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The Integration of granted refugees into the German labour market

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The Integration of granted refugees into the German labor market

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A qualitative analysis of the organizational integration of refugees in German companies

Anna Haddick

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THE INTEGRATION OF GRANTED REFUGEES INTO THE GERMAN LABOUR MARKET

1 Introduction

Germany and Europe experienced an influx of asylum seekers in the past years. Escaping from civil war and persecution, those people search for a better life for them and their children. The number of asylum seekers has reached a new climax since 2015. In comparison to 2014, the amount of asylum seekers doubled in 2015. From 2015 until 2017 about 1.3 million people applied for asylum in Germany (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2018, p.4). This migration movement does not only mean a complex administrative challenge for Germany, but also raises the question how to integrate the refugees into the German society. An answer provides the Council of Europe (2014, p.1), stating that “Successful employment of asylum seekers and refugees is beneficial to host societies, in that the State has fewer costs providing social assistance, and societies are more likely to be cohesive, as employment is linked to other areas of integration. Access to the labor market is also important to the individual because it helps reinstate a sense of self-worth, is crucial to human dignity, facilitates recovery from trauma and encourages financial independence.” It implies that work is a crucial enabling factor for integration since it is the key to social contact and self-esteem for refugees.

The German labor market is marked by a demographic revolution. Due to current demographic trends, it can be estimated that the number of persons in the labor market will drop significantly in the near future. The Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2013, p.4) estimates a drop of economically active persons by 1.4 million comparing 2010 and 2030. For this reason, a shortage of skilled workers is expected. Probably especially the middle levels of qualifications would be affected. In contrast, the demand for unskilled workers is considered to drop further. Regarding specific sectors, there will be a shortage in the health and social sectors and other services like storage, transport, hospitality and cleaning. Although it is hard to predict to which extent these scenarios may occur, the federal government introduced measures to secure the supply of skilled labor. The concept includes the activation of minority groups for the labor market like older people, migrants and people with disabilities (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2013, p.8). Another key factor are the



apprenticeships which enable companies to train employees to qualified staff. During the past years, especially the impact of refugees on the shortage of skilled workers was discussed.

Due to their importance for the German labor market and the recent influx of refugees, this study will focus on the integration of refugees. While migrants leave their country of their own will mostly due to economic reasons, refugees are forced to leave their country and are therefore not predominantly concerned with their economic advantage. However, in order to integrate them in Germany and to use their potential as qualified workers, they must be integrated successfully into the companies. The German government actively promotes the integration of refugees by corresponding policies and measurements to facilitate the entrance into employment. While asylum claimants and tolerated refugees have rather restricted access to the labor market, granted refugees benefit from unrestricted access. Due to the minimized legal hurdles, this study will focus on granted refugees.

This research deals with the question how to accommodate granted refugees into German organizations. Until now, little research has been conducted in this field. While acculturation theories mainly refer to the adaptation to new cultures in general, organizational psychology deals with the socialization into an organization without including intercultural aspects and migration. To fill this research gap, the question will be answered by a mixed methods research, including deductive and inductive research. The acculturation process of refugees in Germany will be assessed in detail. The adaptation of the theoretical acculturation process to the current situation serves as a basis for the further research. The process includes the acculturation conditions, orientations and outcomes in Germany. Afterwards, facilitators of organizational acculturation in the German labor market will be derived deductively by assumptions. They are mainly based on the acculturation theories as well as on a model combining the approaches of acculturation and organizational socialization. The assumptions will be tested. For that, a qualitative research design is employed. Primary data is collected by semi-structured interviews. The interviews are structured according to the assumptions and provide insights on their validity but also contain open questions. Those are designed to enable the inductive approach of this study. Considering the lack of research in this field, the inductive approach helps to develop new categories to answer the research question. The thematic data analysis aims to illustrate themes in the collected data both inductively and deductively. While existing themes are derived according to the assumptions, additional themes and categories can emerge inductively.

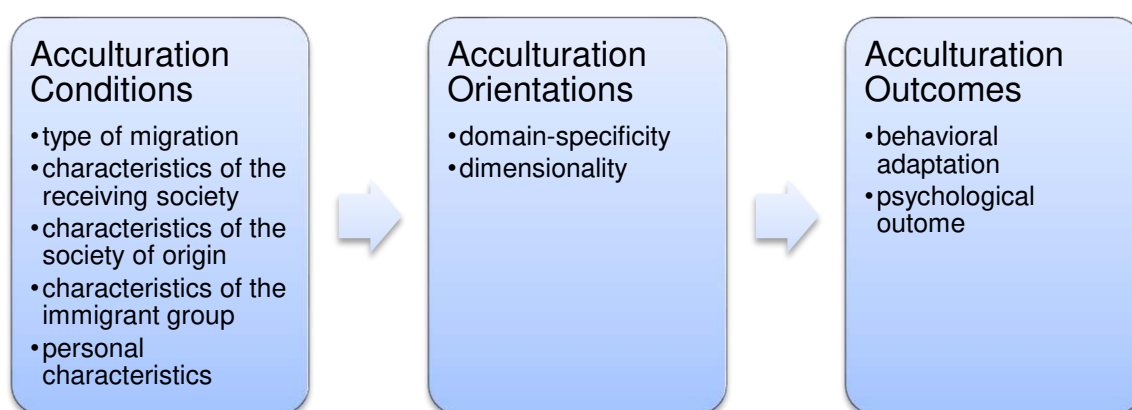


Based on the thematic analysis, the results can be conceptualized into a model that can be adapted by any company. Finally, the aim of this study is to provide guidance to facilitate the accommodation of refugees into the work place.

2 Assessment of the acculturation process of refugees in Germany

In 2011, the international organization for migration (p.7) defined acculturation as “a series of changes in cultural mores resulting from direct and continuous contact between groups of different cultures, particularly through migratory movements or economic exchanges. Acculturation can occur when one group adopts the traits of the dominant culture of a society in public life while keeping its own culture in the private sphere. Acculturation may also result in the creation of a new culture, one that synthesizes elements of the two original cultures.” The definition implies that there are different acculturation strategies as well as different groups experiencing these changes. The acculturation strategies are defined within the bidimensional model by Berry. However, in order to design acculturation studies, the examination of three pillars is suggested in the literature: the acculturation conditions, orientations and outcomes (Celenk and Van de Vijver, 2011, pp.3-4 and Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver, 2006, p. 30). These factors form the acculturation process as shown in the following figure.

Figure 1: Framework of the acculturation process



Source: own illustration based on Celenk and Van de Vijver, 2011, pp.3-4 and Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver, 2006, p.30



The acculturation conditions represent the context, within which the acculturation process takes place both on the group level and on the individual level (Celenk and Van de Vijver, 2011, p.3). The acculturation orientations are the core of many acculturation studies comprising for example the acculturation strategies by Berry (1974, 1980, and 1990). The orientations are considered to be the most characteristic part of the acculturation process because they connect the conditions and the outcomes. The last component of the acculturation process are the outcomes which involve long-term factors, such as mental health, well-being, cultural identity, cultural knowledge, language skills and academic and job performance (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver, 2006, p.5). The three-pillar framework of the acculturation process will be applied in the following subchapters.

2.1 Acculturation conditions

The acculturation process involves at least two groups, usually the mainstream and the ethnic group. In this study, the German society represents the mainstream or receiving society. The ethnic group or immigrant group are the refugees. In the following, the components of acculturation conditions will be applied on the context of the labor market integration of refugees in Germany as shown in Table 1. The personal characteristics as an individual factor will be included as labor expectations.

Table 1: Application of acculturation conditions to the acculturation of refugees in Germany

Theoretical acculturation conditions	Application
Type of migration	Profile of recent refugee flows in Germany
Characteristics of the receiving society	Framework conditions of the labor market integration of refugees in Germany
Characteristics of the society of origin	Comparison of the cultural characteristics of the refugees' culture and the German culture
Characteristics of the immigrant group and personal characteristics	The qualification level and labor expectations of refugees in Germany

Source: own illustration based on Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver, 2006, p.30

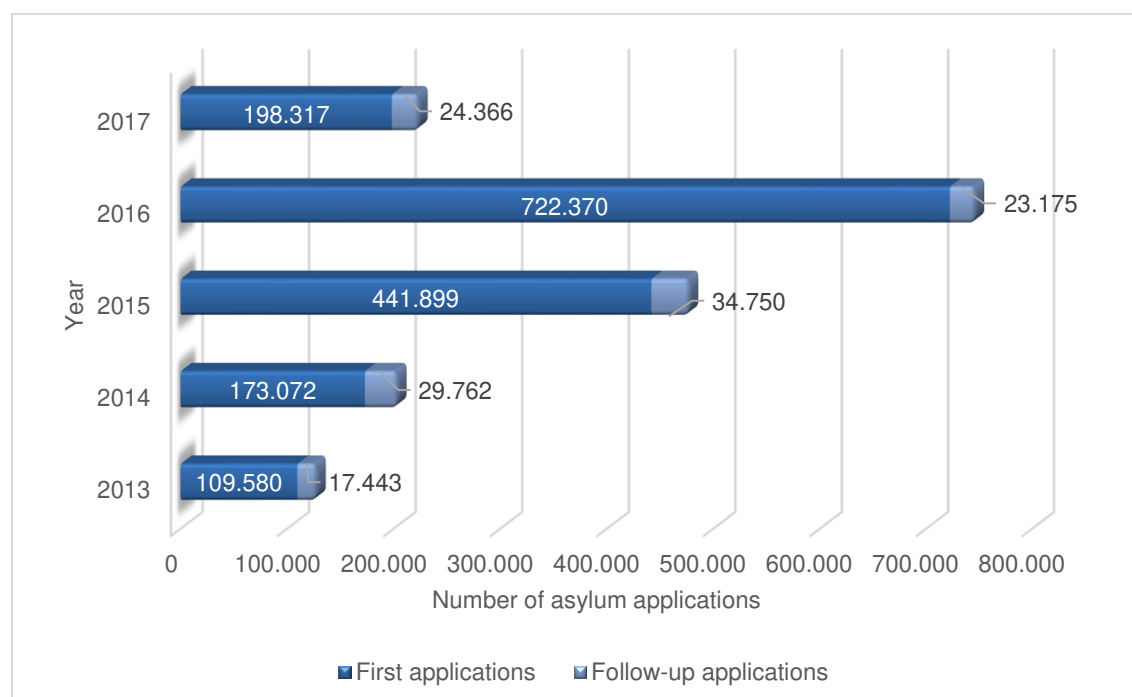


2.1.1 Profile of recent refugee flows in Germany

According to Berry (1990, pp. 201-234), the groups facing acculturation can be differentiated along the three dimensions: voluntary – involuntary, sedentary – migrant and permanent – temporary. Crossing these dimensions, six different groups can be identified. Both refugees and asylum seekers are classified in the group of involuntary migrants as they are forced to leave their country due to civil war, persecution and bad economic conditions. In contrast to sedentary groups who remain on home grounds, migrants move far away from their ancestral territory. With regards to the third dimension, involuntary migrants can either be settled permanently or be temporary residents. Besides that, many other factors can vary amongst the refugees which is why they cannot be considered a homogenous group. The characteristics of the refugees migrating to Germany will be examined in the following. Therefore, the group's size, their origin and demographical factors are analyzed.

The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in Germany measures the number of refugees in Germany by the applications for asylum they receive. The following graph illustrates the number of asylum applications in Germany in the past five years.

Figure 2: Trend of asylum applications in Germany from 2013 - 2017



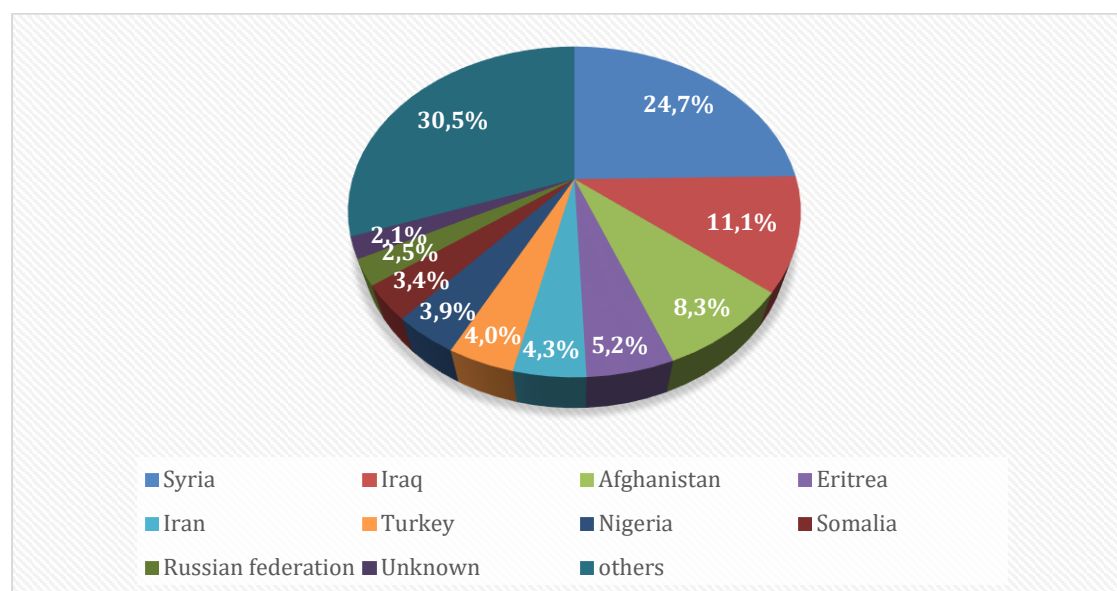
Source: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2018, p.4



In 2008, 28,018 persons applied for asylum, whereas in 2014 already 202,834 persons applied. In 2016, 722,370 first applications and 23,175 follow-up applications were registered, which was the highest number of asylum applicants since the introduction of this statistic in 1995. Due to the administration overload many persons were not able to apply in 2015, when they actually entered the country. In January 2018, 12,907 persons applied for the first time in comparison to 16,057 applicants in the comparative month of the previous year, which means a decrease of 19.6% in the number of asylum applications. However, the number of follow-up applications increased by 13.8 % from 1,907 to 2,170 applications (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2018, p.4). The increase in follow-up applications indicates the ongoing administration overload of the federal office.

Regarding the country of origin, the group of refugees arriving in Germany is very heterogeneous. Most asylum applicants came from Syria with 35.9% in 2015 and 36.9% in 2016, followed by Afghanistan with 17.6%, Iraq with 13.3% and Iran with 3.7% in 2016. In 2015, the number of applicants from the Balkan states like Albania and Kosovo was significantly higher than in 2016. Further countries of origin are Eritrea, Pakistan, Nigeria and Somalia (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2017a, p.20). The top ten countries of origin in 2017 are displayed in the following figure.

Figure 3: The top ten countries of origin of asylum applicants in 2017 in Germany



Source: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2018, p.8



Compared with the two previous years, the number of refugees from Syria and Afghanistan has declined in 2017. However, almost half of the applicants (44%) came from the first three countries Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. The first statistics from January 2018, in contrast, show a decrease of applicants from Afghanistan with 5.6% and an increase of Nigerian applicants, ranking the third country with 6.8% (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2018, p.8). The reason might be legal hurdles which will be examined in the next chapter.

Concerning the demographics, the refugees migrating to Germany are predominantly young and male. In 2016, 65.7% of the applicants were male. While 36.2% are younger than 18 years, almost three quarters (73.8%) are younger than 30 years (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2017a, p.21). The statistics in 2017 show the same tendency with 61.1% being male applicants and 75.4% being younger than 30 years (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2017b, p.7).

Not only the origin and the demographical factors influence the acculturation process. Especially the protection status granted results in the formation of different categories which has a significant impact on their acculturation experience. The influence of the refugee's status on the labor market integration will be analyzed in the next chapter.

2.1.2 Framework conditions of the labor market integration of refugees in Germany

The access to the labor market depends on the migrant's legal status. In general, there are three different legal statuses relevant for the labor market integration: asylum seeking, tolerated and granted. In the last years, the German government facilitated the access to the labor market for asylum seekers and tolerated refugees by various policies.

The asylum seekers are those refugees who already applied for asylum but whose application is still in process. Due to the massive refugee influx and resulting administration overload, the refugee recognition process takes on average 8.7 months. However, 78.8% of the recognition processes take less than a year (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2017a, p.55). As of 31.12.2016, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees stated to have 681,306 open recognition processes. The majority of the applicants are from Afghanistan (21.3%) and Syria (19.9%) (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2017a, p.67). In February 2016, the federal government introduced a new law, enabling asylum seekers who start an apprenticeship to obtain a guaranteed residence permit, which is limited to the duration of the apprenticeship plus



two additional years to provide further stability for the companies and to give the opportunity to gain job experience. Therefore, it is called the 3+2 rule.

The second group are the tolerated refugees, whose asylum application has been refused. However, they cannot be sent back to their country of origin due to various reasons (Aumüller, 2016a, p.68). In general, both groups face the same labor market restrictions. They are allowed to enter the labor market after having been in Germany for a period of three months. Furthermore, they need a work permit by the foreigners' authority as well as in the first four years of stay by the federal employment agency. The approvals mainly depend on a review of equivalent conditions of employment and on the priority review. It means that they can only engage in employment if that workplace cannot be staffed with a national or an EU citizen. The priority review expires as soon as the asylum seeker or tolerated refugee has lived in Germany for more than fifteen months. After four years of stay, approval of the Federal Employment Agency is no longer needed. Another exception is the engagement in temporary work. For temporary work no priority review is needed for asylum seekers and tolerated persons and accordingly it is possible to engage in temporary work after the waiting period (Aumüller, 2016a, p.69).

Nevertheless, the asylum seekers and tolerated refugees are distinguished by the safety of their country of origin, the so-called protection rate. The protection rate is accordingly low in the safe countries of origin. In contrast, asylum seekers from countries with a protection rate that is higher than 50% are considered to have good prospects to stay. In 2017, this applied to Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Somalia, the so-called big five. The protection rates are updated every six months (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2017c). Due to the high probability of staying, asylum seekers from these countries are supported in entering the labor market early by getting immediate access to integration courses. These courses consist of 600 hours of German language lessons and 60 hours of training about the culture and political system and are a precondition for being employed (Aumüller, 2016a, p.69). Usually, asylum seekers from the Balkan states, Ghana and Senegal face an accelerated asylum process with the outcome of being refused because their countries of origin are considered to be safe. Those countries are defined by the German law as countries without risk of state or non-state persecution (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2016). Consequently, they are excluded from any integration measures. Moreover, asylum seekers and tolerated refugees from secure countries of origin are no longer allowed to complete an apprenticeship or engage in any gainful employment.



The third group, the granted refugees, get full access to the labor market and all supportive measures such as the integration course. By end of 2016, 452,023 persons belonged to this group. The majority of granted refugees are from Syria (59.9%) followed by Iraq (16.3%), Eritrea, Afghanistan and Iran (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2017a, p.67).

Due to complexity of the labor market access, many companies are discouraged from employing refugees. Employers are required to acquire extensive knowledge about the legal framework of the refugees' labor market access before employing refugees. Solely the group of granted refugees will be included in this study due to their full access to the labor market.

2.1.3 The qualification level and labor expectations of refugees in Germany

A survey by the research center of the ministry for migration and refugees (BAMF-FZ) in cooperation with the German socio-economic panel (SOEP) and the Institute for employment research (IAB) at the German institute of economic research (DIW) provides valuable insights into the conditions of refugees. It examines the qualification levels which the refugees have acquired in their countries of origin as well as their further career aspirations. The annual survey was first conducted in 2016 with 4,527 refugees living in 3,336 households. The surveyed refugees entered Germany between the first of January 2013 and the 31st of January 2016 and applied for asylum in this timeframe. They were chosen as a random sample based on the central register of foreign nationals. The results of the study allow to derive generalized statements about refugees that arrived in Germany between the stated dates (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2017, p.1).

With regards to the academic degree it has to be noted that a scale describing the German school degree was used considering that the refugees might not be familiar with the German educational system. In general, 58% of the surveyed refugees visited a school or university for more than ten years compared to 88% of German inhabitants. In contrast, 13% have no education (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2016, p.6). The following table illustrates the proportion of refugees that visited a certain type of school and obtained an academic degree.



Table 2: The academic qualification levels of refugees

Type of school	School visit (%)			Academic degree (%)		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
No school	11	19	13	-	-	-
Primary school	13	11	12	-	-	-
Middle school	31	29	31	24	21	23
Secondary school	41	38	40	35	33	35
Others	4	3	4	3	2	3

Source: Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2017, p.21

With regards to the academic education there are some gender differences. Despite the fact that almost the same percentage of male and female refugees (16% and 17%) visited a university, 13% of the female refugees graduated in contrast to 10% of the males. Moreover, there are significant differences in the qualification levels according to the country of origin. For refugees from Syria and Iran, the proportion of rather low qualified persons is smaller than for refugees from Iraq, Eritrea and Somalia. The reason for that might be the political situation in the countries of origin. While Syria had a working educational system before the civil war started in 2011, the other countries suffer from instability and civil wars for decades (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2017, p.21).

In terms of professional experience, 8% of the male refugees took part in a professional education, while 6% graduated from it. In contrast, 5% of the females took part and 4% graduated from a professional education. In total, the low amount of refugees with a professional degree can be explained by the lack of a dual education and training system such as the one in Germany. Since technical and administrative professions are often conducted without formal apprenticeships, many refugees might have valuable experience which cannot be statistically evaluated (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2017, p.20). 73% of the surveyed refugees have worked before they came to Germany. The male refugees have more professional experience with 81% compared to 50% of the women. This trend probably can be explained by the gender roles in the respective countries. In total, 13% worked in a leadership position and 27% stated to have been self-employed (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2016, p.7). Therefore, it can be said that the refugees seem to have some educational as well as professional experiences which are central for their integration.



Another important facilitating factor for the labor market integration are the language skills. The survey revealed that around 8% of the refugees do not have any writing or reading skills, i.e. they are analphabets. A correlation has been found between the education level and the analphabetism. However, 19% stated to have good or very good English skills. At the same time, 60% admit to have no or bad English skills (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2017, p.34). With regard to their German skills, 90% of the refugees had no German skills when they arrived. Nevertheless, they have allegedly increased their knowledge comparably fast in a short period of time. 19% of the surveyed refugees, being less than two years in Germany, claimed to have good or very good German skills and 35 % average language skills. There is also a correlation between the legal status, the length of stay and the German skills. Especially granted refugees state to have good German skills (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2017, pp.40-42). It can be assumed that granted refugees have a high motivation to learn the language due to their high perspective to remain in Germany.

Since the access to the German labor market is highly controlled by educational certificates, those without these certificates are limited to mainly unsecure and badly remunerated low skilled jobs. Considering the rather low proportion of highly qualified refugees, as shown before, it is important to analyze the degree to which refugees plan to further educate themselves in Germany. Almost half of the surveyed refugees want to graduate from school in Germany maybe, one quarter for sure (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2017, p.61). With regards to the countries of origin, refugees from Eritrea, Iran and Somalia more often strive to graduate from school compared with Syrian refugees striving for higher qualification levels. The difference can be explained by the higher level of education in Syria. In detail, a correlation has been found between the previous acquired education and the graduation aspiration in Germany. While a comparably high proportion of refugees from Syria strive to graduate from secondary school (62%), significantly more refugees from Eritrea and Somalia strive to acquire a lower degree (35%). With regards to a professional degree, comparably more men than women are interested in acquiring one (66% to 59%). Moreover, the study revealed that the majority of the refugees does not strive for an academic degree. Solely 35% of the surveyed refugees are interested in an academic degree. These are comparably many Syrian refugees (45%), while less refugees from Eritrea and Somalia belong to this group. However, almost two thirds of the refugees strive for a professional degree (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2017, pp.61-66). In the light of



the previously described need for certificates to enter the German labor market, the high motivation for education can be evaluated very positively.

To sum up, a polarization in the school education can be noted. Comparably many refugees graduated from secondary schools, while also a high proportion has no or low school education. However, the professional education is significantly lower than the school education.

2.2 Acculturation orientations

The acculturation orientations refer to the acculturation strategies and describe the way immigrants prefer to relate to the mainstream society. Since they represent the core of the acculturation process, they relate to the acculturation conditions and impact the acculturation outcomes. In general, the strategies can be distinguished by their dimensionality and the domain specificity. With regards to the dimensionality, the bidimensional acculturation strategies according to Sam and Berry (2012) will be examined. As domain specificity indicates that acculturation orientations can vary across life situations (Celenk and Van de Vijver, 2011, p.4), the preferred acculturation strategies with regards to the labor market integration of refugees will be analyzed. For that, influencing factors of the strategies will be identified and related to the acculturation conditions.

2.2.1 Acculturation strategies

The concept of acculturation strategies refers to the “how” of acculturation. They can be divided into strategies at the cultural level of the larger society between two groups in contact and strategies at the individual level of the emergent ethno cultural group. Those mostly belong to the non-dominant group, in this study the refugees migrating to the culture of the dominant group, which represents the larger society Germany. Nevertheless, as previously described the group of refugees is rather diverse with regards to the demographics, country of origin, qualification levels and ethnicity. The following figures illustrate all strategies at both levels.



Figure 4: Acculturation strategies in ethno cultural groups

Relationship sought among groups + ↑ ↓ -	Maintenance of heritage culture and identity + ← → -	
	Integration	Assimilation
	Separation	Marginalization

Source: Sam and Berry, 2016, p.22

Figure 5: Acculturation strategies in larger societies

Relationship sought among groups + ↑ ↓ -	Maintenance of heritage culture and identity + ← → -	
	Multiculturalism	Melting Pot
	Segregation	Exclusion

Source: Sam and Berry, 2016, p.22

There are four strategies in each level which can be measured according to the degree of maintenance of the heritage culture and identity and the relationship sought among groups. The first figure shows the acculturation strategies from the point of view of the non-dominant ethno cultural group, the refugees. The assimilation strategy is defined by not maintaining their cultural identity and seeking daily contact with other cultures. When assimilation is pursued by the larger society Germany, it can be defined as the melting pot. The opposite is defined as separation, when individuals avoid interactions with other cultures and seek to hold on to their heritage. As it is enforced by the dominant group or larger society, it is called segregation. In the



case that some degree of the own culture is maintained while having daily interactions with other groups, the individual follows the integration strategy. When this strategy is accepted by the dominant group and the cultural diversity is demanded by the whole society, it represents the strategy of mutual accommodation, multiculturalism. The fourth option is called marginalization and takes place when there is a low degree of maintaining the own culture as well as a low degree of interactions with other cultures. This is often the reason for discrimination or exclusion in the acculturation strategies in the larger societies (Sam and Berry, 2016, p.22).

2.2.2 Influencing factors of the cross-cultural adaptation of refugees in Germany

Refugees had to leave their home country due to push factors rather than pull factors and most of them have experienced traumatic events. As they are entitled to basic rights such as employment, education and welfare, refugees interact with other cultures in various social settings. These aspects of life impact how their acculturation strategies take place (Sam and Berry, 2016, pp. 20-21). According to Sam and Berry (2016, pp. 22-24), there is a preference for integration in the social life, while assimilation is common in the work place and separation in terms of family. Furthermore, the host society has a major influence on how migrants experience the acculturation process. Liu, Volcic and Gallois (2015, p. 210) argue, that integration probably benefits migrants most, since it offers the opportunity to keep some of their cultural practices while maintaining a positive relationship with the host society. However, integration can only be pursued when the dominant society accepts and appreciates cultural diversity. It further requires the ethno cultural individual to acknowledge basic values of the larger society in order to reach multiculturalism. Hence, the refugees need to adapt to some degree to an unfamiliar cultural context. This cross-cultural adaptation is influenced by several factors, such as the similarity between host and home cultures, the ethnic social support, the personal characteristics, the intergroup contact and the political environment (Liu, Volcic and Gallois, 2015, pp.213 – 215). Those factors will be evaluated in the following with regards to the labor market integration of refugees in Germany.

First, the degree of similarity between cultures impacts the acculturation process significantly. There is a great cultural distance between Germany and the refugees home countries. Increased cultural distance means higher acculturation stress for the migrants and encourages them to



remain close to their ethnic group. Therefore, the cultural differences can be evaluated as a barrier for a successful integration of the refugees.

The ethnic social support refers to ethnic communities providing important support for migrants in adapting to a new culture. The support from those communities can help to bridge cultural distance and gradually build connections to the host culture (Liu, Volcic and Gallois, 2015, p.213). Considering the huge influx of refugees in Germany, it can be assumed that their networks provide valuable support for the refugees in adjusting to the German culture.

Other important influencing factors for the cross-cultural adaptation are the personal characteristics of the refugees. Especially demographic factors such as age and education influence the preferred acculturation strategies. Younger, well-educated migrants usually adapt more easily to the new culture in contrast to older, less-educated ones. Moreover, the ability to speak the host language encourages the integration process (Liu, Volcic and Gallois, 2015, p.214). The profile of the recent refugee inflow showed that almost three quarters of the refugees are younger than 30 years while about 35% are even younger than 18 years old (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2017a, p.21). The analysis of the qualification level in the previous chapter revealed a comparably low education with regards to academic degree and especially professional degrees. Moreover, 90% of the refugees did not speak German upon their arrival (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2017, pp.40-42). However, the German skills seem to steadily increase in a rather short period of time and hence, reduce acculturation stress.

Moreover, the interpersonal contact between migrants and host society facilitates the adaptation to the new culture. In general, it results in more positive perceptions and reduces potentially negative stereotypes (Liu, Volcic and Gallois, 2015, p.214). In Germany, many initiatives have been launched giving volunteers the opportunity to support refugees in diverse aspects of life. Especially in the labor market integration, the engagement of volunteers plays an important role. Volunteers can serve as mentors providing job opportunities via their networks. Moreover, they help as translators and mediators between job agencies. Although there are no representative studies about the extent of those initiatives on a volunteer basis, it can be assumed that they significantly contribute to the integration process (Aumüller, 2016b, p.34).

Lastly, the host society's political and social environment has a major impact on the acculturation strategies. Liu, Volcic and Gallois (2015, p.215) argue, that the higher the support of the



host society, the more resilient the non-dominant group and consequently, the lower the discrimination will be. Supporting measures enhancing the multiculturalism include among others political policies, employment opportunities and language requirements. The analysis of the framework conditions of the labor market integration showed that although there have been some adjustments in the legal framework in the past years, it is still highly complicated. While refugees from countries with a high protection rate and granted refugees benefit from the adjusted policies, the access to the labor market is limited for others. Moreover, language and integration courses are accessible solely by the granted refugees and those with a high prospect to stay (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2017a, p. 67). The high complexity and long administrative processes lead to the fact that many companies are discouraged from employing refugees.

To sum up, both the aspect of life and the host society influence how the acculturation strategies take place. Integration on the ethno cultural group level and multiculturalism on the larger society's level have been identified as the most beneficial strategies for both the dominant and non-dominant group. Despite some barriers like the cultural distance and the low education level of the refugees, there are major facilitators of the integration process.

2.3 Acculturation outcomes

The acculturation outcomes are the last component of the acculturation process and are influenced by the conditions and strategies (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver, 2006, p.5). The long-term outcomes with regards to the language skills as well as the academic and professional performance will be examined as far as it is possible. The participation of the refugees in the labor market as well as the experiences of companies and their willingness to employ refugees will be analyzed. Resulting from that, the future labor market participation will be estimated.

The previously presented survey by the ministry for migration and refugees and the German socio-economic panel provides insights into the refugee's participation in the labor market (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2017). However, it should be noted that the labor market integration of the refugees is only at the beginning. At the time of the survey in 2016, 14% of the refugees claimed to be employed either part-time, full-time, self-employed, in an apprenticeship or internship. In more detail, out of the surveyed refugees who arrived in 2015, 9% stated to be employed, while out of those who arrived in 2014 22% and among the 2013 migrated refugees



31% were employed. 42% of them found their first job in Germany via social contacts such as their family and friends (Brücker, Rother and Schupp, 2016, p.50). This trend might also be supported by the high voluntary support in initiatives. According to Brücker, Hauptmann and Vallizadeh (2015, pp.9-10), many refugees are employed in sectors with lower skill requirements such as the hospitality business and other services. This trend can be explained by the missing qualifications. Although many refugees strive for further education in Germany, they still might not have acquired further qualifications, considering the short time they have been in Germany.

Further insights are provided by a study conducted by the institute for employment research (IAB) in 2016. Within the framework of the annual study by the IAB, almost 9,000 companies in all sectors were surveyed with regards to their experiences and expectations towards the refugee inflow since 2014. The representative study allows to generalize the results to the whole German economy (Gürtzgen, Kubis, and Rebien, 2017, p.8). The study showed that 10% of German companies have experiences with refugees while 3.5% employ at least one refugee. More than one third of the companies with more than 500 employees and 25% of the middle-sized companies with 50 – 249 employees stated to have experiences with refugees, including applications, job interviews and employment. Among companies with less than 50 employees, almost 40% have these experiences. However, it has to be considered that the majority of the German companies are small-sized. Therefore, the proportion of big companies accounts for 2% of all companies in absolute which have experiences with refugees (Gürtzgen, Kubis, and Rebien, 2017, p.2).

Comparing the economic sectors, the study shows that about 25% of the refugees are employed in temporary employment agencies. As explained in the acculturation conditions, there is no priority review needed for asylum seekers and tolerated refugees to engage in temporary work. Further sectors with high experiences with refugees are the hospitality sector, industrial production and other services. In contrast, the finance and real estate sector have rather low experiences with refugees. Reasons for this can be the missing qualifications (Gürtzgen, Kubis, and Rebien, 2017, p.3). In the future, a comparably high amount of companies (8%) plan to offer apprenticeships to refugees with regards to an apprenticeship ratio of 20% of all companies. Companies not only consider refugees as potential apprentices but 15% also strive to employ refugees regularly. For companies which do not plan to employ refugees at all, the main barriers



are the lack of language skills and qualifications. However, the study also revealed that companies which already employ migrants are also more likely to employ refugees. While 8% of the companies without previous experiences with migrants employ refugees, almost 20% of companies that have previous experiences also employ refugees (Gürtzgen, Kubis, and Rebien, 2017, pp.3-5).

With regard to the labor market integration from previous migration waves in Germany, similarities can be observed to the current integration process. After five years, 50% of the migrants obtained an employment and after 15 years about 70% did. Similar trends can be found in Sweden, where the employment rate reached 55% for refugees being six to ten years in the country (Brücker, Hauptmann and Sirries, 2017, p.5). Moreover, the literature suggests that refugees need more time to become part of the host country labor market compared to other migrants. While labor migrants start working immediately after their arrival, the employment rate of refugees is significantly lower at the beginning, since the main reason for migrating was not labor. Additionally, they face hurdles which go beyond the legal framework, such as low awareness among employers that refugees are allowed to work, lack of language skills, absence of mechanisms enabling recognition of qualifications and untapped potentials. However, refugees close the gap in terms of labor market performance compared to other immigrants in the long term (Kalantaryan, 2016, p.12).

In summary, the first trends of the labor market integration of the refugees in Germany suggest a positive development. The high willingness of companies to employ and train refugees will surely support this trend. Nevertheless, there is still support needed in order to enhance the language skills and qualification levels. Apart from the institutional measures, especially the initiative from companies is needed to facilitate the integration of refugees into the labor market. How companies can contribute to a successful acculturation in an organization will be discussed in the following chapter.



3 Facilitators of organizational acculturation in the German labor market

The integration of refugees in Germany contains a strong correlation between the accommodation into the society and the integration into the labor market. On the one hand, the acculturation into the host society plays an important role for the professional success of the refugee. On the other hand, employment contributes significantly to the acculturation process in the larger society. Ager and Strang (2008, p.170) confirm, that employment is one important key domain of integration. While the acculturation theory by John Berry (1974, 1980 and 1990) and Sam and Berry (2012) mainly refers to the adaptation to new cultures, organizational psychology deals with the socialization into an organization. However, organizational socialization theories barely include intercultural aspects and migration.

In order to fill this research gap, Reif, Spieß and Berger (2017, pp.61-66) suggest a model combining both approaches. Their model of organizational acculturation underlies the assumption that migrants face multiple challenges, including the acculturation in a new society and the socialization into a new organization. While the affected person is impacted by its own culture, values and personal characteristics, the team as well as the organization is influenced by the organizational culture. Since the socialization process takes place within the team, its working atmosphere and the extent of social support influences the integration of the migrant (Reif, Spieß and Berger, 2017, p.64). The following figure illustrates the process of organizational acculturation in a simplified way.



Figure 6: Simplified process of organizational acculturation



Source: own illustration based on Reif, Spieß and Berger, 2017, p.63

The contact between the migrant and the new organization results in acculturative as well as socialization-based stressors. The strength of the acculturative stressors is impacted by the cultural distance and the individual culture of the migrant. Depending on those factors, they can include anxiety and uncertainty, mistrust and communication issues. The socialization-based stressors include role conflicts, ambiguity and not fulfilled expectations. Managing these stressors determines a successful acculturation into an organization. This process is called coping and is referred to both by acculturation as well as by socialization theories. Central intrapersonal coping measures are the reduction of uncertainty, learning and information about company-relevant processes. These measures are interrelated since receiving information leads to the reduction of uncertainty which again enhances the learning and seeking of new information. Those information should include professional and cultural aspects and refer to both the host



culture as well as the country of origin. In order to encourage mutual exchange between the team and the migrant and support the learning process, social support should be given by the team. By giving the migrant the opportunity to participate, he is given voice. Social support, participation and giving voice are called interpersonal coping measures and positively influence the coping process for the team and the migrant. Lastly, successful coping with the stressors leads to the adaptation of the migrant with regards to the social integration and the development of intercultural competences. As a result, successful adaptation positively impacts work satisfaction, performance, commitment, motivation and well-being (Reif, Spieß and Berger, 2017, p.65).

This model of organizational acculturation indicates, that especially managing the stressors and the coping process influences the adaptation of migrants into an organization. Therefore, the practical implementation of managing stressors and coping measures will be analyzed in the following. By that, assumptions will be derived about the successful accommodation of refugees into the German labor market.

3.1 Reducing stressors by adapting the recruiting process

To reduce acculturative and socialization-based stressors, the recruiting process before the socialization plays an important role. A tailor-made recruiting process can help to reduce stressors like anxiety, uncertainty, miscommunication and unfulfilled expectations from the beginning. Hence, the implementation of a suitable recruitment process provides a positive experience for the refugee being employed as well as for the company. First, the contact ways to refugees should be reconsidered. The recruitment should take place in a combination of various ways depending on the region and experiences. The acculturation outcomes showed that most refugees found their first job via social contacts. For that reason, Bußmann, Metzler and Werner (2016, p.9) suggest to contact refugees not only via classic recruiting measures but also include schools, chambers, private initiatives, governmental initiatives and online offers which aim to support refugees. Charta der Vielfalt (2017, p.26) points out the importance of communication about mutual expectations. It should be clarified if the applicant's interests fit the job offered and if it is realistic to fulfil the obligations due to the applicant's place of residence, transportation possibilities and the work schedule. In this way, the stressors miscommunication and unfulfilled expectations are minimized. To more effectively use the human capital of refugees and



to ensure, that their needs are met, it is crucial to assess their skills properly. This again can reduce uncertainty and miscommunication. Until now, there is no binding recognition process of formal and informal skills in Germany (Aumüller, 2016b, p.50). On the one hand, the OECD (2016, p.30) states that refugees represent a specific part of the population of their country of origin. Due to the costly journey to Europe, which led to a selection of comparably wealthy people, the OECD considers them to be higher skilled than the average population in their country of origin. Nevertheless, they come from countries with a significantly different educational system and labor market. Moreover, they may have no proof of their qualifications and experiences and consequently do not find employment or tend to be overqualified (OECD, 2016, p.30). On the other hand, the assessment of the qualification level in the previous chapter showed a polarization in the school education. There are many refugees with a degree from secondary schools or universities, whereas there is also a high proportion with no or low school education. Moreover, the professional education is significantly lower than the school education. Therefore, companies need to develop customized ways to assess the skills and education level. That will guarantee that the refugees meet the necessary requirements to perform the job efficiently and that stressors are reduced. Consequently, it can be assumed, that:

A1: An appropriate recruitment process regarding the contact channels, open communication and skills assessment leads to a better match between the employer and refugee.

3.2 Facilitating interpersonal coping by diversity management

The basis for the interpersonal coping processes including voice, participation, empowerment and social support is an open and psychologically secure working environment. This allows the team and the management to include refugees into discussions and decisions and let them be a part of the team (Reif, Spieß and Berger, 2017, p.66). In this context, the multiculturalism within the organization contributes incomparably. Multiculturalism covers various meanings including the diversity of the demography, political options and cultural heterogeneity (Sabatier, Phalet and Titzmann, 2016, p.420). In terms of acculturation strategies explained in the third chapter, it refers to the mutual accommodation and is the counterpart for integration in the larger society. In the previous chapter it was shown that acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity is a precondition for successful integration. Therefore, the related term diversity man-



agement needs to be defined as it supports multiculturalism. The core idea of diversity management is the assumption, that a diverse workforce regarding gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, age, identity and disability is positive and contributes to the company's success. A diverse workforce helps to better understand the increasingly diverse customer and business partner, brings diverse talents and enables solutions. Hence, diversity is an opportunity to create a competitive advantage by competently led mixed teams and an unbiased working environment (Charta der Vielfalt, 2017, p.8). Dietz, Metzler and Werner (2016, p.7) argue that diversity management contributes to a welcoming culture within a company where cultural diversity is appreciated. Such an organizational culture has four major benefits. It supports the company to secure a skilled workforce in the future by attracting and retaining foreign employees. Moreover, it facilitates the integration into the company by various measures. As those measures build trust, the employees feel positive about the company and tend to be more committed and efficient. Lastly, a welcoming organizational culture embedded in the corporate values increases the attraction as an employer of choice and fosters the company's image. Diversity management is a long-term process with the aim to create an unbiased and appreciative environment and should be included both in human resources and managerial decisions (Charta der Vielfalt, 2017, p.9). Accordingly, the following can be assumed:

A2: Creating an open and unbiased working environment by diversity management facilitates the integration of refugees into the work place.

Before introducing diversity management measures, it is recommended to analyze the current company's situation. Thus unnecessary costs will be avoided and risks identified. Subsequently, the existing experiences with cultural diversity should be examined to build on them. The challenge is to analyze potential problems the refugees could face and prevent those risks (Dietz, Metzler and Werner, 2016, p.5). As shown in the previous chapter, there is a great cultural distance between the refugees' countries of origin and Germany. This might affect the acculturation process in the company negatively and cause conflicts or misunderstandings. To prevent these risks, it is necessary to sensitize both employees and supervisors for cultural differences. A common measure are intercultural trainings. They are aimed to enhance the intercultural awareness of all employees and train their intercultural communication. By intercultural trainings, the understanding and appreciation of refugees as new employees can be increased



and their benefit for the company emphasized. Furthermore, it increases the awareness of cultural differences and knowledge about foreign cultures (Charta der Vielfalt, 2017, p.10). This ideally results in an open and unbiased working environment which again enhances the culture of multiculturalism as one of the acculturation strategies.

A3: Intercultural trainings enhance the intercultural awareness and the appreciation of a multicultural culture which is crucial for the refugees' integration.

3.3 Facilitating intrapersonal coping by German training

The intrapersonal coping process includes the interrelated concepts information, reduction of uncertainty and learning. Triggering this by specific information and learning programs, the most important skills for refugees are language skills in order to understand the given information and keep learning. In the literature, the relationship between language skills of the host country and the migrant's achievements in the labor market are pointed out. Ager and Strang (2008, p.182) state that being able to speak the local language of the host community is central to the integration process in terms of social interaction and economic integration. Chiswick (2008, p.23) proves that immigrants with higher language skills earn more. He focuses on studies in the USA, Canada and Australia and found that the investment in learning the destination language is profitable compared to the salary. A study in the UK confirmed that English fluency increases the probability to be employed as an immigrant by 26% (Dustmann and Fabbri, 2003, p.710). The reason for language being a decisive factor in determining employment is that it enables migrants to convince possible employers of their qualifications. Furthermore, many jobs require communication skills both in unskilled occupations, like the service sector, as well as in skilled occupations (Dustmann and Fabbri, 2003, pp.706 – 707). As shown before, the majority of the refugees arrive in Germany without any German skills. For these reasons, German training is provided to the refugees within the mandatory integration course. This probably contributes significantly to the fast increasing German level as described previously. However, according to the OECD (2016, p.37), especially job-specific language training is important. It provides knowledge about the most important vocabulary in the work place and is adjusted to individual needs. By linking vocational training and working experience, it is considered as a facilitator to enter an employment. Moreover, it increases the refugees' motivation to learn the



language by learning it in a practical way. Although on-the-job language training is highly effective, it requires a high financial effort and therefore, requires the cooperation from employers. Charta der Vielfalt (2017, p.26) confirms that sufficient German skills are a crucial factor for a successful acculturation. The knowledge of technical terms, which exist in each sector, would be especially important. Moreover, it is suggested that the financing of those programs and language tandems by companies could support the integration course very effectively. Bußmann, Metzler and Werner (2016, p.18) suggest diverse ways to support the language integration. Besides language courses and tuition, companies can provide online possibilities to improve the language skills independently. Moreover, the adaption of the own language in e-mails, personal communication and meetings facilitates the understanding. Ager and Strang (2008, p.182) confirm, that in the understanding of integration as a mutual concept, the host country is required to reduce barriers by translating materials or adapting the communication style. At the same time, the authors criticize that translations and other measures would be inhibitors of language learning. Therefore, they suggest to provide such facilitating measures in early stages of settlement and reduce them according to the proficiency in the language. It can be summarized that especially supporting the language skills enhances the coping processes, information provision and learning. Therefore, the following assumption how to accommodate refugees successfully in the German labor market can be derived.

A4: Supporting the German knowledge with special focus on technical terms by providing language courses is essential for the successful integration of refugees into the labor market.

3.4 Facilitating intrapersonal coping by mentoring

Moreover, in order to keep learning, being encouraged to seek more information and to reduce uncertainty, the introduction of mentor programs are advisable (Reif, Spieß and Berger, 2017, p.66). The refugees who entered Germany in the past years are not a homogenous group as stated in the previous chapter. They are rather diverse and bring different qualifications, education levels, language skills and career aspirations. This complicates the integration needs significantly and requires tailor-made approaches. OECD (2016, p.36) states that the Scandinavian countries lead by example as they have the most advanced integration measurements in Europe. Those measurements consist of multi-year programs combining language training, labor market



training and civic integration courses. Their duration and intensity depend on the refugees' individual needs. While refugees who lack basic skills may receive additional trainings, highly skilled refugees may receive less trainings before entering the labor market. A Canadian initiative transferred a customized approach into a mentoring program, named ALLIES. Internationally trained professionals helped immigrants to enter the labor market successfully for twelve months. The aim was to provide a professional network, enhance the knowledge about recruiting norms, Canadian workplace cultures and employer expectations. It turned out to be a positive experience for the mentees and improved their economic standing significantly. After twelve months, the unemployment rate decreased by 54% among the participants and their average full-time earnings increased by 62% (ALLIES, 2013, pp. 2-3). This case shows the importance of mentoring as a measure to successfully integrate refugees. Transferring this into the work place, it would be beneficial for companies to introduce a mentoring concept for the refugees. Mentors contribute by personal support and other diversity-based measures to the integration of refugees. The mentor's tasks include for example giving information regarding unwritten rules, professional issues or German skills. However, they could also include the support in personal matters, such as bureaucratic procedures. In order to be able to support the refugee adequately, the mentor needs extensive social and intercultural competences as well as professional and language skills. Therefore, the mentor ideally is an experienced employee who knows the company and its workforce very well. The company can increase the willingness to take part in such mentoring programs, by offering incentives or compensating the mentor's efforts (Dietz, Metzler and Werner, 2016, p.7). OECD (2016, p.50) confirms that the effectiveness of mentorships depends on the adequately trained mentors. Therefore, it is advisable to include information about the mentorship within intercultural trainings. Additionally, joint social activities for all mentors and mentees give the opportunity to exchange experiences and expand their networks. To sum up, a tailor-made approach such as a mentoring program would be mutually beneficial for the refugee as well as for the mentor. It contributes to the intrapersonal coping process by reducing uncertainty, supporting learning and providing information. Therefore, the following can be assumed:

A5: Mentoring programs according to the individual needs facilitate the refugees' integration.



4 Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore the organizational acculturation process of refugees in Germany. In detail, the study addresses the question how to accommodate granted refugees into the German labor market. After the theoretical framework, this chapter presents and justifies the study's research methodology which was chosen to answer the research question. According to Bryman (2012, p.15), it includes the research design, the research sample, the data collection and the data analysis. Additionally, the limitations of the employed research method will be discussed.

4.1 Research design

In order to answer the research question, a mixed method design was employed. In the first part of the study, assumptions were derived deductively. This approach aims to develop assumptions based on existing theory and test those assumptions. However, due to little existing research on the organizational acculturation of refugees, the second part employs the inductive approach. It provides the possibility to generate theory from collected data by identifying patterns and relationships as a result of the data analysis (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p.127). The mixed approach allows to refine existing theories and add new categories. The research design is based on qualitative research. It is characterized by the emphasis on words rather than on the quantification of data and therefore, is mostly appropriate for small samples. Moreover, its outcomes are not quantifiable. It is rather useful in earlier phases of research since the description and analysis aims to result in the production of a concept (Bryman, 2012, p.380). In this study, a qualitative research method mix was used, containing semi-structured interviews and case studies. The sampling of respondents and the case studies will be described in the next chapter. Afterwards, the data collection and analysis will be outlined in detail.

4.2 Research sample

To select the study's sample, the purposive sampling as a form of non-probability sampling was used. In this technique the sample has not been picked using a random selection method. It rather means that only people with certain characteristics have been selected (Bryman, 2015, pp.203-204). Specifically, the method of criterion sampling was used to identify relevant companies and case studies. It aims to sample participants in a strategic way, choosing participants



that are relevant to the research question. Therefore, companies having experiences with employing refugees as well as employed refugees were selected. The criterion sampling is characterized by all units meeting particular criteria. Moreover, a variety in the sample is ensured by selecting participants that differ from each other with regards to key characteristics (Bryman, 2012, p.419). The key characteristics which are meant to vary within the sample are the sector and the company size regarding the company or respective company, the refugee is employed by.

Research showed, that refugees are predominantly employed in the temporary work sector, the production and service sectors. Since the temporary work sector does not display the long-term acculturation in one organization, companies and refugees from the production and service sectors were chosen. The service sector includes the hospitality sector, the facility management, consulting and other services. The production sector contains amongst others the metal production, construction as well as craft (Gürtzgen, Kubis, and Rebien, 2017, p.3). Moreover, companies of all sizes have already gained considerable experiences with employing refugees. It can be argued that on the one hand there are in absolute more middle-sized and small companies in Germany or on the other hand big that companies usually provide more jobs in total (Gürtzgen, Kubis, and Rebien, 2017, p.2). However, it can be assumed that all companies contribute to the integration of refugees and in order to provide an overview over the whole labor market, no company size was excluded. The company size is defined according to Gürtzgen, Kubis and Rebien (2017, p.2) by the numbers of employees. Small companies have less than 50 employees, middle-sized companies between 50 and 250 and big companies employ more than 250 persons. Therefore, the sample was chosen according to the following characteristics:

- Sector: Service/ Production
- Size: Small/ Middle-sized/ Big

In order to approach relevant companies, the initiative “Wir zusammen” was used. The initiative was established in 2015 by 36 companies to bundle their experiences. Today, the initiative contains 217 German companies that engage in the integration of refugees in the labor market (Peine, 2017). The initiative preselected diverse members that were willing to participate in this study and met the previously described criteria. “Wir zusammen” provided twelve company



contacts of the managers responsible for the integration of refugees. From the companies contacted, six responded and agreed to participate in the study out of which one company requires to remain anonymous. Therefore, it will be referred to as “C1” in the following. Regardless of the response rate of 50%, those companies did not cover each relevant company size and sector. In fact, five companies have more than 250 employees and operate in both relevant sectors. The reason for the dominance of big companies might be their comparably more developed infrastructures and communication regarding the integration of refugees. The sixth company operates in the service sector and has less than 50 employees.

The sampling approach regarding the employed refugees entailed partly a convenience sample because refugees belong to a hidden population that is hard to reach. This approach aims to select the individuals due to their proximity, availability and accessibility (Bryman, 2012, p.201). However, only refugees that are currently employed in one of the relevant sectors were selected. In total, two refugees participated in the study. Both are employed in the service sector while one works in a big company and the other one in a middle-sized one.

In order to fill the gap in the company sample and provide a complete overview of the integration in relevant organizations, case studies were selected by the technique of criterion sampling. The case studies were required to be from small and middle-sized companies in both the production and services sector as well as to provide a largely complete overview of the integration of refugees in one company instead of focusing on one domain. Especially the last criteria limited the selection significantly. Case studies were searched in the online platforms of three initiatives occupied with the research topic, namely “Wir zusammen”, “Netzwerk Unternehmen integrieren Flüchtlinge” and “In Arbeit”. Three case studies that met the criteria were found at the platform “In Arbeit” and therefore, were included to the sample. Two of them describe the integration of refugees in two middle-sized companies, one in the service sector and one in the production sector. The third case study presents a small company in the production sector.

4.3 Data collection

In order to collect evidence to prove the validity of the assumptions, a methodology mix was chosen. The main part of the data collection took part with qualitative interviewing in form of semi-structured interviews aiming to gain primary data. Moreover, secondary data were derived from the case studies. Semi-structured interviews are interviews that follow an interview guide



but are still rather flexible. The aim is to cover specific topics while the order of discussed topics may vary. It provides the possibility to deep dive into topics of particular interest of the interviewee and leaves room to elaborate further where it seems necessary (Bryman, 2012, pp.470-471).

The interviews were conducted with six companies and two refugees. The company representatives have experience with the organizational acculturation process of refugees due to their responsibility for the integration of refugees within the company. Additionally, the refugees are directly affected by integration measures in organizations. They can give valuable insights into the effect of certain measures and additional support they might require in order to be integrated successfully.

Due to the mostly great geographical distance, four interviews were conducted via telephone and one via skype. Three interviews were conducted face to face. The interviews were conducted in German and took between 45 minutes and one hour. The interview guide followed categories and subcategories according to the previously derived assumptions. However, the interviews with company representatives and refugees differed in some parts. While the company representatives were asked about the company, the refugees were asked about their own situation in an organization. They were not asked about the whole organization where they are employed in order to avoid miscommunication.

After the interviews, the interviewees were asked to sign a consent form to use the interview data. All interviewees signed the form and agreed to the full usage of the interview data while one interviewee requires to remain anonymous. The primary data collected by means of the interviews were complemented with the secondary data from the case studies. The next subchapter explains how the acquired data were analyzed.

4.4 Data analysis

The thematic analysis was used to analyze the collected data gathered from interviews and case studies. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016, p.579) this approach aims at searching themes across the data. By coding the qualitative data, themes or patterns are identified for further analysis. The thematic analysis provides an orderly and logical way to analyze data, identify key themes and produce thematic descriptions. Moreover, it can help to develop



explanations and draw conclusions. The main advantage is its flexibility, which allows to analyze data either deductively, where previous defined topics build the categories, inductively or by using a combination of both approaches. In this case, a mixed approach following three steps was applied.

First, the interviews were transcribed in form of interview keynotes in English. The keynotes were structured according to the predefined categories which represent the assumptions. However, the interviews might not have followed that order. They are ordered according to the company size and sector, starting with the big companies. Afterwards, the transcripts and the case studies were coded. The process of coding aims to categorize data with similar meanings by labelling each unit of data with a code. The respective code summarizes the unit of data's meaning and can be a single word or phrase. A unit of data can be a number of words, a line or a whole paragraph (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016, p.579). In this initial step, the data were assigned to the existing categories and subcategories which are illustrated in table 5. By the process of open coding, which means giving labels to similar units of data, the case studies and transcripts were coded (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016, p.596). Although the transcripts were already structured according to the categories, a priori codes were applied in order to underline relevant data for those categories. A priori codes "may be derived from terms used in existing theory and literature" and consequently, refer to the existing categories (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016, p.582). In the next step, those units of data that could not be assigned to existing categories, were coded. This step represents the inductive approach of the data analysis. In contrast to the deductive approach using a priori codes, this approach develops codes from the wording of participants or the meaning of the respective unit of data.

The first two steps resulted in a number of codes, within which patterns and relationships were searched in the last step. This stage of analysis aims to create a list of themes that relate to the research question. A theme can either incorporate several codes that are related to each other or consist of one code that appears to be of great importance. This process serves to group the coded data into analytic categories and illustrate relationships. For that, the codes were assigned to the existing themes, each reflecting one assumption. By axial coding the relationships between and within the themes that have emerged from the open coding were examined. This process indicates the rearrangement into hierarchical forms and creating of subcategories (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016, p.582). By this, the inductively derived categories were



assigned to the themes or defined as an additional theme. The coding table summarizes main statements of each interview and case study for each code or respective category. It serves as basis for the following analysis. Besides illustrating all themes and subcategories, it allows the development of valid and well-grounded conclusions. The first theme of general information as well as the key characteristics of the sample were used to explain patterns and interpret the results in the following chapter.

4.5 Limitations

This study contains limiting conditions, some of which are related to the common critiques of qualitative research, while others are due to the research design. However, careful thought has been given to minimize their impact. In general, the interpretation of qualitative data is limited by the researcher's subjectivity and bias. Since the qualitative approach allows rather small samples, it might not adequately represent the target population and therefore, the generalizability can be questioned (Bryman, 2012, p.418). However, the small sample size was balanced out using criterion sampling. Although criterion sampling limits the generalizability of the findings to a population, it enables the strategic choice of participants. Moreover, the convenience sampling used to overcome the disadvantages of a hidden population is highly impacted by selection bias and sampling errors (Bryman, 2012, p.420).

The mix of primary data from interviews and secondary data from case studies might lead to less comparability of these data. Moreover, secondary data is generally produced for another purpose and therefore, may not display all relevant information. Therefore, the lack of information regarding a certain category was not evaluated negatively in the analysis. Interviews are as well impacted by the interviewer's subjectivity and therefore, might lead to incorrect conclusions. In order to minimize that, questions were formulated in the same way as far as possible. Moreover, main statements were repeated to avoid misunderstandings. The majority of the interviews were recorded to facilitate the transcription and avoid misinterpretations. In two cases this was not possible due to technical issues. Moreover, the interviews were conducted in German and afterwards translated into English. The translation might also modify the meaning of certain statements and cause misunderstandings. Some professions that were mentioned cannot be translated adequately in other languages, since they might only exist in Germany. Lastly,



the thematic analysis is also subject to the researchers own perception which effects the reliability. Moreover, the inter-rater reliability is not given since the data has been coded by one single coder (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016, p.587).



5 Results of the data analysis

The conducted expert interviews and case studies were analyzed to identify measures how to accommodate granted refugees into the German labor market that can be adopted by companies. In general, data from nine companies and two refugees were collected through expert interviews and case studies. Five are big companies, two are middle-sized companies and two are small. All sample companies operate in the production and services sector. The interviewed refugees both work in the services sector, one in a middle-sized company and the other one in a big company.

The recruiting process defines the first contact with the refugees and the results show, that it differs significantly from regular ones. It was assumed that especially the recruiting channel, open communication in the job interview and the skills assessment contribute to a successful integration since it reduces stressors. According to the results of the thematic analysis, the recruiting process of refugees should comprise the following subcategories: refugees motivation and job requirements.

The second assumption refers to the multiculturalism within an organization in terms of diversity management. It was assumed that an open and unbiased working environment, created by diversity management, facilitates the integration. Additionally, intercultural trainings were assumed to enhance intercultural awareness and therefore, contribute to a facilitating working environment. The results in general confirm the importance of an open and unbiased working environment, whereas diversity management is not necessarily embedded into the corporate strategy. Moreover, several subcategories were developed which specify the working environment as well as diversity measures such as the company communication, employees volunteering, equal treatment und customized solutions.

With regard to the fourth assumption professional training, the results indicate a clear trend. Besides the high importance of German skills, tuition for schools are especially relevant for apprentices.

Lastly, it was assumed that mentor programs, adapted to the individual needs, facilitate the integration of refugees by reducing uncertainty and encouraging learning. Moreover, the importance of the mentor's position, compensation and training was pointed out and possible tasks were described. The results in general confirm the basic elements of mentor programs for refugees.



Additionally to the existing main themes, the importance of cooperation and networks was mentioned by various respondents. Therefore, a respective theme named cooperation and networks was created. Building a network with initiatives and NGO's can contribute to a successful integration of refugees. Moreover the exchange with other companies that employ refugees contributes to the integration because an organization can benefit from the experiences of other organizations as well.

The validation of the assumptions as well as all categories as facilitating measures in order to integrate refugees into an organization are illustrated in the following table. Besides the previously assumed subcategories, the inductively derived ones are darkly highlighted.

Table 3: Summarized results of the data analysis

Category	Validity of assumptions	Subcategory	2. Subcategory
Recruiting process	A1: partly strengthened	Contact channels	
		Job interview	Refugees motivation
		Skills assessment	Job requirements
Diversity management	A2: strengthened	Working environment	Corporate philosophy
			Intercultural workforce
			Company communication
	Diversity measures	Employees volunteering	
		Equal treatment	
		Customized solutions	
	A3: partly strengthened	Intercultural trainings	
Professional training	A4: strengthened	Necessity of German	
		German training	External training offers
		School tuition	
Mentor programs	A5: strengthened	Mentoring programs	
		Mentor's position	
		Mentor's tasks	
		Mentor's compensation	
		Mentor's training	



Further experiences	Cooperation Networks	&	
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Source: own illustration

The table shows that assumptions 2, 4 and 5 were strengthened by the data analysis. Moreover, several subcategories could be added inductively. Moreover, assumptions 1 and 3 were partly strengthened while the first one could be specified further as well through inductive subcategories. Additionally, the theme cooperation and networks was created inductively. While the extent to which those measures are implemented depend mostly on the company's size and job level, the sector does not seem to have any influence. Beyond those measures to facilitate the integration, the results show that companies benefit significantly from employing refugees. An interview partner explained, that "although you have to make an effort in order to facilitate the integration process it is worth it and it is a great benefit for the company to employ refugees". Moreover, companies that employ refugees convey values such as tolerance and open-mindedness not only within the team but also beyond company boundaries. The company's open-mindedness, moreover, positively impacts the customer loyalty. Besides gaining skilled workers, the social commitment plays an important role. The refugees not only benefit from being integrated into the society, the learned skills can also be used when they return to their home country. Lastly, it was stated that "learning and experiencing foreign cultures is a mutual enrichment, also in the work routine" (Initiative Neue Qualität der Arbeit, 2018). In order to enhance the positive impact of employing refugees, the following chapter provides specific recommendations for companies.

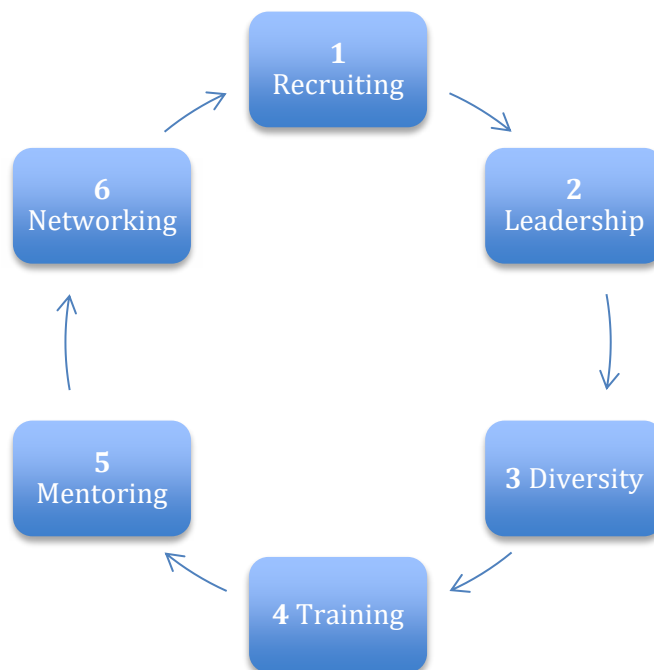


6 Recommendations

The integration of refugees includes both the professional integration and diverse tasks that go beyond that. Therefore, the following chapter illustrates recommendations for companies that facilitate the integration of refugees into the workplace. They are conceptualized through the thematic analysis and theoretical input based on the strengthened assumptions and the analysis of the interviews and case studies. Moreover it includes the inductive created categories.

The integration of refugees can only be generalized to a certain extent since it always requires customized solutions according to the refugee's needs and several other characteristics. Based on the thematic analysis, those factors include the companies' motivation to employ refugees, the size, the skills requirements of the respective job, the form of employment as well as the organizational culture. In general, it can be recommended to follow the illustrated 6-step action plan in order to successfully integrate refugees into an organizations.

Figure 7: 6-step action plan for the organizational integration of refugees



Source: own illustration

To begin with, it can be recommended to revise the organizational structures and possibilities to design an appropriate and company specific integration program according to the six steps. For companies that actively seek to employ refugees due to their high demand for skilled workers, it is advisable to use diverse ways in order to get in contact with refugees. In addition to



classic recruitment channels it is necessary to approach the expanded company network. This could include refugee homes and schools, volunteers, local initiatives by the church, local job centers by the federal agency of employment as well as the chamber of industry and commerce. Yet there is no best way since it depends on individual local conditions and the diversity of the refugees. Next, it can be recommended to adopt the selection process to the requirements of the job level and moreover, take into account the refugee's motivation. It can be differentiated between jobs that require higher skills and jobs that require lower skills. Especially interviews for lower skilled jobs can be held rather informal. Considering the language barrier, it is advisable to rather focus on the skills assessment in form of work trials. In the job interview, the focus should lie on clarifying mutual interests. The research showed, that refugees are often motivated by short-term goals rather than investing in long-term trainings. With regards to apprenticeships, it would be useful to explain the broad concept in order to avoid high fluctuation rates. The skills assessment aims at examining the general interest and motivation of the candidates to perform the respective job. Job-specific skills can be learned on the job. However, it is advisable to offer a preparation phase before apprenticeships in order to acquire basic skills necessary for the apprenticeship.

The next step comprises the general leadership within an organization. It is recommended to provide an open and unbiased working environment which supports the integration of refugees into the workforce. While companies employing a diverse international workforce ever since might comprise an organizational culture that values diversity anyways, others still might have to work on that. The leadership plays an important role in enhancing such an environment since it reflects the corporate values. In addition, it is recommended to foster an open communication about the aim of employing refugees towards all employees. By this, transparency is provided and the appreciation of diversity can be strengthened.

Thirdly, it is advisable to implement diversity measures according to the company's possibilities and size. Bigger companies might have more resources to implement possibilities for employees to volunteer in external integration projects. The social commitment might also positively impact the working environment and general attitude towards refugees. Furthermore, it is important for companies of all sizes to treat refugees and other employees equally. By supporting all employees according to their needs, it can be avoided that one group might feel disadvantaged and the team spirit can be encouraged. Similarly, customized solutions should



be implemented regardless of the company size, considering the heterogeneity of refugees. On the one hand, attention should be paid to individual situations and needs. On the other hand, customized solutions can be designed along the companies' conditions. Examples might be the integration of refugees into existing sports groups, cooking events or other activities that foster the mutual understanding. By that, the cultural distances can be overcome and potential conflicts are minimized. Another measure to enhance the mutual understanding are intercultural trainings.

As the next step it is highly recommended to provide trainings, on the one hand German trainings and on the other hand school tuitions for those doing an apprenticeship. Sufficient language skills are the essential key for a successful integration into the German labor market. Therefore, companies should place great importance on supporting refugees by improving their German skills. There are numerous external training offers subsidized by the government whose usage is especially advisable for smaller companies. However, those external trainings might not provide sufficient support. Employing a mix of external and internal training opportunities is rather advisable. For bigger companies that employ a higher number of refugees it is recommended to implement internal solutions. Additionally, customized solutions are advisable according to the refugees' needs in order to facilitate their learning process. Those can for example include digital solutions which enable them to keep learning independently. Moreover, refugees who are employed as apprentices need to visit school. Due to the language barrier and different educational systems in their countries of origin, it is strongly advisable to provide school tuition. Whether internal, external or digitally, it facilitates the successful completion of an apprenticeship.

On top of that, it is recommended to implement mentoring programs for the refugees. Especially in the initial phase it is important to provide a contact person that assists in the integration process. For that, it is advisable to select experienced employees as mentors which have some similarities with the mentees so that they can build a trustful relationship. Moreover, mentors should be prepared for their tasks adequately and be given work time to perform the tasks. The contact between mentors should be fostered in order to enable the exchange of experiences. However, the formality of the mentoring can vary significantly. In smaller companies there might be less resources available to organize those programs which is why they might be less formal.



Lastly, it is advisable for companies to build a network with initiatives and NGO's which can provide important advice and establish contact between refugees and companies. By the cooperation and networking with other companies, valuable experiences can be exchanged. Since the integration of refugees can be considered as a learning process, companies should keep reevaluating their integration measures. Therefore, it is advisable to benefit from others' experiences as well in order to keep improving and adjusting the presented 6-step action plan. By that, the integration of refugees into organizations can be improved further in the future which is not only beneficial for the refugees and organizations, but also for the German labor market and the society.



7 Conclusion

This paper aimed at developing recommendations for German companies how to accommodate granted refugees into the work place. Against the background of the immense inflow of refugees in Germany in the past year, the need for integration is increasingly important. An essential factor contributing to the integration into a society is work since it provides self-esteem and independence (Ager and Strang, 2008, p.171). Moreover, the changing labor market in Germany enhances the need for the integration of refugees into companies even more. Due to the demographic revolution, a shortage of skilled workers especially in middle levels of qualifications is expected. Refugees play amongst others an important role in order to overcome this shortage (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, 2013, p.8). Although there are already several measures to facilitate their entrance into an employment, especially for granted refugees, the need for integration does not stop at this point. Therefore, this study answered the question how to accommodate granted refugees into German organizations. However, there has been little research regarding this topic. Hence, this study aimed to fill this research gap based on interviews and case studies. The research by John Berry (1974, 1980 and 1990) and Sam and Berry (2012) is considered to be the best researched and scientifically valid theory with regards to acculturation. Therefore, it was used for the assessment of the acculturation process of refugees in Germany. The three pillars of the acculturation process (Celenk and Van de Vijver, 2011, pp.3-4 and Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver, 2006, p. 30) were applied to the current context in Germany. The detailed analysis regarding the acculturation conditions, orientations and outcomes served as a basis for the following assumptions. It was found that the recent influx reached its climax in 2016. Most asylum applicants came from Syria, the Iraq and Afghanistan while the majority is male and younger than 30 years old. After that, it was revealed that the access to the labor market highly depends on the legal status and solely granted refugees have unlimited access to the labor market. Refugees from countries with a high protection rate and consequently good prospects to stay are most likely to receive the granted status. As a last part of the acculturation conditions it was found that refugees received rather low school education in their home countries and barely no professional education. However, there are differences between the diverse countries since Syrian refugees hold comparably higher qualification levels. Nevertheless, a high motivation of the refugees for further studies in Germany was also found. Next, the acculturation strategies (Sam and Berry, 2012) were illustrated with regard to



the preferred strategy for the given context. It was found that integration would benefit the refugees and host society most. Although some barriers like the cultural distance and the low education level of the refugees have been found, there are major facilitators of the integration process including strong ethnic social support, intergroup contact based on voluntary initiatives, demographic factors of the refugees and partly the political environment. This was reflected in the acculturation outcomes, which include the labor market participation and future expectations. It was found that the first trends suggest a positive development although it was noted that the labor market integration is still in an early stage. However, the high willingness of companies to employ and train refugees was pointed out.

In the next chapter, facilitators of organizational acculturation were derived. Based on a model that combines acculturation and organizational socialization (Reif, Spieß and Berger, 2017) it was suggested that managing stressors and coping processes facilitates the accommodation of refugees into an organization. Therefore, five assumptions were derived. Firstly, the recruiting process was assumed to reduce stressors by adapting the contact channels, communication and skills assessment. Secondly, creating an open and unbiased working environment by diversity management was considered to facilitate the integration since it supports interpersonal coping. Intercultural trainings were assumed to enhance the intercultural awareness and therefore, have the same effect. Moreover, the importance of German trainings was pointed out in order to support the intrapersonal coping process as the fourth assumption. The fifth assumption also concerns intrapersonal coping and refers to mentoring programs.

In the empirical part, qualitative interviews were conducted with refugees and company representatives in order to prove the validity of those assumptions. Additionally, case studies were analyzed in order to complete the research sample of several company sizes and sectors that are relevant for the purpose of this study. A comprehensive summary of the data analysis was provided in table 3. While the second, fourth and fifth assumptions were strengthened, the first and third assumptions were solely partly strengthened. On top of that, the thematic analysis allowed the inductive creation of new themes. Finally, recommendation for companies that facilitate the integration of refugees into the workplace were given in form of a 6-step action plan. In general, it was recommended to adapt the steps according to the companies' structure and possibilities which are influenced by the size, the skills requirements, the form of employment and the organizational culture. Firstly, it was recommended to use an expanded network to reach refugees



and to adapt the job interviews and skills assessments to the skills level required. Moreover, the short-term orientation of the refugees should be considered. Secondly, it was recommended to promote an open and unbiased working environment by the appropriate leadership. Thirdly, diversity measures should be implemented. Their design and extent depend significantly on the company's size. The fourth recommendation refers to the importance of trainings, including German training and school tuitions for apprentices. Moreover, it was recommended to provide mentoring for the refugees while the formality also might depend on the company's possibilities. Lastly, it was recommended to use cooperation and networks in order to exchange experiences. By this, the 6-step plan should be revised and improved regularly in order to facilitate the integration of refugees into organizations.

To conclude, it is evident that companies strongly benefit from the employment of refugees also with regard to the shortage of skilled workers. By providing apprenticeships and the motivation for further studies from refugees, workers in middle levels of qualifications are secured. Moreover, employing refugees positively impacts the working environment within the companies as well as the integration into the society. However, companies need to undertake several measures in order to facilitate the organizational acculturation of refugees. The presented 6-step action plan provides valuable recommendations on how to facilitate their integration. Nevertheless, there is a high need for customized solutions and there is no best solution that can be generalized. Therefore, further research is needed in order to specify those recommendations further. Firstly, it should be noted that this study solely focused on granted refugees to exclude political hurdles. However, the research showed that many companies are discouraged from employing refugees regardless of their status due to the complexity of the labor market access. Moreover, the labor market access of refugees with other legal statuses was strongly facilitated in the past years. Accordingly, the research as well as the empirical study showed, that companies not only employ refugees from the big five countries but also from several other countries of origin. Therefore, further studies should also consider other legal statuses and countries of origin in order to provide a more complete picture of the current situation.

Moreover, the companies that were included in this study and served as the basis for the data collection all belong to a network that focuses on the integration of refugees. This fact implies that those companies might not be representative for all companies in Germany. Although they



served in this study to provide valuable experiences, further studies should include rather unexperienced companies as well. By this, the needs of those companies will contribute to a more holistic overview. Additionally, only companies operating in the production and service sector were considered. Given the fact that many refugees are also employed in temporary work, special attention should be given in further research to that topic. Additionally, research showed that there are differences in the qualification levels of male and female refugees. Moreover, gender roles differ significantly from the German ones. However, the interviews in this study solely included male refugees. Therefore, further studies should pay special attention to the integration of female refugees into the German labor market since they may need special integration measures.

This study provides practical recommendation for companies that facilitate the integration of refugees. It can serve as a basis for further studies in order to contribute even more to the integration of refugees into the German labor market. By that, the integration into the German society can be enhanced, the shortage of skilled workers in Germany prevented and additionally, it contributes to the development of the countries of origin once the refugees might return.



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