is a person who “faces well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion”.² The issues surrounding refugees are vast and complex, with wide-reaching and long lasting effects. As the world continues to face massive human displacement as a result of fragile states, civil wars, and countless other factors, refugees and related issues will continue to be of vital importance. One key element to the issue of refugees is the question of resettlement and even further the issue of integration.

To truly understand the effects of the flows of refugees facing the world today we must first realize the importance of integration as one of the crucial political, social, and economic pieces of the situation surrounding refugees. What is of particular interest is; what are the key points of refugee integration being picked up by the media, and what can this mean for opinions about refugees and asylum seekers as a whole? For this analysis German media is the focus in particular; with an attempt to weed out the key integration related topics, which can then help make the argument that in Germany, integration is recognized as a key issue and mainstream

¹ “Figures at a Glance,” UNHCR, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>

² Alexander Betts and Paul Collier. *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy in a Changing World*, (Oxford University Press, 2017), 4.

media coverage shows that Germany in general is working towards total and long-lasting integration in a positive manner.

The idea that refugees deserve help is not argued in most cases, where trouble begins is in actually carrying out this help. Resettlement can be seen as a sticking point within the refugee regime today and integration is arguably one of the trickier refugee related issues to deal with. The UNHCR lays out three basic principles of resettlement. First of all, resettlement should provide a perspective for refugees most in need of protection. Also, acceptance for resettlement should be especially crucial for people in protracted refugee situations without a return option and without the possibility of integration in their first country of asylum. Lastly, resettlement should be seen as an expression of shared responsibility with the first countries of asylum which are strongly affected by forced migration.³ In the face of the recent refugee “crisis”, as it is labeled in so many countries today, resettlement and integration have become ever-increasing topics of debate among governments and people worldwide. In particular there has been a fascination in Europe with the recent surge of refugees and especially the issue of integration. Due to its relative physical closeness to many refugee producing nations, Europe has been the Western location of choice for many refugees and asylum seekers. Countries of choice for refugees making the journey to Europe have been Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, due to established refugee communities and to some degree a welcoming nature towards refugees generally. What is often overlooked however is that, “Almost 90 per cent of refugees are in havens in the developing world, and just ten of these countries host around 60 per cent of the world’s refugees”.⁴ Media attention has largely been focused on Europe, and their struggles

³ Tatjana Baraulina and Maria Bitterwolf, “Resettlement in Germany – What is the programme for particularly vulnerable refugees accomplishing?” *BAMF Brief Analysis*, (April 2018): 3.

⁴ Betts and Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 1.

with the refugee populations “flooding” their borders, but there is rarely talk of the neighboring countries, some of which are among the poorest in the world, who are taking the hardest hit. For example, Lebanon hosts the highest number of refugees per capita in the world, estimates place around one and a half million refugees within their borders.⁵ While Turkey hosts an unbelievable three and a half million refugees, a number incomprehensible to a European country. As Betts and Collier state, “Refuge entails (at its core) the principle that when people face serious harm at home, they should be allowed to flee and receive access to a safe haven, at least until they can go home or be permanently reintegrated elsewhere”.⁶ Refugee resettlement is not an isolated or small issue, it is fundamental to the international refugee regime. Analyzing government policies, and media reaction to the ideas of resettlement and integration can allow for a more holistic understanding of the varied discourses surrounding refugee integration related issues.

By drawing from a variety of newspaper articles from mainly two different sources in Germany, within the last two years; this critical discourse analysis will look at the specific language used within the larger context of the media discussion on integration. The news sources chosen were German sites in English; which could lend itself to them having a more international audience. German media has increased its coverage of the issue over the past couple years, and has shown a consistent interest in the issue. By analyzing the discourse of German media, a more holistic picture can be painted on integration in German society.

Understanding the context of today’s refugee situation is vital to an analysis on any refugee related discourse. The recent flow of refugees has been exacerbated by one particular conflict, the civil war in Syria. Syria has the unfortunate distinction of being the top refugee

⁵ Maha Yahya, Jean Kassir, Khalil El-Hariri, “Unheard Voices: What Syrian Refugees Need to Return Home,” *Carnegie Middle East Center*, (April 2018).

⁶ Betts and Collier, *Refuge: Rethinking Refugee Policy*, 4.

producing country in the world; nearly thirteen million Syrians are considered in need, nearly six million of which are refugees.⁷ Like most refugees today, Europe is not their destination of choice for the most part; the majority of Syrians stay in the Middle East. Jordan for example hosts approximately six-hundred thousand Syrians, Lebanon hosts over a million.⁸ On the other hand, Germany hosts about seven hundred thousand Syrian refugees, which is much less per capita than the Middle Eastern nations.⁹ Syrian refugees therefore understandably make up the bulk of refugee resettlement discourse in many refugee hosting nations in both the Middle East and Europe. The Syrian crisis led to Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, to implement the so-called “open-door policy”. This policy led to the acceptance of nearly one million refugees into Germany, and had drastic effects on public opinion on refugees, including the rise of an anti-immigrant, far right party. Recently Merkel has abandoned the policy, but the political aftermath still lingers. Despite this, integration discourse continues to be of great importance within the German media.

Refugee resettlement in Germany is implemented in response to the UNHCR principles on resettlement. According to German law, an asylum seeker is allowed to stay in Germany if he or she is seeking protection from political persecution or is under international protection, which includes refugee status.¹⁰ The integration of these refugees has been a major talking point for the German people, which is reflected in both media coverage and government policies. In relation to Syrian integration in German society Hindy points out a major issue, “For many Germans, integration means assimilation, while many Syrians are hoping to maintain their strong traditions

⁷ “Syria Emergency,” UNHCR, Accessed April 11, 2019, <https://www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html>

⁸ *Ibid.*, Accessed April 11, 2019.

⁹ Lily Hindy, “Germany’s Syrian Refugee Integration Experiment,” The Century Foundation, Accessed April 12, 2019, <https://tcf.org/content/report/germanys-syrian-refugee-integration-experiment/>

¹⁰ Jenny Gesley, “Refugee Law and Policy: Germany,” The Law Library of Congress, Accessed April 11, 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/refugee-law/germany.php>

from home”.¹¹ Integration is key because it represents a second chance for refugees. A second chance at a peaceful, safe life; something that was taken away from them and led to their flight from their home countries. There is a legal process for resettlement and integration in Germany; however it can be shown through media accounts that results are somewhat mixed.

The German resettlement process usually begins at a reception center, where those seeking asylum are processed and then assigned to one of the sixteen German federal states. This process is difficult for both Germans and the refugees themselves. It is costly and requires setting aside places to house the asylum seekers from the German perspective. From the viewpoint of refugees, it can take months to be processed. In the eyes of refugees this is valuable time in which they could be looking for jobs or making contacts and restarting their lives, but they are instead kept from working and kept waiting. Times have decreased a little bit, for example in the third quarter of 2018, “German authorities took a little over six months on average to process asylum requests”.¹² This is down from just over nine months in the beginning of 2018 according to the Interior Ministry. However, this number is still far above the wishes of the government, “The time that the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) officials needed to process asylum requests in the third quarter is still way below the target of three months”.¹³ Government and media discourse is mainly focused on the time of this process, and voicing the opinion that it needs to be streamlined. The other concern, from a German perspective is cost. Refugees being housed in refugee homes or reception centers are entitled to “pocket money”, which has stirred up questions and concerns among some about refugees being treated better than German citizens. The truth however is pointed out in a 2017 article about common questions on

¹¹ Hindy, “Germany’s Syrian Refugee Integration Experiment”.

¹² “Germany Speeds up Asylum Process,” *Deutsche Welle*, November 2, 2019, <https://p.dw.com/p/3D6sV>

¹³ *Ibid.*, Accessed April 17, 2019.

refugees in Germany, “For single adults this is 135 euros per month. For couples this is 122 euros each [per month]...All these payments are lower than the base welfare payments to German citizens. An unemployed German is given 409 euros per month as the lowest rate of welfare”.¹⁴ On the asylum seeker side of things, the biggest concern is also the time it takes to be processed and then assigned a Federal State to move to, but for different reasons than the Germans. The Germans are mostly concerned with the bureaucratic side of things, the asylum seeker side is much more practical, each day they spend waiting is a day wasted in their eyes. Since the federal agency in Germany that handles refugees is overtasked and spread thin, asylum seekers have to wait months to file applications. During this time there is a curfew of three months, during which time refugees may not work.¹⁵ This is a major concern for refugees who want nothing more than a sense of normalcy, and a chance at a new life. For example, the Sawans are a family who came to Germany from Syria, when interviewed they were generally thankful to be in a safe place, but they point out something important, “What they had not anticipated was everything else that came with the refugee experience: the loss of independence, the lack of privacy, and the perpetual state of waiting for an outside power to dictate how and when they could begin their lives again”.¹⁶

Once the resettlement process ends, the integration process begins. A key concept to the international refugee regime is the establishment of durable solutions in regards to refugees and asylum seekers, integration is one of these durable solutions, and potentially the most important one. In Germany, those who are seeking asylum generally plan on staying in Germany.

¹⁴ Jorg Luyken, “Six common questions people have about refugees in Germany,” *The Local*, December 15, 2017, <https://www.thelocal.de/20171215/six-common-questions-people-have-about-refugees-in-germany>

¹⁵ Bruce Katz, Luise Noring, Nantke Garrelts, “Cities and Refugees: The German Experience,” *Centennial Scholar Initiative at Brookings*, (September 2016): 9.

¹⁶ Laura Kasinof, “The New Berliners,” *Virginia Quarterly Review* 92, no.2 (March 2017): 56.

Particularly for Syrian refugees, who see no end in sight to the current conflict in Syria, integration into society is considered the best option available. The issues surrounding integration are many, and well documented, but integration can be beneficial for everyone. However, for integration to succeed both sides need to work together, "Integration can only succeed if it is a two-way process, with a society willing to accept and integrate foreigners and with immigrants willing to make visible efforts to integrate".¹⁷ Media coverage surrounding refugee integration in Germany generally is focused on the topics of language, education, and jobs. Outside of these specific areas of discourse, there is a basic discussion of refugees in German society more generally.

Before going into more specific issue areas on integration it is useful to understand the general discourse around integration. There is at least some confidence among German people in the ability to overcome the challenges that come with migration flows. However, this general confidence has done little to erase base fears of refugees that still plague a portion of German society. An increase in positive sentiments towards the refugee flows into Germany does not correlate to a complete reduction of fears. A study covered by Deutsche Welle found that roughly two-thirds of those polled feared more crime and Muslim extremists as a result of refugee integration and resettlement. The poll also found that one-third worry about Muslim culture dominating German society in everyday life.¹⁸ This is not necessarily all that surprising, tensions are bound to arise when new groups of people are placed into an established society. No doubt it must be difficult for German citizens to feel like their country is shifting under their feet. As integration progresses in Germany and these refugees integrate themselves and continually

¹⁷ Oya S. Abali, "German Public Opinion on Immigration and Integration," *Migration Policy Institute* (October 2009): 10.

¹⁸ Konstantin Klein, "New Study Shows Consistent German Public Opinion of Refugees," *Deutsche Welle*, December 5, 2017, <https://p.dw.com/p/2ctnT>

gain ground in German society, existing Germans may feel displaced, which would explain negative backlash against resettlement and integration. For example, “Refugees already residing in Germany are facing mounting antagonism, reflected among other things in the refusal to rent them homes, expulsion from homes they have already rented, difficulties in finding work, and hostility in the street and shops”.¹⁹ In the context of the more recent influx of Syrian refugees, there is something important to realize, as integration and resettlement is carried out, “The more refugees arrive in Germany from Syria, the more they realize that they’re not as welcome as they were when the civil war began in their country”.²⁰ As of today, media discourse seems to be fairly mixed, with both very positive, and very negative outlooks on integration. What is interesting to consider is the effects on the future of Germany, and on discourse, with the increasing integration of multiple generation of refugees. Considering that one out of five people living in Germany has immigrant roots, a significant portion of that being refugees, there is a concern among some: “People are asking themselves what their heimat, or homeland, will look like in 10, 20, or 30 years. They harbor doubts that the government is able to solve the problems already arising out from the lack of integration among some immigrant groups” and even further a “Recent survey by Forsa, showed that more than one out of four Germans agree that Islam is something that ‘arouses fear’”.²¹ The language surrounding a concern for the homeland and fear is of particular interest. This idea could have powerful implications in the long run as asylum seekers establish themselves as permanent members of German society. If the question lingers in the back of the German consciousness, on whether or not they can safely maintain their

¹⁹ Zvi Bar’el, “Syrian Refugees in Germany Earn Rare Win but Remain on Borrowed Time,” *Haaretz*, August 6, 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/europe/refugees-on-borrowed-time-1.6343700>

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Accessed April 18, 2019.

²¹ “The Changing Face of the Country,” *Spiegelonline*, April 19, 2018, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/germany-and-immigration-the-changing-face-of-the-country-a-1203143.html>

homeland, true integration could prove difficult. General discourse on integration is important and helps frame some of the more specific and highly discussed pieces of integration into German society for refugees.

Perhaps the most discussed part of integration is language, learning German is considered a key factor for integration by Germans, but there is a great deal involved in integrating groups of people who very simply have no experience with German or learning a new language at all. Discourse around language skills as a piece of integration logically makes up a large portion of the coverage on integration. Language takes such an important role in discourse because it affects essentially every aspect of integration and life in Germany. For example, in Luyken's article in *The Local* it is stated that, "poor language skills and a lack of formal training make it difficult for refugees to integrate into the job market".²² The use of the word integrate shows the seriousness of the idea of language; without German skills integration into the job market is difficult, which means integration into other facets of life remain difficult and so on. The job market is just one example, day-to-day life is also dictated by language skills. Media discourse involving language skills of integrating refugees seems to focus on both a discussion of what is being done, but also at the same time a recognition that the current model is not as effective as it needs to be. In this case the German media is taking what appears to be a very even and fair approach to discussing the role of language in integration.

An article in *The Local* by Anita Lekic, titled "Here I am a human being: How Kaiserslautern continues to integrate refugees", looks into how a small German city has integrated refugees, with special attention paid to the need and reality of integration through language skills. Since language is a key first step to integration, once refugees arrive in

²² Jorg Luyken, "Six common questions people have about refugees in Germany," *The Local*, December 15, 2017, <https://www.thelocal.de/20171215/six-common-questions-people-have-about-refugees-in-germany>

Kaiserslautern “they have the opportunity to take free language courses, organized and financed by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees”.²³ It is obvious through this article, and others, that there is at least some sense of pride in the extent of German language classes offered to those trying to integrate into German society, and the number of articles on the topic shows recognition of its importance. The small town that Lekic studied has “seven institutions offering such courses [German language classes], consisting of 600 to 900 hours of language instruction and 100 hours of coursework on German culture”.²⁴ From this angle it is quite obvious just how important language is; it is the first thing considered after refugees are settled in, which makes a lot of sense. The fact that this statistic is pointed out by the author proves the idea of German pride in their system. In terms of the larger picture, the department responsible for evaluation of integration in Kaiserslautern said that, “The main question was whether refugees will manage to learn the language and join the local economy, assimilating in the broader social structure, but this is a difficult and long-lasting process replete with hurdles”.²⁵ The use of the words assimilating and long-lasting process ultimately show through to the core of what is important in integration, that it is done with a focus on the future. There is a question to be asked with this idea however, does the use of these terms imply erasing the cultures and identities of those assimilating? This is not something ever truly addressed, especially considering the general lack of coverage from a refugee viewpoint within the German media. This in-depth media coverage on something so seemingly simple, but absolutely crucial, shows that the German integration system is at least trying to do something right. In a larger context, “Germany’s integrations

²³ Anita Lekic, “Here I am a human being: How Kaiserslautern continues to integrate refugees,” *The Local*, November 13, 2018, <https://www.thelocal.de/20181113/how-the-southwest-german>

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Accessed April 23, 2019.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Accessed April 23, 2019.

systems have responded rapidly to the emergency demands and have improved in the process”.²⁶ This says a lot about how refugees are conceived of more generally in Germany. If small towns are going to the lengths of Kaiserslautern, and media outlets are giving in-depth coverage to language course for refugees, it shows at some level that those trying to integrate are seen as important and worthy of German attention. However, there are still issues within the language integration system that Germany has set up.

While there are many great news stories chronicling the language courses and volunteers helping out and teaching refugees German, there is a fundamental issue. Nicole Goebel's article in Deutsche Welle is just one of many that points out a main problem, “Around 45 percent of migrants taking part in language and integration courses in Germany do not pass”.²⁷ What is particularly interesting is that the migration office of Germany is under fire, not necessarily the refugees themselves. Of course it is fair to say that there are those in Germany who would prefer to blame the refugees attempting to integrate into German society, but generally media discourse seems to be focused on catching what is wrong and trying to find solutions. This once again can show that integration is an issue of great importance to the German media, and in a positive way. The idea that language is a theme of German media discourse on integration is a good thing. There are still some fears and concerns about refugees, that will never go away, but if media coverage is anything to go off of, refugees are seen as important and coverage chronicling the processes of integration will serve to heighten this idea of refugees as potentially important actors within Germany society.

²⁶ Swati Mehta, “How Integration is Actually Working in Germany,” *Refugees Deeply*, October 24, 2018, <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/community/2018/10/22/we-need-a-more-honest-discussion-of-ugandas-model-refugee-policies>

²⁷ Nicole Goebel, “Migrants fail German tests in increasing numbers,” *Deutsche Welle*, March 22, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/migrants-fail-german-tests-in-increasing-numbers/a-48018342>

Language coverage inevitably plays into media coverage on education, yet another key aspect of integration. Language and education go hand-in-hand, “a lack of integration and language teaching means first-generation migrant children are twice as likely to drop out of school than local pupils”.²⁸ The focus on success versus failure in this statement and the article more broadly, reflects concern about the results of integration from the perspective of the future. While discourse on integration and language was fairly mixed, there seems to be a slightly more negative discourse surrounding education. This stems mostly from the fact that for integration to be a long-term concept, all must be educated, but in particular the youth must be if they are to contribute to German society in the future; which is ultimately what Germans want to see out of integration.

It is quite easy to see why education would be, and is, an important topic in the discourse around refugee integration. The discourse surrounding education takes the tone of a difficult task that could very well fail if not implemented correctly. As an article by Julia Vergin states clearly in the title, “German School System is Failing Refugees”; this title does not take much interpretation, something wrong is happening within integration and education. Vergin points out, “distribution of refugees represented a major impediment to academic success. Most refugees landed in schools located in deprived areas”.²⁹ The key word to focus on here is distribution. As discussed earlier, resettlement is carried out by a federal organ of German government that uses a quota system to carry out resettlement. Obviously, this resettlement process is missing some of the problems that are occurring with integration. The fact that the resettlement system and the process of integration are not lining up on something as important as

²⁸ “UN warns migrant children are missing out on education,” *Deutsche Welle*, November 20, 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/un-warns-migrant-children-are-missing-out-on-education/a-46368142>

²⁹ Julia Vergin, “German School System is Failing Refugees- Report,” *Deutsche Welle*, March 1, 2018, <https://www.dw.com/en/german-school-system-is-failing-refugees-report/a-42790487>

education is cause for concern. Another issue that Vergin discusses is that, “most teachers simply aren’t qualified to deal with students who come from different cultures, grew up in a different religious context and who often struggle with trauma as a result of their experiences”.³⁰ The focus on the fact that teachers are not qualified to deal with a different type of student is actually a productive discourse. Despite the negative sounding connotations of that sentence, it reflects a theme that was also obvious in the media discourse surrounding language. The asylum seekers and refugees in Germany are thankful to be in Germany; even though things may seem a little off and unusual to them in many cases. As Mr. and Mrs. H, refugees in Germany, stated: “Here [in Germany], the most important thing for us is that we have escaped hell. There [in the first country of asylum] you had no right to go to school or work. You had no identity card. Here you have good opportunities, and the children can go to school. You can live much better, like a human”.³¹ The language used to describe the issues with the school system, much like the descriptions of the issues in language integration, highlights the fact that the German media sees an issue and wants to create a more constructive dialogue. This discourse is much more productive than saying “these refugees are dumb and are not able to keep up with our advanced education system”. Understanding the issues of refugee students coming from different religious or cultural backgrounds; with the possibility of a traumatic past, is a step in the right direction in terms of discourse.

Austin Davis also constructs an important discourse about integration into education in his 2017 article “There are about 400,000 refugee kids in Germany. Educating them is a ‘national task’”. Right away the words ‘national task’ must be looked at. This discursive trend is

³⁰ Ibid., Accessed May 1, 2019.

³¹ Tatjana Baraulina and Maria Bitterwolf, “Resettlement in Germany – What is the programme for particularly vulnerable refugees accomplishing?” *BAMF Brief Analysis*, (April 2018): 11.

something that seems to pop up in German media. Integrating refugees into the German educational system is something to be undertaken by the nation; which sounds really good from the perspective of creating a long-term plan for integration. Unfortunately, Davis's article is a discourse on the issues that are restraining this task. One vitally important thread of discourse that Davis picks up on is, "More generally, there's a lack of understanding about refugees and their needs among some German students and their parents, who fear that their children won't receive a spot in a good secondary school and that their education will suffer as a result".³² The German education system is a very competitive one, in which there are different tiers and those on the top tier get a better choice of schooling. This discourse about refugee students potentially holding back "normal" German students is both concerning and could have long-term negative effects. Davis goes on to say, "Such sentiments have created a 'zoo-like' mentality in the school in which refugee students are ostracized from the rest of the student body".³³ The use of the words "zoo-like" and "ostracized" create a very negative tone. Reference to refugees as animals, which is implied in "zoo-like", within the education system; sets up a larger question about just general integration. If refugees cannot comfortably be integrated into the school system, then how can anyone expect them to integrate into society as a whole? If this kind of language is being used to describe the realities of integration into the German education system it casts a slightly more negative light on the topic of overall integration in Germany. Education is so crucial in integration, which is why it is one of the major themes touched on by the media; however, "if this experiment in integration doesn't work in Germany, where completing a

³² Austin Davis, "There are about 400,000 refugee kids in Germany. Educating them is a 'national task,'" *Public Radio International*, October 12, 2017, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-10-12/there-are-about-400000-refugee-kids-germany-educating-them-national-task>

³³ *Ibid.*, Accessed May 1, 2019.

rigorous amount of schooling is key to future success, the refugee kids could become a lost generation".³⁴ Once again some troubling, but important word choice to consider.

Education is something that worldwide is important. Regardless of race, religion, or gender; everyone should be entitled to a fair education. German discourse on integration in relation to education uses language and takes on the tone of wanting to help; and there is evidence that Germany is indeed trying to do so. More classes are being created, more teachers hired, and more programs started. However, the discourse within the German media points to the fact that education of refugees attempting to integrate into German society is riddled with problems. Once again, like the German discourse around language and integration, the focus on a more well-rounded media approach is evident. From the articles sampled, all placed the focus on the system; rather than as a critique of the refugees themselves. There are many issues surrounding educating those refugees who want to integrate into German society, and there is an overall recognition of these issues, which bodes well for the future. The word choice of journalists appears negative at first glance; but in reality, it is more focused on constructive criticism than pure negative rhetoric.

The final main discourse on integration revolves around the always debated topic of jobs; in this case with specific focus on refugee integration into a large and advanced German labor market. Media coverage on integration into the labor market is once again fairly mixed within the sources used for this study. Experts are quoted as seeing the integration as going quite well, and at a more macro level; which simply considers the numbers, this is true. Media coverage however does not only focus on the numbers, one important area that seems to be a hot topic is the discrimination faced by migrants in their attempts to integrate.

³⁴ Ibid., Accessed May 1, 2019.

A good deal of coverage uses the positive figures of jobs for migrants as a way to highlight the seemingly positive reaction of the German labor market to the current influx of refugees and asylum seekers. An article from *TheLocal* in 2018 does just that by quoting Ingo Kramer, the head of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations: "Today more than 400,000 are in employment or training...even I am surprised at how quickly it's progressing".³⁵ The use of such a positive quote reflects a general positive attitude towards the integration happening in the job market. However, in the same article there is a glimpse of some of the deeper issues that seems to be the main focus of media coverage, "the German institute for Human Rights highlighted in its annual report this month that foreigners are often underpaid, hired without formal contracts or pushed to work overtime without pay".³⁶ The important points made in this quote outline some of the very basic issues faced by refugees in the German work force. If integration is going to work in Germany and be successful for a long period of time, as new generations find themselves in the work force; Germany will need to focus on the dialogue that stems from these issues. This article from *TheLocal* is an example of a typical article focusing primarily on the basic numbers of job market integration; the deeper discourse is found in other articles.

The article "Germany's migrants: Wooed and discriminated against", by Astrid Prange touches on some of the more difficult pieces of media discourse around job market integration. Right away Prange points out that, "achieving equality and integration in society will not be an easy task. Discrimination persists in Germany, not just between those with or without immigrant

³⁵ "Germany integrating migrants quickly, according to business chief," *TheLocal*, December 14, 2018, <https://www.thelocal.de/20181214/germany-integrating-migrants-quickly-business-chief>

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Accessed May 9, 2019.

backgrounds, but also within different immigrant groups”.³⁷ The use of equality and integration together points towards some recognition of the importance of integration, particularly in something such as the job market, in creating long-lasting results; which in turn could facilitate equal treatment for refugees and asylum seekers. This is why discourse about jobs is so crucial, it can have a huge impact on the overall status of integration and even further, equality. However, Prange tempers the media accounts that only use the numbers to argue the success by digging a little deeper. She follows an important thread of discourse about the discrimination faced by refugees and asylum seekers in seeking jobs. As she discusses in her article, “A lack of self-esteem, insufficient qualifications, mistrust, cultural differences and above all deeply-rooted prejudices can get in the way of immigrants starting off successfully in the workforce. Many job applicants with a non-German background are simply never offered an interview”.³⁸ Going even further, Prange cites a 2018 study that found “job applicants with immigrant backgrounds face ‘clear discrimination’ despite a shortage of skilled labor in the work force”.³⁹ The language used by Prange shows the simplistic nature of the issues facing refugees attempting to integrate into the job market, but it also shows these issues are deep seated and quite difficult to actually overcome. The problem with the discourse surrounding jobs is that “experts say the integration of refugees into the labor market is generally going well”.⁴⁰ However, analyzing the word choice and general coverage of media articles shows that in fact job integration may be a larger problem than those at the top are willing to admit.

³⁷ Astrid Prange, “Germany’s migrants: Wooed and discriminated against,” *Deutsche Welle*, February 11, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-migrants-wood-and-discriminated-against/a-47450543>

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Accessed May 9, 2019.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Accessed May 9, 2019.

⁴⁰ Imane Mellouk, “When refugees in Germany are exploited by their fellow countrymen,” *Deutsche Welle*, January 3, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/when-refugees-in-germany-are-exploited-by-their-fellow-countrymen/a-47734932>

Similar to media coverage on language and education; the fact that coverage on jobs is a priority is a positive thing in general. German media, by covering the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the labor market, reinforces the concept that Germany is behind the idea of successful and long-term integration, but the majority of coverage tends to be filled with the recognition that there are a multitude of problems associated with this integration process. The language used to discuss job market integration includes a lot of negative connotations that point towards the levels of discrimination faced by those attempting to integrate and find jobs in Germany. The word choice reflects a slightly less positive attitude than seen with discourse on language and education; but still is better than completely ignoring the subject all together, or simply attacking those trying to integrate.

Looking critically into media discourse in Germany on the subject of integration of the large number of refugees and asylum seekers currently within their borders can help point to the idea that Germany is living up to the world's expectations. The world sees Germany as an example of a western nation upholding their international duty to help create long-term, durable solutions to one of the greatest issues facing the world, human displacement. The fact that there is little discourse within German media that is overtly negative is promising. Even more promising is the fact that most coverage tends to be on what can be called constructive points. German media has honed in on language, education, and jobs as three main points to look at when considering integration for refugees and asylum seekers. Some of this coverage is positive, and alludes to the good things happening in Germany to facilitate integration. Some coverage takes a more negative tone; however, even in this case the language used can be seen as more constructive criticism than anything else. The media in Germany seems to really be considering the issues at hand and is offering up commentary on these issues in a way that looks to find

solutions. The sources used for this analysis could slightly affect this appearance. All news sites used are more focused on an international audience, and it is possible that in more local papers a different discourse could be taking place. That being said, the fact that generally German media can be seen as providing fair coverage on important issues, and is concerned with constructively criticizing the parts of German integration strategies that are not working lends itself well to the idea that at least the German media truly cares about the results of integration. By digging into the discourse provided by the German media on integration, this conclusion becomes evident.

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