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## (In)Hospitable: Refugees as "Guests" in Germany Today

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(In)Hospitable: Refugees as ‘Guests’ in Germany Today

Senior Project submitted to  
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By

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But even if the hospitality of urgency is redefined as the norm rather than the exception, it is worth considering those cases in which a collective body must alleviate the sufferings of individuals who have already been victimized by an original act of inhospitality. The definition of the refugee recognizes that the principle of hospitality has already been violated, and that asylum is an exceptional remedy, a moment of excess in the system: an access of hospitality here responds to the lack of hospitality elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

On August 31, 2015, German Chancellor Angela Merkel accepted the first train carrying refugees from Budapest, Hungary, and uttered the iconic statements “Wir schaffen das” (“We can do this”). A week later, the borders of Germany were officially opened and refugees seeking to escape persecution were welcomed into Germany. This act of hospitality was heralded internationally as a feat of humanism. The sentiment of Merkel’s iconic words motivated many Germans to volunteer with newly arriving refugees, and a culture of welcoming (Willkommenskultur) spread throughout Germany. In 2015 alone, roughly one million refugees entered Germany, the majority of which applied for asylum.<sup>2</sup> This increase in refugees came to be known as the “migrant crisis”, and the question of how to best handle such an influx of people became an intense topic of debate in political and public spheres. During this period, many questions arose: Who is welcome in Germany? Who is allowed to stay? Is it dangerous to allow refugees into the country? How will refugees be integrated?<sup>3</sup> These questions were initially answered optimistically, as the culture of welcoming prevailed. Following an incident in multiple

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1. Mireille Rosello *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 153.

2. “Asylum Statistics - Statistics Explained,” March 13, 2017. [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics).

3. Anna Riemann, Almut Cieschinger, Claudia Niesen, Susmita Arp, and Arp Schlossarek. “Endlich Verständlich: Fakten Zur Flüchtlingskrise.” *SPIEGEL ONLINE*, February 22, 2017. <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/fluechtlinge-und-einwanderer-die-wichtigsten-fakten-a-1030320.html>.



German cities on New Year's Eve, public approval of refugees in Germany plummeted, and the overall atmosphere towards them soured, particularly toward male refugees.

Against this background, this project aims to examine how refugees in Germany are conceptualized by the government and the larger population as 'guests', and are seen as beneficiaries of German hospitality. Using Jacques Derrida's *Of Hospitality* and Mireille Rosello's *Postcolonial Hospitality* as a theoretical framework, and guided by interviews conducted by myself with young male refugees living in Berlin, the following chapters will deconstruct the selective hospitality offered by Germany and demonstrate how refugees are conceived as impermanent in German society, and are forced to adhere to set notions of guesthood.

## **Historical Background**

The views of the German government and German population toward immigrants entering their country are shaped by policies dating back to early times of emigration. As Germans emigrated to the New World and colonized territories, German citizenship was conceptualized through the principle of *jus sanguis*. This was the notion that the national community was considered more important than civil rights and the republic, opposing more common principles of that time, which were based on territory, such as *jus soli*. According to *jus sanguis*, Germans who left the country were therefore still considered citizens of Germany, as were their children. Conversely, immigrants to Germany maintained citizenship from their country of origin, as did their children, even if born on German soil.<sup>4</sup> This understanding of the nation left foreigners living in Germany in precarious legal and societal circumstances, which

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4. Klaus J. Bade, and Myron Weiner. *Migration Past, Migration Future*, (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997), 17.

were further compounded by Germany's lack of political discourse on immigration. Until the late 1990s, the German government did not officially categorize the country as an immigration country, and instead of enacting policies on immigration used the term "policy concerning foreigners" (Ausländerpolitik).<sup>5</sup> It was thought that if an official immigration policy was put in place, it would be easier for immigrants to come to Germany, and Germany did not want to become an immigration country. Klaus J. Bade and Myron Weiner outline this view in their book

*Migration Past, Migration Future:*

Germany is not a country of immigration. For decades this has been the official view of the German government on defining its position on international migration and the integration of foreigners. This official stand also reflects the view of many Germans. In line with the German Constitution and the law on citizenship, a majority of them see their country as an ethnically defined nation-state. Germany's self-definition as a nonimmigrant society is thus to be understood as a normative statement: Germany should not be a country of immigration today and must not become one in the future.<sup>6</sup>

This understanding of nationhood excludes people who are not considered ethnically German from being considered a part of German society. As long as Germany is considered not to be a nation of immigration, immigrants are prevented from claiming Germany as a country of their own. They are viewed as foreigners, rather than members of German society. It was not until 2000 that it became possible for children born to immigrants in Germany to become citizens. The updated law also allowed immigrants to apply for citizenship, but only after they had resided in the country for a considerable amount of time.<sup>7</sup> To understand German attitudes towards refugees entering the country today, it is imperative to understand German views toward nationhood and its history of immigration.

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5. Klaus J. Bade, and Myron Weiner. *Migration Past, Migration Future*, (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997), 28.

6. *Ibid.*, 65.

7. "Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht." *Auswärtiges Amt*, January 28, 2015. <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/Staatsangehoerigkeitsrecht.html>.

There have been six distinct phases of immigration between 1945 and the early 2000s in Germany. From 1945 to 1949 ethnic Germans, refugees, and foreign expellees immigrated to Germany after being displaced during World War II. From 1949 to 1961, migration mainly took place between East and West Germany. Beginning in 1955, Germany began actively recruiting foreign labor until 1973. In 1973, Germany stopped recruiting foreigners, which led to families of foreign workers living in Germany to migrate and reunite with their families. After the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and through the 1990s, there was a resurgence of Ethnic Germans, asylum seekers and refugees entering Germany. Since 1992, Germany has developed policies to better regulate immigration of Ethnic Germans and asylum seekers into the country.<sup>8</sup> From these six phases, three types of immigrants emerge: Ethnic Germans living in different countries, Germans travelling from East Germany to West Germany, and foreigners (guest-workers, refugees and asylum seekers). This last category is the primary focus of the following analysis.

Both East Germany (GDR) and West Germany (FRG) invited foreign guest workers following World War II. The FRG experienced an economic boom during the 1950s and companies had difficulty finding enough labor to fill positions in factories. This economic upswing happened at the same time the FRG was undergoing a shift in demographics; as more Germans enrolled in higher education, less people entered the workforce.<sup>9</sup> To counteract the reduced labor force, the FRG began recruiting laborers from other countries, beginning with Italy in 1955, followed by Spain, Greece, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia throughout the 1960s.<sup>10</sup> These workers often held undesirable positions that German workers did

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8. Klaus J. Bade, and Myron Weiner. *Migration Past, Migration Future*, (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997), 68.

9. *Ibid.*, 79.

10. *Ibid.*, 78.

not want to occupy.<sup>11</sup> It was expected that foreign workers would work for a period of time and then return to their country of origin. Therefore, they came to be known as guest workers. This system proved to be inefficient by the late 1960s, as many workers had not saved enough money to return home. Employers grew tired of having to constantly retrain their workforce as temporary immigrant workers left. In 1971, the FRG offered a five-year visa for foreign workers, provided they had already been working in the country for five years. Soon after, in 1973, the recruitment of workers stopped altogether. Guest workers knew if they left the FRG the likelihood of being allowed back was low. Therefore they chose to stay, even when offered a monetary reward for returning to their country of origin.<sup>12</sup> Their families then immigrated to Germany in an attempt to reunite with their loved ones.<sup>13</sup> Like the FRG, the GDR also invited foreign workers, but enforced strict policies to send foreign workers back to their countries of origin.<sup>14</sup> There was no attempt to integrate guest workers in the GDR, and workers were housed in areas segregated from the German population.<sup>15</sup> Historically, Germany's policies toward guest workers were centered around the notion that they were impermanent residents. As guest workers stayed and the population of foreigners rose, xenophobic attitudes among Germans grew. The temporary nature of guest workers was transforming into a permanent fixture. Resultantly, the growing fear of foreigners directly affected refugee policy in the late 1980s in an attempt to keep migrants out of the country.

Like guest workers, refugees and asylum seekers were welcomed into Germany in the era following World War II. This welcome changed as an influx of foreigners entered the country,

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11. Klaus J. Bade, and Myron Weiner. *Migration Past, Migration Future*, (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997), 79.

12. *Ibid.*, 83.

13. *Ibid.*, 82.

14. *Ibid.*, 80.

15. *Ibid.*, 24.

and the government felt they did not have a means of regulating the flow due to their lack of immigration law. In 1988, the German legislature changed its law regarding refugees and asylum seekers. Rather than granting people asylum because they faced persecution in their country of origin, asylum seekers had to prove they were persecuted on an individual basis. This excluded refugees fleeing from war, torture or terror directed toward larger populations, rather than individuals. Although they were still tolerated within Germany's borders due to the Geneva Convention, refugees were not likely to receive asylum status.<sup>16</sup> The flow of refugees and asylum seekers into Germany was further curtailed by establishing safe border countries around Germany, as well as deeming certain countries of origin 'safe states', meaning that the German parliament declared no risk of persecution by state actors occurred in these states. Refugees who were known to have entered through a border state lost their right to apply for asylum in Germany, and had to apply for asylum in the state of entry.<sup>17</sup> This is known today as the Dublin Agreement, and is still used to prevent refugees from staying in Germany. With such policies in place, reaching Germany by way of land would lead to expulsion from Germany, and re-entry into a safe country of arrival. This ensured the only direct way of reaching Germany was through flight, which requires a visa. Often in order to be granted such a visa, proof of sufficient means to support oneself, or an agreement to leave Germany and not apply for asylum upon arrival were required.<sup>18</sup>

For both guest workers and refugees, entrance into Germany and permission to stay were filled with uncertainty, a fact that remains true for refugees and asylum seekers in Germany

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16. Klaus J. Bade, and Myron Weiner. *Migration Past, Migration Future*, (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1997), 88.

17. *Ibid.*, 89.

18. Christoph H. Schwarz "Refugees from Syria as 'Guests' in Germany: The Moral Economy of German Refugee Policy in 2014." In *Migration, Mobilities and the Arab Spring: Spaces of Refugee Flight in the Eastern Mediterranean*, edited by Natalia Ribas-Mateos, (Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2016), 110.

today. With the opening of the borders it became easier for refugees to enter the country; the struggle now is whether or not they will be allowed to stay. This project will examine the ways in which Germany asserts its role as host: both in granting and denying hospitality to refugees within its borders.

The first chapter is an exploration of “Willkommenskultur” (culture of welcoming), born out of a moment of euphoric optimism. This culture of welcome is characterized as a societal movement, but it is deeply rooted in political pressure and the politics of hospitality.

In the second chapter, I analyze to whom this culture of welcome actually applies. Through a process of categorization, the German government created a system to more easily deny or approve asylum applications. This selective hospitality leads to a hierarchy of refugees, based on country of origin and reasons for fleeing. Further limits are placed on hospitality granted to those deemed welcome, as the approval of protective statuses are only temporary, and must be renewed.

Using news sources from the two weeks following the sexual assaults on New Year’s Eve in Cologne, the third chapter scrutinizes what takes place when the “rules of hospitality” are broken by the “guest” in contemporary German society. Through biased reporting and the co-optation of victims’ stories, the atmosphere surrounding refugees and refugee politics worsened greatly. Many media sources labelled the events as a cultural phenomenon, and therefore a result of failed integration.

The fourth and final chapter deals with the topic of integration, viewed often as a duty of refugees to their host country. There are a very specific ideas of what integration is supposed to consist of to the German populous; this chapter explores the obstacles that prevent many refugees from fulfilling these unrealistic expectations of integration.

Throughout this paper I use the terms refugee and asylum seeker interchangeably, since in Germany a person is granted refugee status through the asylum application process. Although I recognize that the term refugee generalizes the experiences of a diverse population, I believe it fits best in describing the circumstances faced by people seeking refuge in Germany.

My time spent volunteering with and interviewing refugees was the inspiration for this project. Every person I met was thankful to be in Germany, but they still struggled to fully adjust and feel comfortable. While attempting to understand these circumstances of my participants, I struggled to find the vocabulary to piece it all together. Through the revelation that refugees are treated as impermanent guests in Germany, I found the means to best describe the very real and frustrating situation in which they live.

## Chapter One: Willkommenskultur

It is important to begin with the startling fact that Germany has taken in more refugees than any other European country.<sup>19</sup> A large portion of these refugees came during the “long summer of migration” and especially after Chancellor Merkel and the German government decided to keep Germany’s borders open in September 2015. This period is mainly remembered as one of absolute welcome, as both the government and the German population greeted refugees with great enthusiasm. Therefore, this moment is often characterized by the concept “Willkommenskultur” (culture of welcoming). This “culture of welcoming” is defined as consisting of welcoming practices toward new members, and in order to be considered a welcoming culture “society must fundamentally acknowledge society itself as a ‘society of immigration’.”<sup>20</sup> Germany was applauded internationally due to the shocking amount of citizens who rushed to welcome and support refugees. Although this widespread hospitality remains the prevailing memory from this period, it was born out of uncertainty and a necessity to act, and fleetingly held sway over the majority of the population. The reigning narrative is one of absolute welcome, but it truly manifested from complex political pressures and various tragic events, which spawned a dominant tone of euphoric positivity.

French philosopher Jacques Derrida offers terms through which the phenomenon of welcome can be understood. He describes the law of hospitality as the “law of absolute, unconditional, hyperbolic hospitality.”<sup>21</sup> According to Derrida, guests must be unconditionally

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19. “Asylum Statistics - Statistics Explained,” March 13, 2017. [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics).

20. Friedrich Heckmann, “Willkommenskultur was ist das, und wie kann sie entstehen und entwickelt werden? (Welcome Culture: what is it, how does it emerge and how can it be developed?)” *Bundeskonzferenz der Integrationsbeauftragten von Bund, Ländern und Kommunen*, Europäisches Forum für Migrationsstudien (efms). May 5, Wiesbaden.

21. Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 77.



welcomed, even when that welcome infringes upon the “powers, rights, and duties” of the host.<sup>22</sup> Herein lies the issue of “Willkommenskultur”. This term has come to signify a moment of absolute welcome at the peak of migration to Germany, whereas in reality, it was shaped by political pressures, both past and present, and the susceptibility of the public to these pressures.

The months leading up to the opening of Germany’s border are often clouded by this memory of absolute welcome. Before September 2015, German policies toward refugees were very different. In the summer months of 2015, the European border states (Italy, Greece, and Hungary) were overwhelmed by the amount of refugees entering their borders. They were obliged through a European Union (EU) law, known as the Dublin Regulation, to prevent people from passing into other European countries. This allowed Germany to maintain some sort of control over their asylum process. By mid-summer thousands of refugees had surpassed border controls in the neighboring states, and had reached Germany. Officially these refugees had reached Germany illegally according to the Dublin regulation, but with the sheer volume of people seeking refuge, the influx was difficult to control.<sup>23</sup>

In July 2015, Chancellor Merkel was forced to face the consequences of the German government’s asylum policies when she met a Palestinian girl named Reem. Reem had come to Germany when she was ten years old from a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon with her family. She quickly learned German, and adjusted to life in Germany. Her family’s experience, however, was different. Her father was unable to work since they had yet to receive a decision on their asylum application, four years after arriving in Germany. Merkel responded to Reem by commenting on how wonderfully Reem spoke German and expressed remorse that her family

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22. Ibid.

23. “Two Weeks in September: The Makings of Merkel’s Decision to Accept Refugees,” *SPIEGEL ONLINE*, August 24, 2016. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/a-look-back-at-the-refugee-crisis-one-year-later-a-1107986.html>.

had waited so long to receive a decision.<sup>24</sup> To Merkel, Reem's story exemplified the issue with the asylum system; it took too long and in the meantime people became adjusted to life in Germany. Reem pushed Merkel, stating that she fears that her family will not be allowed to stay. She had dreams to study in Germany, but her future was so uncertain that she was unable to enjoy her life. Merkel replied:

Nevertheless, I must say, this is hard politics. When you stand in front of me, and you are an incredibly likeable person, but you know there are thousands and thousands in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. If we were to say, "You can all come, and you can all come from Africa, you can all come", we also could not do that (Wir können das auch nicht schaffen).<sup>25</sup>

This last sentence is of particular interest, since Merkel would contradict this exact statement six weeks later on August 31, when she first said, "Wir schaffen das." As Merkel continued to discuss the matter, she realized that Reem was crying. In an attempt to comfort the crying girl, Merkel stroked her gently and told her how well she had represented her cause, and the circumstances of many refugees.<sup>26</sup>

After this exchange, Merkel faced tremendous criticism from the press and the German population. Her responses to Reem were characterized as cold and robotic, while her attempt to calm the upset girl was made laughable. The hashtag "#merkelstreichelt" (#merkelstrokes) went viral, as people criticized the ridiculous scenario of a young refugee crying in front of the German chancellor, only to be met with a pat on the shoulder.<sup>27</sup> Even after this uncomfortable

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24. "Two Weeks in September: The Makings of Merkel's Decision to Accept Refugees," *SPIEGEL ONLINE*, August 24, 2016. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/a-look-back-at-the-refugee-crisis-one-year-later-a-1107986.html>.

25. Norddeutscher Rundfunk, *Ungekürzt: Angela Merkel konfrontiert mit weinendem Flüchtlingsmädchen*, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4au5JUp0eQ>.

26. "Begegnung in Schule: Weinendes Flüchtlingsmädchen Bringt Merkel Durcheinander," *SPIEGEL ONLINE*, July 16, 2015. <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/angela-merkel-trifft-weinendes-fluechtlingsmaedchen-aus-libanon-a-1043924.html>.

27. "Angela Merkel streichelt die Wirklichkeit tot." *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, July 16, 2015, sec. politik. <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/kanzlerin-und-fluechtlingsmaedchen-angela-merkel-streichelt-die-wirklichkeit-tot-1.2568815>.

event, Chancellor Merkel and the German government remained firm on their stance toward refugees in the weeks following.

As more and more refugees gathered in the border states, circumstances became desperate. Hungary, in particular, treated refugees poorly. There was much discussion between the Hungarian and German governments regarding how to proceed. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán wanted to start building a fence on the Hungarian border, in the hopes that refugees would not be able to enter Hungary. Orbán did not want more refugees to come, nor was he hospitable towards those already within Hungarian borders. He posed the question to EU leaders in July: “Schengen or corridor?” With this question he implied that either Hungary would become a corridor through which refugees could travel to other European states, or inter-European border controls would be reinstated. This question was met with dismay from European officials: “The corridor would be a violation of the Dublin regulation, and Dublin must continue to apply.” Orbán reportedly responded: “Well, then we'll need the fence,” suggesting a wall would prevent refugees from entering and settling in Hungary.<sup>28</sup> EU officials were also opposed to Hungary instating such border controls, but Orbán ordered the construction of the fence anyway. Panic then spread throughout refugees, as many feared they would be forced to stay in Hungary.

The lack of response from the German government was tested in the late summer, as multiple tragic events surrounding refugees came to light. By mid-summer, attacks on refugee shelters in Germany had reached an all-time high, with over 199 attacks.<sup>29</sup> Responses from

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28. “Two Weeks in September: The Makings of Merkel’s Decision to Accept Refugees,” *SPIEGEL ONLINE*, August 24, 2016. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/a-look-back-at-the-refugee-crisis-one-year-later-a-1107986.html>.

29. “Heidenau: ‘Danke Denen, Die Vor Ort Hass Ertragen.’” *Die Zeit*. August 26, 2015, sec. Politik. <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-08/heidenau-angela-merkel-fluechtlinge-besuch-unterkunft>.

German citizens were not all negative, as the number of volunteers offering their time to these shelters began to rise. On August 26, 2015, Chancellor Merkel was met with both support and opposition in Heidenau, during a visit to a refugee shelter. As she entered the shelter, angry right-winged voices jeered at her, calling her a traitor for allowing refugees into the country.<sup>30</sup> Chancellor Merkel's unclear stance regarding refugees was becoming more and more contested, and she would soon have to choose a side.

The pressure mounted further in late August, when a truck filled with seventy-one dead refugees was found on the side of the road in Austria. Such an event had yet to happen in Europe, and it was the first time that the urgency of this situation became clear to many Europeans. The asylum policies of European countries were forcing people to take deadly risks in order to make it to the desired country and apply for asylum.<sup>31</sup> People fleeing from war, torture, and unimaginable hardship were coming to Europe in search of refuge. Instead they were met with enduring hardship, and in some instances, death.

Shortly after the deadly discovery in Austria, Merkel declared the first train from Budapest to Munich, and uttered her famous words: "Wir schaffen das". Reactions to this first train proved that many Germans were enthusiastic to welcome refugees into the country. The first train arrived to Munich with 400 refugees, and were met by a crowd of people yielding the first of the signs that read: "Refugees Welcome."<sup>32</sup> Members of the Green Party had organized an impromptu welcome committee through Facebook and the group had gathered at the train

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30. "Heidenau: 'Danke Denen, Die Vor Ort Hass Ertragen.'" *Die Zeit*. August 26, 2015, sec. Politik. <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-08/heidenau-angela-merkel-fluechtlinge-besuch-unterkunft>

31. "Asylum's Dark Side: The Deadly Business of Human Smuggling." *SPIEGEL ONLINE*, May 7, 2014. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/refugee-smuggling-a-big-business-in-the-balkans-a-1051461.html>.

32. Two Weeks in September: The Makings of Merkel's Decision to Accept Refugees," *SPIEGEL ONLINE*, August 24, 2016. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/a-look-back-at-the-refugee-crisis-one-year-later-a-1107986.html>.

station. Images from this day mark the beginning of “Willkommenskultur” in Germany as it became known internationally.

After the first train left Budapest, it was unclear for refugees still waiting in Hungary when the next would be allowed to leave, if at all. Many people waiting at the station decided to make the trip to Germany by foot through Austria. Those seeking refuge in Hungary held protests and chanted Merkel’s name, calling for her to let them in. Hungarian officials wanted to bus those walking to the Austrian border, especially after the horrors of the journeys made by many refugees was highlighted by the death of Alan Kurdi. The body of the three-year-old washed ashore a Turkish beach on September 2, and images of the lifeless child significantly impacted European sympathy toward the risks refugees took in search of safety.<sup>33</sup>

The image of Alan Kurdi certainly was in mind, when Germany officials truly opened their borders on September 4. 20,000 refugees travelled from Budapest to Munich on this one weekend. The flow of people continued, since many questioned how long the borders would remain open. German officials deliberated whether or not to close their borders in the days following, but the logistics proved to be complicated. In a comprehensive report from the magazine *Der Spiegel* about this moment, an official who had been present during these discussions reported the conversation that took place:

How would the Federal Police have had enough officers for the blanket surveillance that would require? And how would they respond if it weren't just individuals illegally breaching the borders, but instead groups who had sought to penetrate it in groups of 500 – women and children too? Would they react with water cannons? Tear gas? In Germany? No one would have been able to bear images like that.<sup>34</sup>

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33. “Drowned Refugee Aylan’s Father: Let Him Be the Last.” *Al Jazeera*, September 4, 2015. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/09/drowned-refugee-aylan-father-150903151607625.html>.

34. Two Weeks in September: The Makings of Merkel’s Decision to Accept Refugees,” *SPIEGEL ONLINE*, August 24, 2016. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/a-look-back-at-the-refugee-crisis-one-year-later-a-1107986.html>.

From this report it becomes obvious that the decision to welcome refugees to Germany was not one of absolute welcome, but rather deeply rooted in politics and political image. Instead this moment became known as compassionate act of hospitality to the international community. Germany slowly worked to reverse the consequences of this moment with an overhaul of their asylum system, and international deals like the one made with Turkey to cut off the Balkan Route.<sup>35</sup> This complex relationship between Willkommenskultur and political pressure went beyond the German government and influenced the culture of welcoming as practiced by German citizens.

With such an increase in the number of people entering Germany, the overall atmosphere was one of welcome. Some German citizens opposed refugees entering the country, and in certain cases held racist protests. This negative reaction only fueled the surge of people eager to volunteer and assist refugees at already existing organizations, and also to create many new initiatives in an effort to further support those seeking refuge in Germany.<sup>36</sup>

Germany's long history of such a welcoming response in times of necessity plays an important role in the most recent volunteer movement. In both World Wars, extensive networks of volunteers were set up to aid those displaced by war. Again in the 1970s, as refugees came to West Germany from Vietnam, both practical and financial assistance was offered. Most recently in the 1990s, many organizations and volunteer networks were founded in response to refugees coming from the Balkans. Along with the surge of do-gooders generated by this period, refugees and asylum seekers were also the target of many racist attacks often resulting in death, adding to the charged political atmosphere surrounding refugees. The response of volunteers to refugees in

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35. Ibid.

36. Ulrike Hamann and Serhat Karakayali, "Practicing Willkommenskultur: Migration and Solidarity in Germany," *Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics* 2, no. 4 (2016): 74.

the Summer of 2015 was largely born out of the legacy of these movements, and the population's historic understanding of the importance of such networks.<sup>37</sup>

Countless Germans waited at train stations to welcome the newly-arrived, some even drove to Hungary and Croatia to pick up refugees and bring them into the country.<sup>38</sup> Many people volunteered in welcome centers, helping to prepare food and hand out clothing. As more refugees settled in camps and shelters, volunteers were vital in language instruction. In this way, they also played an important role in helping asylum seekers maneuver asylum applications, since applications were in German and many were just beginning to learn the language.<sup>39</sup>

Alongside volunteers, a surprising amount of political parties, companies, and right-leaning media joined in the welcoming of refugees to Germany. Even Germany's infamously exploitative tabloid *Bild* expressed a positive attitude toward refugees, and began publishing an Arabic supplement to their newspaper. Such a positive reaction in mainstream politics and media truly made Willkommenskultur the prevailing atmosphere throughout Germany.

The prevalence of this atmosphere is illustrated by surveys released during this time on the political and social climate in Germany. Infratest dimap released statistics from a survey about the sentiments felt by German citizens towards refugees. The results were notably positive:

According to "Infratest dimap", 6 out of 10 respondents are not afraid of "too many" refugees. Every 9 out of 10 are "ashamed of the violent protests". 95% think it's good, that Merkel's "good citizens" are engaging with refugees. One in two call for greater protection against xenophobic attacks. Surprisingly, more than half do not want benefit cuts for asylum seekers.<sup>40</sup>

These statistics demonstrate how deeply Willkommenskultur corresponded with the mainstream.

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37. Ulrike Hamann and Serhat Karakayali, "Practicing Willkommenskultur: Migration and Solidarity in Germany," *Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics* 2, no. 4 (2016): 74.

38. *Ibid.*, 75.

39. *Ibid.*, 79-80.

40. Josef Joffe, "Willkommenskultur: Das Deutsche Wunder," *Die Zeit*. September 12, 2015, sec. Politik. <http://www.zeit.de/2015/37/willkommenskultur-deutschland-fluechtlinge-zeitgeist>.

This sentiment of Willkommenskultur reached so deeply into German culture that some even saw it as an agent changing the way that Germans conceived their national, collective identity. For years, this identity was defined largely by ethnicity. With such an influx of people from other cultures, what it meant to be German was shifting. An article by *Die Zeit* about Willkommenskultur directly addresses this phenomenon, and attempted to explain why German citizens had reacted so positively to the influx of refugees:

The second reason has nothing to do with DNA, rather with a change in culture. For centuries being German was connected to ethnicity: origin, belief, language. This country is now developing a modern understanding of nationality: German is not “to be” but rather “to become”, not “bio”, rather an act of will – like millions have become Americans, Australians and Canadians. Ethnicity is fading away in favor of the future. To give Angela Merkel the last word: “We can do it, and where something stands in the way, it must be overcome.”<sup>41</sup>

This quotation highlights the positivity that surrounded the weeks following the opening of the borders. The euphoria of this moment shifted opinions so fundamentally that conceptions of German identity that had existed for centuries, were confronted. These century-old concepts of what it meant to be German directly impacted the way that their lawmaking bodies addressed immigration, and the way that the populous addressed foreigners in the country.

Perhaps the euphoria of Willkommenskultur manifested in response to the horrible circumstances faced by refugees in their countries of origin, and during their journey to Germany. This suffering was made visible by news media, which clearly showed the inhospitality suffered by refugees. Mireille Rosello confronts this idea in her book *Postcolonial Hospitality* when she says:

The body that grants asylum both condemns that lack of hospitality elsewhere while recognizing that, within that space, inhospitality has become the norm or the reality of

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41. Ibid.



law. Helping asylum seekers is also an admission of powerlessness, a sign that inhospitality, somewhere, vails unchallenged.<sup>42</sup>

The very necessity for hospitality towards refugees in Germany was born out of absolutely inhospitable conditions in another place. In an attempt to overcome this inhospitality which created the mass migration in the summer of 2015, German citizens initially responded with an outpour of volunteers, resources and open-mindedness.

However overwhelming this euphoria of welcome seemed, Willkommenskultur proved far less unconditional than originally purported. In a survey of volunteers working with refugees, the complexities of this topic came to light: “The majority of volunteers have very extensive ideas about asylum, but they still only ‘conditionally’ accept immigrants. Findings suggest that the relatively small share of volunteers who would agree to ‘unconditionally’ accept refugees and the demand for ‘open borders’ has significantly declined since the rise in participation of 2014.”<sup>43</sup> There are circumstances in which German hospitality becomes strained. This is particularly so when addressing the permanency of refugees in Germany. What at first seemed like unconditional hospitality for everyone seeking refuge, quickly became a selective process only offered to those who fit standards set by the German government. The intensity of Willkommenskultur dwindled in the months following the opening of the borders, and proved itself fragile in the face of adversity.

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42. Mireille Rosello, *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 153.

43. Ulrike Hamann and Serhat Karakayali, “Practicing Willkommenskultur: Migration and Solidarity in Germany,” *Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics* 2, no. 4 (2016): 78.

## Chapter Two: Who is Welcome?

Travelling through Europe in the summer of 2016, I witnessed an incident on a plane that made me confront the question: who is welcome in Germany? As I boarded the front of the aircraft, I heard a man yelling from the very last row. No actual words escaped his mouth, instead sobs came from deep within him. I looked at my ticket and realized that I would be seated two rows in front of him. I couldn't comprehend the situation; what was making this man so upset? Passengers filed through the rows, unilaterally confused by the commotion, trying to act as if nothing was happening. The man screamed, "I refuse to fly, this is against my will." When I reached my seat, I looked at him and realized he was handcuffed, held down by two large men on either side of him. A woman stood over him, straddling his legs and smothering his face with what looked like tan stockings. His face was distorted under the fabric as he pushed against it, writhing his head from side to side and shouting as loudly as he could. The passengers looked at one another, obviously uncomfortable given the treatment of this man, but unsure of what to do, or how to help. A young American woman yelled, "He is a human being, you can't treat him like that." I turned to the flight attendant and asked, "Why does she have to cover his face like that?" "It's for his own good," she replied, "So he doesn't spit." I tried to settle into my seat, and ran through the possibilities of why he was handcuffed. I thought to myself he must be a criminal. The plane was delayed, and we sat on the tarmac. He continued to scream, shouting mostly in a language I could not recognize, but sometimes in English, "I refuse to fly!" "Please stop the plane!" "Let me off, let me off, let me off!" I sat there puzzled, and then he yelled, "You can stay. I'm Afghan, I can't stay." It clicked in my head, he was a refugee, and he was being deported. I looked back at him, his face was still smothered by the spit guard. The woman pushed down hard against him, wrapping her arms around his head, almost putting him in a

headlock. We sat on the tarmac for an hour; he never stopped screaming. When the plane began to move, and the pilots prepared for take-off, his cries became more desperate. The flight attendant tried to give directions over the loudspeaker, but he yelled over her, “I refuse to fly, I refuse to fly.” As the plane's wheels left the ground, his screams changed. His hopes of being taken off the plane were crushed, but he persisted. The entire flight he cried out, sometimes indecipherable sobs, and sometimes desperate pleas for help in every language he knew, trying to reach someone on the plane. The whole time, the woman loomed over him, smothering him with the spit guard. I looked back and saw it wrapped tightly around his neck. He pleaded repeatedly, “Oxygen! Please oxygen!” She loosened her grip. He begged, “My family is there, I want to be there. Take me back, please take me back.” After two hours, his yells became whispers, but his pleas were unwavering. We landed, and the passengers were told to remain seated. I looked out the window and saw the lights of a police car approach the stairs, and turned to look at the man. His shouts had finally stopped, and the woman unwrapped his face. He hung his head, defeated, as the men on either side of him lifted him from his seat and carried him down the stairs. The police car quickly drove away.

In this chapter I discuss European and German asylum law, the legal framework that makes this unsettling story possible.

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Before the German government decided to keep the borders open, their stance toward refugees was simple; they couldn't take in everyone. With the opening of the borders in early September 2015, this sentiment seemed to change, and people seeking refuge from many geopolitical conflicts saw an opportunity to flee to Germany. This created a dilemma for the German government, as Germany was overwhelmed by the sheer volume of people entering the

country. In the following months, standards were set for which types of refugees could seek refuge, and from where. Legitimate and illegitimate reasons were outlined regarding why a person could legally stay within German borders. French philosopher Jacques Derrida provides the theoretical vocabulary to discuss the German view toward incoming refugees:

How can we distinguish between a guest and a parasite? In principle, the difference is straightforward, but for that you need a law; hospitality, reception, the welcome offered have to be submitted to a basic and limiting jurisdiction. Not all new arrivals are received as guests if they don't have the benefit of the right to hospitality or the right of asylum, etc. Without this right, a new arrival can only be introduced "in my home," in the host's "at home," as a parasite, a guest who is wrong, illegitimate, clandestine, liable to expulsion or arrest.<sup>44</sup>

Germany became a hospitable place of refuge for some and inhospitable to many others. By setting these standards, a hierarchy of refugees was created, and laws, like the Dublin Regulation, that were initially ignored were once again enforced with rigor. During in-person interviews with refugees living in Berlin, it became obvious how deeply immigrants' experiences were affected by these groupings. Categories were formed: guests who were welcome, and those that were not. The treatment towards these two categories varied greatly. From this prioritization of refugees, narratives of legitimate and illegitimate refugees were created, and a hierarchy of hospitality emerged. This hierarchy is characterized by notions of welcome versus unwelcome, but also extends further for those who are welcomed by continuing prioritization based on country of origin, and then once again as to which protective statuses are granted.

This process of deeming people welcome or unwelcome was "optimized" in December 2015 with the creation of "clusters."<sup>45</sup> All applications for asylum are handled through the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). As refugees reach the German border and

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44. Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality* (Stanford: Stanford University, 2000), 61.

45. "Optimised Asylum Procedure," *Bundesamt Für Migration Und Flüchtlinge*, December 18, 2015, <http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Meldungen/EN/2015/20151218-vorstellung-modellverfahren-heidelberg.html>.

express their desire to apply for asylum, they are sent to the nearest arrival center. Even before being offered food or water, asylum seekers are registered, questioned and fingerprinted. During this time, recently-arrived individuals are put into one of four clusters; A, B, C or D. Cluster A includes people coming from countries who are most likely to be offered protection in Germany. These countries include Syria, Eritrea, Iraq, and Iran. Cluster B applicants are considered people from “safe countries” of origin. Applications which fall under Cluster C are considered to be “complex cases”. The final cluster, Cluster D, are Dublin cases, meaning applicants have applied for asylum in another country and therefore are not allowed to do so in Germany.<sup>46</sup> Before the use of clusters, certain countries of origin were prioritized based on the country and conflicts occurring there, and applicants from these countries received their decisions faster. These countries would now fall under Cluster A or Cluster B.<sup>47</sup> From these clusters, people are divided into categories of guests or, in the words of Derrida, parasites, and as a result varying degrees of hospitality are offered.

Once the asylum procedure starts, the process can last for many months. If an appeals process is necessary when an application is denied, the entire process can possibly last years. Applicants are permitted to stay in the country and are provided basic necessities, like food and shelter, during the duration of their application. Cluster A and B applications are put on a fast track, since their decisions are pre-determined. The first decision from BAMF is referred to as the “first instance decision.” Denied applications are labeled either “manifestly unfounded” or “inadmissible.”

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46. “Examining the Dublin Procedure,” *Bundesamt Für Migration Und Flüchtlinge*, October 1, 2016, <http://www.bamf.de/EN/Fluechtlingsschutz/AblaufAsylv/PruefungDublinverfahren/pruefung-dublinverfahren-node.html>.

47. “Country Report: Germany.” *aida: Asylum Information Database*, December 31, 2016, 19.

When an application is accepted, there are four possible statuses granted: constitutional asylum, refugee status, subsidiary protection, or another form of protection, such as prohibition of deportation.<sup>48</sup> Constitutional asylum is only for people who have been persecuted on an individual basis by the government in their country of origin. Refugee status is granted based on the 1951 Refugee Convention, and therefore those given refugee status are guaranteed the rights outlined by the Convention.<sup>49</sup> Subsidiary protection and other forms of protection are offered when neither asylum or refugee status can be offered, but there is still a serious risk of harm if the person were to return to their country of origin.<sup>50</sup> Protective statuses are granted only for specific periods of time, typically one to three years, and then the status must be reevaluated. These forms of protection are some of the ways that keep refugees in Germany in a precarious state. Without knowing if one's refugee status will be renewed, life remains in a state of uncertainty. The status of your guesthood has to be renewed to ensure that you are still deemed worthy of hospitality, or if you have overstayed your welcome.

### **Cluster A**

Those that are assigned Cluster A are granted a variety of benefits to which other clusters are not entitled. These benefits start with the swift asylum procedure, as the process is completed within 48 hours. Applications are approved as a rule, granting either asylum, refugee status, or subsidiary protection.<sup>51</sup> Before 2016, 95.8% of Cluster A asylum seekers were granted refugee status, but in early 2016, BAMF changed their decision making process, and this number

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48. Ibid, 15.

49. UN General Assembly, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 28 July 1951, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, p. 137.

50. "Subsidiary Protection." *Bundesamt Für Migration Und Flüchtlinge*, October 1, 2016. <http://www.bamf.de/EN/Fluechtlingsschutz/AblaufAsylv/Schutzformen/SubsidaererS/subsidaerer-schutz-node.html>.

51. "The Decision of the Federal Office." *Bundesamt Für Migration Und Flüchtlinge*, October 1, 2016. <http://www.bamf.de/EN/Fluechtlingsschutz/AblaufAsylv/Entscheidung/entscheidung-node.html>.

dropped to 56.4%. These cases were instead granted subsidiary protection, which meant they were not entitled to family reunification until March 2018, whereas those with refugee status were immediately granted the right to family reunification. Many of those granted subsidiary protection appealed the decision and over 75% of appeals were upgraded to refugee status.<sup>52</sup> In addition to all Cluster A applications definitely being granted some form of protection, refugees in this category were also granted access to integration activities that others were not, such as integration courses and easier access to the labor market.

### **Cluster B**

Countries considered “safe countries of origin” are assigned to Cluster B; particularly the Western Balkan states. As of November 2015, eight countries are listed as safe countries: Ghana, Senegal, Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo, and Montenegro. The German Constitution defines a safe country of origin as a country “in which, on the basis of their laws, enforcement practices and general political conditions, it can be safely concluded that neither political persecution nor inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment exists.”<sup>53</sup> Adding a country to the list of safe countries requires ratification by both chambers of the German government. A law was proposed in April 2016, which would have added Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia to the list, as a reaction to the sexual assaults in Cologne and various petty crimes involving people from these countries. This proposal reflects how deeming countries “safe” is not simply about conditions in that country, but also influenced by political circumstances. Asylum seekers coming from countries on this list are easier to deport, fueling the attempt to add

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52. “Country Report: Germany.” *aida: Asylum Information Database*, December 31, 2016, 53.

53. *Ibid.*, 46.

the three countries to the list. However, it was not approved by the Germany's second chamber of parliament, the Bundesrat.<sup>54</sup>

Asylum seekers that fall under Cluster B are subject to special reception and residential procedures. Although the goal is to process Cluster B asylum procedures faster than Cluster C or D, very few areas in Germany have the ability to do so. As a rule, asylum seekers from safe countries have to reside in their initial reception center, making them easier to keep track of and therefore easier to deport when the asylum request is denied. People from these countries are not allowed to move on from initial reception centers that may have better living conditions. This requirement to remain in initial reception centers immediately bars Cluster B refugees from entering the labor market, since all asylum seekers obliged to reside in reception centers are not allowed to work. This detention further ensures that people coming from "safe countries of origin" are not permitted to stay in Germany.<sup>55</sup>

### **Cluster C**

The asylum procedure for Cluster C cases have no set duration and it can take over a year to reach a first instance decision. Often times, the first instance decision for Cluster C applicants is disappointing, since they are not considered priority cases. The circumstances leading them to flee may not be deemed as dangerous as those coming from Cluster A countries. Applicants who fall under Cluster C typically come from countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan. Unlike Cluster A asylum seekers, those placed in this category receive no special benefits, although they are allowed to move out of initial reception centers, unlike Cluster B.

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54. Jefferson Chase, "German Bundesrat Says Maghreb States Not Safe for Refugees." *Deutsche Welle*, March 10, 2017. <http://www.dw.com/en/german-bundesrat-says-maghreb-states-not-safe-for-refugees/a-37882572>.

55. "Country Report: Germany." *aida: Asylum Information Database*, December 31, 2016, 71.



## Cluster D

All asylum applications filed under Cluster D are Dublin cases, referring to the Dublin III Regulation. This is a law which applies to member states of the European Union (EU), except Denmark, and other non-EU signatories of the regulation. The law establishes which member state is responsible for processing an asylum application. Typically, the first EU country of entry is responsible for processing an individual's application. For example, when an asylum seeker enters the EU through Italy and travels to Germany, they would like by sent back to Italy and their application would be examined there.<sup>56</sup>

This law was often overlooked as migration to Germany peaked in 2015, but is currently being applied with vigor.<sup>57</sup> The Dublin III Regulation can be better enforced due to a biometric database called Eurodac. All signatories of the agreement must enter the fingerprints of asylum seekers applying in that country.<sup>58</sup> Now that fingerprinting is one of the first steps taken when a refugee arrives at a reception center, border states like Italy and Greece are typically the first to register an asylum seeker's fingerprints to the database. This action prevents refugees from travelling further, frequently stopping them before they reach their desired destination. Many people are unaware that having their fingerprints taken in a European country restricts their ability to apply for asylum in a different state. Those that are aware of this fact go to great lengths to avoid being fingerprinted, or if their fingerprints are taken, will resort to burning or cutting off them off in order to be untraceable in the system.<sup>59</sup>

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56. "Europe | Dublin Regulation." *JRS Europe*. Accessed April 19, 2017.  
<https://jrseurope.org/Advocacy?LID=834>.

57. "Country Report: Germany." *aida: Asylum Information Database*, December 31, 2016, 27.

58. "Recast Eurodac Regulation - Think Tank." *European Parliament*. Accessed April 19, 2017,  
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS\\_BRI\(2016\)589808](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2016)589808)

59. "Germany's Refugee Crisis." *Al Jazeera*, March 3, 2016,  
<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/peopleandpower/2016/03/germany-refugee-crisis-160302135618356.html>.

When an asylum seeker is filed under Cluster D, it becomes much easier to deport them from Germany. A Dublin procedure typically lasts three months, and the applicant receives a notice that they are not allowed to apply for asylum within Germany based on the Dublin III Regulation. It is possible to appeal a Dublin decision, and request that the deportation be stopped through the court. Furthermore, after an asylum seeker receives their decision of rejection due to the Dublin III Regulation, it is within the legal limits for that person be detained to ensure their deportation from Germany back to the country of first-arrival.<sup>60</sup>

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From these clusters, categories of legitimate and illegitimate refugees are created. Cluster A countries are states from which people are fleeing war, religious persecution, political persecution, torture, and other serious threats to their safety. These people are granted definite refuge in Germany, and rightfully so, but by determining these reasons for fleeing to be the most legitimate, those suffering who may not fit into this description are left neglected.

Economic refugees (*Wirtschaftsflüchtlinge*) are an obvious group of people left out by the legitimization of certain reasons to flee over others. During the height of migration to Germany, people fleeing their countries for economic reasons were immediately dismissed as being illegitimate. Chancellor Merkel clearly stated in August 2015 that economic hardship was not a justifiable cause to stay in Germany, as she called for the faster deportation of those considered to be economic refugees: “In order to help those in need,” Merkel said, “we must also tell those not in need that they cannot stay with us.”<sup>61</sup> Interestingly, in the original German statement, Merkel used the German term “*Not*” to signify need, which also directly translates to

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60. “Country Report: Germany.” *aida: Asylum Information Database*, December 31, 2016, 29.

61. “Flüchtlingskrise: Merkel will Wirtschaftsflüchtlinge schneller abweisen.” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 30, 2015. <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/merkel-will-wirtschaftsfluechtlinge-schneller-abweisen-13777172.html>.

poverty, although in this instance she was directly delegitimizing those coming to Germany in search of better economic circumstances.

Refugees coming from the Balkan states are considered to be economic refugees. For this reason, many of the Balkan states were added to the list of safe countries categorized under Cluster B. As stated previously, asylum applications filed under Cluster B are turned down as a rule and therefore vulnerable groups within the Balkan states are dismissed, particularly Roma people. Discrimination against Roma people is a widespread European phenomenon, but is often worse for those living in Balkan states. For example in Macedonia, where many Roma people are not given legal documents by the state, and they receive no medical treatment, schooling, legal jobs, and in some places water or electricity.<sup>62</sup> Those facing these circumstances are immediately deemed unwelcome in Germany because of the states they come from, with little regard for the physical and economic hardships they are forced to endure.

Conceptions of legitimate refugeehood lead to expectations of what a refugee narrative should entail. In order to be greeted warmly by the German state and the larger population, refugees must adhere to set notions of what it means to be a refugee. Where a refugee comes from, the reasons they give for fleeing, how they perform refugeehood, and more are scrutinized. Those who do not or cannot fit these conceptions are deemed unworthy of hospitality within Germany, and are considered abusers of the system. Mireille Rosello addresses the creation of ideal refugee narratives in her book *Postcolonial Hospitality*:

Today, the figure of the (ideal) refugee engenders less xenophobia or racist hostility, but is often assumed that individuals who invoke the Geneva convention are not “real” refugees, that they are cheating: they are suspected of self-servingly taking advantage of the treaty. They are implicitly or overtly accused of lying about their lives, of embellishing (so to speak) their autobiographies to include some of the elements of persecution that give them the right to seek asylum in another

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62. “Was Menschen vom Balkan zur Flucht treibt.” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, August 17, 2015, <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/sichere-herkunftsstaaten-demokratien-mit-fussnote-1.2610249>.

territory. In other words, even the most simplistic anti-immigrant discourses are quite able to make a distinction: they are willing to protect the victims of state persecution while suspecting every asylum seeker of deceiving the authorities, by, for example, transforming a supposedly voluntary economic departure into a narrative of political persecution. The bad refugee stretches the definition: the real refugee must be innocent, powerless, a victim.<sup>63</sup>

This passage seems to directly address the question posed by Derrida cited at the beginning of this chapter. A host distinguishes between a guest and a parasite by forming rules and expectations, even if they may seem arbitrary or unfair upon further analysis. A refugee from the Balkan states is perceived to be taking advantage of the system, whereas those from Cluster A countries fit the mold of powerless victims. By forming these distinctions, it becomes easier for Germany to enact their power as host, and dismiss those deemed unworthy of their hospitality.

But what happens when a refugee seemingly fits Rosello's definition, and feels themselves indeed worthy of protection under these guidelines, but is still denied refuge within German borders? These are the circumstances in which one of the men I interviewed found himself in January 2017. I met Sahir\* at an English tutoring program for refugees. He came to Berlin in September 2015, and had waited one year and three months to receive his decision. A week before we met for the first time, he received his letter. His application for asylum had been denied. He was notified that he should leave the country and return to Pakistan. Sahir was disheartened by the outcome, but was working with a lawyer to appeal the decision. As we discussed his options, Sahir started to describe the treatment of other refugees in comparison to Cluster A, as he had experienced it:

I used to hate the other refugees here, the Syrians, Iranians, Iraqis and Eritreans. Why do they get preferential treatment to me? I realize now it's not them I should be mad at. It's the German government that decided to prioritize their lives over those from Pakistan or Afghanistan. I just don't understand why, how did they

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63. Mireille Rosello. *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 15.

\*Name changed

decide to give those countries the right to stay and not me? There is war in my country.<sup>64</sup>

This hierarchy created by Germany in order to more easily grant or deny protection seriously affects the way refugees come to view their own experiences. Luckily, Sahir had learned not to blame those that were more welcome than he, but rather directed his criticisms towards the body that made these distinctions. What is it that makes the war in Syria a more justifiable cause to flee than conflict in Pakistan? Perhaps because the Syrian conflict involves the Syrian government persecuting its own people, whereas in Pakistan civilians face violence more from militant groups?<sup>65</sup> If this is indeed the case, then perhaps those from Pakistan shouldn't be granted asylum status, but rather refugee status or even subsidiary protection. Instead, 95% of asylum seekers from Pakistan are rejected entirely.<sup>66</sup>

For those that do fit the image of a 'real' refugee, and are granted protection in Germany, this welcome only goes so far. When an application is approved in the form of asylum, refugee status or, subsidiary protection, this does not mean that a person is welcome to stay in the country unconditionally nor without a time limit. The law states:

According to Section 25(2) of the Residence Act, both refugees and subsidiary protection beneficiaries are entitled to a residence permit (*Aufenthaltserlaubnis*). According to Section 26(1) of the Residence Act, the duration of residence permits differs for the various groups:

- Three years for persons with refugee status;
- One year for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, renewable for an additional two years;
- At least one year for beneficiaries of humanitarian protection.<sup>67</sup>

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64. Sahir, interview by Rebecca LaPoint, January 11, 2017, transcript.

65. "Crisis Guide:Pakistan," *Council on Foreign Relations*, Accessed April 20, 2017, [http://www.cfr.org/interactives/CG\\_Pakistan/index.html#/overview/](http://www.cfr.org/interactives/CG_Pakistan/index.html#/overview/).

66. "Country Report: Germany." *aida: Asylum Information Database*, December 31, 2016, 8.

67. *Ibid.*, 83.

After a certain amount of time for each status, the case has to be reassessed to assure that said status still applies. The fact that these statuses have an expiration date creates an atmosphere of impermanent hospitality and the lives of many refugees are left in a temporary state. Only after three years can those with refugee status apply for a permanent residence status, and even then permanent residence is only granted to those that are “outstandingly integrated”. If an applicant cannot speak fluent German, cannot provide for themselves or their family monetarily, nor have a living space of their own, they will not be granted permanent residence. After five years, the language requirement becomes a lesser factor in the decision, but significant financial means to provide for oneself are still required.<sup>68</sup> These requirements prove to be exceedingly difficult to fulfill due to insufficient language courses and a competitive job market, and also because those that are granted protection in Germany are expected to leave rather than seek permanent residence.

Chancellor Merkel was very clear about her expectations that most refugees living in Germany will eventually return to their country of origin: “We expect that when ISIS is defeated in Iraq, and there is again peace in Syria, they will return to their homeland with the knowledge they have gained with us.”<sup>69</sup> This expectation that refugees in Germany will once again return to their country of origin serves as a reminder that they are only guests in Germany, and misinterprets the conflict. They are not meant to become permanent fixtures in German society, but rather beneficiaries of a hospitality that eventually expires. With the knowledge that a certain status may not be renewed, it becomes difficult to feel secure. In an interview, I posed a question

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68. “Country Report: Germany.” *aida: Asylum Information Database*, December 31, 2016, 83.

69. Frank Pergande, “Flüchtlingskrise: Merkel: Die Meisten werden zurückkehren müssen.” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 30, 2016. <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/fluechtlingskrise-merkel-die-meisten-werden-zurueckkehren-muessen-14043375.html>.

of how expectations to leave affects a person's ability to feel secure. Sana, a refugee from Syria, answered:

This is again the foundation of legal refugee status. They give you a temporary one, because they want you to return, or expect you to return. So Germany, when you arrive there and after waiting and waiting and waiting, you get your status. It's not a permanent residency. Every year and a half to two years, you have to renew. They have to look again at your case and decide whether you can stay or not. So they are making it temporary, and making it very hard even, because having to do this every two years doesn't give you any sense of stability in this country.<sup>70</sup>

From this impermanent status comes the reminder that the host country is not one's own, and rather residence there is permitted there only as a guest. This guesthood can be revoked if the host decides so, which makes it hard to build a way of life when circumstances of refugees are fundamentally rooted in temporariness.

These time constraints placed on protection is one way that Germany asserts control over refugees, whereas the Dublin III Regulation allows the state to immediately establish their role as host. Refugees deemed Cluster D are called "Dubliners" and their time in Germany is often kept short. This was the case for Brahim\*, a Chadian man who had been living in Berlin on and off since 2013. He came to Europe by way of Italy, with the goal of making it to Germany. Having had his fingerprints taken in Italy, it was legally not within his right to apply for asylum in Germany. Brahim was deported from Germany to Italy on two occasions due to the Dublin III Regulation. He said that the treatment of refugees in Italy was horrible, and there was very little opportunity to better his circumstances. Because of this, he made his way back to Berlin after each deportation, and is currently waiting to hear back about possibly transferring his application from Italy to Germany.<sup>71</sup> Brahim's story, like so many others, is proof of how little control some

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70. Sana Mustafa, Interview by Rebecca LaPoint, April 14, 2017.

\*Name changed

71. Brahim. Interview by Rebecca LaPoint, January 15, 2017, transcript.

refugees have in choosing where they seek refuge. Although they may be provided for in Germany during the asylum process, once an application is deemed inadmissible on the grounds of the Dublin III Regulation, benefits provided to refugees, such as food, accommodations, and monetary allowance can be legally withheld.<sup>72</sup> The Dublin Regulation is another means through which Germany legally rescinds its hospitality and, in doing so, becomes an inhospitable place for Dubliners.

From the perspective of the German government, the Cluster system is a means of assuring that the most vulnerable populations are offered protection in Germany, simultaneously preventing undesired populations from staying in the country. While this may have been a valid concern at the height of migration, most state run reception centers and shelters are no longer facing overcrowding or supply shortages. By March 2016, state run reception centers across the country were operating at 50% capacity. Only shelters in Bremen, Hamburg, and Berlin were operating at 100% capacity.<sup>73</sup> Thus, Germany may have the means to allow more refugees to stay within its borders, and chooses not to.

Compared to other European countries, Germany has been a very hospitable place for refugees in recent years. Many refugees have been granted protection, and are treated as welcome guests within its borders. This welcome, though, does not extend to all. The system implemented to optimize the asylum process excludes many from this hospitality. Even for those who are welcome, German hospitality only extends so far. Derrida succinctly addresses the theoretical underpinnings of the selective power granted to hosts in *Of Hospitality*:

Paradoxical and corrupting law: it depends on this constant collusion between traditional hospitality, hospitality in the ordinary sense, and power. This collusion is also power in its *finitude*, which is to say the necessity, for the host, for the one who receives, of choosing, electing, filtering, selecting their invitees, visitors, or

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72. "Country Report: Germany." *aida: Asylum Information Database*, December 31, 2016, 56.

73. *Ibid.*, 62.



guests, those to whom they decide to grant asylum, the right of visiting, or hospitality. No hospitality, in the classic sense, without sovereignty of oneself over one's home, but since there is also no hospitality without finitude, sovereignty can only be exercised by filtering, choosing, and thus by excluding and doing violence. Injustice, a certain injustice, and even a certain perjury, begins right away, from the very threshold of the right to hospitality.<sup>74</sup>

To grant hospitality is to exert power, as is to deny it. By denying some and granting others asylum, Germany's sovereignty is reinforced. The host maintains control through this process of selection. Even though Germany frames exclusionary injustice as a necessity in its asylum system, empty reception centers throughout the country tell a different story. This selective system then needlessly creates a dangerous hierarchy of refugees, which for some could result in serious hardship, and possibly death, when they are turned away.

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74. Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality* (Stanford: Stanford University, 2000), 55.

### Chapter Three: The Turning Point

“It was the act of a few criminals. Most refugees have nothing to do with the acts.”  
–Sherwan Suleyman, Syria

After a refugee is granted protection in Germany, the relationship between the host country and its guests remains important. Jacques Derrida reflects on the relationship between the host and guests in *Of Hospitality*:

I want to be master at my home, to be able to receive whomever I like there. Anyone who encroaches on my “at home”, on my ipseity, on my power of hospitality, on my sovereignty as host, I start to regard as an undesirable foreigner, and virtually as an enemy.<sup>75</sup>

This passage asserts the role of the host in relation to the guest. In receiving a guest, it remains vital for the host to maintain a sense of control or else the offer hospitality can be rescinded.

When a guest infringes on the host’s sense of control, they are no longer considered a welcome entity. The events of New Year’s Eve in Cologne and other German cities, which had a lasting effecting on refugee politics, exemplify this relationship described by Derrida.

On the night of New Year’s Eve 2015/2016 an unprecedented number of thefts, robberies and sexual assaults occurred in and around the central train station in Cologne, Germany. The majority of victims on this night were women. Starting in the late evening, crowds of men began to congregate in front of the train station, many reported to be intoxicated and shooting off fireworks. Throughout the night, more and more joined the crowd until upwards of 1,000 men were collected in the square.

As people attempted to enter and exit the train station there, they were forced to make their way through the large group. Somewhere between 100 and 200 members of the crowd used the confusion as a tool to harass and steal from people travelling to and from the station. Reports

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75. Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 55.

from those affected and witnesses say that groups of men would surround a target and grope them as they made their way through the crowd. As victims of these sexual assaults exited the crowd, they found that their personal belongings had been stolen. The types of assault varied, but most consisted of touching of the breasts, thighs and groin, whereas some women were digitally penetrated, which constitutes rape under German law. Most of the incidents occurred between 11 P.M. December 31 and 1 A.M. January 1.

The happenings of this night only became clear weeks after, whereas the initial period following the event were marked by false statements from the police, unclear reporting from German media, and inflammatory responses from right-wing political groups. On January 1, 2016, a press release from the Cologne police reported that the festivities on New Year's Eve were celebrated peacefully.<sup>76</sup> The following day police retracted this statement, saying there had been many reports of theft and sexual assault against women throughout the night. Most major German news media did not report on this fact until January 5.

Due to the wide-spread readership of German newspapers in Germany, the way in which news is reported is very important. This is particularly clear in the reports about New Year's Eve in Cologne. Police reports, eye witnesses, and those affected by this event stated that the men were of "north African and Arab origin".<sup>77</sup> The discussion in the media surrounding the event was immediately linked to refugees and refugee politics because the ethnicity of the members of the crowd was cited repeatedly. Before any definite suspects were arrested or even detained, refugees were suggested as likely participants.

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76. Pascal Beucker, "Der Polizeichef auf Abruf." *Die Tageszeitung*, January 7, 2016, sec. Aktuelles.

77. Anette Dowideit, "Plötzlich die Hand am Po"; Silvester in Köln: Eine Bande junger Männer betatscht und bestiehlt Frauen. Die Polizei spricht von einer 'neuen Dimension der Gewalt.'" *Die Welt*, January 5, 2016, sec. Panorama.

This suggested involvement of refugees in the events sparked outrage across Germany. Many viewed this incident as refugees taking advantage of the hospitality that had been offered to them. In this way, the event became known as a turning point in refugee politics<sup>78</sup>, and the trauma experienced by victims was co-opted by political groups with anti-refugee policies in order to sour the prevailing atmosphere of welcome towards refugees.<sup>79</sup>

In the weeks following New Year's Eve in Cologne, the news media was vital in promoting the demonization of male refugees; further reformulating refugees from guest to enemy. Through a close examination of three major German news sources, the following chapter seeks to demonstrate the ways in which the sexual violence on New Year's Eve became situated as a refugee issue, and where the crimes of a few became applicable to all.

Using articles from the two weeks following January 1, 2016, this section will closely analyze the reporting from *Die Welt*, *Die Tageszeitung* and *Bild*. These publications were chosen in order to display a range of political leanings within the media. *Die Welt* is a conservative daily newspaper, which circulates around 200,000 copies daily. *Die Tageszeitung* (TAZ) is a left-leaning, progressive newspaper with around 50,000 copies circulated daily. *Bild* is considered to be a tabloid more than a newspaper, but it is widely circulated, with around 2,500,000 copies daily. The publication is often described as aligning politically with the right-wing, and is criticized for its inflammatory language and sensationalist writing.

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78. "Flüchtlingsdebatte: De Maizière Nennt Kölner Silvesternacht 'Wendepunkt.'" *SPIEGEL ONLINE*, October 25, 2016. <http://www.spiegel.de/panorama/gesellschaft/thomas-de-maiziere-nennt-koelner-silvesternacht-wendepunkt-a-1118162.html>.

79. Daniel Bax, "Und wenn es Deutsche wären?; Pressekodex In Berichten über die sexuellen Übergriffe während der Silvesternacht in Köln wird plötzlich die Herkunft der Straftäter offensiv benannt. Was soll das?" *Die Tageszeitung*, January 6, 2016.

## *Die Welt*

The events in Cologne are first reported by *Die Welt* on January 5. The articles are dominated by similar themes in the first days, as the details of what happened are explained, and the experiences of some victims are recounted. It is clear, however, the the spotlight is on the suspects and how such an event took place. Alleged ethnicities of the suspects are repeatedly mentioned. As reporting continues, the events of the night are mentioned less and less, and the suspects are assumed to be refugees and asylum seekers. By the end of the two-week sample, only refugee politics are discussed in reaction to the incident. Interest in the women affected is very short-lived, and rather articles became dedicated to who committed the crimes, with the focus being their country of origin, and that they are indeed not German. Headlines from this time show the progression of the discussion in *Die Welt*:

“Suddenly a hand was on my butt”; New Year’s Eve in Cologne: A Group of Young Men Molest and Rob Women. The Police are Speaking of a “New Dimension of Violence.”<sup>80</sup>  
(January 5, 2016)

The horror thereafter: The sexual Assaults and Thefts on New Year’s Eve in Cologne have triggered great horror. Although the perpetrators are not yet known, politicians and police vie with one another for suggestions.<sup>81</sup>  
(January 6, 2016)

“Whoever only thinks in black and white, silences the middle”; The young CDU politician Diana Kinnert warns against the trivialization of Cologne’s attacks, as well as the defamation of entire groups of people<sup>82</sup>  
(January 11, 2016)

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80. Annette Dowideit. “‘Plötzlich die Hand am Po’; Silvester in Köln: Eine Bande junger Männer betatscht und bestiehlt Frauen. Die Polizei spricht von einer ‘neuen Dimension der Gewalt.’” *Die Welt*, January 5, 2016, sec. Panorama.

81. Dirk Banse, Kristian Frigelj, Claudia Kade, and Martin Lutz, “Das Grauen Danach; Die Sexuellen Übergriffe Und Diebstähle in Der Silvesternacht in Köln Haben Großes Entsetzen Ausgelöst. Obwohl Die Täter Noch Nicht Bekannt Sind, Überbieten Sich Politik Und Polizei Mit Vorschlägen.” *Die Welt*, January 6, 2016, sec. Politik.

82. Ulf Poshardt, “‘Wer nur in schwarz und weiß denkt, macht die Mitte mundtot’; Die junge CDU-Politikerin Diana Kinnert warnt vor der Verharmlosung der Kölner Übergriffe ebenso wie vor der Diffamierung ganzer Menschengruppen.” *Die Welt*, January 11, 2016, sec. Politik.

The majority believe: “We can’t do it.” There is a growing doubt among the population about the Chancellor’s approach to the refugee crisis. The incidents on New Year’s Eve play a big part.<sup>83</sup> (January 16, 2016)

These headlines depict the progression of the conversation surrounding New Year’s Eve from one of the victims’ experience to a focus on the perpetrators and who they are; by the last headline refugees have become the main focus of the discourse. The lack of focus on victims’ experiences is notable, and even when quotes from victims are used, they are often in relation to who the assailants are. Of course this is an important question, but by shifting the focus away from those who were affected, it makes the identity of the perpetrator more important than the crime itself, and the issue of women’s safety becomes an alibi for criticizing refugees and Chancellor Merkel’s open-door policy. Though there is some awareness by politicians and *Die Welt* about using ethnicity as a reason to be suspicious of people, this statement is made only a few times throughout the articles, and do not outweigh the constant repetition of the ethnicity of those involved and whether or not they are refugees and asylum seekers.

Issues that have been raised by skeptics since the beginning of the mass migration of refugees in 2015 become the focal point of the articles, including cultural differences and integration, crime among migrants, deportation proceedings, etc. These themes are typically introduced through a return to the questions: Who are the offenders? Why did they do this? How do we prevent it from happening again?

*Die Welt* clearly suggests who they believe the offenders to be. The alleged ethnicity of the perpetrators is constantly mentioned in retellings of the events, in ways that make their ethnicity seem responsible for the crimes: “According to police, on New Year’s Eve more than

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83. “Mehrheit glaubt: ‘Wir Schaffen Das Nicht’; In Der Bevölkerung Wachsen Zweifel Am Vorgehen Der Kanzlerin In Der Flüchtlingskrise. Die Vorfälle In Der Silvesternacht Spielen Eine Große Rolle.” *Die Welt*, January 16, 2016.

1,000 young men gathered around the main station, mainly from the North African region. Groups were formed out of the crowd, who surrounded, bothered, and robbed women. The Africans and Arabs were drunk, uninhibited, and ignited many fireworks.”<sup>84</sup> This quotation also reveals how, although only a portion of the group committed the crimes, the guilt of everyone present is implied. The facts of the event are presented directly alongside the descriptions of the members of the group. By stating the ethnicity of those involved in such a way, the crimes committed are then connected ethnicity, as if it could be the primary reason that such crimes were committed.

The origin of the offenders again comes into play when nationality is referred to in some of the articles as a reason for why those involved have not been apprehended or thoroughly investigated. Green Party Leader Katrin Göring-Eckardt is quoted often, stating, “There is no bonus for nationality or residency status. The law applies to everyone. Whether they come from Dresden or Damascus.”<sup>85</sup> This argument is reasonable, and all offenders should be held accountable under German law. Göring-Eckardt asserts that the law applies to everyone, also implying protection for non-German citizen, but she also inaccurately links the crimes to those coming from Damascus, and therefore to refugees. Her attempt to state that everyone is equal before the law, further stirs resentment against refugees and asylum seekers.

When the reporting of *Die Welt* goes beyond the retelling of the night, and tries to dissect why these events may have taken place, refugees are again framed at the center of the debate. Many articles state that the sexual assaults were a method utilized by thieves in order to more

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84. Dirk Banse, Kristian Frigelj, Claudia Kade, and Martin Lutz. “Das Grauen Danach; Die Sexuellen Übergriffe Und Diebstähle In Der Silvesternacht In Köln Haben Großes Entsetzen Ausgelöst. Obwohl Die Täter Noch Nicht Bekannt Sind, Überbieten Sich Politik Und Polizei Mit Vorschlägen.” *Die Welt*, January 6, 2016, sec. Politik.

85. Claudia Kade, “Es Gibt Keinen Bonus Für Nationalität”; Grünen-Fraktionschefin Katrin Göring-Eckardt Über Integrationsanforderungen Und Die Silvester-Exzesse.” *Die Welt*, January 6, 2016, sec. Politik.

effectively rob targets, rather than the thefts being a byproduct of the assaults. Because this method was used so widely among the group of thieves, the events of this night were thought to be organized and planned before the night, leading to reports of a new form of organized crime like Germany had never seen before. The topic of organized crime is discussed in the first article published by *Die Welt* on this issue: “Information from the NRW Ministry of Interior says that some of the perpetrators came from North Africa as refugees around 2 years ago, and their integration until now was obviously not successful.”<sup>86</sup> With the first article alone, *Die Welt* introduces the suggestion that crime of this sort would not exist in Germany without refugees, and that there is little hope for “successful” integration of those from these areas, even after so many years.

“Middle Eastern culture” is often mentioned as a reason behind the events of New Year’s Eve, in addition to the hatred of women and search for sexual pleasure. *Die Welt* consequently creates a narrative of sexual deviancy among the perpetrators, and by default, those coming from Arab and North African culture. In an interview with a policeman, who was present on New Year’s Eve, he states, “Most Arab perpetrators were concerned with the sexual offenses, or to put it from their point of view, for their sexual amusement.”<sup>87</sup> The meaning of the sentence would change if the word “Arab” was left out, as it would still incriminate the men who committed crimes on that night without making their ethnic origin the explanatory key. The very first article on this issue published by *Die Welt* states, “A series of attacks on women have taken place at the turn of the year, in a form that Germany has never seen until now, but that are reminiscent of the

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86. Dowideit, Anette. “‘Plötzlich die Hand am Po’; Silvester in Köln: Eine Bande junger Männer betascht und bestiehlt Frauen. Die Polizei spricht von einer ‘neuen Dimension der Gewalt.’” *Die Welt*, January 5, 2016, sec. Panorama.

87. Till Reimer-stoldt. “Kontrollierte Hatten Syrische Papiere; Kölner Polizisten Sind Verärgert Über Die Darstellung Durch Ihre Führung. Einer Macht Seinem Ärger Luft.” *Die Welt*, January 8, 2016.



scenes from Egypt's Tahrir Square."<sup>88</sup> The comparison of Cologne to Tahrir Square is disturbing; though both are sites of mass sexual assaults, the events at Tahrir Square are more violent and have happened on a continuous basis for years.<sup>89</sup> By comparing Cologne to Tahrir Square rather than other places in Germany where many sexual assaults are known to happen, like Oktoberfest, music festivals, or any other celebrations that involve large crowds of people, the problem becomes identified as a Middle Eastern phenomenon, framing those who come from the Middle East to Germany a threat.

In addition to speculating why these crimes took place, *Die Welt* explores which responses from the German government it believes should follow. Deportation of criminal refugees and asylum seekers was the most discussed response to the events of New Year's Eve in *Die Welt*, a topic which entered the conversation before the identity of the perpetrators was even known. Along with deportation, strengthening Germany and Europe's borders to keep out criminal refugees was also debated. *Die Welt* reporters do not suggest where these criminals should be sent; the responsibility of a country to not return a person to a place where they face persecution or serious harm is never mentioned. The law at the time of the fallout from New Year's Eve stated that criminal refugees and asylum seekers could be deported from Germany if they committed a crime that would result in three years of jail time. After Cologne, many politicians advocated that this be reduced to one year jail time, making it easier to deport criminal refugees.<sup>90</sup>

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88. Anette Dowideit, "Plötzlich die Hand am Po"; Silvester in Köln: Eine Bande junger Männer betatscht und bestiehlt Frauen. Die Polizei spricht von einer 'neuen Dimension der Gewalt.'" *Die Welt*, January 5, 2016, sec. Panorama.

89. Kingsley, Patrick. "80 Sexual Assaults in One Day – the Other Story of Tahrir Square." *The Guardian*, July 5, 2013, sec. World news. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jul/05/egypt-women-rape-sexual-assault-tahrir-square>.

90. Alexander Robin, "CDU fordert Schleierfahndung; 'Mainzer Erklärung' zur Parteiklausur verurteilt Übergriffe und schlägt neuen Straftatbestand gegen körperliche Übergriffe vor. Angela Merkel glaubt nicht, "dass es nur Einzelfälle sind." *Die Welt*, January 8, 2016, sec. Politik.

Integration was also a large part of the discussion in *Die Welt*. Many of the articles discuss how the integration plan in Germany up to that point was failing. The program had to be reformed to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers better adjust to Germany: “The chancellor has confidence, but too little plan. What we urgently need is an integration concept that will take place over the next few years.”<sup>91</sup> Integration into German society is seen as a duty for refugees and asylum seekers, and the level to which refugees become “integrated” directly affects benefits offered by the German government.<sup>92</sup> The topic of integration is discussed often throughout reports from *Die Welt*, highlighting the perceived cultural differences between refugees and Germans.

The sources used by *Die Welt* to narrate New Year’s Eve further portray their understanding of the event.<sup>93</sup> Throughout the articles, most sources are government officials and members of the police force, but the most telling statements come from victims and refugees, who are quoted much less. Quotes from victims about their experiences on New Year’s Eve vary greatly in focus. One 22-year-old is quoted saying, “I was grabbed under my dress and on my butt.”<sup>94</sup> A short sentence that is true for many of the women assaulted on that night, but not much

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91. Claudia Kade, “Es Gibt Keinen Bonus Für Nationalität”; Grünen-Fraktionschefin Katrin Göring-Eckardt Über Integrationsanforderungen Und Die Silvester-Exzesse.” *Die Welt*, January 6, 2016, sec. Politik.

92. Alexander Robin, “CDU fordert Schleierfahndung; ‘Mainzer Erklärung’ zur Parteiklausur verurteilt Übergriffe und schlägt neuen Straftatbestand gegen körperliche Übergriffe vor. Angela Merkel glaubt nicht, "dass es nur Einzelfälle sind.” *Die Welt*, January 8, 2016, sec. Politik.

93. Percentage of Sources used (each source as a proportion of all other sources)

Government	51.6%
Police	22.6%
Victim/Witness	9.6%
German Citizen	8.0%
Religious Group	3.3%
Lawyer	1.6%
Refugee/Asylum seeker	3.3%
Total N	63

94. Anette Dowideit, “Plötzlich die Hand am Po”; Silvester in Köln: Eine Bande junger Männer betatscht und bestiehlt Frauen. Die Polizei spricht von einer ‘neuen Dimension der Gewalt.’” *Die Welt*, January 5, 2016, sec. Panorama.

attention is devoted to it. In the same article a man present on that night is states, “It will be said that it is not true, but I stood in the middle with my girlfriend in hand, which unfortunately stopped nothing, and she was also grabbed underneath her dress. She is still completely ruined because of this scene. Is this what I donated half the content of my closet to? Is this the new Cologne? Is this the new Germany?”<sup>95</sup> The last three questions in this statement condemn refugees implicitly and unilaterally. Even though only a small portion of the refugees who came to Germany committed these crimes, the merit of all those who benefit from the donations is questioned.

The two refugees and asylum seekers that were quoted in *Die Welt* further demonstrate the tone of the reporting. Both quotes came from official reports of the event: “Tearing up the residence papers with a grin on his face he said, ‘You can’t arrest me, tomorrow I’ll get another’”<sup>96</sup> And again: “I am Syrian, you have to treat me nicely. Merkel invited me.”<sup>97</sup> *Die Welt* includes no statements from the many refugees who spoke out against the crimes from this night, but rather only includes quotations that portray an unfriendly and entitled image of refugees.

In all, *Die Welt*’s reporting reveals an unwelcome and sensationalist bias, equivocating criminality, race, and refugee status. Due to the publication’s large circulation, this bias was presented to readers as fact, with little regard for the lack of sympathy concerning victims or the negative effect such biases would have for the larger refugee population.

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95. Ibid.

96. “Das Protokoll Zur Kölner Chaos-Nacht Zum Nachlesen; Weinende Frauen Und Spott von Den Tätern: Die ‘Welt’ dokumentiert Einen Polizeiberich.” *Die Welt*, January 8, 2016, sec. Politik.

97. Ibid.

**Bild**

*Bild* was the first of the three publications to issue an article about New Year's Eve, published on January 4. There is less analysis of the night than in *Die Welt*, with articles written in a more matter-of-fact style, using statements from a variety of sources connected to whatever issues that article discusses. At times the articles are difficult to follow, with a wide range of topics often covered in the same article. Though *Bild* uses many victims' statements, the focus of the articles is often still on the identity of the perpetrators and less about the experience of the victims themselves. In the days immediately following the event, *Bild* published a list of questions they deemed the most important: How many victims are there? Who are the perpetrators? How did they commit the crimes? Is there a phenomenon of sexual humiliation in states from which refugees come?<sup>98</sup> Before any definite suspects were named in relation to the crimes, *Bild* cited the involvement of refugees and suggested it was part of the culture of their countries of origin. Headlines from *Bild* portray some of the main themes emerging from its reporting on Cologne:

Outrage over Sex-Mob +++ Politicians for faster deportation of foreign offenders +++ Four suspects identified by police<sup>99</sup>  
(January 6, 2016)

Stroll in the city ends bloody +++ Already 153 reports +++ 11 Foreigners beaten in Old Town<sup>100</sup>  
(January 12, 2016)

Sex-Mob Scandal; Why was the NRW-Ministry silent for 4 days?<sup>101</sup>  
(January 15, 2016)

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98. Jupp Ley, Frank Schneider, and Ralf Schuler. "+++ Enthemmte Meute Missbraucht Frauen +++ Bislang Keine Festnahmen +++ Kanzlerin Merkel Verlangt Aufklärung Sex-Attacken Schon Länger Ein Problem +++ Kiez von Polizei Enttäuscht +++ Schon 27 Anzeigen +++ Sonderkommission 'Reeperbahn' geplant; So Wütet Der Sex-Mob in Unseren Städten!" *Bild*, January 6, 2016.

99. Frank Schneider, Karsten Riechers, Ralf Schuler, M. Bischoff, and M Arndt. "+++ Empörung Über Sex-Mob +++ Politiker Für Schnellere Abschiebung Ausländischer Straftäter +++ Vier Tatverdächtige von Polizei Ermittelt +++ *Bild*. January 7, 2016.

100. P. Braun, J. Brücher, M. Bischoff, and Frank Schneider. "'Stadtpaziergang' endet blutig +++ Schon 153 Anzeigen +++; 11 Ausländer in Altstadt verprügelt." *Bild*, January 12, 2016.

101. "SEX-MOBKANDAL; Warum Schweg NRW-Minister 4 Tage Lang?" *Bild*, January 15, 2016.

North African Gangs; always more aggressive<sup>102</sup>  
(January 16, 2016)

*Bild* immediately links the perpetrators from that night to refugees through reports of ethnicity, and from very early on reports on the deportation policy of refugees in Germany. It also suggests a political conspiracy surrounding the event in order to protect refugees at the cost of German women, and is outwardly racist in its description of “North African gangs”.

The events of Cologne are exclusively referred to as “The Sex-Mob”, an inaccurate, insensitive, and sensational depiction of the events. Some variation of the term is used in over half of its headlines. The alleged ethnicity of perpetrators is repeated constantly in these articles, appearing alongside the term Sex-Mob, with North African and Arab repeated in 21 out of 31 articles. The term “foreigner” (Ausländer) is used more often in *Bild* than any other publication. Reporters often insert statements such as: “Refugee arrested under charges of sexual offense.”<sup>103</sup> No context is given regarding this statement; it callously connects refugees to sexual crimes. Labeling refugees and asylum seekers as foreigners, and constantly connecting them with sexual deviancy is a useful tool in othering them. As a consequence, public attitude toward innocent people is shifted.

*Bild* makes itself a champion of violence against women, but only violence committed by alleged foreigners. They use the trope of foreign men as threat to German women to veil their xenophobic and racist beliefs, which oppose Chancellor Merkel’s open-door policy. This trope is exemplarily depicted in the quotation: “Young women were not only hunted and robbed by a

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102. Rákóczy, Ines. “Nordafrika-Banden; Immer Aggressiver.” *Bild*, January 16, 2016.

103. Löbker, J, A. Tischendorf, and Frank Schneider. “+++ Flüchtlingskrise in Deutschland und NRW +++ Asylbewerber nach nach Sex-Verdacht verhaftet +++ Schwere Ausschreitungen bei Pegida-Demo +++; Walid Salihi stürmte ein Polizeirevier in Paris und wurde erschossen. In Deutschland sind 7 Identitäten bekannt; Das ist der Terrorist aus dem deutschen Flüchtlingsheim.” *Bild*. January 11, 2016.

sex-mob in the neighborhood, but also in the fine street Jungfernstieg by a mob of young foreigners! In *Bild*, two victims describe the worst moments of their young lives.”<sup>104</sup> *Bild* paints an image of foreigners as wild animals; the term hunted implies a predator. After constructing this beast-like image of foreigners, *Bild* evokes sympathy for the poor young girls who fell prey to the pack. Of all possible streets where assaults happened, *Bild* chose “Jungfernstieg” which translates into “Virgin Alley.” The point of this statement was not to provide support for the victims affected, but rather to present an image of their attackers. This tactic is made increasingly evident when analyzing *Bild*’s use of sources, and the rigor with which it reports on deportation.

Like *Die Welt*, *Bild* repeatedly discusses the ethnicity of perpetrators, and directly blame “Middle Eastern culture” for the events. This reductive concept of culture is used to rationalize the event, revealing the misguided nature of the reports, and their dangerous relation to stereotypes. In one article, a series of questions are presented in relation to the events of Cologne. The article then answers these questions based on the opinions of writers or using quotations collected from a variety of sources. The way Middle Eastern and North African migrants view women is discussed as follows:

Do migrants really have a different image of women?

That is a question of origin. Women’s rights in Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Egypt are the most backward, according to the Thompson Reuters Foundation. In countries where conservative Islamic forces have a say, those in power prefer women exclusively at home. They play no public role, should never disagree, and have no fun in sex.

“In conservative families, sexuality is absolutely taboo,” says Ahmet Toprak, a scholar of education at the University of Dortmund, about young Muslims with migration background. This contributes above all to men having an antiquated attitude towards sexuality and gender roles. “They do not know unaccompanied women in public life,” Signals like a short skirt or flirting could be

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104. Jupp Ley, Frank Schneider, and Ralf Schuler. “+++ Enthemmte Meute Missbraucht Frauen +++ Bisläng Keine Festnahmen +++ Kanzlerin Merkel Verlangt Aufklärung Sex-Attacken Schon Länger Ein Problem +++ Kiez von Polizei Enttäuscht +++ Schon 27 Anzeigen +++ Sonderkommission ‘Reeperbahn’ geplant; So Wütet Der Sex-Mob in Unseren Städten!” *Bild*, January 6, 2016.

misunderstood.<sup>105</sup>

This passage greatly generalizes the cultures of a number of countries as if they were one, using a negative, simplistic, and western-centric understanding. This backwards treatment of women is described as a phenomenon that exists only in these areas, whereas this type of sexism is still prevalent in Western countries. Characterizing a short skirt or flirting as “signals” is inherently problematic, and is a projection of sexist Western ideology onto an already flawed argument.

*Bild* further associates refugees with the events of New Year’s Eve in its discussion of how the German government should respond to these crimes. Deportation of criminal refugees and asylum seekers is presented in a more serious manner than in both *Die Welt* and TAZ. While the other publications mention that deportation has become a large part of the conversation among politicians in the wake of Cologne, *Bild* lays out the situation thoroughly, criticizing the fact that criminal offenders have not already been deported, and explaining the laws that prevent the deportations from taking place:

Whoever becomes a criminal will be deported! Not least because he has abused his guest rights. But there are big hurdles:

- Only a criminal offense of more than one year, in the case of serious drug trafficking or resistance to the state authority, can be theoretically stated at all only in the case of a criminal asylum seeker (§54 Aufenthaltsgesetz).
- However, a single case test is decisive for the expulsion. A spokesman for the Ministry of the Interior on *BILD*: "There are no schematized guidelines."
- In order to deport an asylum seeker, his asylum procedure must be completed.
- Then the next reservation applies. According to the Geneva Refugee Convention, a refugee cannot be expelled to a country where torture, "inhuman treatment" or punishment is threatened by his religion / political sentiments.
- This deportation protection is forfeited only if asylum seekers have committed serious offenses, they have been sentenced to more than three years' imprisonment - for example, for manslaughter.<sup>106</sup>

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105. Roman Eichinger, Miriam Hollstein, and H. Karkheck. “Nach Der Schande von Köln; Regierung Verschärft Vergewaltigungs-Paragrafen.” *Bild*, January 10, 2016.

106. V. Dümer, H. Kautz, H-J. Vehlewald, and S. Baumann. “+++ Immer neue Details zu Sex-Mob an Silvester +++ Politiker fordern schärfere; Abschiebe-Frust!; Darum ist es so schwer, Straftäter auszuweisen.” *Bild*, January 8, 2016.

In this passage, the deportation of refugees is discussed seriously, even though no suspects from that night had been charged with a crime. Interestingly, it is directly stated that refugees and asylum seekers are considered as guests in Germany. For *Bild*, any crime committed by these guests is enough to warrant expulsion from the country. The articles offer little consideration to the Geneva Convention guideline, which states that regardless of a crime, people should not be returned to a country where an imminent threat exists. This protection of human rights is viewed as a hurdle in the way of deporting criminals quickly; criminal refugees are no longer considered worthy of this protection.

When analyzing the sources used in *Bild* as compared to the other publications, a surprisingly large percentage of statements from victims and refugees are included in their reporting.<sup>107</sup> Although *Bild* used more statements from victims than the other two publications, they are used with an immediately evident agenda. 7 out of the 13 statements quoted mention the ethnicity of the attackers. This is significant, since in one article by *Bild*, which printed 113 police reports from New Year's Eve in Cologne, only 9 included ethnicity. *Bild* included the following statement from a victim: "We sat on a bench at the cathedral, we wanted to watch the fireworks and drink a little champagne. Suddenly there were only men around us, and we could only hear Arabic." And then: "We heard only 'Hey Baby'. I was held really tightly on the arm. It

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107. Percentage of Sources used (each source as a proportion of all other sources)

Government	35%
Police	27%
Victim/Witness	12%
German Citizen	11%
Lawyer	8%
Refugee/Asylum seeker	5%
Political Groups	2%
Total N	94



was a nightmare. We were trapped in a crowd.”<sup>108</sup> These statements came from victims who were together during the event, and their use within the article associates the speaking of Arabic with the nightmare of the experience.

The phenomenon of connecting refugees with such negativity continues further when looking at refugee sources. *Bild* publishes the exact same damning statements as *Die Welt* from the police report: “I am Syrian; you have to treat me nicely. Merkel invited me.” And: “Tearing up the residence papers with a grin on his face he said, ‘You can’t arrest me, tomorrow I’ll get another.’” The inclusion of these statements in the reporting immediately associates the crimes committed with refugees.

*Bild* also includes a number of positive statements from refugees. In a publication that is known for its sensationalist reporting, these positive statements come as a refreshing surprise. For example, *Bild* quotes a Syrian refugee: “It was the act of a few criminals. Most refugees have nothing to do with the acts.” Although the overall reporting of *Bild* contradicts this statement and works to associate refugees with the crimes from this night, this quotation serves as a reminder that the refugees involved with the crimes of New Year’s Eve were a minority, and the majority of refugees have nothing to do with this event.

### ***Die Tageszeitung***

*Die Tageszeitung* assumes a very different tone from *Die Welt* and *Bild* when reporting on New Year’s Eve. The first article was published on January 6, and immediately criticizes how the event was being framed in the media. The majority of the articles question the constant

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108. Jupp Ley, Frank Schneider, and Ralf Schuler. “+++ Enthemmte Meute Missbraucht Frauen +++ Bislang Keine Festnahmen +++ Kanzlerin Merkel Verlangt Aufklärung Sex-Attacken Schon Länger Ein Problem +++ Kiez von Polizei Enttäuscht +++ Schon 27 Anzeigen +++ Sonderkommission ‘Reeperbahn’ geplant; So Wütet Der Sex-Mob in Unseren Städten!” *Bild*, January 6, 2016.

repetition of the ethnicity of the perpetrators, and argue that mentioning ethnicity inherently suggests that it is in some way linked to the crime. It is hardly ever suggested that cultural differences are to blame for the sexual assaults, and in moments where they are mentioned, the claim is complicated with further questions about intricacies within “Middle Eastern culture.”

Many of the articles also focus on the women who were affected on New Year’s Eve, and suggest productive tactics that women can use to protect themselves in uncomfortable or even violent situations. One of the central focuses throughout the articles is the role that toxic masculinity and rape culture played in the attacks, and it is constantly reiterated that this is an issue that pervades all cultures. Headlines from the two weeks after New Year’s exemplify the progressive understanding of the event:

And if they were Germans?; Press Code: In reports about the sexual assaults on New Year’s Eve, the ethnic origin of the perpetrators suddenly stated offensively. What’s that supposed to mean?<sup>109</sup>  
(January 6, 2016)

The Shock from Cologne; Crimes of Male Groups Theft, sexual assault and Migrants: This sets the media and politicians into hyper drive. Who gains from this?<sup>110</sup>  
(January 9, 2016)

Do not trivialize the assaults<sup>111</sup>  
(January 13, 2016)

Only a side comment? DEBATE: Since the assaults on the Reeperbahn on New Year’s Eve, reports about refugees who sexual assault have piled up. What role does ethnicity play in this? Is it necessary information or negligent discrimination?<sup>112</sup>  
(January 16, 2016)

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109. Daniel Bax, “Und wenn es Deutsche wären?; Pressekodex In Berichten über die sexuellen Übergriffe während der Silvesternacht in Köln wird plötzlich die Herkunft der Straftäter offensiv benannt. Was soll das?” *Die Tageszeitung*, January 6, 2016.

110. “Der Schock von Köln; Kriminalität Der Männermasse Diebstahl, Sexuelle Übergriffe Und Migranten: Das Versetzt Medien Und Politik in Den Hyperdrive. Wem Nützt Es?” *Die Tageszeitung*, January 9, 2016.

111. Kaija Kutter, “Übergriffe Nicht Bagatellisieren.” *Die Tageszeitung*, January 13, 2016.

112. Kaija Kutter, and Katharina Schipkowski. “Nur Ein Nebenwiderspruch?; DEBATTE Seit Den Übergriffen an Der Reeperbahn in Der Silvesternacht Häuften Sich Berichte Über Flüchtlinge, Die Sexualisierte Gewalt Ausüben. Welche Rolle Spielt Dabei Die Herkunft? Ist Es Eine Nötige Aufklärung Oder Eine Fahrlässige Diskriminierung?” *Die Tageszeitung*, January 16, 2016.

Reporting from TAZ consistently asks these questions. Almost every time the ethnic origin or refugee status is stated, the dilemma of reporting these facts is also discussed. Whether or not there is even a place for these descriptions in responsible journalism is an important question, and TAZ attempts to understand the consequences when such descriptions are used. Other newspapers rarely discuss the damage done by linking the attacks to the ethnicity of the assailants. Throughout their articles about New Year's Eve, TAZ maintains a progressive yet critical presentation of the events, while remaining respectful to those affected.

Whereas *Die Welt* and *Bild* turn to "Middle Eastern culture" to explain what happened, TAZ rejects this idea. One of the only times the culture of the offenders is mentioned is during an interview with a policeman, André Schulz. He is asked whether the way North Africans view women is to blame for the attacks: "Yes, but it also has to do with class and education. A Moroccan teacher or doctor would probably not do such a thing. Because of this it is false to say that all Moroccans are this way."<sup>113</sup> Though this statement rejects the idea that one can generalize the characteristics of an entire ethnic group, it still marginalizes another group, those who are less educated. It is important to recognize that the only time culture is mentioned as an explanation for the attacks is during interviews, and not in the reporting of TAZ.

Negative masculinity and rape culture are discussed exclusively by TAZ as the underlying factor causing the violence on New Year's Eve. Rather than calling upon the guilt of the perpetrators in their identities as Arab and North African men, they invoke the guilt of masculinity in general, and the role that society plays in encouraging such behavior:

Not only male refugees are dangerous, rather all men. They do not uphold rape culture, but rather the very select hearing of victims and victim blaming, as with

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113. "Das Problem Wird Immer Größer ; KÖLN Der Kriminologe André Schulz Zu Polizeiarbeit, Europas Grenzen Und Den Folgen Des Antiterrorkriegs." *Die Tageszeitung*, January 10, 2016.

Cologne's Mayor Henriette Reker's behavior rules for woman à la maintaining an arm-length distance.<sup>114</sup>

In the discussion following Cologne, sexual violence is usually painted as an “Arab problem”, rather than one that pervades all cultures, but in this quote TAZ frames the problem differently. It is men and masculinity, but on a larger scale it relates to society as a whole. The problem of sexual assault is not actually addressed with the suggestion that women should maintain a distance. Instead, it reinforces sexual assault as a given and places responsibility on women to protect themselves, rather than on the offender. TAZ further situates the issue of sexual assault as a broad societal issue with the statement: “As if there was no theft, no rape and no murder in Germany without immigrants.”<sup>115</sup>

The reporting of TAZ also suggests that there is a racial component to the sudden interest in sexual violence against women in Germany. Sexual assault had been a reality for German women before Cologne, but due to the ethnicity of the perpetrator, the issue suddenly became a great concern, “As soon as the offenders are no longer their potential fathers, husbands, brothers or sons, but instead the evil men of color, the concern for the well-being of German women is very great.”<sup>116</sup>

TAZ continues emphasizing the role of rape culture and sexual violence against women when presenting ways to respond to the events of New Year's Eve. There is call for greater responsibility to understand sexual assault. Articles push people to think beyond blaming the

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114. Hengameh Yaghoobifarah, “Willkommen in Der Hölle, Ladys; SEXUALISIERTE GEWALT Seit Der Kölner Silvesternacht Wird Einer Sexismusfreien Zeit Hinterhergetrauert. Die Hat Es in Deutschland Nie Gegeben.” *Die Tageszeitung*, January 8, 2016.

115. Daniel Bax, “Und wenn es Deutsche wären?; Pressekodex In Berichten über die sexuellen Übergriffe während der Silvesternacht in Köln wird plötzlich die Herkunft der Straftäter offensiv benannt. Was soll das?” *Die Tageszeitung*, January 6, 2016.

116. Hengameh Yaghoobifarah, “Willkommen in Der Hölle, Ladys; SEXUALISIERTE GEWALT Seit Der Kölner Silvesternacht Wird Einer Sexismusfreien Zeit Hinterhergetrauert. Die Hat Es in Deutschland Nie Gegeben.” *Die Tageszeitung*, January 8, 2016.

victim, and instead questioning the greater powers at play in sexual violence: “Was alcohol in play? Was the skirt short and the neckline deep? It doesn’t matter how these questions are answered. It’s important that society as a whole and women in particular are sensitized to the issue. There is still much to be done.”<sup>117</sup> Women being sensitized to the issue is especially important if they themselves become a victim of sexual violence, so as to not internalize the popular narrative that it was their actions which caused their own victimization. TAZ devoted an article to how women can best respond when they are placed in a precarious situation that could result in assault, such as shouting out the description of their attacker in order to make them more easily identifiable. In doing so, TAZ focused their response on the victims of that night, rather than refugees, and rooted the events of Cologne in sexual violence against women.

Although TAZ does not attribute the attacks to the ethnicity of refugees and immigrants, they identify the strategy and challenge those who deploy it: “It is the scenario of fear that Pegida and other right-wing feminists like Alice Schwarzer have been painting for a long time: A hoard of men of Arab descent attack our German women in order to sexually harass, rob and even rape them.”<sup>118</sup>

One anomaly of the TAZ coverage is that although it is attentive to rape culture and masculinity, no statements from victims or witnesses appear.<sup>119</sup> On the contrary, *Die Welt* and

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117. Dinah Riese, “Bei Sexuellen Übergriffen Auf Konfrontation gehen? Gegenwehr Was Kann Frau Gegen Sexuelle Übergriffe Tun? Claudia Winkler Vom Verein Frauenhorizonte Rät: Laut Werden, Umstehende Gezielt Ansprechen.” *Bild*, January 6, 2016.

118. Daniel Bax, “Und wenn es Deutsche wären?; Pressekodex In Berichten über die sexuellen Übergriffe während der Silvesternacht in Köln wird plötzlich die Herkunft der Straftäter offensiv benannt. Was soll das?” *Die Tageszeitung*, January 6, 2016.

119. Percentage of Sources used (each source as a proportion of all other sources)

Government	56.6%
Police	13.2%
Victim/Witness	0%
Citizen	15.1%
Lawyer	1.9%
Refugee/Asylum seeker	7.5%
Political Groups	5.7%

especially *Bild* use many direct statements. Although TAZ discusses the experiences of the victims on New Year's Eve in general terms, there are no stories of individuals presented. Perhaps this was done intentionally to assure that none of the victims' statements were used in a way that trivialized their experience to place the focus on the attackers, or to avoid misrepresenting what they went through.

The statements from refugees are more positive than those printed in *Die Welt* and *Bild*. TAZ is obviously more sympathetic to refugees, choosing a tones that avoids increasing the backlash against them. TAZ also uses more refugees as sources than either *Die Welt* or *Bild*, allowing these marginalizes populations to better represent themselves during the fallout from Cologne. The quotes humanize refugees, and allow for them to say for themselves that sexual violence is not a part of their culture: "24-year-old Mohammed al-Mohammed wishes for normality, 'We fled before the war,' he explained. 'We are looking for security here, to go to school every day, trying to learn German quickly and then to find a job. We are not here to cause problems.'"<sup>120</sup>

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Eventually, the depiction of the events set forth by *Die Welt* and *Bild* dominated the conversation surrounding New Year's Eve. This moment marks a clear shift in the way people in Germany came to view refugees and refugee politics. Although not everyone succumbed to this negative portrayal of refugees as a threat, the mainstream understanding changed drastically.

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Total N	53
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120. Andreas Wyputta, "Angst Und Angst; Laetzen Auf Ein Flüchtlingsheim Wird Ein Brandanschlag Verübt. Zehn Tage Später Wird Ein Bewohner Wegen Versuchter Vergewaltigung Festgenommen. Jetzt Fürchten Sich Bürger Und Asylsuchende." *Die Tageszeitung*, January 16, 2016.

Before this moment, the culture of welcome had prevailed across Germany, and the act of taking in so many refugees was hailed as positive. After New Year's Eve, this was no longer the case: "After a widely discussed event in Cologne on New Year's Eve in which young men (some of them asylum seekers, others German citizens) were accused of criminal activities as a group, public interest in the volunteering movement declined."<sup>121</sup> In addition to a decrease in interest in the volunteering movement, there was a dramatic decrease in the welcome of refugees.

This event had a severe effect on the way German citizens viewed refugees. A research group, Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, surveyed German citizens in the weeks following New Year's Eve, in order to weigh how public opinion had shifted. Responses to a variety of questions highlighted the negative impact of the incidents. In response to whether the increase in refugees would lead to a rise in crime rates, 70% of respondents answered yes, compared to 62% in previous months. The number of people who believed the increase in refugees threatened societal and cultural values in Germany also increased from 33% to 42%, luckily still a minority of the population. A shocking 73% of respondents from a variety of political parties agreed that deportation laws for refugees who commit crimes should be made stricter, and easier to deport. In response to whether or not Germany can handle the number of refugees, only 40% responded it was still possible, in comparison to 60% at the height of migration.<sup>122</sup>

Consequences of this night for refugees were lasting. The acceptance and tolerance of German citizens towards refugees changed greatly after one horrifying night, and the effects are still felt today, particularly for young male refugees. The following chapter explores the difficulties of integration into German society, which were only exacerbated by the events of New Year's Eve.

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121. Ulrike Hamann, and Serhat Karakayali. "Practicing Willkommenskultur: Migration and Solidarity in Germany." (*Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics* 2, no. 4 (2016): 82.

122 "Politbarometer Januar I 2016." *Forschungsgruppe Wahlen E.v.*, January 2016.  
[http://www.forschungsgruppe.de/Umfragen/Politbarometer/Archiv/Politbarometer\\_2016/Januar\\_I\\_2016/](http://www.forschungsgruppe.de/Umfragen/Politbarometer/Archiv/Politbarometer_2016/Januar_I_2016/).

## Chapter Four: Escaping Guesthood

Most refugees have nothing to do, it's not that they don't want nothing to do. They just can't work, and if you're not from certain countries you aren't allowed in the integration courses. There's no real school to go to, and lots of people stay up late because it doesn't matter if they don't, and then they sleep until 12 p.m., 2 p.m., or maybe even all day.

-Sahir, Pakistan<sup>123</sup>

With over one million refugees coming to Germany from 2015 to 2016, the urgent question became how to integrate so many people into German society. To address this question, a number of initiatives across the German states were implemented, such as language courses, apprenticeships, and programs to help find housing. These three criteria became imperative for a refugee to be considered integrated. This is affirmed by the fact that a permanent residence permit is only given to refugees when proof of sufficient language skills, adequate housing, and a sustainable job can be shown.<sup>124</sup> These programs, however, are not large enough to accommodate all refugees. At the same time, strong expectations from politicians and German citizens are placed on refugees to integrate on their own, without the aid of programs.<sup>125</sup> Federal Minister of the Interior, Thomas de Maizière, has been quoted on this topic: "People who want to live in Germany can still feel connected to their homeland, but the society and country in which they live should come first."<sup>126</sup> Such pressure has only been further compounded by a recent law, which allows benefits to be reduced if a person does not "attempt to integrate."<sup>127</sup>

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123. Sahir, Interview by Rebecca LaPoint, January 11, 2017

124. "Country Report: Germany." (aida: Asylum Information Database, December 31, 2016), 83

125. Jaafar Abdul Karim, "Refugees: 'I Want to Integrate, but How?'" *Die Zeit*. April 18, 2016, sec. Gesellschaft. <http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/2016-04/refugees-integration-germany-support-encourage>.

126. "De Maizière: Kölner Silvesternacht war «Wendepunkt»." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 25, 2016. <http://www.faz.net/agenturmeldungen/dpa/de-maiziere-koelner-silvesternacht-war-wendepunkt-14497254.html>.

127. "Merkel Presents New Refugee Integration Law as 'Milestone.'" *Deutsche Welle*, May 25, 2016. <http://www.dw.com/en/merkel-presents-new-refugee-integration-law-as-milestone/a-19281722>.



Young men who travelled alone to Germany are most affected by this issue. Access to housing and the labor market is made easier for those with families, resulting in young men being of less concern to state actors and organizations, particularly because this population is falsely thought to be a greater risk to Germany:

Many refugees in Germany have no idea what their rights and responsibilities are. No plan, no idea. Where are the authorities? Why are these young men being abandoned? Do we not want to integrate them, or are we unable to? Why are we constantly talking about them as people that do not want to integrate? If we do not want to make them part of society, then they will not want to make Germany part of their lives either.<sup>128</sup>

Through my interviews with refugees it became clear that many are eager to integrate themselves into German society. They want to learn the language and culture, find work, and move into living quarters of their own. However, their impermanent living conditions make the path to integration difficult, especially in a country where expectation is one-sided; many Germans do not feel that they themselves should change to accommodate their new neighbors.

Mireille Rosello discusses this topic of integration in her book *Postcolonial Hospitality*: “The city will not change to accommodate the refugee’s difference. And if the process of integration fails, if the refugee suffers from being treated as an undesirable foreigner, the national authorities that granted him the status of refugee may not be able to guarantee that this right is adequately respected within the city.”<sup>129</sup> It is the responsibility of the refugee to integrate into the society of their host country, rather than a responsibility shared by both. This process of integrating is made only more difficult when a host society regards refugees as guests. Using my interviews with young male refugees in Berlin as a guide, this chapter explores the three

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128. Jaafar Abdul Karim, “Refugees: ‘I Want to Integrate, but How?’” *Die Zeit*. April 18, 2016, sec. Gesellschaft. <http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/2016-04/refugees-integration-germany-support-encourage>.

129. Mireille Rosello, *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 156.

integration criteria mentioned above (housing, language, and work), and the ways in which refugees' impermanent status inhibits their ability to successfully integrate.

## Housing

Having a safe and comfortable place to live is crucial to one's overall sense of security. When talking about or to refugees the topic of home is a difficult one, especially when they are so often reminded that the country they inhabit is not their own. Mireille Rosello addresses the concept of home in *Postcolonial Hospitality*:

Being at home is being where you can not only eat and drink but also invite someone to eat, to drink, to chat. Being at home is where you can be the host, where you can offer hospitality... If one cannot offer hospitality, one has an address, not a home: "You live here, but you are not at home".<sup>130</sup>

Rosello's words apply to many refugees living in Germany. In a place where refugees are conceived as guests, it becomes difficult to feel at home. When a person lives in the domain of their host, how can they offer another hospitality?

The difficulty of creating a home was further complicated with the latest version of the Asylum Act. Refugees have little agency in deciding what state they will be placed in, or what type of lodging they are offered.<sup>131</sup> As a rule, recent arrivals are placed in initial reception centers, and are obligated to stay there for three months, but are not supposed to stay for more than six. After initial reception centers, people can move to collective accommodations, or decentralized housing, such as apartments of their own.<sup>132</sup> In many cities, like Berlin, Hamburg, and Bremen, there was not enough space to house all refugees, and emergency shelters were

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130. *Ibid.*, 18.

131. "Chancen in der Krise: Zur Zukunft der Flüchtlingspolitik in Deutschland und Europa." Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration, 2017, 111.

132. "Country Report: Germany." (aida: Asylum Information Database, December 31, 2016), 60.

established. The government was unable to provide as many shelters as was necessary, so private companies were put in charge of managing and running the camps. These shelters were meant to be temporary, but have become long term housing for many.<sup>133</sup>

The conditions in these camps are often shocking. I interviewed Mohammed\*, a 19-year-old from Iraq, who showed me the shelter he was staying in. He talked at length about the conditions of the camp:

When I first arrived, over 150 people were living in the converted gymnasium, and we had only two bathrooms for that many people. Our beds were divided by thin barriers that you could see over. In recent months, most of the families have moved out and found apartments. So now only 60 people share the space, but there is still no privacy.<sup>134</sup>

The conditions endured by Mohammed are similar to the majority of refugees living in large cities. Reception centers and emergency shelters are still overcrowded, particularly in Berlin.<sup>135</sup> In many of these spaces, barriers are not provided, and people live among rows and rows of beds, separated only by a few feet. Hygiene within the camps is not prioritized, due to little existing regulations or enforcement of these regulations. Living among rodents is an everyday reality for many. Improving these conditions has proven to be difficult; those managing the camps have little power, and those in higher-up positions do not prioritize living conditions. Many of the people I spoke with had accepted these conditions and refused to publicly speak out for fear that their objections might affect their application for asylum.

In November 2016, refugees living in a shelter on Osloer Street in Wedding, Berlin decided to fight against the conditions within their camp, and were met with a drastic response.

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133. Ibid.

\*Name changed

134. Mohammed, Interview by Rebecca LaPoint, January 5, 2017.

135. "Country Report: Germany." aida: Asylum Information Database, December 31, 2016, 62.

A group of refugee activists born out of the Orianenplatz Movement<sup>136</sup> reported in depth on this event. Oplatz publishes articles on events involving the unfair treatment of refugees in Germany that often are not discussed in mainstream German media. The protest called for the camp to be closed, and the arrangement of permanent living quarters. Inhabitants cited the inadequate conditions within the shelter: lack of privacy, disrespect from those running the camp, and too little political agency. Occupants had no control over decisions which seriously impacted their everyday life. They felt purposely segregated from the outside community, and after thirteen months of living in such conditions, were desperate for change.<sup>137</sup>

Responses to the protest only worsened the situation. The company running the camp, BTB Bildungszentrum, forbade outside volunteers and activists from entering the camp, an illegal action. On multiple occasions volunteers formed groups in an attempt to enter the camp together, but they were blocked by security, who claimed the camp was under a Hausverbot (forbidden to enter the premises). Proof of an official Hausverbot was never given. When inhabitants of the camp came outside to see the volunteers, security forces attempted to separate them. The police were called, and security forces told them that volunteers were breaking the rules of the Hausverbot. Police then banned the group from being on the street for a period of time. This fight is ongoing, and the residents have been further threatened with eviction to Tempelhof shelter, where conditions are said to be worse. The company also allows certain religious groups inside, but volunteers advocating for better conditions and promoting activism are not permitted to enter.<sup>138</sup>

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136. Orianenplatz was a protest site for refugees living in Berlin, which was forcibly evicted in 2014.

137. "The Break out from the Lager at Osloerstr 23 #CloseTheCamp #LagerOsloerstr23." *Oplatz — Berlin Refugee Movement*, November 27, 2016. <http://oplatz.net/the-break-out-from-the-lager-at-osloerstr-23-closesthecamp-lagerosloerstr23/>.

138. "Wie BTB Bildungszentrum Die Menschen Im Lager Osloerstr. 23-26 Segregiert #CloseTheCamp #LagerOsloer23." *Oplatz — Berlin Refugee Movement*, February 6, 2017. <http://oplatz.net/wie-btb-bildungszentrum-die-menschen-im-lager-osloerstr-23-26-segregiert-closesthecamp-lagerosloer23/>.

With deplorable conditions in camps, and limited ability to make change, it is difficult for many refugees to feel a sense of home or security. Conditions and institutional responses as seen in the case of the Mohammed and the Osloer Street protests exemplify the common narrative of refugee shelters in Berlin. Overcrowding, lack of privacy, and unhygienic conditions are the reality in many city shelters.<sup>139</sup> These camps were meant to be temporary, but have become long term residences; official resistance against better conditions or moving inhabitants further prevents people from finding some sort of permanency during their stay.

When I asked participants of my interviews about their interactions outside the camp, each responded they seldom interacted with any Germans. Fadi\*, a 25-year-old Syrian man stated: “I can go weeks without talking with a German person, especially after completing the integration course. I really only talk with my friends in the camp.”<sup>140</sup> Residing in camps only segregates refugees from the surrounding German community, and inhibits refugees from integrating into German society as a whole.<sup>141</sup>

Finding an apartment and moving out of shelters is an exceptionally difficult task for many young male refugees. After spending the obligatory three months in a reception center they are permitted to move into an apartment of their own, but in a city like Berlin there are very few affordable apartments available, and many people compete for those spaces. All of the participants in my interviews had expressed the desire to move out of their shelter, but after months of searching, had found nothing.

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139. “Country Report: Germany.” aida: Asylum Information Database, December 31, 2016, 64.

140. Fadi, Interview by Rebecca LaPoint, January 13, 2017.

\*Name changed

141. “Chancen in der Krise: Zur Zukunft der Flüchtlingspolitik in Deutschland und Europa.” Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration, 2017, 114.

Mohammed had been attempting to move out of his camp for over eight months, and had viewed countless apartments. His choices were limited, since many apartments exceed the viable budget for refugees. Monthly monetary benefits for single adults living inside a camp are €135, which increases to €351 when they move out.<sup>142</sup> In addition to budget issues, many landlords are reluctant to rent to refugees. Mohammed faced serious discrimination after landlords discovered he was a refugee. To counter this, Mohammed's European friends made appointments for him using their names, but when he went to the viewing and his situation became clear, he was not chosen to rent the apartment.<sup>143</sup>

The challenge of finding an apartment is further compounded by the lack of space in many cities, and a shortage of apartments overall. Building projects have been commissioned by the government in order to address this issue, but such projects take time, and when people are living in unjust conditions time is limited. Additionally, before this surge in migration, rent in Germany was already on the rise: "This development in the housing market had already been taking place for some time, but the migration of refugees has intensified the situation, and will further do so when asylum seekers ask for apartments. Particularly for simply equipped apartments, it is expected that prices will continue to increase in proportion."<sup>144</sup> This makes it exceptionally difficult for refugees living with such a small monetary allowance, who are also struggling to find work.

In a system that prioritizes having a place of one's own to live, the outlook is bleak for refugees looking to move out of camps. The most important question to refugees in Germany is whether or not they will be allowed to stay, and finding a place to live is a first step toward a

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142. "Country Report: Germany." aida: Asylum Information Database, December 31, 2016, 55.

143. Mohammed. Interview by Rebecca LaPoint, January 5, 2017.

144. "Chancen in der Krise: Zur Zukunft der Flüchtlingspolitik in Deutschland und Europa." Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration, 2017, 110.

feeling of permanence and security.<sup>145</sup> Even if a refugee finds an apartment, there are more factors at play when deciding if they will be allowed to stay in the country.

## Language

Learning the language is often considered the most important key to integrating into German society.<sup>146</sup> From first entry into Germany, the language is vital to maneuvering the asylum system and operating within German culture. Jacques Derrida addresses the theme of language as it pertains to hospitality: “That is where the question of hospitality begins: must we ask the foreigner to understand us, to speak our language, in all senses of this term, in all possible extensions, before being able and so as to be able to welcome him into our country?”<sup>147</sup> Before a refugee can be truly welcomed and accepted into German society, they must learn the language. This claim is asserted again and again by German states, who provide language and integration courses, as well as by German policies which use fluency as a marker of integration.

Each participant I interviewed had a very difficult time learning German, and some were still in the beginning phases learning. Two of the men were offered a state sponsored integration course, while the other two were not. Instead they attended external language courses, which teach German at a slower pace, and are less about culture. Of the two who partook in the integration course, both characterized it as unhelpful and difficult. Often times, the teacher did not speak their native language, and so they were forced to learn German in German. Fadi stated:

I didn't find the Willkommenskurs [stated funded program] helpful at all. German is a very difficult language, and the course was not taught in a helpful way. I found that visiting language cafés was a more helpful in learning the language. I still don't

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145. “Integration: Was Flüchtlingen Wichtig Ist Und Was Sie Belastet.” *Die Welt*, January 24, 2017. <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article161459299/Was-Fluechtlingen-wichtig-ist-und-was-sie-belastet.html>.

146. “Sprache Ist Der Schlüssel.” *Der Tagesspiegel*, October 1, 2015. <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/neue-serie-kultur-und-fluechtlinge-sprache-ist-der-schluessel/12385036.html>.

147. Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 15.

like to speak it though; I much prefer English. When I first arrived at the Bavarian border, the guard started speaking to us in German, and someone asked if he could speak English. He responded, “You’re in Germany now, you have to learn to speak German.”<sup>148</sup>

Mohammed echoed the claims of Fadi, saying that the course was unhelpful. He felt as though there was no real incentive to go to the courses, since the teachers did not encourage or really help. It was a daily course, offering around eleven hours of instruction per week. After attending the course for six months, his teacher started to miss more days. When she did come, she often just put on a German movie, rather than language instruction. Once he decided to learn German seriously, his German greatly improved, but he attributes this mostly to German-speaking friends, rather than the course.

For the participants who were not offered the integration course, their opinions of language courses were similar. The terms unhelpful and boring were used by both participants in describing their experience. Sahir was particularly critical of the class, and hurt for being excluded from the integration program: “The integration course is taught at a much faster rate, so people in that class have an advantage and learn the language faster. They also give those courses the better teachers, so we get stuck with the lazy ones that don’t actually care.”<sup>149</sup> Both Sahir and Brahim found it easier to learn German by visiting language cafés and having conversations with German speakers.

These harsh criticisms from the participants in these courses point out serious flaws in the way German is taught to refugees. That said, the outrage directed toward the teachers may not be fully justified, since often teachers are hired on a volunteer basis, and want to teach the language as a means of helping. Many are underqualified because of this, but with the high demand for

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148. Fadi. Interview by Rebecca LaPoint, January 13, 2017.

149. Sahir. Interview by Rebecca LaPoint, January 11, 2017.



language classes, proper training was not a priority.<sup>150</sup> Many refugees are left without language instruction due to the lack of teachers alone. A reporter for *Die Zeit* researched this topic in depth: “The young men that I met want to learn German, but they cannot because there simply aren't enough openings for them. There are supposed to be 300,000 such openings, but 800,000 are needed.”<sup>151</sup>

If Germany considers language to be a necessity for integration, this lack of availability is a severe problem. Most refugees want to learn German and find work in the country, but face serious impediments to doing so. Since finding work is a dependable way to be allowed to stay in the country, sufficient language instruction is crucial.

### **Access to Work**

The current German system offers protective statuses for a certain period of time. Depending on which status a refugee is granted, their file may be reviewed every one to three years to assure that this status still applies. One definite way of assuring that protective status is renewed is by finding a job. Of the nearly one-million refugees now living within Germany, only around 40,000 were employed at the end of 2016.<sup>152</sup> For many refugees, language and vocational training is necessary before entering the job market, and finding a position is tough. Securing a job is a path not only to residency, but also to integration into and acceptance from German society:

Almost a quarter of the asylum applications in 2015 and 2016 were made by young women and in particular young men, aged 18 to 25. For these people, gainful

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150. “Chancen in der Krise: Zur Zukunft der Flüchtlingspolitik in Deutschland und Europa.” Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration, 2017, 134.

151. Jaafar Abdul Karim, “Refugees: ‘I Want to Integrate, but How?’” *Die Zeit*. April 18, 2016, sec. Gesellschaft. <http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/2016-04/refugees-integration-germany-support-encourage>.

152. “German Integration Report Exposes Prejudice against Immigrants.” *Deutsche Welle*, December 2016. <http://www.dw.com/en/german-integration-report-exposes-prejudice-against-immigrants/a-36719666>.

employment is one of the key integration prerequisites: they not only gain financial independence, but also social contacts and social acceptance. On the certification-oriented German labor market, the inclusion of qualified employment - and thus successful (labor market) integration - is still extremely difficult if the person concerned cannot demonstrate a recognized professional qualification. This situation is particularly difficult for refugees.<sup>153</sup>

Not only is the competition to find a job difficult, but the German government has very specific rules regarding how a refugee can enter the job market.

People living in initial reception centers are prohibited from working, and it is now mandatory for refugees to live in these centers for at least three months. Once the waiting period of three to six months has expired, refugees are allowed to enter the labor market, but must follow strict guidelines. It is required to apply for an employment permit, and submit proof that a job offer exists, before starting a job. After an employment permit is secured, the local job center must review the job opportunity to see if another job-seeker may be better qualified for the position based on residence status (i.e. a German citizen). This can take place for up to 15 months after the permit is secured, although it is not enforced in many states.<sup>154</sup> Once a position is secured, residence permits are often extended.

One of the most common ways to gain access to the labor market is by finding an apprenticeship (Ausbildung), which offers technical training in a specific field. As with employment, finding an apprenticeship is a competitive process. People who are offered a position in a training program are granted legal resident status for the duration of their program. This policy recently went into effect, in response to many employers who were resistant to offer training to refugees, out of fear that their residence status would not be renewed during the

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153. "Chancen in der Krise: Zur Zukunft der Flüchtlingspolitik in Deutschland und Europa." Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration, 2017, 131.

154. "Country Report: Germany." aida: Asylum Information Database, December 31, 2016, 66.

duration of their training.<sup>155</sup> In cases where training programs result in employment, resident status is extended for two years. If a trainee is not offered a position, their status is extended for six months in order to look for work.<sup>156</sup>

All of the men I interviewed were looking for employment in Germany in the hopes of gaining longer lasting residency permits. For two of these participants, the search for a job had become their only hope for being allowed to stay in the country, since both were being threatened with deportation. All seemed to understand that finding employment was one of the only ways they could experience any feeling of security while staying in the country.

Brahim had already been deported twice because of regulations set forth by the Dublin Regulation, and came back to Germany each time, determined to live and work in the country. He told me he searched almost every day for a job, devoting hours to visiting companies around Berlin in search of employment. Since he arrived back in Berlin in 2015, he had continually searched for work, but to no avail: “I want to work, anywhere would be great. As a painter or a cleaner, I just want to work.”<sup>157</sup> Upon his last entry into Germany, he was advised that if he found a steady job that he would be allowed to stay. Although I was unable to find any reputable source that this was now an option for Dubliners.

Sahir received the denial of his application and notice of deportation a week before we met. In the process of appealing this decision, he was told that if he were to find a training program or a job, he would be allowed to stay. This news was frustrating, since he had been looking for a job for the duration of the 15 months he had spent in Berlin. From his perspective,

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155. “Merkel Presents New Refugee Integration Law as ‘Milestone.’” *Deutsche Welle*, May 25, 2016. <http://www.dw.com/en/merkel-presents-new-refugee-integration-law-as-milestone/a-19281722>.

156. *Ibid.*

157. Brahim. Interview by Rebecca LaPoint, January 15, 2017.

there was little hope, since the job center was unhelpful to him, and his German was still not sufficient. He clearly expressed his disdain for the German government and the job center:

The government lies, I've been trying to get my Ausbildung and I want to do it in IT (information technology), so I went to the job center and they said with your English you should be able to find a job no problem. When I went to find a job, I was told I needed at least B1 level German, so I'll make my B1 by February, and when I went back to the job center they told me that I needed B2 level German. They just lie, they don't actually know.<sup>158</sup>

Although Sahir's words are harsh, and the direction of his blame may be misguided, his frustration and concern toward the system are valid. His greatest desire is to be allowed to remain in Germany, and he is told his only hope is to find a job, making these circumstances frustrating. In the past month, Sahir was offered an apprenticeship with an IT company, and he is waiting for the job center to grant his employment permit.

Sahir was lucky to find such a position; for many refugees this opportunity never arises. One recent integration law implemented by the German government created a number of "one-euro jobs", which pay between €0.80 to €2.50 per hour, in addition to existing monthly monetary benefits. If a refugee refuses to do such work, their benefits can be reduced.<sup>159</sup> Oplatz has closely followed the development of this policy, and the effects it has on refugees. These jobs typically consist of work within camps, such as cleaning bathrooms. This work is forced on refugees, even if they have legitimate reasons for not wanting to participate. In the case of one woman, she was taking a German language course in order to enter a training program. Her school time contradicted with working in the camp, and she wanted to postpone working until after the course was finished. She was told this was unacceptable, and if she refused to work her benefits would be cut. She was also told that this work would help integrate her into society,

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158. Sahir. Interview by Rebecca LaPoint, January 11, 2017.

159. "Merkel Presents New Refugee Integration Law as 'Milestone.'" *Deutsche Welle*, May 25, 2016. <http://www.dw.com/en/merkel-presents-new-refugee-integration-law-as-milestone/a-19281722>.

even though she was attempting to do so by learning German, and was now prevented from visiting these classes due to the forced work. Besides the obvious human rights abuses for forcing a person to work for such abysmal wages, this policy begs the question: how does cleaning a toilet in a camp integrate refugees into German society?<sup>160</sup>

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With such emphasis placed on integration, the lack of state support to help refugees overcome these hurdles is counterintuitive. By basing the standards for gaining permanent residency on these three criteria, yet not providing sufficient support, integration becomes an impossible test set up to fail. With the expectation for most refugees to return to their home country, it begs the question whether Germany actually wants to integrate refugees? If the idea is for them to remain only temporarily in the keeping them in such precarious, insecure circumstances, the current system makes sense. German policies ensure that few refugees meet the criteria to be “successfully” integrated, reaffirming stereotypes of immigrants as resistant to integration, and therefore unappreciative of German hospitality. This can easily be spun into a narrative suggesting that refugees are unable to integrate based on cultural differences, even when people are willing to go to great lengths to “become German,” to be allowed to stay in the country.

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160. “How Does Cleaning the Lager Toilet for 80 Cents per Hour Integrate You into the Society? #modernslavery.” *OPlatz — Berlin Refugee Movement*, April 18, 2017. <http://oplatz.net/how-does-cleaning-the-lager-toilet-for-80-cents-per-hour-integrate-you-into-the-society/>.

## Conclusion

When discussing the topic of my project with curious people, I often received the resigned response: “At least Germany’s letting them in.” In my attempt to explain the harm of this statement, I felt that my words were not always well received. This sentiment cannot stand after walking through a maze of beds filling a converted gymnasium, looking into the eyes of a man dreading his imminent deportation, or listening to a young boy tell of his harrowing journey after losing his parents and eight siblings in a bombing in search of refuge in Germany. Throughout the process of writing this project, these experiences stayed in my thoughts.

Of the people I met, both while volunteering and interviewing, each one faced unnecessary injustice and hardship in Germany. Allowing these transgressions to go unaddressed simply because they had been allowed into the country was not an option. The issue then became how to best present these injustices. With concerns ranging from conditions in camps, to Dublin deportations, to the racist reporting on New Year’s Eve, finding a way to highlight all these issues in a comprehensive and respectable way proved difficult. I knew these conditions were all important and connected, but I could not find the terms to explain how. The more time passed, and the nearer the deadline came, I still found myself searching for the proper vocabulary, until a class discussion about the widespread treatment of refugees as recipients of hospitality.

This term was illuminating, as it sparked the thought process that allowed this project to become what it is. Refugees in Germany were conceived of and treated as guests, who benefit (or suffer) from German (in)hospitality. The unjust circumstances faced by refugees I met resulted from the treatment of refugees as guests in Germany.

Germany was applauded for opening its borders and offering hospitality to those in seek of refuge at a time when inhospitality reigned in other parts of the world, and in other European

states. Already in this moment, German hospitality is complicated. This was not an act of absolute welcome, but rather a response to unavoidable political pressure.

By creating the cluster system, Germany worked to negate this unconditional welcome, while outwardly remaining a shining example of how to treat refugees. This system granted hospitality to some, while denying it to others, and in the process constructed a hierarchy of refugees and a set notion of legitimate refugeehood. Those who did not fit this notion were labelled as parasites, attempting to benefit from the true suffering of others, rather than suffering themselves.

The biased reporting about New Year's Eve in Cologne removed refugees from the role as innocent guests and reframed them as threats to German society and the German way of life. This event is considered the turning point in refugee politics, as more people began to believe the initial welcoming attitude was a mistake, and the cultures of refugees' homelands were presented as too different to integrate into German society.

Integration proves to be difficult in a country that conceives of refugees as impermanent fixtures, yet expects them to integrate in search of permanent status. The path through which refugees become integrated is blockaded by challenges preventing them from learning German, securing a job, and creating a sense of home.

The sources used to support these conclusions from each chapter were collected from a variety of places. They range from philosophical texts, to news articles, to interviews and more. Each of these sources served different purposes, but were crucial in the overall outcome of this project. The theoretical frame from Jacques Derrida and Mireille Rosello provided a vocabulary to discuss hospitality in an informed and thorough way. Due to the on-going nature of this topic, there is little academic work published on the matter. For this reason, news articles and statistical

data were necessary to this project. As discussed in Chapter Two, the perspective of refugees is often left out of these sources; a puzzling occurrence, as these articles are about refugees and refugee politics. To this end, I felt interviewing refugees to be the most crucial component of this project.

These sources inform one another to create a more complete and nuanced picture of the situation surrounding refugees in Germany. In the coming months and approaching elections, this situation could drastically change. This change will hopefully be toward fairer treatment and more secure circumstances for refugees.





## Translations

(numbers correspond to citation from text)

25. Dennoch muss ich jetzt sagen, das ist hart Politik. Wenn du jetzt vor mir stehst und du bist ein unheimlich sympathischer Mensch, aber du weißt in palästinische Flüchtlingslager gibt es noch tausend, und wenn wir jetzt sagen ihr könnt alle kommen und ihr könnt alle aus Afrika kommen und ihr könnt alle kommen, dass können wir auch nicht schaffen.

40. Laut infratest dimap haben sechs von zehn keine Angst vor "zu vielen" Flüchtlingen. Fast neun von zehn "schämen sich für die gewalttätigen Proteste". 95 Prozent finden es gut, dass sich Merkels "gute Bürger" für Flüchtlinge engagieren. Jeder Zweite fordert mehr Schutz vor fremdenfeindlichen Angriffen. Überraschung: Mehr als die Hälfte will keine Leistungskürzungen für Asylsuchende.

41. Der zweite Grund hat nicht mit DNA, sondern mit einem Kultur(um)bruch zu tun. Jahrhundertlang war Deutschsein an Herkunft gekettet: Abstammung, Glauben, Sprache. Dieses Land entwickelt gerade ein modernes Verständnis von Nationalität: Deutsch ist nicht "sein", sondern "werden", nicht "bio", sondern Willensakt – so wie Abermillionen Amerikaner, Australier, Kanadier geworden sind. Herkunft verblasst zugunsten von Zukunft. Lassen wir Angela Merkel das letzte Wort: "Wir schaffen das, und wo uns etwas im Wege steht, muss es überwunden werden."

61. Damit wir denen, die in Not sind, helfen können, müssen wir auch denen, die nicht in Not sind, sagen, dass sie bei uns nicht bleiben können. FAZ

69. „Wir erwarten, dass, wenn wieder Frieden in Syrien ist, wenn der IS im Irak besiegt ist, sie mit dem Wissen, das sie bei uns erworben haben, wieder in ihre Heimat zurückkehren“, sagte Merkel.

80. „Plötzlich die Hand am Po“; Silvester in Köln: Eine Bande junger Männer betatscht und bestiehlt Frauen. Die Polizei spricht von einer: „Neuen Dimension der Gewalt“

81. Das Grauen danach; Die sexuellen Übergriffe und Diebstähle in der Silvesternacht in Köln haben großes Entsetzen ausgelöst. Obwohl die Täter noch nicht bekannt sind, überbieten sich Politik und Polizei mit Vorschlägen

82. "Wer nur in schwarz und weiß denkt, macht die Mitte mundtot"; Die junge CDU-Politikerin Diana Kinnert warnt vor der Verharmlosung der Kölner Übergriffe ebenso wie vor der Diffamierung ganzer Menschengruppe

83. Mehrheit glaubt: "Wir schaffen das nicht"; In der Bevölkerung wachsen Zweifel am Vorgehen der Kanzlerin in der Flüchtlingskrise. Die Vorfälle in der Silvesternacht spielen eine große Rolle

84. Nach Polizeiangaben hatten sich am Silvesterabend rund um den Hauptbahnhof mehr als 1000 junge Männer versammelt, überwiegend aus dem nordafrikanischen Raum. Aus der Menge bildeten sich demnach Gruppen, die Frauen umzingelten, bedrängten und ausraubten. Die Afrikaner und Araber seien alkoholisiert gewesen, enthemmt aufgetreten und hätten viel Feuerwerk gezündet. 100 bis 150 von ihnen bildeten ein Spalier, eine Gasse.

85. Grünen-Fraktionschefin Katrin Göring-Eckardt: Es gibt keinen Bonus für Nationalität oder Aufenthaltsstatus. Das Gesetz gilt für jeden. Ob er aus Dresden oder Damaskus stammt."

86. Aus dem Umfeld des NRW-Innenministeriums dagegen heißt es, einige der Täter seien vor rund zwei Jahren aus Nordafrika als Flüchtlinge nach Deutschland gekommen, ihre Integration sei bislang offensichtlich nicht geglückt.

87. Vorrangig ging es den meist arabischen Tätern um die Sexualstraftaten oder, um es aus ihrem Blickwinkel zu sagen, um ihr sexuelles Amüsement.

88. Ausgerechnet hier hat sich zum Jahreswechsel eine Serie von Übergriffen auf Frauen zugetragen, die man in dieser Form in Deutschland bislang nicht gekannt hat, sondern entfernt an Szenen vom ägyptischen Tahrir-Platz erinnern.

91. Die Kanzlerin hat Zuversicht, aber zu wenig Plan. Was wir dringend brauchen, ist ein Integrationskonzept, das über die nächsten Jahre trägt.

94. "Mir wurde unter mein Kleid und an mein Gesäß gegriffen", berichtete eine 22-Jährige

95. Man wird jetzt sagen, das ist alles so nicht wahr, aber ich stand mittendrin mit meiner Freundin an der Hand, was leider nicht verhinderte, dass auch ihr immer wieder unter das Kleid gefasst wurde. Sie ist immer noch völlig fertig aufgrund dieser Szenen. Ist es das, wofür ich den halben Inhalt meines Kleiderschranks gespendet habe? Ist das das neue Köln? Ist das das neue Deutschland?

99. +++ Empörung über Sex-Mob +++ Politiker für schnellere Abschiebung ausländischer Straftäter +++ Vier Tatverdächtige von Polizei ermittelt

100. "Stadtspaziergang" endet blutig +++ Schon 153 Anzeigen +++; 11 Ausländer in Altstadt verprügelt

101. SEX-MOBSKANDAL; Warum schwieg NRW-Minister 4 Tage lang?

102. Nordafrika-Banden; immer aggressiver

103. Flüchtling unter Sex-Verdacht verhaftet

104. Nicht nur auf dem Kiez wurden junge Frauen von einer Sex-Meute gejagt und beklaut, auch am feinen Jungfernstieg drehte ein Mob von jungen Ausländern durch! In BILD schildern zwei Opfer die schlimmsten Minuten ihres jungen Lebens.

105. Haben Migranten wirklich ein anderes Frauenbild? Das ist eine Frage der Herkunft. Die Frauenrechte in Syrien, Irak, Saudi-Arabien und Ägypten sind am rückschrittlichsten, hat die Thomson Reuters Foundation ermittelt. In Ländern, in denen konservative islamische Kräfte das Sagen haben, sehen die Machthaber Frauen am liebsten ausschließlich zu Hause. Sie spielen öffentlich keine Rolle, sollen nicht wider sprechen und keinen Spaß an Sex haben.

"In konservativen Familien ist Sexualität absolut Tabu", heißt es in einer Expertise des Dortmunder Erziehungswissenschaftlers Ahmet Toprak über gewaltbereite junge Muslime mit Migrationshintergrund. Das trage vor allem bei Männern zu einer überholten Einstellung zu Sexualität und Geschlechterrollen bei. "Unbegleitete Frauen im öffentlichen Leben kennen sie nicht." Signale wie ein kurzer Rock oder Flirten könnten falsch verstanden werden.

106. Wer straffällig wird, wird abgeschoben! Nicht zuletzt, weil er sein Gastrecht missbraucht hat. Doch es gibt große Hürden:

b Erst ab einem Strafmaß von mehr als einem Jahr, bei schweren Drogendelikten oder Widerstand gegen die Staatsgewalt kann ein straffälliger Asylbewerber theoretisch überhaupt erst ausgewiesen werden (§54 Aufenthaltsgesetz).

b Allerdings: Entscheidend für die Ausweisung ist eine Einzelfallprüfung. Ein Sprecher des Innenministeriums zu BILD: "Es gibt keine schematisierten Vorgaben."

b Um einen Asylbewerber dann wirklich abzuschieben, muss sein Asylverfahren abgeschlossen sein.

b Dann gilt der nächste Vorbehalt. Laut Genfer Flüchtlingskonvention darf ein Flüchtling nicht in ein Land abgeschoben werden, in dem ihm Folter, eine "unmenschliche Behandlung" oder Strafe aufgrund seiner Religion/politischer Gesinnung droht.

b Dieser Abschiebeschutz verfällt nur, wenn Asylbewerber schwere Straftaten begangen haben, sie zu Strafen von mehr als drei Jahren verurteilt wurden - etwa für Totschlag.

108. Wir saßen auf einer Bank am Dom, wollten das Feuerwerk gucken, ein Sektchen trinken. Auf einmal standen nur noch Männer um uns herum, man hat nur noch Arabisch gehört." Und weiter: "Wir hörten immer nur,Hey Baby'. Ich wurde richtig fest am Arm festgehalten. Das war ein Albtraum. Wir waren gefangen in einer Menschenmasse."

109. Und wenn es Deutsche wären?; Pressekodex In Berichten über die sexuellen Übergriffe während der Silvesternacht in Köln wird plötzlich die Herkunft der Straftäter offensiv benannt. Was soll das?

110. Der Schock von Köln; Kriminalität der männermasse Diebstahl, sexuelle Übergriffe und Migranten: Das versetzt Medien und Politik in den Hyperdrive. Wem nützt es?

111. Übergriffe nicht bagatellisieren

112. Nur ein Nebenwiderspruch?; DEBATTE Seit den Übergriffen an der Reeperbahn in der Silvesternacht häuften sich Berichte über Flüchtlinge, die sexualisierte Gewalt ausüben. Welche Rolle spielt dabei die Herkunft? Ist es eine nötige Aufklärung oder eine fahrlässige Diskriminierung?

113. Ja, aber das hat auch mit der Schicht und dem Bildungsstand zu tun. Ein marokkanischer Lehrer oder Arzt würde so etwas vermutlich nicht tun. Deswegen ist es falsch zu sagen, die Marokkaner sind alle so.
114. Nicht männliche Geflüchtete sind gefährlich, sondern alle Männer. Nicht sie halten Vergewaltigungskultur aufrecht, sondern die sehr selektive Anhörung der Betroffenen und Victim-Blaming, wie es jetzt Kölns Oberbürgermeisterin Henriette Reker anhand von Verhaltensregeln für Frauen à la eine Armlänge Distanz betreibt.
115. Als ob es in Deutschland ohne Einwanderer keine Diebstähle, keine Vergewaltigungen und keine Morde gäbe.
116. Sobald die Täter eben nicht mehr ihre potenziellen Väter, Ehemänner, Brüder oder Söhne sind, sondern die bösen Männer of Color, ist die Sorge um das Wohl deutscher Frauen sehr groß.
117. War Alkohol im Spiel? War der Rock kurz und der Ausschnitt tief? Es sei egal, wie die Antwort auf diese Fragen laute, sagt Winker. Wichtig sei es, dass die Gesellschaft im Ganzen und Frauen im Speziellen für die Thematik sensibilisiert würden. Da ist noch viel zu tun.
118. Es ist das AngstszENARIO, das Pegida und andere Rechtspopulisten sowie Rechtsfeministinnen wie Alice Schwarzer schon lange an die Wand malen: Eine Horde von Männern arabischer Herkunft fällt über unsere deutschen Frauen her, um sie sexuell zu belästigen und auszurauben, wenn nicht sogar zu vergewaltigen.
120. Normalität wünscht sich auch der 24 Jahre alte Mohammed al-Mohammed. Wir sind vor dem Krieg geflohen, erklärt er. Wir suchen hier Sicherheit, gehen jeden Tag zur Schule, versuchen, schnell Deutsch zu lernen und dann eine Arbeit zu finden. Wir sind nicht hier, um Probleme zu machen.
144. Diese Entwicklung auf dem Wohnungsmarkt hatte schon vor längerer Zeit eingesetzt, die Flüchtlingszuwanderung verstärkt sie aber bzw. wird dies tun, wenn Asylberechtigte Wohnungen nachfragen. Insbesondere bei einfach ausgestatteten Wohnungen ist zu erwarten, dass die Preise im Verhältnis weiter steigen.
153. Knapp ein Viertel der Asylanträge in den Jahren 2015 und 2016 wurde von jungen Frauen und insbesondere jungen Männern gestellt, die sich im Ausbildungsalter befinden (18 bis 25 Jahre) (BAMF 2016c; 2017a). Für diese Menschen ist Erwerbstätigkeit eine der entscheidenden Integrationsvoraussetzungen: Dadurch gewinnen sie nicht nur finanzielle Unabhängigkeit, sondern auch soziale Kontakte und gesellschaftliche Akzeptanz. Auf dem zertifikatsorientierten deutschen Arbeitsmarkt ist die Aufnahme einer qualifizierten Beschäftigung – und somit eine erfolgreiche (Arbeitsmarkt-)Integration – aber nach wie vor äußerst schwierig, wenn die betreffende Person keinen anerkannten berufsqualifizierenden Abschluss vorweisen kann. Für Flüchtlinge ist diese Situation besonders schwierig.

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