



**The Integration of Female Refugees in Germany:
Perspectives of Women and an Analysis of Federal and
Selected State and City Integration Policies from 1998-2019**

Dissertation

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This dissertation is dedicated to the women who have come to Germany as either immigrants or refugees in order to live out their dreams, find freedom, and live in safety and security.

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Abstract

The following study, *The Integration of Female Refugees in Germany: Perspectives of Women and an Analysis of Federal and Selected State and City Integration Policies from 1998-2019*, is focused on the qualitative analysis of integration policy in Germany regarding female refugees. The states of North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria, and Saxony-Anhalt have been selected for this dissertation as well as the cities of Cologne, Wuerzburg, and Magdeburg. Through an analysis and comparison of integration policies and programs on the federal and selected state and city levels the question will be answered how recognized female refugees are taken into account with the development and formulation of integration policy in Germany. The analysis is then complemented through interviews with recognized female refugees in each of the states and cities. Through analyzing the results of the interviews the question will be answered how the women view their situation and integration. Through a comparison of the findings from the policy analysis and the interviews it will then be able to decipher if integration policies and programs are truly reaching their target group, if they are effective, or what hurdles they may be producing. The goal of the study is to provide initial findings on the overall integration of recognized female refugees in Germany in connection to integration policies in order to discover potential deficits or ineffective programs and policies which can then be further researched in order to produce concrete policy suggestions.

List of Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|---|
| AfD | Alternative for Germany |
| AGDM | Age, Gender, and Diversity Mainstreaming |
| BA | Federal Employment Agency |
| BAMF | Federal Office for Migration and Refugees |
| BMAS | Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs |
| BMBF | Federal Ministry of Education and Research |
| BMFSFJ | Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth |
| BMI | Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building, and Community |
| BMWi | Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy |
| CDU | Christian Democratic Union of Germany |
| CSU | Christian Social Union in Bavaria |
| DIHK | Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce |
| ESF | European Social Fund |
| EU | European Union |
| FDP | Free Democratic Party |
| FGM | Female Genital Mutilation |
| IAB | Institute of Employment Research |
| LGBTQI | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex |
| MGEPA | North Rhine-Westphalia Ministry for Health, Emancipation, Care, and Age |
| MHKBG | North Rhine-Westphalia Ministry for Community, Building, and Equality |
| n.d. | No date |
| NAP | Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NIP | Nationaler Integrationsplan |
| NRW | North Rhine-Westphalia |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| Pegida | Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes |
| PerF-W | Perspektiven für weibliche Flüchtlinge – Potentiale identifizieren, Integration ermöglichen |
| PDS | Party of Democratic Socialism |
| PTSD | Post-traumatic stress disorder |
| SOEP | German Socio-Economic Panel |

| | |
|--------|---|
| SPD | Social Democratic Party of Germany |
| STMI | Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior, for Sport, and Integration |
| UNESCO | United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| US | United States of America |

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“Sex-specific violence and discrimination has never been treated with the same seriousness as other human rights abuses... If a person is murdered because of his or her politics, the world justifiably responds with outrage. But if a person is beaten or allowed to die because she is female, the world dismisses it as cultural tradition.”

(Lori Heise quoted in Valji 2001)

1 Introduction

In 2015, the ninth UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, stated a simple but not yet widely accepted fact when he said: “We can't deter people fleeing for their lives. They will come. The choice we have is how well we manage their arrival, and how humanely” (Guterres 2015). Statistics from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) underlines this very statement. Each year the number of refugees increases (UNHCR 2018: 5). In 2018, the highest levels of displacement on record were witnessed with an unprecedented 70.8 million people worldwide who had been forced to flee their homes. Nearly 25.9 million of them were refugees (UNHCR 2019b). Around half of the refugees were women (UNHCR 2018: 61). Asylum-seekers could thus just as easily be women or girls as they could be men or boys (Emmenegger and Stigwall 2019: 1294). With 67% of all refugees coming from just five countries which have been in a state of war or civil unrest for many years (Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, and Somalia), it shows that violence and death are the main forces behind forced migration (UNHCR 2018: 3). In recent years, Germany has maintained its position amongst the top five countries hosting refugees with 1.1 million refugees (UNHCR 2018: 3). This is worth mentioning for two reasons. Firstly, four out of five refugees worldwide are in countries *neighboring* their country of origin (UNHCR 2018: 2). This means that most refugees are outside of Europe and do not leave the region they are from. Secondly, due to the high numbers of refugees integration policies are, and will continue to be, crucial for the development of German society in the future.

1.1 Research Debates about the Legal and Political Considerations of Refugee Women

How have women been considered in refugee law and policies both globally and in Germany? Much has happened in the past years regarding refugee women. This section addresses the respective research debate, and in order to fully understand the development of integration policy regarding refugee women in Germany, also considers the European and global context. In addition, research will be touched on that looks at the development and challenges of integration itself. Based upon that, I will outline the objectives and research questions for this study which are rooted in the foundations of these debates and discussions.

1.1.1 *Legal (Dis)Regard of Women in Refugee Law and Policies?*

The definition of a refugee is anchored in the *1951 Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* (Geneva Convention) and the *1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*. During the time that the Geneva Convention was developed and ratified, refugees were viewed primarily as men fleeing political persecution. Women were thus neglected from the international right to refugee protection (Valji 2001: 25). This meant that the idea of what a refugee was along with the Convention's

definition for international refugee protection were based around the masculine experience and women and their experiences were viewed as secondary (Edwards 2010: 23). There has been a debate ever since to have women, as well as gender, recognized. The early lack of recognizing gender-related claims has often been seen as being due to refugee law focusing on individuals and their specific denial of civil and political rights instead of recognizing social and economic rights and that they may be violated for political reasons (Crawley 2000: 17). The western legal system has historically been separated between the public and private spheres and international law has been most interested in the public (Krause 2017a: 81). The west has understood political opinion as meaning actions and expressions of opinion which take place in traditional 'public' spheres – the military, politics, and the market – which is most often dominated by men (Valji 2001: 27).

Historically, the women-dominated private sphere has been excluded from this: the space where they encounter the greatest threats to their security. This understanding of 'public' versus 'private' has denied women validity for political views and actions expressed within the private sphere (Valji 2001: 27). International refugee law has thus been characterized by a 'male paradigm' (Markard 2007: 377). This paradigm privileges the public over the private and repression within the public over those within the so-called private sphere. Women are however more often affected by 'private violence' than men which does not come from the state but rather from non-state actors (Markard 2007: 377). Due to this, sexual violence for example taking place within the 'private realm' would not be handled as a form of persecution (Scherschel 2016: 11). Women, or others fleeing due to sexual orientation, thus remain unnoticed (Krause 2017a: 81). This separation between a public and private sphere was already discussed in the 1980s. It was described as creating the illusion that the private sphere was non-problematic with personal relations connected to the family (Indra 1989: 233). This 'bifurcation' of society ignored that women had a life outside of domesticity. It put women's oppression within the private realm and in sexuality. Through this it ignored, and even disregarded, oppression in non-domestic situations and the connection of the public with the private sphere (Greatbatch 1989: 520). Despite the same debates taking place throughout the years, much progress has been made towards recognizing women as refugees as well as other groups. There have been attempts to end the 'male paradigm' by focusing on the activities of females in the private realm. Despite progress made, these attempts have often led to a reproduction of the binary structures and stereotypes they were trying to fight against by presenting gender as something that is separate from the 'mainstream' refugee categories (Firth and Mauthe 2013: 473).

The 1990s can be described as 'the decade' for refugee women (Oxford 2014: 157). It represented a landmark in international human rights movements and brought with it many positive changes in women's rights (Molyneux and Razavi 2002: 1). The campaign *Women's Rights are Human Rights* as part of feminist movements and research put light on the recognition of Human Rights in the

private sphere also influencing refugee law and policy (Markard 2016: 366-367). In 1990, the UNHCR published its *Policy on Refugee Women* and in 1991 issued its first *Guidelines for the Protection of Refugee Women* which served to improve the protection of women. Countries also began implementing national laws and policies recognizing gender-based persecution (Oxford 2014: 157). In March 1993 Canada became the first country to create guidelines on including gender as a 'particular social group' under the 1951 Geneva Convention. It was then followed by the United States in 1995, Australia in 1996, the United Kingdom in 2000, and Sweden in 2001. In 2002 in its *Guidelines on International Protection: "Membership of a particular social group"* and *Guidelines on International Protection: Gender-Related Persecution* the UNHCR affirmed that "sex can properly be within the ambit of the social group category" (Foster 2014: 18; UNHCR 2002a; UNHCR 2002b). In 2004 in its Council Directive 2004/83/EC, the Council of the European Union (2004b) also accepted that 'membership of a particular social group' could include gender-based claims. The Council of the European Union recast this in 2011 with the Directive 2011/95/EU which required its member states to implement the new standards into their domestic legislation by December 2013.

Throughout the debates and discussions in the European Union (EU) leading to Council Directive 2004/83/EC, Germany was not an exemplary member with supporting the trend towards recognition of gender-based persecution and persecution from non-state actors.¹ In fact, until 2002 Germany played a major role within the EU in working against the acceptance of these two important aspects for the recognition of female refugees. In 2002, Germany eventually gave up its opposition to recognizing gender-based persecution but was still staunchly against recognizing persecution from non-state actors (Brabandt 2011). Eventually Germany was able to compromise and end its opposition and the Council Directive could be passed. The final document was however a much weaker version of the original presented two and a half years earlier due primarily to Germany. It must be noted that at the time Germany was working against the recognition of gender-based persecution and persecution from non-state actors in the EU, the government in the country was led by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder under a coalition of the Social Democratic Party of Germany and the Greens. Under the previous government led by Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the Christian Democratic Union of Germany/Christian Social Union in Bavaria together with the Free Democratic Party, it had been exactly these two parties which had campaigned for the recognition of gender-based persecution within German asylum law. Once they came to power however their support for this changed. Just as Germany was leading a debate surrounding gender-based persecution and persecution by non-state actors in the EU the same was happening within the country. It was only after pressure from the EU, and much debate and controversy within the country, that Germany adopted the recognition of

¹ For an in-depth analysis on how Germany voted and debated against the recognition of gender-based persecution and persecution from non-state actors within the European Union see Brabandt (2011).

persecution based on gender and from non-state actors into its Immigration Act which was enacted in 2005.

This trend of looking at the specific needs of refugee women, creating gender guidelines, and implementing gender-sensitive interpretations of the Geneva Convention has continued. Scholars and academics however still note issues and protection gaps. Although global protection norms for women do now exist, gender-specific needs are only partially recognized (Krause 2017a: 82). In addition, adding gender to 'particular social group' sends the signal that gender-based persecution does not fall under 'normal' categories for protection but must be added separately. As a result, 'female' experiences are excluded and turned into special cases (Markard 2007: 376). It further marginalizes women's experiences through equating 'gender' to women and causes a generalization of their experiences. This ignores the idea that what it is to be a 'woman' or a 'man' and the resulting gender relations and differences are based upon history, geography, and culture and changes over time (Crawley 2000: 17). Although these documents, directives, and guidelines shape refugee protection for women they have continued to lead to an image that they are victims. In 2001 it was already being criticized that women were being portrayed as passive, powerless, and vulnerable and in need of help and protection (Valji 2001: 25). The same critique continues today despite the progress in their recognition. The comparison of a 'male' experience with a 'female model' of persecution with an overemphasis on sexual violence for the female (Crawley 2000: 18) was just as relevant in 2000 as it is today. Independent of legal practice, refugees are often labeled as passive innocent actors without any agency or responsibility for the future. Removing the state of agency has taken place alongside the homogenization of refugees making individual backgrounds irrelevant (Krause 2017a: 82) and identifying them as one group causing them to become speechless (Freedman 2010: 603). This has in turn led to a feminization of the construction of a refugee due to them being depicted as powerless, helpless, and passive (Krause 2017a: 82).

The inclusion of women and the recognition of gender-based persecution is happening at a time when countries are beginning to adopt, or introduce, more restrictive asylum laws. The increase of refugees into the EU in 2015 for example led to a number of reforms focused on restricting the right to claim asylum (Emmeneggerand and Stigwall 2019: 1317). When female refugees enter through family reunification they often become the 'dependent' of the male. There are countries that encourage married couples, or even force them, to make joint claims. This could lead to a woman staying in a violent or abusive relationship because her legal status and right to stay in the country is dependent on the male (Freedman 2008: 421). This under-representation of women as the primary applicant brings questions of gender equality to the forefront. When women are put into the position as being dependent, it could possibly reinforce a dependency that already exists between them and their partner (Boucher 2007: 389). The primary applicant is the official agent of migration while the

female refugee is the 'trailing spouse' who simply comes because of marriage although she may have her own qualifications and experience. The primary applicant often has a better chance of gaining employment and through this financial dependency is also enhanced within the relationship (Boucher 2007: 389).

It is criticized that refugees are also disadvantaged within the asylum process because of the reliance on oral testimony. Many women are fleeing persecution and violence which is often intimate. Shame and trauma can play an immense role in their ability to be able to fully, clearly, and most importantly at the 'correct' time describe their story and situation (Singer 2014: 111). This is combined with the situation that many times decision-makers assess the credibility of women during an interview based upon stereotypical, inaccurate, or inappropriate perceptions about their demeanor (Singer 2014: 112). It is often that that women must conform to a specific cultural stereotype to succeed. There is hardly any space for context specific and accurate representations of their diverse backgrounds, experiences, and agency (Firth and Mauthe 2013: 482). It is important to make clear that the personal experiences of the women, their reasons for flight, how they reached the country where they claimed asylum, the asylum process, and integration into the receiving country are closely tied with each other (Hobsig 2004: 235). The legal aspects of integration are important and affect the lives of each refugee. Integration however is also a topic that is equally of importance and is connected to the legal and political aspects of Forced Migration.

1.1.2 Forced Migration and Integration Internationally and in Germany

When focusing on questions regarding the 'integration' of refugees in general and women in particular, two separate strands of academic discussion are often recognized: local integration as a durable solution and integration as a social process in the country of asylum. The latter is often viewed in academia as largely being disconnected from the legal status of refugees whereas the former is mainly connected with refugees' perspectives for permanent residency and citizenship, meaning a durable solution. When researching the integration policies of a specific country such as this study does pertaining to Germany, it becomes clear that this separation in academia between these two defined types of integration are not as clear as they may appear.

At first glance it would seem that this study is focusing on policies that support the social process of integration as defined in academia, the second form of integration, and not local integration which includes perspectives for permanent residency and citizenship. This however would not be entirely accurate. As will briefly be discussed here and more in-depth in chapter 2.2, there is no one definition or understanding of integration on either a national or policy level, or in academia. Each country individually describes its understanding of integration and what the goals and objectives are; including how to reach them. Most often it is the 'social process' of integration as defined by the

respective country through their policies which assist refugees, and with them immigrants, to gain the qualifications needed to obtain permanent residency and eventually citizenship: a durable solution. This is not to ignore that there are certain groups of people who despite social integration do not have access to permanent residency or citizenship such as displaced or stateless people. Despite this, local integration as a durable solution and as a social process can not so easily be separated from each other when looking at the policy context. They rely on and build upon each other. Often a person's legal status dictates what they have access to within the 'social process' of integration. The author of this study has not chosen to just look at the 'social process' of integration. It is German integration policies that have developed these projects and programs which often form the foundation and assist recognized (female) refugees in fulfilling the criteria to obtain permanent residency and/or citizenship: the durable solution. Without the 'social process' of integration in the German context there is little support for local integration and a 'durable solution'.

It is important to point out that this study does not specifically look at how a person can obtain citizenship in Germany or the legal aspects surrounding that. The main requirements however are proof of sufficient knowledge of the German language, no criminal record, knowledge of German laws and rights (often through a citizenship test), and being able to support oneself financially without aid from the government (Auswärtiges Amt 2021). It is these points above all language, knowledge of German laws and rights, and obtaining employment that German integration policy focuses on and supports. Refugees as well as immigrants can use language and citizenship test certificates from integration courses developed and supported by German integration policy to fulfill certain citizenship requirements. The social process of integration does not have legal aspects like the durable solution of citizenship and permanent residency. Nonetheless, it would be suggested to avoid putting a line of separation between these two aspects of integration within a policy context.

In academia, as a durable solution, integration has been described as the 'forgotten solution' (Jacobsen 2001). It was argued however that labeling it as 'forgotten' was misleading. It is not that it has been forgotten at the national and international policy level but that it has been *evaded* (Hovil 2014: 488). For refugees on the other hand it is 'remembered' and acted upon. Through integration they are able to show their ability to claim forms of belonging (Hovil 2014: 488). Local integration and country policies are however different. There is no one recognized or accepted definition for integration or understanding of how it should take place. Integration has also been viewed skeptically by many countries and governments as there has been the assumption that when refugees integrate they will not return to their home country (Hovil 2014: 491). Fielden (2008: 1) states that "local integration is actually not a forgotten solution, but an undocumented one". Whereas there is a vast amount of literature and information on the situation of refugees living in camps, the situation of refugees living *within* societies is not as widely studied although there is much work being done on the

topic. The idea that there is much debate and various meanings surrounding the term integration and its multidimensional nature has been seen as a reason why there is not as much information to measure the integration of refugees (Cheung and Phillimore 2017: 212) outside of a camp or protracted refugee situation. This is not to ignore that there is a focus on integration and diverse concepts associated with it within academia. Integration, as will be discussed in chapter 2.2, is a multi-faceted and complex topic with no one definition or answer.

The work of academics and scholars who do explore refugee integration is often found in specialized journals. Within this work gender-neutral terms are often used which still portray the 'average' refugee as male (Cheung and Phillimore 2017: 214). Research that has studied refugee integration and taken gender into account tends to focus on small numbers of women from specific countries and their experience with specific topics such as health or employment. This however makes it difficult to develop an *overall* understanding of the integration of refugee women (Cheung and Phillimore 2017: 215). There is a wealth of research on the topic of Forced Migration and integration internationally which has contributed to academia within Germany. As this study focuses on Germany it is important to look at the current research on Forced Migration within the country specifically in connection with female refugees and integration. This can then be broadened to look at the international context and the role it plays within German academia.

Forced Migration is interdisciplinary with researchers from various fields and backgrounds contributing to studies and gathering information. Scholars and academics in Germany have however not always been well connected. This field of study is still quite fragmented with very little focus on interdisciplinary cooperation regarding research or networking. In addition, there is hardly any academic activity focusing on long-term research which could be used as setting the foundation for future research (Kleist *et al.* 2019: 4). Despite this, various scholars have made important findings within German academia and have contributed to further understanding the dynamics of gender within Forced Migration. In her work most often connected to refugees in Uganda, Ulrike Krause has published numerous studies, books, and articles which demand a critical analysis of, and reflection on, gender. Much of her work focuses on viewing female refugees as social and independent actors with agency. Their situation is understood within gender-specific aspects. Krause advocates moving away from the traditional line in research of simply seeing refugees as objects and writing about them to instead viewing them as potential partners. This is important in leading researchers, as well as policy writers, to rethink the way they go about studying and writing about female refugees and seeing them as actors in their own right. Her contribution *Die Flüchtling – der Flüchtling als Frau. Genderreflexiver Zugang* in 2017 brought into question if refugee laws truly do take gender into account, discussed the idea of empowerment, and most importantly looked at the labels that have developed around the female refugee as a 'victim' and the male refugee as the 'perpetrator'. This has direct implications on

policy due to the way that female refugees are described not only in integration policy but overall in the media. A narrative has been created surrounding this group of women which should be critically looked at. Her articles together with Hannah Schmidt *Vom Opfer zum Akteur? Diskurse über Resilienz von Flüchtlingen und im Flüchtlingsschutz* in 2018 and *Refugees as Actors? Critical Reflections on Global Refugee Policies on Self-reliance and Resilience* in 2019 furthered the critical analysis within German academia on how refugees are viewed within humanitarian settings and despite a focus on agency and resilience they are still not viewed as independent actors.

Karin Scherschel has also made important contributions to German academia in the area of Forced Migration by looking at how the term refugee has been defined and integration aspects such as rights and access to the labor market play out. Most notably in looking at gender and Forced Migration her contribution together with Anna Krämer *Flucht in die Aktivierung. Empirische Befunde einer qualitative Studie zum Arbeitsmarktzugang von hochqualifizierten geflüchteten Frauen* in 2019 was important in better understanding the situation of female refugees on the job market as very little is currently known. Together with Ulrike Krause, Scherschel also made it a point to foster critical reflection within German academia on the lack of attention to gender in the article *Flucht-Asyl-Gender: Entwicklungen und Forschungsbedarfe* in 2018. When looking at asylum laws and the legal aspects of gender and Forced Migration, Nora Markard has brought the ideas of intersectionality and the situation of LGBTQI refugees into Forced Migration studies in Germany. Her article *Persecution for reasons of Membership of a Particular Social Group: Intersectionality avant la lettre?* In 2016 brought the idea of intersectionality into legal discussions. A theory which plays a prominent role in this study and is continuously gaining more attention.

The contributions listed above and those made by other academics are important. Such studies have been drawn on for the work here and provide important knowledge to be build upon. For the most part they are in the realm of asylum within and outside of Germany or focus on refugee women and integration as one group. Unless noted, it is often not possible in many studies to know if recognized female refugees are the target, if women who are still in the asylum process are the focus, or if it is a combination of both. What is often missing from academic debate is a look at the specific situation of *recognized* female refugees within Germany and their integration at a policy level. It may be asked why this is important. There are numerous studies on female refugees within the German integration context looking at women with specific nationalities and their outcomes in specific areas of integration. Information could be drawn from these studies and findings made with the assumption that they pertain to recognized female refugees as well as women still within the asylum process. This grouping of recognized and not yet recognized female refugees within a policy context should however be looked at with caution and assumptions of who is the target of what study should be avoided. One group of women does not yet have legal status within the realm of German asylum or immigration law

meaning they do not have access to nor are they the target of most integration policies and programs. Their situation within Germany is precarious and how long they will be here is not known as it depends on the outcome of their asylum process. The other group of women has been through the asylum system, has gained some form of status or protection, has an idea how long she will be able to stay in Germany, and is now considered a target of integration policies and programs. These groups of refugee women have different access to healthcare, language courses, job opportunities, and support amongst others. One group of women could potentially begin the path to permanent residency or citizenship if they so choose while the other cannot. These two groups of women are potentially faced with institutional and structural hurdles and obstacles that are very different due to their status and rights which should be taken into account with any research or study aimed at integration policy and programs. If we are to understand the integration situation of female refugees within the German context these very important differences cannot be ignored or set aside. The specific situation of recognized female refugees within integration policy is important to look at as it leads to a generational question of integration policy long term and how it affects and impacts, whether positively or negatively, recognized female refugees and potentially others groups. In addition, many of the studies on female refugees within Germany are looking at the 'effects' so to say of integration policy: access to the labor market, language acquisition, healthcare, and access to education and training amongst others. Suggestions and conclusions are often drawn from these studies. The policy these 'effects' are based upon are however rarely looked at. The question must be asked if the policy that either creates or denies the space for female refugees to access these various things is not analyzed or studied, how can effective or targeted suggestions or conclusions be made.

It was not until 2016 that the situation and integration of female refugees was discussed and studies were released on a *policy* level. The first studies on a policy level released in 2016 were supported and funded by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) or led by other organizations and institutions upon request. Beginning in 2016 BAMF began releasing short analyses on the situation of refugees in Germany. Information regarding integration and the situation of both male and female refugees were presented. It was however not until 2017 that reports and studies *specifically* on the situation of female refugees on a policy level began to be published. One study of particular importance for the academic involvement with the topic together with the federal government was that released by Helen Schwenken in 2017 entitled *Integration von Flüchtlingen unter einer Gleichstellungsperspektive. Bestandaufnahme und Forschungsbedarf*. This study was written as an expert analysis for the German federal government describing the situation of refugees from a gender-sensitive aspect. Schwenken made it clear that little was still known about the situation of female refugees and their integration within Germany and that the government needed to do more to collect data and information. She acknowledged however that the situation was improving. In 2017

BAMF released a brief analysis entitled *Female Refugees in Germany: Language, Education and Employment* looking specifically at these aspects of their integration. In addition, in 2017 the Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin and Alexianer St. Hedwig-Krankenhaus released the *Study on Female Refugees: Repräsentative Untersuchung von geflüchteten Frauen in unterschiedlichen Bundesländern in Deutschland*. The study was a collaboration with hospitals around the country in order to conduct a representative study on, above all, the mental health and well-being of female refugees while also briefly discussing other aspects of their integration. It is important to note that interviews were conducted with female refugees throughout the country as part of the study giving them the opportunity to be heard. This study was funded and supported by BAMF.

As can be seen, a focus on the integration and situation of female refugees first truly began on a *policy level* in 2016 initiated by the ‘refugee crisis’ in 2015 and 2016. Due to this there has been progress but still little is known specifically about German integration policy dealing with female refugees and how female refugees themselves view their situation. In the few studies and reports released since 2016 supported by the federal government, only the report conducted by Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin and Alexianer St. Hedwig-Krankenhaus gave female refugees the opportunity to speak and be a part of the study. It is also clear that there is an immense gap in information on female refugees and their integration in connection with integration *policy* before 2016. With regards to female refugees who have received some form of protection status there are no *known* studies looking at their integration on a policy level. Outside of this study there has been no *known* attempt to address this situation and begin the initial steps of correcting it.

Research within Germany is influenced by and often builds upon work from academics in other parts of the world. Although the recognition within Germany that there has been a lack of focus on female refugees and gender within Forced Migration studies is relatively new, it is a topic that has garnered attention internationally for many years and has influenced the discussion within Germany. In 1989 Doreen Marie Indra noted that it was a “hopeful sign that there has been a substantial increase in research on women refugees in the last ten years” (1989: 224). Despite this however she felt that the research was still focused on ‘conventionally defined women’s issues’ (Indra 1989: 224). She also highlighted the problems that female refugees face within refugee law and recognition when defining and separating a private and public sphere. A critique that is still being voiced today. In addition, she warned that gender cannot ‘adequately’ be integrated into studies by simply “adding in a subspecialization of refugee women’s studies” (Indra 1989: 239). A discussion that is still taking place in academia over 30 years later. Indra addressed this problem head on in her 1993 article *Some Feminist Contributions to Refugee Studies*. Her main focus was on academia and the dangers of categorizing female refugees. She pointed out that it was “common practice at conferences having a few special sessions on gender on a particular topic and then seeing only so-called ‘women’, ‘women’s

topics' or even occasionally 'women with men' covered there" (Indra 1993: 2-3). This for her sent the message that everything else was 'universal', 'general', and not gendered: the norm. Women on the other hand were marginalized and equated with gender.

Indra went on to warn us in academia to be wary of categorizations. To make sure we 'unpack' categories and relationships and that we understand the context within which the concept of gender has been developed. She cited Barbara Harrel-Bond's landmark 1986 study *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees* as a warning and reminder to those in academia. Harrel-Bond was one of the first to discuss the image of refugees as helpless and how powerful this can be. Through Harrel-Bond's work Indra directly asked the question who speaks of and for refugees and why. What are the consequences? Those in the field of refugee studies must make sure they give refugees 'more voice'. This is a discussion we see up to this day and unfortunately for many has not adequately been addressed or corrected. The lack of creating a space where refugees can speak and most importantly be heard is constantly discussed. Indra saw the problem in that researchers could not conceptually separate or distance themselves from each other; especially with regards to gender. Researchers tended to just take up definitions from others discourse. The problem here was that "if researchers work within the same conceptual universe as those representing gender and refugees who have quite other agendas, it is virtually impossible to generate much new or different" work (Indra 1993: 16). A goal of academia is to create "new knowledge and ways of seeing". For Indra, the current way academia was functioning regarding gender and asylum was not producing this. She summed up the dangers of current academia poignantly: "After all, millions of women, men and children have to live with the consequences long after the researchers and policy makers have gone" (Indra 1993: 18).

Despite Indra and others bringing these important points to the forefront we still see the same critique and discussions happening within academia on the lack of focus on women and gender within refugee studies. In 2002 Agnès Callamard noted that the "incorporation of women within the field of refugee policies and studies [was] slow, marginal, and contradicted by broader structural constraints" (2002: 137). She did acknowledge however that steps had been taken to end this marginalization. The critique continued however in 2010 when Jane Freedman wrote that the "neglect of gender in refugee protection was mirrored in the lack of academic research on asylum and refugees which took gender seriously" (2010: 591). Gender was either not mentioned at all or simply viewed as a trait like that of age or occupation (Freedman 2010: 591). Freedman set out to contribute to filling this gap in the research and to bringing to light the lack of academic attention with her publication *Mainstreaming Gender in Refugee Protection* in 2010. She emphasized the lack of data on female refugees and how they were often portrayed as vulnerable, speechless, and helpless. This provided the groundwork for studies that followed including this one. Years later however some felt that the gap in attention and research in academia regarding gender and female refugees had not yet been fully addressed. Patrick

Emmenegger and Katarina Stigwall (2019: 1294) summed the problem up well when they stated that “academic research has not kept up with the increasing feminization of asylum. Studies on asylum policies are still gender-neutral”. Emmenegger and Stigwall recognized that there had been many scholars who have contributed to pointing out the feminization of migration and asylum in research. Heaven Crawley for example provides an important example on how to properly analyze and understand gender when conducting a study on female refugees with her article *Gender, persecution and the concept of politics in the asylum determination process* published in 2000. Georgina Firth and Barbara Mauthe also highlighted the importance of the interplay between the public and private realm in refugee law in their work *Refugee Law, Gender and the Concept of Personhood* from 2013. They also argued that we must pay attention to stereotypes, personhood, agency, and the ideas of intersectionality when analyzing the situation of female refugees. Firth and Mauthe echoed the words of Indra in reminding academia that the addition of particular social group to include female refugees should be looked at with skepticism.

In the article *Female refugees and asylum seekers: The issue of integration* from 2016 Silvia Sansonetti discussed the importance of vocational training and language courses for the integration of female refugees into society which was an important contribution in academia to enhancing the understanding of the integration of female refugees. Despite the importance of these works and others, many scholars have been limited to case studies and comparisons of a few states or are only within a theoretical or legislative framework looking at isolated initiatives (Emmenegger and Stigwall 2019: 1295). There is not much literature looking at the gendered aspects of asylum policies. Simply adding the word ‘women’ or ‘gender’ is not enough for a ‘women-friendly’ interpretation of policy (Emmenegger and Stigwall 2019: 1295). This echoes back to what Doreen Marie Indra said in 1989. Emmenegger and Stigwall (2019: 1317-1318) call for an expansion of the definition of ‘gender’ to consider sexual identity and placing the analysis in an intersectional framework. Something that this study is aiming to do. It is important to note that the studies listed above and others primarily focus on female refugees as a whole and it is not always possible to know if recognized female refugees are included or if it is those who are still within the asylum process.

The increased attention to female refugees and gender within academia internationally and nationally is important. Within the *policy* context of this study however it is important to note that there has been little attempt by academics or scholars within Germany to start the process of analyzing and understanding how female refugees are taken into account within the development and formulation *specifically* of integration policy in Germany. Not just aspects of integration and how female refugees are fairing on the job market for example but how policy *specifically* incorporates and takes them into account. This study thus stands to address this situation not only within German academia but also politically and socially within the country. It is hoped that through the findings of

this study more scholars, academics, and policymakers will be encouraged to continue the research in order for us to collectively improve the information and data on German integration policy and (recognized) female refugees.

1.2 Research Questions, Aims, and Relevance

Drawing on such research debates and seeking to contribute to filling research gaps, the study to be conducted here addresses the issue of refugee women and integration policy in Germany. To be more specific women who have *already* received refugee or protection status. It is exactly these women who have been through the asylum process and, theoretically, have access to all integration programs which could lead to obtaining permanent residency or citizenship in the country where they have received their status. This study sets out to answer two research questions:

- 1) How are *recognized* female refugees taken into account with the development and formulation of integration policy in Germany?
- 2) How do recognized female refugees view their situation and integration?

Before looking more closely at the research questions and their relevance, it is important to define the target group *recognized* female refugees within the context of this study. The term female refugees is often used as an umbrella term to include asylum-seekers, those who are tolerated, officially recognized refugees, and women with protection status although from a legal status they are very different. Each group has various rights under asylum and immigration laws depending on their status and with that differing degrees of access to integration programs. In order to answer the question to what extent *recognized* female refugees are taken into account in the development and formulation of integration policy in Germany it is important to define which group of female refugees will be analyzed in order to avoid confusion. Although the integration and situation of each woman is important and deserves to be further looked at, this study will *only* focus on women with *official* refugee status. This decision was made based upon the fact that this group of female refugees is the only one with access to, theoretically, all integration programs meaning the 'social process' of integration. It is also the only group which can *officially* begin the integration process as defined by Germany meaning they are the only group that can eventually apply for permanent residency or citizenship, the durable solution, based upon the 'social process' of integration. It is thought that focusing initially on this group of women will make a study on the development of integration policy more effective. It is however encouraged that further studies look at the integration of other groups of female refugees.

The question may be raised why only female refugees are being focused on in this study and not also male refugees. Both are forced to leave their homes and encounter new societies, laws, and

cultures which they must attempt to integrate into and build a new life out of. Through the increased focus on the situation of gender and flight in the Global South the issue has been raised that the situation of men is being neglected. They tend to be either 'sidelined' or presented as "oppressors, fanatics, or criminals" (Griffiths 2015: 469). There has however been a shift to viewing men as victims. It is advocated that "stereotypes bind men to particular identities, statuses, roles, and responsibilities as much as they do women" (Edwards 2010: 41) which 'restrict' them to stereotypes developed through refugee discourse (Griffiths 2015: 472). Men also have 'gendered identities' which are connected to, among other things, their ethnicity, religion, age, and marital status (Griffiths 2015: 470). In her important research on male refugees, *Here, Man is Nothing! Gender and Policy in an Asylum Context* published in 2015, Melanie Griffiths analyzes the situation of male refugees. As the traditional head of the household in many countries the situation of flight can cause gender roles to change and men can feel emasculated. This in turn can affect their wives or partners and family. One passage from Griffiths's article (2015: 474) summarizes the situation of male refugees well and is worth quoting:

"In tandem with the demonization of male refused asylum seekers, there is a contradictory emasculation of such individuals. Many aspects of asylum systems are infantilizing, offering little space for men to behave as adults – to support themselves, make decisions about their lives, and to establish stable families. They are often treated like children by the system with their ability to tell the truth doubted by decision makers, their self-determination limited, and their productivity restricted by prohibition from working and/or arduous reporting conditions."

For Griffiths, male refugees find themselves stuck between immigration categories and social identities. They "occupy a particularly ambiguous discursive space" where their gender, race, and immigration status create tension as well as contradictions (2015: 479 and 484). The living situation of male refugees and their integration does thus deserve attention and an increased focus on their situation is needed. Nonetheless, this does not dispute the fact that international and domestic laws and policies regarding asylum and integration have from the beginning been conceptualized and developed with the male refugee in mind. Since the 1980s and through the second and third waves of feminism there have been movements and pressure to include the topic of gender in asylum law. To make sure that women are equally considered and their needs and reasons for flight addressed. This creates a situation where men have not had to 'fight' to be recognized whereas women have. Although it is a welcomed step that laws have been changed internationally and domestically and that gender has gained more attention, the topic is not yet finished and there is still much to be done pertaining to gender-specific aspects of Forced Migration (Wessels 2017).

As the integration of *recognized* female refugees is still underrepresented on a policy level, and gender is often times viewed simply as being 'female', such studies as the one here are and will

continue to be of importance in understanding the situation of this group of women domestically and how integration policies affect their lives. In including male refugees in this study it would become a comparative analysis of both within German integration policy and what advantages or disadvantages they may have over the other. That is however not the objective of this study. The objective is to first and foremost discover how recognized *female* refugees are taken into account in the development and formulation of German integration policy and how *they* view their situation. A study including both male and female refugees could not be viewed as complete at this point in time when the situation of recognized female refugees within Germany on a policy level is understudied. Such a study would not get to the core of truly understanding German integration policy regarding recognized female refugees. Lastly it could be questioned why a researcher must justify why their research on *female* refugees does not include male refugees. This is a further sign that research and politics still must continue to develop to a point where female refugees are viewed as independent actors within Forced Migration and that they are not simply connected to the male. A future study comparing the integration situation of recognized male and female refugees would however greatly contribute to academia and policy in Germany and is highly encouraged. It is also important to note that sexual orientation will not play a role in this study. The situation of LGBTQI refugees is however immensely understudied and is an area of research which calls for *immediate* attention. This study could be used as an example on how initial research could be conducted on the situation and integration of this group of refugees in Germany at a policy level and in other countries so that they receive the much needed attention they require. It must be noted that German integration policy is broken up between the federal, state, and city levels. In order to gain a full picture of the significance of recognized female refugees in integration policy, three cities and states were chosen together with the federal level to complete the policy analysis: The states of North-Rhine Westphalia, Bavaria, and Saxony-Anhalt and the cities of Cologne, Wuerzburg, and Magdeburg within those states.

The topics of integration and Forced Migration are certainly not new in Germany or internationally. There is a dearth of research and publications. Increasingly more scholars and students are becoming involved in the topic. Gender in connection with Forced Migration has also gained more attention in recent years and gender-sensitive and feminist studies are being released. Governments are also being called upon to pay more attention to issues of gender. The question is therefore why the two research questions listed above are of relevance at this time. The main reason is that the majority of research regarding gender and Forced Migration is most often *not* connected to Europe (Schwenken 2017: 9). Despite the increased awareness on the topic, academics in Europe, including Germany, often focus their research outside of the country and mostly in the Global South. This is not to be seen as something negative. The majority of refugees are in neighboring countries of the country they fled. It is a small percentage that make it to Europe. It is therefore logical that researchers would

go where the majority of (female) refugees are. Nonetheless, this has left an immense gap in the research regarding gender and Forced Migration within Europe on a *policy level*. This has led to a situation where ever more information is being gathered and studies released about the reasons why women living in refugee camps in the Global South may have fled their homes and what their living conditions are, but little is known about female refugees and their situation within Europe. Germany has not remained outside of this trend. Research in Germany regarding flight and gender has continued to remain insufficient (Krause and Scherschel 2018: 8).

Asylum, integration, and immigration are topics which are often politically and emotionally charged. Due to this they can easily be manipulated or adjusted to fit certain political or social motivations and objectives. Not every citizen must be an expert on these topics, but public opinion can be more easily 'manipulated' when there is a general lack of information to begin with. This was seen most prevalently after the so-called 'refugee crisis' in Europe in 2015 and 2016. Anger, fear, misunderstanding, and discrimination were politicized as a wave of right-wing populist groups gained popularity and power throughout Europe. Germany was not exempt from this development. It became clear that there was a lack of information and data regarding refugees as a whole within the country, most specifically pertaining to (recognized) female refugees. Little was known about the living situation of this group of women, their difficulties or successes, and how to best integrate them into society.

The question that follows is although there is a gap in the research regarding the living situation and integration of recognized female refugees within Germany, why is it important to conduct a study on it? Migration, flight, and displacement are social phenomena. There are predictions that due to climate change and increased conflict around the world more people will have to leave their homes in the future. These people will have to create new lives for themselves in other countries and integrate into new societies. Integration is a topic that may garnish fluctuating amounts of attention but will not fade from policy circles. Women will also continue to leave their countries and female refugees will continue to find safety and security in Germany. Due to this it is not only politically but socially important to properly analyze and understand the integration situation, long-term, of female refugees specifically at a policy level. Integration policy regarding female refugees should not be reactive. There should be an understanding of their integration situation, long-term, within the country and how they are taken into account in the development of integration policy in Germany. It is important in order to discover if their situation improves, if their development mirrors that of other groups or if they perhaps have particular needs, and if integration programs do help them. Through this, 'crises' can potentially be avoided in the future and long-term programs and plans can be implemented and adjusted as seen fit. Understanding how recognized female refugees are taken into account within German integration policy could also potentially be beneficial for other groups of refugees or immigrants also integrating into German society. Conducting a study focused on answering the question to what extent female

refugees are taken into account in the development and formulation of integration policy is thus beneficial for the societal cohesiveness and development of the country.

Looking at the extent to which recognized female refugees are taken into account in the development and formulation of German integration policy is however not enough. This is where the second research question comes into play: how do recognized female refugees view their situation and integration? As discussed in the introduction, refugees are often put into one group. Female refugees are even further marginalized due to not only being refugees but also women and members of various religious or cultural groups. They are connected to the rhetoric, assumptions, and stereotypes surrounding each group and their voices are rarely heard. These women are however experts on their situation. They 'live' integration and are the targets of integration policy. Conducting a study on how/if recognized female refugees are taken into account in German integration policy would not be complete without hearing directly from them. Refugees' narratives on their situation is often created within pre-given discourses and power relations and they themselves are often turned into a "mute and faceless physical mass" denied the right to express themselves and present their own narratives (Sigona 2014: 371-372; Rajaram 2002: 247). This creates a situation where western 'experts' and organizations working with refugees become the only trustworthy voices representing and speaking for them about their experiences (Sigona 2014: 372). By acting and being political however refugees can make way for 'transformative opportunities' and bring into question the dominant representation of them as only being speechless and traumatized (Sigona 2014: 371). Giving recognized female refugees the space to have their voices heard within this study allows the women a chance to be 'political' and to contribute to taking back the narratives on their lives and to become the masters of their story. It creates the possibility of being able to analyze if the policies implemented truly achieve what they were designed to or not. It further gives first glimpses into if recognized female refugees have other needs not addressed by integration policy or if the policy perhaps does not go far enough. Further, it may answer the question if certain programs are ineffective or if new programs need to be developed. It is misguided to conduct a policy analysis centered on a specific group of people without including them as partners within the analysis. This second research question thus ensures that this study is complete and effective. In addition, hearing directly from recognized female refugees is one of the best ways to attempt to break down stereotypes and possibly build bridges within German society. Instead of reading stories about this group of women, Germans can hear directly from them and possibly gain knowledge and understanding which they otherwise may never have had the opportunity to discover. With a greater understanding of the situation of (recognized) female refugees it could be more difficult for the topic of asylum and integration to be manipulated and used for political gain.

The following study has two objectives. First, it wants to research the integration situation at a policy level of recognized female refugees in Germany both socially and politically. Once a woman has received refugee status they seem to 'fall out' of the target group for research or are not mentioned. As discussed earlier recognized female refugees and women still in the asylum process, for the most part, do not have the same access to integration programs and are viewed differently under integration and migration policies. Grouping them together for a research study could lead to conclusions that are potentially misleading or false. Such a study as the one here can not only enhance academic knowledge on the long-term situation of female refugees in Germany on a policy level, but also provide the basis for policymakers to understand how their policies, if at all, involve or affect the integration of recognized female refugees. A female refugees' integration success or failure can ultimately have societal consequences. The purpose of this study is however not to provide concrete policy recommendations or to call for certain interventions. This study rather serves as an attempt to address a gap in the knowledge regarding recognized female refugees and integration in Germany at a policy level. Its purpose is to draw initial findings and conclusions. Future studies based upon the conclusions from this study could potentially lead to better policy decisions regarding integration and female refugees in the future.

The second objective of this study is to provide recognized female refugees with a space to use their voice building upon past research to continue to work towards changing the perspective of women being viewed as passive instead of active actors; that they are independent agents who do have control over their life. This study wants to present female refugees as experts on their own experiences. Too often research is conducted *about* instead of *with* refugees. It is of utmost importance that researchers continue moving away from this perspective. Making this simple change of giving female refugees agency and providing them a space to express their thoughts and opinions can have a major impact on the way this group of people is viewed as a whole. When female refugees are viewed as partners in Forced Migration research and not just as objects to be studied it completely changes the narrative surrounding them and their story. Through asking the question how female refugees view their situation and integration it is hoped that this study can contribute to the important change in moving academia, and above all policy, in this direction.

1.3. Structure of the Study

The following study is structured as follows. The theoretical framework of this study is laid out in chapter two. It combines various theories which are important for conducting the policy analysis which will take place in this study specifically pertaining to recognized female refugees. The theory of semantics is important to understand and include as it guides an analysis based primarily on analyzing words and ideas. This connects to the various theories of integration as integration is a concept

defined and understood differently not only by various countries but also institutions and levels of government within a country. The theory of intersectionality keeps the policy analysis focused on understanding how people are not just affected by policy due to their gender, age, nationality, religion, or refugee status for example, but that a person can be affected and potentially discriminated against based upon a combination of these and how different policies interact with each. Political steering gives a first glimpse into the question of how integration policy, if at all, is organized, led, and implemented in Germany. It was discovered through the study that political steering does not play much of a role at this point as Germany tends to be developing and implementing their integration policy based upon 'learning by doing'. Nonetheless, it was important to bring in this aspect in order to see if there is a guiding principle or thread throughout integration policy at all levels of government.

Chapter three continues with setting the methodological framework for the study by describing the qualitative methods and interpretive policy analysis that were used, how exactly the study was conducted, and looks at ethical considerations that need to be taken into account when conducting interviews with refugees. The methodological framework did run into specific hurdles and difficulties due to the lack of information, data, and overall attention to recognized female refugees on a policy level at all levels of government. This was brought to light more in chapter four.

The policy analysis of the integration policies of the federal government, and the selected states, and cities within the timeframe of 1998-2019 is presented in chapter four. The results of each was compared with the other in order to gain initial findings of the overall relevance of recognized female refugees in integration policy in Germany. As already mentioned, it was through the policy analysis that the methodological framework met its difficulties. Through the analysis it became apparent that recognized female refugees, or female refugees in general, were not a focus of integration policy until 2016. Due to this, there was very little official information or statistics on their integration not only at the federal level but also on the state and local level. Due to this, recognized female refugees needed to be put into the category of immigrant women for most of the policy analysis. This decision came with its own initial hesitations as recognized female refugees and immigrant women do not have the same background nor the same experience in Germany. Nonetheless, this was the only way the author could continue with the study in light of the methodological difficulties. These difficulties with the methodological framework highlight the lack of focus and information that has been persistent regarding recognized female refugees on a policy level.

Directly connected to the policy analysis in chapter four, recognized female refugees were given the space to speak for themselves. The women were kept anonymous and any additional information that could have led to identifying them was not included. The interviews were analyzed, compared, and the significance of the results discussed. Initial findings showed that the situation of the women did not seem to be very different depending on where they were in Germany, their

nationality, their age, how long they have been in Germany, or other various factors. Most of the women had not benefitted from any program or integration policy and were often left on their own, together with their families, to integrate into German society. Most of them relied heavily on local organizations and individuals to help them learn German, find a job, begin with further education or start a training program, and try to become a member of society.

In chapter six the results of the interviews were compared with the findings from the policy analysis in chapter four in order to discover if integration policy and programs were effective or reached recognized female refugees. Through the analysis initial findings suggested that integration policy, and with that programs, were not reaching their intended target group. It also came to light that the image portrayed of recognized female refugees, mostly connected to immigrant women, by integration policies, programs, and the various levels of government has created a narrative surrounding this group of women that may not match the reality of these women or how they view themselves. This is important in going forward with developing and implementing appropriate integration policy. It is also significant in the overall image of recognized female refugees, and female refugees as a whole, in Germany and how they are viewed by society.

Chapter seven rounds up the study with a final summary of the initial findings and conclusions while also looking at methodological challenges which arose during the study. In addition, the impact of the results of the study on the field of Forced Migration and integration as well as their potential importance and implications for current and future research is discussed. As a final contribution to current research, future avenues or fields of research are suggested which can build upon the work done in this study.

2 Theoretical Framework

Before setting out on a policy analysis, developing the theoretical framework within which the analysis will be conducted is very important. It creates a guide within which the analysis is to take place and provides definitions and context. The proper framework contributes to an effective analysis taking place. Most importantly, it assists in ensuring that the conclusions and findings are as complete as they can be and not misguided or misinformed. The theoretical framework created for this study combines different theoretical strands making it unique. It brings together four theories which build upon and compliment the other: the semantics of Forced Migration, the most prominent theories of integration within academia at the moment, the theory of intersectionality, and political steering. Each plays a crucial role in guiding the analysis in this study and properly understanding the context within which Forced Migration and integration take place. These fields of research are vast and connecting them to a policy analysis can easily lead the researcher to not being able to see the forest for the trees. The combination of the four theories listed allow for the analysis to remain focused, to not get 'lost' in unnecessary details, and to lead to findings that truly reflect and answer the research question to the best of the researcher's abilities. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the components of the theoretical framework. It will explain why each theory was chosen, its connection to the other, and its importance for the research.

2.1 The Semantics of Forced Migration

Within Policy Analysis there has been a 'linguistic turn' which has refocused attention on the way language itself "constitutes the social 'reality' analysts are studying" (Yanow 2000: 117). Interpretive Policy Analysis has developed along with this 'linguistic turn' and has changed the question from what is the cost of the policy to what is the meaning of the policy (Manning, Miller, and Van Maaren 2000: v.). Two schools of thought have played an important role in the development of Interpretive Policy Analysis: Hermeneutics and Phenomenology. Through hermeneutics specifically, there is an attention to word choice and textual structuring (Yanow 2000: 117). The way words are used can have an important impact on how a situation is understood and interpreted. Words and descriptions are carefully chosen to convey a certain message or meaning and to illicit a desired response and emotion from an audience. Semantics have played an important role in the discourse on Forced Migration. More specifically on the people at the center; those who have left their countries. How these people and their movement from one place to another are described shapes the discourse within the country they have arrived in or are planning to reach. These descriptions not only effect their reception in the country but their rights and access to services. Paul Chilton best described this in an E-Mail to Carmen Rosa Caldas-Coulthard: "Policies and the orders to execute them are linguistic acts with psychological, social and ethical underpinnings" (cited in Caldas-Coulthard 2007: 272).

With this in mind, when conducting an Interpretive Policy Analysis on Forced Migration it is crucial to understand and define the vocabulary used. When we discuss a certain topic, we unknowingly take up everything that was said about it previously, mix everything anew, qualify already existing opinions or simply repeat what was already said and written (Böke, Jung, and Niehr 2000: 10). This point is important as the topic of Forced Migration is not new nor are the majority of words and terms used. Many of the terms we hear today in Germany such as *'Das Boot ist voll'* were already being used in the 1990s. Although a discourse analysis falls outside the scope of this study, it is important to understand how the public discussion has developed and how the meaning and interpretation of the associated words have changed, or stayed the same, as the public discourse affects and influences political decisions and vice versa.

Since the beginning of the *Flüchtlingsdiskussion*, or the discussion on refugees, terminology has played a crucial role. Intense and bitter debates over terms such as *Flüchtlinge* (refugee) and *Vertriebene* (displaced persons) represented the political explosiveness of the topic (Niehr 2000: 27). The demeaning character of the word *Flüchtling* from the past is also important to look at. The word was seen as something negative and used as an insult until the middle of the 1960s (Niehr 2000: 28). Without proper explanation the term was misunderstood. We see this in public discourse today as the understanding of the term 'Refugee' or '*Flüchtling*' is anything but clear. Although written almost 20 years ago, Thomas Niehr's (2000: 28; translated by the author) analysis is still relevant today:

"The discussion surrounding asylum-seekers is characterized on the one hand by terminology that is becoming more legally based such as political refugee, a real political refugee, or illegal, politically persecuted asylum-seeker and on the other hand by a moral focus which questions the motive of the asylum-seeker through terms such as economic refugee or asylum tourist."

Words such as *Flüchtlinge*, *Geflüchtete*, Displaced Persons, *Asylflüchtlinge*, *Fluchtmigranten_innen*, Refugees etc. are terms that are notoriously conflicted and lead to a complexity of statements, conflicting ideas, and attributions (Eppenstein and Ghaderi 2017: 4-5). Connected to the main word 'Refugee', many terms which originally were only used within the realm of experts have come to dominate the daily discourse and have led to more confusion. Terms such as 'Dublin I, II', 'Schengen-Agreement', '*Kettenduldung*', 'European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)', 'European Border Surveillance System (Eurosur)', '*Asylpaket I, II, ...*', 'safe country of origin', and '*subsidiärer Schutz*' among others. A type of 'categorical fetishism' has arisen surrounding Forced Migration. This means that it has become general practice to act as if categories such as 'refugee' just exist as 'empty vessels' and people can be put into a category in any way (Crawley and Skleparis 2017: 2). The people themselves, for whom the meaning of the majority of these words and categories remain unclear, simply become objects and are excluded from any debate (Eppenstein and Ghaderi 2017: 7). They

hardly have any means of being able to influence what decisions are made about them. They must live with the constructions and categories that have been created by academics, governments, other people, and institutions (Firth and Mauthe 2013: 473).

Adding to the difficulty in defining and understanding what exactly a refugee is, the words refugee and migrant have been used interchangeably when describing the same group of people. This has increased since 2015 with the so-called 'refugee crisis' in Europe. Even though there are some grey areas these terms have developed for many to have distinct meanings. In refugee studies the different symbolic and material meanings of the term 'refugee' and 'migrant' are strongly emphasized (Schwenken 2017: 5). Refugees are not migrants and it "is dangerous, and detrimental to refugee protection, to confuse the two groups, terminologically or otherwise" (Feller 2005: 27). Confusing them can lead to consequences for the people being defined. When these different groups of people are 'lumped' together, 'problems' with one group is projected on the other and the overall picture can become negative (Blommaert and Verschuere 1998: 186). As Jan Blommaert and Jef Verschuere (1998: 186) put it "[...] any reasonable discourse about 'migrants' becomes virtually impossible. The concept is semantically conflated and ceases to cover any practical reality." With that being said however categories can be dangerous. Within academia there is the risk that categories from political debates can be carried over into academics and be used which could limit the understanding of migration. This could cause researchers and academics to become 'complicit' in the process that "has stigmatised, vilified and undermined the rights of refugees and migrants in Europe" (Crawley and Skleparis 2017: 3). Developing categories is however part of the social sciences and academia. Categories reflect the "subjective perceptions of how people fit into different spaces in the social order and of the terms on which society should engage with them in varying contexts and at different points in time" (Crawley and Skleparis 2017: 4).

In conducting research on Forced Migration it is therefore crucial to understand this balance between defining the words being used so as to avoid confusion and understanding the dangers of placing people into categories. It must also be remembered that creating categories is very powerful and influences not only how issues will, and will not be, represented in policy debate but also turns the people being discussed into objects of that policy (Crawley and Skleparis 2017: 5 and 12). When we categorize and label it puts people into the role of an outsider without allowing them to have a say leading to potential stigmatization (Krause 2016: 9). In the context of international migration it is also extremely important to bear in mind that categories are constantly being challenged and are "in a constant state of change, renegotiation and redefinition" (Crawley and Skleparis 2017: 5). The concept of what a 'refugee' is for example is not a stable category and "there is room for disruption, contestation and continual reconstruction" (Firth and Mauthe 2013: 473). As a researcher conducting a study on recognized female refugees, a category in and of itself, it is important to remain critical of

categorizing people. We have to work with categories but must understand and acknowledge they are constructed and can have direct policy implications (Crawley and Skleparis 2017: 13). When working with categories we must point out that a person, in the case of this study a female refugee, is not defined by the label or category she is in and is much more than that. It is important to note that the homogenization and labeling of refugees as victims is beginning to be discussed and criticized within academia and research. A trend is developing towards empirical studies looking at how refugees themselves view their label, how they see themselves as a refugee, and how their actions contradict the construction of their labeled identity (Krause 2016: 23). It has even been questioned if the label of refugee is even necessary when conducting research in the field of Forced Migration (Krause 2016: 31). Nora Markard (2016: 368) has argued that we need to leave space for those who do not conform to certain identities or orientations. The problem is not that a person belongs to a certain group that is suffering from persecution but rather that the person is being put into a certain group and connected to the resulting negative consequences independent of if that group really exists or if the person would have put themselves into that group.

Having understood the dangers with categorization and labeling it is however important for the purpose of this study to define certain terms. This is said with an emphasis on the point that the women who are at the focus of this study are *not* being reduced to only being understood and labeled as that one word or term and this will be a major theme throughout the study. In order to properly conduct the analysis at hand and be able to answer the research questions posed by this study, it is however important to know what terminology is being used and what is meant by it within an academic and policy context. For this study a refugee will thus be defined based upon the *United Nations Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* (from here on referred to as the 1951 Geneva Convention). A refugee is:

“any person owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” (United Nations 1951: 16)

In contrast to a refugee, there is no internationally accepted legal definition for a migrant which leads to the term being used in many ways and with multiple definitions. Migrants and refugees very often travel using the same routes, modes of transport, and networks. This is referred to as ‘mixed-movements’ (UNHCR 2016b) and further leads to confusion of who should be defined as what. For the

purpose of this study a migrant will be defined according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Migrants are people who:

“choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons. Unlike refugees who cannot safely return home, migrants face no such impediment to return. If they choose to return home, they will continue to receive the protection of their government.”
(UNHCR 2016b)

Along with the word migrant, it is also common to hear the term ‘immigrant’. There is also no internationally accepted legal definition for this word. Defining this term is however also very important for the purpose of this study. Colloquially the term ‘immigrant’ has a more positive connotation than the term ‘migrant’ as an immigrant is seen as someone who wants to become a full member of the new society they have settled in, whereas a migrant is viewed as someone who has come primarily for financial benefits without the goal of integrating. This view is of course debated and challenged. For the purposes of this study an immigrant will be defined according to the general understanding of the term. It is most often used to describe a person who:

“makes a conscious decision to leave his or her home and move to a foreign country with the intention of settling there. Immigrants often go through a lengthy vetting process to immigrate to a new country. Many become lawful permanent residents and eventually citizens. Immigrants research their destinations, explore employment opportunities, and study the language of the country where they plan to live. Most importantly, they are free to return home whenever they choose.” (International Rescue Committee 2018)

Another term which is connected to Forced Migration and used in connection with refugees is ‘Asylum-Seeker’. An asylum-seeker is a person seeking international protection and, according to the UNHCR, is “someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed” (UNHCR 2019a). When referring to asylum-seekers in this study, it will be based upon this definition.

Understanding what these words mean is not only crucial for analyzing the development of German Integration Policy in chapter four, but also for understanding what refugees, in the case of this study female refugees, are entitled to. There are certain statuses an asylum-seeker or refugee can obtain which in turn determines their access to certain services and rights within German integration policy and law. These terms are complex and involve explanations in connection with laws and policies. Some of them are: asylum, humanitarian protection under the 1951 Geneva Convention, political asylum under Article 16a of the German Constitution, subsidiary protection, tolerance permit, and

non-refoulement. This study is however focused only on officially recognized refugees and those with protection status. Defining and describing the other types of statuses listed above could lead to confusion and lies outside the scope of this study. When looking at the situation and integration chances of asylum-seekers who have yet to receive a certain status they are however of great importance.

2.1.1 Forced Migration Discourse

It was not until the 1970s that the topic of Forced Migration from outside of the Federal Republic of Germany gained attention in *public* discourse. This was after the recruitment for Guest Workers ended in 1973 and more refugees and migrants began arriving from developing countries and Turkey (Böke, Jung, and Niehr 2000: 23). Between 1978 and 1980 the number of asylum-seekers tripled from 33,000 to over 100,000 in the Federal Republic of Germany. It was during this time that the public discourse on migration, more specifically pertaining to asylum-seekers, became negative. Migration was portrayed as a dangerous mass movement which would endanger society (Böke, Jung, and Niehr 2000: 24). Common questions were if the Federal Republic of Germany was a country of immigration, if it should become one, or if a multicultural society was something Germany should strive for. Over four decades later migration is still being portrayed by many in the public, and political discourse, as something dangerous and the same questions are still being raised. Jumping off from the progression of the image of migration in Germany it is interesting to briefly look at how migrants and refugees were portrayed internationally in the past as this also has been reflected in Germany and can also lead to understanding partially why refugees have come to be viewed the way they are in Germany.

In 2011 Heather L. Johnson published the article *Click to Donate: visual images, constructing victims and imagining the female refugee*. In her article Johnson looked at the evolution of the image of a refugee and how NGO's and international organizations such as the UNHCR have played a role in creating the narrative on what a refugee is. After World War II and during the Cold War a refugee or a migrant was viewed as a (white) European using their movement to protest against an ideology or political form they did not agree with. A refugee was depicted as a powerful and heroic individual (Johnson 2011: 1016) who was a political dissident that was a "brave defender of freedom" (Krause and Schmidt 2018: 10). Someone who looked like the people of the country they were fleeing to. They were relatable, they had stories, and they had faces. After the Cold War however, and especially into the early 1990s, the image of a refugee began to change with the rise in refugees from the global South. The individuality of the refugee was then taken away and they became "an undifferentiated victim, voiceless and without political agency" (Johnson 2011: 1016). Refugees were reduced to objects of humanitarian programs and victims of their history due to their ascribed vulnerability (Krause and Schmidt 2018: 10 and 11). According to Johnson, this image was then kept and perpetuated by NGO's and international organizations for fundraising as well as to continue widespread public support for

the plight of refugees. The media has been an important actor in perpetuating and continuing the various narratives and images of refugees which have developed throughout the years. This is something that can be seen in Germany with the way refugees are portrayed in news reports, journals, and on television campaigns. The role these type of depictions by international NGOs and organizations in the media play in how German policy regarding refugees is developed, and how refugees are viewed in general, should not be underestimated.

The media plays a central role in how a discussion is framed. The media reports on events, correlations, and incidents but is much more than just a messenger. The mass media is the preferred mode of transportation for mindsets or *Mentalités* (Niehr 2004: 27). The language of the media is one of the most widespread discourses that we are exposed to and has a social, political, and an educational role (Caldas-Coulthard 2007: 273). It is through the media that the majority of people hear or read the discourses of institutions, government, politicians, and groups (van Dijk 1987: 41). The media provides information on national issues such as immigration and immigrants and provides the main 'data' and issues that people may use for everyday conversation. Particularly topics such as immigration as information usually cannot be taken from personal experiences (van Dijk 1987: 45). Due to this, their role "as a prevailing discourse and attitude context for thought and talk about ethnic groups is probably unsurpassed by any other institutional or public source of communication" (van Dijk 1987: 41). An important characteristic of media discourses is that they not only primarily portray reality, but that they are actually reality themselves and deliver guidelines for how a certain event should be reacted to and handled. In addition, the media represents 'normalcy' meaning they decide what should be seen as normal and not normal in a society (Jäger and Wamper 2017: 11). Normalcy is very important for Germany and other western industrial societies. It is asserted that Germany has a 'culture of normalcy'. As soon as something is not seen as normal it must be made normal and action is required in order to regain normalcy (Jäger and Wamper 2017: 11). The arrival of refugees and migrants in 2015 and 2016 and the resulting political measures taken in Germany were not viewed as normal. We find ourselves now in a time where there is an attempt to get back to 'normalcy'. The call for a limit on the number of refugees allowed into Germany characterizes for example a strategy to return to 'normal' circumstances. There however cannot be a return back to 'normalcy'. A 'new normalcy' must be negotiated (Jäger and Wamper 2017: 12).

Controversial discussion regarding migration in Germany has dramatically increased since 2015 and the situation has been described as a crisis. In looking at the semantics surrounding the situation, a state of emergency has been called discursively. Forced Migration has been turned into something that is not normal, almost like a natural disaster or an illness. Not as a disaster for the refugees but as a disaster for those countries they are fleeing to (Jäger and Wamper 2017: 181). In addition, the topic of migration is becoming securitized. News media is (re)producing "constructions

of migrants as 'enemies at the gate' who pose a threat to the physical safety, economy and identity of receiving countries in the 'West' [...] notions of 'victimhood' and 'threat' function as 'co-existing' categories that can be effectively employed in debates around the un/deserving migrant/refugee 'other'" (Gray and Franck 2019: 276). In political discourse as portrayed by the media there has been an increasing focus on a more restrictive migration and refugee policy. This has occurred through a continuous differentiation between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' refugees. Throughout the months in 2015 the group described as 'actual refugees' became smaller and the list of safe countries of origin larger (Jäger and Wamper 2017: 32). Opposite to the actual or 'real' refugees are the 'illegal' refugees. 'Real' refugees have a right to asylum, protection, and solidarity; the others do not (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 186). Due to the labelling of 'real' refugees and those who are not the authenticity of asylum-seekers claims are more often being questioned. Above all, the idea of the 'economic migrant' coming just for economic gain has negatively impacted the belief in the 'legitimate' refugee as they are becoming associated with economic opportunism and depicted as a threat to security (Johnson 2011: 1023 and 1027). Refugees and migrants are further reduced to numbers. Reducing them to numbers and focusing on their illegality further enhances their 'negative' properties (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 373).

The topic of refugees and their movement has also been predominantly portrayed through the perspective of mainstream society. A majority 'white' society. It is important to highlight that the changing narrative between refugees being 'victims' and at the same time a 'threat' is seen to have stemmed from gendered and racialized notions which are already familiar to the audience (Gray and Franck 2019: 276). The perspective of refugees only comes to the foreground when the topics or reasons for fleeing and war in the country of origin are discussed (Jäger and Wamper 2017: 82). The description of non-white bodies as a 'threat' is thus not new. It is argued that these types of narratives should not be seen as a response to extraordinary times but rather a product of modern times (Gray and Franck 2019: 278). The idea of 'culture' has started to replace the idea of 'race'. Migration is more often being portrayed as falling between the dichotomy of threat and vulnerability based upon cultural differences. The "inferior cultural practices, attitudes, and values of migrants and refugees take centre stage and become the primary means for marking those who are deemed a threat" (Gray and Franck 2019: 279). The political and public discourse is based around this and has implications for what policies and laws will be passed or debated and how political parties will discuss the topic with their supporters. Teun A. van Dijk (1987: 375) described the role of the media and authorities (the government) in this way: "They are the ones who use routine procedures and discourse to preformulate such attitudes, and to prepare a decision strategically that can be assumed to be supported by the public."

The use of metaphors also plays an important role in the discussion on refugees. Policies especially use metaphors in order to shape perceptions and understandings (Yanow 2000: 12).

Metaphors are generally used to convey new, complex, or abstract phenomena in a visual way through already known, concrete, or understandable contexts (Böke 2000: 132). They are the juxtaposition of two unlike elements where the separately understood meanings of both create a new perception of whatever the metaphor is focused on (Yanow 2000: 42). They can suggest possible actions in response to a certain situation and shape action as well as thought. The metaphoric roots of policy or agency language and acts is a way to discover the architecture of a policy argument (Yanow 2000: 43). The use of metaphors is however often connected with exaggeration and dramatization or in understatements and euphemisms (Böke 2000: 132).

In the context of Forced Migration, metaphors are often used to describe migration as a mass movement. Particularly the movements of refugees from Africa and Asia are described as ‘floods’, ‘flows’, and ‘hordes’ (Johnson 2011: 1023). Descriptions using metaphors of water thus play an exceptional role. The concept of water as a violent, potentially dangerous natural force that when needed is to be restrained or controlled has a variety of use and design (Böke 2000: 132). Above all it describes that there are many, or too many, migrants or refugees. Immigration is categorized as a natural disaster and the migrants and refugees are dehumanized (van Dijk 1987: 372). In 2015 in Germany we saw metaphors such as *Migrationsströme*, *Flüchtlingsstrom*, and *Fluchtwelle* (Jäger and Wamper 2017: 37). Waves are seen as a threat to the country and its people which might ‘drown’ and policies should be enacted to stop a flood (van Dijk 1987: 372). Through such metaphors the individuality of refugees is taken away and they are represented as a mass of people. An individual is able to act and have agency but ‘masses’ of refugees cannot have this (Johnson 2011: 1023 and 1029). This enhances the idea that the receiving society should be worried and makes the numbers of those coming seem intimidating.

Whichever metaphor dominates the discourse reflects the public perception and the political response. The effect of the use of collectively symbolic terms is especially powerful because it is connected to directives or guidelines on how to react (Jäger and Wamper 2017: 10). When it is argued that ‘*das Boot sei voll*’, then no one else can be allowed in (Jäger and Wamper 2017: 10). This will in turn directly affect the policies and laws enacted. When it is implied that immigrants or refugees ‘flood’ the country, that the country is ‘full’, or that most immigrants are ‘illegal’, these views largely come from media stories about how authorities or governments have reacted to immigration. If the aim is to ‘keep them out’, then this legitimizes citizens to keep them out of their cities or neighborhoods. If immigrants and refugees are however in our neighborhoods, that means the government has not done enough (van Dijk 1987: 364). The narrative of large waves of refugee movement is seen as “able to threaten intercommunal harmony and undermine major societal values by altering the ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic composition of the host populations” (Johnson 2011: 1024).

Once it is clear however that the refugee or migrant is going to stay, the discourse changes from who and what they are to how the relationship between the migrants or refugees and non-migrants and non-refugees will be characterized and controlled. The question becomes what level of homogenization between the two groups is desired: Integration, Assimilation, or Ghettoization (Jung 2000: 109). There are two perspectives here that need to be differentiated: migrants or refugees as an object (they will be integrated or assimilated etc.) and migrants and refugees as a subject of integration (they integrate or assimilate etc.) (Jung 2000: 109). In Germany the same debate around integration is happening that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. Some groups of migrants and refugees are being seen and portrayed as unwilling or incapable of assimilating or integrating into German society. On the other hand many migrants and refugees are seen as not wanting to completely give up all of their culture to be accepted into German society. The term integration and what is meant has changed throughout the years and has become ever more differentiated and challenging (Jung 2000: 111). It is important to review the debate, above all the discursive debate on integration, and where Germany fits in, in order to understand its policy and integration goals and what space (female) refugees have within them. Integration will be looked at in further detail in section 2.2.

2.1.2 Discourse and Female Refugees

Within the past 70 years the image of what a refugee is has changed. It shifted from “the heroic, political individual to a nameless flood of poverty-stricken women and children” (Johnson 2011: 1016). The term ‘refugee’ has developed to be connected with the ideas of passivity and victimhood. Refugees were often portrayed as “powerless victims of forces beyond their control” (Valji 2001: 31). When refugees they were described as being traumatized victims, an identity was created of them being passive and separated from political and community structures (Valji 2001: 31). Although this act of victimizing refugees has been highly criticized and is changing, this idea of the ‘passive victim’ is most often associated with refugee women. Along with the racialization and victimization of refugees there has been a feminization in the construct of what a refugee is (Johnson 2011: 1016; Krause 2016: 21). This is in part due to ascribed feminine characteristics such as powerlessness, helplessness, and passivity (Krause 2016: 21). Even though there is more of a focus on female refugees, they have been added as a “broad and undifferentiated category” (Johnson 2011: 1031). It is easy to find what percentage of refugees are women but there has been a lack of accurate gender-disaggregated statistics (Freedman 2010: 595). This should not be confused with a *lack* of research or work on the topic of refugee women. This simply means *statistically* at times and with certain topics, such as what type of refugee protection women have received, it is difficult to find information on refugee women *separating* them from refugee men making it difficult to discover the real statistical difference between men and women (Freedman 2010: 595). This is particularly the case in Germany where the federal

government did not begin releasing statistics and data on female refugees until after 2016 and specific requests need to be sent to obtain some of the information.

Pictures of women in colorful clothes surrounded by poor looking children waiting for aid has become the image not only spread by the media but also by NGOs and accepted by the majority. Female refugees have become 'racialized' which causes them to be seen only as vulnerable and in need of rescue (Gray and Franck 2019: 279). In addition, they are non-threatening as they are not seen as likely to migrate just for economic reasons. They travel shorter distances, cross only the most necessary of borders in order to reach relative safety, and rarely reach borders of the global North (Johnson 2011: 1032). They "embody in western imagination a special kind of powerlessness; perhaps they do not tend to look like 'dangerous aliens'" (Johnson 2011: 1032). They are thus portrayed in international and domestic media as "a person of pity and vulnerability, a victim of violence, in need of food and protection" (Pittaway and Pittaway 2004: 123). Creating the category of *womenandchildren* also creates the image that their suffering and death is particularly saddening and should be avoided (Gray and Franck 2019: 280). Women being portrayed in this way has become a part of the 'cultural tool kit' of NGOS and those in international policy making assisting them with their fundraising goals (Freedman 2010: 603). Portraying women in this way takes away their agency and voice and leads them to a situation where they are being used to represent refugee vulnerability. This depiction also allows for a situation where the vulnerability of refugee men is often ignored (Gray and Franck 2019: 287). In her work *Click to Donate: Visual images, constructing victims and imagining the female refugee* from 2011 Heather Johnson analyzes how international NGOs, most noticeably the UNHCR, have used and perpetuated the image of the female refugee as a victim for fundraising and in order to garnish public support and concern for refugees. As Johnson describes (2011: 1032) "women are front and centre in representations and images of international refugee regimes, and have done much of the 'work' that discourses of victimization and depoliticisation demand".

Female refugees are particularly underrepresented in discourse on the topics of Forced Migration and in political discussions. By underrepresented it is meant that they are generally blocked together as one voiceless group, seen very often as victims as described above. In Germany the most common public image of a refugee is a man. In the last decades however a discourse focused on 'saving' female refugees and migrants has been established (do Mar Castro Varela and Dhawan 2016: 35). Since the fall and winter of 2015 there has been more attention paid to gender in discussions on refugees in Germany (Neuhauser, Hess, Schwenken 2016: 176). Pictures dominate public discourse in the media showing the dangerous young Muslim man in contrast to the woman in the role of the suppressed victim that the west needs to free and emancipate (Harth 2017: 18). There also tends to be a trend in conflict and refugee studies of reproducing gender stereotypes of women as victims and

men as perpetrators. There is a contrast between women as peaceful, docile, and innocent and men as strong, powerful, and independent (Krause 2015: 4).

Although the number of female refugees is increasing in Germany, they are most often labeled as 'dependents' either coming with their family or being brought later by their husbands through family reunification. Independence is viewed as being masculine whereas dependence is connected to all that is 'womanly' (Boucher 2007: 388). Being 'womanly' in turn is most often associated with the socio-cultural, the domestic, the family and being the homemaker, often being victimized, and given jobs in low-skilled sectors (Kofman 2004: 644-645). A female refugee is rarely seen as an independent individual in the public and political discourse with her own specific history, story, and needs (Hobsig 2004: 245). If there is a focus on them they are reduced to stereotypes (Firth and Mauthe 2013: 483) and passive roles attributed to their religion or country of origin. They are viewed as a 'part' of something only seen together with their husband, family, or membership to a particular group, or coming from a certain area or country of origin (Hobsig 2004: 245). This portrayal of women and their position, family structures, and their religion etc. are predominantly based on media stories (van Dijk 1987: 366). The power that media and news sources have to form images and symbols lays the foundation for societal responses (Indra 1987: 3). Images transcend language provoking an immediate and at times complex reaction. They are thus important in shaping the support of a certain narrative (Johnson 2011: 1017). There have been calls for a more "careful analysis of experiences and needs of female and male migrants and refugees" (Freedman 2016: 580). Molyneux and Razavi (2002: 9) argue that refugee women need to be seen, and see themselves, "as autonomous, free human beings capable of making their own choices, rather than being 'pushed around by the world'". The role and importance of the depiction of refugee women will become apparent in chapter four.

2.1.3 Summary

Language is crucial and cannot be overlooked. The way citizens, the media, the government, and political parties discuss a certain topic will influence how policy is made. The government and political parties can also influence the thoughts and feelings of citizens through their language and semantics. In order to fully understand a policy it is therefore crucial to analyze and understand the language surrounding it. As stated earlier, the question is no longer what the benefit is, but rather what the meaning of policy is. Making the semantics of Forced Migration along with the discourse surrounding policy development and female refugees an important part of the analysis in chapter four will lead to a more complete and effective analysis of German Integration Policy.

2.2 Integration

The debate surrounding the topic of integration is not new but it is lively. The goal of this study is however not to take an active part in this debate. The question of which form of integration or

integration policy is best will also not be answered in this section or in the study at large. This section will serve a similar purpose to that of the previous section: to set the theoretical framework within which the analysis of German integration policy will take place in chapter four. In order to analyze to what extent female refugees are taken into account within the development and formulation of German integration policy we must first have a discursive understanding of what integration means. This also entails an understanding of the current debates surrounding the topic. A full explanation of the various theories, models, and public policies of integration and their respective debates however falls outside the scope of this study. This section will only provide an overview. Most importantly, this section will look at the debates that have been taking place regarding integration within Germany in section 2.2.3. It is important to note that the majority of the writings discussed internationally on this topic come from the United States. They in turn greatly influence the debates in other countries, including Germany. Therefore the majority of the focus will be on the international debate. In order to properly analyze the situation of female refugees within German integration policy we must however also understand the debate that is taking place within the country which will be looked at in the following sections.

2.2.1 Defining Integration

There is not one idea or agreement on how to define the term 'integration' or what it really means (Ager and Strang 2008: 173). It has been suggested by Robinson (1998: 118) that integration is a chaotic and vague concept because it is "used by many but understood differently by most". The concept is "individualized, contested and contextual" (Robinson 1998: 118). This assessment is supported by Castles *et al.* (2001:12): "There is no single, generally accepted definition, theory or model of immigrant and refugee integration. The concept continues to be controversial and hotly debated". Despite this 'lack' of a set definition, integration is a stated policy goal of most governments (Ager and Strang 2008: 167). This leads to the question of how all of the various policies, laws, initiatives, societal dispositions (at the state and federal level) can come together and be seen as the government's overall strategy or policy of integration. The question is who or what is integrating whom into what (Sigona 2005: p. 118). Due to the fact that the term 'integration' is used with differing meanings, policy development and productive public debate can at times be difficult (Ager and Strang 2008: 166). Integration involves many actors, agencies, and opinions and they are not a homogenous body. Various groups and organizations, for example NGOs, play an important role in shaping the discourse on integration and acting as lobbying, advocacy, or implanting agencies (Sigona 2005: 118).

Although integration is an elusive concept, the issues of immigration and integration are formulated in very distinct and context specific ways across Europe (Sigona 2005: 119). Castles *et al.* (2002: 112) suggest that "meanings [of integration] vary from country to country, change over time,

and depend on the interests, values and perspectives of the people concerned". Integration is closely tied to the idea of 'national belonging' (Sigona 2005: 119). How a country in the end defines integration is dependent on its sense of identity and its "cultural understandings of nation and nationhood" (Saggar 1995: 106). This sense of identity incorporates certain values and it is these values that shape the way a country goes about defining and understanding integration. It is this idea of nationhood and citizenship that dictates the rights accorded to, and the responsibilities expected of, refugees (O'Neill 2001). Immigration policies are structurally linked to the creation of sovereign states. The ability to control borders and define citizenship has developed to be a "core component of modern statehood" (Lavenex 2019: 569).

The concept of citizenship can however be interpreted in various ways. Carl Levy (1999) defined four models of citizenship: imperial (subjection), ethnic ('blood ties'), republican (political partnership), and multicultural (choice). At that time he cited a trend in Europe towards "a modified form of ethnic-based citizenship". Faist (1995) alternatively identified two types of citizenship models in western democracies: 'ethno-cultural political exclusion' (e.g. Germany) and 'pluralist political inclusion' (e.g. US, UK, and France). Ethno-cultural political exclusion is often associated with 'assimilation'. This is initially an expectation that refugees will adapt and become indistinguishable from the host community (Ager and Strang 2008: 174-175). This has however become less acceptable in liberal democracies as the right to maintain cultural and religious identity and practices has gained more focus (Ager and Strang 2008: 175).

Being able to articulate the rights accorded to refugees is the foundation of integration policy and is tasked to the government (Ager and Strang 2008: 175). The established society is the site of institutions – including employers, civil society, and the government – in which integration has to take place and they must take the lead (Modood 2005). 'Connecting' refugees to the appropriate services is a central task in supporting and facilitating integration (Ager and Strang 2008: 181). Certain circumstances such as not speaking the language of the country or not being familiar with the system can lead to barriers to integration. The role of the government is to thus 'remove' these barriers in order to facilitate integration and allow for it to take place (Ager and Strang 2008: 181). John O'Neill (2001) however has argued that successful integration depends on all sectors of society contributing. Refugees and those working with them in the United Kingdom for example describe an 'integrated' community as one where refugees have the same rights as those they are living with. Social connection between refugees and their community is important. Refugees pointed out that equal rights also play a role in how people view them. When they did not have equal rights, they experienced less respect (Ager and Strang 2008: 176).

Despite there not being one agreed upon definition for integration, Alastair Ager and Alison Strang developed a conceptual framework defining the core domains of integration. The framework is

shown in Graph 1. It has since been taken on and accepted by many in the academic community. It brings together what can be understood as full and equal participation in all parts of society with rights and citizenship as its foundation. In connecting this framework to (female) refugees who are the focus of this study, social bridges represent the connection between refugees and host communities; social bonds are the connection between refugees and others from the same country, with the same ethnicity, or the same religion etc; and social links describe the connection of individuals with structures of the state for example government services. This framework is extremely helpful with understanding the development and aspects of integration policy regarding female refugees in Germany in chapter four. Despite the debate around the exact definition of integration, as previously mentioned, being able to articulate refugee’s rights is foundational and it is the job of the government to remove any barriers to integration.

Graph 1: Core Domains of Integration



Source: Ager and Strang (2008): 170

This idea of access to rights leads us to a brief look at the idea of civic stratification. In 1996 David Lockwood presented the idea that one’s chances to obtain rights connected to citizenship is dependent upon access to resources such as socio-economic status, prestige, and membership in a favored group (Scherschel 2015: 124). Not everyone in a society has the same claim or entitlement to rights. Their various positions in a society and financial resources play a role in what they can obtain (Scherschel 2015: 125). This can be seen in that ‘second class citizens’ have to go through checks and tests to see

if they really are eligible for services. People in these groups are also often stigmatized in society and in public and political discourse (Scherschel 2015: 125-126).

In 2006 Morris took the idea of civic stratification from Lockwood and applied it to the idea of Human Rights in the context of asylum. Morris analyzed the positioning of individuals from the perspective of inequality and the unequal access to citizenship rights. The highest position within his system was full citizenship. Those who find themselves in a status less than 'citizen' do not have complete access to citizenship and social rights, or are unable to completely use them (cited in Scherschel 2015: 127). As stated previously resources affect access to rights. Specifically social, economic, cultural, and symbolic resources. Cultural and symbolic resources fall under the debate centered on multiculturalism and interculturalism, which will be looked at in the next section, as well as the discourse and semantics surrounding Forced Migration already discussed in section 2.1.

Asylum-seekers and refugees have highly restrictive access to citizenship rights (Scherschel 2015: 128). Symbolic resources, meaning, and communicative classifications play an important role in their access to, and the implementation of, rights. The cultural/political closeness or distance of the refugee to the host country as well as their supposed legitimacy to Asylum also play an important role (Scherschel 2015: 129). As discussed in section 2.1, many refugees have already been separated into 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' refugees. Due to this many will be seen to not even have a right to apply for asylum (Scherschel 2015: 129). Residence rights guarantee refugees various social statuses in that their access to relevant resources is set. On the other hand, gaining rights is dependent on resources such as income, education, and social prestige (Scherschel 2015: 135). This brings us back to integration. Refugees and asylum-seekers are part of a group that due to public and political discourse has certain connotations connected to them. It is thus important to question if this group has the social, economic, cultural, and symbolic resources to be able to achieve integration. If they in fact have access to the core domains of integration as set out by Ager and Strang.

Two dimensions of immigrant rights have been proposed: Firstly individual equality and secondly cultural rights attributed to them as a group and cultural obligations expected of them by the state before obtaining full citizenship. The cultural dimension is based on racial, cultural, or religious group membership and has been at the center of philosophical discussions on multiculturalism and assimilation (Koopmans 2010: 5). Over the past centuries Europeans have started to view themselves and their social affiliations in new ways. Social solidarity is increasingly defined in terms of ethnicity, culture, or faith. Europeans are more concerned with defining the community they belong to rather than determining what kind of society they want to create (Malik 2015). Kenan Malik (2015) describes the evolution in this way: "the politics of ideology have given way to the politics of identity". The consequence has been the creation of what economist Amartya Sen has called 'plural monoculturalism' – a policy driven by the myth that society is made up of distinct, uniform cultures

that dance around one another (quoted in Malik 2015). This leads to the debate on which ‘model’ or ‘theory’ is most effective in facilitating integration.

2.2.2 Multiculturalism, Assimilation, and Interculturalism

Research on integration generally distinguish between the two “poles of difference-friendly ‘multiculturalism’ and universalistic ‘assimilationism’” (Joppke 2007: 2). The debates and discourse surrounding these terms are however often difficult. Just like with the term integration, there is no set definition for these theories and policies. They are interpreted differently by those supporting and refuting them. A government may use them as a way of integration whereas for others they are not policies but lived experiences. In 1972 Vander Zanden defined assimilation as “a process whereby groups with diverse ways of thinking, feeling, and acting become fused together in a social unity and a common culture” (cited in Michael 1997: 236). In 1979 Hraba joined the academic discussion and defined assimilation as “the process by which diverse ethnic and racial groups come to share a common culture and have equal access to the opportunity structure of a society” (cited in Michael 1997: 236-237). In 2005 Tariq Modood defined assimilation as follows:

“[W]here the desired outcome for society as a whole is seen as involving least change in the ways of doing things of the majority of the country and its institutional policies. This may not necessarily be a laissez-faire approach – for the state can play an active role in bringing about the desired outcome, as in the early 20th century ‘Americanisation’ policies towards European migrants in the United States – but the preferred result is one where the newcomers do little to disturb the society they are settling in and become as much like their new compatriots as possible.”

Modood’s definition of assimilation was however different from that of Zanden and Hraba. Zanden and Hraba described assimilation as a fusion of cultures where one is not dominant over the other and at the end the ‘common culture’ has benefited from the contributions of those that came together. Modood’s definition portrays a situation where the ‘newcomers’ have to become like the majority as much as possible. The goal of assimilation as defined by Modood is that there is as little change as possible for the majority of the country and its institutions. For Hraba however, the goal of integration “calls on equal access to the opportunity structure of a society.” No one is put at a social, economic, or political disadvantage because of their culture (Michael 1997: 237). Today Modood’s definition of assimilation is the one that is the most connected to and associated with the policy and its goals.

Modood claimed in 2005 that assimilation, how he has described it, is actually what European politicians have in mind when discussing integration. Cultural assimilation is seen however to have been rejected by many countries. In November 2004, the European Council published the *Common*

Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU. This gave a look at integration policies across Europe. The first of the EU's principles stated: "Integration is a dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of the Member States" (Council of the European Union 2004a). This meant that both the immigrants and the society of the Member State had to change. The Member State was further mandated to create "the opportunities for the immigrant's full economic, social, cultural, and political participation" (Council of the European Union 2004a). For the EU integration "implies respect for the basic values of the European Union" which include "the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law" (Council of the European Union 2004a). The EU's principles also included the "full respect for the immigrants' and their descendants' own language and culture" (Council of the European Union 2004a). This showed a move away from assimilation where it meant 'imposing' the culture of the majority onto the newcomers and towards a system where both the State and the immigrants are involved in the process.

The fourth principle in the EU policy states that "[b]asic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration" (Council of the European Union 2004a). This referred to the new policy of civic integration which began in the Netherlands in the late 1990s and which was taken up by Finland, Denmark, Austria, Germany, and France among others. Newcomers must enroll in civic and language courses immediately after entry (or whenever they are able to based upon their status). If they do not do this they face either financial penalties or a denial of permanent legal residence permits (Joppke 2007: 5). It is argued by Christian Joppke (2007: 14) that civic integration should not be seen as a rebirth of nationalism or racism. These policies carefully observe the line between 'integration', which leaves the ethical orientation of the migrant intact, and 'assimilation' which does not.

The policy or theory which was seen as the opposite to assimilation and which is at the center of much debate today is 'multiculturalism'. The term emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in countries like Canada and Australia. In the beginning it was seen as the application of 'liberal values' in that it extended individual freedoms and substantiated the promise of equal citizenship to immigrants (Meer and Modood 2012: 180). It became a global movement against assimilationist pressures and ensured that cultural differences would be dealt with by recognizing them and requesting that they be 'liberal' (Werbner 2012: 200; Wieviorka 2012: 227). Charles Taylor's essay from 1992 is considered to be a founding statement of multiculturalism in political theory. Taylor presents an emergence of a modern politics of identity based upon the idea of 'recognition'. Recognition and its connection to multiculturalism, for Taylor, developed out of a move away from understanding historically defined or inherited hierarchies as the only type of social status, towards the idea of a dignity more congruent with the ideals of a democratic society or polity. A society that is likely to grant political equality and

full civic status to all of its citizens (Meer and Modood 2012: 183)². In 1995 Will Kymlicka ‘introduced’ the idea of multicultural citizenship. He claimed that recognizing special rights for cultural minorities was compatible with liberalism and that the liberal values of autonomy and equality could be used to defend special rights for these minorities. This individual autonomy required membership in and maintenance of one’s own culture. A cultural minority had the right to maintain its culture against the domination of a majority culture. Much of the debate on multiculturalism at the turn of the century focused on this idea of multicultural citizenship in plural or immigrant societies and the politics around it. It was however concerned with language or religious rights rather than ‘culture’ (Werbner 2012: 198).

Amongst the debates and controversy surrounding multiculturalism, Tariq Modood became one of its most prominent defenders. Modood locates the creation of multiculturalism within a “matrix of principles that are central to contemporary liberal democracies”, which establishes multiculturalism as “the child of liberal egalitarianism, but like any child, it is not simply a faithful reproduction of its parents” (Meer and Modood 2012: 178). Under multiculturalism, the concept of equality has been redefined because of the social requirement to treat each group identity with respect (Modood 2005). Equal respect, or the politics of ‘recognition’, which is the key idea of multiculturalism according to Modood (2005), consists of giving group identities a public status. According to the American feminist scholar Iris Marion Young, any public space or society is structured around certain kinds of understanding and practices which prioritize some cultural values and behaviors over others. No public space is culturally neutral (cited in Modood 2005).³ When minority groups claim equality, they are claiming that they should not be marginalized, subordinated, or excluded. Their values, norms, and voices should also be a part of structuring public space. The question arises why their identities should be privatized while the dominant group has its identity universalized. This centers on the idea of what is ‘normal’ in society (Modood 2005). Based off from this, according to Modood (2005), multiculturalism can also be defined “as the challenging, the dismantling, and the remaking of public identities in order to achieve an equality of citizenship that is neither merely individualistic nor premised on assimilation”. Multiculturalism is simultaneously used to describe pluralism or diversity in any society and as a moral stance that cultural diversity is desirable for a society (Meer and Modood 2012: 179).

In Europe multiculturalism has come to mean the political accommodation by the state and/or dominant group of all minority cultures defined first and foremost by reference to race, ethnicity or religion, and additionally by reference to other group-defining characteristics such as nationality and aboriginality (Meer and Modood 2012: 181). Multicultural accommodation recognizes the “social

² For further reading on Charles Taylor and the ideas of recognition and multiculturalism see Gutmann (1994).

³ For further reading see Young (1990).

reality of groups (not just of individuals and organisations)” (Modood 2005). Group-based cultural and religious practices are allowed to fit into the existing ways that the majority society does things. The identities and practices would not be seen as ‘immutable’, but there would also be no pressure to change (outside of major issues of principle, legality, or security) or confine them to a limited community or space (Modood 2005). For Modood, multicultural accommodation works on two levels: creating new forms of belonging to citizenship and country and helping to sustain origins and diaspora.

Multicultural accommodation is high on the political agenda. Countries are beginning to revisit their policies as cultural diversity is becoming ever more important. Advocates and critics of multiculturalism have both highlighted the potential for accommodation to “erode the social unity of already diverse polities” and are concerned that there will be nothing to hold citizens together anymore (Shachar 2001: 1). Critics claim that multiculturalism is a “vague, confused concept whose different meanings to different people render sensible debate and policy orientation difficult” (Modood 2005). It is believed that multiculturalism has failed and is leading to the creation of separate communities with negative consequences for trust and solidarity (Demireva and Heath 2014: 161).

Ayelet Shachar (2001: 56-57) for example put the situation of women at the forefront when discussing multiculturalism and the debate surrounding it. She asserts that multiculturalism and policies that give minority groups more control over certain areas hurt minorities, especially women, in these groups. The emphasis on women’s cultural and biological role is used as a reason by a group for limiting their choices relating to education and employment. Minority group members such as women who live under strict intra-group controls are exactly those members who usually lack the economic stability, cultural ‘know-how’, language skills, connections, and self-confidence needed to successfully exit from their minority communities (Shachar 2001: 69). Susan Okin went further on this point arguing that the relationship between multiculturalism and feminism amounts to a zero-sum game, in which any *strengthening* of a minority group’s rights implies an accompanying *weakening* of rights for that minority group’s female group members (cited in Shachar 2001: 65).⁴ Whereas Shachar calls for a new type of multiculturalism that takes the situation of women and other minorities and groups into account so that individual rights are not violated, Okin calls for the complete abolishment of minority group practices that do not adhere to the state’s legal norms, or they should change to such an extent that they conform to the norms and perceptions of the majority (cited in Shachar 2001: 65).

Kenan Malik (2015) argues further, that multicultural policies seek to institutionalize diversity by putting people into “ethnic and cultural boxes” – into a singular, homogeneous Muslim community for example – and defining their needs and rights based on this. The policies have therefore lent to

⁴ For further reading on feminism and multiculturalism see Okin (1998).

creating the divisions they set out to manage. Malik further argues that both multiculturalism and assimilationism view minority communities as homogeneous groups, connected to certain cultural traits, beliefs, and values, instead of as parts of a modern democracy. Tariq Modood however describes multiculturalism as a civic idea which can be tied to an inclusive national identity. Citizenship can foster commonality where difference lies:

“[I]t does not make sense to encourage strong multicultural or minority identities and weak common or national identities; strong multicultural identities are a good thing – they are not intrinsically divisive, reactionary or subversive – but they need to complement a framework of vibrant, dynamic, national narratives and the ceremonies and rituals which give expression to a national identity. It is clear that minority identities are capable of exerting an emotional pull for the individuals for whom they are important. Multicultural citizenship, if it is to be equally attractive to the same individuals, requires a comparable counterbalancing emotional pull.”
(Meer and Modood 2012: 190).

Different from Modood, Pnina Werbner (2012: 197) views multiculturalism as a *discourse* in which scholars, cultural actors, politicians, and the media participate. The discourse centers around if multiculturalism is ‘good’ or ‘bad’, whether it has created ‘bridges’ (or more solidarity), or ‘failed’ and is divisive (Werbner 2012: 197). Since the early 2000s, there has been a ‘retreat’ in north-western Europe from multicultural citizenship. Its limits as a way of dealing legally and institutionally with cultural differences have additionally been highlighted (Meer and Modood 2012: 176; Wieviorka 2012: 226). A new theory has arisen out of this turning away from multiculturalism: interculturalism and the idea of ‘intercultural dialogue’. Since then, these two terms – ‘interculturalism’ and ‘multiculturalism’ – have been used in the same discursive space, especially in Continental Europe and Quebec (Levey 2012: 217). Geoffrey Brahm Levey (2012: 217) sees the terms as being so discursively fluid that it is difficult to find any stable distinction between them. There has been a debate amongst academics on whether multiculturalism is in fact no longer a realistic policy or integration approach and if interculturalism has now taken its place. Connected to this is the question of if interculturalism is simply an ‘updated’ version of multiculturalism or something truly different (Meer and Modood 2012: 192).

Gérard Bouchard (2011: 441) makes the claim that multiculturalism and interculturalism operate within different paradigms. Paradigms are ‘large schemas’ that aid in situating the primary intention, or the defining outlook, of each model and structure in the public debate, determine the parameters and basic issues, inspire state policies and programs, and fuel perceptions that citizens have of each other. Multiculturalism operates in a ‘diversity’ paradigm where a country is made up of a collection of individuals and ethnocultural groups that are equal and protected by the same laws.

There is “no recognition of a majority culture” and thus no minorities. Interculturalism operates in a ‘duality’ paradigm where “diversity is conceived and managed as a relationship between minorities from a recent or distant period of immigration, and a cultural majority that could be described as *foundational*” (Bouchard 2011: 441-442; italics in original).

Interculturalism is viewed by some not as a political theory but rather as a mode of communication across ethnic or religious divisions (Werbner 2012: 197). According to Wood *et al.* (2006: 9) “an intercultural approach aims to facilitate dialogue, exchange and reciprocal understanding between people of different backgrounds” which separates it from multiculturalism. Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood (2012: 182) however ask to what extent this can be claimed as unique when, for them, dialogue and reciprocity are foundational to multiculturalism. In other words, what makes communication unique for interculturalism that is different from multiculturalism? Some point to the ‘openness’ through which communication takes place in interculturalism. Wood *et al.* (2006: 7) assert that “[m]ulticulturalism has been founded on the belief in tolerance between cultures but it is not always the case that multicultural places are open places. Interculturalism on the other hand requires openness as a prerequisite and, while openness in itself is not the guarantee of interculturalism, it provides the setting for interculturalism to develop”.

A further case against multiculturalism is that it “tends to *preserve* a cultural heritage, while interculturalism acknowledges and enables cultures to have currency, to be exchanged, to circulate, to be modified and evolve” (Powell and Sze 2004: 1; italics in original). This means that interculturalism is seen to be better able to facilitate management of all of the different languages, ethnicities, and religions in contrast to multiculturalism which emphasizes strong ethnic or cultural identities at the expense of wider cultural exchanges (Meer and Modood 2012 : 186).

It is further charged that multiculturalism, in contrast to interculturalism, only speaks to and for minorities and fails to look at the broader picture for success. Interculturalism “emphasises interaction and participation of citizens in a common society, rather than cultural differences and different cultures existing next to each other without necessarily much contact or participative interaction. Interculturalism is therefore equivalent to mutual integration. While multiculturalism boils down to celebrating difference, interculturalism is about understanding each other’s cultures, sharing them and finding common ground on which people can become more integrated” (NewStart Magazine 7 June 2006 cited in Meer and Modood 2012: 188).

Another debate between proponents of multiculturalism and interculturalism is that multiculturalism lends to illiberality and relativism, whereas interculturalism is able to criticize and censure culture through a process of intercultural dialogue and emphasizing the protection of individual rights (Meer and Modood 2012: 190). This assertion has played a part in the backlash in Europe against multiculturalism. Will Kymlicka describes it as such: “it is very difficult to get support

for multiculturalism policies if the groups that are the main beneficiaries of these policies are perceived as carriers of illiberal cultural practices that violate norms of human rights” (cited in Meer and Modood 2012: 190). This is most prominent in the debates around religious minorities, especially when it is viewed that the religion in question is taking a conservative stance on issues of gender equality, sexual orientation, and progressive politics (Meer and Modood 2012: 190).

Much of the discourse around the failure of multiculturalism since 2000 has focused on the ‘non-integration’ of Muslims (Werbner 2012: 206). Bhikhu Parekh (2006: 180-181) demonstrates this in that there is a perception, in Europe, that Muslims cannot and do not want to integrate. It is thought that they are “collectivist, intolerant, authoritarian, illiberal and theocratic” and that unlike previous generations, they use their faith as “a self-conscious public statement, not a quietly held personal faith but a matter of identity which they must jealously guard and loudly and repeatedly proclaim”. Their faith is “intended not only to remind them of who they are but also to announce to others what they stand for” (Parekh 2006: 180-181). Muslims are perceived to be on the opposite side of liberal discourses and individual rights and secularism. This is shown through how Muslim practices such as veiling are reduced to and conflated with Muslim practices such as forced marriages and female genital mutilation in public discourses (Meer and Modood 2012: 191). This leads one to believe that there is a “radical otherness” to Muslims and an illiberality in multiculturalism as it is alleged to allow and license such practices (Meer and Modood 2012: 191). Now in Europe in the wake of ‘moral’ panic over Muslim immigration and integration, interculturalism or ‘intercultural dialogue’ is being advocated as an alternative to multiculturalism. It is seen to offer a more acceptable set of principles and arrangements for the state management of cultural diversity (Levey 2012: 218).

Based upon this debate surrounding Islam and Muslims, Pnina Werbner (2012: 202) asks if it is accurate to speak of *culture* within multiculturalism, when the issue is actually historical conflicts sparked by *religious* feelings in confrontation with liberal secularism and western geopolitics. When ‘culture’ becomes a euphemism for religion or community, it entangles government ministers and opposition leaders in contradictions. The “mystification of culture” as Chetan Bhatt (2006: 99) calls it, conflating religious pluralism with identity politics, merges two quite separate, historically constructed discourses (Werbner 2012: 204).

Will Kymlicka (2012: 211) asserts that the debate between the new, innovative, and realistic ‘interculturalism’ against the tired, discredited, and naïve ‘multiculturalism’ rests on a misrepresentation and even caricature of multiculturalist theories and approaches. Thus the literature on the ‘good interculturalism vs. bad multiculturalism’ is simply rhetorical and not analytical (Kymlicka 2012: 211). As an example, the 2008 *Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* argued that interculturalism should be the preferred model for Europe because multiculturalism has failed:

“In what became the western part of a divided post-war Europe, the experience of immigration was associated with a new concept of social order known as multiculturalism. This advocated political recognition of what was perceived as the distinct ethos of minority communities on par with the ‘host’ majority. While this was ostensibly a radical departure from assimilationism, in fact multiculturalism frequently shared the same, schematic conceptions of society set in opposition of majority and minority, differing only in endorsing separation of the minority from the majority rather than assimilation to it [...] Whilst driven by benign intentions, multiculturalism is now seen by many as having fostered communal segregation and mutual incomprehension, as well as having contributed to the undermining of the rights of individuals – and, in particular, women – within minority communities, perceived as if these were single collective actors. The cultural diversity of contemporary societies has to be acknowledged as an empirical fact. However, a recurrent theme of the consultation was that multiculturalism was a policy with which respondents no longer felt at ease.” (Council of Europe 2008: 18)

It further argues, that the intercultural approach avoids the ‘failed’ extremes of assimilation and multiculturalism by acknowledging diversity and insisting on universal values: “Unlike assimilation, it recognises that public authorities must be impartial, rather than accepting a majority ethos only, if communalist tensions are to be avoided. Unlike multiculturalism, however, it vindicates a common core which leaves no room for moral relativism” (Council of Europe 2008: 20).

Kymlicka (2012: 212) points out that the arguments against multiculturalism by the Council of Europe are vague and general. The Council does not give examples of countries in Europe where problems of social segregation or gender equality are worse than those that embraced multiculturalism compared to those that rejected it. Despite this, the *White Paper* has presented an official statement by a pan-European organization officially stating that there is a consensus among member states that multiculturalism has failed (Kymlicka 2012: 212). This shows a political consensus that a post-multicultural alternative is needed: interculturalism (Kymlicka 2012: 213).

For Kymlicka (2012: 213), “interculturalism as a remedy for failed multiculturalism” is intended to be a new narrative, not an objective social science account of the situation. Many have concluded that it is politically useful to create a new narrative around interculturalism in Europe. It is believed that such a narrative can better sustain public support for progressive agendas and inclusive politics (Kymlicka 2012: 213). Europeans have refashioned interculturalism into an overarching state and society approach to governing cultural diversity based upon fundamental rights and liberties (Levey 2012: 220). For Kymlicka (2012: 214), interculturalism as an objective social scientific analysis is intellectually weak as it is highly rhetorical instead of analytical, however as a form of political rhetoric it should be taken seriously. The narrative is “don’t take your frustrations out on minorities; your

objection is not to diversity, which is a good thing, but to the extreme multiculturalist ideology that we have now safely put behind us” (Kymlicka 2012: 214). Multiculturalism can simply be ‘re-labeled’ as interculturalism. On the other hand interculturalism is so vague that assimilationist policies could be defended in its name. Also supporting too strong a stance against multiculturalism could legitimize anti-diversity and racist views. For Kymlicka (2012: 214), despite these problems, it may be better politically to use interculturalism instead of trying to defend diversity in the name of multiculturalism. According to him, it has been demonized, perhaps beyond repair, in many countries. Bhikhu Parekh (2006: 180-181) supports the same opinion: “Multiculturalism as a term has become so mired in controversy and maligned in public debate, that its semantic capital is spent”. A new or different label is needed which can appeal and be sold to the public. This type of ‘political’ dynamic is what may be driving the discourse on interculturalism and post-multiculturalism (Brahm Levey 2012: 223).

Despite the debates between multiculturalism and interculturalism, Meer and Modood (2012: 192) assert that until interculturalism, as a political discourse, can offer its own original perspective that can speak to a multitude of concerns arising from complex identities and matters of equality and diversity in a more persuasive manner, it cannot, at least intellectually, surpass multiculturalism. Despite this, many may have already made the decision to drop the term ‘multiculturalism’ to consciously create a political myth in which interculturalism has emerged to rescue us from ‘failed’ assimilationism and multiculturalism (Kymlicka 2012: 215). The question for Kymlicka (2012: 215) now should be if interculturalism is a compelling political narrative that can sustain a commitment to diversity. If not it is left to wonder what an alternative strategy could be.

2.2.3 Political and Academic Debate on Integration in Germany

The debate on integration in Germany has been, and is, a highly political and emotional one. Due to this it has been easy to oversee the academic debate happening on the subject in the country. Despite the fact that the contribution of academics is viewed as extremely important by many in order to help bring objectivity to the debate, their visibility is very low. In a study conducted by Christoph Klimmt and Alexandra Sowka published in 2013, academics in the field of Forced Migration in Germany were asked why they thought they were underrepresented. All of those questioned agreed that the role of migration research played a marginal role in the public debate. It was felt that academics did not have much of a significance. Where they did ‘surface’ they hardly gained an audience (Klimmt and Sowka 2013: 317). Those interviewed put the blame both on themselves and the media. It was felt that the majority of academics did not attempt enough to be heard and the media sent few requests for interviews or statements (Klimmt and Sowka 2013: 318). Despite the little exchange between academia and the public there is an immense and robust exchange within academia on the topic (Klimmt and Sowka 2013: 320).

The academic discussion on integration in Germany started rather late in comparison with Anglo-Saxon research which already began in the 1920s (Öztürk 2007: 285). The academic discussion in Germany was therefore largely characterized by the highly influential approaches stemming from American migration studies. After the 'awakening' of German academics to the robust debate on integration, for many years the focus was on assimilation and multiculturalism. In the public and political debates in the country integration was often understood as assimilation. It was seen as the giving up of one's own cultural and linguistic origin in order to adapt completely to German society. Normally it was however not specified which norms and values the immigrants had to adapt to or take on (Meier-Braun 2013: 16). There have been various definitions of integration and assimilation. They have however for the most part espoused the idea that immigrants should either completely, or to a large extent, adapt to the society they are living in (Brinkmann and Uslucan 2013: 14). The *Race-Relations-Cycle* model from Robert E. Park and the *Theory of Migration* from Milton M. Gordon, both from the Anglo-Saxon realm, were taken up in Germany. Based upon these frameworks and theories Hartmut Esser, a German sociologist, designed the *handlungstheoretische Modell*. This followed the idea of assimilation and greatly influenced the integration debate academically in Germany. Esser in turn became one of the most influential academic voices on the topic in Germany. Due to his influence it is worth taking a moment to look at his writings in more detail.

For Hartmut Esser the term integration had already been defined and understood. Its connection and difference to other similar sounding concepts was also known. For him the problem was that clarifications were not only lacking in the public debate but also partly in the academic debate (Esser 2001: Zusammenfassung). Too often terms such as multicultural society, assimilation, and *Leitkultur* were used in an ideological way with hidden political concepts without taking into account potential consequences (Esser 2001: Zusammenfassung). Esser thus made it a point to clarify the meaning of the term integration. He defined integration as such: "Integration is broadly understood as the *cohesion* of pieces in a 'systematic' whole where it is unimportant at first upon what the cohesion is based. The pieces must be an indispensable, or in other words, 'integral' part of the whole" (Esser 2001: 1; italics and quotations in original; translated by the author). This meant that the various parts of the whole were connected and each part played an 'integral' role in the functioning of the whole. There was a certain interdependency between the various parts. Each part was dependent on the other. If one part was missing or not functioning correctly all of the other parts would 'feel' it (Esser 1999: 205). The opposite of integration for Esser was 'segmentation'. Here the pieces were independent of each other and existed only for themselves (Esser 2001: 1). For Esser this idea could easily be applied to the relation of ethnic groups to each other. Ethnic segmentation and ethnic conflict were the most important indications of a threat to integration in a society (Esser 1999: 205).

Esser defined two types of integration within society: *Systemintegration* and *Sozialintegration*. *Systemintegration* described the cohesion of a social system, such as a society, as a whole. *Sozialintegration* was connected to the individual actor and described their inclusion into an already existing social system such as a society (Esser 2001: 73). *Systemintegration* was possible through three mechanisms: the material interdependence of the actor on markets, the vertical organization in the form of taxation institutions, and the specific orientation of the actor such as their loyalty to society (Esser 2001: 73). Interdependence on the market was the most important for modern societies. Here the qualifications and skills of the actor were important. A firm loyalty and identification to the society was not necessary when there was material interdependence (Esser 2001: 73). *Sozialintegration* was, on the other hand, dependent on four dimensions: *Kulturation* such as learning the language, *Platzierung* or obtaining rights, interaction such as making friends or marrying someone from the new society, and (emotional) identification to the social system (Esser 2001: 73). The key to *Sozialintegration* was learning the language and structural integration into the educational system and the labor market. All other forms of *Sozialintegration* would follow (Esser 2001: 75).

For Esser there were two options for the social integration of immigrants: segmentation and assimilation. For him assimilation meant the alignment of the parts. When looking at ethnic groups it meant more specifically the alignment of the various characteristics of the group members (Esser 1999: 206). The most important characteristics of an alignment were knowledge and values, language and social contact, status within the society, cultural habits, and an emotional identification with the society (Esser 1999: 206). It further meant the elimination of systematic differences between the various groups – such as in the areas of education and income – while still maintaining all individual inequalities such as political orientation, religion, or cultural lifestyles (Esser 2001: 74). “Assimilation’ does *not* mean the complete dissolution of all differences between people but rather only the reduction of systematic differences between the groups and the equalization in the *distribution* of relevant characteristics” (Esser 2001: 74; italics in original; translated by author). It was however important for Esser to point out that integration did not automatically mean assimilation. Many however held the opinion that integration could only take place with a (long) process of alignment with the end result being assimilation (Esser 1999: 206). In the end however, for Esser, the integration of immigrants into society, within the sociological concept, was always connected to the equal participation of immigrants to the chances and possibilities offered by the country (Esser 1999: 213).

While Hartmut Esser focused strongly on the idea of assimilation he also discussed and critiqued multiculturalism. The idea of integration through multiculturalism and a multicultural society in Germany closely followed and took on the debate and definition out of the Anglo-Saxon and international realm. Those in Germany who supported assimilation and those who supported multiculturalism had similar debates as those detailed in the previous section. Academics in Germany

found multiculturalism 'utopian' and dangerous because it could lead to parallel societies creating potential for future conflicts. The proponents of assimilation were however accused of being xenophobic and ethnocentric. It was asserted that assimilation disregarded the value of the immigrant and incited societal conflict (Öztürk 2007: 286). Both concepts for integration however came to be seen as mistaken and misguided in Germany. Various social conflicts in the country led to the realization that they were both ineffective and inefficient. Consensus began to form that integration was not a 'one-way street' but that both parties – the immigrants and the State – had to take part. Integration was a "societal undertaking" (Butterwegge and Müller-Hofstede 2007). The idea of integration being a task for both sides also came to play a role in the development of integration policy in Germany which will be discussed in chapter four.

Since 2006, in following the international trend, there has been more of a focus on intercultural dialogue in Germany in order to move away from the impression that the State is talking *about* immigrants and not *with* them. This can be seen as an attempt to move away from multiculturalism while still trying to support the idea of accepting an immigrant's culture but making sure they fit into the countries rules and laws. The integration debate is beginning to be framed in the lens of interculturalism as discussed in the previous section. In Germany it is however not referred to as interculturalism but instead as *Interkulturelle Öffnung*. It has been defined in Germany as institutions adapting to a society that has changed due to migration. These institutions must organize their work in such a way that their tasks are also met under the conditions of a multi-ethnic society. *Interkulturelle Öffnung* is therefore not just an instrument for integration among others, but instead an overarching task within a systematic integration policy (Luft and Schimany 2010: 22). It is seen as the most important concept in integration today in Germany.

The integration debate in Germany, both academically and politically, has for the most part mimicked the debate internationally. The same debates between multiculturalism and assimilation leading to interculturalism, or *Interkulturelle Öffnung*, are happening in Germany just as they are internationally. The German situation is of course different from that of the US or other European countries and the debates within Germany do reflect that. Nonetheless, the similarities are there and the international influence cannot be understated. There is however one trend within the debates on integration in Germany that plays a particularly important role: the 'islamization' of the integration debate. It has been discussed that the first sign of an 'islamization' of the topic began with a change in the language. The meaning of the word 'foreigner' was seen to have been changed to mean 'Muslim'. The new semantics have come to characterize the debate and discussions on integration in the country and are of vital importance (Hierl 2012: 47).

Although a large number of Muslims from various countries have been living in Germany since the beginning of the 1970s, the differences of immigrants based upon religion first came into focus

academically, publicly, and politically in the late 1990s (Spielhaus 2006). The ever increasing attention to the religion of immigrants followed the development of citizenship laws in the country. Foreigners who had come as guest workers and had been viewed as someday leaving the country were now becoming citizens and staying (Hierl 2012: 52). This realization that Islam would become 'permanent' led to public discourse changing the meaning of 'foreigner' to mean 'Muslim' (Spielhaus 2006: 30). With this change in the discourse there was also a 'feminization' of the integration debate in Germany. The focus on Muslim women increased. The picture of the covered woman became a symbolic icon for integration discourse. The Muslim woman represented religious constraints, a familial suppression, and she was the first 'victim' of Islam (Hierl 2012: 56). This also led to the assumption that Muslims were 'difficult' to integrate as their culture was viewed as being very different from that of the German culture. This 'feminization' of the integration debate in Germany was also taking place as female refugees began to gain more attention during the fall/winter of 2015. Gender began to play more of a prominent role in discussions on refugees (Neuhauser, Hess, Schwenken 2016: 176).

One particular event in Germany added greatly to the migration/refugee debate regarding gender and women: New Year's Eve 2016 in Cologne. On this evening numerous women were sexually assaulted on the streets in Cologne. In the news media the perpetrators were depicted as men with a 'North African' descent. This was directly taken into the refugee and integration discussion. The topic of gender was thrust into the spotlight based around the stereotypes of a patriarchal Islam and the passive female refugee. There were increased calls for deportations and stronger asylum laws (Neuhauser, Hess, Schwenken 2016: 176-177). Through the media and the increased debates on gender and Islam in refugee and integration discussions it was almost made to seem as if gender-based violence and assault against women had never taken place in Germany before there were migrants and refugees (Neuhauser, Hess, Schwenken 2016: 179). While many German women felt that they had not been taken seriously when trying to bring attention to gender-based violence in the country in the past, suddenly sexual violence was placed high on the political agenda after Cologne. It was however labeled as an "integration problem due to the Arab man" with the goal of "saving the white woman" (Markard 2016: 374). Due to this, the discussion around the so called 'refugee crisis' in 2015 seemed to focus strongly on male refugees while labeling *womenandchildren* as an exceptionally vulnerable group and underplaying their mobility and agency (Neuhauser, Hess, Schwenken 2016: 179 and 184). Nora Markard (2016: 374) described the attempt to turn the debate on violence into one on integration as stigmatizing and dangerous. These are not problems with integration but rather legal problems. For Markard (2016: 375) it is simply ascribing old problems to new faces.

This 'islamization' and 'feminization' of the integration debate in Germany, together with the discussion on what integration is, plays an extremely important role in the discourse and the semantics surrounding integration policy in the country. The topic of integration, migration, and asylum have

become politicized influencing the discourse and semantics even more. Integration can be seen as almost being equated exclusively to culture in Germany. This has given space for right-wing groups and political parties such as the Alternative for Germany (AfD) to rise in the polls and prominence in the country. Political parties and groups that have centered their entire platform almost exclusively on integration and migration pertaining to Muslims. Parties such as the AfD have tapped into fear and a lack of information regarding these topics in the German population and have been able to create a space where racism, discrimination, and false information can flourish and almost seem commonplace. They are an important element in the German discussion and context of integration. The AfD and other groups will be looked at more in section 4.1.4. This in turn also affects how female refugees are viewed and how exactly they are taken into account in academic, public, and political discussions and debates on the topic. This will become very clear in the analysis in chapter four. It cannot be overemphasized how important semantics are to discussing Forced Migration and integration. As has been shown Germany has largely followed the international debates regarding integration and what the perceived 'correct' path is. The 'feminization' and 'islamization' of the debate has brought in new dimensions. It is important to bear in mind however that the debates and semantics on integration – and migration in general – in Germany have not changed dramatically throughout the years as discussed in chapter 2.1 and 2.1.1. New events within Germany, or in the world, have given 'new' emphasis or raised 'new' concerns but the opinions expressed and the semantics used have largely remained the same. This will again be apparent in chapter four. What has however arisen out of the 'recycling' of semantics and debates is an attention to the categorization and objectification of the people at the center of the debates. There has been an attempt within academia, as previously discussed, to move away from this. The theory of intersectionality has played a large role in questioning categorizations of people and how they should be viewed and discussed.

2.3 Intersectionality

Feminist discourse can be "sketched as a polyphonic interdiscourse critically focusing on processes and problematics connected with sex, sexuality and gender" (Knapp 2005: 252). The debate on inequality and the differences *among* women has been one of the most influential debates within feminism (Knapp 2005: 253). During the 1970s and 1980s in the United States, black women voiced their criticism of what they saw as "a white middle-class bias, an unrecognized self-centeredness in much of feminist theory and politics" (Knapp 2005: 253). They critiqued the use of the terms *women* and *gender* as unitary and homogenous categories by white feminists meant to reflect a common essence of all women (McCall 2005: 1775-1776). Their struggle for rights and equality could not just be tied to the women's rights movement or to the movement for racial equality for Black Americans. Their struggle

for equality and rights was one that was anchored in both. Race, class, and gender were interrelated structures of oppression (Knapp 2005: 253-254).

In April 1977 the Combahee River Collective – a black feminist lesbian organization in Boston, Massachusetts – issued a highly influential manifesto addressing this issue. They saw it as their particular task to develop an “integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking” (Combahee River Collective 1981: 210). Black women were not just oppressed because they were black, but also because they were women. They found themselves on the periphery of both movements as white feminist women did not have to deal with matters of oppression due to their race and black men did not have to deal with oppression due to their gender. For the Combahee River Collective, as black women it was difficult to separate race from class as well as from sex oppression because in their lives “they are most often experienced simultaneously” (Combahee River Collective 1981: 213). They were not just trying to fight oppression and discrimination based around one or two factors but a variety of factors at once. Michelle Wallace stated it poignantly in her article *A Black feminists search for sisterhood*: “We exist as women who are Black who are feminists, each stranded for the moment, working independently because there is not yet an environment in this society remotely congenial to our struggle – because, being on the bottom, we would have to do what no one else has done: we would have to fight the world” (cited in Combahee River Collective 1981: 215).

Following this manifesto, in the 1980s the category ‘woman’ was being deconstructed and ‘gender’ was being dismantled as the theoretical basis for a common identity or shared experience of subordination among women. Race, class, and gender became the new ‘mantra’ in women’s studies (Davis 2008: 73). There was talk of genders instead of gender and feminisms instead of feminism (Davis 2008: 73). During this debate and disputes about power and marginalization, Law Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the Theory of Intersectionality in 1989 in her article *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. In her article which focused on the employment discrimination of black women, she highlighted the fundamental problem of treating race and gender as mutually exclusive from one another when dealing with topics of discrimination and antiracism. She argued that in “race discrimination cases, discrimination tends to be viewed in terms of sex- or class-privileged Blacks; in sex discrimination cases, the focus is on race-and class-privileged women” (Crenshaw 1989: 140). For Crenshaw, black women were excluded from feminist theory and antiracist discourse because it did “not accurately reflect the interaction of race and gender” (Crenshaw 1989: 140). The entire framework needed to be “rethought and recast” (Crenshaw 1989: 140).

In her article Crenshaw highlighted this problem by looking at law cases where black women filed complaints of discrimination. It was clear based upon the rulings of the cases that “the boundaries

of sex and race discrimination doctrine are defined respectively by white women's and Black men's experiences. Under this view, Black women are protected only to the extent that their experiences coincide with those of either of the two groups" (Crenshaw 1989: 143). In order to make her point clearer, Crenshaw (1989: 143) offered an analogy to traffic at an intersection with four directions: "Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a Black woman is harmed because she is in the intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination".

Antiracist policies and feminist theories were organized around the idea that "racism [is] what happens to the Black middle-class or to Black men, and the equation of sexism [is] what happens to white women" (Crenshaw 1989: 152). Black women were "essentially isolated and often required to fend for themselves" (Crenshaw 1989: 145). Black women were seen as so distinct that they could not represent 'all African Americans' or 'all women' even when they sought to although black men and white women could represent black women in race and gender discrimination cases (Bello and Mancini 2016: 11-12). Feminist theory evolved "from a white racial context" and Crenshaw argued that "feminist theory remains *white*, and its potential to broaden and deepen its analysis by addressing non-privileged women remains unrealized" (Crenshaw 1989: 154; italics in original). For Crenshaw this "failure to embrace the complexities of compoundedness" was not based only on political will, but also based upon the fact that the way discrimination was viewed had structured politics in such a way that struggles were seen as only singular issues (Crenshaw 1989: 166-167). The goal should be to include all groups so that it can be said "when they enter, we all enter" (Crenshaw 1989: 167).

In 1991 Crenshaw furthered the discussion on intersectionality with her article *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color*. For her, the main problem with identity politics was "not that it fails to transcend differences, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite – that it frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences" (Crenshaw 1991: 1242). Her observation that "ignoring difference *within* groups contributes to tension *among* groups" led her to develop intersectionality "as a way of mediating the tension between assertions of multiple identity and the ongoing necessity of group politics" (Crenshaw 1991: 1242 and 1296). She underscored her objective with her 1989 article and the introduction of the Theory of Intersectionality by stating:

"My objective there was to illustrate that many of the experiences Black women face are not subsumed within the traditional boundaries of race or gender discrimination as these boundaries are currently understood, and that the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women's lives in ways that cannot be captured wholly by looking at the race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately" (Crenshaw 1991: 1244).

She made it clear however, that intersectionality should not be seen as a new 'theory of identity' (Crenshaw 1991: 1244). She further stated that her focus on the intersections of race and gender should not be seen as excluding other factors such as class and sexuality for example. There are 'multiple grounds of identity' and all are important when looking at the experiences of women of color (Crenshaw 1991: 1245).

To bring both articles together, intersectionality based upon Crenshaw's description can be understood as the interaction of race, gender, class, and other identities and how they together shape the multiple dimensions of a person's (in Crenshaw's case black women's) experiences in regard to discrimination or racism and power. A person's identity can never be limited to a single category (Mancini 2016:7). This gives rise to experiences of oppression, violence, and discrimination different from those caused by a single factor (Mancini 2016:7). In order to understand discrimination, oppression, and power, and most importantly to fight against it and make structural changes, it is important to look at all of the factors that are interwoven instead of just one or two.

Intersectionality has been heralded as one of the most important theoretical contributions that women's studies has made so far (McCall 2005: 1771). Any scholar found to have neglected taking intersectionality into account is at risk of having their work viewed as "theoretically misguided, politically irrelevant, or simply fantastical" (Davis 2008: 68). Crenshaw's idea was however not new. What made it special was that it addressed an old problem "with a new twist" (Davis 2008: 73). For the first time it brought together two of the most important strands of contemporary feminist thought. The first strand was devoted to understanding the effects of race, class, and gender on women's identities, experiences, and struggles for empowerment. The second strand was feminist theorists who had been inspired by postmodern theoretical perspectives and viewed them as a way to help deconstruct the binary oppositions and universalism inherent in the modernist paradigms of Western philosophy and science and the project of conceptualizing multiple and shifting identities (Davis 2008: 70-71).

Although its importance has been highlighted, the theory has received critique. The concept is viewed by some feminist scholars as being weak because it is ambiguous and open-ended (Davis 2008: 67). They ask the question of if it should be conceptualized as a crossroad, as an 'axes' of difference, or as a dynamic process. Should it be used only for understanding individual experiences or understood as a property of social structures and cultural discourses (Davis 2008: 68). There have also been debates about whether there should be categories, how many categories there should be, and if there has been too much of a focus on identity to the detriment of social structures among others (Davis 2008: 68). An argument has been however that it is precisely the fact that the theory is open-ended and ambiguous that has caused it to be so successful. The lack of a clear definition or of specific parameters is what is seen to have made it a useful heuristic device for critical feminist theory (Davis

2008: 77-78). Discussing and addressing the various debates around intersectionality falls however outside the scope of this study. In response to these debates and critiques, in an interview in 2016 Kimberlé Crenshaw stated that she had no aspiration for intersectionality to go 'here' or 'there'. Her aspiration is for people to continue to build and improve upon the theory, to contest power, and to dismantle social hierarchies (Bello and Mancini 2016: 20-21).

2.3.1 Intersectionality and Female Refugees

How is the Theory of Intersectionality connected to the analysis of recognized female refugees in German integration policy? Just as the women in Crenshaw's analysis in 1989 and 1991, recognized female refugees have various identities that are interwoven and connected. It is argued that the label 'refugee women' brings with it "multiple intersecting and compounding layers of oppression" (Pittaway and Pittaway 2004: 119). Female refugees are not only characterized based on their gender but also have other 'identities'. Each identity in turn is portrayed by certain language and discourse. Female refugees are identified or characterized as a refugee, migrant, or asylum-seeker; they are members of a certain religious group; the color of their skin, their country of origin, and their age are further identities that can be interwoven and connected within one female refugee. How each one of these identities is seen and discussed further influences how these women are received, how policy is formulated, and what access they have to services and rights. The discourse and semantics surrounding recognized female refugees, and the different identities they hold, is vitally important when analyzing and understanding how they are taken into account within German Integration Policy. This will thus play an important part throughout much of the analysis in this study.

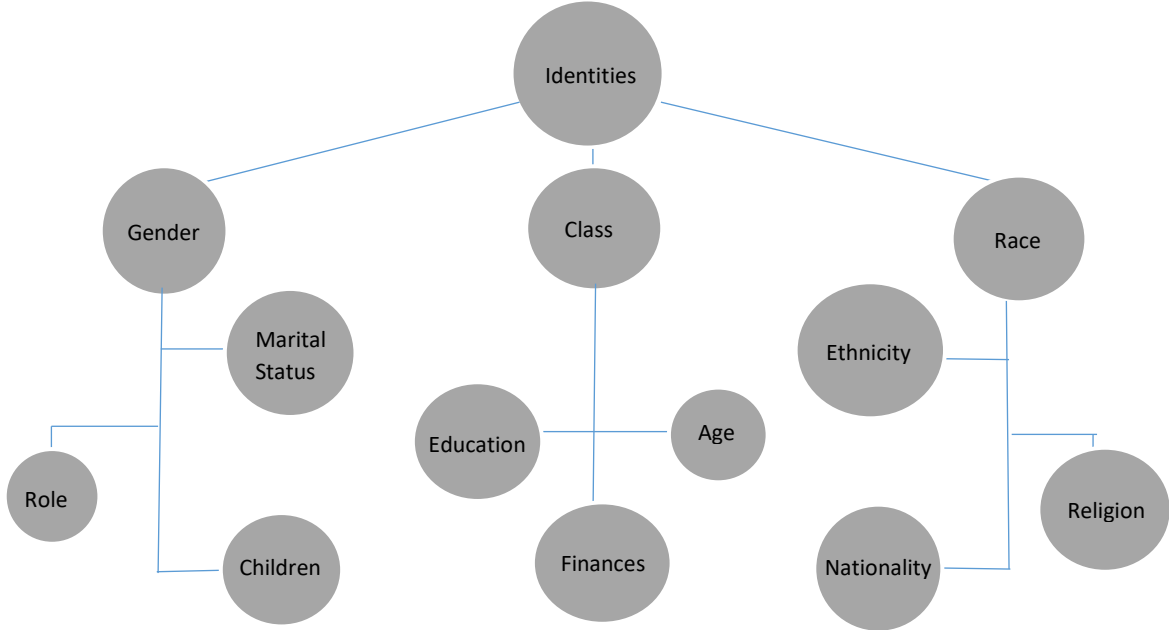
Often in academia and in public and political discourse refugee women are grouped together under one identity: gender. Based upon this one characteristic policy, discourse, studies, and assumptions are made that are meant to represent all female refugees. As discussed previously, the Combahee River Collective already showed in 1977, there is more to it than that and reducing a group of people to one characteristic does not properly represent the people in that group. Female refugees' identities are made up by their age, their skin color, their religion, their race, their nationality, their sexual identity, their level of education, their class, their gender/gender roles, and others. Although intersectionality is used mainly in analyzing and dealing with discrimination and racism, its foundation is ideal in analyzing the integration of female refugees in Germany. If for example the goal of integration in Germany is to include all people and to give them the opportunity to full and equal participation in all parts of society, then, theoretically, a 43 year old female refugee from Ethiopia who had her own business and came to Germany alone, should have the same opportunities as a 27 year old female refugee from Syria who had stayed at home with her three children until her husband brought her to Germany through family reunification and vice versa. In order to discover if this is the

case, just looking at the fact that they are both female is far from enough to come to a conclusion and will more than likely lead to false and misguided results on integration.

The structural and institutional make-up of society, in the case of this study the German society, plays a role in how each category of identity is seen and taken into account. The social construction of a policy target group is very important when analyzing public policy. It influences the policy agenda, the selection of policy tools, and the rationales that legitimize policy choices (Schneider and Ingram 1993: 334). The way a certain group is constructed in discourse can lead to advantages or disadvantages when it comes to policy (Schneider and Ingram 1993: 334). Social construction of a target group can be described as the “cultural characterizations or popular images of the persons or groups whose behavior and well-being are affected by public policy. These characterizations are normative and evaluative, portraying groups in positive or negative terms through symbolic language, metaphors, and stories” (Schneider and Ingram 1993: 334). These constructions have often been created by politics, culture, socialization, history, the media, literature, and religion (Schneider and Ingram 1993: 335). This ties back to the idea of semantics and discourse surrounding Forced Migration and how (female) refugees are portrayed. How they are portrayed can in turn affect policy or their access to certain services and rights which will enable them, or keep them, from being able to integrate.

Intersectionality is a very meaningful addition to the theoretical framework of this study. It allows for “diversity and the complexity of identity” that is particularly important for female refugees (Firth and Mauthe 2013: 500). Further, it is crucial in discovering if all women have equal access and full participation in all parts of society or if there is discrimination or disadvantages based upon certain aspects of their identity. In order to make the theoretical framework effective, the identities that will be taken into account as part of intersectionality must be determined. Within intersectionality three categories are generally used which can then be further broken down. They are gender, class, and race. Within German women’s and gender studies gender, class, and nationality represent the central categories (Münst 2008: 42). Nationality is set as a category rather than race due to specific events within German history and will be discussed further below. Graph 2 represents the identities that will make up the focus of intersectionality in the theoretical framework of this study. It is important to describe each identity and why it should make up the theoretical framework.

Graph 2: Identities in Intersectionality



Source: Own graph

Gender is a concept that has been the center of much debate and discussion in feminism and gender studies. The term ‘gender’ is understood today as representing culturally and socially constructed roles which can change that a society presents and declares as binding through bans, punishments, and rewards (Schößler 2008: 10; Zentrum für Genderforschung 2014). How women and men are described is thus based upon “political and ideological articulations that are informed by – and that establish – power relations” (Wikström and Johansson 2013: 95). It is therefore different from the biological term ‘sex’ which describes bodily characteristics that are either male or female. It is not possible to discuss all of the various gender roles of every female refugee and their respective nationality. It will therefore be looked at through the German and western understanding in order to better put into context German integration policy and the meaning behind it. It is important to note that the German or western idea of gender roles is disputed. However, for the purpose of this study it will be understood that women are not seen primarily as homemakers who are to stay at home and raise the children. They should be viewed as equal participants on the job market and as having equal access to all parts of society in comparison to men. A debate on if women truly do have equal opportunity on the job market and equal access to all parts of society lies outside the scope of this study. The task is to discover if German integration policy enables all female refugees, regardless of their respective gender roles, to have access to the core domains of integration. This may seem simplistic in connection to a term that has created its own studies around it. However, an analysis and discussion on the term ‘gender’ lies outside the scope of this study.

The ideas of class and race are not easy to define. These concepts come from the US context which for many German academics, based upon the country's historical characteristics, cannot be transferred over to the Western European or German circumstances one to one (Degele and Winker 2007: 1). In the German context the meanings of race and class change. In the original US American context of 'class' it signifies the differences in social location. In German however the idea of class, or *Klasse*, is almost only used in the context of Marxist theory (Knapp 2005: 256). In the most recent sociological theories of inequality, the notion of '*Schicht*' (strata) has largely replaced the idea of class. *Schicht* represents cultural ideas of horizontal disparities or lifestyle differences (Knapp 2005: 256). Although this study is in English, it is only appropriate to use the German understanding of class, or *Schicht*, in the theoretical framework. This is connected to the idea of resources and how resources affect ones access to rights and how they are viewed. In this regard class will be understood as resources that female refugees have in order to have access to the various domains of integration. In addition, the discourse surrounding their class 'status' will also be taken into account in so far as it affects their resources or access to rights.

In German the term race is directly translated as *Rasse*. This cannot be used in an affirmative way in the German context nor can it be used to speak about or assign an identity which is common practice in the US. This is not only in the academic context but also in the social context in general in Germany. This connects back to the racist identity politics of National Socialism and the Nazi regime (Knapp 2005: 257). There have been concerns that intersectionality "threatened to impose an American preoccupation with race" (Bello and Mancini 2016: 17). Kimberlé Crenshaw noted in an interview that she was "struck by the way that the 'already intersectional' claims remain associated with projects that are agnostic toward the significance of race in Europe" (cited in Bello and Mancini 2016: 17). Race in Germany is hardly ever defined as a category. It is instead the topic of critical analysis and is almost always negative. Most work instead focuses on 'white privilege' (Baer 2016: 69). This moves the discourse from one of 'victims only' to that of perpetrators and their responsibility. This then turns a characteristic, race, into a social effect (Baer 2016: 69). Discrimination is thus a disadvantage based upon a social pattern, or structure, and not an individual trait. Race has been replaced by ethnicity, culture, religion, and other categories in Germany (Bilge 2013: 419). As with the term 'class', 'race' will be understood in the German understanding for the purpose of this study. Therefore, instead of race on its own, the identities of nationality, ethnicity, and religion will be used within the theoretical framework to represent the overall concept of 'race'. Religion, specifically Islam, has increasingly found itself at the center of integration questions and debates as discussed in the previous section. It is thus appropriate within the German context that it makes up one of the identities within the theoretical framework for this study. Lastly age and marital status will be used as identities within the theoretical framework. When further looking at marital status it is important if the woman

has children or not, if she is married with children, single with children, or married without children. If a woman is married or not also plays a large role especially if she has been brought by her husband to Germany through family reunification.

In Germany due to the use of collective categories in history during the Nazi regime there is a call to avoid categorizing identity, to not think in groups, and to focus on recognizing the discriminating social structures of the distribution of power and opportunities instead. In 1995 German feminist theorist Birgit Rommelspacher coined the term '*Dominanzkultur*'. This represented a "dominant culture that perpetuates patterns of dominance, yet also emphasizes culture as the dominant structure formed of the varieties of all our experience we ourselves engage in" (cited in Baer 2016: 69). For Germany, intersectionality is "a search for a politics beyond identity claims, with a specifically reflexive component, not just a more complex account of the world. In law, it is the rejection of legal groupism, to end oppression and not perpetuate one very source of it: boxing people based on stereotype, creating stigma" (Baer 2016: 69-70). German debates insist on a focus on social and economic structures in society instead of relying only on experience or identity.

Despite German scholars hesitation in working with identities and creating categories based upon the country's history, this theoretical framework will remain in the scope of intersectionality and look at identities. In writing this study in English and from an English linguistic perspective, there is an advantage in being able to use terms such as 'race' and 'class'. Even though some German scholars and academics have begun to use the English word 'race' when writing in German, they still must write with an awareness that their word choice does affect their work. Although this study seems to avoid this linguistic conflict and the debates surrounding categorization in intersectionality, it is important to be aware of the connotation of words in the German language and culture. Discourse and semantics, as shown in section 2.1, play a large part in Forced Migration. Although this study is in English it is set within the German context and understanding of terminology and that must be respected.

2.4 Political Steering

As the field of policy research develops two particular findings have arisen. Firstly, theories are most strongly elaborated in areas where methodological problems are relatively small and the availability and amount of data is satisfactory. Secondly, developing theories is no longer reduced to simplified causal assumptions, but rather attempts to take into account all relevant aspects within the viewpoint of steering (Lauth and Thiery 2016: 287). Steering, or political steering, is understood as the attempt of political actors to influence societal development pursuant to concrete objectives. Steering instruments could be in the form of the State (power and law), the market (trade), and the community (solidarity). This allows a wide spectrum from 'hard' to 'soft' and 'direct' to 'indirect' steering (Lauth and Thiery 2016: 275). These various steering instruments in turn work based upon specific principles

and aim to achieve an appropriate effect (Buhr and Schmid 2016: 245). The identification of policy issues, their definitions, solutions to problems, policy development, implementation, and assessment involves various actors. How these actors interact with each other in turn affects the development of the policy and how it is, or will, be viewed and discussed. Political steering plays an important part in understanding this and completes the theoretical framework and conceptual idea behind this study. The concept will not be looked at in detail but rather a brief overview will be given. It is thought that this is sufficient to understand the concept and its importance for the study.

There are four different models for political steering: policy making, policy cycle, the network approach, and the Governance concept. These are not theories in the proper sense of the word but rather theoretical models which are open to the integration of hypotheses (Lauth and Thiery 2016: 287). The first two models are part of the traditional way of understanding political steering within the idea of a hierarchy (Lauth and Thiery 2016: 266). This traditional idea of steering is related above all to the state. The state is the head which steers and makes the decisions based upon what it thinks is best (Göhler 2009). This idea of unlimited state sovereignty has however led to the concept of steering coming to be seen as problematic. This is due to, among others, the fact that the increasing effects of globalization have made it obvious that the classic idea of steering based upon the relationship between command and obedience is no longer appropriate (Göhler 2009). The last two models of political steering, the network approach and the Governance concept, thus move away from this traditional approach. They are connected to the increasing societal complexities and the challenges within these complexities for political influence (Lauth and Thiery 2016: 266). Since the 1990s, the term Governance has gained much attention and is often used to represent the idea of political steering. Due to this it will be looked at in more detail.

Governance is not just one concept but is represented by numerous variations. It is connected to the ideas of actor-centered institutionalism and policy networks. It also shares their critique of basic models but goes above their understanding of steering (Lauth und Thiery 2016: 282). Political Science, especially policy research, has continuously been moving away from hierarchy as being the formative mechanism for coordinating action within the political system. Governance has profited from the shrinking importance of the state's scope of action. Its rise in prominence has also been due to efforts to appropriately measure the various regulatory mechanisms on the supranational level without having to connect it to a clear steering actor (Lauth and Thiery 2016: 283). Governance can thus be defined based upon the following definition from Renate Mayntz (2004: 66): "[it is] the total of all current parallel forms of the collective regulation of societal matters: from the institutionalized civil societal self-regulation to the various forms of collaboration between the state and private actors up to the sovereign actions of state actors". It thus means a mode of governing which is non-hierarchical and where non-state actors participate in formulating and implementing policy (Mayntz 2003). It does

not mean that the state has lost control but rather that there has been a change in form. Hierarchical control and civic self-determination are combined (Mayntz 2003).

Through Governance the idea of steering through a steering subject (the State) and a steering object (society) is no longer used. Instead there is a regulation structure which both are equally subjected to. Under Governance there is thus an 'institutional steering' (Lauth and Thiery 2016: 284-285). The use of the concept lies in capturing the various forms and mechanisms of collectively solving problems within a modern society and to analyze its structures, mechanisms, and effects (Lauth and Thiery 2016: 285). The Governance concept has been met with critique. Particularly that it is too focused on solving problems and the idea of 'power' is not appropriately addressed (Lauth and Thiery 2016: 285-286). A thorough analysis of the critique surrounding the concept lays outside the scope of this study. It is worth however taking a moment to look at the idea of power in connection with Governance and political steering. Due to the changing nature of political structures and with it the changing of what political steering is, questions have been raised in academia of if the idea of political steering still really exists or has completely changed and been replaced by Governance. It has been questioned how this concept in all its complexities can truly be captured and understood. One suggestion has been to order it within the theory of power.

It has been asserted that placing political steering within the realm of power and the associated theories allows for a vast perspective on how to understand and define the concept. It is argued that at its base steering is an exercise of power. In contrast to power however, steering is always intentional. The steering actor tries to influence and structure the courses of action of the target group in their favor. Steering can thus be seen as intentional exercised power within a social relationship (Göhler 2009). Staying within the framework of power, the theory provides for a wide scale of exercised political power: from hard to soft. Hard steering is hierarchical and vertical. It is based around orders and obedience with an uneven amount of power. A clear line of causality is defined and apparent. With soft steering the courses of action of the target group can be structured but there is no need for a difference between 'above' and 'below'. Soft steering is not hierarchical but informal and without set procedures. It takes place along a horizontal level of social relationships. There is no strict line of causality to guarantee that a specific action, or cause, will lead to a certain effect (Göhler 2009). This idea of causality is important. Currently understood, political steering has come to most closely resemble the idea of 'soft' steering and Governance; a non-hierarchical mode of governing where non-state actors participate in formulating and implementing policy. This in turn leads to a situation where it is possible to have no one clear line of causality. When analyzing the results of the interviews with female refugees in chapter five the question of causality plays a major role and is directly connected to this.

It is important to ask what specific action led to their integration experiences. To analyze if their successes, difficulties, or hurdles were structural, institutional, or individual. Within the model of soft political steering and the concept of Governance the answer lays on a non-hierarchical plane consisting of various actors and actions. In addition, steering can be influenced by discourses, questions and arguments, and through symbols (Göhler 2009). Within the theoretical framework of this study these are represented by the semantics of Forced Migration, the various theories of integration, and intersectionality. The causality is to be found within the interaction of various actors engaged in developing integration policy in Germany; the various policies and programs; and the effects that semantics, the theories of integration, and intersectionality play. There is thus not one cause or action influencing or leading to a certain experience or effect but a combination of many. When analyzing the interviews in chapter five in connection to the results from chapter four, understanding political steering and the concept of Governance is crucial for properly drawing conclusions connected to causality. In addition, analyzing through the lens of political steering and the concept of Governance will bring to light how integration policy is developed in Germany. It will help discover if it is directed from the State, developed through non-hierarchical structures involving state and non-state actors, or if there is perhaps no sense of political steering as we know it and it is simply 'learning by doing'.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has outlined the new and innovative theoretical framework for the analyses in this study. Bringing semantics, the theories of integration, intersectionality, and political steering together creates an effective way of answering the questions that this study has stated in chapter one. Each part of this theoretical framework has an important function but most importantly connects with the other. Through the semantics of Forced Migration the stage is set to ensure that the importance of discourse, language, and meaning is not overlooked. The *meaning* of policy is brought back into focus and function is no longer the only important factor. This thread of semantics is further woven throughout understanding integration and how it is viewed. The study is further refined through including intersectionality. Ignoring or omitting the fact that women cannot, and should not, only be defined by their gender and that their various identities play a role in their experiences is detrimental to any study or research on the topic. With looking at the various identities that a female refugee can associate herself with the study is able to effectively analyze the experiences of these women and how policy has been formulated around them. Political steering can be seen as bringing all of these elements together. Policy analysis takes place within the understanding of political steering. The actors involved in influencing and creating, in this study, integration policy are in turn influenced by the aspects of semantics, the understanding of integration, and the discriminations that can occur as understood by

intersectionality. This theoretical framework is thus positioned to effectively guide the analyses in this study. This framework also supports the methodological framework which will be described and discussed in chapter three.

3 Methodological Framework

Policy Analysis is methodically 'eclectic' and those using it are able to choose from a breadth of qualitative and quantitative methods (Dunn 2014: 3). In fact, "the history of policy analysis is characterized by the repeated application of creative and intelligent combinations of methods" (Mayer, van Daalen, and Bots 2013: 61). In carrying out a policy analysis, the goal of methodology is twofold: it assists the researcher in finding the 'products' of policy inquiry and also the processes used to create those 'products' (Dunn 2014: 3). It is important therefore to choose the appropriate methodology for the research question being asked in order to make sure that the proper processes are being analyzed in order to lead to the correct findings or 'products'. Policy analysis is both descriptive and normative. It takes from normative economics and decision analysis (what *is*) as well as ethics and branches of social and political philosophy (what *ought* to be) (Dunn 2014: 4). It attempts to identify the 'one-sided or limited nature' of arguments or to reveal blind spots in a debate in order to improve the overall quality of the debate surrounding the policy being analyzed. Policy analysis has a 'multifaceted nature'. Due to this there is no single or 'best' way of conducting it (Mayer, van Daalen, and Bots 2013: 41). Because of the multiplicity of views, schools, and methods one can easily become confused (Mayer, van Daalen, and Bots 2013: 42) and it can be difficult to find the 'right' methods or to use them properly.

Traditional policy analysis has been seen broadly as technical, objective, and based around the idea of a cost-benefit analysis. It has been criticized for ignoring the behavioral and political dimensions of most policy processes (Thissen and Walker 2013: v). Policy analysts are beginning to discover the limitation of approaches and tools that "ignore the social realities – the lived experiences – of policy-relevant publics" (Yanow 2007: 118). Already in 1989 in his book *Evidence, Argument, & Persuasion in The Policy Process*, Giandomenico Majone started questioning the traditional understanding of policy analysis and stated that it is not simply a technical enterprise as ascribed. Analyses are created based upon value judgements. For Majone, rhetorical skills were vital when conducting an analysis as "public policy is made of language". This 'linguistic turn' has moved the attention to how language makes up the 'social reality' being studied adding a hermeneutic argument (Yanow 2007: 117). The assumption has arisen in various perspectives and tools of analysis that policy is "made, defended, and criticized through the vehicle of language" (Mayer, van Daalen, and Bots 2013: 51). It is therefore very important to look at the language surrounding the policy including the arguments, rhetoric, symbolism, and stories (Mayer, van Daalen, and Bots 2013: 51). Value judgments have also been brought into the policy analysis arena. According to William Dunn value judgments play a role in conducting a policy analysis. For him "policy analysis also rests on art, craft, and persuasion" (Dunn 2004: 2).

The awareness that many policy processes have a multi-actor, multiple perspective, and polycentric character has led to various perspectives and new analytical tools and approaches being developed (Thissen and Walker 2013: v). One of these styles is Interpretive Policy Analysis which follows the idea that *meaning* is central to understanding a policy. It offers an alternative to the positivist ontological and epistemological approaches (Yanow 2007: 111). Its promise is “a set of practices that return persons, their meanings, and their very human agency to the center of analytic focus” (Yanow 2007: 111). With a focus on meaning, such a policy analysis is ‘highly contextualized’ instead of looking just for generalizations (Yanow 2007: 111). It follows the belief that conducting a policy analysis can never be purely objective nor can the creation of that policy.

Analyzing German integration policy using a traditional policy analysis would cause the study to be limited. It would not go far enough. Not paying enough attention to the semantics, meaning, language, beliefs, and emotions surrounding the topic that were laid out in chapter two, or only appointing them a secondary status, would lead to possible false findings and conclusions. The perspective and interpretation of the policy by female refugees themselves would not be given their due attention. Using an interpretive policy analysis for this study thus complements the traditional policy analysis and allows it to go further. It encompasses all of the essential components: political actions, institutions, and (the reality-shaping power of) meaning. Meaning does not just represent a person’s beliefs about political phenomena but fashions the phenomena itself (Wagenaar 2011: 3).

3.1 Interpretive Policy Analysis

Interpretive policy analysis asks what the meaning of policy is instead of its costs. The implications of a policy are ‘hidden’ and expressed in various ways depending on the assumptions of those involved in the policy-making process and the policies ‘target’ group. These cannot easily be found by just looking at the text (Manning, Miller, and van Maaren 2000: v). According to interpretive policy analysis, in order to fully understand a policy the stakeholders and policy artifacts - symbolic language, objects, and actions - must be identified together with the policy process (Manning, Miller, and van Maaren 2000: v). The main focus is the role of language, discourse, arguments, and rhetoric (Münch 2016: 45). Dvora Yanow (2000: ix), one of the main proponents of interpretive policy analysis and its use, described it as such:

“Interpretive policy analysis shifts the discussion from values as a set of costs, benefits, and choice points to a focus on values, beliefs, and feelings as a set of meanings, and from a view of human behavior as, ideally, instrumentally and technically rational to human action as expressive (of meaning).”

Although there has been an understanding in policy analysis that language, meaning, and value judgment play a role in analysis, there is nevertheless still critique that interpretive policy analysis is

not a 'rigorous' form of analysis; that because subjective meaning, human judgement, and values are at the center of this technique, it cannot be as methodical as a traditional policy analysis. This is however seen by proponents as a false assumption. This 'interpretive turn' in policy analysis is to be understood as a new methodological and democratic theoretical reconsideration of analysis (Münch 2016: 5). It is recognized that values shape the judgments that go into everyday analytical work such as framing a problem, formulating a questionnaire, analyzing data, drawing conclusions, shaping arguments, and presenting the report (Wagenaar 2011: 5). The methods of interpretive policy analysis are presented to be as formal as traditional analysis and also follow rules and customs. The focus on symbols in interpretive policy analysis has also caused some to separate it from 'real' politics. For Yanow (2000: x; italics in original) however, policies and political actions "are not *either* symbolic or substantive: they can be both at once". Even the most instrumental of intentions are communicated and perceived through symbolic meanings. Policies and their purposes must be interpreted. "There can be no unmediated, directly apperceived policy or agency actions" (Yanow 2000: x). Ignoring this would lead to a flaw in the research or analysis.

A detailed explanation of interpretive policy analysis, its critique, and its differences and similarities to traditional policy analysis falls outside the scope of this study. It is assumed that the readers have at least a basic knowledge of the various techniques of policy analysis. The focus here is on the methods of interpretive policy analysis. Using interpretive methods is based on the understanding that "we live in a social world characterized by the possibilities of multiple understandings" (Yanow 2000: 5). Yanow (2000: 5) summed this idea up when she wrote "[a]s living requires sensemaking, and sensemaking entails interpretation, so too does policy analysis". For many there has been the false correlation that 'interpretation' in interpretive policy analysis means that it is "impressionistic" (Yanow 2000: 93). Looking at meaning, beliefs, and assumptions does not however lead to an 'impressionistic' interpretation of policy. Methods within interpretive policy analysis build in and on the variability among actors. They do not just gather facts, but also understand and have an insight into what those facts truly mean (Yanow 2000: 93). "Believing what implementators do, rather than what policy 'says' in its explicit language, constitutes the 'truth' of policy (and thereby the state's) intent" (Yanow 2000: 9). According to Hendrik Wagenaar, "*Interpretive policy analysis* is concrete, interactive, hermeneutic, pragmatic, personal, and action oriented. It aims as much at good results as at proper procedure" (2011: 309; italics in original). Interpretive policy analysis is seen as an umbrella term for a heterogeneous approach rather than as a methodology that must be used step by step (Münch 2016: 18).

The steps in interpretive policy analysis are outlined in Table 1. There are two elements listed in these steps that are important to define in order to carry out the policy analysis: artifacts and policy-relevant actors/interpretive communities. The communities are the people or groups who are

important to the policy issue and who will then interpret the artifacts. If we want to know what the policy means to the people affected and how they experience it, interpretive research methods are vital (Wagenaar 2011: 3). As Yanow (2000: 38) states, “[t]he interpretive policy analyst needs to build a context in which to access local knowledge. Knowing what specific object or piece of language has significance comes from situational familiarity – understanding what is important to stakeholders, to policy-relevant publics”. Being familiar with the ‘world’ in which those who are affected by and/or the targets of policies and research is vital in being able to properly trace and explain the effects of a certain policy (Wagenaar 2011: 74).

Table 1: Steps in Interpretive Policy Analysis

| | |
|---|--|
| 1. | Identify the artifacts (language, objects, acts) that are significant carriers of meaning for a given policy issue, as perceived by policy-relevant actors and interpretive communities. |
| 2. | Identify communities of meaning/interpretation/speech/practice that are relevant to the policy issue under analysis. |
| 3. | Identify the “discourses”: the specific meanings being communicated through specific artifacts and their entailments (in thought, speech, and act). |
| 4. | Identify the points of conflict and their conceptual sources (affective, cognitive, and/or moral) that reflect different interpretations by different communities. |
| Interventions/Actions | |
| 5a. | Show implications of different meanings/interpretations for policy formulation and/or action. |
| 5b. | Show that differences reflect different ways of seeing. |
| 5c. | Negotiate/mediate/intervene in some other form to bridge differences (e.g., suggest reformulation of reframing). |
| Note: Steps 1 and 2 lead to each other; 1, 2, and 3 are typically done at the same time. | |

Source: Yanow (2000): 22

The policy-relevant actors and interpretive communities in the context of this study are: 1) the German legislature represented by the parliamentarians and their respective parties; 2) the German government represented by its Chancellor, the Chancellor’s Ministers, the various Ministries of the government, and the ruling parties; 3) The female refugees who are the targets of the integration policy; and 4) the states and cities. Although it can be claimed that there are more groups involved in the development, debate, passing, and implementation of integration policy, the scope will be limited to the actors and communities listed here. Looking at the involvement of other groups at this point in the research could cause it to be pulled in various directions without an end in sight. It is important to keep in mind that policymaking “takes place in a dynamic arena where policy issues come and go and where stakeholders enter and leave as they will” (Enserink, Koppenjan, and Mayer 2013: 17). The groups listed above however are a constant in the policy arena. Although the ruling parties and

chancellor can change, the position remains regardless of who the occupant is and as history has shown the topic of integration is a constant on the agenda.

Interpretive policy analysis comes out of the interpretive philosophies of phenomenology and hermeneutics. The theory of hermeneutics represents the idea that manmade artifacts - language, objects, and acts - contain and project human meanings (Yanow 2007: 114). Understanding does not follow rules or procedures. “Understanding *is* interpretation” (Schwandt 2000: 194; italics in original). Hermeneutics stems from the idea of ‘getting inside’ the head of the relevant actor or community in order to understand their motives, beliefs, desires, and thoughts (Schwandt 2000: 192). This means when conducting a policy analysis, focusing on the artifacts is crucial. How the communities interpret the artifact’s meanings lies at the heart of the analysis (Yanow 2000: 14 and 17). Interpretive policy analysis emphasizes the meaningfulness of human action which connects to the philosophy of phenomenology. Phenomenology strives to understand how we interpret our action and that of others as meaningful in order to explain the reasoning for their actions (Schwandt 2000: 192; Yanow 2007: 113). Meaning is ‘constitutive’ of political actions, governing institutions, and public policies (Wagenaar 2011: 4). The artifacts are used to understand the actors and how a certain policy makes sense within its particular (cultural) context (Yanow 2000: 22-23). In order to define the artifacts, we must ask how the issue is being ‘framed’ by the relevant communities (Yanow 2000: 11). Framing is generally understood as an act of selection, organization, interpretation, and production of meaning in a complex reality in order to create a guide for knowledge, analysis, conviction, and action (Münch 2016: 79). When it is clear what the frame is, the policy artifacts begin to make sense as certain elements are put into focus and highlighted and others are pushed to the side. These highlighted elements tend to represent what the group as a whole values (Yanow 2000: 11). Frames are generally expressed through language, bringing us back to chapter two. It is therefore important to identify the language and the corresponding understanding, actions, and meanings in order to uncover what the artifacts of the policy are. It is through a document analysis, which will be looked at in more detail in section 3.2, that the artifacts will become apparent and assist in guiding the analysis.

Let us now bring the actors and communities together with the artifacts. In order to answer the research question and conduct the analyses in chapters five and six, we now have four policy-relevant actors and community groups, listed above, that have been pinpointed. Only these four will be looked at which will keep the study focused and on task. Through using the artifacts of language, objects, and acts in order to understand the actors and communities, we will be able to properly trace and explain the effects of integration policy regarding female refugees, how it has been developed, and how it is interpreted. Most importantly it will lead us to being able to answer the research questions defined in chapter one.

In order to go through the steps of an interpretive policy analysis as outlined in Table 1, we need the proper methods. As stated earlier, for many, choosing and properly using the methods is often where mistakes are made and/or uncertainties arise. There are many approaches in interpretive policy analysis: frame analysis, ethnomethodology, discourse analysis (based either on Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe, Potter, Fairclough, or Gee), narrative analysis, genealogical analysis, (philosophical) hermeneutics, phenomenology, structuralism and poststructuralism, and practice theory (Wagenaar 2011: 7). These in turn each focus on different methods and philosophical backgrounds. This intertwining of theory and method makes it difficult for many to carry out an interpretive policy analysis. Each approach makes up its own “theoretical and methodological whole” which makes it difficult for the researcher or analyst to find the right balance between theory and method (Wagenaar 2011: 8).

The hermeneutic approach is the most popular and most commonly used in doing an interpretive policy analysis. There are two features at its core: looking for a meaning behind the policy that is hidden and the ‘phenomenological assumption’ that the experiences of policy actors are a way to finding the meaning (Wagenaar 2011: 71). What is often missing however is the interpretive theory “that defines the analytical problem, that drives the data collection, and that gives direction to the analysis” (Wagenaar 2011: 9). According to Hendrik Wagenaar (2011: 9): “Interpretive inquiry without theory is like an airplane without lift. It never gets off the ground”. For him, the solution to this can be found in Grounded Theory. Grounded Theory is generally seen as the instructions for how to conduct qualitative research (Wagenaar 2011: 243). The hermeneutic approach together with Grounded Theory will be used as the methodical framework for this study.

3.1.1 Ethnomethodology, Grounded Theory, and Hermeneutics

Precisely defining and explaining the methodology to be used is vital as this is where many practitioners have the most difficulty and make the most mistakes when conducting an interpretive policy analysis. The research and analysis in this paper will be based upon qualitative methods of research; more specifically the method of ethnomethodology within the hermeneutic approach combined with Grounded Theory. Ethnography is however a complicated term. For those outside of fields where ethnography is a trained way of conducting research, it has come to be used to describe any study dealing with people, conducting research, using case studies, or qualitative research as a whole (Markham 2018: 653). For many using it, it is a way to find “meanings of cultural phenomena” by getting close to them (Markham 2018: 653). With using it in connection with policy analysis, it is a way to make the effects of policy for those affected by it visible (Münch 2016: 107). Ethnomethodology is made up of the methods of interviews, observations, and document analysis. Generally the first step in ethnomethodology is document analysis. Based upon the information gathered from this,

(conversational) interviews are then conducted with the policy-relevant actors and communities. These two steps can then be followed up with observations of various relevant meetings (Yanow 2000: 31).

When connecting to the study at hand, in order to discover how female refugees are taken into account with the development and formulation of integration policy in Germany, a document analysis is a very effective method. Through this the policy-relevant groups and communities can be followed in various ways. The relevant artifacts as well as the relevant communities of meaning, interpretation, speech, and practice can also be detected. The meaning of the documents is not found in the text itself, but rather in the understanding of the target group or the intentions of the legislators for example (Yanow 2007: 116). This method is also connected to step three in an interpretive policy analysis: identifying the 'discourses'. This means to identify the way each community, or group, talks and acts about the policy issue (Yanow 2000: 30-31). According to Yanow (2000: 20) the purpose of this step "is to be able to say something about the meanings – the values, beliefs, feelings – that are important to each policy-relevant community, as well as to extend the analysis of the artifacts [...] [I]t is necessary to identify the artifacts – the language, objects, and acts – in which they are embedded, and which represent them in a symbolic fashion". This will lead to uncovering the meaning of the policy, the exact steps of implementing and passing the final policy, and what role female refugees played in the development along the way. How exactly the document analysis will be conducted, within which timeframe, and which documents will be used will be explained in detail in sections 3.2 and 3.3.

The method of (conversational) interviews combined with document analysis will lead to discovering if female refugees are hindered in their integration and, if so, by what means. By comparing the results of the document analysis to the interviews conducted a picture will develop of how the policy was understood and meant by the legislators and government and how the female refugees actually interpreted and experienced it. The interviews are very important for answering the second research question: how the women view their situation and integration themselves. The other policy-relevant actors listed will not be interviewed for this study. Through the document analysis it will mostly be their opinion, beliefs, language, and discourse being presented. This is based upon the fact that in the majority of cases it is the experts and elites that are more involved in policymaking situations (Mayer, van Daalen, and Bots 2013: 47). Traditionally some stakeholders are left out of the policymaking process which causes values and arguments to be overlooked as well as problems with policy implementation (Mayer, van Daalen, and Bots 2013: 52). Through a policy analysis such as the one being conducted in this study, an attempt is being made to correct this 'inequality' by bringing attention to the views and opinions often overlooked: that of female refugees (Mayer, van Daalen, and Bots 2013: 47). Qualitative research brings the perspective of the target group of the policy into the foreground. It gives voice to "otherwise excluded and marginalized groups" (Wagenaar 2011: 75). In

gaining insight into how that group understands a policy based upon their own experiences qualitative research can “lead to the reframing of a policy solution” (Wagenaar 2011: 75). In order to have a full analysis it is very important to focus on giving this important group the space to express their opinions and experiences. How the interviews will be conducted will be looked at thoroughly in section 3.4.

The method of observation, meaning actively sitting in on legislative sessions or party meetings, will not be used. Instead of observation acts will be looked at. An act is meant for example as holding a hearing, conducting a special session, or meeting with focus groups or relevant communities. It is the idea that it was decided to have these events take place. These acts. When looking at acts, potential significant contrasts between acts and words can become apparent. This means integration policy may say, implement, or promise something but in reality it looks different or does not actually help or serve the people – here female refugees – it was intended to help. These contrasts can become clear by asking for example if there have been attempts by the policy-relevant groups listed earlier to meet with specialists, if reports have been drawn up on the topic, if there have been attempts to track the success of female refugees and their integration, or if there have been legislative discussions on the integration of female refugees. These are all acts.

Focusing on acts instead of observing meetings is thought to be more effective in answering the questions of this study. It is believed by the author that enough information can be gathered through document analysis, interviews, and looking at acts so that active observations are not needed at this stage. For future research on this topic however incorporating the method of observation could be a way to obtain an even deeper understanding of those involved in policy development and further develop the relevant artifacts to integration policy. The combination of document analysis and interviews with a focus on acts will be enough to show if there are points of conflict and what the potential sources of those are for step five in an interpretive policy analysis as listed in Table 1. As stated in chapter one, the purpose of this study is to set the foundation for future studies on this topic by providing initial findings and laying out a new method for going about such an analysis in order to help lead to better, or different, policy decisions in the future. The goal is not to provide concrete policy recommendations or to call for certain interventions as is generally done in an interpretive policy analysis.

3.1.2 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a powerful heuristic. It is important for, as its name refers to, keeping the research ‘grounded’ in the data being collected at all times through the listed methods above. It also ensures that the analytic process is transparent from the beginning (Wagenaar 2011: 272). This can be exceptionally difficult in an interpretive policy analysis where meaning(s), beliefs, interpretations, and language among others are center stage. In referring back to Wagenaar’s anecdote: Grounded Theory

is the lift to get the analysis in this study off the ground. While the theories in chapter two set the theoretical framework within which the analysis is to take place and guides the methods being used, grounded theory provides “[s]ystematic inductive guidelines for collecting and analyzing data to build middle-ground theoretical frameworks that explain the collected data” (Charmaz 2000: 509). This is also the reason why it is introduced and mentioned in this chapter and not in chapter two. Grounded Theory “is part of a larger flexible, emergent, ‘improvisational’ process of inquiry and interpretation, in which research design, sampling, data collection, and data analysis weave in and out of one another” (Wagenaar 2011: 259). It has been ‘adjusted’ over the years but its core characteristics have remained:

“It begins with inductive data, involves simultaneous data collection and analysis, relies on comparative methods, explicitly focuses on analysis and theory construction, provides tools to study action and process, and contains strategies for developing, checking, and strengthening an original analysis. These strategies include using abductive logic, a creative form of reasoning that entails constructing a theoretical explanation of puzzling findings and developing and checking the tentative theoretical categories constituting this explanation”(Charmaz, Thornberg, and Keane 2018: 412).

The steps of Grounded Theory are: coding data, memo writing, and theoretical sampling. The purpose of coding is to “move beyond the data without losing touch with the data”. Through proper coding categories are created that are able to describe, explain, and organize the data (Wagenaar 2011: 261-262). Data is taken apart and defined. Through this analysts can take a ‘fresh look’ at the data and develop new analyses. Coding is made up of at least two phases: initial coding and focused coding. It is however not a linear process. Those who use Grounded Theory move back and forth between the different phases (Charmaz, Thornberg, and Keane 2018: 424). Coding is most important within the context of this study when conducting the interviews with the refugee women. It focuses on making sense of the various transcripts by asking if the data supported, contradicted, or developed what was already known (Wagenaar 2011: 265). This will be looked at in more detail in section 3.4.

Memo writing is important for the document analysis. It helps make sense of the information that emerges from the data collected and provides an analytical distance from the data creating a space for researchers to document their analysis (Charmaz, Thornberg, and Keane 2018: 429). It is the key element “in the dialogue between data and (emerging) theory which brings the researcher to the most logical conclusion” (Wagenaar 2011: 262). Charmaz (2006:72) writes that “[m]emo-writing constitutes a crucial method in grounded theory because it prompts you to analyze your data and codes early in the research process”. Memo writing is crucial for this study. It is not only important for the document analysis but also for the interviews. With all of the information collected memo writing ensures that the study (and author) stays on task, that comparisons can be made, discrepancies brought to light, and that the findings truly reflect the research that was conducted.

Theoretical sampling is the most difficult part of Grounded Theory as there are few rules on how to go about it. The purpose of this is to make sure there is enough diversity and difference among the groups in the analysis in order to avoid redundancy and missing out on important groups. It is difficult however to estimate the amount of relevant variation in advance. One can however try to anticipate, and if need be, adjust later on. This is most important when conducting interviews as it is important in attempting to avoid homogenization which could lead to findings that do not properly represent the group who make up the focus of the research. Theoretical sampling will be looked at in more detail in section 3.4.

Despite Grounded Theory working on keeping data collection on track, there are, according to Wagenaar (2011: 79-81) two potential dangers in conducting a qualitative policy analysis: 1) relying too much on language and not enough on observation and acts and 2) not paying enough attention to power and conflict. Power lies “at the heart of the categories that structure problem formulations, the way that policy alternatives are selected and prioritized, the choice of acceptable policy instruments, and so on” (Wagenaar 2011: 81). Grounded Theory ensures that this study does not rely too much on language and not enough on acts in order to avoid the first danger by keeping the analysis focused on the data and task at hand. The theoretical framework set out in chapter two and ethnomethodology take this idea of power into account although it was not explicitly mentioned. By looking at language, discourses, intersectionality and categorization, conducting a document analysis, and performing interviews the idea of power cannot be avoided nor the role that it plays. Many times it is power that decides which problems are *not* on the public agenda (Wagenaar 2011: 81). The general nature of integration policy is directed by the idea of power and how that plays out. Female refugees for example are dependent on the German government, its laws and policies, and the decision makers for their future, as well as what they have access to and what they will be granted or denied. Power dynamics are central to this issue. When conducting the document analysis as well as analyzing the the interviews with the female refugees the idea of power will be present although it will not be explicitly mentioned or appear obvious. Power is also represented through the semantics and the symbols that will arise through the interpretive policy analysis. As already discussed in chapter two language is power and creates the narrative within which female refugees are portrayed and the context within which policy discussions take place. It is a powerful but silent force which should not be underestimated nor neglected.

3.2 Document Analysis: 1998-2019

When conducting an analysis on German integration policy, the question of which timeframe to use is essential but not straightforward. There has been a robust debate in Germany surrounding the topics of integration, migration, and citizenship for decades. The most important question is thus

which date the analysis should begin with. This question has to be connected to the research question(s) and objectives of the study. Should the study start with 1951 and the Geneva Convention? Or perhaps in the 1980s as the question of the future of Guest Workers was being looked at? Or maybe on a completely different date. A major point to consider here is that the Germany as we know it today, including geographically, did not exist until October 3, 1990. An analysis starting before this date would have to be broken up into two parts. The first part would be an analysis on the integration policy of the Federal Republic of Germany excluding the German Democratic Republic in the east. The second part would be an analysis as of 1991 on the integration policy of the Federal Republic of Germany including eastern Germany with geographical boundaries different to those in the first part. Reconstruction after World War II, the Cold War, and the separation and eventual reunification of the country played major roles in the foreign and domestic policies of the country and shaped citizenship and migration laws and policies. All of these events helped lead to the current policies and laws that exist in the country and should be understood in this historical context. Including them in the analysis of this study however lies outside of the scope of the ultimate questions to be answered. It would lead the study down many separate paths not necessarily connected to its objectives. An additional potential problem with beginning the document analysis prior to 1998 would have been which policy-relevant groups and communities to include in the study. Integration has traditionally been seen as falling within the realm of welfare organizations and charities. This would have led to the question if these groups also have to be included and looked at as the government was not an important actor before 1998. As stated previously, defining too many policy-relevant actors and communities could potentially lead to an analysis that would only touch the surface due to too many actors being looked at. With a start date of 1998 it is clear which policy-relevant actors and communities make up the core group to be included in the analysis and keeps the research focused and on target.

The year 1998 is thus seen as the most ideal date to begin the analysis when considering the research questions laid out in chapter one. As will be looked at in-depth in chapter four, this date represents the beginning of the first 'official' attempt of the German government to deal with questions of integration, migration, and citizenship. It launched the debates leading to changes not only in citizenship law but in the creation of brand new laws and policies regarding migration and integration. The document analysis will end in 2019 and mention potential changes or adaptations that are being discussed or planned for 2020. A timeframe of 21 years with an outlook to the future is seen as sufficient enough to produce concrete findings and conclusions.

3.2.1 Selection of Policy Documents

The document analysis is made up of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are in the form of official legislative texts, documents, transcripts, statements, interviews, statistics and quotes

directly from the defined policy-relevant actors and communities. This includes media sources quoting these sources directly. It is important to keep in mind that these texts are always a *de jure* reality that do not yet say anything about the *de facto* implementation these policies or laws are intending to carry out. This is why the heuristic approach is crucial. It ensures that the policy-relevant artifacts of the texts are defined through the document analysis and their respective meaning by the policy-relevant actors and communities is seen or understood. The secondary sources are represented by academic studies and articles, media coverage of the policy issue, and reports by national Non-Governmental organizations (NGOS) or groups working with female refugees. Regarding the secondary sources, only well-known sources are used in order to have a certain level of quality and reliability in the information and reporting. A certain level of data variety is also taken into account during the document analysis. This on the one hand makes it possible to locate and discover any type of differences in meaning or interpretation by one community over another and on the other hand to make sure that objectivity is always sought after. Although it is accepted in an interpretive policy analysis that no analysis is truly objective, making sure that subjective understanding and interpretations do not completely control the direction of the analysis is constantly in the foreground.

Due to the nature and topic of this study objectivity must always be strived for even if it cannot be fully reached. The topics of integration and migration can be highly emotional and information regarding the topic can easily be misused or adjusted to benefit one group over another. When looking specifically at female refugees maintaining objectivity can become more difficult as they are often not represented. This means there is less information regarding them and it is easier to make broad assumptions. If they are mentioned, as already discussed, it is often as one collective group of 'voiceless victims' or the focus is only on Muslim female refugees and the debate surrounding Islam. Female refugees are not only connected to the group 'refugees', but they are constantly put into one category which has attempted to define the rhetoric surrounding them. The analysis in this study is focused on recognized female refugees and integration policy. Recognized female refugees represent a group within which reports and information are at times hard to find and integration policy represents an emotionally and politically charged policy area. While conducting the analysis in chapter four, it is important to remain aware of this situation and to use primary and secondary sources that attempt to remain objective. When objectivity is questionable within a document containing statistics and information it is important to make it known that the information may not be objective.

The document analysis is conducted almost entirely in the German language. Almost all of the primary sources are in German and only a few of the secondary sources are in English. The relevant information for this study has been translated by the author into English. As an interpretive policy analysis focuses on meaning, translating the data from one language to another involves risk. There is the potential that the original meaning can be misrepresented or misunderstood negatively affecting

the final results of the study. An attempt has however been made to remain as true to the original wording and context in the German language as possible when translating into English. Continuing on with this idea of properly translating the original meaning and context, the timeframe of this study spans 21 years. Artifacts defined and developed in documents in 2002 could for example be understood differently in 2018. The artifacts – language, objects, and acts – are thus always analyzed and understood within their timeframe. This is important in making sure that the original sense and meaning are truly captured and not misunderstood.

In conducting a document analysis of texts spanning 21 years, a considerable amount of information is collected. Data in the sense of interpretive policy analysis are “the words, symbolic objects, and acts of policy-relevant actors together with policy texts, plus the meanings these artifacts have for them” (Yanow 2000: 27). As pointed out previously by Wagenaar, one danger of an interpretive policy analysis is to get caught up or ‘lost’ in the language and acts. The method of memo writing within Grounded Theory is therefore of utmost importance for this analysis. Memo writing plays a central role for the author in that it helps keep the focus on the research questions, helps define and develop the policy artifacts, makes it possible to make connections, spot discrepancies, and ultimately lead to findings and conclusions. Transparency is very important in ensuring that a certain level of objectivity is reached along the research process. Memo writing contributes to making sure the data, research, and analysis remains transparent as all of the information is documented and recorded. As a final note, although the document analysis has been conducted in German, the memos have been written in English in order to connect better with the final study.

3.2.2 Data and Resources

As was touched on already in chapter one, the amount of information on the integration of *recognized* female refugees is very limited in Germany. This is particularly the case in attempting to gain long-term information on their integration in the country. Germany, like other countries, releases annual data on the total number of asylum claims made, and granted, and breaks these down into more detailed information such as country or age. Whereas there is gender disaggregation of the figures regarding asylum claims, there are no officially reported figures on asylum granted broken down by gender. Without specifically requesting the information, or perhaps finding it within the various requests for information sent by parliamentary groups, it is difficult to find out women’s success rate in being granted asylum. When this data is found it is not always broken down into the kind of claim; for example those related to gender-based persecution (Arbel, Dauvergne, Millibank 2014: 8). This means there is currently no *openly published* way in Germany to find out on what grounds refugee women have been granted asylum or protection status. This lack of information is based upon the situation that not all data information takes gender into account, when collecting data gender-specific questions

are not always asked, in analyzing data the category of gender is often not taken into account although the information may be available, and not all data is openly available to the general public or researchers (Schwenken 2017: 16). In addition, before 2015, there was rarely information or statistics presented on female refugees' participation in integration programs or success on the job market. Refugees in general were not a target group for integration and were not mentioned in the area of integration policy until after 2015. It is therefore difficult to analyze female refugees in the context of integration policy due to the immense lack of data and information. This situation is however set to improve in Germany regarding gender. Attempts have been made since 2014 to increase attention surrounding the subject of gender in order to provide more differentiated statistics which is a welcomed change (Schwenken 2017: 16). We must however wait and see if this does happen long-term or if it is just a phase.

When conducting an analysis on the role recognized female refugees have played in the development of integration policy, it is important to stay aware of this lack of availability of data and the low level of representation of these women as a whole in primary and secondary sources. Once they have been granted refugee status and their situation in Germany is stabilized, they are most often considered a part of the group defined as 'immigrant women' (Sansonetti 2016: 13). The data and statistics on recognized female refugees is thus often mixed with other immigrant women or lacking entirely. Therefore, for this study comparisons often have to be made and conclusions extrapolated from the development of integration policy, and statistics, regarding immigrant women. It is however very important to note that the situation of a refugee woman is vastly different from that of an immigrant woman. Refugee women are fleeing persecution and war and do not have the time to plan their journey to Germany. They have experienced abrupt interruptions of family and community bonds and are more likely to have experienced trauma (Sansonetti 2016: 13). Despite this, using information regarding immigrant women is the only way in many instances to gain some type of information on how the integration situation of recognized female refugees could be as they are simply put into this group. The integration of immigrant women and female refugees, including the rhetoric regarding them, is oftentimes intertwined as will be shown in chapter four. If female refugees are mentioned in documents it is often not clear if recognized female refugees, asylum-seekers, those who have been tolerated, or all are being referred to. Keeping the focus narrowed onto integration policy and immigrant women when there is no data on, or clear reference to, recognized female refugees is seen as the most efficient path for this study. It ensures that the information and data being looked at, to the best of the author's knowledge, can be attributed to recognized female refugees and their situation within integration policy.

3.3 Integration Policy of German States and Cities

Germany has a federal system made up of 16 federal states.⁵ The word federalism stems from the Latin word *foedus* which means alliance or treaty. Federalism thus means when many states come together to create one all-encompassing state structure but still maintain their own characteristics as states (Bundesrat 2009: 5). A federal system is seen as having various advantages when compared to a unitary state such as power-sharing, more democracy, more leadership opportunities, being closer to the people, and more diversity. Despite its advantages, this type of multi-level system can lead to disadvantages such as a lack of uniformity and being regarded as complicated, time consuming, and expensive (Bundesrat 2009: 8-9). When looking at integration policy, the intricacies of such a system are clear to see. It is often said that there is not one integration policy in Germany. Instead, there are different legally and politically defined responsibilities at the federal, state, and city levels. These levels coordinate with one another in some areas but are different in others (Sachverständigenrat 2012: 17).

When referring back to the core domains of integration by Ager and Strang in section 2.2.1, many areas were named as being important for successful integration: employment, education, language acquisition, health, and learning the laws and rules of the country among others. What is however often forgotten in the context of Germany is that due to the multi-level federal system, the implementation of these domains can look very different nationwide. On the one hand, this type of structure allows for policy to be flexibly adjusted to the different circumstances on the state and local level. On the other hand, it can lead to a lack of coordination and an extreme amount of variance in the implementation of measures along with, at times, unnecessary replications of programs (Sachverständigenrat 2012: 110-111). In addition, the financial situation of states, and above all cities, plays a large role in the implementation of integration measures and whether additional services will, or can, be offered. A city with a small budget or financial difficulties may not be able to offer additional integration opportunities compared to a city with a bigger budget. It may in fact neglect increasing its own budget if it receives funding for certain projects or programs from the state or federal government. Table 2 shows the distribution of responsibilities between the federal government, the states, and cities regarding integration and migration policy.

⁵ In the German language federal states are called *Bundesländer*. In writings regarding Germany it is common to use the German term *Länder* instead of the English translation 'states'. For the purpose of this study however, the English translation will be used to provide for more consistency.

Table 2: Responsibilities for Migration and Integration in a Multi-Level System

| | Federal Government | State | City |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Legislation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy areas under the sole responsibility of the federal government: immigration and citizenship - Policy areas with concurrent legislation: right of residency, refugee policy, job market | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy areas under the sole responsibility of the states: education, culture, religion, and public safety (among others) - Participation in federal legislation (<i>Bundesrat</i>) - Organization of the framework for cities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issue statutes in matters of self-government |
| Management and Implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asylum proceedings and the promotion of integration according to the Immigration Act through BAMF | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of federal government and state laws (administrative sovereignty): Decide responsibilities and procedures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local implementation of laws and programs - Voluntary tasks such as additional recreational activities and educational offers, cultural institutions, and city development |
| Indirect Governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formulation of guiding principles and objectives - Funding programs - Summits, campaigns, and other forms of informal politics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formulation of guiding principles and objectives - Funding programs - Summits, campaigns, and other forms of informal politics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formulation of guiding principles and objectives - Funding programs - Round tables, campaigns, and other forms of informal politics |

Source: Sachverständigenrat 2017: 9 (Adapted and translated).

As shown in Table 2, the legislation, management, implementation, and indirect governance is broken up between the federal government, the states, and the cities. Each level of government is responsible for different policy areas. Although there are some overlaps, Table 2 demonstrates the complexities that can arise when discussing integration policy in Germany. The purpose of this study is not to look at the detailed inner workings of the federal system in Germany nor to break down the exact responsibilities of the federal government, the federal states, and the cities regarding integration policy. The goal is also not to assess the implementation of integration policy at these three levels. The objective is to look at how recognized female refugees are taken into account in integration policy and its development, above all, at the federal level and their personal integration experiences. Nonetheless, because Germany has a multi-level system and female refugees are affected by policy at all levels, such an analysis would be incomplete without also looking, albeit briefly, at the integration policy at the state and local levels. Only looking at the development of integration policy regarding

female refugees at one level could produce potentially misleading findings. Thus, this study will include an analysis of integration policies of three states and three cities.

3.3.1 Selection of States and Cities

Each state and city is unique and has its own specific integration history and experience. An analysis of any state or city in Germany regarding the topic of female refugees and integration would surely provide interesting results and information. For the purpose of this study however three specific states were selected which were thought to be able to best assist in answering the research questions: North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), Bavaria, and Saxony-Anhalt. Each state represents a very different picture of integration and climate within the country regarding the topic. These 'pictures' are however highly politicized and perpetuated by the media. Their images throughout the country are therefore not entirely objective. This is however exactly what makes them interesting for this study. What also makes them interesting is that based upon the *Königsteiner Schlüssel*, which is used to distribute refugees throughout the country, North Rhine-Westphalia is given the highest number of refugees followed by Bavaria. Saxony-Anhalt on the other hand has one of the lowest numbers of refugees. North Rhine-Westphalia, in the west of the country, has traditionally been described as the most welcoming state for immigrants, and now, refugees in the country. As a result of the 'refugee crisis' in 2015 and 2016, Bavaria, in the south of the country, has come to represent a state connected strongly to promoting German 'values' and 'culture'. The Christian Social Union party in Bavaria (CSU), which is the sister party of the governing coalition party the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU), is found only in Bavaria and promotes tighter asylum, integration, and migration laws. Saxony-Anhalt, in the east, on the other hand is most often connected to racism and discrimination towards immigrants and refugees. This is however a stereotype that is attributed to many of the states in the east, or more precisely the former German Democratic Republic. It is viewed as being 'behind' the trend in Germany regarding welcoming refugees and being accepting of immigrants. Analyzing the integration policies, or official stances when no integration policy exists, of each of these states in chapter four will provide initial and potentially valuable information. It will provide the first steps, firstly, in discovering if the reality within the state government truly matches that which is portrayed in the media. Secondly, and most importantly, it will help lead to finding out if recognized female refugees within each state have a different integration experience based upon the political stance of each respective state government or if this does not have a direct impact on their integration. In addition, it will become apparent if the federal and state governments work together in formulating and implementing integration policy or if they work independently of each other.

The cities within each state which were chosen for this study were picked for slightly different reasons than the states. The cities chosen were Cologne in NRW, Wuerzburg in Bavaria, and

Magdeburg in Saxony-Anhalt. Cologne has the largest population of any city in the state and is the fourth most populous city in all of Germany. This automatically made the city the most interesting within the state for this study. It is also described as being the most welcoming city for immigrants within the state. Looking at integration policy and the political stance of the city regarding the topic could present initial information on if size, and the political stance of the state as a whole, positively affects the integration experience of female refugees at the local level. It could be argued that because Cologne was chosen due to its population size within a significant state for integration, that when looking at the state of Bavaria Munich would automatically come into play as being a candidate for this study. It is the most populous city in the state and the third most populous in the country. These reasons do make sense and a comparison between Cologne and Munich would be highly interesting regarding integration. The city of Wuerzburg was however chosen instead. This was for two main reasons. Firstly, the author of this study is located in Wuerzburg and has first-hand experience, and access, to many welfare organizations and associations working directly with female refugees. The author was also part of a focus group put together by the city dealing with developing an official integration policy. This advantage cannot be underestimated in conducting a study on such an emotionally and politically charged topic. This makes it easier to gain contact with female refugees for interviews and to analyze integration policy within the city. Secondly, Wuerzburg has a very small population compared to that of Cologne. In comparing the two cities it will lead to findings on if the size of a city could make a difference in the integration experience of female refugees. Similar to Cologne, choosing Magdeburg as part of this study was very obvious from the beginning based upon the reputation Saxony-Anhalt has regarding integration. In contrast to Wuerzburg and Cologne, Magdeburg is the state capital of Saxony-Anhalt. This makes it the most interesting city from the state for this study. As the state, in the media, is connected to racism and discrimination, it is important to analyze if the city capital is portrayed similarly and if it simply follows the lead of the state, or if it carves its own path and creates its own policy regarding integration. Magdeburg (236,000) has a larger population than Wuerzburg (127,000) but is smaller than Cologne (1,086,000). Through these three cities it will also be possible to compare integration policies and strategies of three differently populated cities to see if population size makes a marked difference in the integration experience of recognized female refugees.

Based upon these reasons for choosing North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria, Saxony-Anhalt, Cologne, Wuerzburg, and Magdeburg it is thought that the analysis in chapter four will provide solid and interesting initial findings, in connection with the analysis at the federal level, upon which further studies can base themselves upon regarding integration policy. The results from the analyses regarding these cities and states in connection with that of the federal government will also provide context and

enhance the effectiveness of the interviews conducted directly with female refugees as part of this study and analyzed in chapter five.

3.3.2 Data and Resources

The selection of documents and texts when analyzing the integration policy of each respective state and city will follow the same criteria which was described already in section 3.2.1. The availability of data not only regarding female refugees in each state and city, but also on integration policy in general, is however of main importance. The fact that there is a lack of information and data regarding female refugees at the federal level is also seen at the state and local level. It is however more pronounced at these lower levels. In contrast to the federal government having to release statistics annually on asylum claims and decisions, the states and cities are not required to do the same. The amount of information regarding integration is thus extremely different from state to state and city to city. In addition, each state and city did not begin focusing on integration at the same time. Whereas some cities declared integration as a main priority before the federal government did, others only did it after the topic became a focus nationwide. This leads to a situation where some states and cities have a long history of dealing with integration policy and for others it is relatively new. This in turn also effects the type and amount of data available.

Each state and city being analyzed as part of this study is at a different phase in recognizing and dealing with integration. They are also doing it in different ways. This makes it difficult to compare one to one or to have the same time frame for an analysis for each. It can also lead to a situation where female refugees are not discussed at all and information regarding immigrant women must, again, be relied upon to draw conclusions. Due to this, the most appropriate timeframe for conducting an analysis on integration policies in the selected states is 2005 to 2019. Within this timeframe it is felt that the development in each state can fully be represented. For the cities the timeframe of 2003 to 2019 was selected. This type of analysis can be challenging. Each city and state must individually be analyzed based upon the available data and information with the appropriate timeframe for each. Only after each individual analysis is it possible to compare the states and cities and draw potential conclusions. The variance of data availability and focus on the topic must be kept in mind when doing such an analysis. Despite the challenges it is possible to conduct such an analysis and it is important in furthering the understanding of the integration situation of recognized female refugees in Germany.

3.4 Qualitative Interviews with Female Refugees

At the heart of interpretive policy analysis lies qualitative interviewing and the analysis of interview data (Wagenaar 2011: 251). There is the normative position that analysts have “a responsibility to make silenced stories and silenced communities speak: to bring them, their values, and their points of

view to the conversation” (Yanow 2000: 92). In returning to the idea of ‘power’ touched on earlier, in order to understand the constellation of power within the policy issue being studied it is important to have a variety of sources, including interview partners, in order to give the ‘weak’ within the power dynamic a voice. As already discussed, in conducting a document analysis it is the experts, policymakers, or others who are seen as authorities on the issue whose opinions are represented. This study however questions the perceived assumption that recognized female refugees are not experts or ‘authorized speakers’ on the topic of integration policy. This study asserts that recognized female refugees are experts regarding their own situation and living conditions (Helfferich 2011:163) and should be viewed as such. In defining female refugees as experts, the word expert “describes the specific role of the interview partner as a source of special knowledge about the issue being researched” (Gläser and Laudel 2010: 12). This assertion directly affects the view of the data collected through the interviews, its relevance, and quality. The interviews with female refugees are thus not just extra information to be considered but rather form a main part of the analysis.

3.4.1 Semi-structured Interviews

In conducting a qualitative interview there are various styles to choose from: structured interviews with closed questions, semi-structured interviews, and open interviews. It is important to know before conducting the interview what the goal and intentions are as the type of interview method used ultimately influences the results and findings of the research. In the case of this study the objective of the interview with the female refugees is twofold: first to give the women a space for their voice to be heard about their situation as experts and secondly to discover how they interpret integration policy and how it is actually implemented compared to its intention by the German government, states, and cities. Semi-structured interviews were therefore chosen as the appropriate method for the interviews. This was seen as the best method as it has as its goal not to hinder or interrupt the flow of the person being interviewed or to influence their answer. It is however structured by an outline or type of guide prepared before the interview in order to make sure important topics are discussed. This guide or outline ensures that the discussion goes in the desired direction without interrupting the person being interviewed and without a strict sequencing of questions. This method of interviewing also connects back to the philosophy of phenomenology which forms the basis of interpretive policy analysis. It focuses on ‘lived experiences’. Through this the researcher gains a better understanding of choices, decisions, meanings, and understandings (Yanow 2007: 114).

The guide for the interviews was based around the core domains of integration by Ager and Strang as described in section 2.2.1. For every domain a basic guide with questions was developed which could then easily be modified based upon the person being interviewed. The theory of intersectionality as laid out in section 2.3 also played a large role in developing the guide to make sure

that these important categories were not left out. It is important to know the various 'identities' (gender, class, and race; refer back to section 2.3) of the women being interviewed. This makes it possible to be able to use their interviews in the final analysis in chapter six and account for possible differences in answers, stories, or experiences.

In order to ensure that the information gathered from the interviews can be used for the final analysis of the study, Siegfried Lamnek (2002: 174) laid out four principles that should be followed when conducting qualitative interviews:

- 1) *Do not influence*: The questions and hypothesis upon which the research is based should not be carried over to the person being interviewed. The person being interviewed should be able to express themselves freely without interference from the interviewer. This follows the methodological principle of openness.
- 2) *Specification*: Everything that was experienced by the person being interviewed in a certain situation should be recognized or mentioned. Based however upon the idea of explication, those experiences have to be related to each other and interpreted by the interviewer.
- 3) *Cover a broad spectrum*: This means covering and collecting all perceived relevant data from the interview. Unexpected reactions to questions by the person being interviewed are of particular importance here.
- 4) *Profundity*: It is to be assumed that descriptions entail value and meaning. The underlying layers of meaning of what is said by the person being interviewed should also be taken into account.

Despite following the four principles, the researcher understands that their presence will inevitably affect the interview and the person being interviewed. There are no steps that can be taken to effectively avoid the "interviewer effects" (Yanow 2007: 114). It is therefore very important for the interviewer to understand and acknowledge how their own personal experiences with the issue being studied will shape how they conduct the research, what they observe, what they may oversee, what questions they may ask (or not ask), what they are told (or not told), who accepts an interview with them (who does not), and so on (Yanow 2007: 114).

It is important to establish a 'relationship' with the person being interviewed from the beginning and frame the interview as a partnership. The person must above all feel like their integrity will be protected (Wagenaar 2011: 252). Sometimes they may need help in developing their story, but it is important that the person conducting the interview help them develop it in their own way and in their own words. The interviewer can however assist by asking simple questions at the right moment which encourage the person being interviewed to give more detail or more examples. Robert Weiss (1995:75-76) suggested the following six tips to help the person being interviewed without influencing their answers: 1) Extending: Suggest that they develop the situation and explain how it came about, 2) Filing

in detail: Think of useful questions that could be used to get more detail from the respondent about a specific situation or event, 3) Identifying actors: Find out who else was involved and inquire about the social context, 4) Others the respondent consulted: Inquire about if the respondent sought help or advice from anyone, 5) Inner events: What thoughts, emotions, perceptions, etc. the respondent had when a certain event happened, and 6) Making indications explicit: The respondent may use non-verbal communication or body language to express their feelings, therefore it is important to have them explain what those feelings were in words for the transcript. These questions are precise and open. The person being interviewed can answer and develop their train of thought free from influence from the interviewer. They also learn that the interviewer is looking for detailed responses to the questions (Wagenaar 2011: 258).

The interviews conducted with female refugees in this study were performed based upon the principles and information detailed above. Through this it was ensured that the goal of the interviews was met with as little interference from the interviewer as possible. All of the interviews were conducted in German except for one. Therefore, the interview guideline for the semi-structured interviews was in German. For the one interview in English the questions were translated from German into English by the author of this study. The woman interviewed in English however spoke fluent German. Her native language was English which was the reason why she preferred to conduct the interview in that language as the author of this study is also a native English speaker.

3.4.2 Selection of Interview Partners and the Interview Process

In choosing the interview partners there was only one criteria that had to be met: they had to be recognized refugees or have protection status. In addition, speaking German was not a requirement. With refugee or protection status the women have access to all integration programs and offers. It is thus possible to ask questions about numerous topics and to discover their accessibility to integration programs. Female refugees whose asylum claim has been denied and who are currently appealing or being asked to return to their country of origin, or those waiting for a response to their initial asylum claim are not part of this study. Although their experiences are just as important and valid as women who have received refugee or protection status, they are outside of the target group of German integration policy and do not have access to what is offered. Including them in the interviews would lead to discussions outside the scope of this study. It is however highly recommended for further research that the situation of these women be looked at in detail. Many of them wait over a year for a response to their initial asylum claim. If denied and they appeal this could mean more years of waiting. This leads to a female refugee, and her family if she is married, living in Germany for possibly four or five years, for example, without any status or access to certain services and many integration offers and programs. This should not be overlooked in academia.

The author worked together with established and well-known welfare organizations and associations working directly with female refugees in each city to gain contact with women for the interviews. In many of the cities it was these organizations that organized rooms where the interviews could take place and set the time which would work best for the women. In the event that a woman worked during the day, the author went to her home in the evening and conducted the interview there. The interviews always took place in environments that the women knew and where they felt comfortable. An effort was made to reach out to female refugees who do not have much contact with Germans or who spend most of their time with women of the same culture, religion, or country of origin. Female refugees contacted for possible interviews by cooperation partners also assisted in helping to gain access to others that the author of this study or the cooperation partners otherwise would not have been able to reach. Many of the women also served as translators for family members or friends being interviewed.

The interviews took place between April and October 2019. The interviews were all recorded with the verbal consent of the women. Ethical considerations during the interview will be looked at in detail in section 3.4.4. Most of the interviews were conducted one on one. Ideally it was attempted to make sure no group was larger than three women to ensure that each woman had equal time to speak and, most importantly, felt free and comfortable to speak. An attempt was also made to keep the groups small for the purpose of transcribing after each interview in order to avoid a statement being attributed to the wrong woman. Smaller groups also made it easier to keep track of the interview. The flow of the interview was also easier. There were however two situations where groups of three women or less were not possible. There was a group of five women in Magdeburg and ten women in Cologne. The circumstances of these particular interviews will be looked at in more detail in section 3.4.3.

In returning briefly to the steps in Grounded Theory, theoretical sampling plays an important role in conducting interviews. In order to make sure that the findings truly represent the issue it is important to have a wide variety of people being interviewed as previously discussed. It was however not possible for the author of this study to fully account for theoretical sampling when selecting the women to be interviewed. Firstly, the number of women interviewed for this study, 36, was too small to be representative. It is thus a non-representative study. Despite being non-representative it is still important in providing initial findings. Secondly, the author had little control over choosing which women to invite for interviews in Cologne and Magdeburg as she was located in Wuerzburg. Besides informing the cooperation partners that only recognized female refugees could take part, the author relied on the cooperation partners, particularly in Magdeburg and Cologne, to reach out to women they thought would take the time to take part in an interview and who perhaps knew other women. In Wuerzburg however the author could work together with the cooperation partners and attempt to

reach women of various backgrounds and ages. In the end, the make-up of the women depended highly on who had time and was interested in taking part in an interview. The author of this study thought it ill-advised at this point in the research, and with a small sample size, to say no to women who were eager to tell their story and take the time to meet in order to account for theoretical sampling. It is highly suggested in future research to conduct interviews with more women in more states and cities in Germany. Theoretical sampling can better be accounted for when a larger number of female refugees take part in interviews creating a representative study.

After the interviews took place the next step was the analysis of the data. The interviews were transcribed and brought to text form in order to better analyze and compare. The transcription of the texts took place in the language that the interviews were given. In the case of this study all interviews were conducted in German except for one in English. Information used from the interviews in German and cited in this study in chapter five were translated by the author into English. It is important to take a brief moment to focus on the idea of translating. Translation can lead to a slight change in the meaning or context of the statements made. It requires “knowledge of subject-specific terminology, awareness of style and grammar, nuances, and idiomatic expressions” (Halai 2007: 351). The translated passages were therefore translated as the “inexact equivalent” not as the “exact equivalence” as that is not possible (Halai 2007: 351). The interviews were translated in such a way that the basic requirements of “(a) making sense, (b) conveying the spirit and manner of the original, and (c) hav[ing] a natural and easy form of expression” were met (Halai 2007: 351).

The length of the interviews were on average one hour and each interview was transcribed in its entirety. This was done in order to avoid important information being overlooked or underestimated when choosing what to transcribe and what to leave out. This could have led to bias or missing out on information that in the end could have been important for the final analysis. In transcribing each interview in its entirety, the complete story of the female refugee and her answers to the various questions could be seen in full. Each interview could then be compared with the others and with the findings of the analyses in chapter four. That was the only way to achieve a complete evaluation of the data. The resulting texts were carefully documented and archived.

Before discussing the coding of the interview it is important to note that due to all of the interviews being conducted in German except one, the coding was also done in German in order to ensure there was consistency. The findings were then translated into English to be used in the analysis in chapter five. The code building process was the same in this study as in the majority of other qualitative research. Interviews were read in order to identify the potential indicators for coding. The potential indicators were then specified. After this the potential indicators were used to code other interviews in order to see if they worked or if there were problems that needed to be adjusted. This was then repeated until the code was viewed as being reliable and valid (Gläser and Laudel 2010: 222).

It is important to note that not every respondent had the same experiences or focused on the same topics during the interviews. This means that with some respondents there was not enough information for certain coding. This is however normal and does not raise concerns for the effectiveness of the study. The purpose of the coding was to find the most common themes and most important aspects of integration for the women themselves. The final and most consistent and effective codes that developed through the process make up the sections in chapter five which are used to analyze the situation of the female refugees interviewed for this study: German course and learning German, education, recognition of qualifications, work experience in Germany, experience with government agencies, German laws and system, contact with Germans, discrimination, adjusting to and integrating into life in Germany, appreciations, and overall experience and advice. These codes represent what was most important for the women being interviewed and provides for an effective way at analyzing their situation and comparing it with the results of the document analysis.

3.4.3 Overview of Interviews and Women

In total 37 recognized female refugees were interviewed in three different states and cities. It is therefore non-representative but nevertheless presents initial findings on the situation of female refugees and their experiences with integration in Germany. It is also important to note that the author only travelled to each city once for interviews. This was due unfortunately to time restrictions. Ideally it would have been beneficial to the study if the author had been able to travel to each city multiple times in order to ask follow-up questions and interview more women. This unfortunately was not possible. Nonetheless, the author was able to find creative solutions to this problem and conduct fruitful interviews. Tables 3, 4, and 5 breakdown the age, nationality, marital status, number of children, work experience, educational background, religion, when they arrived in Germany, and when they received refugee or protection status for the women in each state. For some women it was not possible to gain all of this information due to the circumstances surrounding the interview or their level of German. In addition, the author felt with certain women that she could not ask private questions such as their religion, their age, if they were married, or about their residence permit. It was their first, and only, contact and it was important for the author to first make sure that the women felt comfortable so that they could share their story and discuss their experiences. With these women the author did not want to start by asking questions which could be viewed as very private, but rather begin with small talk and then ask questions as the conversation became more relaxed. Due to the progression of some interviews it was however not always possible to ask certain questions. Where such information is lacking the author does not feel that it negatively affects the information gained through the interview. The identity of the women has been kept anonymous. Any information that could lead to their identification has been left out and pseudonyms have been used. Locations of

certain interviews, the names of organizations which helped connect the author of this study to the women, or where women have worked or are currently working have also been left out as the women could be identified through this information.

The interviews in the city of Cologne in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia presented unique challenges. During the first attempt to contact organizations and groups that worked with female refugees, the author either did not get a response or there was no possibility of women being asked if they would be interested in taking part in an interview. Upon the second attempt one organization did respond but could only guarantee an interview with one woman. The organization stated it would however ask other women. The author travelled to Cologne for the scheduled meeting. Upon arrival she learned it had not been possible for the organization to ask other women. While in Cologne the author personally went to various organizations and groups asking if it would be possible to arrange interviews with female refugees on such short notice. The author discovered a women’s breakfast and decided to go. It was not possible to contact anyone beforehand due to it being a spontaneous visit. Upon arrival the author explained her research and the purpose of the interviews to the German woman in charge of the breakfast. She agreed to allow the author to ask the women if they would be interested in taking part in an interview without any prior notice. Ten women were present at the breakfast and all agreed to the interview. The time was however restricted to one hour. Due to the spontaneous nature of the interview it was not possible to gain all information about the women. In total 11 women were interviewed in Cologne. One woman from the first organization and ten from the women’s breakfast. Information regarding the women is presented in Table 3. Only seven women are however listed in the table.

Table 3: Women Interviewed in Cologne

| | Nationality | Age | Marital Status | Number of Children | Work Experience | Education Background | Religion | Year arrived in Germany | Year received refugee or protection status |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----|---------------------|--|--|---|----------|------------------------------|--|
| Hani | German (originally Iranian) | 63 | Divorced in Germany | One born in Iran and one born in Germany | NGOs and Women’s Rights Groups In Iran and Germany | Bachelor and Master in Iran. Began PhD in Germany but stopped due to work | (*) | 1986 | 1988 |
| Layla | Iranian | (*) | Single | none | Teacher in Iran. Nurse and taxi driver in Germany | University in Iran and training to be a nurse in Germany | (*) | After the Iranian Revolution | (*) |
| Faezeh | Iranian | (*) | Married | Two | Housewife | (*) | (*) | 1988 | 1993 |
| Maral | Iranian | (*) | (*) | Two | (*) | (*) | (*) | 2017 | (*) |
| Fateme | Iranian | (*) | Single | none | (*) | (*) | (*) | 2017 | (*) |
| Melika | Iranian | (*) | Married | (*) | (*) | (*) | (*) | After the Iranian Revolution | (*) |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------------------------|-----|
| Mina | German (originally Iranian) | (*) | Divorced in Germany | (*) | (*) | (*) | (*) | After the Iranian Revolution | (*) |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------------------------|-----|

Own graph. Names of the women have been changed. The notation (*) means that the information is not available.

There are two reasons why not all eleven women are listed. Firstly, it was difficult to conduct a spontaneous interview with ten women. Many times they spoke simultaneously. It was also not possible to ask follow-up questions or focus on certain topics because of the time restraint. Due to this, only the women who were easiest to follow when transcribing the interview were used for the study. The story and experiences of the other women are just as important but it was not possible to gain enough information to use for the analysis. Throughout the course of the interview the author also became unsure about if two of the ten women had received refugee or protection status or if they were still waiting. Due to this uncertainty they were not included in the final analysis although their answers and experiences were fully transcribed. The author did however know that all of the other women had received refugee or protection status and many of them now had permanent residency and one had become German. It was however not possible to find out exactly when each woman had arrived, when exactly they had received their status, or how old they were. Almost all of the women were of similar age as many had come to Germany after the Iranian revolution in 1979. Due to the situation and uncertainties, the answers of only six of the ten women who took part at the Women's breakfast were used for the final analysis in this study (Layla, Faezeh, Maral, Fateme, Melika, and Mina Table 3). All of the women interviewed in Cologne were originally from Iran. The author was informed that there is a very large and active Iranian community in the city which could account for this. It was not possible for the author to return to Cologne for a second time to attempt to interview more women from other countries due to funding restraints. Despite these challenges, the author was able to gain valuable information from the women interviewed for the study and enough to compare with women in other cities.

In contrast to Cologne, the author received an immediate response from almost all organizations and groups contacted in Magdeburg in the state of Saxony-Anhalt. The response from organizations and groups was so overwhelming that the author was not able to take advantage of all of the offers for cooperation. This could have created a situation where women located in Magdeburg were potentially overrepresented in the study making a comparison with the two other cities difficult. Interviews with 16 women were conducted in the end. Only 15 of the interviews were however used as it came out during an interview that one of the women did not come as a refugee but as an immigrant. The stories and experiences of female immigrants are important and deserve to be heard. Female refugees are however the focus of this study. An overview of the women can be found in Table 4.

Table 4: Women Interviewed in Magdeburg

| | Nationality | Age | Marital Status | Number of Children | Work experience | Education Background | Religion | Year arrived in Germany | Year received refugee or protection status |
|----------------|---|-----|---------------------|---|---|--|----------|-------------------------|--|
| Aamiina | Somalian | 24 | Married | (*) | Vocational Training in elderly care in Germany | Secondary School Certificate from Eritrea, Realschulabschluss from Germany | Islam | 2015 | 2016 |
| Faven | Eritrean | 28 | (*) | One born in Germany | (*) | (*) | (*) | 2016 | 2019 |
| Ella | Eritrean | (*) | (*) | One born in Germany | (*) | (*) | (*) | 2015 | 2015 |
| Helen | Eritrean | 30 | Married | One born in Germany (others in Eritrea) | (*) | (*) | (*) | 2016 | (*) |
| Sesuna | Eritrean | 28 | Married | Two children born in Germany | (*) | (*) | (*) | 2015 | (*) |
| Senait | Eritrean | 29 | Married | Two children born in Germany | (*) | (*) | (*) | 2014 | 2016 |
| Arya | Kurdish (In the process of becoming German) | 28 | Single | none | Part-time jobs in cafés and restaurants during school time and team leader at a manufacturing company | Schooling in Germany, vocational training as pharmaceutical technical assistant, Bachelor now in Social Work | Islam | 1998 | 2016 |
| Sahin | German (Originally Kurdish) | 26 | Single | none | Volunteer work helping refugees and freelance translator | Schooling in Germany and now Bachelor in Social Work | Islam | 2002 | 2006 |
| Elaha | Afghan | 39 | (*) | Seven | (*) | (*) | Islam | 2016 | (*) |
| Qudsia | Afghan | 50 | Divorced in Germany | Four | (*) | (*) | Islam | 2016 | (*) |
| Selda | Syrian | 38 | (*) | Two | (*) | (*) | Islam | 2017 | (*) |
| Yana | Syrian | 22 | Single | none | In Syria beautician | (*) | Islam | 2017 | (*) |
| Malva | Syrian | 50 | (*) | One | In Syria tailor | (*) | Islam | 2017 | (*) |
| Diana | Syrian | 34 | Married | Two children | In Germany translator for potential trainees, translator for a program with refugee women, and works at her family business | University degree in English studies | Islam | 2015 | 2015 |
| Zia | Lebanese | 31 | Married | One child born in Lebanon, two in Germany | Orthodontist's assistant in Lebanon | Studied law in Lebanon but did not finish | Islam | 2014 | 2018 |

Own graph. Names of the women have been changed. The notation (*) means that the information is not available.

There were three interviews in Magdeburg with special circumstances. At one organization five women had agreed to take part in an interview together (Elaha, Qudsia, Selda, Yana, and Malva in Table 4). After the author explained the purpose of the interview and the consent forms some of the women were apprehensive about signing their names. The author did not want to pressure the women to sign and explained again what their signatures would be used for and that they would not be passed on. The women were extremely open during the interview but the author became aware that they were not comfortable with discussing their status or anything pertaining to that. Due to this it was not possible to find out when they had received their refugee or protection status. It was also not possible to discuss educational backgrounds or work experience as the women often spoke over each other and were excited to talk about certain aspects of integration and experiences they have had in Germany. During two other interviews the women's husbands arrived after work towards the end (Senait and Zia in Table 4). They sat down and engaged in conversation and took part in the interview. The author however had enough time with the women individually to gain useful information and learn about their experiences before the husbands arrived. The husband's contributions and answers to questions were fully transcribed.

Contact and cooperation with groups and organizations in the city of Wuerzburg in the state of Bavaria was just as successful as in Magdeburg. It would have been possible to conduct interviews with numerous women. The number of women interviewed in Wuerzburg was however influenced by how many women had been interviewed in Cologne and Magdeburg. Due to the special circumstances which arose in Cologne leading to not every interview being able to be used, if just as many women had been interviewed in Wuerzburg as in Magdeburg, or more, it would not have been possible to use the interviews from Cologne. The women would have been greatly underrepresented and a comparison extremely difficult. Ten interviews were thus conducted in total in Wuerzburg. An overview of the women can be found in Table 5. Through limiting the number of interviews to ten, the author was able to attempt to balance out the lower number of interviews in Cologne with the higher number of interviews in Magdeburg. Through this a comparison between all three cities was made possible.

Table 5: Women Interviewed in Wuerzburg

| | Nationality | Age | Marital Status | Number of Children | Work experience | Education Background | Religion | Year arrived in Germany | Year received refugee or protection status |
|---------------|-------------|-----|----------------------------------|---------------------|---|---|----------|-------------------------|--|
| Saya | Syrian | 22 | Single | none | Self-employed translator in Germany | Studied medicine in Syria. Did not finish | Islam | 2016 | 2016 |
| Lava | Syrian | 44 | Widow | Four | Elementary and music teacher in Syria | University degree in Syria | Islam | 2016 | 2016 |
| Milana | Syrian | 36 | Separated in Germany | Two | In Syria worked in a Kindergarten, as a math teacher, as an accountant, as a banker, and as a social worker. In Germany internship in an elementary school | Vocational training in Syria to be a banker | Islam | (*) | 2017 |
| Marla | Syrian | 39 | Married | none | In Syria elementary school teacher. In Germany Arabic teacher and part-time position at a school | University degree in Syria | Islam | 2014 | 2015 |
| Rina | Kosovar | 25 | Single | none | Kindergarten teacher | All of her schooling and education in Germany. | Islam | Born in Germany in 1994 | 2010 |
| Xelat | Kurdish | 32 | Single | none | none | No education in Kurdistan (Iraq). Working towards Mittelschulabschluss in Germany to start a vocational training in elderly care. | Islam | 2009 | Could not remember |
| Jana | Syrian | 27 | Single | none | Eight month Internship in an arrival center for refugees, six months with the Bundesfreiwilligendienst, employed at a shoe store, employed at a gas station | Studied English Literature in Syria at the University. Doing bachelor in Social Work in Germany | Islam | 2013 | 2013 |
| Nancy | Ugandan | 29 | Single (lives with the father of | Two born in Germany | In Germany various part-time jobs and work in | High school degree in Uganda. German | Islam | 2008 | 2018 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------|-----|---------------|-------|--|--|-------|------|------|
| | | | her children) | | elderly care as part of her vocational training | Mittelschulabschluss and currently doing vocational training in elderly care | | | |
| Nazia | Afghan | 17 | Single | none | A few jobs next to school | Attending school in Germany | Islam | 2011 | 2013 |
| Lida | Afghan | (*) | Married | Three | In Afghanistan gym teacher (aerobics). In Germany works in the factory of a company and at her family business | Vocational training in Afghanistan to be a gym teacher | Islam | 2011 | 2013 |

Own graph. Names of the women have been changed. The notation (*) means that the information is not available.

Three special situations arose during interviews in Wuerzburg. The author had scheduled an interview with a woman from Afghanistan (Lida from Table 5). Upon arrival the woman was there with her daughter (Nazia from Table 5) so that her daughter could help her in case she did not understand everything in German. Nazia took equal part in the interview and at times answered more questions based upon her experiences than her mother Lida did. Although Nazia was 17 the author wanted to include her in the study due to what she had said during the interview. Her mother signed a consent form allowing this which is the reason why there is one minor represented in the study. In the next situation, the author had organized an interview with three women from Syria who knew each other (Saya, Lava, and Milana from Table 5). Milana was however running very late so Saya and Lava suggested doing the interview with them first. Saya is Lava's eldest daughter. After Milana arrived the author conducted an interview with her but Saya and Lava were still present as the interview took place at Lava's home. Due to this they also took part in the interview with Milana answering questions and making remarks. In addition, one of Lava's daughters arrived after school and sat down. At times she made comments during the interview about certain topics. She however did not speak enough to be included in the study. Despite having three additional people present during the interview, the author made sure that the focus remained on Milana and that she was able to fully tell her story and discuss her experiences. Through Saya the author was able to gain contact with another woman from Syria: Marla (Table 5). Saya accompanied the author to the interview with Marla and also made comments or answered questions. As was the case with Milana, the author made sure that the focus remained on Marla and that she was able to answer all questions and discuss her experiences. One circumstance also requires brief attention. The question may arise why Rina (Table 5) has been included in this study as she was born in Germany. For someone unfamiliar with German nationality law it may seem confusing why a young woman born and raised in Germany would not have German citizenship. Rina is Kosovar. As discussed in section 2.2 being born in Germany does not automatically

make one German. There are requirements that need to be fulfilled. Rina was born to refugee parents. Due to this she is also categorized as a refugee based upon German law. This is a situation which many children and young adults find themselves in who have been born in Germany but whose parents are either immigrants or refugees. In the most extreme of cases they are stateless. Due to this Rina is considered a refugee to the same extent as the women who were not born here but fled from other countries.

Through the overview in Tables 3, 4, and 5 a picture emerges of the women overall. Out of the 37 women interviewed responses from 32 could be used for this study. Of those 32 there was not one nationality which strongly dominated. Most of the women were Syrian (9) but this was closely followed by Eritrea (5), Iran (5), Afghanistan (4), and three women with German citizenship. Although religion did not come up in every interview the majority of the women were Muslim (20). It was almost even between women who were married (10) and those who were single (11). Slightly more women however had children (18) than those who did not (11). A bit less than half of the women were between the ages of 18 and 30 (12) meaning that this age group made up the majority of women being interviewed. Due to the study being focused on integration experiences in Germany, it was not possible to discuss the background of every woman. As a result it was not possible to find out for about half of the women if they had work experience in their country of origin or what their educational background was. In addition, many of the women were currently attending language courses or had young children which kept them from being able to work in Germany. Almost half of the women however (15) had work experience in Germany and about a third (9) had work experience in their country of origin. A bit less than half (12) had either vocational training or had studied at a university in their country of origin. Around a third (10) had obtained, or were currently in the process of obtaining, some type of education in Germany. About half of the women (15) had been in Germany for less than five years which matched to a bit less than half (12) of the women having had some type of refugee or protection status for less than five years. As discussed above, it was however not possible to know when each woman had obtained refugee or protection status as it was the first time they had met the author and not all women were prepared to discuss their status. This information is thus missing for 13 women. Based upon this overview the majority of women interviewed for this study were Muslim, were either married or single, had at least one child, and were between the ages of 18 and 30. The average woman had work experience in Germany and had obtained some type of qualification or vocational training/university education in her country of origin. She has been in Germany, and has had refugee or protection status, for less than five years. She is therefore young, educated, a Muslim, and has worked in Germany.

Although already discussed in chapter 3.4.2, it is important to look one last time at translating. All of the interviews took place in the German language except for one in English (Nancy from Uganda

in Table 5). None of the women were native speakers although one of the women was born in Germany and three others came at such a young age that they grew up speaking German. All of the quotes used for the analysis in this chapter have been translated from German to English except for quotes from the interview already conducted in English. As already stated in chapter 3.4.2 there can be no “exact equivalence” of the quotes as this is simply not possible (Halai 2007: 351). The quotes must thus be understood as the “inexact equivalent” of the original (Halai 2007: 351). The quotes were translated in such a way that the basic requirements of “(a) making sense, (b) conveying the spirit and manner of the original, and (c) hav[ing] a natural and easy form of expression” were met (Halai 2007: 351). Each woman had her own personal and unique way of speaking German and the levels were different. Specific grammar mistakes made or the wrong use of a word in German could not be translated into English as they were language specific. Due to this it is not possible for the reader to get a sense of the women’s use of the German language. This however does not change the context of the original quote or misconvey the meaning. The women’s stories and experiences in English are still true to the original German and their voice is still very much present despite being translated.

3.4.4. Ethical Considerations

In the area of forced migration it is becoming more common to conduct interviews directly with refugees, displaced persons, or asylum-seekers. Many of these people have experienced trauma, have fled dangerous situations, have lost loved ones, and/or live in precarious and uncertain situations. As a researcher conducting fieldwork ethical questions must thus be at the center of how we collect our data (Krause 2017b: 1). Research ethics have become widely discussed. In 2007 the Refugee Studies Centre in Oxford presented its *Ethical Guidelines for Good Research Practices* which was meant to be used as a type of guide for researchers. In addition, the idea of *Do No Harm* has become a golden rule upon which the majority of scholars agree on (Krause 2017b: 5). Following the guidelines from the Refugee Studies Centre and keeping *Do No Harm* in the foreground however does not guarantee that ‘no harm’ will take place. It causes the researcher to constantly reflect on their research and above all puts the person being interviewed and their well-being in the center. Although the guidelines developed by the Refugee Studies Centre and the widespread agreement on *Do No Harm* are important developments, many scholars simply just mention the names or reference them as a way to check the box in their research of having appropriately taken ethics into account.

As already mentioned in chapter one, it was extremely important for the author of this study to conduct a study *with* female refugees and not solely *about* them. As discussed in chapter two, refugees in general are often portrayed as ‘objects’. Female refugees are most often labeled simply as a group of passive victims without a voice. Their individual stories or the chance to be presented as

independent agents is often taken away from them from the very beginning. In order to avoid that in this study research ethics played an important and central role.

The rights of the women interviewed for this study were constantly kept in focus. Informed consent forms have become a popular tool in fieldwork for researchers. Informed consent forms are made of up three features: 1) participants must receive information about the research, 2) they must adequately understand what they are agreeing to, and 3) they must be able to freely decide to participate (Krause 2017b: 10). Before conducting the interviews for this study, the author introduced herself to the women and verbally explained the purpose of the study. A consent form was then thoroughly discussed with the interviewees informing them of their rights as participants and allowing them to ask questions. Issues however did at times arise in connection with the informed consent form. These issues are connected to the current debates among researchers on the effectiveness of such forms. Not all of the women taking part in the interviews were literate. The majority had an adequate level of German to conduct an interview, but not all had an adequate enough level of German in order to understand their rights and what was listed in the consent form. A few of the women raised concerns about signing their names as they thought it could possibly lead to others finding out that they took part and cause potentially dangerous situations. Women who had not been in Germany for very long and came from countries where speaking negatively about the government was a dangerous action and women were suppressed without many rights were particularly nervous about signing the informed consent form. In such situations the author took time to repeatedly go over the laws in Germany, what would happen with the consent form, what would happen with the interviews (as they were being recorded), who could potentially see them, and to answer questions. No woman was forced or 'convinced' to sign the form. Once the women had thoroughly understood what would happen with their interviews and signature they signed the consent form. Each interviewee was given a copy of the consent form, along with the author's contact information, to bring home and read through again and translate if needed. They could then contact the author if questions arose.⁶ Most importantly they had the possibility to decide to end the interview early or to contact the author at a later date to have their interview excluded from the study if they decided to withdraw their participation. The author also decided that all of the names of the women would be changed and their real identity kept anonymous. Only their age and where they live will be mentioned in the analysis in chapter five. The majority of the women agreed with this and it gave them a sense of ease. There were however a few women who had no problem with their name being used. One woman even insisted that her name be used. Although it is important to let the women have agency over what is done with their personal information, the author nonetheless decided to keep all women anonymous for this study.

⁶ None of the women interviewed contacted the author after the interviews.

As each interview lasted approximately an hour and the interviewees were meeting the author for the first time, a certain level of trust needed to be built in a short amount of time. The author also wanted to avoid a 'hierarchical' situation where she as the interviewer was perceived by the interviewee as being 'above' them. A mutual feeling of respect and partnership had to be fostered from the beginning. Although it can be debated if a true feeling of trust, respect, and partnership can be developed in such a short amount of time, it was important for the author to achieve as high a level as possible. As noted in the previous section, the interviews took place in buildings that the women were familiar with and even at some of their homes. The interviewees were connected with the author for the interviews through people they knew and had already created a bond and trust with. This in turn made it a bit easier to create an atmosphere of ease from the beginning. The author began with small talk in order to create a type of relationship with the women and to make them feel as comfortable as possible. It was repeated that the women were the experts on their own experiences, that they were partners in making sure that female refugees' voices were heard, and that each individual woman was important.

Creating a feeling of trust, respect, and partnership is made more difficult when the cultural backgrounds and language of the interviewer and interviewee are different. Understanding someone that comes from a different background, culture, or situation can at times be a fundamental problem. It is never certain that we have properly understood a statement made by somebody else as we can only understand it based upon our own value systems (Kruse 2014: 68). *Fremd zu sein* or being a 'stranger' means that we are inadequately 'interpreting' or 'categorizing' verbal and non-verbal communication. In order to properly interpret and categorize it is important to bear in mind the context within which the discussion is taking place (Bohnsack 2000: 97). At the beginning the personal 'reference system' of the interviewer (meaning how the interviewer views and understands their world) is sometimes not enough to understand what is being said. The interviewer has to work on understanding and expanding their reference system so that in the end they do understand what is being said (Helfferich 2011: 131). In the case of this study the author, in the role of interviewer, and those being interviewed were from different backgrounds and cultures. In addition, the majority of the women interviewed spoke a different language. This unfamiliarity therefore needed to be approached with a certain openness by the interviewer. This idea of 'openness' meant to listen to and take in what was unfamiliar, new, unique, and foreign (Helfferich 2011: 131). When the women had trouble expressing certain thoughts in German the author encouraged them not to give up and that it was ok if they were having trouble. They were given the time and space to fully express themselves and discuss topics that were most important for them. When the author did not understand something she asked the women. The author and the women were at times a team working through language and culture

barriers which also assisted in creating a certain level of trust and respect. It must be noted that the author is also not a German native speaker.

As stated earlier it was not a criteria that the women could speak German. For the interviews where translators were needed the women took the initiative themselves to bring a friend or conducted the interview together with a female family member with a better command of the German language. This was not agreed upon in advance. The women simply informed the cooperation partners ahead of time. Due to this there was no need to organize translators. For the most part the women translating for their friend or family member allowed the conversation to remain between the interviewee and the interviewer. The author also made it a point that the interviewee felt that she was communicating directly with them even if it was through a translator. There were a few instances when a translator answered questions for an interviewee or corrected what they said. As the author did not have the possibility to speak privately with the translators beforehand it was not possible to discuss certain aspects of translating with them. Such as allowing the interviewee to express themselves freely and that 'exact' translations are not possible and should not be strived for. Due to this the author had to attempt to make these corrections simultaneously during the interview without losing the direct contact with the interviewee. This however did not affect the results of the interview. In situations where the author felt that the translator may have answered the question for the interviewee, the author asked the question later on in a different way in order to hear directly from the interviewee.

An important aspect during the interview was understanding the situation of the women being interviewed. The psychological and emotional state of the women can at times be difficult as the asylum process can be long, draining, and put them under enormous pressure. Although the women interviewed had received refugee or protection status, many were still experiencing high amounts of stress or were still living in temporary accommodation centers due to a lack of housing. The author wanted to avoid a situation where the interview itself had negative emotional consequences for the women as they at times spoke about difficult situations. It was therefore important during the interviews to make sure that successes or positive moments were also discussed and touched on by the women. If the author felt that a topic was becoming too emotional for a woman or that she was hesitant to answer a specific question, she quickly changed the subject. In situations where women did discuss experiences that had effected them negatively and caused stress but did not want to change the subject, the author focused on the strength of the woman in being able to conquer the situation and what she had learned from going through it in order to attempt to end on a positive note.

It was also important for the author to keep in mind that an interview plays a very special role in the lives of female refugees, and refugees as a whole. All of the women being interviewed had already given at least one interview during their asylum process. The first one lays the foundation for their whole asylum process. The situation of giving an interview can therefore be seen as negative or

be connected with uncertainty or even fear. It was therefore very important for the success of this study that the women were told in detail when approached by the cooperation partners to take part in the interview what the purpose and goal of this study was. The author further reiterated this fact during the interview with the women. It was also important to make clear that the author of this study could not help them or give any legal advice.

The ethical questions do not end after the interview. Any researcher conducting interviews must also answer the question of how they will handle the information gained from the interviews after and if/how they will reach out again to those who took part in the interviews. The cooperation partners and the female refugees who took part in the interviews showed immense trust in allowing the author to come to them and to discuss private, and at times delicate, information. Providing feedback to the cooperation partners and female refugees as well as updating them on the results of the study are viewed as important. The author wants to continue to convey the feeling and message that a partnership was established with the female refugees and that even after the interview is over they are still important and relevant. The author does not have the contact information for the majority of women who took part in the interviews as contact was made via the cooperation partners. The author however gave her contact information to every woman and informed them that they could reach out to her for an update on the study at any point. In addition, the author arranged with each cooperation partner that she would inform them once the study was completed and upon publication send a copy of the manuscript which they can then look through with the women.

3.5 Summary: Theoretical and Methodological Frameworks

The last two chapters have provided detailed information on the theoretical and methodological frameworks for this study. Although presented in two separate chapters, they are intertwined in order to provide the backbone of the study. They complement each other and guide the analyses in this study. It is important therefore to take a moment to detail how exactly they work together. The theory of semantics showed that language plays a central role in the research field of Forced Migration. The way the people at the center of this issue are portrayed in political and public discourse, and how they are defined, directly influences policy and decisions. Semantics and a focus on language is a thread that weaves itself throughout the entire study. This directly connects to the technique of interpretive policy analysis as *meaning* is at the heart of analysis. Understanding the deeper relevance of language through the theory of semantics is therefore important in properly conducting an interpretive policy analysis. The methods used for this study as represented through a document analysis, ethnomethodology, and Grounded Theory anchor the idea of meaning into the study while still keeping the author focused and on task. These methodological tools however also ensure that the focus is not

too strongly on meaning which could lead to other important aspects, such as the role of power, being overlooked.

Through looking at the theories of integration in connection with the unclear definition and understanding behind the term integration a very important framework is set for the methods described above. In conducting the document analysis, discovering and defining the policy artifacts, and locating acts the theoretical framework creates the guidelines within which the development of integration policy regarding female refugees is to be analyzed. Without establishing this theoretical framework in order to guide the methods the research would not have had been focused. There would have been the danger that it could have gone in various directions. The core domains of integration as defined by Ager and Strang in 2008 and discussed in section 2.2.1 also set a framework for the document analysis and interviews with the female refugees concerning integration. There are many aspects to integration policy and it is easy to get lost in them. The core domains of integration helped to create a guideline for the semi-structured interviews with the female refugees. In defining which aspects of integration are essential, the core domains of integration helped to keep the guideline for the interviews focused while still ensuring enough space for the women to be able to freely discuss the various topics and what is most important for them.

The theory of intersectionality discussed in section 2.3 is an important addition to the theoretical framework in making sure that the methodological tools used properly address the 'real' situation of female refugees. They are not just women and should not be reduced to the single identity of gender. Their experiences are also influenced by various other identities they associate with. Understanding the theory of intersectionality is especially important in connection with semi-structured interviews and analyzing and understanding the results. Each woman is unique. In order to compare the integration experience of one woman to another it is important to understand the various identities that come together within each woman to effectively draw conclusions about similarities, differences, and why they may exist. Political steering further brings the theoretical framework together in one coherent and comprehensive formulation. Developing and understanding integration policy regarding female refugees involves semantics, understanding integration, and intersectionality. Through political steering the theoretical framework can most effectively be used as a guide for the methodological framework and as an extension of it.

By using an interpretive policy analysis together with the theoretical and methodological frameworks presented, a new and innovative approach to analyzing German integration policy regarding female refugees has been established. It has been shown through this study to be an effective, practical, and focused approach which can be used as a basis for further studies on the subject.

4 Female Refugees and the Development of Integration Policy in Germany

The election of the first red-green coalition government (SPD and the Greens) in Germany under Chancellor Gerhard Schröder on September 27, 1998 laid the foundation for a new focus on immigration and integration policy. In the Coalition Agreement from October 20, 1998 both parties recognized that an irreversible process of migration had taken place. Their focus was now on the integration of immigrants who had been living in the country long-term and who recognized Germany's constitutional values (Koalitionsvereinbarung 1998: 38). At the center of integration policy was a modernization of the Nationality Law from 1913. Since then German nationality had been based upon the principle of *ius sanguinis* (right of blood). Through a modernization of the law, the coalition wanted to change to the principle of *ius soli* (right of soil) making it easier for immigrants, and their children, to become naturalized citizens. 'Blood' would no longer determine if you could be German but rather 'soil' or where you were born and lived. In addition, dual-citizenship would be allowed so that immigrants would not have to 'deny' their identity and in order to make the naturalization process easier. These objectives of modernizing the Nationality Law and allowing dual-citizenship were further promoted by Schröder on November 10, 1998 in his speech to the *Bundestag*⁷ laying out his government's goals and objectives (Schröder 1998: 60-61).

In addition to modernizing the Nationality Law, the Green Party wanted to develop a legal way of controlling and managing immigration. The SPD however did not support a fundamental change to German immigration policy (Siefken 2007: 137). Then Secretary of the Interior, Otto Schily, stated that Germany's capacity to take in immigrants had been exceeded (Spiegel 1998). The focus was on *restricting* immigration. Not on managing it. Therefore, there would be no move to create or develop an immigration policy; the focus would only be on the Nationality Law. The CDU and CSU were however strongly against the addition of dual-citizenship to the Nationality Law. They initiated a petition against it in 1998 and 1999 during the state parliamentary elections. This petition and protest gained support in many states and played a particularly significant role in the public and political discourse in the state of Hesse. Due to the outcome of the elections there, and the subsequent loss of the SPD, the coalition lost their majority in the *Bundesrat*⁸. This in turn weakened the government's hand moving forward in the field of immigration and made it harder for them to achieve their goals.⁹ With their weakened position the coalition, particularly the Greens, had to remove dual-citizenship from the Nationality Law

⁷ This is the German federal parliament. The German term *Bundestag* will be used in this study instead of the English translation. Using the German word will allow for more clarity when discussing the legislative process in the country.

⁸ This is the legislative body representing the 16 German federal states. The governing parties in each state are represented in this body. They are not directly elected by the citizens of the state. The *Bundesrat* has the power to suggest new laws to the *Bundestag*. A law cannot be passed in Germany without the consent of the *Bundesrat*. The German word *Bundesrat* will be used in this study to provide for more clarity when discussing the German legislative process.

⁹ See Siefken (2007), especially chapter 4, for more information on the role the parliamentary election in Hesse played, as well as the debate on dual-citizenship, in the development of integration policy in Germany.

in order to have it accepted. On January 1, 2000 the law was enacted. This date marks the beginning of intense debate and discussion on integration and immigration policy in Germany.

4.1 The Federal Government and the Integration of Female Refugees 1998-2019

The discussion surrounding female refugees in Germany regarding policy did not start out with integration but was rather in the realm of asylum law and protection from gender-related persecution. In order to fully understand and follow the development, it is important to briefly look back at the last years of the coalition government between the FDP and the CDU and CSU under Chancellor Helmut Kohl (1982 - 1998). Persecution against women was often in the private sphere and by non-state actors. This was not recognized as grounds for asylum in Germany. At the Conference for Equality and Women's Affairs on June 26, 1997 the federal states of Berlin, Hamburg, and Saxony-Anhalt introduced a proposal that gender-related persecution should be grounds for asylum. They proposed that the German government implement a number of measures such as Gender Guidelines as in Canada and the US and a gender-sensitive interpretation of the Geneva Convention (Brabandt 2011: 142). In addition, the parliamentary groups from the SPD, the Greens, and the PDS (today the Left party) submitted various proposals requesting the same. They also sought the recognition of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as grounds for asylum. The sticking point at the center of the debate was the German government's understanding of persecution and who a refugee was. For Germany, a refugee was a person fleeing *political* persecution which was most commonly associated with a young man. This persecution was directly related to the state. Gender-related persecution did not fit into this understanding.

Then Minister for Women's Affairs, Claudia Nolte, summarized the position of the German government stating that it would mean a completely new conception of the term asylum if gender-related persecution would also be understood as 'impairments' that could not be attributed to the state. In the basic understanding of asylum it is not protection in and by itself (from family and society), but protection from state actions (Brabandt 2011: 145). In addition, in response to inquiries by parliamentarians regarding if persecution based on gender could be attributed to membership of a certain social group based on the Geneva Convention, the government stated that it was not of crucial importance for Germany. The legal grounds for asylum were based on Article 16 in the Basic Law. For Germany, asylum procedures were centered on the concept of political persecution as stated in this article. Not the direct interpretation and establishment of the Geneva Convention (Drucksache 13/9715 1998: 6). In the final months of the Kohl government, the various parliamentary groups were unable to achieve a bill or law recognizing gender-related persecution.

With the beginning of the red-green coalition government under Gerhard Schröder in 1998, many NGOs and organizations anticipated the recognition of gender-related persecution and a gender-

sensitive interpretation of the Geneva Convention. The two governing parties had been amongst the strongest supporters of this during the Kohl government. With the release of the Coalition Agreement on October 20, 1998 they were however disappointed. The topic was relegated to one sentence simply stating that the government would revise administrative regulations with the goal of taking into account reasons for gender-related persecution (Koalitionsvereinbarung 1998: 39). In comparison to other countries in the EU, and in the world, Germany was lagging behind with the recognition of gender-related persecution, a gender-sensitive interpretation of the Geneva Convention, and the implementation of gender guidelines.¹⁰ This topic was relegated to debates at the EU but would again become relevant in Germany a few years later as discussions regarding immigration intensified.

4.1.1 The Disadvantaged Muslim Woman

With the enactment of the Nationality Law on January 1, 2000 Germany had a modern citizenship policy and a major goal of integration for the coalition was fulfilled. The main political parties, besides the Greens and opposition parties such as the Left Party, were still adamant that there would be no reform of immigration policy. This however changed with Gerhard Schröder's speech at the opening of the computer trade fair Cebit on February 23, 2000. Schröder suggested implementing a 'Green Card' for high-tech specialists using the US Green Card as an example (Spiegel 2000). This unexpected idea caught his party, and the coalition, off guard. While the CSU and members of the SPD criticized the idea, businesses along with the FDP and the Greens welcomed it. The 'Green Card debate' opened the door for a discussion on developing an immigration policy. Immigration was no longer simply seen as a humanitarian duty but rather something connected to the economy (Siefken 2007: 145).

With his speech in Berlin on May 12, 2000 then President¹¹ Johannes Rau brought the topics of immigration and integration to the forefront. For Rau, Germany had spent too little time over the years thinking about what integration should look like. The debate instead had been on whether Germany was a multicultural society and what to do with 'the' foreigners. For Rau however 'the' foreigners did not exist (Rau 2000). Germany needed to start thinking about following the example of other countries and creating a law to actively support integration. For him integration was a societal task which needed to be taken seriously (Rau 2000). Everyone should know what to expect and what is expected of them when coming to Germany. Rau highlighted however that it was important to separate integration from the right to asylum. Thus the debate on dual-citizenship, the modernization of the Nationality Law, Schröder's Green Card initiative, and Rau's speech in Berlin fundamentally changed the way integration, and immigration, was discussed in Germany. As a result then Secretary

¹⁰ For an in-depth analysis on the development of recognizing gender-related persecution in Germany, as well as a gender-sensitive interpretation of the Geneva Convention, see Brabandt (2011).

¹¹ The president is the official head of state but serves mainly within a representative capacity. The chancellor is in charge of governing the country and day-to-day business.

of the Interior, Otto Schily, created an independent commission of 21 experts, *Die Unabhängige Kommission 'Zuwanderung'* (Süssmuth Commission), in 2000 to develop suggestions for a concrete immigration and integration policy within a year.

2000 was a foundational year for Germany and the discussion on integration and immigration. Where were female refugees amidst this discussion and debate? The simple answer: hard to find. Of course there were female refugees in Germany. However, outside of the debate on gender-related persecution within asylum law they were rarely directly mentioned. Part of the reason for this was that there was no systematic collection of data or information based on gender at that time. In addition, female immigrants were most often grouped together with no distinction between if they came as refugees or for other reasons. It had to be assumed that when integration and women were discussed, recognized female refugees were also included. Through the various statistics and statements in the early 2000s, the role and place of immigrant women as a whole in policy discourse was beginning to be carved out.

In the *Vierte Bericht über die Lage der Ausländer in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* in 2000, then Federal Commissioner for Foreigners, Marieluise Beck, reported in-depth on the new debate on integration in the country and the intention to develop an immigration and integration policy. Beck appealed for an integration policy that concentrated on groups that had 'problems' with the integration process. For her this was two groups: firstly women and girls and secondly refugees. Beck supported this by stating that women and girls were most often limited in their participation in education and society. Especially when coming through family reunification. Refugees were further denied access to central areas of societal integration due to their uncertain status and restrictions on working (Beck 2000: 230-231). Female refugees fell into both groups: they were women and they were refugees.

The analysis that women had more difficulty in accessing the various areas of integration could be seen in the statistics at the time. The *Vierte Ausländerbericht* outlined that young immigrant women not only took part less in vocational training than young men from other countries (31% to 43% in 1997), but also less than German young women (31% to 50% in 1997). In addition to this, foreign women between the ages of 20 and 25 had a higher chance of having no training when compared to German women (33%-50% to 12%) (Beck 2000: 140 and 214). The trend continued when looking at the job market. It was noted that immigrant women faced multiple discrimination based upon their gender, nationality, religion, and age when looking for a job. They were further disadvantaged on the job market compared to foreign men and German women due to the various residence permits they could acquire. Women who came through family reunification (30.6%) had a more difficult time gaining access to the job market or obtaining a work permit (Beck 2000: 66-67). Women who obtained their residence permit due to extreme hardship did not automatically have the right to work (Beck 2000:

215-216). Due to these various factors, women were more likely to work in low-paying jobs without social benefits, or to be unemployed, than German women or foreign men (Beck 2000: 155-158). Older immigrant women were thus more likely to need financial and social assistance during retirement than men (Beck 2000:165). Although recognized female refugees were not directly mentioned in these statistics, it can only be assumed that they were a part of this group due to having received refugee status and no longer being asylum-seekers. This analysis and discussion on 'multiple discrimination' and the effects of it pertaining to immigrant women point directly to the theory of intersectionality as discussed in section 2.3. Although not named directly there was an acknowledgment that women were more than just their gender and their other 'identities' led to various forms of discrimination. The view of immigrant women was thus challenged through the lens of intersectionality.

The report had a special section on women and girls. It highlighted that foreign women were often portrayed negatively in public discourse and in the media. The focus was often on their disadvantages. They were portrayed as being deficient, backward, and subordinate. This contrasted sharply with the 'western' woman who was portrayed as modern, self-determined, and free (Beck 2000: 218). In order to change this Marieluise Beck suggested that there should be a sensitization campaign regarding female immigrants, especially pertaining to work in the public sector, focused on their strengths. Their presence in the media and public discourse had to be increased and in a positive manner. Structures needed to be created that not only worked towards equality between immigrant men and women, but also between immigrant and German women. In addition, special language courses needed to be offered for specific groups to help them have a better chance at accessing the job market (Beck 2000: 216-220).

One program which was mentioned in the report as a prime example of how to better the situation of female immigrants was the INTEGRA-Project. Its goal was to sustainably improve the integration chances of female immigrants onto the job market. The project was financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) as part of the EU joint programming initiative Employment (Beck 2000: 216). Upon further research however only one source could be found in Germany specifically describing the overall goal and purpose of the INTEGRA-Project. In 1999 a short chapter in the book *Migration und soziale Arbeit* was dedicated to describing the project *Neue Berufschancen für Migrantinnen*. It was led and organized by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training together with four other organizations. The target group of the project was immigrant women *including* female refugees. The fact that female refugees made up the target group in the project is significant as they were virtually invisible in integration discussion at the time. The goal of the project was to develop new approaches to counselling and vocational qualifications which took into account the existing intercultural skills and multilingualism of the women. Qualification measures would then support and enhance these skills. This would in turn lead to better chances of employment (Kollatz

1999: 58). Through the project new job descriptions would be identified that fit the potential of the immigrant woman. Through a needs analysis and the development of cooperation strategies at the local level, new ways of accessing the job market would also be created (Kollatz 1999: 59). The project was also meant to be organized in a way that would foster an exchange of ideas with other European countries so that Germany could benefit from their experiences. In contrast to the discussion at the time which focused on the disadvantages of immigrant women, this program was focused on their advantages and skills and how they could better be used. Due to the difficulty in finding information regarding this project it is unfortunately not possible to know if it was successful, how long it ran for, or how many immigrant women and female refugees it reached. As its source for the project, the *Vierte Ausländerbericht* cited the book chapter discussed above and the results of an international conference on April 20, 1999 in Berlin. The author of the book chapter, Heidemarie Kollatz, was however the expert discussing the project at the conference (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung 2000). The question is thus raised why such a project would be cited as an example for a successful project when there was scarce information regarding it.

In returning to the section on women and girls in the *Vierte Ausländerbericht*, it also highlighted the topic of violence. It was outlined that foreign women had more obstacles when dealing with domestic violence than German women. Due to legal and social reasons, it was harder for them to protect themselves against it. They first looked for help once the violence had escalated to such a level that their lives were in danger. They most often sought protection in women's shelters. The topic of residence status also played an important role in perceived increased violence against foreign women. It was more difficult for foreign women to separate from violent partners due to the possibility of losing their status or residence permit. The problem also arose of finding a new place to live (Beck: 218). It is however important to note that in contrast to immigrant women being disadvantaged on the job market, the issue of violence was not supported by any statistics or figures during the time the report was written. It begs the question therefore what the report was basing this claim around. Especially as immigrant women would become increasingly connected to domestic violence.

During this time the debate began in Germany if Muslim women should be allowed to wear headscarves or Hijabs when teaching at schools. This debate came out of the broader discussion on Islam in Germany and the perceived cultural and religious differences associated with it. In 1998 a student teacher wore a headscarf in the school where she was training. The school fired her due to the headscarf and she took her case to the courts in the federal state of Baden-Wuerttemberg. This raised with it the question of religious neutrality and if a Muslim teacher should be allowed to wear a headscarf. It put into question if it promoted the acceptance of different religions and cultures or if it put Muslim female students under pressure to also wear a headscarf. The concern arose if it 'pushed' a certain belief on students. This case eventually made it to the Federal Constitutional Court. On

September 24, 2003 it was decided that the German states ultimately could decide in the end if teachers could wear headscarves or not (Bundesverfassungsgericht 2003). Although the case was limited to a school setting, it helped lay the framework for immigrant women being generalized as Muslim women wearing headscarves. They came to represent a religion and culture perceived as vastly different from the German one.

At the time that the *Vierte Ausländerbericht* was issued, the Süßmuth Commission was underway analyzing the situation in Germany and developing suggestions for an immigration and integration policy. From the *Vierte Ausländerbericht*, it was clear that immigrant women were disadvantaged on the job market and in education, they were perceived negatively in the media, it was asserted that they experienced higher rates of violence, and they were subject to multiple discrimination. The two groups listed as having the most difficulty in integrating were women and girls as well as refugees. Female refugees fell into both. Despite these challenges it was found however that immigrant women were *more* likely to take part in further education courses than men (Beck 2000: 160). In addition, although they were disadvantaged in vocational training and on the job market, they made up the majority of participants in language classes with 68% in 1998 (Beck 2000: 169). This left a picture of female immigrants as being disadvantaged but motivated to learn and acquire skills. Information that the Süßmuth Commission and the government had access to.

The results of the Süßmuth Commission were presented as an official report on July 4, 2001 at the French Cathedral in Berlin. Its reception by the government and political parties was however muffled. The coalition government avoided any public positioning in relation to the report. In addition, each party, including those in the coalition government, had published their own reports on a possible legal framework for migration. The most prominent of them being the Müller Commission from the CDU and CSU. In their report, the CDU and CSU made the role of identity and culture an important aspect of immigration policy. Then chairman of the CDU and CSU in the *Bundestag*, Friedrich Merz, had already kicked-off the discussion on identity in October 2000 by alluding to the idea that a successful immigration and integration policy should be based around a *Leitkultur* (a defining or leading culture) (Merz 2000). Due to this, the aspect of culture became a major part of the integration debate. The discussion changed from if Germany was allowed to decide who came to the country to what a person must do once they have arrived in order to stay. The other parties were forced to 'defend' their position on German culture and give a statement in response to Merz whether they had agreed with him or not (Siefken 2007: 139-141). The debate surrounding immigration and integration policy turned into one of semantics connected to culture, identity, and party politics with little policy substance. In the end the report presented by the Süßmuth Commission was regarded simply as a list of suggestions and not as a legal framework for an immigration policy (Siefken 2007: 167-170). Despite its lackluster acceptance by the political parties and the government, the commission received much attention by

the media and was very present in public discourse. It was in part due to the existence of the commission and its goals that the debate surrounding integration and immigration amongst the political parties and in the media took place. Its work can therefore be seen positively in the sense that due to its existence a wide-ranging discussion began on a political topic that until then had been neglected (Siefken 2007: 181). It is therefore important to take a look at what the commission presented regarding female immigrants and refugees.

With the findings of the *Vierte Ausländerbericht* having been released in 2000 and fresh in mind, the results of the commission are disappointing. Female refugees were only mentioned in regards to gender-related persecution. This was however to be expected due to the lack of focus or information on female refugees. It was stated that they should be protected along with others fleeing non-state violence or persecution based on gender. Even here however the commission admitted to not being able to come to a consensus on how that legally should occur (Süssmuth Commission 2001: 162). In the section on providing more access for immigrants to the job market, immigrant women were not mentioned once. Even under the section regarding promoting employment for women, it is highly debatable if immigrant women were even considered or if it was written solely with German women in mind. This is of course a very absurd conclusion to draw after reading a report on immigration, but it is nonetheless the sentiment. The focus was almost exclusively on women as mothers and successfully combining work and children (family). The solutions presented to increasing women's presence on the job market were more daycare facilities, allowing flexible working hours, and providing more qualification programs (Süssmuth Commission 2001: 53-54). Although these were important and much needed steps, there was no mention of the problems women had *accessing* the job market. Before an immigrant woman, or recognized female refugee, can discuss needing flexible working hours, they first need to be employed. Where immigrant women were mentioned in connection to work was not to be found under a section dealing specifically with the labor market but under 'Family'. Immigrant women were depicted as having a more difficult time participating in the labor market, and in society, not because of the multidimensional discrimination they faced as described in the *Vierte Ausländerbericht*, but due to living in a strongly patriarchal structure. It was asserted that it was difficult for them to find a balance between following cultural norms and their entitlement to equality, autonomy, and participation in society. According to the commission, although they needed access to support with language acquisition and entering the job market, above all immigrant women needed a great deal of help in coming out of their 'social isolation' (Süssmuth Commission 2001: 228). This support was not mentioned as needing to come from the federal government, the state, or the city where the women lived but instead from charitable organizations and organized groups. Difficulty for women in regards to equality was further mentioned in the context of Islam (Süssmuth Commission 2001: 236).

Immigrant women had officially been equated to 'the' Muslim woman in public and political discourse. A Muslim woman wearing a headscarf had become the symbol for the 'backward' immigrant woman and the object upon which stereotypes regarding foreigners were being built. This immigrant woman was to be pitied while the immigrant, Muslim man was to be viewed with hostility (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Ausländerfragen 2002: 320-321). Minimizing immigrant women into one stereotypical picture of a Muslim woman, even if unconsciously, played an important role in defining the future narrative of female refugees, and immigrant women, after that. This echoes back to the idea of categorization as discussed in chapter two. In developing and discussing a potential new integration policy, categories were developed within which to place the people, or objects, of that discussion in order to make it appear easier to create policy suggestions around them. The creation of this category for immigrant women early on in the debate on integration policy laid the foundation for having a 'one size fits all' category to place immigrant women, and later on female refugees, in. The Süßmuth Commission missed an important opportunity to discuss the integration situation of female refugees, and immigrant women, and present possible solutions while breaking down stereotypes. It seemed to ignore, or not find relevant, the statistics presented the year before regarding immigrant women and their integration. Instead, it repeated and strengthened stereotypes and further marginalized women into the realm of the family. Refugee women were only relevant enough to mention in connection to gender-related persecution. The Süßmuth Commission was however not alone in this missed opportunity. The other political parties also only discussed gender-related persecution in connection to refugee women. The specific integration of immigrant, or refugee, women was nowhere to be seen.

This lack of attention to immigrant women and female refugees in the Süßmuth Commission, and in the general debate on integration and immigration, could also be found in the various ministries of the government. The integration of immigrants, especially young people, onto the German job market through vocational and educational training was an important topic for the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). On June 26, 2000 the BMBF released the results of a working group on vocational training and qualification for young immigrants. An *Aktionsprogramm Verbesserung der Bildungschancen von Migrantinnen und Migranten* was to be enacted in 2002. The goal was to improve the chances of young immigrants, both male and female, in obtaining vocational training and getting a job (Arbeitsgruppe Aus- und Weiterbildung 2000). Refugees were however not mentioned. Immigrant women were only specifically mentioned as an example of a group that needed special measures focused on them. What these measures would look like and how women could particularly be helped was however not mentioned. This program was part of a bigger project entitled *Kompetenzen fördern – Berufliche Qualifizierung für Zielgruppen mit besonderem Förderbedarf* which was launched in 2001. This project in turn was part of the *Initiativstelle Berufliche Qualifizierung von Migrantinnen und Migranten*. The objective of this office was to create regional information centers

which would work as a lobby for immigrant men and women bringing all relevant actors together into one regional network. Women were however only mentioned in the field of equality within access to the job market. A specific program to assist immigrant women, or female refugees for that matter, was not mentioned or referred to. Immigrant men and women were put together into one group and discussed as such. This is not to automatically assume that a program targeting both immigrant men and women could not be successful. It is however questionable if such a program can be effective if no specific measures are created as part of the project to help a disadvantaged group.

It would be unfair to say that immigrant women were completely ignored during this fundamental time in the discussion and creation of a German immigration and integration policy. Women were mentioned, almost always together with men, in the areas of education, work, and overall integration. Gender-specific statistics were released comparing immigrant women's access to the labor market, unemployment rate, and educational access. Specific areas such as violence were focused on for women with the aim of protecting them and ideas such as equality were important. The problem lies however in the fact that although it was known that immigrant women were disadvantaged compared to immigrant men, and German women, no concrete measures were taken, or discussed, to improve their situation. They were instead put together as one 'problem' group. Immigrant men on the other hand were not viewed through the lens of being difficult. Special sections in reports or working groups were not dedicated to helping disadvantaged and suppressed males. This further added to the picture that the male was the norm and the woman the 'outlier'. This stereotyping would follow these women and play a role in the development of integration policy. Moreover, female refugees were almost entirely absent from any discussion on immigration and integration. In 2000 the Federal Office for the Recognition of Foreigners and Refugees (today the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, BAMF) released statistics on asylum applications separated by gender for the first time. Although this was an important step, outside of the realm of asylum and gender-related persecution such statistics were not to be found. The specific integration situation of refugee women with official refugee or protection status was almost entirely unknown. There were no statistics specifically regarding their situation on the labor market, access to education, or integration success.

4.1.2 The Integration of Women Gains Attention

In March 2002 the Immigration Act was passed by the *Bundestag* and *Bundesrat* to be enacted on January 1, 2003. Due to a dispute in the *Bundesrat* however on whether votes had properly been counted, states led by the CDU and CSU sent a motion to the Federal Constitutional Court to have the decision repealed and won. The Immigration Act was thus retracted and minor changes made. It was again passed by the *Bundestag* and *Bundesrat* in July 2004 and officially enacted on January 1, 2005. Through this act immigration and integration were legally defined and regulated. For the first time the

German government recognized its role in the integration of foreigners. A comprehensive concept for integration through language was legally anchored into law and became a central part of Germany's integration policy (Schneider 2007). In addition to language, immigrants would learn about the legal and democratic principles of Germany, its culture, and history. It was also defined in Article 44 of the Immigration Act who had access to taking part in an integration course. They were listed as immigrants who had just received their residence permit to live long-term in Germany to work, due to family reunification, or for humanitarian reasons. These specific immigrants could be mandated to take part in an integration course if they had very little command of the German language. The Immigration Office could also require someone to take part if they were receiving social benefits or were particularly in special need of integration (Zuwanderungsgesetz 2004: 15-16).

Through the Immigration Act female refugees, at least in the realm of asylum, gained renewed attention and focus. Article 60 brought German asylum law into line with international, and European, practice, norms, and expectations in respect to female refugees. Gender-related persecution and persecution by non-state actors were officially recognized as grounds for asylum. There was also a direct reference to the Geneva Convention. The article stated that when a person's life, freedom from bodily harm or liberty was threatened solely on account of their sex, this may also constitute persecution due to membership of a certain social group. Persecution could emanate from non-state actors if the state, or parties or organizations which control the state or substantial parts of the national territory including international organizations, were demonstrably unable or unwilling to offer protection from the persecution. This was irrespective of whether a power exercising state rule existed in the country unless an alternative means of escape was available within the state concerned (Zuwanderungsgesetz 2004: 60).

This was a success in moving away from the traditional view in Germany that a refugee was a male fleeing political persecution. A refugee could also now be a woman fleeing persecution stemming from non-state actors. Outside of Article 60 however, gender was not specifically mentioned. Article 31, "Eigenständiges Aufenthaltsrecht der Ehegatten", is however seen as having been adjusted due to the perceived increased threat of intimate partner violence that immigrant women faced. This article stipulated that in the event of a divorce, a spouse could have their residence permit extended for a year as an independent right of residence unrelated to the original purpose of family reunification. They however had to have been lawfully married in Germany for at least two years (Zuwanderungsgesetz 2004: 12). This had previously been four years. This minimum of two years could be waived in order to avoid particular hardship. In the *Aktionsplan der Bundesregierung zur Bekämpfung von Gewalt gegen Frauen* in 1999, this change from four to two years was explained as needing to be made with the idea of women coming predominantly as spouses through family reunification. A particular hardship was understood as suffering from physical and emotional violence

from the husband (Bundesregierung 1999: 24). This was a very important and welcomed change. It lowered the hurdle for immigrant women, including refugee women, suffering from violence to separate from their partner. They were no longer forced to stay in violent and abusive marriages out of fear of losing their status or landing in a precarious situation. This reduction from four to two years would however be criticized many years later with a (successful) attempt to increase it.

Since the beginning of the red-green coalition in 1998, there had been the assertion made that immigrant women suffered under higher rates of violence than German women. In the summer of 2004, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth (BMFSFJ) released the results of the study *Health, Well-Being and Personal Safety of Women in Germany: A Representative Study of Violence against Women in Germany*. It was the first representative study of gender-based violence against women of its kind. For the first time refugee women were also asked about their experiences with violence. A random sample of 65 female refugees was undertaken making this part of the study non-representative. Nonetheless, it gave the first look into the situation of this group of women. This of course leads to the question posed earlier of what statistics or facts the ministries, various reports, and German government were using prior to the release of this study in regards to violence against immigrant women and female refugees. Article 31 of the Immigration Act had been developed with the intent of protecting immigrant women from violence and abuse at the hands of their husbands. This is not to minimize the importance of this article, but it brings to light the lack of information and understanding on the situation of immigrant women at this time and in particular female refugees. It can only be assumed that the assertion that immigrant women and female refugees suffered more from violence had been determined, up until 2004, not based upon a collection of facts or concrete information, but on stereotypes and assumptions.

Although the sample of 65 refugee women was small, the study had the first statistics which pointed to a situation where refugee women did in fact experience more physical, sexual, and psychological violence than German women. Although the abuse most often came from relationship partners, it also came from strangers in the form of racist attacks, from casual acquaintances, male and female residents in temporary living accommodations, the staff at these accommodations, and those providing psychosocial counselling (BMFSFJ 2004a: 27). A main reason given why female refugees experienced more violence was their extreme situation of dependency and the difficulty in escaping it. The women further experienced various forms of abuse at government agencies, bureaus, and welfare offices. The study concluded that abuse at such places was not a rare occurrence. They were however not reported on until the release of the study due to them being difficult to see from the outside (BMFSFJ 2004a: 27).

In contrast to the past reports on violence against immigrant women, this study did not solely put refugee women in the lens of being victims. Instead, they were forced into extreme dependency

due to their situation not just as refugees, but as *female* refugees. Whereas past reports claimed that immigrant women could not fully protect themselves from violence due to patriarchal structures and a pull between modernity and tradition, this study showed that not being able to easily leave this situation of dependency was a major factor for experiencing violence. Women were put into this situation. They did not put themselves in it. That they experienced various forms of abuse at government agencies, bureaus, welfare offices, organizations, and places that were supposed to assist them was extremely important. It demonstrated that the violence and abuse also occurred outside of the private sphere. Instead however of giving suggestions or further thought on how to combat violence against female refugees inside and outside of the home, the study concluded simply that these women needed to be defended and protected. Despite the lack of concrete suggestions, this study made an important contribution to generating statistics and information on female refugees. During this time, and after, there was a continued increase on the focus of violence against immigrant women. Forced marriages and honor killings were particularly brought into focus by women's rights organizations and were the topic of many events and news articles. There was however, again, no reliable data on how many women were affected by forced marriages and honor killings. It seemed to be going on stereotypes and generalizations. The findings in the study that female refugees were forced into these situations of high dependency were quickly relegated to the background and the picture of the helpless immigrant woman continued. Immigrant women were increasingly put into the realm of violence. The fact that they experienced violence outside of the private sphere and at government agencies or government run accommodation centers was barely mentioned. This of course did not fit into the narrative and categorization that women were suffering at home due to patriarchal and religious structures.

Despite the continued portrayal of immigrant women as a 'helpless' and 'vulnerable' group, the increased attention surrounding this group was a welcomed trend which continued. In 2005 for the first time, the micro census released information on how many people were living in Germany with a migration background. This was also further differentiated based upon gender. The statistics were broken down into various categories: without a migration background, with a migration background but without migration experience, and with a migration background with migration experience. With or without a migration experience was further separated between Germans and foreigners (Statistisches Bundesamt 2019). This was an important step in learning more about the situation of immigrant women in Germany. Based upon this information it was however not possible to know how many recognized refugee women were living in the country. Although there were statistics on how many women had applied for asylum in Germany since 2000, there was no available information on how many of them were granted asylum, what status they obtained, and how many were living here.

Despite this important step in providing gender-specific information on immigrants, recognized female refugees were still nowhere to be seen.

In June 2005 the first study of its kind on female refugees was released by the German Institute for Human Rights entitled *Flüchtlingsfrauen – Verborgene Ressourcen*. The study looked at various aspects of female refugee's lives in Germany: educational and vocational background, the recognition of their qualifications, access to the job market and education, the effect of the Immigration Act and reforms to the labor market on their situation, discrimination, and their current economic and social situation. In addition, for the first time, female refugees were given a platform to speak and be heard. A section of the study was dedicated solely to citations from interviews with female refugees. Although the study only conducted interviews with 61 women and was therefore non-representative, it was the first in-depth look at the life and situation of female refugees in Germany. At the center of its findings was that there was a lack of recognition and identification of the resources and qualifications that refugee women had which in turn led to their exclusion from the job market (Foda and Kadur 2005: 5). Multidimensional discrimination played a major factor in this exclusion and could be broken down into individual and structural discrimination. Individual discrimination was based around ethnicity, nationality, gender, religion, skin color, accent, and other physical traits. Structural discrimination was, intended or non-intended, selection mechanisms based upon a woman's status as a refugee, a social welfare recipient, or gender related (Foda and Kadur 2005: 11-12). This led, for example, to women with recognized degrees being given jobs below their qualification, such as a cleaning lady. This idea of multiple discrimination circles back to the *Vierte Ausländerbericht* in 2000 which also presented the same findings. This study was not only the first in the policy realm in Germany but also in academia in the country. It was the first attempt to look at gender and women bringing in the idea of intersectionality following the trend that was happening internationally at the time. In addition, it answered the call internationally to give refugees, above all women, a space to be heard. Several of the women interviewed spoke of a lack of acceptance and racism as reasons for not being able to find a job. Others did not speak of racism or discrimination, per se, as reasons for not getting a job, but did hint to the feeling that they were denied positions due to how they looked (Foda and Kadur 2005: 32). The study listed eight suggestions as to how the integration of refugee women onto the job market and into life in Germany could be simplified and made easier (Foda and Kadur 2005: 44-47):

- 1) Create a Migration Point at the Job Center to give a first orientation, counselling, and provide group specific help.
- 2) Make it easier to transfer and recognize professional and educational degrees and qualifications.
- 3) Implement language courses targeted at specific groups and needs.
- 4) Create specific mechanisms to promote participation in the job market.

- 5) Create mentoring programs in companies.
- 6) Create programs to help women become self-employed.
- 7) Limit the amount of time and restrictions women have based upon their status until when they can access the job market.
- 8) Create better access to further education and funding opportunities.

Despite the importance of this study and the possible positive affects the implementation of some of the suggestions may have had on the integration of female refugees, after its publication it did not receive any recognition in the media or from the various ministries, parties, or the German government. Although concrete solutions had been named they were not mentioned anywhere in policy. This was a missed opportunity for the German government, along with the various agencies and ministries working on integration, to take up the situation of female refugees and work on bettering their access to the job market and integration overall. Many of the suggestions in this study would however be brought up in later programs and summits on integration but not in connection to this study. In addition, its findings and suggestions were not widely discussed or built upon within the academic community in Germany. This study opened the door not only in the policy realm but also academically in Germany to take up the topic of gender, women, and intersectionality. An opportunity that was not taken. It provided an example to those researching migration and forced migration on how a space could be created for the voice of those who were the object of studies. An example that was not followed upon. Even today in current research it is rare to see this study cited as one of the first of its kind.

Shortly after the release of the study, the sixth *Bericht der Beauftragten der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration über die Lage der Ausländerinnen und Ausländer in Deutschland* was released in August 2005 by the Commissioner of the Federal Government for Migration, Refugees, and Integration (before only Commissioner for Foreigners) Marieluise Beck. Since the report in 2000, the Nationality Law had been modernized, a discussion on integration and immigration in Germany had begun, and the Immigration Act had been enacted in 2005. Despite this not much had changed for immigrant women. There were also still no statistics pertaining directly to refugee women which had been a critique in the study in 2005 mentioned above. The findings after five years were still very similar. In May 2003 61.5% of immigrant men were employed compared to 38.5% of immigrant women. There had however been an increase in employment for immigrant women since 1999 when it was 34.1% (Beauftragte für Migration 2005: 79 and 89). Similar to the report in 2000, immigrant women still worked more often in part-time positions, were less likely to work in jobs with social benefits, earned less, and were less likely to have vocational or professional qualifications than men. The number of immigrant women in low-paying jobs had however decreased over time whereas it had increased for immigrant men. Low-paying jobs nonetheless remained one of

the only ways immigrant women could gain access to the German labor market (Beauftragte für Migration 2005: 93). In the report in 2000 it was presented that older immigrant women had higher chances of living in poverty. This was still the case in 2005. Other than in 2000 however, the report in 2005 explained that very little was known about the situation of single immigrant women in retirement age. Despite this there were many stereotypes and misconceptions about them retreating into their ethnic community. This cliché view of older female migrants needed to be addressed and changed according to the report (Beauftragte für Migration 2005: 156). It is interesting to note that although more immigrant than German women (44.5% to 40.5%) took part in the German dual vocational training system, German women were more often in school-based vocational training. Only 5% of immigrant young women were found in this type of training. Young immigrant women were thus not competing with immigrant men for training positions but rather with young German women who were better qualified. Despite having better school degrees and being more engaged in looking for training positions, more immigrant young women than men were without vocational or professional training and thus had no realistic chance of sustainable integration onto the labor market (Beauftragte für Migration 2005: 61-62). This same trend could also be seen in higher education.

The integration of immigrant women and girls through sport was a new topic in the report.¹² It was however recognized in a footnote that the current research on migration and sport at the time was insufficient and no reliable conclusions could be drawn on the topic. This was partly due to the fact that most sports clubs did not collect data on the background or nationality of their players. Amateur soccer was the only sport looked at in connection with integration and migration (Beauftragte für Migration 2005: 167). A representative study had however been conducted by the BMFSFJ on girls with a migration background and their participation in sports in the summer of 2004. The study, *Mädchen mit Migrationshintergrund und sportliches Engagement*, was referenced by the report as a way to better integrate this group of immigrants. The study found that girls with a migration background wanted to do sports. When it came to differences between Germans and immigrants however, young girls with a migration background were often grouped together as being Muslim, Turkish, and 'problematic'. A theme that could be seen in the public media discourse at the time. It was assumed that because of their religion they had a lesser affinity to doing sports. The study however discovered that there was no difference between Muslim and non-Muslim young girls when it came to doing sports. Young girls with a strong religious belief actually did more sports (31.5%) than less religious girls (20%). It was only young girls wearing a headscarf who did less sports. They however were interested in doing more and when the question of clothing was cleared up, they were able to

¹² The program *Integration through Sport* dates back to 1989 when it was developed primarily for *Spätaussiedler*. It was however expanded to include all immigrants in 2001. For more information on the development and goals of the program see Bundestag (2009) and Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund (2012).

be won for sports clubs (BMFSFJ 2004b: 21). The issue was rather that sports clubs had problems reaching girls with a migration background. This report thus worked towards attempting to dispel stereotypes and categorizations regarding young women with a migration background. They were not held back by their religion or patriarchal structures as portrayed in the media. They were active, and wanted to be active, and just needed the chance to do that.

It is an important step that the German government and its ministries were thinking about ways to better integrate women and girls with a migration background. Female refugees were however, yet again, nowhere to be found. Furthermore, the study on sport participation was only on girls with a migration background from Greece, Turkey, Italy, Yugoslavia, and *Aussiedler*¹³. It is not clear if the girls interviewed in the study migrated to Germany themselves or if their parents or grandparents had. This was an important difference. Statistics consistently showed that women and girls in the second generation and after had almost the same participation rates in education, the job market, and social activity as German women and girls without a migration background. Using a study focused perhaps only on girls and young women who had been born in Germany to also represent girls and young women who themselves had migrated to Germany can be seen as problematic as their experiences are often not the same. Nevertheless, an enhanced focus on immigrant women and girls, and those with a migration background, was important in the hopes of moving towards more attention for immigrant women and above all female refugees.

Language was another topic in the *Bericht über die Lage der Ausländerinnen und Ausländer*. On December 13, 2004 the *Integrationskursverordnung* was enacted. Immigrant, but not refugee, women were specifically mentioned. It was stipulated that measures needed to be taken to ensure childcare during integration courses for children who could not yet attend school and when there was no other option available for daycare (Integrationskursverordnung 2004: 2). In addition, an equal participation of women in integration courses was to be guaranteed. Special integration courses could be organized for participants who were not able to take part in regular integration courses due to family or cultural reasons. These courses could be specifically for women or parents (Integrationskursverordnung 2004: 2). The *Bericht über die Lage der Ausländerinnen und Ausländer* continued with this focus on women putting particular attention on integration courses for women. Childcare was seen as extremely important for ensuring the participation of women. The reasoning for this was that in 2004 around 73% of participants in the integration courses organized by the BAMF had been women. In 2003 around 30% of these courses had offered childcare. Childcare was requested the most in connection to special women's courses. Due to this and the idea of gender mainstreaming it

¹³ These are ethnic German immigrants who migrated to Germany from the former soviet bloc.

was advocated that childcare be a fundamental part of integration offers (Beauftragte für Migration 2005: 218).

It is interesting to take a moment to look at what was being asserted in the *Integrationskursverordnung* and the *Bericht über die Lage der Ausländerinnen und Ausländer in Deutschland*. Equal participation of both men and women in integration courses is of course important and childcare can mean the difference between a parent being able to participate or not. It is however interesting that the focus was on women whereas the statistics showed that in 1998 68% and in 2004 73% of participants in general integration courses were women. Advocating for equality of participation for women alludes to the idea that they are underrepresented when in reality they were not. It is however important to note that it is not possible to know what percentage of these women were refugees and if they were truly underrepresented. Special courses and childcare were advocated for women and parents in order to ensure they could take part. This was despite the fact that women made up the majority of participants in regular integration courses and in 2003 70% of these courses did not offer childcare. Why then would childcare not be increased for the classes where the most women were in attendance but instead in special classes? The question was also never posed why men were participating less in integration courses and what could be done to improve their presence. This continued with the idea that women were being put into a box of being suppressed, underrepresented, and connected to the family. It was also due to the fact that immigrant women were still being seen through the lens of Islam.

Islam as represented through immigrant women was again a topic in the *Bericht über die Lage der Ausländerinnen und Ausländer*. The idea of the 'west against Islam' was still prominent in 2005 in the wake of the bombings of the British Consulate and the HSBC bank headquarters in Istanbul in November 2003, the bombing of commuter trains in Madrid in March 2004, and the bombing of three subway trains and a bus in London in July 2005. As past reports had discussed, immigrant women had been put into one group described as Muslim and backwards. Muslims had become the prototypical opponent of the west and the symbolization of cultural differences. Women became the 'symbol' of this difference, or more specifically the headscarf. The 'suppressed' woman in a headscarf needed to be 'saved' from the patriarchal and fundamentalist culture they were in (Marx 2008: 55-57). As discussed earlier, the debate surrounding the headscarf in Germany came to a head after a student teacher in Baden-Wuerttemberg was fired due to wearing a headscarf. Afterwards two other women who had also been fired for wearing headscarves at their jobs took their cases to court. This led to debates nationwide on if there should be a ban on women wearing headscarves in public schools. It touched however on much more than that. Through the debate it was feared that Muslim women would increasingly be marginalized. Such a ban would play into the hands of fundamentalists (Spiegel 2003). As a response in 2003, 70 prominent female politicians from all parties, Commissioners of

Foreign Affairs from the German federal states, union members, academics, actresses, and representatives from churches and the media signed an appeal against a headscarf ban: *Aufruf wider ein Lex Kopftuch*. Amongst the signatories was Marieluise Beck (Spiegel 2003).

In the *Bericht über die Lage der Ausländerinnen und Ausländer* commissioned by Beck in August 2005, a study released in December 2004 by the BMFSFJ, *Viele Welten leben. Lebenslagen von Mädchen und jungen Frauen mit griechischem, italiensichem, jugoslawischem, türkischem und Aussiedlerhintergrund*, was referenced in regards to Muslim girls and young women. Its findings were used to demonstrate that the media picture of young Muslim girls and immigrant women was not correct. There was an array of diversity amongst religious and non-religious girls. In order to assist with integration, not only the girls but also institutions and organizations had to work towards an opening and acceptance of Islam (Beauftragte für Migration 2005: 227-230). This study on girls and young women was however not just on religion. It looked at the whole spectrum of their lives. Central to the report was the fact that women had been disregarded in migration research in Germany for a long time (BMFSFJ 2004c: 13). The reason for this, according to the study, was that Germany had been led by a picture of migration connected to those coming to work. This migrant was in turn seen as a male. It was stated that while the extensive sociological migration literature looked into the experiences and goals of foreign workers, the situation of foreign women was placed within a background of their almost exclusive perception as being non-active and restricted to the one-sided perspective of a man as the head of the household, exiled to isolation at home and threatened by an identity crisis (BMFSFJ 2004c: 13). The study further went on to assert that girls and young women with a Turkish background had come to represent 'the' female immigrant. This was connected to a picture of a girl with a foreign background dependent on her father and stuck in a conflict between ethnic and German norms (BMFSFJ 2004c: 14). There had however been attempts to change this with isolated studies on girls and young women with migration backgrounds focusing not on problems and deficits but rather specific resources they had. Despite this there were still many gaps in empirical research regarding the situation of children and adolescents with a migration background. There was also a considerable lack of gender-differentiated information. The study named three tendencies in the literature regarding girls and young women with a migration background: adolescents with a migration background were hardly taken into account in youth research, women's studies largely ignored female migrants, and migration studies ignored gender aspects (BMFSFJ 2004c: 15). Although female refugees were not mentioned in the report, this research into the fact that immigrant women and young girls were being underrepresented and put into false stereotypes was important. A federal ministry of the German government wanted to draw attention to this and change it. Government agencies and ministers were taking the lead in challenging the depictions of immigrant women, including religion, in the country.

They were putting into question the semantics and categorizations of these women attempting to bring intersectionality and a new perspective to the forefront.

The end of 2005 saw a change in government. On November 22, 2005 the red-green coalition under Gerhard Schröder ended and the black-red (CDU, CSU, and SPD) coalition under Chancellor Angela Merkel began. In the Coalition Agreement on September 11, 2005 integration played an important role. According to the agreement migration and migration flows were a central challenge of the time. A successful integration of people who had come to stay long-term was of fundamental importance for the internal condition of society. It was viewed that integration could only be 'successful' when migration was managed and restricted. An intercultural and interreligious dialogue with all religious denominations, specifically with Muslim organizations and groups, was seen as central for the integration process and in combatting racism, antisemitism, and extremism (Koalitionsvertrag 2005: 117-118). Immigrant women were specifically mentioned in the Coalition Agreement. Their equal participation into the political, economic, and cultural life, as well as learning the German language, were central to accessing education and a job. Equality between men and women would be a central aspect of interreligious dialogue. It was also stated that the measures already put into place pertaining to the integration of immigrant women should be enhanced and their integration into society and the job market promoted (Koalitionsvertrag 2005: 119).

Although it is extremely important that immigrant women had begun receiving increased attention in studies, federal ministry reports, and from the ruling parties, the goal of better integrating immigrant women was nothing new. It was a statement that had been made since 2000 and had been seen in every report on immigrants since. The study on female refugees in 2005 listed the specific hurdles to accessing the labor market and what could be done to solve these problems yet female refugees still remained virtually ignored. Statistics after statistics showed that immigrant women were disadvantaged in accessing jobs, education, and vocational training yet their situation since 2000 had not improved. It bears raising the question what measures the coalition was referring to which needed to be 'enhanced'. How were they going to promote the integration of immigrant women into society and onto the job market now that the spotlight was moving towards this group? In addition, there had been a push by various ministries to put into question the narrative surrounding immigrant women that had developed. They were not just 'muslim' women suppressed by a patriarchal and fundamental culture. These ministries had even highlighted deficits within German academia pertaining to this topic. Despite this the semantics surrounding immigrant women remained the same. Perhaps there would be a change through the specific policies of the new government.

4.1.3 The Development of Concrete Integration Plans for (Immigrant) Women

On July 14, 2006 the first ever Integration Summit took place in the German Chancellery. The summit was led by Chancellor Angela Merkel and then Minister for Integration Maria Böhmer. Guests and representatives from various immigrant associations were invited to take part. Integration was described as one of the biggest political and societal challenges in Germany. It was therefore seen as a key political task for the government (Bundeskanzleramt 2006: 1). For a successful integration both the State, and its citizens, as well as those coming to live in Germany had responsibilities to fulfill. Immigrants had to be prepared to adjust to life in German society, accept the constitution and legal system, and most importantly learn the German language in order to show their 'belonging' to Germany. German society on the other hand had to show acceptance, tolerance, civic engagement, and the willingness to welcome those who legally lived here (Bundeskanzleramt 2006: 3). It was decided to develop a *Nationaler Integrationsplan* (NIP) broken down into six areas important to improving integration. Women and girls made up one of the focus areas. The goal was to have binding measures and agreements within a year (Spiegel 2006).

In addition to the first integration summit, the first evaluation of integration courses as stipulated by the Immigration Act was released in December 2006 by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building, and Community (BMI). As was the case in the statistics since 1998, it was reported that over 60% of the participants in integration courses were women. This was seen as very positive as it demonstrated, for the evaluation, the integrative capacity women had within their family (BMI 2006: i). According to the evaluation in 2006, the majority of participants took part in regular integration courses. Special courses, such as those for women, had a small number of participants and mostly took place in urban areas with a large percentage of immigrants. In rural areas these type of courses were rare due to a low number of participants (BMI 2006: ii). In surveys with course participants conducted for the evaluation, only about one fourth of women asked were interested in taking part in a women's course (BMI 2006: 33). It was noted in the report that women who came to Germany through family reunification had a 'special need' for integration. It was asserted that these integration courses had a particularly positive effect on this group of women's integration as it was their only chance to leave their environment and have contact with other women. In addition, it was stated in the report that through learning German they became more independent and could go to doctors or government agencies alone and help their children with school (BMI 2006: 67). It could seem a bit questionable to state that women coming through family reunification had 'special integration needs' when over 60% of participants in integration courses were women. There was no further breakdown of who these women were and how they came to Germany. How can it be concluded that women coming through family reunification needed specific attention when there were no statistics showing how many there were and what percentage of them took integration

courses? Further, this seems to allude to an idea that their husbands who came first did not have the same needs. This then opens up the question if men learn German easily and have no problem integrating. Throughout the evaluation women were often referred to when discussing difficult situations whereas men were not. This first report on integration courses may at first glance not seem important in the focus on immigrant, and later refugee, women but it is. Through such a report the categorization of immigrant women as being their own problematic group that needed special attention was further perpetuated. This was despite the statistics in the same report showing that women attended classes more than men. Further, they were attending regular integration courses and not special courses. This depiction and categorization of immigrant women would play a role in integration courses for them later and also for refugee women.

When looking at the topic of childcare, the evaluation noted that only *Aussiedler* had a legal right to childcare during integration courses. For all others childcare had to be provided for by other means. For courses specifically for women or parents, funds were 'automatically' made available for childcare for all participants. In the study it was concluded that there was adequate childcare in over 50% of the evaluated regions. In the other half this was not the case. It was asserted that childcare was important for parents, and particularly women, in order to take part. The fact that over 60% of participants in integration courses were women was further proof, for the evaluation, that such offers were important. 39.5% of participants asked during the evaluation said they had to stop attending their integration course due to a lack of childcare (BMI 2006: 140-141). When we take a moment to digest this information it is quite shocking. Immigrant women had consistently been put into the realm of the family and childcare had been noted as being important for their access to integration courses. In statistics on integration courses it had continuously been found that women made up the *majority* of participants in regular integration courses. Despite this, only a certain group of women had a legal right to childcare during integration courses. Furthermore, childcare was only guaranteed in the special courses with the least amount of female participants. This did not seem to match reality. It would seem that the categorization of immigrant women that had come to be the narrative had more weight than actual statistics.

As one of its conclusions, the report called for a further expansion of courses for women and parents in order to reach more people who otherwise would not be able to take part. If however the majority of participants in regular integration courses were women, and only around one fourth of those asked in the survey for the evaluation were interested in special women's courses, why was the conclusion not instead expanding childcare offers for regular integration courses? What was thus the reasoning for expanding women's courses when, at least during the release of this evaluation, there were no statistics showing that the majority of women wanted these courses and were taking them. This is not to minimize the importance of these courses for women who may need to take them.

Advocating for these type of courses however when statistics paint a different picture further puts immigrant women into a special category. Besides childcare, another conclusion was to increase measures to help better integrate participants onto the job market through integration courses. Women were however not specifically mentioned when discussing this topic despite the knowledge that they had more difficulty in gaining employment. During the integration summit, and in the evaluation of integration courses, the same trend concerning female refugees continued: they were not mentioned. This was the same in 2007 with the official release of the NIP and the second integration summit.

The second summit took place on July 12, 2007. The *Nationaler Integrationsplan* was officially presented on this day as well. 400 voluntary obligations were agreed upon in order to improve integration. The FDP, the Left, and the Green party however hardly saw a change in integration policy due to the voluntary nature of the measures and agreements (Tagesspiegel 2007). The NIP described integration policy as a cooperation between the federal government, states, and cities. They each had a specific role to play in ensuring successful integration. Integration was also defined with a specific phrase for the first time: *Fördern und Fordern*. This idea had been expressed in previous years and was embedded in the Immigration Act. It had however never been described in one phrase in the context of integration. It meant, based upon the Immigration Act, that immigrants had a legal right to participate in integration courses while on the other hand certain groups were mandated to take part in the courses or face certain penalties (Schneider 2007). This meant immigrants were supported (*Fördern*) with their integration but also required to do certain things (*Fordern*) in order to receive that support.

The way female immigrants were represented in the plan can only be described as highly disappointing. The fact that female refugees were not mentioned was to be expected at that time. Immigrant women were seen almost solely in the realm of the family. They were victims of violence and forced marriage held back by their partners and family. The plan made it appear as if all immigrant women faced violence or experienced the same thing. It seemed to promote an image, even if unintentionally, that had been in the media and which past studies and reports from German ministries had tried to work against: that all female immigrants were Muslim women. For years the statistics had shown that immigrant women, when educated, were more educated than their male counterparts but had disadvantages when gaining access to the job market. It was known that there were no programs or solutions for equal access to the job market or vocational training, no way to have their qualifications recognized, and no programs to combat multidimensional racism. The NIP had a chance to address all of these points but did not. Instead it continued to support and spread the narrative of immigrant women without question. It is worth looking more closely at a particular paragraph from the NIP (2007: 13-14; bold in original; translated by the author) regarding women:

A successful integration policy recognizes the key role that women with a migration background play. It is women especially who through their careers and family, as well as through their social and political engagement, decisively shape the integration of the next generation. Therefore we must strengthen the potential of women and girls. Their possibilities of social and political participation must be improved. This should begin as soon as possible as well as at school and vocational training. Integration policy measures must specifically be tailored to the particular needs of women and girls with a migration background. This also applies to topics that often receive little attention such as health care, sex education, and care for older people. At the same time equality of the sexes, which represents a central part of the constitution, should be strengthened and realized in daily life. Domestic violence, including specific forms of violence such as Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage, affect women and girls with a migration background in particularly various ways. Increased prevention and better protection are essential.

This section of the NIP does sound nice. It portrays immigrant women as being at the center of integration and playing an important role for not only their families but future generations. It puts their integration at the forefront and describes their success as key. Equality, preventing abuse and violence, and strengthening the role of female immigrants is important and it is correct to support that. When however these topics and the realm of the family are consistently the main, and at times only, ones associated with women, it will affect what programs and policies, if any, are implemented. Nice and empowering words cannot be equated to effective policies and programs. The NIP seemed to follow the trends regarding immigrant women: words but no action.

Education and vocational training were listed in the NIP as central factors for the integration of all immigrants, male and female, into society. The federal government promoted expanding the spectrum of careers for immigrants and custom-fitting and further developing public offers of support for specific groups. This included increasing the number of vocational training possibilities for young immigrants (Nationaler Integrationsplan 2007: 17). It was noted in the NIP that half of the people living in Germany with a migration background were women and girls. The percentage of immigrant female students who had qualifications to enter higher education was noticeably higher with 12.1% in comparison to immigrant male students with only 8.5%. It was concluded that young immigrant women had a high educational drive. When looking at vocational training it was similar (Nationaler Aktionsplan 2007: 192-193). Based off from the conclusion that immigrant women had a high educational drive and the government's words of empowerment on the central importance of the integration of immigrant women, it would have been assumed that concrete programs would be

introduced in the NIP to then be implemented and further developed. Only one specific program for female immigrants was however mentioned as a *voluntary* measure for the federal government. The one program listed as exclusively targeting immigrant women, according to the NIP, was the NetWork.21 mentoring program. It was meant to provide individualized support in the form of a mentor who would help young immigrant women along their path to finding a job. When the program was however looked at further, it was discovered that the project was not just for female immigrants but also for German men and women as well as male immigrants. Women with migration backgrounds were listed as a special focus group. It is not problematic that this program was also open to immigrant men and German women. The question is however why the NIP would list it as a program specifically for immigrant women when that was not the case. Was there really nothing else? The goal of the project was to contribute to sustainably improving career and societal possibilities for women and to change the image of women with migration backgrounds. The project was designed for students about to finish university and ready to transition into a career (BMFSFJ 2007). Although this type of support is very important, it had been shown through statistics and reports year after year that immigrant women were not as represented at universities or vocational training as German women and immigrant men. This project could therefore not completely provide a solution needed to first get women to the university or into vocational training where they could then apply to be a mentee and benefit from the program. Further, it was not possible to find out how many immigrant women took part in the project or how successful they were.

One other program, or rather agreement, in the NIP was listed as having a particular focus on women with a migration background. Although it was to be implemented by associations it is worth mentioning. It was an agreement between the federal government and the Central Associations for German Industry to promote equal opportunities for men and women in the private sector. The associations agreed to suggest measures to their members on how to improve equal opportunities and provide a family friendly environment. This included the particular promotion of women with a migration background (Nationaler Integrationsplan 2007: 82). This very same agreement had however failed in 2001 in leading to a comprehensive equality act for the private sector partly due to its voluntary nature. Published reports on the agreement in 2003 and 2006 (including later in 2008) showed that it was not successful and had not brought a new dynamic into the private sector. Above all there was a lack of statistics showing a demonstrable improvement of women in gainful employment (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung 2010: 6). Women with a migration background, let alone refugees, were never mentioned as a particular target group in any of the reports. It is simply incomprehensible why the NIP would list a failed agreement in which not once female immigrants were mentioned, as an example of a program that could help them gain equal access to the job market. The NIP was thus not able to mention one concrete program or project *specifically* for immigrant women to be

implemented and developed by the federal government to help them gain better and equal access to education, the job market, and higher education.

Throughout the other parts of the NIP women were mentioned in the same areas which had become the norm: family, violence, special integration courses for women, and childcare. It was clear that women were seen first and foremost as mothers within a family setting. Female immigrants were continuously described as having a key position due to their role as a mother (Nationaler Integrationsplan 2007: 18). This idea of women being the sole caregiver for their children was again portrayed as the focus for special types of integration courses and childcare. The NIP consistently ignored past statistics and data showing that women took part more in regular integration and language classes than in special ones for women or parents. Childcare was again represented as being crucial for ensuring that women could take part in courses and to prevent them from having to end their participation early. The NIP however did not advocate for childcare in the courses where the most women were represented.

Just before the release of the NIP, the federal government released a progress report in June 2007 on the implementation of the integration courses prepared specifically for the *Bundestag*. In the report it was again shown, as in past years, that women still made up the majority of participants with 65.5% (Bundesregierung 2007: 31). Childcare could however only be covered by the BAMF if at least one parent was taking part in a special integration course (alphabetization, a course for women or parents, or for adolescents). Participants however predominantly took part in general integration courses with 84.5%. There had been a slight increase in the percentage of participants in special courses, 15.5%, but they still remained on the low end of the spectrum (Bundesregierung 2007: 54). In 2005 (90.2%) and 2006 (84.5%) the majority of new participants entered general integration courses. Following these courses, courses specifically for parents and women saw more new participants compared to the others (6.0% in 2005 and 8.5% in 2006) (Bundesregierung 2007: 55). There is however no reason given for the increased participation of men and women in special courses. One reasonable question is if they were joining these special courses because of the course material or if they had no choice due to childcare. If the government was truly concerned with making sure that women could visit integration courses and not have to worry about childcare, the following question must again be asked why they would not simply choose to provide childcare where the women actually were. The federal government themselves provided statistics on integration courses in 2007 but seemed to not react to them.

In returning back to the NIP, in the section of the plan dedicated specifically to girls and women the focus was solely on violence, forced marriage, and health. Although these are important topics not to be ignored this can be seen as problematic due to it further stereotyping immigrant women into roles as Muslim mothers threatened by violence. It was recognized in other parts of the NIP that

women were just as educated, sometimes more, than their male counterparts and extremely motivated, but had a more difficult time getting a good job or one they could qualify for. Solutions to this problem or concrete programs or projects to combat this were not mentioned once in the section specifically on girls and women. As its reasoning why only violence, forced marriage, and health were focused on when discussing the integration of women, it was stated in the NIP that the working group consciously chose to deal with topics that were not yet broadly discussed elsewhere and could lead to a wide package of measures. The topics were taken from a list of questions that were of specific importance to immigrant women (Nationaler Aktionsplan 2007: 87). It is debatable however if these topics really were not yet broadly discussed. Past reports on immigrant women almost always included these topics. Many of them already discussed previously in this study. Furthermore, these topics fit into the narrative regarding immigrant women and further justified their categorization.

Integrating immigrant women and girls through sports was also brought up in the NIP. Albeit in a different section. It is however not clear why the federal government decided to focus on this as a promising way to integrate immigrant girls and women. In the NIP it was stated that there was no sufficient data to prove that girls with a migration background were less active in organized sports than boys yet only difficulties were mentioned. It was claimed, without providing evidence, that girls and women could usually only be reached for organized sports through personal contact and their whole family needed to be spoken to. It was asserted that Muslim girls and women had 'specific requirements' which needed to be taken into account in order to win them for sports such as gender specific sports groups, separate shower and changing facilities, and female trainers along with proper clothing (2007 Nationaler Aktionsplan: 140). All Muslim girls and women were **again** put into one group. This directly contradicted the study released in December 2004 by the BMFSFJ, *Viele Welten leben. Lebenslagen von Mädchen und jungen Frauen mit griechischem, italiensichem, jugoslawischem, türkischem und Aussiedlerhintergrund*, discussed earlier which wanted to work towards moving away from grouping and stereotyping all Muslim girls and young women into one specific group. The NIP concluded that close attention needed to be made in creating a condition where the cultural, social, and religious needs of girls and women with a migration background were complied with (2007 Nationaler Aktionsplan: 141). This view which puts all immigrant girls and women into one group not only continues to makes them the 'other' in the context of integration, but it further separates and differentiates them from German women and girls. In addition, it further solidifies stereotypes and perpetuates the assumption that immigrant men and boys do not have difficulties integrating.

All in all the NIP did not sustainably contribute anything concrete, or new, regarding the integration of immigrant women. The picture that it created separated immigrants into people 'with' and 'without' gender. Immigrant women symbolized the 'other'. The plan only focused on their 'special' situation and needs (Eggers 2007). This is not to minimize the importance of the topics

discussed in the NIP relating to immigrant women, or to ignore that women who have migrated or fled to Germany may have particular needs which should be addressed. When there is however no discussion of the specific needs of men who have come to the country or special programs and offers for them, this automatically puts them in the category of being a part of the average population (Eggers 2007). In addition, it purveys the idea that immigrant men do not suffer from violence, forced marriage, health issues, or difficulties with integration. Through focusing constantly on intimate partner violence and the suppression of women due to culture and religion, it automatically leads to the picture of the male immigrant as being a perpetrator of violence and a suppressive force. This in turn can have serious repercussions for how foreign men are viewed in the media and by the population as a whole. When female immigrants are viewed as 'the other' and male immigrants as 'the norm' this also directly impacts integration offers and support. If the male is the 'norm' then nothing needs to be done to assist him. This could lead to a situation of men suffering under violence, abuse, and health issues. They may have no place to go to seek help or where they can be taken seriously if they experience serious problems with finding work due perhaps to discrimination and stereotyping or problems with integration and access to courses. Although the situation of immigrant, and refugee, men lies outside the scope of this study, it is an extremely important topic which warrants further research as was already noted in chapter one.

The question must yet again be raised why still seven years after the beginning of the debate in Germany on integration, and two years after the passing of the Immigration Act, refugee women were still nowhere to be found. They were still not mentioned in specific statistics or reports outside of gender-related persecution and asylum. It is as if this group of women only existed in a perpetual state of flight and precariousness. With its focus on fighting forced marriage, working against the suppression of 'the' female Muslim immigrant, and advocating for equality in relationships and against domestic violence, the federal government was trying to make itself appear as the 'champion' of rights for women with a migration background. The focus on these topics however only added to the stigmatization of female, and male, immigrants in implying that they had 'integration deficits' (Pelzer 2008: 93). Measures to empower female immigrants in the areas of education or to improve the handling of refugee women were neglected (Pelzer 2008: 93-94).

One year after the presentation of the *Nationaler Integrationsplan*, it was seen by many that the voluntary obligations and around 400 pledges had not led to the hoped changes and would not lead to them in the future (Güngör 2008). In 2009 the CDU and CSU, with Angela Merkel, won a second term. This time with the FDP as their coalition partner. In the Coalition Agreement from October 26, 2009 the parties set the objective of further developing the NIP from an overall political concept for integration to an action plan with clearly defined and binding goals which could be monitored and reviewed (Koalitionsvertrag 2009: 74; Bundesregierung 2010a). At the fourth Integration Summit on

November 3, 2010, it was officially announced that a *Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration* would be developed within a year. Then Integration Commissioner of the Federal Government, Maria Böhmer, stated that through the *Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration* the government would increase its commitment so that integration was even more successful. Through this every single immigrant would have a better chance of advancing. The country could thus lift the potential of people from immigrant families and strengthen the cohesiveness of society (Bundesregierung 2010c). The ten original focus areas of the NIP – integration courses, language, job market, women, local integration, culture, integration through sport, media, civil society, and science – would remain but be expanded to also include health and care as well as immigrants in civil service (BMBF 2010).

It is important to note that this summit took place within the backdrop of a heated debate in Germany regarding integration and Islam. This debate was sparked by Thilo Sarrazin and the release of his book *Deutschland schafft sich ab – wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzten*. In his book, Sarrazin argued that Muslim immigrants had failed to assimilate into German society and were living culturally separate and parallel lives. He concluded that immigration from Turkey and other Muslim countries should be restricted. If not, Germany would become a predominantly Muslim country in the future. This question however of if Islam was ‘compatible’ with Germany, or if Muslim immigrants or refugees could truly integrate, was not new. This debate nonetheless led to then German President Christian Wulff stating in a speech on the 20th anniversary of German reunification on October 3, 2010 that Islam belonged to Germany (Wulff 2010). During this time Angela Merkel also declared that Multiculturalism was dead. When asked about the potential ramifications of this statement in regards to the success of Sarrazin’s book, Merkel did not see it as fueling the debate. Germany, for Merkel, had become a country of integration. For her and her government in a country of integration all people of foreign origin who were prepared to live as fellow citizens based off from the legal system and a set of values, or even to become German citizens, were welcome (Bundesregierung 2010b). Despite the intense rhetoric and debates in the media surrounding Islam, migration, and integration, it did not seem to affect or change the objectives, focus, or rhetoric surrounding the NIP and subsequent plan of action. The *Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration* was officially presented in 2012. Before looking more specifically at this plan and what, if anything, it meant for female refugees, it is important to first look at the developments regarding immigrant women since the NIP had been presented five years earlier in 2007.

In the first progress report on the NIP, the section on women and girls focused on forced marriage, ending stereotypes, and enhancing dialogue. A central political and integration concern for the federal government was the right of women and girls to be able to determine their own life and live in a violence free family environment (Bundesregierung 2008: 31). Despite wanting to be seen as a champion for the protection of women, the government did not include an independent right of

residence for abused women in the NIP or even mention it (Schuler 2008). Instead, the government considered looking at *raising* the amount of years a marriage needed to exist in Germany from two to three before a partner could separate and be granted their own independent right of residence (Koalitionsvertrag 2009: 78). As discussed earlier, this had been decreased from three to two years in the Immigration Act to specifically protect abused immigrant women. The government argued that this new potential change from two to three years was in order to prevent sham marriages. There was however no proof that this would in fact prevent them. In addition, there was no concrete mention of bettering access to the job market or education for immigrant women in the NIP. An objective was to increase the political and civic participation of female immigrants. In order to do this the federal government had bound itself to contribute to breaking down stereotypes and prejudices against female immigrants (Bundesregierung 2008: 26). When looking at funding for specific programs targeted at female immigrants however, it is difficult to detect where exactly the government had 'bound' itself. It must also be emphasized again that in the NIP the government itself was reusing and strengthening stereotypes and categorizing immigrant women instead of trying to end them and create a new narrative based around actual statistics and its own ministry findings. The government in a sense was contradicting itself. On the one hand it was following the stereotype that immigrant women required 'special' help and were one group of suppressed Muslim women suffering under violence, while on the other hand the government was saying such stereotypes should be fought against.

One year after the NIP had been presented, it was reported that of the 134 voluntary obligations the federal government had made, only 90 of them were attached with costs for the government. One third of them cost less than one million Euros (Holzberger 2008). This is particularly extreme when looking at integration support for female immigrants. Only two of the 19 voluntary obligations connected to women cost the government more than 200,000 Euros. Ten of them cost less than 100,000 Euros. As an example, the federal government had listed the further development of the Dialogue Forum with Muslim Women as a measure it would follow. The dialogue forum was initiated in July 2005 by the BMFSFJ and the Federal Commissioner for BAMF, as well as the *Muslimische Akademie Berlin e.V.*. Its objective was to give Muslim women the opportunity to represent and speak for themselves in public discussion and to take part in political decision-making processes (BMFSFJ 2009). The government however only provided 2,000 Euros to fulfill this voluntary obligation (Holzberger 2008). This is worth noting as it could be difficult for a program or project to truly start or become sustainable if it does not have the proper funding. Continuing with the lack of funding, despite a focus being on the importance of special courses for women in the NIP, the central organizations providing these courses had 800,000 Euros less (40%) than under the previous red-green coalition. The

result was a 20% *decrease* in the number of courses provided a year after the integration plan was presented (Holzberger 2008).

In 2008 and after, the majority of participants in integration courses were still women with 67% or around two-third (Rother 2008: 9; BAMF 2010: 54). The percentage of women in special courses for parents and women was 81.7%. Much more than in the general integration courses (Rother 2008: 25). These two numbers can however not be compared. Firstly, the statistics for the special courses for women and parents are combined and not separated. Secondly, in comparing the statistics of a course that is for men and women, and a course that is only for women, it is inevitable that there will be a higher percentage of women than men overall in a course that is only for women. Lastly, due to the enhanced focus on special integration courses for women this could have led to a situation where women were encouraged to join these courses instead of the regular integration courses even if they would have preferred the later. Comparing these two statistics can thus lead to misleading conclusions. As was discussed earlier, more women preferred to take general integration courses than the special courses for women. For example, three-fourths of the participants asked in 2008 preferred to take a general integration course. Only 4.7% preferred to take a special course for women. In an interesting find, 61.5% of the participants surveyed in the special integration course for women would have preferred to take a general integration course (Rother 2008: 60-61). The first evaluation report on the NIP in 2008 stated that the special integration courses for women had proven themselves as good low-threshold options for women. It was noted however that less funding was available for them than in the previous year and an increase was urgently required (Bundesregierung 2008: 226). There were however no reports or statistics on exactly how these courses had proven to be good offers for women. Despite this and the fact that women primarily took part in regular integration courses, in 2009 and 2010 the government emphasized the continued importance of courses for parents and women and called for increasing and strengthening the number offered at schools (Beauftragte für Migration 2010: 68). Again, the government seemed to be looking past statistics and instead continuing with the narrative and assumptions surrounding immigrant women.

In its Coalition Agreement, the government stated that the goal of integration courses was to integrate participants onto the job market. Furthermore, there would be an attempt to strengthen the connection between the courses and the specific departments and offices responsible for job placement (Koalitionsvertrag 2009: 76). Special integration courses for women however focused on the 'living environment' of women, without explaining what that specifically meant, and considered their 'individual needs'. Topics such as domestic violence and forced marriage were also touched on (Bundesregierung 2008: 225-226). There was no special emphasis on integration onto the job market. In addition, at the state and local level courses for women such as *Mama lernt Deutsch* were offered as well as courses for mothers and their children such as *Rucksack* and *Griffbereit* (BAMF 2010: 17).

Despite the importance of learning German, immigrant women were still being portrayed through these programs as being the sole caregivers and only functioning within a family environment. It is fair to raise the question why courses such as *Papa lernt Deutsch* were not offered. This continued with the stereotype on the other side that men were not engaged with their family and were outside of that realm.

In the Coalition Agreement in 2009, the federal government stated that it wanted to support the participation of women and girls from all cultures in public and social life. In order to do that an educational and vocational training offensive for female immigrants was needed. In addition, there needed to be special attention on human and civil rights as well as social law and a sensitization for the equality of men and women (Koalitionsvertrag 2009: 77). Despite the call for this 'offensive', the statistics and facts regarding immigrant women in the realm of education and vocational training did not change much between 2007 and 2012. Women and men in integration courses, on average, had attended school for the same length of time (men 10.54 years and women 10.46). More immigrant women still tended to have a college degree than men (29.5% to 25%) (Rother 2008: 35). The percentage of immigrant women with an academic degree continued to rise (8.8% in 2005 and 11.6% in 2010) while it decreased for men from 9.3% in 2005 to 8.6% in 2010 (Engels, Höhne, Koopmans, and Köller 2011: 54). Despite this, the trend continued that it was more difficult for women to use or transfer their qualifications and skills than immigrant men (Universität Bremen 2009: 93). Although being more successful, on average, than men in the educational system it was still more difficult for young immigrant women to obtain a spot in vocational training (BAMF 2010: 18). In 2011, four years after the implementation of the NIP, more immigrant women still did not have vocational or professional training although they, on average, were more successful and better qualified than men (Engels, Höhne, Koopmans, and Köller 2011: 45). Highly qualified immigrant women were three times more likely to be unemployed than women without a migration background with 10.9%. One explanation provided for this was the lack of recognition in Germany of degrees from other countries (Sachverständigenrat 2010: 173). This was something that the report *Flüchtlingsfrauen – Verborgene Ressourcen* highlighted in 2005 but which was mostly ignored.

When looking at unemployment following the presentation of the NIP, immigrant women were still less likely to earn their own living through employment than all other groups, immigrant and non-immigrant. With 32.5% they were the most likely to be supported by members of their family (Sachverständigenrat 2010: 175). In the *Zweiter Integrationsindikatorenbericht* released by BAMF in December 2011, the years 2005 to 2010 were studied and compared. Throughout the entire period women with a migration background with migration experience and foreign women had the lowest employment rate (Engels, Höhne, Koopmans, and Köller 2011: 58). The data can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6: Employment Rate of Population in the Age Group 15-64 in Percentage

| Population Group | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Without a migration background | 67.6 | 69.5 | 71.2 | 72.4 | 72.8 | 73.5 |
| Men | 73.0 | 74.6 | 76.4 | 77.4 | 77.2 | 77.7 |
| Women | 62.2 | 64.3 | 65.9 | 67.3 | 68.2 | 69.1 |
| With a migration background and migration experience | 57.3 | 58.9 | 61.1 | 62.6 | 62.6 | 63.9 |
| Men | 65.9 | 67.5 | 69.9 | 71.9 | 71.1 | 72.5 |
| Women | 48.7 | 50.3 | 52.4 | 53.4 | 54.4 | 55.6 |
| Third-Country Nationals | 46.2 | 47.4 | 49.2 | 50.9 | 51.3 | 52.3 |
| Men | 56.4 | 57.5 | 59.6 | 61.9 | 61.3 | 62.6 |
| Women | 35.5 | 36.7 | 38.7 | 39.8 | 41.4 | 42.1 |

Source: Modified from *Zweiter Integrationsindikatorenbericht erstellt für die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration*, by D. Engels, J. Höhne, R. Koopmans, and R. Köller, 2011.

Despite the call for an educational and vocational training offensive in the Coalition Agreement, the fact that foreign and immigrant women with migration experience consistently had lower rates of unemployment as shown in Table 6, and that immigrant women had less of a chance at securing a spot and finishing vocational training, there were no new concrete programs or projects put into place to help women between 2007 and 2012. The focus remained on integration through sport and NetWork.21. Sports clubs and organizations were called on to develop group specific offers in order to increase the participation of female immigrants. The working group Integration and Sport was charged with the task of creating a handout for sports clubs and organizations with tips on how they could better reach women and girls with a migration background (Beauftragte für Migration 2010: 210). NetWork.21 was often mentioned between 2007 and 2012 as a model project and as the answer to the structural disadvantages of women (Jung and Schubert 2010: 9). The network however remained only open to women and men at the university who were ready to transition to a job. The network recognized education as the key to integration and that men and women with a migration background had a more difficult time accessing education and were more often without a general school degree (Jung and Schubert 2010: 109). Due to this, the program itself acknowledged that only a small portion of mentees in the program came from immigrant families (Jung and Schubert 2010: 111). Of the

mentees taking part by 2010, 15% did not have German citizenship, 7% had dual-citizenship, and 29% of the female mentees had their own migration experience (Jung and Schubert 2010: 16-17).

Immigrant women were thus still mostly portrayed within the context of problems and deficits. In the area of health and well-being only women were noted in public and political discussion as being particularly affected by multiple stresses due to their unfavorable job situation and conflicts with their family (Beauftragte für Migration 2010: 212). Domestic violence remained a main topic when discussing immigrant women after 2007. The increased potential of violence against immigrant women was often attributed to their difficult social situation and lack of educational and economic resources (Beauftragte für Migration 2010: 244-245). The statement that immigrant women had a lack of educational and economic resources was not new. It had been shown in numerous statistics not just between 2007 and 2012 but dating all the way back to 2000. Despite this, the situation had not significantly improved since 2000, although the government had verbally focused on it, and there had been no concrete programs or projects implemented to specifically help immigrant women better their economic and social situation.

In 2010 two studies were released looking at family, marriage, and values connected specifically to immigrants. In November 2010 the study *Familien mit Migrationshintergrund: Lebenssituation, Erwerbsbeteiligung und Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf* was released by the BMFSFJ. The study pointed out that migration studies in Germany had long focused on the immigrant as being a male looking for work. The migration of women had however been viewed above all as a dependent phenomenon connected to marriage and family reunification (Heimer, Henkel, and Sommer 2010: 48). This echoes the sentiment of past reports released by the BMFSFJ. The goal was to, again, try to break out from this mold and look at the gender aspects of migration and the specific situation of women. In the study *Ehe, Familie, Werte – Migrantinnen und Migranten in Deutschland* released by the BMFSFJ in December 2010 however, immigrant women were again put into the role of mothers as it was claimed that motherhood was an important part of the normal biography of a female immigrant (BMFSFJ 2010: 6). Despite government ministries attention however no concrete changes in semantics or the development of concrete programs developed for immigrant women.

Since 2007 and the NIP, female immigrants' space had further been carved out as belonging to the family and being first and foremost as mothers. Although specific language courses for mothers and offers for women and their children were being supported, sports clubs were being encouraged to offer more for women and girls, and flyers were being created to inform abused immigrant women of where to seek help, no concrete measures had been taken as part of the NIP to effectively improve the situation of female immigrants on the job market or in the area of education and vocational training. This again is not to diminish the potential importance of the programs and initiatives listed here, but they were being pushed as important measures without any statistics, reports, or data

providing evidence on their effectiveness. It was clear from statistics and reports that the overall situation of immigrant women had not significantly improved and such programs were often leading to generalizations and stereotypes. Yet again, female refugees were nowhere to be seen in the area of integration.

At the fifth Integration Summit on January 31, 2012, the *Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration* (NAP) was introduced. For the first time, women and girls did not have their own section. In addition, violence against immigrant women was not a main focus. Instead, women and girls were mentioned throughout the plan in various sections. It was once again stated that the integration of women and girls was a main focus. It was expressed as *essential* for integration that the role of immigrant women was highlighted in the migration process and that their specific situation and interests were included in the concrete implementation of all focus areas (Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration 2012: 23). It was again acknowledged throughout the plan that immigrant women were well educated but that they had higher rates of unemployment and lower rates of vocational training. For example, at the time the action plan was released, 53.3% of women with a migration background were employed compared to 68.2% of women without a migration background (Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration 2012: 410). The plan stated that there was a lot of potential to catch-up. Better access to employment for women with migration experience would promote equality, contribute to integration into society, and be an important element in fighting against a lack of specialists in various branches (Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration 2012: 410). Despite this, the NAP did not offer anything new or reveal the creation or development of new programs specifically to get immigrant women working or to improve their chances at vocational training. It was the same rhetoric as had been seen in the NIP in 2007 and before.

Around the same time as the release of the NAP, the BMFSFJ released the *Aktionsplan II der Bundesregierung zur Bekämpfung von Gewalt gegen Frauen*. In the action plan various programs were mentioned as ways the BMFSFJ was improving the societal and political participation of women with migration backgrounds through strengthening their independence. The model programs cited were the dialogue forum with representatives of Muslim women's organizations, transcultural and interreligious learning houses for women, and the project NetWork.²¹ As already noted however, the federal government only financed the dialogue forum with 2,000 Euros and the project NetWork.²¹ could not reach many women with a migration background due to the difficulty for these women in accessing higher education. Learning houses for women were relegated to the state level and it was not possible to find specific information on their financing or success. Specific integration courses for women were also listed as ways of preventing violence, promoting independence, and increasing women's resources (BMFSFJ 2012: 26). It is clear that 2012 did not bring with it any new projects or programs for immigrant women to improve their integration onto the job market or access to education and vocational training. Programs and projects that had already been proven to be

insufficient, or which did not address the root cause of the difficult situation for immigrant women, were continuously being promoted and used as model examples. One positive development in 2012 however for immigrant women was that the *Gesetz zur Verbesserung der Feststellung und Anerkennung im Ausland erworbener Berufsqualifikationen* came into effect on April 1, 2012. This law was the first step in making it easier for degrees obtained abroad to be recognized in Germany. It was found that the recognition of a degree earned abroad increased the chances of employment in Germany by 50%. This in turn accelerated the whole integration process (Braun 2012: 2). This was seen as an important step in the integration of immigrant women onto the job market and a much needed law. It is worth noting that the study on female refugees in 2005 released by the German Institute for Human Rights had already called for such a law. In 2005 it was already clear for this institute that it was important in order to improve the chances of female refugees in gaining employment equivalent to their educational level and experiences. It took seven years for such a law to be enacted.

Despite releasing the NIP and the NAP, the situation for immigrant women did not significantly change. It was another event which was not directly connected to integration which caused immigrant women to be viewed in a different light and which would have an impact on increasing focus on refugee women in the future. During the time of the NAP, the discussion around a lack of specialists, or a *Fachkräftemangel*, in certain areas was gaining new traction. The public and political debate was on whether there was really a lack of specialists in branches such as elderly care. There was uncertainty around if reports like those by the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHK) suggesting that 1.3 million positions could be left vacant if the government did not act were merely exaggerated (Spiegel 2011). The fear was that the German population was aging and there were potentially not enough young workers to make up for those going into retirement (Spiegel 2012). This public and political debate was brought into the realm of immigration. The idea arose that perhaps immigrants could be a solution to stemming the problem. This was further brought to immigrant women.

In November 2013 the first report on women with migration backgrounds and employment was released by the BMFSFJ. The report was however specifically targeted at mothers with migration backgrounds and was entitled *Integration mit Zukunft: Erwerbsperspektiven für Mütter mit Migrationshintergrund*. Despite statistics showing since 2000 that immigrant women on average were disadvantaged on the job market, it was not a need to better the situation of these women that led to this report, but rather the debate in Germany on the lack of specialists and that immigrants could help curb the problem (BMFSFJ 2013a: 5). As immigrant women had been put into the role of mother in German debate and policy, it is not surprising that this report focused only on immigrant women as mothers. The data regarding mothers with migration backgrounds was updated in this report with a particular focus on the potential of this group for the labor market (BMFSFJ 2013a: 5). The report

however did not provide any new statistics. It was further shown that mothers with migration backgrounds were less educated than mothers without a migration background and were less likely to be employed. This report however officially presented and discussed the first initiative targeted *specifically* at mothers with a migration background to help them access the job market since the enactment of the Immigration Act in 2005.

The name of the initiative was *Ressourcen stärken – Zukunft sichern: Erwerbsperspektiven für Mütter mit Migrationshintergrund*. It was a one year pilot project from 2012 to 2013 launched by the BMFSFJ. As part of the initiative, 16 organizations and locations which dealt regularly with integration offers and/or offers for the professional orientation of immigrant women and mothers were chosen to host the initiative. The goal was to improve the employment opportunities for mothers with a migration background, to create a transition between the already existing offers, and to face the lack of information and reservations of employers regarding this group of women (BMFSFJ 2013a: 39). Over 1,000 mothers with a migration background were reached through the project and around 50% of them took part (497 participants). Around 80% of the participants achieved one of the measures in the initiative, or ended their participation early due to obtaining a job, and 30% of the participants were able to directly access the job market and obtain employment. At the end of the project 32% were taking part in qualification courses, such as German or English language courses, in order to prepare them for entering the job market and 18% were taking part in integration or similar courses to help introduce them to the job market. For 21% of the participants it was not clear what they would do after the project ended (BMFSFJ 2013a: 40). The BMFSFJ described the project as a 'success' due to a personal meeting and discussion with the women and individual support and guidance, as well as a close connection with important actors on the job market (BMFSFJ 2013a: 40). Although the initiative only targeted mothers, it was seen an important step in helping immigrant women access employment. Refugee women were however not mentioned as a target group for the initiative.

At the same time that the report was released and the results of the initiative were being assessed, the BMFSFJ also released the report *Mütter mit Migrationshintergrund – Familienleben und Erwerbstätigkeit* in 2013. This report could also be connected back to the debate on a lack of specialists on the German labor market and the potential of immigrants. In this report it was asserted that there needed to be new solutions in order to fulfill the needs of families and women with a migration background regarding (re-)entry onto the job market. Mothers with a migration background offered a particular employment potential which had not yet been tapped into with regards to the increasing lack of specialists (BMFSFJ 2013b: 4). It was further stated that the employment potential of women with a migration background had been insufficiently used in Germany (BMFSFJ 2013b: 12). Through looking at past reports, statistics, and programs however employment had not been a particular focus with regards to immigrant women. The focus had instead been on combating violence, integration

through sport, and increasing the number of special integration courses for women as previously discussed. It is clear that this new 'push' to assist immigrant women in accessing the job market was due to the increased focus in Germany on the lack of specialists on the job market and not as a 'correction' per se to past policies. Despite this, the debate created a new wind in promoting the support of immigrant women onto the job market.

In 2014, for the first time, a long-term program was specifically created and designed with the goal of integrating women with a migration background onto the job market, more specifically mothers. The program *Stark im Beruf – Mütter mit Migrationshintergrund steigen ein* was introduced after the initiative *Ressourcen stärken – Zukunft sichern* was deemed a 'success' by the BMFSFJ. The program was part of the ESF in Germany and was designed to run from 2014 to 2020. The first phase of funding took place from February 2015 to the end of 2018 and the second phase was planned for 2019 to the middle of 2020. Around 90 project locations were funded with 50,000 Euros yearly. The goal of the program was to ease the transition onto the job market for mothers with a migration background and to improve access to already existing offers to help integration onto the job market (BMFSFJ 2014). It focused on counselling, family-life balance, and re-entry onto the job market through internships and vocational training. The program also focused on sensitizing companies on hiring mothers with a migration background and the advantages of working with this particular group. The program was not only the first long-term attempt at a solution to increasing immigrant women (mothers) participation and integration onto the job market, but most notably the *first* time since the federal government had begun discussing integration policy that refugee women were directly named as a target group. It was listed in the program that refugee women with children who had good perspectives of being able to stay and obtain asylum in Germany could also take part in the program (BMFSFJ 2014).

In 2015 another project was introduced. This time not just for mothers with a migration background but for all immigrant women. The two-year project was officially launched on January 1, 2015 and was entitled *Migrantinnen gründen – Existenzgründung von Migrantinnen*. The project was initiated by the BMFSFJ and the organization *jump – Ihr Sprungbrett in die Selbständigkeit e.V.* as part of the already existing initiative *FRAUEN gründen* from the BMFSFJ and the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi). The project was funded directly by the BMFSFJ and there would be a first round in 2015 and a second one in 2016. According to the website for the program, the goal of the project was to support women of all nationalities with starting their own business or company through mentoring and a program specifically designed to include individual coaching, workshops, collaborations with already successful teams, and with networking. The goal was to have 16-20 successful tandems by the end. The project was however set-up in only one city, Frankfurt am Main, and only one rural area, Groß-Gerau, both in the federal state of Hesse. The project was supported

and evaluated by the Center for Small and Medium Sized Business Research at the University of Mannheim. The objective was to see if and how the project could be established in other regions in Germany (BMFSFJ 2015).

It could be seen that the debate on a lack of specialists in Germany had been the straw which was needed to break the camel's back regarding specific support for immigrant women onto the job market and through that their improved integration into society. Although it had been a fact since the implementation of the Immigration Act in 2005, and well before, that immigrant women were disadvantaged on the job market, the calls by the BAMF and, particularly, the BMFSFJ in report after report to change the way immigrant women were perceived and to increase support for employment and qualification had not been enough to move the federal government to action. It had taken a public and political debate on a potential lack of specialists on the German job market and a call by the DIHK to implement measures to combat this, to move the federal government and its ministries to develop concrete programs and projects in 2015. Although this attention to immigrant women, and with it to an extent refugee women, was viewed by many as an important step, it still placed immigrant women in a specific category separate from the mainstream. Women were still mothers within the family and private realm who needed help from outside to succeed. It is the case that German integration policy was built around the idea of *Fördern* and *Fordern*: the government must assist and the immigrants must fulfill certain requirements. Due to this the German government did create an integration situation where it was their 'duty' to assist in integration. In the case of immigrant women help was needed from the government in obtaining employment and education. This was however done while still supporting and passing on unfounded stereotypes and characteristics. It further alluded to the idea that immigrant men did not need assistance or help from outside like immigrant women and were able to obtain what they needed. The narrative was created that immigrant women needed help accessing the job market and education not due to perhaps inequalities and difficulties already inherent in the German labor market and educational system, but instead due to religious and cultural reasons connected solely to the immigrant woman by the narrative created by German policy and society. An 'unexpected' event in 2015 would not only bring more attention to immigrant women and integration, but finally to female refugees ten years after the passing of the Immigration Act in 2005 and 14 years after the release of the findings of the Süßmuth Commission in 2001.

4.1.4 The 'Refugee Crisis' and the Entrance of Female Refugees onto the Integration Stage

In 2015, the first year of the programs *Stark im Beruf* and *Migrantinnen gründen*, the 'refugee crisis'¹⁴ in Europe began. Germany was unprepared for the thousands of men, women, and children entering

¹⁴ Although Germany, and Europe, described the event in 2015 and 2016 as a refugee crisis, this is debatable. It cannot be denied that European countries were extremely unprepared for the thousands of women, men, and children seeking protection and that countless people lost their lives trying to seek refuge in Europe. It can however be questioned if this

the country and focused on creating temporary housing in tents, containers, and gymnasiums. In March of 2016, for the first time, more women and children reached Greece via sea than men (UNHCR 2016a; Schwenken 2017: 15). This in turn affected Germany as more women and children entered the country and claimed asylum. The majority of people applying for asylum for the first time in Germany in 2015 were men (69% men, 31% women). In the first half of 2016 however 3.4% more women registered as asylum-seekers for the first time compared to 2015 (Neske and Rich 2016: 1). The number of female asylum-seekers increased particularly for women from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. In 2015 21.2% were from Syria, 24.5% from Iraq, and 24.9% from Afghanistan. In 2016 it was 30.8% from Syria, 32.9% from Iraq, and 28.3% from Afghanistan (Neske and Rich 2016: 4). The focus quickly shifted to the living conditions of women and girls seeking asylum in temporary accommodation and how they were subjected to violence and harassment with no safe place to go.¹⁵ It is important to take a moment to discuss the climate in Germany during the beginning of the 'refugee crisis' as public and political debates and discussion on refugees were heated and controversial.

The increase in asylum applications in Germany in 2015 created a sense among many Germans to help. The well-being of this group of people being housed in makeshift shelters during the winter months, and many being sent from state to state and from makeshift shelter to makeshift shelter, led many Germans to volunteer. A *Willkommenskultur* quickly developed regarding refugees. At its core this meant a general positive attitude towards refugees coming to Germany and measures being implemented to help and assist them. The slogan *Flüchtlinge Willkommen* was not only used by individual citizens but also cities, organizations, and groups. The increase in refugees not only brought a move to assist them, but also the return of racist statements and calls for limiting the number of immigrants back to mainstream discussion. In October 2014 the movement *Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes* (Pegida) was founded in Dresden. This movement believed that Germany was being 'Islamicized' and this needed to be stopped. This idea of the 'Islamization' of Germany echoes back to Thilo Sarrazin and his book *Deutschland schafft sich ab – Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen* in 2009 which then spurred debates on the perceived poor integration will of Muslim immigrants. Pegida held demonstrations and rallies every Monday; the first one held in October 2014 with just a handful of people. The number of participants however quickly rose and by December 2014 10,000 were taking part. Demonstrations continued throughout 2015 with thousands of supporters. The movement also spread to other cities where local groups were formed such as in Würzburg, Bonn,

movement of people out of conflict zones was truly a surprise or if European countries could have prepared themselves. Due to this the term refugee crisis will be enclosed in single quotation marks in this study to represent the question on whether this time period represents an unexpected crisis or an event which could have been better managed.

¹⁵ See Women's Refugee Commission (2016) and BMFSFJ and UNICEF (2016) for more information on the living condition of refugee women and girls in refugee accommodation centers in Germany at the beginning of the 'refugee crisis'.

and Frankfurt. The Pegida demonstrations however also drew large crowds for counterdemonstrations.

Also during this time the political party the AfD gained particular attention in 2015 due to its rhetoric on immigration and asylum. It has since continued to be a prominent party in German politics. The party was originally founded in 2013 as a euro-sceptic party but quickly took on the topic of immigration and asylum in 2015. It advocated closing borders and keeping refugees out. The party played up stereotypes and focused most predominantly on Muslim refugees and that Islam was not compatible with German values and norms. Much of their rhetoric however had been used to various degrees since 2000, and even before.

A series of events on New Year's Eve 2015/2016 particularly enhanced the popularity of groups such as Pegida and parties like the AfD. On New Year's Eve 2016 mass sexual assaults and rapes took place during celebrations mainly in the city of Cologne. During many of the incidents women were surrounded by a group of men and assaulted directly on the street in public. The men were reported as being Arab or North African. This event led to intense debate on women's rights, asylum policy, and violence against women by immigrant and refugee Muslim men. Groups such as Pegida and parties such as the AfD used this event to their advantage to increase rhetoric against immigrants and refugees, particularly those from predominantly Muslim countries. By the end of 2016, the AfD had won seats in seven of the 16 federal German states (2014: Thuringia 10.6%, 2015: Hamburg 6.1%, 2016: Rhineland-Palatinate 12.6%, Baden-Wuerttemberg 15.1%, Saxony-Anhalt 24.3%, Berlin 14.2%, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania 20.8%) (Suhr 2019). Of course there are more reasons why parties such as the AfD began gaining popularity and have continued to remain popular. Immigration has however played a prominent role.¹⁶

The events of New Year's Eve in Cologne and the rise of movements like Pegida and the party AfD not only strongly influenced the debate on immigration and German asylum policy, but also brought the topics of values and norms back into discussions on integration. The focus was again on 'German values', what exactly they were, and how they could best be passed on to participants in integration and orientation courses. The discussion remained however focused on Islam and if it was compatible with German, Judeo-Christian, norms and values. The integration of Muslim men and their willingness to integrate was put into question but not that of women. The depiction of women did not seem to change other than an enhanced picture of all immigrant women and female refugees as being suppressed and vulnerable Muslim women. The core of integration policy, language acquisition and employment, did not seem to change despite the intense debate surrounding integration and immigration.

¹⁶ By the end of 2019 the AfD was represented in all German federal state parliaments, had become the third strongest party in the German Bundestag, and was the biggest opposition party to the Coalition Government (CDU/CSU and SPD).

In reaction to the 'refugee crisis' in 2015 and 2016, the federal government released the *Meseberger Erklärung zur Integration* on May 25, 2016. In the statement the government again listed the concept of *Fördern und Fordern* as the core of its political integration measures. In referring to refugee women, their integrative power (along with their role in the family) was seen as having particular meaning. The government therefore wanted to take into account their specific interests (Meseberger Erklärung 2016). In addition, the government made it clear that they would not tolerate attacks on women, children, and others needing protection independent of if these attacks targeted refugees or Germans (Meseberger Erklärung 2016). This was a direct response to the sexual assaults which had targeted women in Cologne discussed above. Following the *Meseberger Erklärung zur Integration*, the Bundestag passed the Integration Act on July 7, 2016 which came into effect on August 6, 2016. Much of the Integration Act did not affect female refugees who had already received refugee status. One provision however that could potentially affect refugees and those with protection status, both male and female, was the *Wohnsitzregelung*. This new provision stipulated that for sustainable integration, a foreigner who had received refugee, subsidiary, or protection status was mandated to live in the state where they lived during their asylum process for three years. There were however exceptions such as if the person, their spouse, partner or minor children had a job where they earned enough monthly based upon certain provisions of the *Zweites Buch Sozialgesetzbuch* (Integrationsgesetz 2016: 1942). The *Wohnsitzregelung* was expressed as being important due to the high number of refugees coming at that time and the need to be able to foster integration in an effective manner. It was however criticized by many groups as there was no proof it would improve long-term integration. Instead it was seen as limiting the freedom of movement of refugees and those with international protection and creating unnecessary hurdles. In addition, gender-specific difficulties were not addressed in the act which was seen as critical by many groups and organizations (Schwenken 2017: 32).

At the ninth Integration Summit on November 14, 2016, refugees were mentioned for the first time as a group that also needed attention when it came to integration. It was acknowledged that there was more attention overall for this group of people due to the 890,000 refugees who entered Germany in 2015 (Bundesregierung 2016). Germany's integration policy now had to include this group of people who, up until that point, had rarely been mentioned, if at all, in integration discussions. It was acknowledged that immediate action needed to be taken in the area of learning the German language for asylum-seekers, refugees, and those who were tolerated (BA 2015: 1). The political will to integrate refugees and those who had been tolerated onto the labor market was there; further steps however had to be taken: need-based German language courses as part of integration courses needed to be implemented, access to integration offers expanded, perspectives to be able to remain in

Germany for the duration of vocational training needed to be created, and equal opportunity at educational and vocational training needed to be guaranteed (BA 2015: 2).

As has been discussed, refugee women had not been a part of the general integration debate in Germany. From 2000 to 2014 they had not been mentioned as a specific target group and were only referenced occasionally in the area of domestic violence and intimate partner abuse. The only study released on their situation was in 2005 by the German Institute for Human Rights which was not taken up or considered by the federal government, any of its ministries, or German academia. Due to this, up until 2015 and the 'refugee crisis', very little had been known about the living situation of refugee women and gender-specific problems in Germany. This however began to change in the summer of 2016. The data basis had not improved, but new initiatives began to be created and developed (Schwenken 2017: 3). There began to be calls from various organizations and groups to improve the situation of refugee women. Their access to educational offers and the job market was seen as playing an important role in their participation in society. In the summer of 2016, the network *Women in Exil* did the first bus tour of its kind from July 25th to August 14th throughout Germany stopping in twelve cities¹⁷ in order to gain a picture of the situation of female refugees. It was shown that daily life was very difficult for them and very few came into contact with gender-specific offers of support (Women in Exile e.V. 2016).

During the 'refugee crisis', a new survey was developed and conducted by the Institute of Employment Research (IAB), the Research Centre of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF-FZ), and the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) at the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin). This survey, called the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey, was a representative longitudinal study which "generated an entirely new database for analyzing forced migration and the integration of refugees into German society" (Brücker et al. 2016: 1). It was not only the first extensive collection of data for the analysis of forced migration and the integration of refugees in Germany, but also worldwide (Brücker et al. 2016: 2). In addition, for the first time SOEP included registered refugees in its surveys on immigrants and published the results in 2016 in its study *Leben in Deutschland*. SOEP is the biggest representative panel survey of immigration conducted annually since 1984.

In 2016, BAMF released a number of brief analyses for the very first time based upon the results of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey looking at the life and situation of refugees and asylum-seekers in Germany. Many of the BAMF studies at this time focused primarily on refugees from the top countries of origin such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, and Eritrea. Most of the refugees surveyed in the analyses were male (around 70%) and the majority were under 35 (Neske and Rich 2016:1; Bund and Worbs 2016: 1). In the social component of the surveys conducted in order to gain

¹⁷ Potzehne, Halle/Saale, Cologne, Frankfurt/Oberursel, Osnabrück, Bielefeld, Göttingen, Witzenhausen, Bremen, Hamburg, Potsdam, and Berlin

information on schooling, language knowledge, and employment among others, 74% of the adult applicants recorded in 2015 were male and 26% were female (Rich 2016: 3). Each of the analyses came to similar conclusions: female refugees, from the countries represented, were less active on the labor market than male refugees (Bund and Worbs 2016: 6-7; Rich 2016: 6-7). In addition, they were more likely to not have attended school, to have little or no vocational training, and to be unemployed or in low-skilled jobs in Germany (Bund and Worbs 2016: 4-6; Neske and Rich 2016: 7-9). It was found that, of those refugees surveyed for the analyses, 37% of women and 32% of men had no formal schooling and 71% of women and 68% of men had no university degree or vocational training. In addition, 81% of men had work experience whereas only 50% of female refugees did. However, 97% of men and 85% of women had a strong desire to work (Brücker et al. 2016: 8). It is important to look at the conclusions regarding women of two of the analyses mentioned above:

- 1) “Focus will be placed here on the situation of refugee women, who obviously face particularly major obstacles when it comes to participation in German society” (Bund and Worbs 2016: 10).
- 2) “Given the different starting situations with regard to the pre-existing schooling and work experience of women and men, greater account should be taken of the needs of women. Women from all countries of origin are more commonly affected by illiteracy, or by a very low level of schooling. A larger number of literacy courses for women should therefore be offered. Support measures on acquiring a (first) job specifically for women may also appear expedient given their low employment rate” (Rich 2016: 11).

The conclusions regarding female refugees, firstly, were very similar to those which had been drawn about immigrant women since 1998, the starting point for this study. Secondly, both analyses concluded that female refugees needed support and particular attention. The SOEP Study, *Leben in Deutschland*, further concluded that refugee men and women had a harder time integrating onto the German labor market than other groups. One reason for this was that, in comparison to other immigrants, they were fleeing a dangerous situation and needed more time once they had arrived in Germany (SOEP 2016: 37). In comparison to other immigrants and male refugees, female refugees had above all the hardest time integrating onto the job market. Based on a survey using SOEP data with refugees who had come to Germany between 1990 and 2010, it was found that after ten years in Germany, around 80% of male refugees were employed whereas less than 50% of female refugees had a job (SOEP 2016: 37). Each of these studies drew the same conclusion that female refugees were disadvantaged, special focus needed to be paid to their situation, and measures developed to help them.

For the first time since 2000, the BAMF report on the situation of foreigners in Germany released in 2016 entitled *Teilhabe, Chancengleichheit und Rechtsentwicklung in der*

Einwanderungsgesellschaft Deutschland, mentioned projects specifically for supporting refugee women as a new area of focus. Female refugees were described as being particularly vulnerable but that they were often the anchor of integration in the family (Beauftragte für Migration 2016a: 14). It is worth noting again that these were the same words that had been used when describing immigrant women. Although the focus was still on offering more language and integration courses specifically for women, the report again showed that these specific courses were still not taken by the majority of women. In 2014 6.0% of men and women took integration courses for parents or women whereas it sank to 4.7% in 2015 (Beauftragte für Migration 2016a: 71). However, the number of women in all of the integration courses sank from 60% during the release of the last report, to 56.6% in 2014, and 50.8% in 2015. The trend however remained that the majority of women took regular integration courses and not courses for parents and women. Access to childcare was still a concern in 2016 although this had continuously been a topic regarding the integration of immigrant women. A lack of childcare near to the courses was listed as a reason why it was difficult for refugee women to take an integration course (Beauftragte für Migration 2016a: 72). Due to this the BMI agreed to re-instate subsidiary childcare offers. Through this BAMF would support participants of an integration course with childcare offers when their child needed care but nothing could be found in the area. The BMI and BMFSFJ would provide 10 Million Euros in 2017 for childcare (Beauftragte für Migration 2016a: 73). This leads to the question why childcare, and proper funding for it, was still an issue in 2016 even after it had been consistently regarded as crucial for the integration of immigrant women for years before the 'refugee crisis'. When the government and its ministries had consistently highlighted childcare as an important issue for integration there had been ample opportunity to address it.

On July 5, 2016, the Federal Employment Agency (BA) introduced the program *Perspektiven für weibliche Flüchtlinge – Potentiale identifizieren, Integration ermöglichen* (PerF-W) which would take effect on December 1, 2016. The program noted that female refugees needed special support and their resources needed to be strengthened (they needed to be empowered), and they needed help in overcoming daily hurdles. The BA made female refugees the target of this program because it claimed that female refugees, especially those coming from patriarchal societies, had experienced disadvantages and structural barriers due to their gender. The BA also expressed that female refugees had experienced sexual violence in their country of origin or along their flight to Germany. The theme that had played the biggest role in describing immigrant women was also highlighted: female refugees were seen as playing a central role and being role models for their children and partners. Due to this the BA highlighted that they needed early support in order to quickly integrate into society and the job market (BA 2016: 4). It was concluded that female refugees needed help to be able to help themselves, access to information, strengthening of their own resources, support with childcare including costs, and integration that fit to their potential. The program PerF-W took all of that into account. It offered

enhanced support in gaining knowledge of the German job market, assisted with finding childcare, provided information on the educational and vocational systems in Germany, and information on how the application process worked. In addition, women could gain job experience in companies and improve their language skills for the job (BA 2016: 4). With PerF-W for the first time a program was specifically developed with only female refugees and their integration in mind. The program looked at the current situation in Germany regarding female refugees, the reported difficulties they encountered, and attempted to find a 'solution'. The BA however followed the same pattern of programs that had been implemented for immigrant women strengthening and using stereotypes. The BA justified the program based around claims that female refugees were in the private realm of family, were suppressed, and experienced increased violence instead of basing the program solely on facts and statistics. Narratives and categorizations coming straight from discussions on female immigrants were used. These assumptions of female refugees were being made without any statistics or facts proving or disproving the claims of suppression and violence. Through the semantics surrounding the program, female refugees were separated from the 'mainstream' and made into the 'other' needing specific help from the State.

The BMFSFJ and the BA also created a concept for a pilot project for female refugees coming to Germany on their own based on the experiences with *Stark im Beruf* and PerF-W. The idea was to bring together language acquisition and integration onto the job market. Childcare would be financed as well as mental health counselling if needed. Individual coaching would also be provided (Schwenken 2017: 42). There was however no follow-up or further mention of this pilot project. In addition, BAMF joined together with The Federal Association of Non-statutory Welfare to empower refugee women and educate them on their rights in Germany. Over 100 projects were started nationwide from cafés for women and meeting centers, to counselling offers and coaching (Özoğuz 2016: 1). The names of the projects were however not mentioned and it was not possible to follow-up on or find them. Then Commissioner for Immigration, Refugees, and Integration, Aydan Özoğuz, also noted her support for two projects specifically focusing on refugee women (but not funded by the government): a research project being conducted by the University Hospital Charité in Berlin on the psychological situation of refugee women and girls in temporary housing, and the project *Migrantinnen als Mutmacherinnen und Brückenbauerinnen* developed by the *Dachverband für Migrantinnenorganisationen*. The goals of the project were to train women to support female refugees in improving their daily situation and to understand their rights in Germany (Beauftragte für Migration 2016a: 349).

The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) set up a website during this time specifically regarding female refugees which can still be accessed today. On the website there is basic information on female refugees as well as examples of projects from various federal states and communities working with female refugees to improve their access to the job market. In addition,

BAMS released an editorial on refugee women in 2016. It acknowledged that statistics and information on refugees up to that point had been dominated by men. Of the 566,000 refugees registered at an employment agency or Job Center in November 2016, 145,000 of them were women. Persistence, patience, and individual support was necessary in order to integrate these women onto the job market. This would not only increase the chances of integration for women, but also enhance their position as the driving force within the family and support integration attempts by their children and husbands (BAMS 2016: 1). As was the case with immigrant women in past reports and studies, refugee women were also represented as the 'other' in this editorial. They were described as having experienced trauma and violence and that religious and cultural norms (gender roles) had to be taken into account when supporting their integration onto the job market. Due to this they needed comprehensive and individual support (BAMS 2016: 1-2). Refugee women were put into the realm of challenges, as had been done with immigrant women, and that it would be difficult for employees at Job Centers to properly be able to help them access the job market due to all of their 'differences'. First the family situation of the women needed to be 'controlled', their children taken care of, accommodation found, and traumatic experiences properly handled before successful support could begin (BAMS 2016: 3). Language acquisition was seen in the editorial as one way to help 'master' these problems. Childcare and language courses specifically for women were also presented as solutions. Despite seeing refugee women through the lens of challenges and difficulties, it was noted in reference to the IAB-BAMF-SOEP study and survey that refugee women were motivated to work (BAMS 2016: 4).

In 2016 the BMFSFJ along with the DIHK released a brochure for businesses and companies on employing refugee women entitled *Perspektiven bieten. So gelingt der Berufseinstieg geflüchteter Frauen in Ihr Unternehmen. Eine Praxishilfe für Unternehmen*. The brochure was developed as part of the ESF-Federal Government program *Stark im Beruf*. It offered information on what potential female refugees would bring with them, what support they required, how female refugees could get on the path to gaining a job, and how companies could connect with female refugees in order to win them as new employees (BMFSFJ and DIHK 2016). The brochure was revised three times with the most recent version being released in February of 2019. It is however not known how many companies have received the brochure or have hired female refugees due to the tips presented. It is also not known how the BMFSFJ and DIHK promote and distribute the brochure.

The integration of refugee women onto the job market was viewed as a major challenge and there was a call for more programs to assist them in addition to *Stark im Beruf* and PerF-W (Beauftragte für Migration 2016a: 237). As part of the results of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey released in 2016, it was shown that programs such as language courses offered by the BAMF and BA, as well as career counselling and other advisory services offered by the BA, provided significant impacts on employment probabilities for refugees. BAMF integration courses and BA general job and career

counseling offers provided the highest impacts (Brücker et al. 2016: 11). It was however found that only a small percentage of refugees which had taken part in the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey by the end of 2016 were aware of, or had used, existing career counseling and integration programs. “Around one-third of the refugees represented in the sample have participated in integration courses; two-thirds have attended other language courses. A minority of refugees have taken advantage of the many advisory programs and job placement services available, for instance career counseling to foster refugees’ job market integration” (Brücker et al. 2016: 16). This reflects the findings from the group *Women in Exile* during their tour through Germany documenting the situation of female refugees that most female refugees were not aware of these programs.

A program which had been pushed yearly by the federal government as a way to integrate immigrant women was expanded to include refugee girls and women in 2016: integration through sport. In 2016 the Commissioner for Migration, Refugees, and Integration released the flyer *Willkommen im Verein! Fußball mit Flüchtlingen* together with the German Football Association. One section was dedicated to winning refugee women and girls as members in sports club. It was largely the same advice used in the past to gain immigrant women and girls: separate changing rooms, teams and groups just for women and girls, and being sensitive to clothing rules, religion, and culture (Beauftragte für Migration 2016b: 11). It repeated many of the same stereotypes about foreign women and girls regarding religion and culture which had been dispelled in previous studies released by various federal agencies mentioned earlier. Other than adding refugee women and girls to an already existing program, nothing new was developed or created to further improve integration into society and contact with Germans.

In April 2017, BAMF released the first ever brief analysis on female refugees entitled *Female Refugees in Germany: Language, Education and Employment*. It was acknowledged in the analysis that female refugees were “quantitatively underrepresented. Their living conditions and their integration prospects are of little significance for the public debate” (Baraulina and Worbs 2017: 2). A reason for this was seen in the fact that issues such as security, criminality, violence, and Islamist radicalization most often discussed politically and in the media were often associated with men. Women on the other hand were seen as a vulnerable group (Baraulina and Worbs 2017: 2). These conclusions could be seen not only in the way female refugees were portrayed in reports and editorials discussed earlier, but also how immigrant women as a whole had been discussed and portrayed in Germany. They had been seen as the ‘outlier’ group with difficulties and challenges needing special help, protection, and support. It is not surprising that the same rhetoric was used to describe female refugees. This in turn led to the assumption that the male immigrant and refugee represented ‘normalcy’.

Like male refugees, the majority of female refugees were young in 2015 and 2016: 40% of applicants were under 18 years and 38% were 18 to under 35 years of age (Baraulina and Worbs 2017:

3). The analysis assumed that most of the women who came to Germany or lived there were with family although there was no comprehensive or representative data to support this assumption. It was made based upon the fact that in the BAMF Refugee Study released in 2016, 14% of female respondents stated that they lived alone whereas 36% of men said they did (Baraulina and Worbs 2017: 4). It is important to point out here that 'lived alone' was used in the survey. Not 'lived with family'. Those drawing the conclusions made 'live alone' equate to 'not live with family' and 'not live alone' to mean 'live with family'. If this one study is to be used to make broad statements about a group of people, then it would also be correct to state that the majority of male refugees who came to or lived in Germany were with family. More than half, 64%, of male respondents did not live alone. It must be asked why it would only be assumed that female refugees were with family and not male refugees? It does not dispute the fact that, based upon the survey, more women were with family than men. Keeping out the fact that the majority of male refugees were also not alone however further supports the generalization of putting women entirely in the realm of family.

The BAMF analysis focused on language acquisition and employment as both were seen as crucial for being able to participate in society (Baraulina and Worbs 2017: 3). It was noted that in 2015 and 2016 there were many opportunities for refugees to learn German. The BAMF integration courses were mentioned as well as courses offered by the BA, states, cities, welfare associations, and volunteers. Unlike with the BAMF courses however, there was no "reliable representative gender-specific data" to show how many men or women took advantage of each offer (Baraulina and Worbs 2017: 6). From 2015 to 2016 the number of women taking part in BAMF integration courses steadily fell from 53.8% in the first quarter of 2015 to 30.7% in the third quarter of 2016. One reason given for this was the change in country of origin of attendees. Most new course attendees in the beginning of 2016 came from Syria, Iraq, and Eritrea. The number of women newly starting an integration course from these countries was continuously under 30% (Baraulina and Worbs 2017: 6-7). A reason given for the low attendance rate was that women with families tended to have to take care of the children and household tasks before they could focus on themselves and learning the language (Baraulina and Worbs 2017: 8). This issue of women attending language courses and childcare was however not new as has been repeatedly discussed throughout this study. Solutions given in the analysis were expanding special integration courses for women and children and offering more childcare options so that more women could participate. The 'blame' however here was again put on the family situation of the refugee women and not on the fact that Germany had not been able to find a proper solution to ensuring that women with children could attend integration courses since the enactment of the Immigration Act in 2005, 12 years prior to this analysis being released by BAMF. As in previous reports and studies on female immigrants, this analysis on female refugees concluded that once able to attend

integration courses, women were just as successful as men, if not more (Baraulina and Worbs 2017: 8).

In regards to employment and education, the analysis drew the same conclusions as those in 2016, as well as studies and reports in the past on immigrant women in Germany: they had fewer educational qualifications, more frequently lacked any form of schooling or vocational training, had less experience with paid labor in their country of origin, employment participation was lower in Germany (compared to male refugees and other groups), and employment was concentrated in cleaning, tourism, hotel, and catering (Baraulina and Worbs 2017: 1). Of the very little data at the time regarding female refugees (and refugees as a whole) on the labor market, the BA released statistics in July of 2016 that of the 105,285 people who were citizens of “non-European countries of origin of refugees” employed with social insurance contributions, 19% were women. Based upon the BAMF Refugee Study released in 2016, 67% of female refugees were employed part-time or were in marginal jobs. They were mostly active in the sectors of cleaning, sales, tourism, hotel, catering, and non-medical health professions (Baraulina and Worbs 2017: 10-11). Two solutions, again, given to help female refugees were BAMF’s low-threshold women’s courses described as being “useful for younger women who (as yet) cannot or do not want to attend integration courses because of family obligation” and the BMI and BMFSFJ increasing funding for childcare (Baraulina and Worbs 2017: 13). One thing to note here is that it was showed time and time again in reports and studies regarding female immigrants, that most women attended general integration courses and in fact preferred to attend them to the courses specifically for women. In 2015 4.7% of those attending integration courses took part in special courses for parents and women (statistics on these courses are always grouped together) and in January to September 2016 2.6% took part (OECD 2017: 57). In addition, increases in spending on childcare was a common promise. Childcare was however most often only provided in the special integration courses with the least number of participants. The solutions offered to support female refugees having better access to integration courses were the same offered many years previously for immigrant women and had not shown any benefit or improvement. The final conclusion of the BAMF analysis on female refugees is in direct connection to this “[...] comparisons should be drawn with other groups of female migrants to work out in how far the social position of female refugees is in fact a specific one” (Baraulina and Worbs 2017: 12). When looking at the initial statements and statistics on female refugees, they are very similar to those in almost every report and study on female immigrants from 1998 to the release of this analysis in 2017. There has however been no study or report released by the BAMF, or any federal government agency, following the suggestion in this analysis to specifically compare the social position of female refugees with other immigrant women. This study is the first one to do just that.

In addition to the BAMF analysis on female refugees, a second major study was released on female refugees in 2017 entitled *Study on Female Refugees: Repräsentative Untersuchung von geflüchteten Frauen in unterschiedlichen Bundesländern in Deutschland*. The study was carried out by the University Hospital Charité in Berlin and the Alexianer St. Hedwig Hospital funded by the BAMF. This was the first *representative* study on female refugees conducted in Germany. The first study on female refugees was conducted in 2005 by the German Institute for Human Rights. It was however not representative, focused on integration onto the job market, was not discussed or taken up by the German federal government or any ministry, and not funded by the BAMF. The study released in 2017 was not only funded by the BAMF but then Commissioner of Immigration, Refugees, and Integration, Aydan Özoğuz, wrote a preface for the study. She distinctly separated female refugees from male refugees and wrote that their experiences and needs separated them in many ways. Examples of such differences were gender-specific traumas, responsibility for accompanying children, or a traditional understanding of roles. These factors could limit mobility, participation in educational opportunities, and access to medical and psychosocial care. Women and girls often also experienced higher stress factors in temporary accommodations than men (Alexianer and Charité 2017: 5). The objective of the study was to present the psychosocial situation of refugee women, and as with the study from 2005, interview women directly and give them the opportunity to express what could be improved and what would be helpful for their integration into German society. Female refugees were interviewed in Berlin, Nürnberg, Rostock, Frankfurt, and Mainz. In addition, the authors of the study hoped to fill a gap in the research on female refugees as very little was known about their situation in Germany up to that point. The study was conducted with female refugees who were still living in temporary accommodation and had not yet received refugee or protection status.

The study found that 45% of the women interviewed described their current quality of life as fair. The researchers were surprised to find that 70% of the women were happy or very happy with their relationship (Alexianer and Charité 2017: 42). This contradicted what had previously been assumed about female refugees and their family situation. Over 50% of the women said that their living situation was bad or very bad. In addition, there were structural problems in Germany such as a lack of financial means, a lack of privacy, bureaucratic hurdles, and problems finding an apartment. Only 5% of the women however described having problems with communication due to language barriers. Only 2% had experienced discrimination. Discrimination appeared to have occurred most often within temporary housing amongst other refugees (Alexianer and Charité 2017: 43). When it came to actively seeking help, only 15% of the women went to a doctor for physical ailments and only 4% for psychological support. This was surprising for the researchers as only 36% of the women stated that there was a lack of professional support. It was concluded here that further research needed to be done to discover why more women were not actively seeking help (Alexianer and Charité 2017: 44).

The study further found that only 16% of the women had access to a general practitioner, 10% had access to medicine, and only 8% had the possibility to speak with a psychologist. Many women reported a lot of psychological stress and that there was a high need for psychological counselling (Alexianer and Charité 2017: 46). For the researchers of the study, this showed a substantial barrier for women in accessing medical help and a large gap in treatment which required immediate action. When at the doctors, many women described language barriers and a lack of gender-specific treatment options connected to topics that were perceived as embarrassing (Alexianer and Charité 2017: 46).

The topic of traditional gender roles had continuously been a theme in studies and reports not only in the newly published reports on female refugees, but also in those in the past on immigrant women. Family and gender roles were consistently shown through the lens of women being suppressed in a patriarchal, religious, and traditional society. In the study conducted by the University Hospital Charité, it was found that the women interviewed were worried about the development of their family cohesion, the role of husband and wife, and the loss or change of a specific role (Alexianer and Charité 2017: 45). The women saw integration onto the job market as a way to become independent from welfare, as well as from their husbands, and as liberation from a submissive role. They also saw their chance at obtaining financial freedom again and becoming active through having a job (Alexianer and Charité 2017: 47). In regards to language acquisition, the women often criticized that their access to language courses was often made difficult due to false information on courses, events, and offers (Alexianer and Charité 2017: 46). The most often named goals of the refugee women interviewed were obtaining an education and job (38%) and successful integration (25%) (Alexianer and Charité 2017: 44).

Although the study was conducted with female refugees who were still in the asylum process and therefore subject to asylum laws and regulations, it still drew relevant conclusions for integration. It directly interviewed female refugees and gave a picture of their life in Germany and what they wanted and needed. Stability and security were themes that strongly came out throughout the study and interviews. Above all through good health, employment, and successful integration the women felt that they could reach these two things. These topics and conclusions were however not new. Of course in regards specifically to female refugees they were, but health, employment, and successful integration were topics that had continuously been addressed relating to female immigrants.

With the increased attention on female refugees and implementing projects and programs to assist them with better integration onto the job market, the program *Stark im Beruf* reacted to the 'refugee crisis' by trying to do more to integrate refugee mothers into its programs beginning in the summer of 2015. By 2016 around 230 mothers who had come as refugees, around 10% of all participants, had taken part in the program. They were connected to the program through Job Centers, organizations for immigrants, welfare organizations, and outreach work at temporary housing for

refugees (Schwenken 2017: 41). It is however not possible to know how many of these women were officially recognized as refugees or still registered as asylum-seekers as the program was open to women with good perspectives of obtaining asylum as well as those who had already obtained it. Two central problems were however the difficulty that still remained with recognizing degrees and qualifications obtained abroad and a lack of knowledge of the German language. The additional modules targeted at refugee women thus focused on professional orientation and skill assessment, language acquisition, and various forms of coaching and counselling (Schwenken 2017: 41). In August 2017 an additional module was added to the program specifically for mothers who had come to Germany as refugees. Additional offers were created for this group of women in order to help them successfully join the job market. 35 locations were funded with an additional 25,000 Euros in 2017 and again in 2018 (www.starkimberuf.de). The other locations were however also open to women (mothers) who had come as refugees even if the locations were not a part of the new module. The new module followed the same general principle of the program overall but added information for companies and businesses on why it was a good idea to hire female refugees.

In addition to expanding *Stark im Beruf* to include female refugees who were mothers, a three-year project was also introduced in 2017 called *Frauen mit Fluchterfahrung gründen*. The project could be seen as a 'spin-off' of the two-year project initiated in 2015 *Migrantinnen gründen* which concluded at the end of 2016. In 2017 the organization *jump-Ihr Sprungbrett in die Selbständigkeit e.V.* released a handbook together with the other cooperation partners, and funded by the BMFSFJ, outlining the major points of the original project *Migrantinnen gründen* in order to help other groups implement similar ones (Block, Lange and Leicht 2017). There were however no statistics given on how many immigrant women had taken part and how many tandems were successful in founding a business. In a separate evaluation however conducted by PHINEO and published on their website, it was reported that 22 of the original 25 women took part in the project until the end in 2016. 15 of these women became their own bosses while participating, two were able to take part in internships, and four others were planning on enacting their ideas by the end of 2017.

The new project for female refugees, *Frauen mit Fluchterfahrung gründen*, built off from the experiences of the first. It was supported and initiated by the same cooperation partners, funded by the BMFSFJ, also located in the Rhine-Main Metropolitan Region surrounding Frankfurt am Main, and was set up similarly to the original. The goal of the project was to support female refugees with starting their own businesses through mentoring and a program specifically designed to include individual coaching, workshops, collaboration with teams, and networking as in the original program. For the new project with female refugees however, co-working would also be included as well as job shadowing in small and medium-sized enterprises. The program was broken into three phases: the first took place in 2017 and was used to sensitize the public as well as to activate the potential of female

refugees, in 2018 the mentoring began, and in 2019 the participants officially enacted their business ideas. The project would then conclude in the end of 2019 with the objective of 20 successful tandems. The goal stayed the same between the two projects: support and sensitize. In the project for female refugees however there were two new points: gender equality and the development of specific methods (www.frauenmitfluchterfahrunggruenden.de). An expert conference regarding the program was scheduled for November 1, 2019 in Berlin by the DIHK. After the project ended, an overview was released in August 2020 with findings and suggestions for the future. 107 women with a “flight biography” took interest in the project. 39 of them were able to develop concrete business ideas. Several were however unable to put their ideas into action due to various reasons but were given support and suggestions on how to continue following their goals. By the end of the project seven participants were able to officially establish their business and four others were on the path to doing the same (Phineo 2020: 12). Direct conclusions regarding the success of the program, and the businesses established, could however not yet be made due to it being too early.

In June of 2017 the BMFSFJ released the *Zweiter Gleichstellungsbericht der Bundesregierung*. The situation of female refugees was a prominent topic. When looking at measures that had been implemented for refugees, it was clear for the BMFSFJ that the stereotypes of gender had to be overcome and the heterogeneity of female refugees taken into account (BMFSFJ 2017: 20). The program *Stark im Beruf* was the only program listed as an example of a program working towards the integration of female refugees (mothers) onto the job market. This was despite the fact that the BA had introduced PerF-W in 2016 specifically for female refugees (not just mothers) and *Migrantinnen gründen* and *Frauen mit Fluchterfahrung gründen* also had the same objectives. As was reported in the various BAMF analyses, it was also found in the *Zweiter Gleichstellungsbericht* that, independent of their qualifications and age, female refugees were often counseled to take a position in predominantly ‘feminine’ fields such as care and in the low-paying service sector. It was concluded that this was due largely to gender-based stereotypes and a lack of knowledge on these topics by personnel responsible for job placement. It was noted that the recognition of qualifications and degrees in Germany obtained in other countries was still a problem for female refugees (BMFSFJ 2017: 227). In the area of gender equality, the report asserted that the large number of refugees that had entered Germany presented new challenges (BMFSFJ 2017: 224).

It was criticized in the report that the numerous projects and programs that had been developed in order to help refugees and were still in the beginning phases had not taken gender-specific violence and gender overall into account. Due to this, it was claimed that the projects could not properly address the specific needs of target groups. It was further criticized that it was often ignored in public discussion and debate that refugees were a heterogeneous group. This often led to repeating stereotypes and generalizations. In order to counteract this, according to the report, gender-

based studies on the situation of refugees were needed (BMFSFJ 2017: 225). It was further stated that conclusions and data gained through such studies needed to be communicated to groups outside of the 'professional public' in order to avoid gender-based stereotypes such as the 'suppressed woman' or the 'violent man' (BMFSFJ 2017: 226). In the area of violence, the report noted that men were also victims of violence although the focus had continuously been on women solely as victims. It was stated that men experienced more violence from strangers outside of the home than women (BMFSFJ 2017: 80). The focus in the report however quickly turned back to women with a migration background and female refugees strongly being affected by violence. Despite recognizing that immigrant and refugee men also experienced violence all of the programs and measures discussed in the report were solely for women and girls. It is important to highlight the points raised above by the report. Specifically with stereotypes and generalizations. This study was continuing the critique that had been raised by the BMFSFJ and other ministries in the past regarding female immigrants that government programs or reports were perpetuating stereotypes and categorizing women into one group. This time regarding female refugees. It went further than past reports however in raising the point that information on female refugees needed to be made available to all groups in order to avoid stereotyping and categorizations. Despite this not being the first government ministry and report bringing to light the categorization and stereotyping that was occurring through government programs and projects it did not seem to make much of an impact.

A last important critique point made by the report directly corresponds to this study. The programs and measures implemented for female refugees from 2015-2016, funded or supported by the federal government or its ministries, were not open to all female refugees but only those with good perspectives of being able to stay in Germany and obtain a residence permit or official refugee status. This included the program *Stark im Beruf* which had continuously been mentioned as a model program. This led to a situation where female refugees who did not yet know how their asylum claim would be decided, but who would be in Germany for a longer time awaiting the response, were shut out from almost all programs and measures. It also led to uncertainties for communities and federal states as they often interpreted the guidelines of programs differently. In addition, most programs and projects were implemented in large cities or areas around cities, as with the project *Frauen mit Fluchterfahrung gründen*, disadvantaging women in rural areas (BMFSFJ 2017: 227-228). Although it lies outside the scope of this study, the repercussions of a woman living for a long period of time in Germany without access to any programs or projects due to their uncertain status cannot be ignored. It is an important area of research that needs to be studied and looked at in-depth. It plays an important role in the integration success of women once they have gained refugee or protection status, what qualifications they have, and even what level of German they are starting out with.

On September 24, 2017 the German federal elections took place. The alliance of the CDU and CSU under Angela Merkel received the majority of the votes followed by the SPD. A government was however not formed until March 12, 2018 due to failed coalition negotiations between the CDU/CSU, the FDP, and the Green Party. As a result, the SPD agreed to join the CDU and CSU again in a coalition government after much intense debate. The concept of a *Leitkultur* or guiding culture again gained prominence and became a central talking point in the campaigns leading up to the elections in September. Almost every party described the compliance with formal legal norms and the values of the Basic Law as ways to measure successful integration. When speaking of values and norms, most parties referred solely to the Basic Law. The CDU/CSU and AfD however spoke directly of a German *Leitkultur* which they thought should form the basis for living together in Germany. The parties' idea of what this exactly meant however differed. For the AfD it meant assimilation and that integration was the sole responsibility of the immigrant. For the CDU, and in particular the CSU, it was more connected to the Basic Law and rules of law (Sachverständigenrat 2019: 178-179). As has already been referenced in this study, the discussion of a *Leitkultur* in German immigration debate is nothing new. The problem is however that such concepts are often used by racist and populist parties. Such discussions solidify the perception in some parts of society that the values of, above all Muslim, immigrants are all the same and incompatible with German society (Sachverständigenrat 2019: 179). Since the renewed discussion on a *Leitkultur*, formal legal norms and informal behavioral norms, as well as rules of daily life, became more strongly conveyed in integration courses as well as information material. This enhanced focus on norms and values was however not directly connected to a *Leitkultur* (Sachverständigenrat 2019: 185). Despite such emotionally charged topics and the intense debates on integration, values, and norms, there has not been a noticeable change in the rhetoric or development of programs connected to immigrant women and female refugees. The focus and talking points have always remained the same: language acquisition, integration onto the job market, and the family.

Angela Merkel was officially re-elected as Chancellor on March 14, 2018 by the representatives in the *Bundestag*. She has been Chancellor since November 22, 2005 and with that Chancellor since the enactment of the Immigration Act in 2005. She has become an integral part of the debate, development, and implementation of German integration policy including before, during, and after the 'refugee crisis' in 2015 and 2016. Her now infamous phrase "*Wir schaffen das*" which she used to assert that Germany could absorb the large number of refugees coming into the country in 2015, was quickly taken up by anti-immigration parties and groups and used against her and her policies. Despite this, integration remained a main focus for Merkel and her coalition. In the Coalition Agreement released on March 12, 2018, the core of German integration policy was again re-iterated as *Fördern und Fordern*. The objective was to improve integration, to learn from past mistakes, make quick and effective corrections, and enhance integration onto the job market with a focus on integration courses

and language. The integration of refugees was also a key point (Koalitionsvertrag 2018: 106-108). Mothers were specifically mentioned in the agreement as crucial for the integration of the entire family. Due to this there had to be a focus on their integration into society and onto the job market. In order to achieve this the program *Stark im Beruf* would be funded further (Koalitionsvertrag 2018: 21). It has almost become monotonous to yet again point out that a focus on mothers in the integration of their families in coalition agreements and other reports and studies had become common place. Yet despite their continuous mention since 2005 only one long-term program, *Stark im Beruf* in 2014, had been developed and enacted as a possible way to better women's integration without showing any significant or positive changes in the statistics on the situation of immigrant women. Similar to this, sport was again listed in the Coalition Agreement as playing an important role in integration although there had also not been any statistics or findings supporting this.

In 2018 it was declared by the current Commissioner for Migration, Refugees, and Integration, Annette Widmann-Mauz, that it was the right time to give new impulses to integration policy because of the new challenges facing the country since 2015 (Integrationsbeauftragte 2018). Due to the large number of refugees which had entered the country, the people already living in Germany with a migration background had been put 'under pressure' (Welt 2018). The previous NAP was from 2012. Since then, and due to the thousands of refugees who had entered Germany, the debate on integration had fundamentally changed (Welt 2018). In 2018 the federal government, coordinated by the BAMF, therefore began developing a new *Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration*. The idea for a new plan was presented at the Integration Summit on June 13, 2018. It would bring all of the plans and tasks of the federal government together regarding integration and work closely with immigrant and refugee organizations among other actors (Welt 2018; Ahad and Schmidt 2019: 49). *Fördern und Fordern* was again the core of integration policy. For the federal government, integration was most successful through education, vocational training, and access to the job market (Integrationsbeauftragte 2018). A website was set up for the action plan. On the website the plan was broken up into five phases: before immigration, first steps to integration, integration, coming together, and solidarity. As part of the new action plan, ministries needed to develop detailed proposals on actions in order to implement the plan and report back annually by 2021 (Ahad and Schmidt 2019: 49).

Two months after the federal government presented the new NAP, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) presented the results of a study on female refugees in Germany entitled *Triple Disadvantage?: A first overview of the integration of refugee women*. Its findings were discussed in German news media and public debates and seen as leading to the conclusion that female refugees were poorly integrated in German society. Although it concluded that refugee women had "particular integration challenges associated with poorer health and lower education and labour market outcomes compared to refugee men" this was not new (Liebig 2018: 4).

The study relied on the IAB-BAMF-SOEP refugee analyses and the results of the 2014 *Refugee Study* released in 2016. What was new however, was that the study by the OECD brought in the idea of correlation. It asserted that “[...] there is little correlation between indicators such gender differences in participation and employment in the origin and in the host country, suggesting that the integration issues can be addressed by host-country employment and education policy instruments” (Liebig 2018: 4). The idea of a triple disadvantage was seen as a major cause for difficulties in integrating due to the fact that female refugees had to simultaneously deal with obstacles for immigrants, refugees, and women (Liebig 2018: 8). This idea of intersectionality and multi-discrimination were also not new. These had been discussed in past reports and studies on immigrant women as well as the first study on female refugees in 2005 by the German Institute on Human Rights. Despite not offering any new statistics or data, the OECD study, if only briefly, publicly put pressure on the federal government to develop and implement programs that would properly address the triple disadvantage that female refugees faced. The focus was not on the disadvantages that female refugees brought with them, but rather on that it was only through government policy instruments that integration issues could be solved. Once female refugees arrived in Germany it was almost like they had a ‘blank slate’. According to the study, it was government programs and initiatives that determined how ‘successfully’ female refugees would integrate, not the qualifications or level of education they brought with them. This point is extremely important. Up until then the government and its ministries had put the ‘problems’ with integration solely on ‘deficits’ that female refugees, and female immigrants, had. There had been no suggestion that difficulties with integration could instead lie with the government and factors external to women. Despite this and the focus in the media on the article there was no major change in the rhetoric surrounding female refugees and their integration. The ‘problems’ continued to lie with them and their lack of certain things such as language skills, qualifications, and cultural differences. This study had also offered German academia the opportunity to research more into the integration of (recognized) female refugees and their situation in Germany. An opportunity not taken. Nonetheless, this study continued to show that the focus on female refugees had been continuously increasing in Germany since 2015. Whereas before 2015 they had only been mentioned once in a study in 2005, now they were being named as specific target groups in programs and reports were being released on their situation.

After the release of the OECD report, an expert report was released in October 2018 by the BMFSFJ, Fondation Chanel, DFL Foundation, and PHINEO entitled *geflüchtete Frauen in Deutschland stärken: Fempowerment*. It targeted civil society groups, institutions, and companies working with female refugees. It presented 24 projects and programs implemented by local actors seen as successful by those putting together the report in supporting and empowering these women. Although many new programs and projects had been initiated for refugees, it was asserted that too few of them had

a gender-specific view. Slowly however programs were beginning to include female refugees. However, it was the opinion of the authors of the report that these programs faced obstacles such as those connected directly to forced migration, challenges women faced along their route to Germany, and specific challenges once in Germany. In order to properly support the potential of female refugees who arrived in Germany, it was concluded in the report that certain guidelines were needed. Above all it was important to know the initial situation of these women. Public discussion on refugees was often ‘genderless’, meaning that most people had young men in mind, despite the fact that the number of refugee women coming to Germany had been steadily increasing since 2015 (2015: 31 %, 2016: 34%, 2017: 40%, 2018: 42%) (Phineo 2018: 9). As soon as women were however spoken of, gender stereotypes and clichés followed. Specialist publications from academia and politics had increased on the topic of gender in forced migration, but these rarely reached the public. The report touched on the ideas of multi-dimensional discrimination, patriarchal family structures which could hinder female refugees in learning German, and the importance of empowerment (Phineo 2018: 11). Most of the challenges and needs presented in the report had however already been seen in past reports and studies on immigrant women, as well as newly published reports on refugees, and nothing new was presented. The trend was continuing that government reports and studies were speaking out about generalizations and multidimensional discrimination but official rhetoric and reports were not reflecting this. What was different about this report however, was that it was released specifically for groups and organizations working with female refugees. This could have been a very useful and helpful report but it was not advertised or reported on in media outlets, nor was it referred to publicly by the federal government or the BMFSFJ. A civil society group, institution, or company would have to actively search for tips on this topic and luckily come across the report or have another person or group send it to them.

At the end of 2018 a report on the program *Stark im Beruf* was released by the BMFSFJ entitled *So gelingt der Berufseinstieg von geflüchteten Müttern: Erkenntnisse aus dem ESF-Bundesprogramm “Stark im Beruf – Mütter mit Migrationshintergrund steigen ein”*. This program had been the one referenced most by the government as the most ‘successful’ program for immigrant (and refugee) women. Results were not presented showing how many female refugees had participated and how successful they were. Instead an overview was given of the situation of female refugees in Germany based upon BAMF studies from 2016 and the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey previously discussed and how the program was organized. In addition, there were practical tips for other actors supporting female refugees’ integration onto the job market and how integration all around could be successful. In looking at qualification, level of education, and employment, the findings were the same as those from 2016 and 2017: female refugees were on average less educated (however when they were educated they more often had university degrees) and they had less employment experience than

male refugees (BMFSFJ 2018: 5). More women were registered with the BA and had jobs providing social security benefits in 2017 than in 2016. This improvement however was not attributed to any program initiated by the federal government or any of its ministries (BMFSFJ 2018: 8). The report listed five aspects of life that attributed to the disadvantageous position of female refugees on the job market. These aspects were not only echoes from newly released reports on female refugees in 2016 and 2017, but more so from the numerous reports and studies on immigrant women from the past: language, education, health, employment experience, and family (BMFSFJ 2018: 10).

As has become the recurrent theme not only for immigrant women but now for female refugees, they were being depicted as the 'other'. It was female refugees that were disadvantaged with language, education, health, employment experience, and family. Their lower levels of qualification or lack of employment experience were depicted as the 'problem'. A 'problem' that they brought with them. The fact that the federal government had not been able to implement a long-term program since the enactment of the Immigration Act in 2005 in order to enable immigrant women, and female refugees, to obtain the qualifications they needed to acquire a well-paying job with social security benefits and/or to gain employment opportunity through internships or vocational training was not mentioned. According to the report female refugees needed to be 'sensitized' to family friendly language courses and childcare was yet again described as being important for their access to language courses and special programs for support in finding a job (BMFSFJ 2018: 12). There was however no mention of the fact that childcare was often only offered for women taking special integration courses for parents or women. In addition, continuously connecting childcare to the success of female refugees, and immigrant women, takes the father entirely out of the situation further pigeonholing women in the area of family. Female refugees were again described in the report as having a high level of need and requiring long-term guidance and support (BMFSFJ 2018: 13).

Besides perhaps providing interesting suggestions for groups working with female refugees, the report from the BMFSFJ did not provide any concrete information on the success of the program *Stark im Beruf*, how many female refugees had participated and, reproduced stereotypes, focused on challenges instead of opportunities, and did not offer any concrete suggestions for improving the situation of female refugees. On the website for the program however data could be found on how many female refugees did take part and what the overall participants in the program had achieved. By December 2018 9,409 mothers with a migration background had started the program, 24% (around 2,259) of them were mothers officially recognized as refugees or with protection status. Of the total amount of mothers who had started the program 7,212 participants had finished it. Of those who finished the program 27% switched to jobs providing social security benefits or became self-employed, 10% were sent to educational or vocational training (for example in care or education), 14% completed a qualification (without language qualification), and 11% successfully completed a language course

(www.starkimberuf.de). This data was however not broken down to show what the female refugees had participated in or achieved. Therefore it is not possible to know how successful the program has been for this group of women.

Following the lack of information on female refugees from the report on *Stark im Beruf*, there was still very little reliable data on the current situation of female refugees at the end of 2018; almost four years after the beginning of the 'refugee crisis' and almost 14 years after the enactment of the Immigration Act (Lingen-Ali and Ullmann 2018: 4). At the end of 2018, female refugees were simply being presented as wives and mothers passively accompanying male immigrants in public discussion and the media, just as with immigrant women before them. Also in comparison to immigrant women, they were seen as being particularly in need of protection and care. The focus was on difficulties and barriers instead of their potential and resources. This generalization made it hard to see that there were many female refugees actively participating in society and integrating (Lingen-Ali and Ullmann 2018: 6). Furthermore, measures dealing with family-life balance where childcare was offered were often part of projects or programs specifically for women, whether immigrant or refugees. Anything dealing with gender was immediately put into the realm of 'the woman' (Lingen-Ali and Ullmann 2018: 8-9).

The year 2019 did not bring with it any new programs or initiatives for female refugees but instead a number of reports and studies on integration, immigrants, and refugees. The results of the second wave of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey were published and discussed and a survey on the living situation of refugees was conducted from August to December 2019. The goal of the survey from August to December was to provide long-term data on the situation of refugees who had come to Germany between 2013 and 2016. The participants had already been surveyed in 2016, 2017, and 2018. Through looking at the results and findings of these latest reports and studies, it will give us a picture of the current situation of not only female refugees but also immigrant women. Before discussing the results and findings however it is important to first briefly discuss the adoption of a hotly debated *Migrationspaket* in June 2019 by the *Bundestag*.

The *Migrationspaket* was comprised of seven different legislations on the regulation, management, and limitation of migration. The most highly contested of them was the *Geordnete-Rückkehr-Gesetz* which for many critics led to a tightening of asylum law in Germany. Despite the immense focus and critique, most primarily directed at the *Geordnete-Rückkehr-Gesetz*, the *Migrationspaket* for the most part did not affect female refugees who had obtained a residence permit or protection status. Although it is important to look in detail at the *Migrationspaket* and the different legislations and their effect on asylum and migration, it lays outside the scope of this study. There was however one change that could have potential integration affects for recognized female refugees who came to Germany between 2015 and 2017. As is general practice in German asylum law, after a person

has received refugee or protection status, their case is reviewed three later in order to determine if their reason for protection is still valid or has changed. If their reason for protection is still perceived as valid, they have the possibility of receiving permanent residency which puts them on the path to perhaps one day becoming a naturalized German citizen. If the claims for asylum are no longer valid, meaning they no longer need protection and can return to their country of origin, their status can change or asylum can no longer be provided. This review of an asylum decision after a period of time, known in German as a *Widerrufsverfahren*, was changed as part of the *Geordnete-Rückkehr-Gesetz* in 2019. For those who had arrived in Germany in 2015 and had received a residence permit and refugee or protection status the time period was extended to December 31, 2019. For those who had arrived in 2016 it was extended to December 31, 2020, and for those who had arrived in 2017 it was extended to December 31, 2021 (Bundesamt für Justiz 2019). For each of these groups of refugees the time period was raised from three to five years after which their case would be reviewed. This will affect most of all refugees who came to Germany from Syria. This change to the law puts this group of refugees under new pressure. Although a review of an asylum decision is common practice and each recognized refugee knows that it will take place, increasing the time period from three to five years forces them to stay longer in a period of uncertainty not knowing what will happen after five years. It is too soon to know however if this will have a negative effect on their integration success or not. It is nonetheless important to keep in mind that refugee women, and men, will have the pressure of this increased time period as a part of their integration into German society.

In returning back to the studies and reports on refugees released in 2019, in January 2019 the BAMF and the BMI released the *Migrationsbericht der Bundesregierung: Migrationsbericht 2016/2017*. At the time of writing this study, the end of 2019, this report provided the most up-to-date, in-depth, and comparative statistics and data on migration to Germany released by the federal government. A report by the BAMF Commissioner on the situation of immigrants in Germany is also published at least every two years. The difference between the report on migration and the report detailing the situation of immigrants in Germany is that the report on migration looks at why immigrants have come to Germany, from which countries, how long they have been in the country, gender and age, and the migration comparison between Germany and other EU countries. The BAMF report on the situation of immigrants in Germany on the other hand gives detailed statistics on employment, health, education, and other topics related to life in Germany. The eleventh report on the situation of immigrants was released by the BAMF in December 2016. At the time of writing there had not been an in-depth study on the situation of immigrants in Germany released by the BAMF in three years. The *Migrationsbericht* offered much more in regards to data differentiated based upon gender than past reports. The percentage of men and women who had migrated to Germany between 2000 and 2017 was presented. Although it is not possible to know how many of the women were officially recognized as refugees or

how many had a residence permit, one is able to see that between 2000 and 2017 women consistently made up around 40% of those migrating to Germany. In the years leading up to the Immigration Act in 2005 and the early debates on integration, women made up more than 40%. Despite making up a large part of those migrating to Germany since 2000, and report after report showing that immigrant women were disadvantaged on the job market, only very few programs or initiatives were introduced to assist immigrant women, and later female refugees, as has been discussed earlier. These few programs were also introduced years after the enactment of the Immigration Act in 2005 and the initiation of the NIP in 2007.

In regards to asylum, the *Migrationsbericht* also offered some statistics on recognition and status differentiated by gender. These types of statistics have been, and are still, very rare to come by as the majority of statistics are broken down based upon gender only when looking at asylum applications, not decisions. Statistics on how many female refugees were granted asylum, and which type of status, is important for knowing how many are able to officially take part in all integration programs and what restrictions, if any, they are faced with based upon their status. This type of information would make it easier to analyze and, in the long-term, track the success and difficulties of female refugees. It was provided in the *Migrationsbericht* that by December 31, 2017, 57 women out of 89 third-country nationals had received a temporary residence permit based on §25 Para. 4a from the Immigration Act. This was given to foreigners who had been victims of human trafficking (BAMF and BMI 2019: 115). The report also presented two graphs showing how many women arriving from specific countries in 2017 received a residence permit that same year. The graphs were divided between residence based on §25 Para 4. (humanitarian) and §25 Para. 5 (unable to return back to country of origin). For §25 Para. 4, ten countries¹⁸ were listed as well as data for others. In total, out of 3,846 people that had received this status, 1,801 of them were female. For §25 Para. 5, five countries¹⁹ were listed as well as data for others. Out of 763 people, 276 of them were women in 2017 (BAMF and BMI 2019: 117-118). Further, data was given on how many women came to Germany through the Resettlement Program²⁰ from 2012-2017. The most women, 661, came in 2016 and then steeply dropped in 2017 to 188 (2012:102; 2013: 140; 2014:155; 2015:238) (BAMF and BMI 2019: 119). The largest group in 2017 was that of women coming to Germany through family reunification to their (foreign) husbands, 32% in comparison to 31.3% in 2016.

Based upon this information we know that at least 2,322 female refugees officially obtained a residence permit in 2017. In September 2019 the BAMF released its most current data on asylum at

¹⁸ The United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Russia, Angola, Serbia (including former Serbia and Montenegro), Afghanistan, Turkey

¹⁹ Serbia (including former Serbia and Montenegro), Syria, Ghana, Nigeria, Vietnam

²⁰ In the resettlement program refugees from one asylum country are transferred to another country that has agreed to admit them and give them permanent settlement.

the time of writing. The only statistics differentiating based upon gender were, yet again, those relating to first application of asylum between January and September 2019. This was broken down between gender and age. There were no statistics differentiating based upon gender for asylum decisions. In the BAMF report it was listed that in total 603,428 decisions were made on asylum applications in 2017 from asylum-seekers from the top ten countries of origin including unknown (232,307 asylum claims were denied) (BAMF 2019: 11). There is no way to know how many of these were for women. This means 371,121 asylum-seekers received some type of protection in the year 2017. When connecting this back to the *Migrationsbericht* from 2017, we see that despite the positive fact that data was presented on recognition for female asylum-seekers in this report, 2,322 is only a smidgen of asylum decisions made that year. There is unfortunately no way to conclude from these official reports how many female refugees can fully begin the process of integration into German society. Statistics on asylum decisions for female refugees however do exist. They are not in official reports or publications by the federal government or any of its ministries. They are located in responses to official requests for information by members of the *Bundestag*.

On April 9, 2019 a group of representatives from the Left Party in the *Bundestag* sent a request to the federal government regarding female refugees (Drucksache 19/9216 2019). Amongst other questions the representatives requested the following information for each year between 2015-2018:

- 1) How many asylum decisions had the BAMF made regarding women and what were the exact decisions?
- 2) How many women had received protection as a family member?
- 3) How many women had received refugee status based on §16a in the Basic Law (§3 in the Refugee Act) due to gender-specific persecution?
- 4) What happens to a woman who is recognized as a refugee as part of family asylum pursuant to §26 of the Asylum Act and divorces her husband? How many women have lost their residence permit due to divorce?
- 5) How many female refugees have used a woman's shelter and what plans does the government have to better financially support these shelters?
- 6) How has the government implemented the findings and suggestions in the *Study on Female Refugees* (study by the University Hospital Charité in 2017)?

On May 20, 2019 the federal government responded. Each of the above-listed questions is important to fully follow, analyze, and understand not only the situation of female refugees, but how the federal government and its ministries are responding to them. It is therefore important to briefly look at each answer.

The answers to questions one, two, and three on asylum decisions for each year from 2015-2018 can be found in Tables 7 and 8 (negative decisions not included). They are for the top 14 countries

of origin²¹, including unknown country of origin, from which refugees applying for asylum came during the given time period, and women over 18 years of age.

Table 7: Asylum Decisions for Female Refugees 2015-2018 (Part One)

| Year | §16a German Basic Law | | §4 Para. 1 Subsidiary protection | | §60 Immigration Act prohibition of deportation |
|------|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| | Total | From that family asylum | Total | From that International Protection for family members §26 Para. 5 in conjunction with §4 of the Asylum Act | |
| 2015 | 478 | 25 | 321 | 20 | 495 |
| 2016 | 534 | 33 | 34,153 | 137 | 6,029 |
| 2017 | 1,201 | 65 | 20,571 | 409 | 10,555 |
| 2018 | 783 | 55 | 7,669 | 124 | 2,393 |

Source: Own graph based on data from *Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten und der Fraktion DIE LINKE* (Drucksache 19/10341), 2019.

Table 8: Asylum Decisions for Female Refugees 2015-2018 (Part Two)

| Year | Recognition as refugee §3 Para. 1 Asylum Act | | | | | | |
|------|--|---|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| | Total | From that international protection for family members §26 Para. 5 in conjunction with §3 Asylum Act | From that direct recognition as refugee § 3 Para 1 Asylum Act | | | | |
| | | | Total | From that gender specific persecution | | | No assessment/misc. |
| | | | | Total | Persecution by state | Persecution by non-state actor | |
| 2015 | 23,147 | 274 | 22,873 | 423 | 202 | 218 | 3 |
| 2016 | 49,789 | 1,948 | 47,841 | 4,930 | 1,243 | 2,862 | 825 |
| 2017 | 23,924 | 3,254 | 20,679 | 6,717 | 1,455 | 4,786 | 476 |
| 2018 | 5,567 | 1,970 | 3,597 | 1,448 | 334 | 1,036 | 78 |

Source: Own graph based on data from *Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten und der Fraktion DIE LINKE* (Drucksache 19/10341), 2019.

²¹ Syria, Albania, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Serbia, Eritrea, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Iran, Russian Federation, Nigeria, Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Compared to the data given in the *Migrationsbericht*, Tables 7 and 8 show a very different picture. In the *Migrationsbericht* only 2,322 female refugees were reported as having received some type of protection status. According to Tables 7 and 8 however, since the beginning of the ‘refugee crisis’ in 2015 until the end of 2018, at least 187,609 female refugees in total had received a positive decision to their asylum claim. It can be assumed that the actual number could be higher than that when taking into account that the data listed above is only for women from the top 14 countries of origin for refugees, including women for whom the country of origin is unknown. This information plays an important role in determining the efficacy of a program designed to support female refugees and its ability to reach them. For example, by the end of 2018 around 2,259 female refugees who were mothers had started the program *Stark im Beruf*. Since its start in 2015, this program had consistently been touted as being a prime example of supporting immigrant women and female refugees. It is however now clear that since the start of the program around 187,609 female refugees had gained some form of protection status in Germany, meaning they had access to this program. This leads to the question of if this program, as the only long-term program of its kind at the moment, is truly enough to help this group of women. It only reached around 1% of its target group. The question then follows what is being done, if anything, to expand the program’s reach to ensure that it connects to as many female refugees as possible, as well as to organizations and groups supporting them, in order to gain them as participants. The other question is why is the information on how many female refugees have received protection status not readily available? Why can it only be found by looking through the archives of the German Bundestag or contacting the BAMF directly and requesting it?

The question asked by members of the *Bundestag* on residence status and divorce is not new. It had already been brought up in respect to female immigrants, as well as female refugees, who had come through family reunification or obtained their residence permit through their spouse. In the Immigration Act from 2005, Article 31, *Eigenständiges Aufenthaltsrecht der Ehegatten*, was seen as having been adjusted due to the perceived increased intimate partner violence that immigrant women faced as discussed earlier. This article stipulated that in the event of a divorce, a spouse could have their residence permit extended for a year as an independent right of residence unrelated to the original purpose of family reunification if they had been lawfully married in Germany for at least two years (Zuwanderungsgesetz 2004: 12). This minimum of two years could however be waived in order to avoid particular hardship. A particular hardship was understood as suffering from physical and emotional violence from the husband (Bundesregierung 1999: 24). This change from the original three to two years was viewed by advocates as a ‘success’ in the protection of abused immigrant women. It is important to mention that this ‘success’ was retracted in 2011. As discussed earlier, in the Coalition Agreement from 2009 the government considered looking at *raising* the amount of years a marriage

needed to exist in Germany from two to three before a partner could separate and be granted their own independent right of residence (Koalitionsvertrag 2009: 78). In 2011 they did just that. The amount of years a marriage needed to exist was raised from two to three years. The reasoning of the federal government was in order to reduce the number of sham marriages in Germany. This was seen as a move backwards by many organizations and groups working with immigrant women and female refugees. Especially as there was neither proof nor statistics proving that this would reduce sham marriages.

The members of the Left Party in the German *Bundestag* specifically asked what the consequences were for a woman who was recognized as a refugee as part of family asylum pursuant to §26 of the Asylum Act who had divorced her husband. The federal government replied that this had legal consequences for a residence permit if the woman obtained the permit *solely* for the purpose of joining a spouse (§30 Immigration Act). This woman would only have the right to an independent right of residence pursuant to §31 in the Immigration Act described above. Regarding the case of family asylum and protection based on §26 of the Asylum Act in the event of divorce, a residence permit would then be granted based on §25(1)(2) of the Immigration Act (Drucksache 19/10341 2019: 18). A person could receive protection based on §25(1)(2) when they were incontestably recognized as being entitled to asylum based on humanitarian grounds or the conditions of §60(1) were met. This section, §60(1), was discussed previously as being an important step for recognizing gender-related persecution as grounds for asylum in Germany with the enactment of the Immigration Act in 2005. It stipulated that a refugee may not be deported to a state in which his or her life or liberty was under threat on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a certain social group, political convictions, or they were threatened solely on account of their sex. Persecution could come from state or non-state actors (Zuwanderungsgesetz 2004). The federal government however did not have any statistics showing how many female refugees lost their residence permit due to divorce. The answer to this question did not provide anything new. It had already been known that a woman who obtained her refugee status through family asylum or family reunification would need to provide her own reason for needing protection, or not being able to return to her country of origin, or else she would not be entitled to a residence permit. It is not far-fetched to assume that this question was primarily asked in order to gain statistics and numbers. It would have been enlightening to learn how many women had lost their status due to divorce.

In looking at the next question asked by members of the *Bundestag*, the topic of women's shelters was also not new. Already in the *Vierte Ausländerbericht* in 2000 it was detailed how immigrant women were more often victims of intimate partner violence than German women and often used services provided by these shelters once the situation had escalated to dangerous levels. Women's shelters have been regarded since then as important resources for immigrant women and

female refugees. It had however been a consistent theme that they were underfunded. The federal government however did not have any information on how often female refugees used these shelters as such information was not systematically collected. To the question of funding, the government referenced the round table *Gemeinsam gegen Gewalt an Frauen* which took place on September 18, 2018 (Drucksache 19/10341 2019: 24). The round table was a cooperation between the BMFSFJ, the federal states, and local communities. The goal was to expand financial security for women's shelters as well as outpatient help and support institutions. The federal government planned to create a funding program to secure financial support. The draft budget for 2019 reserved 5.1 million Euros for the program and in 2020 30 million Euros would be made available (Drucksache 19/10341 2019: 24). On August 15, 2019 members of the FDP in the *Bundestag* requested information on progress made in the fight against violence towards women. Questions were specifically asked regarding the *Aktionsprogramm gegen Gewalt an Frauen*. When specifically asked about which concrete measures had already been implemented with the 5.1 million Euros (raised to 6.1 million) to expand and provide financial security for women's shelters, as well as outpatient help and support institutions, no response was given regarding the shelters (Drucksache 19/12873 2019: 4-5). When further asked if the allocation of federal funds for the funding project for women's shelters and outpatient help and support institutions would be based upon a process for which the federal states and communities would have to apply, it was stated that the required funding guidelines were currently being developed. Due to that no measures in the federal states or communities had yet been approved or denied (Drucksache 19/12873 2019: 6-7). Based upon the responses of the government it is clear that no concrete measures requiring funding for women's shelters had yet been implemented and the program was still in the early stages. It is therefore not yet possible to see what type of measures will be implemented and if they have a potential to reach female refugees.

The final question posed above in the *Bundestag* was how the government had implemented the findings and suggestions in the *Study on Female Refugees* by the University Hospital Charité in 2017. The response from the federal government was short and direct: the BAMF had funded the study. The various authorities, institutions, or organizations were responsible for taking into account the suggestions and findings and implementing them (Drucksache 19/10341 2019: 25). This answer is troubling for the simple reason that it appears that the federal government sees its role in funding such studies but does not have a responsibility to actively take into account suggestions and findings. Implementation of measures that could better the situation of female refugees, according to the federal government in this response, is not its responsibility but rather that of authorities, institutions, and organizations. This type of thinking could lead to little progress in improving the integration of not only female refugees but other groups as well. Instead of offering nationwide programs with the same quality and goals, each city and federal state could have its own offers which would be very different.

This could quickly lead to a situation where integration success depends upon where a person lives within Germany. Should this be a framework for integration policy? As will be shown in seven this may be the trend in the development of integration policy in Germany. Each state and city may seem to be following their own path. The federal government had continuously highlighted throughout the integration debate as well as in the NIP in 2007, the NAP in 2012, and the revised NAP in 2018 that integration policy was to be developed in *cooperation* between the federal government, the federal states, and the local communities. The response here however seems to point in a different direction. It can be concluded that overall the answers the federal government gave to the six questions listed above were for the most part non-informative and disappointing. Such requests for information are however very important for finding and gaining information on statistics, such as how many women have received refugee and protection status, which otherwise would be very difficult to find.

In the beginning of 2019, the results of the second wave of the IAB-BAMF-SOEP Refugee Survey were released. The survey was conducted in 2017 with the same refugees who had taken part in the first phase in 2016. Progress in rates of employment and language acquisition were reported. In the BAMF brief analysis *Refugees Make Progress in Language and Employment*, the results of the survey were presented. When discussing female refugees, it was clear that their situation had not changed between the results of the first refugee survey and this second one. Female refugees were still less integrated onto the German job market than male refugees. More women lived together with their partner and had small children which was viewed as a reason why they perhaps were not as involved in education programs or employment. It was concluded however that more research was needed to discover further factors leading to their lower levels of participation (Brücker and Corisier et al. 2019: 18). This was also a conclusion regarding female refugees in the first round of BAMF analyses that were published in 2016. It appears that this suggestion in 2016 to focus on female refugees and their situation was not followed up on and the same questions and conclusions were consistently being repeated with each report, survey, and study.

Family was again a main point in the brief analysis. Two interesting statistics stood out. During the time of the survey for those with a partner, 12% of the women and 21% of the men were not living with their partner. Regarding children, 67% of the women lived together with their children whereas only 20% of men did. In the study, it was asserted that the constellation of the family played a role in a person's integration (Brücker and Corisier et al. 2019: 2). Women, whether immigrant or refugee, have mostly been described as being in the realm of the family and as being the motor of integration. This can be attributed to the fact that statistically more women are with their families in Germany, or are in a relationship, than men. Solely attributing family to women however leads to the assumption that men are therefore not a part of the family. They are separate from it. What is however missing from statistics such as those presented above is: how many of these men are trying to bring their wives

and family to Germany through family reunification? How many have tried and received a negative decision? What does that mean for their integration when their family is far away and perhaps in an extremely precarious and unsafe situation due to conflict and violence? These points are however never addressed when family and integration are discussed in studies and reports and should be looked at in more detail as they could have a direct impact on male refugees integration.

The IAB-BAMF-SOEP survey found that language success correlated to family situation. Refugees with children, especially small children, were less likely to have a very good or good handle of the German language. It was concluded in the survey that this was especially the case with female refugees where it was shown that having children presented a hurdle in learning German whereas it did not for men. For those without children however, both men and women, their German language skills were much better. Overall however, female refugees, as in past studies, had lower levels of German than male refugees (Brücker and Corisier et al. 2019: 7-9). Family situation also played a role in whether a male or female refugee was employed. During the survey, 27% of male refugees and 6% of female refugees were employed during the second half of 2017. For those with small children however employment levels decreased (3% of mothers and 18% of fathers were employed). The levels of employment could however not only be attributed to the family. For refugees, both male and female, who were not living with children, only 6% of the women were working whereas 30% of the men were (Brücker and Corisier et al. 2019: 13-14). It is clear from these statistics that whether with or without children female refugees had lower levels of employment than male refugees. Instead of looking further at why this may be, as in the past, this study simply concluded that it was due to women being responsible for childcare with a side note that it could also be attributed to other factors. The study seemed to completely ignore the fact that men with children also had lower levels of employment (18%) than men who did not have children (30%) showing that it was perhaps not a gender issue but rather a structural issue. Those conducting and analyzing the results of the survey however missed the opportunity to look more in-depth at this.

Another area where disadvantages were primarily attributed to women was health. This was also seen in the above-mentioned BAMF analysis. The title of the section leading into health was “Higher Physical Health Risks for Women and with Increasing Age” (translated by author). Under this heading there was only one sentence referring to findings that after the age of 34 male refugees *also* experienced poorer health. Without a table showing an exact breakdown between female refugees in comparison to male refugees and the average population in Germany, one may have assumed that it was only female refugees who experienced high levels of poor physical and mental well-being, more signs of depression, and much higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with increasing age. There was however a table in the study. Although female refugees experienced higher levels in all areas than male refugees, and it is important to determine why in order to find solutions (such as was

the goal of the *Charité Study on Female Refugees* in 2017), this again places the male refugee outside of the area of health as has also been the case with male immigrants. When looking at the data, apart from physical well-being, just like female refugees, male refugees experienced lower levels of mental well-being and higher levels of signs of depression with increasing age when compared to the general population. Female refugees did however experience significantly higher levels of PTSD with increasing age than male refugees (Brücker and Corisier et al. 2019: 3-4). Two questions must be asked. Firstly, if male refugees are also experiencing increasing health problems with age, why is the focus almost only entirely on female refugees? Why have there been no studies on male refugees to find out why they are also experiencing increased health risks with age and to suggest solutions? Secondly, could the physical, and especially, mental well-being of male refugees in reality be worse than what the statistics have shown? Could it be that male refugees, due to cultural or gender norms, are less likely than female refugees to 'admit' to depression or low levels of mental well-being? Focusing almost entirely on female refugees as being *the* gender with health problems and almost seemingly ignoring the fact that male refugees also share many of the same problems again puts female refugees in the lens of being weak and needing special support and attention. This does however not dismiss the importance of such studies and statistics in improving the health of female refugees. It has to be asked if those conducting these reports and analyses year after year realize the image, stereotypes, and categorizations they are reproducing. They have consequences not only for the picture of female refugees, but also for the availability of help and the development of support measures for not only male refugees but also male immigrants.

In continuing with the release of data and statistics on refugees and immigrants in 2019, in May 2019 the Federal Statistical Office published a report entitled *Migration und Integration: Integrationsindikatoren*. The report published almost exclusively statistics and numbers relating to health, residence permits, employment, and poverty among others. The report looked at and compared data from 2005-2017. The statistics presented in this report were extremely important in giving an idea on how the situation of immigrants had developed since the enactment of the Immigration Act in 2005. It also gave a picture of the integration of immigrants and whether it was 'successful' or if there were still areas that needed work. The statistics were broken down between men and women giving the opportunity to directly compare their integration progress and development. As however was the case with past statistics discussed in this study, there was no separation between immigrants and refugees. Migration status was broken up between people without a migration background and with a migration background. Those with a migration background were further broken down between German, foreign, without migration experience, with migration experience, and by country of origin. Country of origin was yet further broken down between certain countries from Europe, Africa, America, Asia, and Oceania/the rest of the world. Statistics were also

provided for those with a migration background based upon how long they had been in Germany, how old they were when they arrived, and what year they arrived.

Although statistics were not given on refugees, it is important to look at the development of the situation for immigrant women with migration experience. Two of the three programs initiated for female refugees since 2015 were based off from programs designed to help immigrant women better access the German job market. Female immigrants and refugees also have on average lower qualifications, less experience with work in their countries of origin, are less active on the German job market, and are presented as having more health problems than men. Looking at the development of the situation of female immigrants in Germany with migration experience as shown in Table 9 could perhaps give clues as to how the integration of female refugees may develop.

Table 9: Women with a Migration Background and Migration Experience

| Year | Unemployment rate for those between the ages of 15 and 65 | Rate of risk of poverty | Employment in public service |
|------|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2005 | 17.3 | 28.8 | 15.6 |
| 2006 | 15.9 | 27.4 | 15.1 |
| 2007 | 13.9 | 27.3 | 14.4 |
| 2008 | 12.4 | 26.7 | 13.8 |
| 2009 | 11.8 | 26.7 | 14.1 |
| 2010 | 10.5 | 26.4 | 13.6 |
| 2011 | 8.9 | 26.7 | 12.8 |
| 2012 | 8.2 | 27.2 | 12.6 |
| 2013 | 7.9 | 27.8 | 12.7 |
| 2014 | 7.4 | 27.6 | 12.5 |
| 2015 | 7.2 | 29.1 | 12.2 |
| 2016 | 6.2 | 29.3 | 12.1 |
| 2017 | 5.5 | 29.8 | 12.2 |

Source: Own graph based on statistics in the report *Migration und Integration: Integrationsindikatoren 2005-2017*, Statistisches Bundesamt 2019. Amounts are given in percentages.

As stated above, this data is not representative of female refugees but may provide some insight. The unemployment rate for immigrant women with migration experience steadily dropped between 2005 and 2017 (2005: 17.3%, 2017: 5.5%). The rate of risk of poverty showed however a different trend. The rate declined until 2012 when it started to increase again. The rate of those at risk of poverty was

slightly higher in 2017 (29.8%) than in 2005 (28.8%). One major push of the federal government was to increase the number of immigrants in public service as a way to promote the idea of intercultural opening as discussed in chapter 2.2.2. As can be seen from Table 9 however, the percentage of women with a migration background and migration experience in public services steadily dropped between 2005 and 2017 with an exception between 2008 and 2009. What stands out is that unemployment dropped drastically while the risk of poverty increased. How can it be that more women were working but were at a higher risk of poverty? Before looking further at this question it is important to compare this group to women without a migration background as well as male immigrants with migration experience to see if the trends are similar or specific to these women. Information regarding them is shown in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10: Women without a Migration Background

| Year | Unemployment rate for those between the ages of 15 and 65 | Rate of risk of poverty | Employment in public service |
|------|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2005 | 9.8 | 12.3 | 24.2 |
| 2006 | 9.1 | 11.7 | 23.5 |
| 2007 | 7.9 | 12.1 | 22.9 |
| 2008 | 6.7 | 12.4 | 22.4 |
| 2009 | 6.4 | 12.4 | 22.5 |
| 2010 | 5.8 | 12.4 | 21.8 |
| 2011 | 5.0 | 13.1 | 21.6 |
| 2012 | 4.6 | 13.1 | 21.6 |
| 2013 | 4.3 | 13.5 | 21.6 |
| 2014 | 4.1 | 13.2 | 21.7 |
| 2015 | 3.6 | 13.2 | 21.6 |
| 2016 | 3.2 | 12.9 | 21.7 |
| 2017 | 2.8 | 12.7 | 22.1 |

Source: Own graph based on statistics in the report *Migration und Integration: Integrationsindikatoren 2005-2017*, Statistisches Bundesamt 2019. Amounts are given in percentages.

Table 11: Men with a Migration Background and Migration Experience

| Year | Unemployment rate for those between the ages of 15 and 65 | Rate of risk of poverty | Employment in public service |
|------|---|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2005 | 18.4 | 28.3 | 7.4 |
| 2006 | 17.1 | 27.1 | 7.1 |
| 2007 | 14.3 | 26.6 | 6.6 |
| 2008 | 12.1 | 25.7 | 6.1 |
| 2009 | 13.4 | 26.0 | 6.7 |
| 2010 | 12.2 | 25.7 | 6.4 |
| 2011 | 9.5 | 25.5 | 6.2 |
| 2012 | 8.7 | 25.5 | 5.8 |
| 2013 | 8.3 | 26.5 | 6.0 |
| 2014 | 8.3 | 26.9 | 6.0 |
| 2015 | 8.0 | 28.0 | 5.8 |
| 2016 | 7.4 | 29.6 | 5.6 |
| 2017 | 7.1 | 30.8 | 5.7 |

Source: Own graph based on statistics in the report *Migration und Integration: Integrationsindikatoren 2005-2017*, Statistisches Bundesamt 2019. Amounts are given in percentages

When comparing Tables 9, 10, and 11 we see that the unemployment rate for each group steadily dropped between 2005 and 2017, except with a brief increase for men with a migration background and migration experience in 2009. The same trend in rates of risk of poverty is also seen between women and men with a migration background and migration experience. The rates declined after 2005, with an exception for men with an increase in 2007, but then rose again: for women in 2012 and for men in 2013. Just as for women, the rate of the risk of poverty was higher for men in 2017 than in 2005 (2005: 28.3%, 2017: 30.8%). The opposite trend is however seen for women without a migration background. Their rates of risk of poverty actually continuously *increased* after 2005, with the exception of a decline in 2006, until 2014 when the rates began to decline. The same trend can be seen in all three groups regarding employment in public services: a few fluctuations but an overall decrease. Less men and women with a migration background and migration experience, as well as women without a migration background, were employed in public services in 2017 than in 2005. This brings us back to the question of how it can be that more women and men with a migration background and migration experience were working but were at a higher risk of poverty. This could mean that more lower-paying jobs were created and immigrants were possibly overrepresented in this sector leading

to lower rates of unemployment but still higher rates of risk of poverty. This follows the trend that immigrant women have been connected more with low-paying and low-skilled jobs in Germany.

What does this mean for female refugees? We can see from the table that both men and women with a migration background and migration experience over a long time period consistently have higher rates of unemployment, higher rates of risk of poverty, and are less employed in public services than women without a migration background. When looking specifically at women with a migration background and migration experience compared to the other two groups, they tend to fare worse. They have higher risks of poverty compared to the two other groups, higher unemployment rates (except for slightly slower rates compared to men in 2016 and 2017), and are employed less in public services than the other two groups. From this information it can be extrapolated that female refugees could also experience these trends under the same policies and circumstances as during the time of the surveys upon which the statistics were based for the report by the Federal Statistical Office. It could also mean that recognized refugee women may find themselves in a situation where they are employed but earning low wages and at risk of poverty. For both men and women with a migration background and migration experience the rate of unemployment continued to drop between 2005 and 2017. For each group we see a marked increase in the risks of rate of poverty between 2014 and 2017. This increase occurred during the 'refugee crisis' and afterwards. There is thus a correlation between the increased numbers of refugees between 2015 and 2016 and an increase in the rates of risks of poverty. There is however not enough information to show if there is causation.

In assuming for the moment that there is causation between the increase in rates of poverty risk and the increase in refugees coming to Germany, this has important meaning for German integration policy regarding female refugees. In looking at the statistics in Tables 9, 10, and 11 it can easily be concluded that although the situation of immigrant women with a migration background on average had improved since 2005 until the 'refugee crisis', they still experienced higher rates of unemployment and a greater risk of poverty than men with a migration background and migration experience and women without a migration background. No program was implemented to assist them with better access to the German labor market until 2012 with the two-year program *Ressourcen stärken – Zukunft sichern: Erwerbsperspektiven für Mütter mit Migrationshintergrund*. It was actually during the time period of this program that the rates of risk of poverty began to rise for this group of immigrant women. This increase continued through the initiation and implementation of the programs *Stark im Beruf* (funding period 2015-2020) and *Migrantinnen gründen* (funding period 2015 and 2016). The unemployment rate had steadily been dropping for immigrant women with a migration background since 2005 with the most marked decreases between 2005 and 2011, right before the initiative of these programs. As the above-mentioned programs did not exist between 2005 and 2011 this decrease cannot potentially be attributed partly to them.

These statistics show a possible new opportunity, if one will, for German integration policy regarding female refugees. In simply looking at statistics regarding employment and risk of poverty it is clear that over a longer time period the situation of women with a migration background and migration experience does improve. They are still however disadvantaged when compared to men in the same category and women without a migration background. This group of women experienced these improvements without any programs by the federal government to support them. It is however not possible to know if the improvements would have occurred faster, and if the statistics would have become comparable to at least men with a migration background and migration experience, if such programs had existed. Of the five programs initiated and supported by the federal government and various ministries starting in 2012 to not only support immigrant women gaining better access to the job market, but also female refugees, by 2017 two of them had ended. By 2020 of the three remaining, only two will still be running. By 2021 only one will remain if funding is not continued for *Stark im Beruf: PerF-W* from the BA. All of the programs, except the two-year program in 2012, were initiated and implemented between 2015 and 2017. The possible opportunity lies here.

The German federal government has the possibility to look at the development and progression of women with a migration background and migration experience regarding employment over a time period of 12 years. It can be assumed that female refugees may experience similar trends over a long-term period, however with higher disadvantages. It has been shown previously that immigrant women and female refugees both have, on average, lower degrees of education, lower levels of qualification, less job experience, more difficulty in accessing integration and language courses, and are more associated to the family and childcare. With this knowledge, and experiences gained from the short-term programs initiated between 2012 and 2017, long-term programs and projects could be introduced for female refugees to increase and improve their chances of accessing the job market and obtaining insurable jobs and higher wages. The same trends for female immigrants do not have to be repeated for female refugees based upon the long-term statistics and information available. It is however important to note that many of the programs for immigrant women and female refugees, as well as German integration policy in general, have been funded as part of the ESF budget, particularly the program *Stark im Beruf*. The ESF budget in Germany is almost equally divided between the areas of employment and labor market, social inclusion, and education and training. Germany however faces a “significant reduction in funding in absolute terms, and may need to scale back to fewer priorities” (Ahad and Schmidt 2019: 46). It is not possible at the moment to know how this will affect future programs targeting immigrant women and female refugees.

4.1.5 Summary

Very early on in the integration debate immigrant women were put into one homogenized group. They were quickly relegated to the realm of the family as a mother. Their public image became the suppressed, abused, childrearing, Muslim woman with integration deficits. As a Muslim woman she was caught between two worlds. That of a patriarchal, religious, and traditional family role on the one side and that of the modern and liberated western (German) woman on the other. It was asserted that this conflict as well as her, perceived, intense connection to the family realm affected her integration. Difficulties and special needs were thus attributed almost entirely to immigrant women. Gender in public and political discourse in Germany had developed to mean 'woman'. Her realm was that of the 'other'. The focus of the federal government throughout the development of integration policy was thus to protect immigrant women from violence, provide them with the freedom and self-determination the federal government assumed they were all denied at home and in their country of origin, and to integrate them through sport. Any problems with integration were automatically connected with having children and the woman's role in the family; they had nothing to do with the government and its support, or lack of support, for women.

Throughout the development of integration policy and in each integration plan (NIP 2007 and NAP in 2012 and 2018), the importance of the integration of immigrant women was always highlighted. Their integrative power for their family was praised and their integration deemed a priority. These same sentiments could also be found in Coalition Agreements. Despite this, the homogenous depiction of immigrant women continued. The only constant solutions offered by the federal government and its ministries to improve their integration were more childcare opportunities and special integration courses for women and parents. Childcare was however often stipulated on taking part in a special integration course. These two solutions were constantly presented by the federal government despite data regularly showing that immigrant women wanted to work and they preferred regular integration courses to special courses for women. Despite studies from various federal ministries calling for a change in the way immigrant women were viewed and attempts at dispelling stereotypes that all Muslim women were suppressed, the overall rhetoric did not change. It took the debate in the country on a potential lack of specialists to slightly change the way immigrant women were viewed.

Immigrant women became a new target group with untapped potential. Although deficiencies and disadvantages were still discussed, opportunities and potential became a new focus. Pilot projects were launched and programs introduced to help immigrant women integrate onto the job market. Studies were released outlining the potential that immigrant women had. Almost all of these programs, projects, and studies however still described women first and foremost as mothers. This is not to downplay the potential importance these programs and studies may have played in providing access to the job market for immigrant women (although there is no proof of this). Nonetheless,

although immigrant women had left the realm of violence and suppression they were still a homogenized group of women within the family realm who were mothers. They still needed specific attention and support in order to successfully integrate. At the time that immigrant women were gaining more attention and programs were being specifically developed for them, the 'refugee crisis' began and female refugees made their way onto the integration stage.

As the analysis has shown, female refugees simply took on the rhetoric of immigrant women. They were suppressed, abused, caught between two worlds, childrearing, Muslim female refugees with integration deficits, and in addition, with major disadvantages. Due to the new focus being on integration onto the job market for immigrant women however, female refugees were quickly included into this new emphasis and employment became a priority. The integration of female refugees simply merged with that of immigrant women. Their integration success and development can thus not be separated from the other. It is very important to highlight that immigrant and refugee women are not the same. Whereas immigrant women have the possibility to prepare themselves for a move to Germany, refugee women have been forced to leave their homes due to situations beyond their control. They each arrive in Germany under very different circumstances and with very different starting points. Once women in each of these groups however have gained a residence permit, independent of why they have come to Germany, they are on equal footing regarding integration. They have access to the same programs, offers, and opportunities. Despite being viewed as a separate group, female refugees have taken on the same role and perception in the development and discussion of integration policy that immigrant women have held since 1998.

The reports and studies released starting in 2016 on refugees, and in 2017 specifically on female refugees, portrayed the idea that the integration of female refugees was new territory. It was asserted that more research needed to be done in order to truly understand their situation and how their integration could be improved. It is the case that there is a lack of information regarding female refugees in Germany on a policy level due to the fact that they were virtually ignored from 1998 to 2015 in the realm of integration. However, for the first time important statistics are being published not only on female refugees' situation on the job market, but also their qualifications, language acquisition, and family situation. These statistics are essential for being able to track their integration over a long period of time. A better understanding of their life in Germany has been gained due to the various reports and studies since 2016 and this should continue. This study however argues that the 'new situation' with the increase of female asylum-seekers and refugees beginning in 2015 did not create a brand new situation regarding women in Germany.

When looking at the statistics and data provided on female refugees beginning in 2015 and comparing them to the statistics and data on immigrant women between 1998 and 2015, it is clear that there are many similarities. Although female refugees do fare worse than immigrant women, both

groups on average start out with lower levels of education, less job experience, lower qualification levels, and more difficulty in accessing integration and language courses. The situation of female refugees once having arrived in Germany reflects that of immigrant women with migration experience. Just as immigrant women had come to represent 'the other' and gender in immigration, female refugees had come to represent the same in regards to forced migration in Germany. Solutions that had been given to improve the integration situation of immigrant women were simply taken on for female refugees: special integration courses for women and parents and more childcare. In addition, programs that had been introduced to improve immigrant women's integration onto the job market were simply expanded to include female refugees or spin offs were developed. This is not to be seen as negative or to downplay the potential benefit such programs may have for female refugees. It however further shows the similarities and connections between integration policy regarding immigrant and refugee women.

The rhetoric surrounding immigrant women and female refugees is also not very different. The political and public debates beginning in 2015 simply re-used terms and arguments that had been present in discussions since 1998. The argument of limiting the number of immigrants and refugees had also been a topic in 2000 when discussing a potential immigration law. Terms such as *Leitkultur* or the 'Islamization' of Germany were already being used in the early 2000s and in 2010. Debates on whether Islam was compatible with German culture or the perceived danger of Muslim men had been taking place long before 2015. It can be argued that the 'refugee crisis' did not create groups such as Pegida or parties such as the AfD, but rather gave them the necessary political climate and opportunity to interject themselves publicly and gain nationwide support. This is not to understate that the political climate in 2015 and 2016 regarding refugees was extreme. A distinction must however be made between asylum law and integration. This study is only looking at the integration of female refugees once they have gained a residence permit. It must also be remembered that immigrant women were attempting to integrate into German society during a time when Germany did not recognize itself as a country of immigration, when there were no integration plans or immigration acts, there were no programs to help immigrant women access the job market, and when Angela Merkel declared that multiculturalism had failed and was dead.

The perceived difficulties and hurdles regarding the integration of female refugees must largely be seen as stemming from the federal government's missed opportunity to properly support immigrant women with integration. If there had been a concerted and long-term effort to better the situation of immigrant women before there were fears of a lack of workers in various branches in Germany, this could have potentially been used for female refugees. Despite being viewed as a separate group, female refugees have taken on the same perception in the development and discussion of integration policy that immigrant women have held since 1998. This can only be summed

up as disappointing. This shows that the situation of the foreign woman and her integration has not significantly changed in Germany since 1998. Her perception in integration policy has remained almost virtually the same. It can only be hoped that the increased attention to the integration of immigrant women on a policy level which began in 2012 and the new attention to female refugees starting in 2015 will continue. Female refugees are in the unique position of coming into the country when integration is a focus, cities and states are creating integration acts and concepts, and programs are in place to support women with integration onto the job market. However, lessons must be learned from integration policy regarding immigrant women in the past or else there is the risk of history repeating itself and real effective progress regarding integrating recognized female refugees not being made.

4.2 The Federal States and the Integration of Female Refugees 2005-2019

At the first Integration Summit on July 14, 2006, representatives from the German federal states were also present. Integration was seen as a cooperation between the different levels of government: the federal government, the states, and the cities. When the *Nationaler Integrationsplan* was released in 2007, a section was dedicated to the role of the federal states. It described what (voluntary) obligations they had carved out for themselves and where they saw their responsibility. From the very beginning it was important for the federal states to highlight that neither the federal government nor the states or cities could ensure a 'successful' integration policy on their own. Only cooperation between the federal government, states, cities, and civil society as well as a networking of offers could provide a guarantee for an effective, practical, and citizen focused integration policy (*Nationaler Integrationsplan 2007: 22*). Integration was understood by all to be the central future societal task for the country. It was decided that those responsible for integration in each federal state would come together in the future in order to present good examples, exchange ideas and experiences, and develop cooperation amongst themselves regarding integration and policy. Just as for the federal government, the states took on the idea of *Fördern und Fordern* as the basic principle of their approach to integration and viewed learning the German language as key (*Nationaler Integrationsplan 2007: 23-24*). With the NIP for the first time the federal states came together, along with the federal government, and collectively made a statement about integration and what they viewed as crucial for its successful development. Through the NIP not only was a tone set for a path forward for integration for the federal government, but also for the states. Due to this signaling an important step along the path to developing a sound integration policy nationwide, it will be the general starting point for the analysis in this section. Some states however began earlier with addressing the topic of integration and that will also be briefly addressed where necessary.

In 2012 with the *Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration*, the states again had the opportunity to voice their plans and objectives regarding integration five years after the introduction of the NIP. The

goal for the coming years of the states was to develop a culture of appreciating cultural and religious diversity, mutual acceptance, respect, and tolerance that would become common place (Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration 2012: 22). A focus of the states in 2012 which was not present in 2007, and directly connected to the goal listed above, was discussing the advantages of having immigrants in society and what diversity and special abilities they brought with them to the job market. The states pointed out the increasing popularity of integration courses and noted their expectation that the federal government would respond to the increasing demand for these courses. Immigrants were still faced with specific difficulties in the educational system in 2012 and transitioning to vocational training and the job market. The states were determined to further reduce access barriers as well as discrimination and marginalization within the scope of their responsibilities. A major point that the states brought up was that their work was highly dependent on the decisions of the federal government. States could only take action and implement integration measures within the federal framework. For programs that were enacted at the state and federal level, states were further affected by budget decisions. Therefore, goals and measures listed in the NAP could only take place based upon the amount of funds made available by the federal government (Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration 2012: 24-25).

The main areas of focus for the states had slightly changed between 2007 and 2012. Those that had remained the same were local integration, educational and vocational training, employment, integration courses, women and girls (although in 2012 they no longer had their own section), health, civic engagement, integration through sport, and media. Topics from the NIP in 2007 that were no longer viewed as main areas of focus were older people with a migration background and integration monitoring. They were replaced by early childhood development, people with a migration background and civil service, and culture. Pertaining to women and girls, in both the NIP and NAP the states paid special attention to them and their integration situation. Although expressed in different ways, the states described women's and girls' significant role in the migration process and that their special situation and interests should be taken into account with enacting each focus area (Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration 2012: 23). In both the NIP and NAP, the states acknowledged the job of immigrant women for their integration efforts within their family and integration onto the job market, into their neighborhoods, and into society as the federal government had done. The states further recognized women and girls' performance at school, vocational training, and on the job (Nationaler Integrationsplan 2007: 29; Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration 2012: 23). Despite women with a migration background often being more successful than men with a migration background in the educational system, it was harder for them to gain a spot in vocational training. Their professional spectrum was also smaller than that of young women without a migration background. The states therefore saw their job in strengthening the rights and opportunities of women and girls to sustainably

achieve full and equal participation (Nationaler Integrationsplan 2007: 29; Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration 2012: 24). This was even more pressing for the states considering the fact that immigrant women's educational potential could contribute to stemming the lack of professionals due to demographic change in Germany (Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration 2012: 24). In addition, the states understood their responsibility for providing appropriate measures of prevention, crisis intervention, and support as soon as women and girls were denied their rights, especially in regards to freely choosing their partner and job of choice (Nationaler Integrationsplan 2007: 29; Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration 2012: 24).

As was the case with the federal government, there was no mention of female refugees regarding integration for the states in the NIP or NAP. The focus was on the integration of immigrant women. The main areas of focus for the states regarding women and girls with a migration background were education, vocational training, employment, equal opportunities, and self-determination. This next section will look at the specific integration policies of the states of Bavaria, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Saxony-Anhalt to determine to what extent female refugees, if at all, were considered in the development of their integration policies.

4.2.1 North Rhine-Westphalia

North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) is known as the 'integration state' of Germany. In 2005 it established the first integration ministry with the Ministry for Generations, Family, Women, and Integration.²² Through this ministry not only were the various responsibilities formally regulated, but integration policy symbolically increased in value as a political task (Sachverständigenrat 2017: 9). In a government statement from July 13, 2005 it was expressed that the state wanted a modern integration policy (MAIS 2016a: 32). Following this, on June 27, 2006 the state parliament passed an *Aktionsplan Integration*. It encompassed 20 focus areas to structure and further develop an integration policy in the state (Landesregierung NRW 2009). In addition in 2007, on behalf of the Ministry for Generations, Family, Women, and Integration, the *Landesverband der kommunalen Spitzenverbände* together with the *Kommunale Gemeinschaftsstelle für Verwaltungsmanagement* developed a handbook entitled *Integration als Chance für Nordrhein-Westfalen und seine Kommunen* (Bundesregierung 2008: 202). This role as a 'pioneer' continued when NRW became the second state after Berlin (2010) on February 14, 2012 to enact an official act on integration entitled *Gesetz zur Förderung der gesellschaftlichen Teilhabe und Integration in Nordrhein-Westfalen (Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz)*.

Nine goals were listed in the *Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz*. The very first one was to create a basis for a beneficial and peaceful life together for people with and without a migration background

²² This ministry was later changed in 2017 to the Ministry for Children, Family, Refugees and Integration including the new fields of refugees and LGBTQ+.

(Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz 2012). At the heart of this goal, and the act as a whole as its name alluded to, was participation. Article 5 stipulated that people with a migration background had to be appropriately represented at all levels of the state dealing with issues pertaining to them. Article 10 continued with this theme stressing that the participation of people with a migration background at local and state levels was important in order to fulfill integration measures. As with the federal government, intercultural opening was a theme for the state administration in order to increase the number of people with a migration background in public service, as well as to support intercultural competence in administration. The representation of people with a migration background was to be further achieved through the establishment of *Kommunale Integrationszentren*, including integration concepts, in cities as described in Article 7 of the act. These *Kommunale Integrationszentren* would function as central structures in all cities from which integration policy and offers would be coordinated and integration, above all through education, would be supported. A statewide coordination office would support and advise them. Funding for the *Integrationszentren*, and integration at the local level, was guaranteed in Article 14 for a specific amount based upon certain requirements (Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz 2012).

In addition to ensuring the participation of people with a migration background at the local and state level, learning German was listed as one of the main principles in Article 2(3) and seen as central for 'successful' integration. Integration through employment was also singled out through Article 8 as a priority. The various responsibilities of state agencies and those at the local level were broken down in the act. It was expected that they would take into account the integration objectives of the act and support the application of the listed principles. In addition, local integration commissioners were legally anchored (Article 6(3)) as well as the already existing state integration council (Article 10). This council was to be made up of elected immigrant organizations from the state following the theme of participation. In order to follow the development of the implementation of the measures and the integration situation of people with a migration background in the state, Article 15(1) required that the state government provide the state parliament with an integration report every five years documenting and assessing integration policy measures and performance. In addition to this, in Article 15(3) it was required that immigration and integration statistics be released yearly with comments. As the last requirement, Article 16(2) stipulated that the state government had to send a report to the state parliament every five years on the effects and development of the *Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz* (Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz 2012).

The *Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz* not only regulated integration policy at the state level and sought to ensure equal participation, but also created a brand new comprehensive structure to manage local integration policy through the *Kommunale Integrationszentren*. It further secured this permanently by anchoring it to the law (Sachverständigenrat 2017: 13). Although the act was

welcomed and set a precedent for the country, neither immigrant women nor female refugees were mentioned specifically. Gender however was recognized in various parts of the act. One of the nine listed objectives of the *Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz* was to support people with a migration background particularly with education, vocational training, and employment independent of their social situation, background, gender, sexual identity, religion, or world view (*Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz* 2012). In addition, gender was brought up in Article 2(4) regarding the principles of NRW's integration policy. It was stated that integration specific decisions and conceptual developments should take into account the various life situations of people with a migration background. This included, among others, the various effects such decisions and developments could have on genders. A gender-balanced representation of people with a migration background was also to be considered at the state level (*Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz* 2012). Neither women nor men were singled out as representing gender in the act as opposed to the NIP and NAP at the federal level which set women equivalent to gender. The act therefore does not give an idea of how, if at all, immigrant women and/or female refugees were taken into account in the development of integration policy in the state. Instead it seems to view them as equal to men, at least legally.

In looking through the immigration and integration statistics for each year from 2013 to 2017, the data was always differentiated based upon gender. The reports focused primarily on employment, education, and the demographic make-up of people with a migration background in the state (*Integrationsstatistiken* n.d.). In the report from 2015 there was a special section dedicated to women with a migration background. It broke down their age, educational level including professional qualifications, provided employment and unemployment statistics, monthly income, and other areas always in comparison with men with a migration background. The summary was similar to that at the national level: when women with a migration background had professional or educational qualifications, they were at a higher level than men but under those of women without a migration background. Despite the high levels of qualification, they were less employed on average than men with a migration background and more often in low-paying part-time jobs (MAIS 2016a: 35). These statistics did not however give an idea of how, if at all, immigrant women and female refugees were considered in the development of integration policy nor were specific measures or programs mentioned. It was not until the *1. Bericht nach §15 des Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetzes* was released in 2016 that a list of programs specifically for immigrant women and female refugees were compiled and made available. Following this, in 2017 studies on the situation of female refugees and immigrant women were released. It is only by looking at the various programs and studies that it is possible to understand how immigrant women and female refugees were taken into account in integration policy in NRW. The main programs in NRW center on female refugees, employment, and integration through

sport. Not all programs and studies will however be discussed. Only those that received the most attention statewide.

4.2.1.1 Integration onto the Job Market

As part of the state initiative *NetzwerkW: Netzwerke(n) für den qualifizierten Wiedereinstieg*, between 2007 and the end of 2014, 25 local activities were funded in order to support re-entry back onto the work force for women with a migration background. A handbook was developed to assist with counselling women with a migration background regarding employment. In addition, further projects were organized concerning employment and events took place to raise awareness of the topic in public. The programs and activities were carried out by NetzwerkW on behalf of the NRW Ministry for Health, Emancipation, Care, and Age (MGEPA) (MAIS 2016b: 206-207).

Arising out of one of the activities coordinated by NetzwerkW was the website Migra-Info. This website with the official title *Wege in den Beruf: Informationen für Migrantinnen*, developed into a statewide portal with information on integration onto the job market for immigrant women available in 13 languages. It offers immigrant women information starting from requirements to work in Germany and the recognition of qualification, through to the process of looking for a job, gaining professional and vocational training, contracts, employment law and rights of the employee, taxes, and other relevant topics. In addition, it offers information for women on childcare, equality, taking care of family members, separation and divorce, protection from violence, and securing a livelihood (www.migra-info-de). There is also a special section on the website for refugees with information and important links for topics such as studying in Germany, employment, the asylum process, and important apps for refugees. In 2012 46,000 people used the website which then increased to 52,000 in 2014 (MAIS 2016b: 206-207).

As part of the state initiative, in 2013 NetzwerkW developed the project *Herzlich Willkommen in der Altenpflege*. The project was directed at women with a migration background with the goal of gaining them as employees in the field of elderly care. This was done through training female mentors who already worked in the field. They were taught how to inform women with a migration background about the job and to give them an impression of what they could expect through job shadowing. This was further developed into a concrete training concept for women with a migration background entitled *Migrantinnen als Wiedereinsteigerinnen in die Pflege gewinnen*. The women were individually counselled on a job in elderly care, they were provided with childcare during orientation, and received language support as well as job orientation regarding theory and practical experience (BF and BV-PG 2019: 2-3). The goal of the project in 2019 was to be more than just a job coaching offer. NetzwerkW wanted to develop the project to mirror the federal project *Stark im Beruf* and support women with a migration background in NRW through the whole process to gain a state certified vocational training

in elderly care (BF and BV-PG 2019: 4). In order to achieve this, the organizations *BildungsForum Lernwelten* and the *Bonner Verein für Pflege- und Gesundheitsberufe e.V.* released an action guideline funded by NetzwerkW and the NRW Ministry for Community, Building, and Equality (MHKBG) entitled *Beruflicher (Wieder)Einstieg von Migrantinnen – Wie Arbeitgeber neue Fachkräfte durch Wiedereinstiegslotsinnen gewinnen können. Ein Handlungsleitfaden zum “Network W-Wiedereinstiegs-Modell” Komponenten und Module. Schulungs-Curriculum und Checklisten. Kompetenzerfassung mit dem InfoKom-Modell.* The goal of the action guideline was to provide other organizations with a tool to help gain immigrant women as employees in the nursing and health care professions. Female refugees also became a new target group for the state with attempting to gain new employees in the field and were mentioned directly in the guideline. The guideline could also be used as an impulse for the professional public to work more on the integration of not only immigrant women but also female refugees onto the job market. A particular goal of the guideline was to move away from connecting immigrant women and female refugees with deficits, particularly regarding language acquisition, and to rather see the potential in them for the job market (BF and BV-PG 2019: 2). Integrating refugees, both male and female, onto the job market through jobs in the care and health sector also became a focus of the MGEPA. The background for this was that there were less young people going into this field which led to a lack of specialists. This sector was seen as being well-placed to assist the integration of people with a migration background as it had experience already with doing this and taking care of people with a migration background. Refugees were seen as being better able to integrate into society through such jobs. At the same time it was a way to tackle a lack of specialists in the field (Riesner 2017).

As part of the new focus on integrating, above all, female refugees onto the job market, on December 11, 2018 a conference was organized by the *Gesellschaft für innovative Beschäftigungsförderung* in the city of Gelsenkirchen funded by NRW and the ESF. The conference was modeled after a concept developed by NetzwerkW in another region of the state. The name of the conference was *Arbeitsmarktintegration von Flüchtlingen: Unterstützung geflüchteter Frauen.* It was stated that female refugees needed particular support with integrating onto the job market and posed challenges to state policy. The goal of the conference was thus to bring female refugees and experts together in order to discuss the best way for female refugees to integrate onto the job market and to find solutions. Around 130 people took part including almost 40 female refugees. The conference was seen as a success by the organizers particularly because female refugees were able to take part and be heard (MAGS 2018). It is however not possible to know if the conference led to sustainable changes or if female refugees received more targeted help due to the outcomes of the conference.

In addition to spurring the development of the website Migra-Info, developing a concept for gaining women with a migration background for employment in the care and health sector, as well as

providing ideas for new and innovative ways of bringing experts and female refugees together, NetzwerkW has also supported studies, reports, and brochures on immigrant women and female refugees particularly after the 'refugee crisis' in 2015 and 2016. In August of 2017, the organization innovaBest released the first qualitative study in NRW on the situation of female refugees in the state. The study was funded by NetzwerkW as well as the MHKBG. Between the end of 2016 and the beginning of 2017, 37 female refugees with good prospects of being able to stay in Germany from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Eritrea, and Somalia were interviewed (Mußinghoff 2017: 2). It was not intended to be a representative study on female refugees in the state, but rather to give a first look into their life. The women were asked about their background, personal and family situation, educational and professional skills and qualifications as well as goals, their values and outlook, experiences in Germany, knowledge of Germany, and their expectations and perspectives on integration. Based upon the answers suggestions were given as to how their integration, above all onto the job market, could be improved. In contrast to public perception, the female refugees interviewed were well educated and highly motivated to work. They were ready to start further education measures and understood the importance of learning German. Despite having to flee their countries, the women described themselves as being motivated, strong, and optimistic. The women were broken down into three groups: those who were highly motivated (over half), those who were more cautious (one third), and those who were closely connected to their religion (around 15%). It was concluded that each group needed a different integration strategy, but that the majority could be integrated onto the job market. There was an asserted 'obvious' difference between male and female refugees in the study. It was claimed that women saw the importance in gaining vocational and professional training before looking for a job, whereas men were perceived as wanting to quickly find a job and earn money. It was thus concluded that women had a more realistic understanding regarding work and qualifications. Their objectives lined up with their qualifications from their country of origin (Mußinghoff 2017: 14). This assertion however that male refugees were less realistic about employment than female refugees and more interested in working and gaining money was stated without any background, supporting evidence, or interviews with male refugees. It was further discovered that under the women interviewed, the majority had little knowledge on Germany and how 'it worked'. Having contact to Germans was slightly more important for the women than learning German but they had difficulty in finding this contact. Despite understanding the importance of learning German, the study found that women participated less in integration and language courses than male refugees. It is worth noting the final conclusion of the study as this was presented at the above-mentioned conference on December 11, 2018:

"Among the female refugees that came to Germany in 2015/2016, there is a large number of young, educated, and ambitious women who would like to lead financially independent lives.

They shed their past understanding of roles, adapted quickly, identify themselves with German values, and want to be a positive role model for their children. Through this they will also motivate and bring along their husbands. Through timely and targeted support, these women could become the motors of the integration process in Germany. Investing in them is a win for all sides” (Mußinghoff 2017: 14; translated by author).

Other similar studies followed regarding female refugees and integration. In 2018, NetzwerkW supported and funded the study *Bundesweite Analyse von nachhaltigen Angeboten zum beruflichen Wiedereinstieg von geflüchteten Frauen ohne verwertbare Qualifikationen*. The study was again funded by the MHKBG. The goal was to look at programs specifically for female refugees in Germany that could be used as good examples and applied to the Emscher-Lippe region of the state. This was very typical of NetzwerkW to release and support studies pertaining to specific cities or areas in the state. The findings of the study in 2018 were not that different from the qualitative study in 2017. It found that female refugees were hardly referred to in public and political debate, there was little academic information on them, little was known about their situation, they took part in language and integration courses less than male refugees, and there was hardly any reliable qualitative knowledge on them (Quirrenbach 2018: 23). The conclusion was also the same as that of the above-mentioned study that female refugees could be the motors to integration. The study found that a lot still needed to be done in integrating female refugees and provided suggestions as to what could be done to improve their situation. Some of the suggestions were creating opportunities to have contact with Germans, finding unconventional ways of learning German, and providing more information and support with recognizing educational and professional qualifications from abroad (Quirrenbach 2018: 26). These suggestions were also similar to those presented in the study in 2017.

Continuing this trend, in 2018 NetzwerkW together with the MHKBG also funded a study for three cities in NRW - Remscheid, Solingen, and Wuppertal – on the situation of female refugees there with good prospects of being able to stay in Germany. The goal of the study was to find out the situation of female refugees in the area (educational level, employment, family situation, etc.) and what conditions they needed in order to be able to create middle and long-term perspectives to obtain a job and support themselves. Interviews with seven female refugees were conducted in order to hear directly from the women on their situation. One major critique was that the majority of integration measures were offered in traditional ‘male sectors’ and hardly any female refugees were able to take advantage of them (Städte Wuppertal, Solingen and Remscheid 2018: 5). Suggestions were then offered for organizations, job centers, and communities on how they could change this and improve the support offered to female refugees. The suggestions given were similar to what had already been discussed by the federal government and its various ministries as well as the two studies above. They

were childcare during integration courses, including childcare year round so that the women could better balance work and family life, group oriented educational offers, contact to those responsible for assisting with studying at a university, more integration and language classes specifically for women, working directly with men from a patriarchal society and discussing gender equality with them in language and integration courses, more information on how to obtain a job in Germany and what is required, paying for transportation costs to language courses or for the cost of recognizing qualifications from abroad, targeted measures for creating contact between female refugees and businesses, more measures to gain employment along with more vocational and professional qualification offers, and better contact opportunities with Germans most notably through sport (Städte Wuppertal, Solingen and Remscheid 2018: 54-57).

Despite the increased focus on female refugees regarding integration onto the job market and the various programs being developed and studies being released, during the time of writing this study NRW appeared to still be in a phase of figuring out the situation of female refugees in the state and developing programs and solutions to improve their integration onto the job market. It was therefore not possible to find initial conclusions if programs were indeed benefitting refugee women.

4.2.1.2 Equality and Violence

In 2015 NRW created the first funding concept of its kind nationwide offering counselling and therapy for traumatized female refugees called *Beratung und Unterstützung von Gewalt betroffenen Flüchtlingsfrauen* (Landesregierung NRW 2015). It was a temporary funding program to deal with an exceptional situation; that being the high number of refugees which came in 2015 (Landesregierung NRW 2018: 7). The state parliament granted 900,000 Euros for the program in 2015. Its target group was traumatized female refugees who were affected by intimate partner violence, rape, FGM, or gender-related persecution. It was broken down into three modules: 1) Funding measures to train and sensitize specialized staff and employees in temporary housing for refugees as well as volunteers, and low-threshold support and care for traumatized female refugees, 2) Funding for severe psychotherapeutic measures for traumatized female refugees, and 3) Financial support for stays in state-funded women's shelters for female refugees (and their children) if no other funding was available (MAIS 2016b: 239). Local institutions with professionally suitable counselling and support structures could apply for a maximum of 20,000 Euros for funding per application (MGEPA 2015: 3-4). It was however noted that therapy in the native language of female refugees needed to be expanded. The health system nationwide did not have the required number of native speakers or qualified outpatient therapists. This had also been a problem before the 'refugee crisis' particularly concerning those with Turkish as their native language. The federal government had however denied separate approvals for therapist centers based on certain language skills (Landesregierung NRW 2015). The

program was scheduled to end on December 31, 2018. Since 2016 the number of asylum-seekers had significantly decreased in the state. Since then many women with specific needs had entered regular support systems. This changed the conditions for the program. The MHKBG sent its first suggestions for adapting the use of funding earmarked for the program on October 2, 2018 to the Committee for Equality and Women in the state parliament. It was suggested to use the estimated financial resources for the program instead for a structural and long-term strengthening of the regular support system, particularly the general and specialized service centers for women (Landesregierung NRW 2018: 7-8).

This program was however not the only one of its kind nationwide that NRW developed for female refugees. At the end of 2016 the state released the first of its kind smart phone app for female refugees called RefuShe. The goal of the app was to inform female refugees of their rights in Germany as well as offer support in the event of violence. They could learn about life in Germany as well as equality and the right to self-determination. It was however also open for all immigrants, not just female refugees although they were the main focus group (Landesregierung NRW 2016). The app is available in five languages (German, English, Arabic, Kurdish, and Pashtu). Hotline numbers are made available as well as contact information for organizations and institutions which help women suffering from violence. The app was also developed with the goal of supporting women with integration and to encourage them to take advantage of the rights they have in Germany (Landesregierung NRW 2016).

Through these two programs it is clear that NRW found it important to respond to the 'refugee crisis' and the increased number of female refugees suffering from trauma or violence in the state with creative and new ways. Through this they were able to reach more women and create long-term programs that could also be absorbed into the regular structures of the state as was the case with the funding program *Beratung und Unterstützung von Gewalt betroffenen Flüchtlingsfrauen*. This program as well as the app RefuShe have been used as examples nationwide for innovative ways of reaching and helping female refugees.

4.2.1.3 Integration through Sport

In 2007 the NRW State Athletic Commission started the project *Spin – Sport interkulturell* supported and funded by the NRW Ministry for Family, Children, Adolescents, Culture, and Sport, the Mercator Foundation, the Heinz Nixdorf Foundation, and the BAMF. The goal of the project was to better enable sports clubs to take on the long-term role of facilitating integration in their neighborhoods. The target group was children and adolescents with a migration background. Particular attention was to be paid to integrating young women and girls with a migration background into society through the project and thus improving their overall situation (Beauftragte für Migration 2010: 209). One way of doing this was qualifying them to become trainers and then connecting them with sports clubs.

Spin was originally implemented in four cities in the Ruhr region of the state: Duisburg, Essen, Gelsenkirchen, and Oberhausen. The project was broken into two phases. The first phase, which was considered the pilot phase, took place from 2007 to 2011 and was referred to as Spin I. Its main focus was on the intercultural opening of sports clubs and the increased integration of the target group. The second phase, Spin II, took place from 2011 to 2015. In 2011 a fifth city, Recklinghausen, was added to the project. Spin II was considered the evaluation phase. The work that had been done during the first phase was continued. Schools were added as new partners for the program during the second phase as the new focus was on educational opportunities (MAIS 2016b: 228-229). Through this there was a new emphasis on cooperation between sports clubs and schools. This included the development of new organizations or membership forms between sports clubs and schools (for example school sports clubs), the possibility of training sport assistants at schools, developing educationally qualified sports classes by the Sport Department at the University of Duisburg-Essen with a focus on intercultural opening, connecting the work of the project to community educational offers and services, and the expansion of the project to include educational camps with the objective of promoting comprehensive education on many levels (www.projekt-spin.de). The project was supervised and evaluated by the Research Center for Civic Engagement at Humboldt University in Berlin.

In 2015 an evaluation of Spin II was released. Based on interviews with trainers it was concluded in the evaluation that the program did reach its target group. Around 90% were younger than 19 and the majority of those taking part in Spin offers were in elementary school. Around 63% of the participants had a migration background and around 66% of them were girls (Braun, Hickethier, and Winterhagen 2015: 14). The focus on intercultural opening was considered a 'success' by those conducting the evaluation. In total, including Spin I and Spin II, around 250 women (the majority with a migration background) became trainers and attended further qualification courses. It was deemed a 'success' by the program that girls with a migration background, as well as socially disadvantaged children and adolescents, were able to be won as members of sports clubs. Those clubs that worked together with Spin had a strong increase in their number of members (Braun, Hickethier, and Winterhagen 2015: 17). At the end of the evaluation study suggestions were presented in order to assist other clubs and organizations in profiting from the experiences gained through Spin. There were however no concrete suggestions or tips given on how to continue the perceived 'success' of the project in gaining women and girls with a migration background. The last point regarding them was rather a question. As Spin was regarded as especially successful by those conducting the evaluation in recruiting, training, and connecting women with a migration background to sports clubs, the question followed how this could be adapted to a larger area. The only suggestion given was perhaps through a partial or complete funding of sport specific trainer licenses or a general trainers license for women with a migration background (Braun, Hickethier, and Winterhagen 2015: 33).

There was no information following the release of this study that projects based off from Spin had been implemented in other cities or parts of the state. There was also no information on if other programs specifically for women and girls with a migration background had been developed regarding sport. Integration through sport for immigrants in general has however remained a strong focus in NRW. Refugees have also been included as a target group for the NRW State Athletic Commission following the 'refugee crisis' in 2015 and 2016. The project *Willkommen im Sport* was developed to not only directly support sports clubs but to also qualify refugees and people with a migration background to become trainers and assistants, similar to the Spin project. Brochures and handbooks on sport and refugees have also been developed to further assist sports clubs with reaching this group (Landessportbund NRW 2019). Specific programs for female refugees have however not been developed.

4.2.1.4 Summary

The specific integration of female refugees, and in general that of immigrant women, did and does not seem to play a central role in integration policy in NRW. The *Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz* did not emphasize men or women and only mentioned the aspect of gender. The focus areas in the state seemed to mirror those of the federal government and its ministries: integration onto the job market, violence and equality, and integration through sport. Regarding employment, the most well-known programs and those supported by the state were focused on the care and health sector. Something that had been criticized at the federal level. It had been acknowledged for many years that female refugees, as well as immigrant women, were being 'pushed' into this field despite their qualifications in other fields and educational level. NRW seemed to however still be focusing on this field being the best way to integrate women onto the job market. Through this NRW was using stereotypes and generalizations connected to female immigrants creating a narrative at the state level, as at the federal level, that women are in the family and private realm. They can only be 'properly' integrated onto the job market or into society when they stay in this role. In regards to female refugees, NRW did implement a few new and innovative ways of reaching this target group to help and support them. There is however no information on how 'successful' these projects have been or how many female refugees that have reached. In addition, they focused on stereotypes that were being used at the federal level. NRW put female refugees prominently in the role of victims, above all victims of violence. As at the federal level, at the state level in NRW female refugees were depicted as a group of people who needed special help from outside; again they were the 'other'. NRW also put a strong focus on integration through sport although this had not been shown at the federal level, or in NRW, as being an effective form of integration. Through the studies supported by NetzwerkW it is clear that the topic of female refugees is still fairly new in NRW and it is rather local areas and cities attempting to learn

more about their situation in order to improve and better support their integration, not the state. Although the state and its ministries fund and support the studies, they have not initiated any of their own that are known of at the time of writing. The situation and knowledge regarding female refugees, as well as the programs implemented, are limited to various areas within the state. Despite this, integration has been a main focus in NRW for many years culminating into a concrete integration policy. Most importantly the state legally created funding measures to support integration at the local level. Although female refugees only first gained attention after the 'refugee crisis' the state quickly reacted in order to support this group of people. They did this however in a way that further categorized female refugees using stereotypes from the federal level.

4.2.2 Bavaria

On December 13, 2016 the *Bayerisches Integrationsgesetz* was passed and came into effect on January 1, 2017. The act was strongly influenced by the debates surrounding the 'refugee crisis' in 2015 and 2016. Whereas the *Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz* in NRW understood integration as above all participation, the *Bayerisches Integrationsgesetz* was focused almost entirely on immigrants and their cultural integration. The act in NRW created structures on the local level whereas the act in Bavaria only created a Bavarian Commissioner for Integration who could call together an integration council. The tasks of the state were left very vague. Both acts acknowledged the importance communities and cities played in local integration. In contrast to NRW which created structures and guaranteed funding for integration measures at the local level, Bavaria stated in Article 9 that communities, districts, and counties should contribute to the integration goals listed in the act within the scope of their self-administration and financial capacity (BayIntG 2016: 5). No structures or financial support opportunities were developed to assist local communities with integration. In the *Bayerisches Integrationsgesetz*, both male and female immigrants were equally referenced throughout. Article 2 further defined who was to be understood as an immigrant and as a foreigner pertaining to the act. Although female refugees, and immigrant women in general, were not specifically mentioned as main groups or targets, it is important to briefly look through the main parts of the integration act as it was not only vastly different to the one in NRW, but also to many other state integration acts that have been passed.

The *Bayerisches Integrationsgesetz* began with describing the states cultural foundations and the importance of law, loyalty, freedom, tolerance, the EU, and the dignity of men among others. It was made known that the state was ingrained in the values and traditions of the common Christian Occident (*christliches Abendland*) and at the same time acknowledged the contributions Judaism had made to its identity. The whole of Bavaria was formed by established customs, morals, and traditions. Bringing these foundations together was a *Leitkultur*. This identity forming basic consensus, the

Leitkultur, was described as being lived daily in the country and state and formed the cultural fundamental order of society (BayIntG 2016: 1). This *Leitkultur*, or guiding culture, was woven throughout the rest of the integration act. This term can be remembered from earlier in this study as one that espoused much controversy. It can be assumed that the state government knew of the connotations connected to this word but still chose to make it a central part of their integration act making it very clear what they stood for. The integration act also followed the idea of *Fördern und Fordern* similar to federal integration policy. In contrast however, in Article 1 of the integration act outlining its integration objectives, Bavaria expected immigrants and foreigners to obligate themselves to respect and follow the *Leitkultur* (BayIntG 2016: 2).

Education and learning the German language were noted as keys to integration. Offers for immigrants in the area of political education dealing with German history, learning about the Third Reich, as well as culture, economy, and society were to take place as part of offers supported by the state connected to the *Leitkultur* (BayIntG 2016: 3). *Leitkultur* also played a role in early childhood education. In the integration act, the state expressed that all children in daycare centers should learn about the central elements of the Christian Occident culture. Those in charge of the daycare centers were responsible for making sure that the children learned to live sense and value-oriented lives in regards to religious conviction, as well as to develop a brotherly love born through religion or an ideological identity (BayIntG 2016: 5). In addition, it was expected that offers provided by radio broadcasting and telemedia contributed to learning the German language and passing on the ideas of the *Leitkultur* (BayIntG 2016: 6). It is clear that culture plays an extremely important role in Bavarian integration policy. It has also played an important role in the political and public discussion surrounding refugees in the state. Due to this, culture has been prominent in some of the programs implemented for immigrant women and female refugees

Although female refugees, and women immigrants were not particularly taken into account in the development of integration policy in Bavaria, women immigrants were seen as a particular target group for integration by the Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior, for Sport, and Integration (STMI). On its website, the STMI described women as playing a key function in the integration process. Just as the federal government and the various studies in NRW had done, the STMI acknowledged immigrant women not only for their attitude, willingness, and drive for their own integration, but that their integration success was decisive for that of the whole family. The goal of Bavarian integration policy was thus to support women with their integration efforts to the best of its ability. It was described however that reaching this group presented particular challenges. Five projects are presented by the STMI on its website as model programs and will be looked at in more detail. Only one of the projects is specifically for female refugees, the other four are for immigrant women or women with a migration background. Although it could easily be overlooked or seen as not important the semantics must be

looked at. Women were described as having ‘challenges’. This simple sentence creates the overall narrative in the state for immigrant and refugee women. As at the federal level and in NRW they were described as having particular difficulties and being the ‘other’ that needed outside help.

In the beginning of 2017 the project *Lebenswirklichkeit in Bayern – ein Projekt für Frauen und Kinder mit Migrationshintergrund* was launched. The project is financed by the STMI and coordinated by the *Sozialdienst katholischer Frauen* at its local branches in the cities of Munich, Regensburg, Nuremberg, Prien am Chiemsee, Kronach, Schweinfurt, and Aschaffenburg. On the STMI website it is explained that through this project, low-threshold offers are created for women with a migration background with a residence permit. The goal is to strengthen their self-confidence as well as their skills through offers that convey German culture and values. This connects back to the heart of the integration act of supporting and conveying a *Leitkultur*. There is however no overarching program guideline. Each city is able to adjust and create offers that fit to their local situation. It is therefore not possible to know how many women have been reached, how many of them have been recognized female refugees, or the effects and impacts of the project as a whole. There is also no indication that it has been extended to other cities in the state. It is also not possible to know what specific focus areas are outside of the general areas of self-confidence and learning German culture and values as indicated by the STMI. This naturally leads to the question of what German culture and values are and how each city interprets this in order to ‘teach’ it to the women.

Since August 2013 the STMI has financed the project *Starke Mütter – Starke Kinder* initiated by the organization *Frauen für Frauen e.V.* in the city of Erlenbach am Main and the surrounding areas. According to the STMI on its website, the main goal of the project is to increase the educational opportunities for women and children and to improve parenting skills in cooperation with local agencies, organizations, and schools. On the website for the organization *Frauen für Frauen e.V.*, four specific areas of focus are detailed and explained. One area of focus is for mothers and children (0-3 years of age) where they speak, sing, write, and play together in German. Through various offers parenting skills are specifically improved. In the second focus area children and adolescents are worked with through group activities and mother-child groups. The third focus area provides women assistance with looking for employment. In the last focus area immigrant women are supported through women’s breakfasts, informational events regarding strengthening parenting skills, and presentations from educators and specialists. This program focuses very strongly on the image of immigrant women as first and foremost being mothers. Something that has consistently been portrayed by the federal government and has been criticized. As parenting skills play a central role in this project, it would be interesting to know if there were also similar courses offered for German women centered on parenting skills. If not it must be asked why it has been assumed that immigrant women need particular support in this area. This supports a stereotype that mothers who are not

German cannot properly raise and take care of their children. They thus need help from German mothers in order to learn how to do it. This program strongly puts immigrant and refugee women in a categorization of having no agency, no self-confidence, not being able to properly take care of their children, and the only 'hope' they have is for Germany and German mothers to save and help them.

Another program financed by the STMI is a contact point for immigrant women coordinated by the *Interkulturelles Begegnungszentrum für Frauen e.V.*. The main target group is immigrant women who are highly motivated to obtain further qualifications, gain employment, and participate in society. On its website, the STMI describes the main task of the program as putting immigrant women in contact with organizations, counselling and advisory centers, or other immigrant women who can assist them. In addition, low-threshold language courses are offered as well as contact with other immigrant women to help foster language skills. Events are also organized regarding family and parenting skills, the educational and vocational training system in Germany, and health. These events are often held by other immigrants. Contact is also supported between immigrants and Germans through events and intercultural activities such as women's breakfasts. In contrast to the two other programs, it is not clear what is exactly being funded. Upon further research an organization with this name was found in the city of Schweinfurt. The organization as a whole is however funded by the STMI, not just individual offers connected to what is listed on STMI's website. The organization in Schweinfurt does offer counselling and advisory services but that is not the main focus. There is no information on how long the organization has been funded by the STMI, exactly which program(s) are being financed, and what impact if any there has been. It is also not possible to know how many female refugees have been reached. Unlike the programs discussed above this one does seem to have employment as its main focus. Again however that is surrounded by still putting immigrant and refugee women in the role of mother and the family. There is still the assumption that these women are not adequate as mothers and need help from Germany. More however cannot be said due to the lack of information.

The fourth project listed by the STMI on its website is from the *Verein für Fraueninteressen e.V.*. The project is called *JUNO – eine Stimme für Flüchtlingsfrauen*. The project began in the summer of 2016 in the city of Munich in response to the large number of refugees who had come to the city in the summer of 2015. According to the website for the project, the goal is to support female refugees with social integration and participation in society as well as to strengthen their skills, self-confidence, and independence. At the core of the program is a network of mentors as well as intercultural programs to bring female refugees and women living in Munich together. Various programs are listed on the project's website including Café Juno where female refugees and women in Munich can come together, offers for doing sports, excursions, and workshops or special events based on empowerment. There is no information on how many female refugees, or women in general, have taken part in the program. It has however won various awards and focuses on gaining mentors for the female refugees.

This program, based on its own description on its website, does not seem to focus on any specific type of stereotype or deficit of female refugees. It rather looks to strengthen what they have already come with through connecting them with other women. This is in contrast to the depiction of female refugees, and immigrant women, on the state level. This focus on enhancing skills and empowerment instead of focusing on challenges can only be attributed to the group in Munich that has developed the project. A group separate from the state.

One last project is worth taking a look at: Mother Schools. Although it is not mentioned as a model project by the STMI, Bavaria was the first state to bring the world-wide project to Germany in 2017. The main objective of the project is to sensitize mothers to the danger of radical ideologies and give them the tools to be able to prevent their children from becoming radicalized. In the end the women receive a certificate. All 'worried' mothers are allowed to take part regardless of their country of origin or religion. Since the beginning of the project in 2017, 180 mothers have taken part (BR 2019). In 2018 the state of Bavaria funded the project with 170,000 Euros. The project is not statewide but located in six cities: Aschaffenburg, Erlenbach, Schweinfurt, Wuerzburg, Nuremberg, and Augsburg (Lettenbauer 2018). In order to understand what is exactly being taught and to find out how many female refugees have taken part the program needs to be assessed at the city level. It will be discussed further in section 4.3.2 when looking at the integration policy regarding female refugees in the city of Wuerzburg. It can however be noted at this point that again the State of Bavaria is focusing on women as first and foremost mothers. It is keeping immigrant and refugee men completely out of the equation; as if they are not concerned or connected at all with the well-being of their children. Men are not a part of the private or family realm at all.

As was the trend in NRW, it appears in Bavaria that the majority of programs and projects for immigrant women and female refugees are funded by the state but coordinated by various groups in individual cities. There are no statewide programs initiated and coordinated specifically for female refugees, or immigrant women, by the state government. The programs listed above highlight the potential consequences that female refugees within the state could have very different integration experiences. Due to the fact that there is no state policy or statewide initiative for the integration of female refugees, or immigrant women, the women are dependent on the local communities where they live. In addition, there was no monitoring system set up in the Bavarian integration act like there was in NRW. This means Bavaria does not have to report on the effects or impacts of its integration act or present statistics on the potential success, difficulties, or development of integration in the state. This is one reason why more information could be found regarding programs and projects targeting female refugees, and immigrant women, in NRW than in Bavaria. Overall Bavaria, as NRW, seems to be using the same semantics and stereotypes surrounding female refugees, taken over from immigrant women, from the federal level and reducing them to a group of people with difficulties, challenges,

and only in the family realm who need help. Bavaria goes a step further than NRW however in depicting immigrant women, and with them female refugees, as being inadequate in taking care of their children and needing help from Germany and German mothers to do this.

4.2.3 Saxony-Anhalt

Unlike in NRW and Bavaria, Saxony-Anhalt does not have an integration act. The state however began the process of developing an official integration concept in 2019. Events and workshops were held statewide in order to hear from local actors, communities, and organizations on what should be a part of the concept. This process was led and organized by the Ministry for Labor, Social Affairs, and Integration. This does not mean however that integration was not a topic in Saxony-Anhalt. Up until that point, integration policy had been guided by the national integration plans developed by the federal government as well as an *Aktionsprogramm Integration* passed by the state parliament on June 23, 2009. Just as in NRW, Saxony-Anhalt had created a type of integration monitoring and released reports between 2011 and 2016 which helped guide integration in the state. The integration of women was touched upon in the report from 2010 in connection to the NIP from 2007. Due to the NIP, a working group focused on immigrant women was created in Saxony-Anhalt in order to highlight their specific integration needs and to develop specific recommendations for action. The focus was on domestic violence, forced marriage, forced prostitution, and health (Ministerium des Innern 2010: 93). Topics taken directly from the federal level which had been criticized as stereotyping this group of women. Areas such as education, employment, and participation were not discussed and no concrete programs or projects presented. It is therefore not possible to know what this working group achieved or if it is still functioning. Female refugees were not mentioned as a specific target group for integration.

Since the creation and passing of these plans and programs, the state felt that there had been a large change in the environment surrounding integration. The migration situation nationwide had changed, the legal framework nationwide was also different, the diversity of migrants within the state had changed, and there was now a need for differentiated demand-oriented offers (Möbbeck 2019: 15). The state took the opportunity to look at the integration acts from other states, NRW and Bavaria among them, in order to learn from what they had done. Saxony-Anhalt viewed the integration act in NRW as being directed first and foremost at the state with the goal of supporting offers to strengthen participation. The Bavarian act on the other hand mandated immigrants to integrate. For Saxony-Anhalt integration was however a long-term process that included both sides: the state and the immigrant (Möbbeck 2019: 16). Eight main areas of focus have been developed as part of the future integration concept. Immigrant women and/or female refugees do not make up one of those areas. On the state's *Integrationsportal* it is stated that the goal is to have a final draft of the integration

concept ready to be discussed and voted on in the second quarter of 2020. At the time of writing this study this had not yet occurred.

In Saxony-Anhalt there appears to be no programs in place specifically for female refugees, or immigrant women, supported by the state government and focused on integration. This does not mean they do not exist. It also does not mean that there are no programs for integration in general. There are no programs for female refugees, or immigrant women, listed on the website of the Ministry for Labor, Social Affairs, and Integration nor are there programs listed in the integration reports between 2011 and 2016. Two programs were however found in press releases by local news agencies in the city of Magdeburg organized by the IQ Network in Saxony-Anhalt and the Caritas Association for the Diocese of Magdeburg. The programs' connections to the state government are however weak. Nonetheless it is worth looking a bit more at the programs as they are the only ones, at least advertised, that focus on female refugees, and immigrant women, in the state.

On September 13, 2018 the IQ Network of Saxony-Anhalt and the Caritas Association for the Diocese of Magdeburg invited around 55 actors from the Job Center, the Employment Agency, those involved in the field of integration and assistance for refugees, representatives from universities in the state, and representatives from small and medium-sized companies for an expert forum entitled *Arbeitsmarktintegration für Migrantinnen und Migranten – Spezifische Herausforderungen für Frauen!?*. Susi Möbbeck, the Commissioner for Integration in Saxony-Anhalt, took part in the forum. The focus was on the integration of women in the state and that their situation is hardly discussed or taken into account. The participants learned about gender-specific aspects of migration and discussed possible solutions to ensuring the 'successful' integration of women with a migration background (MDN 2018). Shortly after this event, a new service point for immigrant women and female refugees in Saxony-Anhalt was initiated in Magdeburg at the Caritas Association for the Diocese of Magdeburg with Möbbeck in attendance (Caritas 2018). This service point had however been a part of the Caritas in Magdeburg since May 1, 2018. It was set up to support women and girls with a migration background and to advocate for a qualified transfer of knowledge, to support integration and build networks, and to focus above all on language acquisition, vocational training, professional qualifications, and integration onto the job market (Caritas 2019b). Caritas created a flyer, *BLICKpunkt: MIGRANTINNEN. Servicestelle für Migrantinnen und Flüchtlingsfrauen in Sachsen-Anhalt* which explains the service point in more detail. On the flyer it states that the service point directly offers contact persons for immigrant women and female refugees looking for information, offers the possibility of exchanges and contact between the target groups, and provides comprehensive information regarding projects, initiatives, and networks statewide. Although the Commissioner for Integration was at the initiation of the project, neither she nor her ministry (the Ministry for Labor, Social Affairs, and Integration) are listed as cooperation partners for the service point. There is also no mention of funding coming from the

state government.²³ Also, it is unclear if this service point is only available to immigrant women and female refugees in Magdeburg or if there are also contact persons available throughout the state. It is not possible at the time of writing to know how many women this program reached, how many of them were female refugees, or the impact it had.

At the expert forum on September 13, 2018 another offer for immigrant women was referenced. It is offered by the IQ Network of Saxony-Anhalt and entitled *Status: Migrantin!*. It is a counselling and support offer for women with a migration background and female refugees focused on questions relating to employment opportunities, individual support as a woman, and language acquisition. It is however not clear to what extent the state government is involved in supporting this offer or if it is offered outside of Magdeburg. The IQ Network itself is funded and supported by the ESF and the Federal Ministry for Labor and Social Affairs. In contrast to programs in NRW and Bavaria the programs in Saxony-Anhalt do not seem to stereotype and categorize women based on violence and only being mothers. They seem to stem from a realization that there is a lack of information surrounding immigrant and refugee women pertaining to their integration and attempt to address this. This is similar to the project in Munich in Bavaria. The projects in Munich and Magdeburg were developed by groups separate from the state and neither one relied on stereotypes or categorizations. This is not enough information to see a direct link but it is interesting nonetheless that state projects may rely more on stereotypes than ones implemented directly by organizations in specific cities.

On May 10, 2019 the Caritas Association for the Diocese of Magdeburg again invited experts to a meeting. This time it focused specifically on integration onto the job market. It is however unclear if the focus was on immigrant women as a whole or female refugees specifically. The director of the service point for immigrant women and female refugees in Saxony-Anhalt, Monika Schwenke, presented the findings of a survey conducted with 300 immigrant women in 12 languages about their life and situation in the state. The Commissioner for Integration, Möbbeck, was again in attendance. She received a 'package of knowledge' to take with her in order to further work on improving the situation of immigrant women and above all to increase the focus on female refugees (Caritas 2019a). It is not clear what happened after this event or if Möbbeck followed up on the information in her 'package of knowledge'.

It would not be fair to say that Saxony-Anhalt is behind in its focus on female refugees and integration as a whole in comparison with Bavaria and NRW just because it is yet to have a concrete integration act.²⁴ Integration has been a topic since 2009; before Bavaria and only a few years after

²³ After the writing of this study, this program began to receive its funding from the Ministry for Labor, Social Affairs on January 1, 2020. Caritas is however still the coordinator of the program.

²⁴ After the writing of this study Saxony-Anhalt passed the *Landesintegrationskonzept Sachsen-Anhalts* on December 23, 2020. It listed seven areas of focus and had intercultural opening, language acquisition, and societal engagement and participation of and for immigrants as main priorities. Refugee women were specifically mentioned. Instead of dedicating a section of the integration concept to them, the state decided to consider them as a specific target group in every area of

NRW. Despite this Saxony-Anhalt seems to be similar to Bavaria and NRW in that immigrant women and, most often times connected to them, female refugees are just recently gaining attention. Saxony-Anhalt does not however have any known state-funded programs for this group at the time of writing in contrast to the other states. It is however not possible to ascertain if the lack of programs for female refugees, and immigrant women as a whole, is due to not yet having an integration concept or integration act, or if it can be attributed to something else. Once an integration concept has been enacted in the state the situation of female refugees would need to be looked at again. It is however clear that as in NRW with NetzwerkW predominantly one organization in Saxony-Anhalt, the Caritas Association, is the driving force behind enhancing focus on immigrant women and female refugees. It is this association inviting representatives of the state to events on the topic, not the other way around.

4.2.4 Comparison

This section was neither meant to provide a detailed analysis on the integration of female refugees on the state level nor in NRW, Bavaria, or Saxony-Anhalt. Due to the fact that integration policy takes place at different levels within the German political system, it is important to have a basic idea and understanding of integration policy in the German states. Despite each state being in a different phase of integration policy development (NRW as a 'pioneer', Bavaria in direct reaction to the 'refugee crisis', and Saxony-Anhalt still developing) and having a different understanding of what integration means (NRW and Saxony-Anhalt participation and expectations from both sides, Bavaria expectations only from the immigrants and culture) it is clear that integration impulses within the states looked at here come from the federal level but are lead at the local level. NRW is however an exception to this as its focus on integration came before the federal government made it a central priority. The state governments of NRW and Bavaria do fund and support various projects and programs relating to the integration of female refugees often connected mostly to immigrant women. It is however local actors or networks of organizations in each of the three states that lead the call to create programs or to focus on female refugees. This seems to hint at the fact that it does not matter how developed an integration concept in a state is. If there is no group or community willing to focus their efforts and energy on the integration of female refugees it may not happen at all.

Various programs initiated by the federal government for the integration of immigrant women, and often automatically with them female refugees, onto the job market were not mentioned by any of the state governments or ministries. Saxony-Anhalt was the only state to acknowledge the federal integration plans as guiding principles for the development of its own integration policy. Nonetheless, the impulses set by the federal government regarding integration, and the rhetoric surrounding it, do

focus. Projects and programs connected to integration were also mentioned in the integration concept. Information that otherwise was not possible to find while conducting the research for the study.

seem to directly influence integration policy in the states. The intense debate surrounding integration and immigration at the national level directly influenced the integration act in Bavaria. NRW and Bavaria seemed to mimic the rhetoric at the federal level regarding immigrant and female refugees that they were first and foremost mothers in the family realm. Above all, each state viewed immigrant women and female refugees as having special needs. Just as at the federal level they were depicted as 'the other' at the state level needing particular support and attention. The majority of the projects and studies focused on the same topics seen at the federal level: violence, integration through sport, integration onto the job market, language acquisition, and various forms of empowerment. The only time when stereotypes were not being perpetuated in each state was when a local organization within the state, as in Munich or Magdeburg, took the lead. It is clear that refugee women are for the most part following on the tails of immigrant women at the state just as at the federal level. This means that the focus and programs are first and foremost on immigrant women and female refugees are later just 'added on' to them. The rhetoric and stereotypes used to describe immigrant women at the state level are being 'carried over' to female refugees just as at the federal level. Immigrant women, and with them female refugees, at the state level are being depicted as the 'other' within the family realm with particular difficulties and challenges who need special help.

Despite following the general trend and rhetoric regarding immigrant women, and with them refugee women, at the federal level, the states seem to freely create their own concepts and acts. More than anything else they rely heavily on local actors and organizations to create programs or to conduct studies which they then fund and support. It is clear that the integration of female refugees within the states looked at here is highly dependent on the cities and communities where they live. This means that the integration experience could be extremely different not only between states but also within a state. It is also clear that female refugees are still not an important target group for integration measures in any of the three states briefly looked at. They are often simply being added onto programs and projects developed for immigrant women taking on the same rhetoric and categorizations.

4.3 Cities and the Integration of Female Refugees 2003-2019

In the 2007 *Nationaler Integrationsplan* it was emphasized that integration took place at the local level. Communities, cities, and neighborhoods played a decisive role in if integration was successful or not. It was at the local level that possibilities and problems were visible. The states praised the work that communities had already done and were ready to work together for the further development of integration (Nationaler Integrationsplan 2007: 22). The Federal Association of Central Municipal Organizations represented the local communities and cities nationwide in the NIP. Through the federal association the cities, counties, and communities expressed that they were aware of their

responsibility regarding integration and were ready to continue filling this role. It was their opinion that it had been the communities and cities who, for many years, had taken on the task of integration. It was welcomed that through the NIP the federal government finally acknowledged its role and the task of integration received the nationwide attention they felt it deserved. It was however noted that the suggestions made regarding integration could only be carried out based upon the circumstances in each city and above all the financial situation (Nationaler Integrationsplan 2007: 31-33). This section will briefly look at the integration policies regarding female refugees in Cologne, Wuerzburg, and Magdeburg in order to gain a picture of how integration policies can look in the various cities in Germany. This is particularly important based upon the findings of the previous section that action regarding integration programs and projects appear to take place at the local rather than state level.

4.3.1 Cologne

In 2011 the city of Cologne passed and enacted the *Konzept zur Stärkung der integrativen Stadtgesellschaft*. Three principles were listed as being particularly important when enacting recommendations for action. Firstly, integration measures must acknowledge that diversity is normal. Every person should be accepted and they should be able to meet their potential. Secondly, diversity is a win for the community. All measures should be adjusted so that they can satisfy the various requirements of a diverse urban society. Lastly, integration pertaining to equal participation in all areas of life requires a common understanding of the chances, challenges, and problems an urban society faces connected to immigration (Stadt Köln 2011: 5). Fourteen principles were further laid out to help guide integration in the city. Refugees were also included in the concept, particularly with integration onto the job market. They were equally viewed as a group deserving of integration including asylum-seekers, those who have been tolerated, and those without documents (Stadt Köln 2011: 49-51). Women and girls were also listed as a group that was to be considered with every recommendation for action regarding integration. It was stated that their participation on the labor market, as well as in society, was very low despite the fact that they played an extremely important role in the integration success of not only their family, but also for everyone from their country of origin (Stadt Köln 2011: 13). In every section of the document women with a migration background, including female refugees in certain areas such as health and language, were included and specifically referenced. It can therefore be said that immigrant women, including female refugees, were specifically taken into account in the development of integration policy in the city of Cologne. Their situation was a focus in every area and their successful integration, as defined by the city, viewed as extremely important.

In addition to the *Konzept zur Stärkung der integrativen Stadtgesellschaft*, Cologne also has a *Kommunales Integrationszentrum*. As was discussed previously, in 2012 the NRW *Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz* created a structure, as well as funding, for community integration centers

throughout the state. The centers would function as central structures in all cities from which integration policy and offers would be coordinated and integration, above all through education, would be supported. According to its website, the community integration center was established in Cologne on August 1, 2013. The integration center focuses on two main aspects: integration through education and integration as a multi-faceted task. The first main area of focus is children, adolescents, and young adults who are new in Germany and need particular support in order to obtain a school degree or begin with vocational training. The second area of focus is on intercultural opening of administration in the city. It is however noted that an additional challenge is supporting language acquisition and providing humane housing for refugees as well as good counselling and support. The city puts a large emphasis on civic engagement and its importance in assisting and helping refugees and families.

The integration center offers a wide variety of programs connected to education not only for immigrants but also refugees. These programs are open to both boys and girls and men and women with the main target group being children, adolescents, and young adults. One program featured on the website is however centered on language acquisition in young children through their mothers. The program is called *Rucksack*. Mothers (with a migration background) who have a good command of their native language and German are trained as family leaders. They then lead a group composing of seven to ten mothers with children in daycare or elementary school. The program *Rucksack* has two goals. The first goal is to support the language development of children in their native language as well as in German. The second goal is to promote parenting skills. At the time of writing there were 12 *Rucksack* groups in 13 elementary schools and 21 groups in daycares. The groups were offered in Turkish, Arabic, and German. This program, although created to fulfill one of the aims of the integration center, follows the trend seen at the state and federal level: women equal family. Such a program continues the narrative that it is only women who care for and look after their children. Men are completely taken out. In addition, parenting skills are promoted leading to the assumption that non-German women may have deficits when it comes to taking care of their children and Germany must 'educate' them. Of course, the idea that stereotypes are being reinforced could be disproved if there were similar courses for German women offered by the city. At the time of writing however no such courses could be found for German women, or women in general, in the city that focused on language and parenting skills. This does not mean they do not exist; they may just not be as highly advertised. Most courses found were for exercise for parents or mothers with their babies and play groups. The courses for language, parenting, or helping mothers living in difficult situations were most often targeted at women with a migration background or refugees. This further creates a picture that German women do not have difficulties whereas refugee women and those with a migration background do.

Outside of the *Integrationszentrum*, the city itself offers a wide array of support and information for all immigrants and refugees. Gender equality makes up a large part of the information and offers provided for women, particularly in connection with female refugees. Contact information is provided on the city's website for support with domestic and psychological violence, educational information regarding the various forms of violence, and where to seek help. One main focus of the city regarding equality is increasing the number of women in companies and businesses. In 2015 the city developed a *Frauenförderplan* for 2015-2017 as well as the *1. Gleichstellungsplan für 2019-2023*. Neither of these plans however mention immigrant women or female refugees. The plans are however referenced and links are provided for them on city websites for refugees. In addition, the city provides a mentoring and networking program to help women with their professional career. Again however there is no reference to immigrant women or female refugees or if this offer is open to them. In 2013 the local organization for NetzwerkW in Cologne, discussed above as a main driver for more focus on female refugees and immigrant women in the state of NRW, released a brochure *Beruflicher "wieder" Einstieg*. There was a very brief section on employment perspectives for women with a migration background in Cologne. The section informed women mostly on which organizations they could contact for assistance. It also briefly explained integration courses and vocationally oriented language courses (Netzwerk W 2013: 21). There were however no specific projects or programs mentioned. Organizations were listed at the end of the brochure including their offers. Some of them did provide specific assistance to immigrant women. One organization, agisra e.V., was listed as a point of contact for immigrant women and female refugees (Netzwerk W 2013: 54). Besides this organization, no other one was listed as offering specific support for female refugees; only for immigrant women.

The program *Stark im Beruf – Mütter mit Migrationshintergrund steigen ein* funded and led by the BMFSFJ is active in the city of Cologne. It has been run by the organization *Frauen gegen Erwerbslosigkeit e.V.* since March 1, 2015. It has been set up as a network including the organizations *Vingster Treff – Bürgerzentrum Vingst* and the *Volkshochschule der Stadt Köln*. It is also run in cooperation with the Job Center in Cologne. The program is not called *Stark im Beruf* but rather *Migrantinnen AKTIV vor Ort*. The website for the organization *Frauen gegen Erwerbslosigkeit e.V.* gives an overview of the program in Cologne. It is for mothers with a migration background between the ages of 30 and 45 who need assistance either with a new orientation or re-entry onto the job market. In order to take part the women must have a good command of the German language. The project is made up of individual support and counselling as well as weekly seminars on various topics regarding employment and applications. There is however no information on the impact the program has had, how mothers with a migration background can become a part of the program, how many women have taken part, and if refugee women are a target group. This program also appears to be run independently from the city of Cologne, besides the cooperation with the Job Center, as it is funded

and supported at the federal level. There is no mention of it on the city's website for information for refugees or immigrants. This puts into question the federal government's coordination with cities and communities where its most touted program is located. Year after year the government has listed *Stark im Beruf* as its most successful program in helping immigrant women gain access to and integrate onto the job market. Despite this, it seems to be running mostly in connection with independent organizations in the city of Cologne. Whether this is an effective model or not lays outside the scope of this study. It is however an important point which should be looked into further. The success of the program in the cities where it is taking place could largely be dependent upon which organization is leading it, their funding situation, their access to the target group, and further cooperation partners. If this is similar in other cities, it could also lead to various degrees of success as it is not coordinated between the government and cities but rather the government and various small organizations or groups of organizations with different goals and backgrounds.

Despite its programs and offers for immigrants and refugees Cologne itself does not seem to fund or support any projects specifically for female refugees. The question is however if this should be viewed as something negative. Female refugees, as well as immigrant women, are prominent in the *Konzept zur Stärkung der integrativen Stadtgesellschaft*. The city offers a variety of support and counselling offers for recognized refugees and includes asylum-seekers, those tolerated, and those without documents in the target group for integration. The city has a concrete concept on integration and has made integration one of its main priorities. In such a situation the question arises if gender-specific offers are indeed needed or if a comprehensive concept and plan taking women into account on all levels is enough. This question lays outside the scope of this study but is important and should be looked at in future research.

4.3.2 Wuerzburg

In April 2019 the city of Wuerzburg officially released its *Integrationskonzept für die Stadt Würzburg*. As with the integration concept for the city of Cologne, the city of Wuerzburg included citizens, immigrant organizations, welfare organizations, various religious institutions, schools, and educational institutions in the development process and held expert interviews. The author of this study took part in an expert forum overviewing the final concept and giving feedback. The city of Wuerzburg saw itself responsible for creating the possibility of equal participation in social institutions and social life for all citizens. Based off from the writings of Hartmut Esser in the 1980s regarding assimilation and integration, Wuerzburg viewed integration as taking part on the structural, social, and cultural identification levels (Stadt Würzburg 2019: 10-11). The requirements for participation in all three levels, according to the city, are language acquisition, the recognition of the basic principles of liberal-democratic values and life together, as well as an acceptance and openness of institutions and society

for (cultural) diversity (Stadt Würzburg 2019: 11). Twelve guiding principles were then listed to which the city felt itself bound.

Women, including female refugees, were specifically mentioned in discussing the target groups for the integration concept. The city felt they deserved special attention due to the fact that they often had more difficulty in accessing educational offers, as well as the job market, due to a lack of childcare possibilities, family structures, and gender roles (Stadt Würzburg 2019: 16). When women were further mentioned in the document it was within the context of their difficulties due to family situations and (gender) roles within the family. It was emphasized that a focus needed to be put on supporting female refugees, and other immigrant women, with integration onto the job market. Regarding integration onto the job market, measures by the Job Center in the city were referenced such as workshops and the establishment of women's groups during maternity leave (Stadt Würzburg 2019: 63). Upon further research however no information could be found on these measures.

One program for women specifically mentioned in the integration concept was the Hacer-Hagar program. It is part of the City Education and Family Counselling Center. The program supports the societal participation of Muslim women and women with a migration background, along with their families, in Würzburg. On its website, the city provides information regarding what the program entails. The program is composed of nine various offers ranging from a women's group, language courses, swimming courses for women on their own or with children, assistance with local authorities, and help with questions pertaining to bringing up children and their development. Upon looking further into the program there was no information on how women were connected to the program, how many took part, and what if any impact it had had. It was also not possible to know if female refugees took part. As with the federal and state levels and the city of Cologne, Würzburg also connected women automatically with the family in its offers and descriptions. Almost all offers were centered around family and any difficulties women had with integration attributed to this and their gender roles within it. Men were taken out of the family equation as seems to have become the trend. The description of women did not seem to be different in Würzburg than at any other level or city.

Similar to the city of Cologne, Würzburg offers a variety of information for immigrants. On the website for the *Kommunale Bildungskoordination für Neuzugewanderte* information is provided on early childhood education, studying at the university, vocational training, and language and integration. In addition, information is provided regarding information centers, recreational activities and sports as well as educational and recreational activities specifically for women. A number of the programs for women are either run by the city or an employee from the city is the direct contact person. Some of the programs include Family Support Centers where all parents can go for information on bringing up their children and help with strengthening their parenting skills. In addition, intercultural cafés for mothers, a women's group for women from Somalia, a play group for female

refugees and their children directly in temporary accommodation for refugees, and a course on how to learn to ride a bicycle are offered for women supported by the city. One offer, Café Glanzpunkt, an intercultural women's meeting, is part of the project Mother Schools referenced earlier. This was the program focused on teaching women, mothers, how to detect radicalization in their children funded by the state of Bavaria. The advertisement for the meeting however does not mention that it is part of the project. Wuerzburg is one of six cities in Bavaria taking part in Mother Schools. Most of the women participating in the project learned about it by word-of-mouth. There are no flyers or brochures that are given out. The Mother School in Wuerzburg is comprised of ten meetings. Each meeting focuses on a certain topic such as self-confidence as a mother, identity as a mother, women's rights, self-respect, and self-doubt. The project is focused on mothers because it is asserted that they are the first to notice differences or changes in their children. Just as the world-wide project, the one in Wuerzburg focuses on deradicalization, how radicalization develops, and what to do if a child shows signs of potential radicalization (Lettenbauer 2018). The project is coordinated directly by the city of Wuerzburg. There is no information on how many women have taken part in the program or how many of them have been refugees. It is important to note here that, officially, the target group was all women no matter nationality, religion, or background. The only reference to it in the city of Wuerzburg however is in connection to a program for women with a migration background. Not for all women.

The city of Wuerzburg directly offers a variety of programs for immigrant women, including female refugees, but also advertises programs and projects from local groups and organizations. Just as at the federal and state level however, Wuerzburg appears to view immigrant women, and female refugees, first and foremost as mothers and within the realm of the family. The integration concept focuses strongly on gender roles and family situation in connection to difficulties for immigrant women. One area missing is integration onto the job market for immigrant women and female refugees. In the integration concept for Wuerzburg it was noted that more attention needed to be paid to this but no programs have been developed or presented at the time of writing. The question must be asked what affects it could have on the integration of female refugees in Wuerzburg if they are viewed as a group connected solely to the family. This is however the same question at the federal and state level. As the integration concept was first passed in April of 2019, follow-up is required to see if a focus will be placed on integration onto the job market or if this will continue to be in the background. This is not meant to ignore the fact that the city offers various professional and vocational training opportunities for both immigrant men and women. It however cannot be ignored that the rhetoric surrounding female refugees, and immigrant women in general, plays a role in how this group of people will be viewed and what programs are offered for them as has already been shown.

4.3.3 Magdeburg

The development of an integration policy in Magdeburg began before the NIP in 2007 and even before the enactment of the Immigration Act in 2005. In October 2003 the City Council gave the City Administration the task of providing suggestions on how to improve the integration of immigrants and people without a German background. There was to be no difference made between those with a right to stay in Germany and those with an uncertain status (Asylum-seekers and those tolerated). During this time however it was debated in Germany if cities should even have an integration policy as the legislative power rested with the federal government. Nonetheless it was clear that neglecting integration affected the community. With the enactment of the Integration Act in 2005 there was a separation between a legal policy regarding foreigners and a socially oriented integration policy. This separation directly affected policy areas within the organizational structure of Magdeburg. For the city a 'guiding paradigm' was needed in order to overcome the new circumstances (Stadt Magdeburg 2006: 7-9). The result of the task given to the city administration in 2003 and the enactment of the Immigration Act in 2005 was the development of the *Integrationspolitik der Landeshauptstadt Magdeburg: Rahmenkonzept* in 2006.

Magdeburg understood itself as a cosmopolitan city. Integration policy was not only a social topic, but an overall task for all departments with a focus on business development and city planning (Stadt Magdeburg 2006: 5). As the city of Wuerzburg had done, Magdeburg turned to academia to help guide its integration policy. The city understood integration based upon the work of Sociologist Friederich Heckmann. Integration was the inclusion of new groups into the existing social structures and how this new group created relationships within the system. The objective of integration was the equal participation of all groups into all aspects of society. Just like the city of Wuerzburg, Magdeburg understood integration as taking place on different levels and encompassing different dimensions. Those levels were structural, cultural, social, and individual (Stadt Magdeburg 2006: 10-11). Twelve areas of focus were listed for an integration policy. Amongst them was the equality of women and girls with a migration background. The goal listed in the conceptual framework was to particularly support the integration of immigrant women and girls. The city was going to pay attention to the special gender-specific situation of this group. This would create the required sensibility to ensure that integration efforts would also reach them. According to the city, immigrant women objectively had worse chances of participating in public life due to cultural or religious peculiarities and especially because of patriarchal structures in their countries of origin. The city wanted to make sure that these situations would not hinder their integration. Appropriate measures would also be developed in order to fight discrimination against women and girls and human rights violations such as forced marriage, human trafficking, FGM, and forced prostitution (Stadt Magdeburg 2006: 26-27). Just as in Cologne and Wuerzburg, Magdeburg viewed immigrant women as encountering more difficulties with

integration and as a group requiring special attention. Just as the other two cities, Magdeburg also put immigrant women into the realm of family. It is important to note here that Magdeburg went further than Wuerzburg and Cologne in describing the difficulties of immigrant women. Culture, religion, and certain human rights abuses played prominent roles for the city. These assumptions were being made by the city without any facts, research, or studies verifying them. It was the same trend at the federal level. The city of Magdeburg was categorizing immigrant women as victims who needed their help in order to 'break' free and find their way in society. As has been discussed the narrative and description surrounding these women may directly affect the programs developed to support them. It must be said that refugee women were not mentioned at all.

Just as in Cologne and Wuerzburg, Magdeburg provides an array of information and assistance to immigrants. Amongst the programs and offers specifically for immigrant women only a few are directly funded or coordinated by the city. They are mostly in the area of providing support in the event of violence. The city does however fund and support an information center called IntegraAktiv which focuses on integration onto the job market. It is open to both male and female immigrants but does offer special integration courses for women (with a certificate of eligibility) and provides childcare. There are no projects or programs that could be found directly coordinated and/or funded by the city for female refugees. This however does not mean that they do not exist. Perhaps they are not well advertised or only made known through word of mouth as is the case with Mother Schools in Wuerzburg. The same question comes to mind as was asked regarding Cologne. If the city has a concrete integration plan, provides an array of information for immigrants, and promotes programs and projects by local groups and organizations, is it necessary for the city itself to fund and coordinate programs and projects specifically for female refugees? This would require a long-term study on the specific efficacy of integration policies within cities. This would include an in-depth comparison of cities such as Wuerzburg that do directly coordinate and fund projects and programs for immigrant women/female refugees and cities such as Magdeburg and Cologne that do not. Possible difficulties could however be a lack of statistics or information as not all cities, or even states, require periodic updates of their integration policy or programs. Much data would rely on independent organizations and religious groups.

The conceptual framework for integration policy in Magdeburg could change starting in 2020. Since 2014 it was felt that the societal requirements for integration and migration had changed. There had been a new orientation on social political aspects. Due to this the project *Integrationskonzept 2020-2023* has been developed. Events took place in the city throughout 2019 discussing the various areas of focus for integration policy such as integration into city districts, discrimination, antisemitism, racism, and language acquisition. The goal is to officially present the concept in the first quarter of 2020 (Stadt Magdeburg 2019). As of the end of 2020 however no new information had been released

on the progress of the integration concept. It is also not possible at the time of writing to know if immigrant women, or above all female refugees, were considered in its development or would be specifically mentioned.

4.3.4 Comparison

In Cologne and Wuerzburg female refugees were taken into account in the development and conception of integration policies. They were directly mentioned and their integration was viewed as particularly important. This was however not the case in Magdeburg where immigrant women were instead the focus. Although in each city either immigrant women and female refugees, or both, have been officially mentioned, the focus tends to remain semantic. Each city provides a large amount of information for immigrants as well as pointing out groups, organizations, and projects which could be helpful. Other than Wuerzburg however, the cities do not seem to support or fund programs and projects directly for female refugees outside of the realm of violence. This does not mean that other programs do not exist. It is possible that they are not advertised. The question is if this can be viewed as negative. Each city has been engaged with the topic of integration much longer than any of the states with the exception of perhaps NRW. Immigrant women and/or female refugees have been considered in each city and integration measures have been developed to account for them. This raises the question already looked at if it is the case that there is no need for specific city run integration programs for female refugees if there are solid and long-term integration programs for immigrants, both male and female, already in place funded by the city. We have seen this at the federal level that programs which were originally developed and intended for immigrant women simply added refugee women on as a new target group or new programs were developed just for refugee women which mirrored already existing programs for immigrant women.

Concrete support for immigrants is clearly at the city and not state level in the examples looked at in this study. Regarding female refugees, without a local organization or group prepared to specifically coordinate programs or to garner attention for them, it appears that very little happens if anything at all. This is seen most starkly at the state level. What is clear however is that the states looked at for this study are prepared to fund and support programs and projects pertaining to female refugees. This should be viewed optimistically. It is obvious that the topic of integrating female refugees is not only new for the federal government but also for the states. The states are however simply taking on the focus and rhetoric from the national level regarding female refugees. They have labeled them as a 'new' group to be integrated but have initiated very few programs or projects themselves. They are however willing to support local groups and organizations to conduct studies to learn more about female refugees and to support local groups with programs to better their integration possibilities. The rhetoric the states, and with them cities, have seemed to take over from

the federal level cannot be described as optimistically. At every level we see the same categorization and labeling of immigrant women, and with them female refugees, as a victimized group almost solely in the family realm facing suppression due to culture, religion, and gender roles within the family. Their only chance at integration and getting out of this situation is through the help of Germany. Immigrant men, and with them refugee men, have completely been taken out of the equation at each level. Refugee women, and female refugees, are the 'other' whereas immigrant and refugee men are the norm. This narrative has seemed to influence at each level which programs and projects are developed and what topics are deemed as 'important' for refugee women. At each level the assumptions of violence, suppression, and victimhood are not supported by any statistics, facts, or studies. They are simply stereotypes being officially perpetuated and passed on.

Despite the common trends of semantics between each level and the simple 'adding on' of refugee women to already existing programs or projects for immigrant women, overall there appears to be little coordination between the federal, state, and city levels. With just looking at the three states and cities discussed above, there appears to be very little cooperation between state and city governments regarding the integration of not only female refugees but also immigrant women outside of funding studies or attending events. With the exception of Mother Schools in Wuerzburg, no other city and state are coordinating a program together. The same is true for federal programs coordinated at the city level. The program *Stark im Beruf* is considered by the federal government as its most 'successful' program for integrating immigrant women, and with them refugee women, onto the job market. Out of the three cities analyzed in this study however it is only present in one: Cologne. This project however does not seem to be coordinated by the city but rather by an organization. The city is not even listed as a cooperation partner and there is no information regarding the program on the city's website. Concerning cooperation between the federal and state level this seems to perhaps only occur with the development of nationwide integration strategies. There are no examples of coordinated programs or projects for refugee women between the federal and state level in the states analyzed for this study. What rather seems to happen is that the federal government often gives the impulse for integration policy or sets the tone for a nationwide debate introducing the semantics and narratives. It can influence a state to create an integration act as was the case in Bavaria or guide the phases of integration as with Saxony-Anhalt. What can be concluded here based on the three states studied is that the states 'have to' take on the topic of integration because the federal government has made it a priority. There are of course states, and cities, that have been doing this long before, but now it is a must for all. The rhetoric is also simply being carried over as has been shown in this chapter. Gaps that are being seen at the federal level regarding female refugees also appear to be the same at the state level. It seems that there is a 'political learning' at each level regarding the integration of female refugees with the federal government setting the tone.

4.4 Summary

The analysis in this chapter has shown three things regarding the integration of female refugees in Germany. Firstly, the enhanced attention regarding them and their integration can be attributed to the refugee crisis in 2015 and 2016 and the fears that there would be a lack of specialized workers in certain sectors of the economy. Secondly, their integration success and development is connected to that of immigrant woman. Thirdly, they are in a unique position to perhaps have more integration success in the long-term compared to immigrant women in the past. This is due to the fact that projects implemented starting in 2015 to improve immigrant women's integration onto the job market have simply been expanded to include female refugees. This puts them in the special position that there are programs and projects in place, albeit not in every state or city, to assist them with employment. This is something that immigrant women did not have until 2012. The rhetoric regarding immigrant women has however not changed in 19 years since the debate on integration first began in 2000. The fact that the description of immigrant women has simply been taken on for female refugees leads to the assumption that they, along with immigrant women, may continue to be depicted as one homogenous disadvantaged group needing special assistance into the future. This will also continue to equate gender with women and normalcy with men. Unless there is a concerted and genuine effort by the federal government to change this, it could continue to influence and effect what type of programs are developed to support the integration of female refugees, and along with them immigrant women, in the future at each level of government.

Based on the brief analysis of the integration policies in North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria, Saxony-Anhalt, Cologne, Wuerzburg, and Magdeburg it appears that integration policy is connected in some way at the federal, state, and city level. The federal government sets impulses and defines the rhetoric which is then passed down to the states and cities. The cities however seem to have more freedom in creating their own focus but are dependent on financial support. It is not misleading to assume that the increased attention to female refugees at the state and city level, as well as financial support for programs and projects connected to them, can only be guaranteed as long as the federal government has them as a priority. Through this study it can be seen in the states and cities analyzed that local organizations and groups play an important role in providing information on the situation of female refugees and in coordinating and providing programs at the state and city level. Analyzing the situation of female refugees will require further studies, including the role of organizations and groups, in order to track development and progress on the federal, state, and city levels. This also means that female refugees' integration could strongly be influenced not only by the state or city where they live but also if there are local groups or organizations working towards improving their overall integration or access to programs and projects. Above all it can be concluded that rhetoric plays a strong role in what programs and projects, if any, will be developed. At all levels, and over many years, immigrant

women and with them female refugees have consistently been portrayed as the 'other'; as a group of suppressed victims suffering from violence needing help. Although there are no long-term studies to support these assumptions, this is the narrative that has developed. The challenge will be to change this narrative at all levels. To focus on opportunities instead of perceived and unfounded difficulties. The semantics surrounding immigrant women have simply been 'reused' for female refugees and may be strongly influencing what policymakers, governments, and organizations think female refugees need in order to integrate.

5 Perspectives of Female Refugees: Analysis and Comparison

Being able to use our voice and have someone listen and understand can make an important impact on how we, and others, react and deal with a situation. This idea of 'voices' has often been underrepresented in Forced Migration studies. As already discussed previously in this study, oftentimes the people who are the subjects of a study or analysis become the objects. They are not given the space to express themselves or their experiences. Those who have had to flee their homes, who have had to start a new life elsewhere, learn a new language, and adjust to a new society are however the experts on their experiences. Policies and laws that are enacted regarding migration and integration directly affect them. Discrimination and destructive rhetoric can have a direct impact on their lives but yet they are often kept silent. Someone who has not had to flee their home cannot fully understand what this truly means. Someone who has never had to live under integration or migration policies in a new country, face discrimination, or build their life anew can never know how this feels. Yet those who do experience this are boxed into a group which is viewed as silent and without agency. This is a mistake. As expressed at the beginning of this study a major goal is to correct this mistake within the field of Forced Migration. Refugees must be seen as active participants, they must be understood as experts on their situation, and they must be allowed to use their voice; to share their story so that we can learn from them not only in academia but also in society and in forming policies and developing laws.

In this chapter recognized female refugees are given the space to speak for themselves. They discuss various topics connected with integration, describe how integration policies have affected them (if at all), and what they have experienced in Germany. This will also allow a comparison between the cities and states to see if the experience of female refugees is influenced by where they live or perhaps other characteristics. After this, in chapter six the outcome of the interviews will be compared with the results of the policy analysis conducted in chapter four. Through this, initial findings will arise if the policies and programs are truly reaching the target group or not; how integration policy, if at all, is affecting the lives of female refugees; and if one program, state, or city is having more success in reaching and assisting female refugees than another. It is very important to note here that the author of the study made a conscious decision not to reference any academics, researchers, or documents in the analysis of this chapter or that of chapter six. A main focus of this study is to present (recognized) female refugees as experts of their lives and legitimate partners for research and study. In referencing an academic, researcher, or other source it portrays the image that the words of these women are only 'legitimate' if confirmed by another. It takes away the space for the voice of these women that academia itself has called for to be made. The author understands that this approach moves away from

current academia and research but wants to lift the voices of the women interviewed for this study not diminish them.

5.1 Central Findings of Interviews

Through an analysis of the transcripts of each interview and strenuous coding using Grounded Theory as based upon the Core Domains of Integration developed by Ager and Strang (2008), certain topics emerged which were significant for almost all women in each city and state. These topics are presented here primarily through quotes from the women so that they are truly the ones telling their story and discussing their experiences. The experiences of the women are then compared in order to determine if there are similarities or differences which could possibly be attributed to where the women are located or aspects of intersectionality. Every woman's story is unique and their experiences specific to their situation and life thus far in Germany. It was however not possible for the author to include quotes from every woman in the analysis. Where many women had the same experience just one or two quotes were used but other women were also named. Just because one woman was quoted over another however does not mean that their experience was more important. Quotes were chosen based upon their clarity, comprehension, and ability to represent similar experiences from other women to avoid repetition. An attempt was made to have an even distribution of quotes between all women and cities so that a picture could be developed of the situation of women in each location. Through this it was possible to better compare.

5.1.1 German Course and Learning German

Female refugees only have access to official language courses once they have received refugee or protection status. There are exceptions for asylum-seekers from countries with good perspectives of being able to stay in Germany. An asylum-seeker can privately pay for German courses before they are officially recognized as a refugee or gain protection status. These courses are however very expensive and out of reach for most asylum-seekers. There are some local organizations however that sponsor asylum-seekers so that they can attend German classes while awaiting the response to their asylum case. Although the women interviewed for this study had obtained refugee or protection status and were able to attend language classes, the majority of them had already attempted to learn the language before this. It is important to discuss this point. Many of the women interviewed did not receive protection or refugee status the same year they arrived in Germany. Many had to wait one year or even two, four, or over ten years. This can have an immense impact on the women's ability to integrate, perhaps start vocational training, or find a job. If they cannot speak the language they can encounter many difficulties. German classes organized by volunteers were thus the first introduction for many of the women to learning the language.

Zia (31, Lebanese, Magdeburg) explained how she had been in Magdeburg for five days at the reception facility when she met a German woman who told her they were offering German courses with childcare:

“And I had been in Magdeburg for five days when [name of the German woman] came to the reception facility and said we have a social apartment and we can help for example if you want to do a German course with your children. I went with a friend and there were maybe eight or nine people and they taught us first ‘I’, what ‘I’ means, what ‘you’ means. It was on Monday and Thursday for two hours.”

Zia had arrived in Germany in 2014 and took the courses organized by the volunteers until she received her protection status in 2018. When she took the placement exam to be able to start the official German classes she already had level B1 from the volunteer courses.²⁵ Lava (44, Syrian, Wuerzburg) also had a similar experience with volunteer groups organizing language courses:

“Before she received her recognition she had um a, from the volunteer group in Volkach um a course, they offered a course for the Syrians that were in Volkach, there weren’t many. And they did it with a teacher there, it was free, it lasted two, three months [...]” (translated by Saya 22, Syrian, Wuerzburg).

Rina (25, Kosovar, Wuerzburg) who had been born in Germany²⁶ explained the situation of her parents who had arrived after fleeing war in 1993. Her father however did not receive a residence permit until 2013 and her mother until 2019:

“Ok listen. They can speak Albanian, they can speak Serbian, they went to school there and did vocational training, and they worked. To learn another language when they were over 30 was just too difficult especially because we couldn’t, or weren’t allowed to, take a German course for ten years. At that point you are almost 40 and have other things to worry about. I think it is really unfair or quite rude when people say to me that my parents have been in Germany for such a long time, they should have learned German long ago. I say yes they should have, of course they should have, I say that to my parents as well but my parents had other worries at the time when people think they should have learned German. My parents had completely different problems. Just look there was an attempt to deport me when I was five and it is obvious that they just couldn’t do it and actually with Germans actually we didn’t really connect with them in our social surroundings.”

One thing that stood out amongst many of the women was their motivation to learn German before they were officially allowed to take language courses. They quickly understood the importance of being able to speak German. Faven (28, Eritrean, Magdeburg) explained how she learned German online and by watching TV. For her “When you don’t properly speak German, a few problems in Germany. Have to learn German.” Qudsia (50, Afghan, Magdeburg) and Yana (22, Syrian, Magdeburg) also used the TV and internet as resources for learning German. Qudsia stated “Yes but at home a lot a lot of TV, internet

²⁵ This is based upon the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) Levels. The levels are: A1 and A2 basic users, B1 and B2 independent users, and C1 and C2 proficient users.

²⁶ Although Rina was born in Germany, based upon German law she was also considered a refugee because neither one of her parents were German or had permanent residency. They were refugees. This is the reason why she is also included in this study.

learn German [...] Cellphone. Write write read, listen, I understand". Sahin (26, German, Magdeburg) stated: "I have to honestly say, when you come to a foreign country without language skills you simply feel blind and deaf. You don't understand anything, you come to a country without language skills and you somehow feel foreign." Aamiina (24, Somalian, Magdeburg) was so motivated to learn German before she was officially able to take German classes that she paid for courses herself:

"The first time I learned online, there was a teacher, I think he is from Egypt, he speaks Arabic and I speak Arabic and I lived in the reception facility for two years, I wasn't allowed to take a German course because of my residence permit and I had to wait. I wasn't allowed to work or go to school. That was a very difficult situation for me and at the doctors for example you cannot speak English, no Arabic, you have to speak German. I always had to look for someone who spoke English to translate at the doctor. And one day I thought I have to learn this language because I want to live in Germany. When I want to live in a country I have to learn the language because language is everything. When you can speak the language you can really live because when you go shopping you need the language, at the doctors you need the language, at government agencies you need the language, you need the language everywhere. That was very difficult for me. I learned the alphabet online and then I heard there was a course that I could sign up for. I went there and signed up, that was Monday and Thursday, and I did the course for three months. Then I did another course after that one was over. Then I learned German two days a week for three months. Then I continued to learn online and I had A1 and A2 and then I paid for the course myself [...] Yes I paid for the B1 course myself [...] That was about 1 300 Euros [...] I was in the reception facility and got 325 Euro a month. During that time I only ate bread for breakfast, salad for dinner, and you have to calculate. Thank God I paid for it. My school was in Hasselbach close by, 30 minutes from the reception facility, I had to walk [...] I was not able to afford the streetcar. I wanted to pay for this course because the course was 200 Euro per month, but thank God I did it and can do it now."

After gaining refugee status, Xelat (32, Kurdish, Wuerzburg) also paid for additional language classes as she felt her alphabetization course had been too fast:

"I paid 75 Euro myself for [name of school] until I could, I was a bit good with writing [...] I had a residence permit after this ah [name of school] but I was bad because they went through the alphabet so quickly. I didn't understand anything and these people, the foreigners, they speak so quickly and the teacher only speaks to these people who want to repeat, but if I asked to repeat they didn't [...] I had to [pay for a class myself] because when I want to do something then I do it."

Once the women had received refugee or protection status and were able to officially take German courses, their experiences seemed closely linked to the teachers they had. As Ella (Eritrean, Magdeburg) explained:

"The teacher was good in three months. For the six months there were always different teachers. For the three months it was always the same teacher. For the six months there were always different teachers and therefore they could not react to the students very well. When there is only one teacher he can better look after the students, which problems, who understands what and give homework and how things can improve [...] The concept is not very good. I looked for another school. I don't know why there was always a change. I found another one [...] I know there are many schools in Magdeburg. I went and asked [...] I first went to the school and then went to the Job Center and told them."

Zia (31, Lebanese, Magdeburg) recounted a situation where the teacher was so bad that all of the students had her removed:

“We went to Information, not Information, what ah yeah the boss and we said that the teacher was not good [...] Yeah she she um she spoke with us like we we we are in A1 and not B2 [...] Yeah therefore we told the boss that is not good [...] and she gave us another teacher [...] yeah and that was great.”

Helen (30, Eritrean, Magdeburg) was however not as successful in changing a teacher she was unhappy with:

“The problem was that the German teacher was an Arab man. Therefore, a lot of people were Arab and spoke Arabic and therefore the teacher also had to speak Arabic. Maybe 90% were Arab and maybe two people with another language. Therefore, the teacher spoke with the other people in Arabic [...] I often said not Arabic, better English or German. Everyday. I spoke with him a lot and said ‘please speak with us only in German, we don’t want Arabic’. But he responded ‘ok’ and continued doing it. He said ‘ok as of right now I will only speak German’, but then the next day he would always speak in Arabic again [...] I told the information boss. Everyone only speaks Arabic. But for example the other people were also a bit mean, they said ‘we are Arab, we want to speak with our teacher in Arabic’ [...] I tried [to change the course] but I had to stay at the language school because of my child because they know from when to when my child is at daycare. Therefore, I could not go to another one [...] The German teacher spoke with me that I had to stay at the language school. Because if the teacher had been from Eritrea, I would have spoken with him in my native language. Therefore, the Arab people also have to speak in their native language. That is how it is. Yeah [...] I found an open spot in another language school [but the Job Center would not let me go].”

In the German classes themselves the women found that they had enough grammar and writing. There were some varied opinions on whether the classes went too quickly or if they were long enough. What came up often however was the lack of speaking in German. Many of the women felt that this was missing from their language class and that there was no additional opportunity offered to practice speaking. This was an important point for Saya (22, Syrian, Wuerzburg): “They teach the people how to write, the correct writing with the correct grammar, but that is not at all important. They first have to learn how they can communicate.” Milana (36, Syrian, Wuerzburg) also mentioned this point: “We learn grammar and new words at home every day, German words, I watch TV every day but that doesn’t help. Um we need um German people to speak with.” Due to the lack of practice speaking German, Lida (Afghan, Wuerzburg) for example has postponed starting her B1 course in order to gain more experience with speaking so that she feels confident enough to do the language course.

For the women who had come as children - Arya (28, Kurdish, Magdeburg), Nazia (17, Afghan, Wuerzburg), and Sahin (26, German, Magdeburg) – and Rina (25, Kosovar, Wuerzburg) who was born here, their language acquisition took place at school and they grew up speaking the language. They were dependent on the schools they attended offering special integration courses or teachers helping them. Arya attributes her German language proficiency to her German teacher when she was in elementary school:

“I started in first grade here. I was sent to school at age 6 and a half or seven [...] Yeah I have to thank my German teacher for that. When we were in class for example, everyone else was finished and she sat with me and taught me pronunciation and so much more. She really helped me [...] It was four times a week [...] until almost third grade [...] In first grade four times and then always twice [a week].”

While these women were learning German as children, they were also speaking another language at home and grew up bilingual. This was also a trend with women interviewed who had children. They wanted them to speak their native language. Many of the women even banned their children from speaking German at home. For example, Elaha’s (39, Afghan, Magdeburg) youngest son is at school the whole day and speaks German. Due to this she said he has forgotten Paschtu. Elaha said that “everyone laughs. Why did he forget his native language?”. Because of this he is no longer allowed to speak German at home, only Pashtu. Zia (31, Lebanese, Magdeburg) has started to send her eldest son (7 years old) to Arabic School so that he can learn Arabic as well as more about the religion:

“Yeah I always tell the children here at home there is no German. Here at home is only Arabic. When you are at kindergarten or outside you can do what you want because the children were born here and they know German better than Arabic [...] I want them to have two languages. And children can do that, they can learn two, three languages at the same time but only when they are children. When they are adults then it is too late. They have to speak German and maybe a bit of English later [...] Yeah when my children go to kindergarten and afterwards come home I have noticed that [name of children] play with cars and speak in German. German and um why are you speaking German? Ah speak Arabic yeah that is easier.”

On the topic of speaking more than one language, Yana (22, Syrian, Magdeburg) expressed “I am I learn here but to speak German at home is very hard. My mother speaks Kurdish and my father speaks Arabic. I have to speak this and that and at school I have to speak German. It is so difficult three languages”. Although children and adolescents are not the focus of this study this is an important topic. It would be insightful to look into if children who are speaking one language at home and another at school are getting support or if they in fact need it. Following on this it would be important to study what effect growing up between two or three languages may have on their integration or language skills. Children may be put into difficult and stressful situations due to speaking multiple languages and growing up within the asylum and integration system. It is encouraged to spend time researching this topic in the future.

While the experiences expressed above were attributed to more than one woman, there was one individual experience that the author felt was important to mention. Nancy (29, Ugandan, Wuerzburg) arrived in Germany in 2008 and first received a residence permit in 2018. For ten years she was not able to officially attend German language courses. Through work and contact with Germans however she was able to learn German and become fluent through her own motivation and determination. Her status also affected her ability to be able to work. Through a German friend she was able to find an internship in elderly care and later start vocational training in the field. As she did

not have her school certificates from Uganda, in order to gain a spot she needed the *Mittelschulabschluss*. In order to take the exam for the *Mittelschulabschluss* she needed a language certificate proving her level of German. Her nationality and status made gaining this certificate a bit difficult:

“Another problem which is that also to get a school. By that time you have like... some schools you have to start with them. You just can’t pop in and say ‘Oh, I have to do the exams’. I tried. I called many schools. And another one is like if...those non-organization schools, they only taking only like... the time I went there they were only taking refugees from Syria. Arabic and German. So I was like: English-German. It’s like ‘no we can’t. We are only taking people from Syria’. So I like from... someone from Uganda I couldn’t get where this school... (unintelligible) paid for myself. And other schools are like ‘We are in the middle of the what... of the course. We can’t just bring you and do exams. All you have to wait at the end of the course and you have to be attending’. So it was not that easy [...] Those were like the course which was free. They were only taking Syrian people, so if like your card was not saying you are from Syria you couldn’t sit in the class. But the lady (unintelligible) was nice [...] The next time (unintelligible) appointment you can make a test. Actually I did it with the one lady also. I think we did like three people in the... two I think are from Iran and Afghanistan. We did the test and I think I’m the only one who passed.”

As this is just one experience it cannot be concluded that this happened to other women. Nonetheless, it is worth taking a moment to pause and wonder why a woman who had been accepted to start vocational training, spoke fluent German, needed just one exam to prove her language proficiency, and was going to pay for the exam herself was denied by so many schools. Even the schools which were offering free classes, but only for Syrian refugees, denied to assist her due to her nationality although she was prepared to pay. Her luck in being able to take the exam in the end rested on one individual German woman who was willing to help her. Without this woman Nancy may not have been able to get the language certificate she needed to start vocational training. We should ask why such barriers are put in the way of someone who is motivated and doing all they can to integrate and start a life in Germany.

Two other experiences which were individual are also important to mention here. The emotional and personal situation of the women can also play a role in their ability, or willingness, to learn the German language. Female refugees have been forced to leave their homes. This situation is extremely emotional and difficult for many:

“Um I began right um I began learning the language right away and on the very first day I came home and I cried. I told my mom that I would never learn this language, never in my life, and that I was never going to go back to school. Then yeah for about a year I always said I wanted to go back, that I was definitely going to go back. At some point after about a year once I began to understand everything and I could converse things began to get better.” (Jana: 27, Syrian, Wuerzburg)

Being a mother (either a widow or a single parent) can also add additional stress and make it difficult to learn German:

“And that is a bit sometimes hard for me when I have to um come after the course do homework or I have to tidy up because my children study and uh uh I have to uh work alone or only work and only clean or cook or everything for me and that is a bit hard for me because I am alone.”
(Lava: 44, Syrian, Wuerzburg)

Sometimes the women are not ready to learn German, as Jana explained, or their personal situation at home can make it difficult for them to really practice the language as was the case with Lava. It is important to keep this in mind when developing language classes or putting pressure on female refugees to learn German as quickly as possible. It is however a difficult situation. Although many of the women expressed German is the key to a job and a life in Germany, not everyone is emotionally ready to start on day one. A balance must thus be found. It is a question highly discussed how long a woman, or refugee in general, can be ‘allowed’ to come to terms with her situation before consequences are put on her regarding language acquisition and other integration requirements. This extends further to men who may be alone with children or men and women preoccupied with family members still in conflict zones trying to bring them to Germany. It also raises the question of support outside of language courses. It must be asked if the government’s responsibility extends past the end of the school day for men and women who are alone raising children and cannot complete homework or properly practice outside of class.

When looking at the experiences of the women and hearing their stories no major differences arise between the women based upon where they are located. Through their descriptions it can be concluded that the women are equally motivated to learn German and some are even prepared to pay for German classes. Individual experiences are strongly dependent on what language school the women attend and who their teacher is. If a woman feels that she has a good teacher, then her experience is positive. If however she feels that her teacher is not helpful or is not good, her experience is negative. Although some women being interviewed had not yet been able to attend German classes due to having babies or young children each woman was able to express themselves in German. Youtube, the television, and learning online were listed by women in each city as being the main tools for learning German before being allowed to attend official German courses and as supplements once being able to attend. The women want to learn German and are finding ways even if German systems and laws make it difficult for them in the beginning. The importance of organizations and groups providing free German classes for refugees who are not yet allowed to attend official German classes cannot be underestimated. Many of the women interviewed started out in these classes and through them not only learned German but also came into contact with Germans. From these interviews it can initially be concluded that taking courses organized by volunteers can impact a woman’s integration chances pertaining to language. The effects on the integration chances of asylum-seekers who do not yet have access to integration programs or language classes is highly understudied. Through this analysis there has been a first look, albeit non-representative, into the role of volunteer language

courses. It is highly recommended that studies be conducted specifically on the situation of asylum-seekers and their integration as well as how the support from organizations and groups assisting asylum-seekers with language courses and finding employment impact the integration of women once they have received refugee or protection status.

Xelat's (32, Kurdish, Wuerzburg) experience with learning the language and obtaining her B1 certificate sums up the motivation and determination of the women interviewed to learn German:

"With grammar it was a bit hard but I woke up every day at 6:00 to study [...] And ah in half a month we finished two books and they were so fast but we had, one can say we were clever because we studied and we achieved what we want, you have no choice but to do it, get B1. The first time they had the certificate, they said B1, that was unbelievable and I said no I don't want it. That is not my certificate [...] Believe me I said that. When I really saw, my name, believe me I cried. Really."

5.1.2 Education

Discussions surrounding experiences with education primarily took place with women who had arrived in Germany as young children or with mothers with young children. Although each woman had their own experience a common thread emerged. Many of the women who had come as young children did not know about the school system in Germany and neither did their parents. This greatly influenced their educational trajectory thereafter.

"I have to honestly say it was totally confusing. If my parents had known about it before then I would have gone to a Gymnasium but as a result that I knew the language but was still not perfect. I was really good in math and was always the best in reading and math. That was always my field. Then they also said that I could go to the Gymnasium but somehow my parents couldn't manage the schedule and therefore I went to the Sekundarschule. There is something to that. If my parents had gotten more information then I think I would have had better chances." (Arya: 28, Kurdish, Magdeburg)

Arya went on to do a vocational training as a pharmaceutical technical assistant because her parents wanted her to but she did not finish it as it was not really what she wanted. Through a friend she came upon Social Work and wanted to do her Bachelor in this. She however did not have an *Abitur* to be able to study at the university as she had gone to a *Sekundarschule*. She thus went to a private school in order to obtain the qualification needed to study at a university: "I did my *Fachabitur* at a private school on the side. Not the official *Abitur* only the *Fachhochschulreife*. Altogether it took an additional two and a half years and six months to obtain the advanced *Fachabitur*."

Sahin (26, German, Magdeburg) also went to a private school in order to obtain her *Fachabitur* to be able to study Social Work at the University. Nazia (17, Afghan, Wuerzburg) arrived in Germany as a young girl like Arya and Sahin. She was however sent to a school which had an integration class. Such classes did not exist where Arya and Sahin went to school. The main goal of the class was to assist children like Nazia in learning German before officially beginning school. Although she was in this

special class, just like Arya and Sahin neither her nor her parents were informed about the educational system in Germany:

“Um no, actually no. I went to school therefore my mom still doesn’t know what everything is. I also didn’t know um before two years ago what there was. So I went um to [name of the school] um where I learned the German language ah then I went to [name of the school]. That was a German school. There weren’t any integration classes. Um I first realized there ‘ah I can go to a Wirtschaftsschule’. I didn’t know about that then. Or ah ‘I can do an Abitur’. Um the teachers um the students spoke about it and after that I learned about it in passing. After that I asked the teachers and they said ‘Yeah you can do this here, you can do that there. If you for example go to ah [name of school] you can do an Abitur or a Fachabi’. And yeah there wasn’t one person who um explained yeah this is the German school system.”

Nazia was then asked if she found it problematic that no one explained to her and her parents how the school system worked.

“Yeah um in some ways yes because I first realized this year that I can also um at an Abendgymnasium um do my Abitur. In the past I didn’t know that and the thing is because of that it is harder to picture what your goal is. You don’t know for example maybe I want to be a doctor [...] That is an example [...] I want to be a doctor but I don’t know wh what I have to do for that. You have to study to be able to do that. I didn’t know that before and I thought ‘Yeah I can do a vocational training’. No one really informed us of anything.”

Nazia took it upon herself to google how to become a doctor in Germany. Diana (34, Syrian, Magdeburg) has two young children and also googled the German educational system, in both English and German, so that she knew how she could best help her children and what was expected of them. Just as with Arya, Sahin, and Nazia no one had explained the system to her. Lava (44, Syrian, Wuerzburg) has four children and also discussed that no one explained the German educational system to her. Her children were all sent to a *Berufsschule*. When asked why this was the case, her daughter Saya (22, Syrian, Wuerzburg) explained it this way:

“Because they don’t really know the situation, they don’t know what we want to study or what we want to do. They simply thought ‘ok Berufsschule, then they can get a job more quickly’ [...] They didn’t pay it any mind [...] Just find a way [...] At the Berufsschule you don’t need any certificates, you can just sign up.”

Although these women had difficulty navigating their way through the German educational system as they did not have any assistance, they did not say that the experience was bad or negative. It was just difficult. Zia (31, Lebanese, Magdeburg) however who has three young children learned about the educational system while attending her B1 language course. The question is thus raised why the parents of the other young women did not learn about the educational system in their language courses like Zia did. Perhaps it was discussed in the course but the parents may not have understood or it may not have been discussed in enough detail. As discussed in chapter four, the German government puts a major emphasis on language courses as important for integration, especially for women. Topics of raising children however are only specifically mentioned in the curriculum for special

integration courses for women and parents. Not in the general integration courses. It was however shown in chapter four that most women are attending general integration courses, not the special courses for women and parents. Although this study is not representative it hints at a potential problem that education is perhaps not being focused on enough in the general integration classes as it is viewed as a topic which is only of interest for women in special courses. It creates a situation where each individual school or teacher providing an integration course may be left to decide if they want to go over the topic and to what extent. This in turn could potentially have negative effects for children growing up in Germany with parents who are unfamiliar with the educational system taking them longer to achieve what they want if at all.

Nancy (29, Ugandan, Wuerzburg) who has two young sons had a different experience than the other women. It is her kindergarten that has taken an active role in preparing the children and educating the parents on the educational system.

“And for the school, it’s already the kindergarten they would prepare for you. They will prepare you for the next step. They will help you, say ‘You have to do this. You have to apply there’. It’s like if you need another school you have to apply a different form. They will give you (unintelligible) that form. So they during the process, they will give you everything. They will tell you everything you need to know [...] Yes. They will tell you what to do next. Another thing what is good, I don’t know if in other kindergartens they do that, in our kindergarten [name of the kindergarten], if the kids are preschool kids, they have a course. They call it Sprachkurs but actually it is for those, like kids, not refugees, but foreign, foreign lands, like kids from foreign lands. For those who are speaking bi bilingual. They will have a course for them like to see how they will cope up their German, especially German, how far are they in German. They always emphasize also us to speak in our mother language because they don’t want to confuse the kids [...] I think it’s the whole year [...] They have (unintelligible) timetable for those who are getting prepared for the school. They have their special program. They can learn. They also have a program with math. How they cope up with the numbers and, they have every time they see which (unintelligible) they have to make I think each year parents to talk meetings and, but good enough that each parent is alone. They only have the teachers. You have there the one hour they tell you how the kid is progressing, what you need to do, what will help you, what you need to improve, such kind.”

Early childhood education was not only a focus of the federal government but also of some of the states, for example Bavaria, in chapter four. Nancy was the only woman with small children interviewed that described such a supportive and helpful environment at the kindergarten where her children are. It would be interesting to research this aspect further to discover how many kindergartens offer such services and how beneficial they are for the children.

Layla (Iranian, Cologne) had a personal experience with education in Germany. Although she was the only woman to discuss this aspect it was nonetheless impactful.

“[...] After I gained my status I studied to be a nurse. That was my dream job. I wanted it but my parents said ‘no my daughter has to be a teacher’. That is how the Iranians are. Und then uh I said yeah in Iran I don’t have any other choice, I was a teacher. But here I studied to be a nurse. I called my father and I said ‘I am a nurse and I am doing it because I am happy.’”

Although she had to flee her country coming to Germany, being separated from her parents, and being able to start anew gave her a new found freedom and opportunity to study what she wanted and to be what she wanted to be. Layla was able to be her own person and to make her own decisions. The topic of further qualifications and studying at the university also came up with other women. Especially those who had come to Germany with their parents at a young age. There were however two very different experiences with the process to study at the university and it is worth looking at them in more detail.

Saya (22, Syrian, Wurzerbug) studied medicine in Syria at the university but was not able to finish it. After arriving in Germany and obtaining the level C1 she wanted to apply to study medicine to continue what she had started at home. She had no one to support her with the application process however and had to go through the system on her own. She applied to 30 universities to study medicine. She described how the experience was extremely difficult and discouraging.

“Yeah there is no waiting list for foreigners and you can’t for example at the same time do a vocational training and wait until you get a spot to study. No. It’s no use. Or this um NS, I don’t know it is a TMS exam, we aren’t allowed to do a Studiumkolleg because our certificates have already been recognized. Yeah and it is sometimes better for the Germans to have a Studiumkolleg ah a certificate than a normal Abitur from another, from another country [...] And a FSJ year isn’t any use. The Germans get points or a bonus or something like that. I also tried. My Plan B was biomedicine but it also didn’t work [...] This is what happened. I had already tried in Wuerzburg for the winter semester. I applied for medicine and after that I applied for biomedicine. They counted the first one as my first wish and the other one as my second wish. And uh they said someone is um they mistook the first one for the other one, they put biomedicine as my first ah wish. Because of this I’m not allowed, anyone or my name was on a different waiting list, or application list something like that [...] Exactly I’m not allowed. Exactly. Or a foreigner can only apply for one course of study or subject [...] In the field of medicine you are only allowed one. Or only one sometimes. It is different and dependent on the university [...] I am really disappointed [...] I don’t know how I can manage this [...] In the International Office one of the employees said that I should look for something else. He said ‘you definitely won’t get a spot. You can study something else. Not specifically medicine. Why do you want to study medicine? You can study chemistry. You have a chance to be accepted as these subjects are open. For medicine, pharmacy, biomedicine acceptance is limited and as you know they only offer five percent of the spots for foreigners at every university’. And he said ‘yeah your grades for your Abitur are good but there are better ones than yours, look for something else. Don’t just wait and then apply with the same application every year’.”

Saya found out about the application process by researching on her own, asking other students, and looking at information in groups on Facebook. Although Saya is extremely frustrated she ended on a hopeful note: “I am still fighting”. Her difficulties with studying in Germany are not only isolated to difficulties directly with the university but with the whole process. Her situation will be looked at again from another angle in the following section 5.1.3.

Jana (27, Syrian, Wuerzburg) had studied English Literature in Syria but like Saya had to end her studies early. Unlike Saya however she had support with applying to study at a university in Germany and a quite different experience.

"[...] I was told by many people that I could continue with my studies here. I didn't want to do that however. I thought 'hmm, no, first the language and then I can see what comes next' [...] Before the war my brother wanted to come to Syria ah to Germany to study and he had already informed himself, he did a language course, and had signed up for the Test DaF in Turkey. Yeah and yeah through that we were well informed. Yeah [...] My brother and I were mandated to do language courses up to level B1. After that we had to finance the courses ourselves or someone could support us. There was the (unintelligible) Foundation [...] They helped us for a very long time, until we were accepted to universities. They supported us with everything: B2, C1, um Test DaF twice and with a preparation course. They also offered seminars [...] They paid for everything yeah and then um yeah in addition they were open for every question, for every type of assistance."

Jana and her brother were informed about this foundation through a friend who was also doing a language course with them. They made an appointment, had a meeting with a woman from the foundation, and she agreed to help them. It is important to note that Jana applied to study social work at the university whereas Saya wanted to study medicine. However, the process was made much easier for Jana because her brother knew about the system in Germany and she had a German foundation assisting her throughout the whole process, including paying for exams and language courses. It is not certain if the outcome for Saya would have been different if she had had the same support Jana did. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that her frustration may have been minimized if she had had someone to support her who knew the system and could help guide her. The question is thus how many female refugees go through the same situation as Saya? If they are not lucky enough to have a sibling who knows the system in Germany or to come into contact with a foundation that is prepared to assist them the whole way, including financially, like Jana what happens? It would be important to research how many women have had to give up their goal of furthering their education in Germany because they are left to figure it out on their own through a system they are not familiar with.

Once at the university Jana described some difficulties as a foreigner that she felt the university did not take into account:

"In the beginning it was ok but at some point I thought honestly that it was too much. Um and amongst ourselves, I have contact with a few others who are from Syria, we have noticed or we think they don't realize how much it is for foreign students. They don't take it into account. That is what we think because the amount is just too much [...] For example there are three sections Norms, Ethics, and History. For someone with German as their native language it is easy for example to read a book. We however need double the time."

Jana has decided to speak with two professors at the university next semester about the situation to see if they can make any changes to help foreign students. She has been encouraged to do this as there was already a slight change regarding exams. Before, once the students had signed up for an exam they could not cancel it. Now the university allows students to cancel their participation in an exam up to two weeks before the scheduled exam. According to Jana this greatly benefits foreign students as they are given enough time to see if they can take the exam or if they need more time to prepare.

Sahin (26, German, Magdeburg) also spoke of an individual experience at the university. It was not the main focus of what she was discussing but it stood out to the author as an important aspect that is often not discussed. The private situation of a female refugee can play a role in her success at the university. Sahin felt like an outsider at the university and gained the impression that the other students would only work with her as a refugee if they felt it would benefit them for their group work. This aspect of her experience in Germany will be looked at in more detail in section 5.1.8. Due to other students not wanting to work with her, which is what she felt, for one subject she had to write an exam instead:

“We actually had to do group work but no one wanted to work with me. Because of this I had to do an exam. I did not pass the exam the first time because my uncle died in Syria. I couldn’t concentrate. I was allowed to repeat the exam the following year but my aunt then died in Syria. A car was bombed and she was near it and died. I couldn’t concentrate yet again. I had to pass the third time as I did not have any other options left. My uncle became sick, he had liver cancer. I really just couldn’t do anything anymore. He was in Turkey. He was brought to Turkey in order to go to the doctor. There were no longer any doctors in Syria who could treat him. I flew to be with him. I got a 6 on my exam and because of that I was exmatriculated from the university.”

We could say that Sahin’s situation seems extreme, that she lost two family members in a row and her uncle could not find the treatment he needed in Syria due to the war. Is it however extreme? If a woman has left a country at war she still may have family members or loved ones there. This obviously has an effect on their life and situation in Germany as is seen with Sahin. She explained the situation to her university which is why she was able to repeat the exam three times. She felt however that she was exmatriculated in the end due to her personal situation as a woman with family in a country at war. We must ask ourselves how many other women are attempting to further their education but are experiencing a similar situation like Sahin. It should be looked at further if there any measures in place, or that could be put into place, to help women in this situation so that they do not end up being exmatriculated due to circumstances beyond their control.

As with the previous section on language acquisition, no major differences seemed to arise between the women and their experiences with education based upon where they lived. In fact it seemed that women with young children, and women who had grown up in Germany, experienced the same issue that they were not informed about the school system in Germany no matter where they were. This is therefore something that should be looked at further. It appears to be the luck of the draw if a woman is in an integration course where the educational system is thoroughly explained or if her children are at a kindergarten that makes it a point to prepare the children for school, support them, and inform their parents about the process. Taking part in an integration class at a school also does not seem to guarantee that the child, or the parents, will be informed about the school system as was shown here. This can also be extended to the university. There does not seem to be an overall

system in place to support young women who want to continue with their studies in Germany, including taking the personal situation of the women into account. Either they have to work through the system on their own or be lucky enough to come into contact with people or foundations and organizations that can help. This is also independent of where the women are located. Overall, experiences with education seem to be specific to each woman's situation. However, those aspects which seem to affect the women as a whole need to be looked at further.

5.1.3 Recognition of Qualifications

On April 1, 2012 the *Gesetz zur Verbesserung der Feststellung und Anerkennung im Ausland erworbener Berufsqualifikationen* came into effect. This law was the first step in making it easier for degrees obtained abroad to be recognized in Germany. This was an important and much needed step in assisting women in obtaining jobs in their fields or being able to continue with their education. Hani (63, German, Cologne) had however arrived in Germany as a refugee long before this law was passed: in 1986. She described the situation at the time compared to now:

"I had my Masters when I arrived here but at that time Bachelor and Master was completely unknown in Germany. They said 'mm we don't know what that is' and they didn't recognize my degrees until I found a woman, a professor at the University in Cologne, who spoke with me, looked at my grades, looked through all I had studied, and um agreed to be my advisor for my PhD. Once she gave her approval the University accepted that I had a Master. But I also had to um get a few certificates, visit um a few classes and seminars, and then I had visited these seminars and written my Exposé [...] Now they have the right to recognition, to the process to recognize their certificates. A right to the recognition process at least. At that time no one knew what to do, where to send us, ok. I was sent to Dusseldorf and here and there and to various departments where only one was responsible. But now the path is clearer. For degrees and certificates obtained abroad you are sent there and they review it and the Job Center pays for everything even the the translation."

Hani was then asked how she found this professor.

"Um that was at the University. It was its own department. It was called Ausländerpädagogik and I went to see her. I discussed my situation with her and she was very nice and friendly. She was close also close to retirement and she said ok she would do it. She wanted to do it and we were then, there was also a young man from Greece, we started together and she was the advisor for both of us."

Hani's situation was unique compared to that of the other women interviewed who discussed the recognition of their qualifications. She was the only woman, who discussed this topic, to have come before the law was passed. If she had not found a professor willing to help her gain recognition of her degrees and to be her advisor she may not have been able to continue with her studies. It is not possible to know how many other women were in the same situation as Hani. She ended up not finishing her PhD due to gaining, as she described it, her dream job. Nonetheless, this demonstrates the advantage the women have now through the right to have their degrees and qualifications reviewed and potentially recognized.

The experiences of the other women were individual but it is important to hear their stories to gain an understanding of what the process is like. Especially for those whose qualifications or degrees were not recognized in Germany. Aamiina (24, Somalian, Magdeburg) found herself in a situation where Germany did not recognize her qualifications.

“In my country of origin I did a Realschulabschluss and received a certificate [...] I had to do it again because Germany did not accept the certificate from my country of origin [...] I did one year, it is called [name of school]. That is an education institute like the [name of the school]. I was there for one year and passed my exams in June, received my degree, and while I was at school I did many internships and jobs.”

Although Aamiina had to repeat her *Realschulabschluss* it did not seem to disadvantage her based upon her description. Marla (39, Syrian, Wuerzburg) had a different experience. Her degree as a teacher was accepted at the level of a Bachelor but her husband’s law degree was not. Although her degree was accepted and she is now working in the field of education, the situation of her husband has also caused her to feel insecure. She stated “My husband is not safe. He is not recognized”. Not having a degree recognized has meant insecurity for Marla and her husband. He has not been able to find work in his field and Marla is working multiple jobs. They have both received permanent residency and are not dependent on assistance from the Job Center. However, Marla describes the situation as very difficult for both of them as he had worked in Syria and now is unable to in Germany. Diana (34, Syrian, Magdeburg) studied English in Syria and unlike Hani’s husband her degree would be recognized in Germany. She however views the outcome of the recognition process with skepticism.

“I asked and unfortunately I would have to do further training. To work as a teacher in Germany you have to study to be a teacher for five years and afterwards another subject. The subject is no problem, it is recognized, we recognize it. The pedagogical training is missing. Pedagogical training that means studying five years at the university. That is so long and the question arises again with dark eyes, dark hair, and a Hijab. Who would even want to employ me even when I have done everything? It is not guaranteed. So much work and so much time for something that isn’t even guaranteed. That is unfortunately not very motivating. It isn’t guaranteed.”

Without naming it directly Diana touched on the idea of intersectionality and various forms of discrimination that she could potentially face. Although she knows that her degree would be recognized and she could do the required additional training, the prospect of potentially not being hired due to how she looks, and her religion, keeps her from pursuing this path. Diana has been employed twice and she and her husband have opened up their own business in Magdeburg. She described however that she has faced immense discrimination at both jobs, and even from customers at her business, and this has played a major role in her experience in Germany. Her experiences with discrimination at work will be discussed in more detail in section 5.1.8.

The experiences of Saya (22, Syrian, Wurzerbug) and Jana (27, Syrian, Wuerzburg) when applying to study at a university in Germany was looked at in the previous section. They had very different experiences. Saya did not have any assistance and found the application process difficult and

discouraging while Jana had help from her brother who knew the system and from a German foundation. Saya and Jana also had different experiences with the recognition process also due to one having assistance and the other not. Just as with applying for universities, Saya went through the recognition process on her own.

“Afterwards I had the degree translate translated. Germany did not accept the translation and you cannot have it certified for example in City Hall. They asked again if I could have it translated in Germany and I also had it translated again and it cost over 50 Euros. And ah afterwards I picked up my transcript and had it translated here in Germany and sent it to a place in Dusseldorf to convert it and they haven’t yet, I haven’t gotten a response yet. I have been waiting for three to six months. Yeah and if you want to apply for a spot at a university you first have to have your degrees converted or recognized and that sometimes takes place here via Uniassist. It is for foreign students. Um I already sent everything. You first have to create an account for Uniassist ah you can apply for fee waivers as a refugee. They are allowed to have three applications. The first is free, the second, and also the third. After you have to pay 30 Euros per application [...] Yeah I also copied my language certificate and translated, not translated, had it certified, and the certification also costs money. For example I already had something certified at [name of the organization] but it isn’t accepted by some organizations here or universities in Germany. Either from a government agency like the City Hall, and that costs money, five Euros per document, or at a Notary and that costs 12 Euros, 15 Euros, and that is really a lot.”

Saya went on to explain how each university requires different documents and specific tests and everything has to be translated and certified. In the end she sent out 30 applications and it was very expensive and exhausting. What was very frustrating for Saya was that “yearly or every semester they delete our applications and they say we have to refresh it or send it anew”. In addition, if there is a mistake in the application they do not inform you until it is past the application deadline.

“For example you have to send the application through Uniassist and send a lot, really a lot, of documents and afterwards we have to transfer the money and afterwards we get a response at the end of the semester. And if there was a mistake or something was wrong they inform us about it after the time period or the application deadline. It happened last semester. I had already sent my Abitur ah a certified copy but I only had the stamp from [name of the organization] on the Arabic, on the German page. And they didn’t accept it. They had already reviewed my application and did not send it to the university. And only two universities accepted this degree, the others didn’t, and out of 15 universities only two universities received my documents. I asked this agency, Uniassist, and they said ‘yes we already reviewed your documents but a stamp is missing at the top’. I said ‘but I already translated it and sent it’ and they said ‘yeah that doesn’t matter to us because a stamp is missing’. I said ‘yeah but it costs a lot of money when I have to send a new certified copy with every application’. And they weren’t interested at all and so 15 universities were missing.”

Although this situation is not solely related to the recognition of qualifications, it is the process the foreign students, including women who have come as refugees, need to follow in order to have their degrees recognized, certified, and their applications reviewed and accepted by universities. Saya unfortunately experienced nothing but frustration with the process and felt defeated. She did not know if she would have to give up her goal of studying medicine. She had started it in Syria but up to

now had been unable to continue in Germany due to difficulties with the process. She ended her discussion on the topic with an anecdote about her exchange with Germans regarding the topic:

“Yeah and then a German comes and asks me ‘why aren’t you studying?’ and I explain to them that it is difficult. ‘Yeah but you are smart and you are intelligent. Why why do you still not have a spot up to now?’ [laughs] Because you know absolutely nothing about foreigner’s history.”

Once again Jana had a very different experience than Saya when it came to the process of recognition and getting into a university. For Saya this was due to the support she received through a German foundation. She described her experience in the following way:

“The foundation helped me. They took all of the documents and at the time someone had to recognize them in Konstanz. Yeah and then we simply had to go back and forth to sign documents and to reply to things. Yeah and then at some point the woman called and said ‘Great, your Abiturs were recognized and with that you can begin studying’.”

Jana is now doing her bachelor in Social Work and Saya is working.

The recognition of qualifications and the process is a very individual experience as the women each have different backgrounds. Through Marla we see however that even if her degree has been recognized and she can use it in Germany, the fact that her husband’s degree was not accepted affects her just as much, if not more. This leads to the idea that women potentially cannot be separated from the situation of their husband or partner. Insecurity for one can mean insecurity for the other. Negative experiences in Germany regarding discrimination can also potentially affect a woman’s motivation to have her degree recognized and to do any additional requirements that may be needed as Diana expressed. Based upon the idea of intersectionality and discrimination of various characteristics a woman may have there is the risk that she could put in the work but not benefit from it in the end. This is a very important point which should not be underestimated because only one woman discussed it. The continuing differences between Saya and Jana regarding the recognition of qualifications and application process is extremely important. Both women studied in Syria and had to end their courses early due to fleeing to Germany. Once here however they had different experiences partly due to one woman having support and the other not. Perhaps if Saya had received the same support as Jana she would have known which certifications or translations were accepted and she would not have had to spend so much money. She could have potentially received more guidance and not have applied to 30 universities but instead those where her chances were greatest. These interviews have brought to light the potential lack of support with the recognition and application process at the university level. This should be looked at in more detail in future studies.

5.1.4 Work Experience in Germany

Employment and finding a job in Germany were topics that every woman brought up during the interviews. It became clear early in the interview process that the women presented themselves as highly motivated and determined to work. They also viewed employment as something positive and

even freeing. Hani (63, German, Cologne) laughed when discussing her job in Germany: “I told myself I have my hobby as my job. That is great!”. She continued:

“I mean the experience was that um, I said wow this is great, that the work I did with women in Iran I had to be afraid about what could happen, would I be persecuted or this and that and here I get paid to do it. That is great. It is interesting. I said oh this is interesting, it is strange that the uh German government gives us money so that we can fight against the German government. That is great! [laughs] Interesting!”

When asked how it is for a woman to find a job in Germany however, Hani did not respond with as much enthusiasm:

“I think it is very difficult. A job and then which qualifications do they have, language skills, both, and then after they have kids, if they have small children then they can't work full-time, that isn't an option. It is really really complicated and difficult.”

Layla (Iranian, Cologne) saw it however a bit differently. From the moment she arrived in Germany after the Iranian Revolution, which ended in 1979, she was focused on working. Her opinion was that if you want to work you can find a job.

“In Germany, in the beginning after I arrived in Germany, I wasn't allowed to work. I didn't have any status and I wasn't allowed to work. I went to the Social Welfare Office and I said I want to work but they told me I wasn't allowed to. I said I want to work for free and they sent me to a library and I worked there [...] I wanted to work. That was missing for me. I think that is ok if someone wants to work then they can and at that time also everyone said that no one could find work here, there isn't any, and that unemployment is too high. I said that is nonsense. If you want to work then you can, you will find something [...] Then I went to Cologne and I did the same thing there. I have always had a job. You always have to, my theory is that you have to have the drive and stand by that and then you will get it.”

Layla did not only view drive and motivation as important for finding a job, but she also saw employment as an important part of a person's life, including their mental health:

“I said that, I want to say I have worked the entire time and mentally I am really healthy and that is very important for me. I have never been bored. And in addition it is somewhat freeing (unintelligible) and I could pay for a few things on my own that I wanted. No, that is the reason why I would suggest to every person work, work, work. Physically you are tired but when you sleep and wake up the next day everything is over. That is really good [...] That helps to keep you mentally healthy and that is really really really important.”

Layla had been a teacher in Iran but after fleeing to Germany was able to have her, as she describes it, dream job as a nurse. After that she became self-employed as a taxi driver and has been doing that for over 20 years. She enjoys being her own boss and always meeting new people.

Some of the women interviewed were in the process of attending school and doing a vocational training. Aamiina (24, Somalian, Magdeburg) was doing a training in the field of elderly care which she found with the help of her social worker. Nancy (29, Ugandan, Wuerzburg) was also doing a training in the field of elderly care. The beginning was however not that easy for her due to having two children.

“It’s not that easy. It’s, yes, it includes a lot of work, determination first, and if you have someone who can help me because I have, I had kids, I had to breastfeed after school. Had to come home and breastfeed my kid. I had, in the morning to take them to kindergarten and in the afternoon to pick them up. Yes, so it was not that easy.”

Although it was difficult, determination was a main factor for Nancy as it was for Layla in obtaining a job. Zia (31, Lebanese, Magdeburg) experienced a similar situation as Nancy due to having three young children. She wanted to do a vocational training but the school was far from where she lived and she would not have been able to drop her children off and pick them up from kindergarten. Her husband is currently doing a vocational training and cannot assist with that. Due to this she is continuing with a C1 language course. After this she will have to see what work options she has that will fit with her children’s schedule and that of her husband. Determination and motivation also played a big role in Xelat’s (32, Kurdish, Wuerzburg) wish to gain an education in Germany and afterwards start a vocational training in elderly care. Before Xelat discovered elderly care she was very active in trying to find a job. Sometimes she would send 20 applications at a time and get no response. The Job Center most often sent her to jobs at fast food restaurants, supermarkets, or as cleaning personnel. When asked why she thought she was always sent to such jobs her answer was clear: qualifications. It is important to note that Xelat has never been to school. Due to the war in Iraq she was not able to attend school, not even elementary school. Her mother taught her and her siblings how to read and write and basic math. She described her situation as follows:

“Because I don’t have any experience. I don’t have any job. I don’t have any qualifications. I only have a B1 certificate and that is unfortunately not enough because when I have, when I don’t have any idea about work they send me to clean.”

Despite having no education Xelat understood from the beginning that in order to come further she needed qualifications. She needed to go step by step in order to reach her goal of working in elderly care:

“For example, if someone does not know the alphabet they cannot find a job or have a career. Because that is very important, you have to do the first step, the second step, and then continue. If you simply go to school but you do not know the alphabet then you can’t go any further. When you don’t have any qualifications you cannot work.”

She did not just limit this to herself however. She felt that everyone that came to Germany should have the chance to be educated and gain qualifications. Instead of just sending people to work like had been done with her, Germany should give them the opportunity to learn first and gain qualifications. Through that they would have better chances of gaining, better, employment. Xelat felt however that she did not get the support from the Job Center in the beginning that she had hoped for in pursuing her education. This will be looked at in more detail in the following section 5.1.5.

Many of the women interviewed have already had jobs in Germany or are currently working or studying. Jobs or volunteer work they have done while in Germany are listed in Tables 3, 4, and 5 in

section 3.4.3 along with work they had in their country of origin if known. The topic of obtaining a job when wearing a Hijab was brought up almost exclusively in Wuerzburg in Bavaria although women with Hijabs were interviewed in all three cities and states. Lava (44, Syrian, Wuerzburg) was an elementary school and music teacher in Syria and wears a Hijab. She does not want to be a teacher in Germany but instead do a vocational training as a beautician. She has already informed herself about what she needs to do in order to work as a beautician and is just waiting for the results of her language exam. Nevertheless, her and her daughter Saya (22) discussed the situation of women with Hijabs who want to be teachers in Bavaria. Saya stated:

“She [Lava] is not allowed to teach children when she is a Muslim, I mean if she wears a Hijab. She is not allowed to in Bavaria [...] They have to respect our religion and handle the situation in a good way, not only pay attention to our, only focus on our optics because yeah that is normal. It doesn’t influence other people [...] For other women who have already studied to be teachers and many have degrees or they already have a master and they aren’t allowed to teach here at all. That is really tough. One woman already moved away from Wuerzburg because she could not find a job [...] They told her she had to work as a cleaning lady and she already had her certificate in her hand that she could do something else.”

Saya and Lava both found this situation very sad and unfair. Lida (Afghan, Wuerzburg) also wears a Hijab and discussed the situation of wearing a Hijab and looking for a job in-depth:

“I also have the problem that because I ah no job ah with my Hijab [...] But I have to work in a factory or be self-employed with a Hijab. I can’t simply work in a store or at a business or as a cashier. That doesn’t work. That is a problem [...] The problem here is that a lot of people ah they look at you negatively. They see it negatively [...]”

She has applied for jobs at various businesses and some of the potential employers told her directly that she could have the job if she did not wear her Hijab. That was not possible for Lava: “I was sad, but what could be done? What can I do? No I can’t do that. I have to work ah to find a job where I can wear a Hijab, where it doesn’t matter with or without Hijab”. In 2017 the Job Center offered her a job in a factory. She was able to work there because it did not matter that she wore a Hijab. She said that there were many foreigners and refugees working there as well. The contract was however only for nine months and part-time. Once the contract was over it was possible to get a new one but that was also only for nine months and part-time. Lida however wants to work full-time someplace where the contract is more stable. She however only ever gets job offers as cleaning personnel from the Job Center and she does not want to do that. In Afghanistan Lida did a training as a gym teacher. It is the equivalent to a fitness instructor in Germany. She would thus not be able to use her qualifications here directly as a gym teacher but rather as a fitness instructor. She did not show her certificates to the Job Center but she did inform them of what she had done in Afghanistan. The topic of her religion came up however as a reason why she would not be able to continue with her job as a fitness instructor in Germany:

“And yeah but, ah, a lot of people say that I could, could do aerobics or work or do fitness in a sports center. But unfortunately that would not work. Only for women would be ok. But no, with men and women that would be a problem [laughs] Because I have to wear a Hijab. That doesn’t work [...] Then I would have to wear a shirt or a T-shirt when doing sports (unintelligible) and that is the problem.”

Lida continued and explained that she would have to wear long shirts and pants if there were men in her group and that would be very uncomfortable. When asked if it would be possible for her to teach a fitness class with both men and women if she wore her Hijab and a short-sleeved shirt her response was no. It is not possible to wear a Hijab with a short-sleeved shirt. She would say no even if the Job Center offered her a position as an aerobic teacher but at a place with men and women. She was asked if her husband would be ok with her teaching a fitness course if men were also present: “Hm yeah my husband also doesn’t want it, I don’t want it. I don’t like it. I don’t like it and my husband also doesn’t like it”. Her daughter Nazia (17) however would have no problem with doing sports with men as long as she could wear her Hijab. In response Lida said “I think if, ah, if I had come here when I was young like my daughter, ah, maybe yeah. But not now”. It is important to note that Lida’s husband opened his own business and she works there together with him. She is however not the only woman with a family business. Diana (34, Syrian, Magdeburg) also opened her own business together with her husband. They now have two branches in the city and employ Germans.

In returning to the theme of motivation, Marla (39, Syrian, Wuerzburg) has been driven by this since she first arrived in Germany. She was an elementary school teacher in Syria and wanted to continue with this. In the beginning she asked if she could do an internship at a school but was told by a group of volunteers that she would not be able to and it as it was very difficult in Germany. She however did not give up and found a woman who told her she could. She then met teachers who helped her do internships and through this she gained a position as a childcare worker at a school. In addition, she teaches Arabic in the evenings, assists with integration at the school where she works, and is doing a training as a language teacher in Europe on the weekends. When asked how she found all of these jobs her answer was simple: “Do you see me? How I am, how I look? I think my motivation speaks for itself. You don’t need anyone. I don’t have time even to blow dry my hair”. When asked if she thought she would get a full-time position as a teacher at a school she was very optimistic: “Yes that could happen. But it needs time. Like the Germans say time and patience. I realized it is true what they have always said to us. Time and patience. It will come”. It however was not easy for her in the beginning. She was first in a smaller city near Wuerzburg:

“We always heard [name of the city] is a poor city. We can’t pay for you. You have to work. I even got a one Euro job in a kindergarten. Yeah as a kindergarten teacher but I had to work everywhere, not just as a teacher. They told us: ‘When for example someone is missing in the kitchen today then you can work in the kitchen, for example with the janitor, or with the teacher in the classroom’. I said a one Euro job from 8:00 to 4:00. I said ‘No. I won’t take the job. No. That isn’t what I want’.”

Marla described that there was a group of volunteers constantly pushing her and her husband to give up pursuing more language courses. They were often put under pressure to find a job, any job. Marla was even told by a woman “You shouldn’t dream of becoming a teacher in Germany”. She however had a lot of support from her case worker at the Job Center and he helped her in continuing language classes. Her husband however did not have the same luck and was made to take any job he could find. He had been a lawyer in Syria. She said “if my husband had been in Wuerzburg for four years he would have found a good job or had gotten a good position here”. In Marla’s situation, where she was and the people who had been around her played a large role in her, and her husband’s, experiences with finding work. Once they were able to move to Wuerzburg she was able to work in her field and no longer had the outside pressure to take whatever job was offered.

For the women interviewed who were still attending language classes, or with young children, and unable to work at the moment they all expressed the desire to find a job once their language classes were over or their children were at kindergarten. Faven (28, Eritrean, Magdeburg) wants to work at a supermarket; Ella (Eritrean, Magdeburg) wants to work in a kitchen; Helen (30, Eritrean, Magdeburg) wants to do a vocational training in elderly care; Senait (29, Eritrean, Magdeburg) is currently getting support from the Job Center to find a job; and Qudisia (50, Afghan, Magdeburg), Selda (38, Syrian, Magdeburg), Yana (22, Syrian, Magdeburg), and Malva (50, Syrian, Magdeburg) all want to work once their language class is finished.

The desire to work and the motivation to find a job in Germany was expressed by every woman in every city and state. Although this study is not representative this is crucial. All 32 women used for this analysis directly expressed a desire to work. Not just the majority but all of them. Two of the women even started businesses with their husbands. The women described working as a way of freeing oneself, being able to live out what you want to do without the fear of persecution, it is important for mental health, and it is a goal to be reached through education. It is however difficult for women with children but they stay determined and find ways to make it work. It can be a discouraging topic for women with Hijabs as they feel they are discriminated against when seeking employment due to how they look or not able to teach because of the clothes they wear. There can be pressure from outside to give up your goal and just to take any job but the women demonstrated determination and drive. Milana (36, Syrian, Wuerzburg) was very direct in discussing her desire to work:

“In Syria I worked for 14 years. In Germany I sat for two years, about three years, and afterwards I hated Germany (laughs). I want to work. I want to work”.

5.1.5 Experience with Government Agencies

When discussing their experiences with government agencies such as the Job Center or the Social Welfare Office (*Sozialamt*), two groups emerged quickly: those who had arrived before 2015 and the ‘refugee crisis’ and those who had arrived afterwards. Arya (28, Kurdish, Magdeburg) arrived in 1998 as a young girl with her family. When asked what her experience had been like with certain agencies her response was that they did not exist back then.

“I don’t think they existed, except for these courses, but other than that there was nothing. Everything is definitely different now, I have seen it myself, if I am active myself in a certain area, but otherwise there was nothing earlier. I can’t remember anything. At that time there was no Job Center, there was just the Employment Office I think. It was totally different, there was no Hartz IV or anything else [...] There was hardly any real advice or support. Maybe through friends or something like that.”

Sahin (26, German, Magdeburg) arrived in 2002 with her family and had a similar experience:

“At that time, when we arrived, they were talking about integration. Integration, Integration, Integration. In 2012/2013 with the wave of refugees they spoke of a Willkommenskultur. At the time when we came we had nobody who could help us. We didn’t have anyone who could help us at the doctor’s or assist us at an appointment with a government agency. My father just got his residence permit three years ago. He was first allowed to take an integration course three years ago. When we had to go to some agency my father learned German quickly, my mother didn’t. When I accompanied my mother to the doctor’s everyone asked why she couldn’t speak German, she has been here so long. But how is she supposed to learn German when she wasn’t allowed to take an integration course? You can’t learn German on the street with broken German. But back to the topic. At the time when we came there was no help, nothing. We had to figure everything out on our own, help ourselves, children with our parents, our parents with the children, and the children amongst themselves. When the refugees came a few years ago we were there. If they didn’t get any support we helped them. In the Job Center, the immigration authority, and at the police station there were translators. Back then we didn’t have that. We only had a translator during our court hearing but he didn’t translate everything we said. There are now three employees at the Job Center who can assist refugees with the language. Caritas offers integration courses to refugees even if they don’t have a residence permit. They can still take an integration course free of charge [...] It was not an easy time, it was really a difficult time. My father always had to go back and forth although he didn’t understand anything. We were able to get by, for example every time my father, of course there were also people in the reception facility who had arrived a few months prior, or a few years prior, and they explained to us how things worked [...] Sometimes it was really difficult for us. You needed someone to translate just one word in a sentence. But we had a large dictionary at home. German Arabic and Arabic German. If there was an issue we always tried to see what was in there. For example there was no google translator back then. No one knew what that was.”

Sahin went on to describe some differences between then and now:

“In the beginning, when we came here, everything was a lot faster because there weren’t so many people. But I think you have to wait longer today. If I need a doctor’s appointment I have to wait for months. If I need an appointment at the Job Center they are completely overwhelmed. It is the same at the immigration authority. As I told you the Job Center now has three translators but the immigration authority doesn’t have any. You either have to bring your own or you are out of luck if you don’t understand. For me the immigration authority hasn’t

changed. The Job Center and the Youth Welfare Office have. They have many offers and offer a lot of things, they have translation services or if you don't understand they can help you with a translator. But the immigration authority hasn't changed for me at all, not one bit. It has perhaps even gotten worse. I think that is the case for every immigration authority, not just in Magdeburg."

Rina's (25, Kosovar, Wuerzburg) family arrived in Germany in 1993 and she was born in Germany in 1994. Her experience echoed that of Arya and Sahin:

"And um yeah we did have help but when it came to the agencies and others we didn't have much help. We really had to find out ah ah everything for ourselves. We probably still haven't figured out some things, or we were always informed about something last minute that we had to take care of or something we had to do, that is how it happened with my deportation which luckily never took place. Yeah. That is how it was with us. And my sister always had to fight through everything herself and run from agency to agency [...] I don't think there was anything earlier. There is more today. Earlier there was nothing. We got donations once from Caritas, but um we were never offered anything. We always had to figure everything out for ourselves and always by chance because my sister went there 20 times and asked how is that, what do we have to do."

Like Sahin, Hani (63, German, Cologne) who arrived in Germany in 1986 from Iran has seen some positive changes in some agencies since when she first came.

"I mean, now when I look around for example the government agencies, when I look at the government agencies, the immigration authority, Job Center, the Social Welfare Office, if we go to the agencies they are friendlier now than 15 years ago. They are friendlier. Ok we have to, I have to say when we are there. When they know [name of where she works] yeah they know us now (laughs). When we go together and colleagues go and they ask and we say we are [name of where she works] they are careful. But actually there is a different structure. They are trying a bit [...] Because that is a lot, I mean, we have had since, when did we get this integration? In the beginning back then, before it was always foreigners out. Yeah Kohl foreigners out. Then came Merkel and Merkel brought a different policy. Merkel was CDU, I mean it wasn't red-green that called for the Integration Summit but rather Merkel. Red-green didn't do it, the situation of integration for immigrants, Merkel did. And Merkel came with the Integration Summit and everything came bit by bit by bit [...] It is different now than 20 or 15 years ago, this or their acceptance [...] But the government agencies have like I said, it is better, better than 15 years ago."

Through these very similar experiences a picture develops that it was difficult for women who came before 2015. There was nothing really in place to assist them and they were left to 'fight' through the agencies and system on their own. They feel however that the situation is improving and there is more now to help refugees and others which for them is a positive development. For the women who came after 2015 there was no common experience that connected them like the women who came before. Their experiences seemed to be individual or connected to specific bureaucratic problems with government agencies. Ella (Eritrean, Magdeburg) expressed her frustration with the amount of paperwork always requested and the contradictions she experiences at the Job Center:

"How is it with the Job Center. There are a lot of problems at the Job Center. Sometimes when you need help there are a lot of contradictions. They send a lot of papers but can't assist you in

filling it out. The papers are difficult to read and we also don't know what we should bring with us. There are a lot of problems also when you work."

On the other hand Zia (31, Lebanese, Magdeburg) is happy with her case worker at the Job Center and finds her very friendly and helpful. She has however heard from others that their experiences are not always as good: "I have heard from my friends ah um that sometimes they aren't good, sometimes, but ah you will have that at the Job Center or at work, sometimes they are good and sometimes they aren't. That is normal". Her experience at the immigration authority however has not been as positive. This is due, for her, primarily to the people working there:

"Yeah. Yeah um in the immigration authority there are, we know, ah two or three people who work in the immigration authority but they are not good. I don't know why they would work in an office for foreigners and they aren't good with foreigners. Why are you working here? If you don't like foreigners don't work here ah but yeah it isn't good."

Zia had a personal experience with a worker at the immigration authority. She had received a positive response from BAMF for her asylum case that she was allowed to stay in Germany. She felt that the case worker however at the immigration authority made it very difficult for her:

"Yeah maybe. Yeah that. Ah back ah ah he said yeah I will give you a residence permit for three or two years residence ah or document, document he said for the last month he said he needed this document, this document, this document, this document but why? It is really difficult for this document from Lebanon, really difficult. Why do you need that? Yeah I need it. Ok yeah try to prepare all documents but we did it but no chance because it is hard in Lebanon. We said it was really hard all of the documents stop. I need this document. Why? I need these documents [...] Yeah no reason yeah, just because he needed it."

In another situation Zia had been told by the Job Center she was allowed to go to Lebanon to see her family. She had not seen them in four years. When she went to arrange everything at the immigration authority they told her she could not as she needed certain things for her residence permit and passport. They told her it would take three weeks but she had already bought her ticket and was prepared to leave in two weeks due to receiving approval from the Job Center. The woman at the immigration authority kept insisting that she could not go to Lebanon and had to wait. Zia began to cry out of frustration. The employee finally told her to wait five minutes. After that she gave Zia back her passport and residence permit with the required information to travel and she was able to go to Lebanon. Zia was shocked at what had happened.

"Wallah yeah five minutes. Um and I have what? But you had said three weeks. And she said ah no for you I can do it. But before I spoke with a friend and ah ah explained what happened to me and she said no and also with Germans also ah who work at the Job Center and she said why did she do that to me? She should have immediately done it (unintelligible) put everything together and then finished it. I don't know [...] I did not like that. Why did she do that to me? Why? Did she want to see me cry and ask please please? Why?"

As written earlier the majority of experiences have been individual. Not all of them were however negative. Saya (22, Syrian, Wuerzburg) like Zia had a case worker at the Job Center who was very helpful:

“Yeah (laughs) it is different between the Job Center in the city of Wuerzburg and the county. At the county there are some employees who are mean sometimes but the majority are really very nice and I noticed Mr. [name of employee] was really really nice and really helpful. If my mom for example would ask and say that my sister needed help looking for a job he would say yes and call right away, call someone. Or he would search for a job and then print something out.”

Despite the individual experiences based upon employees at the immigration authority or Job Center, there were two similar experiences by two women in Wuerzburg dealing with further education and vocational training. They encountered similar difficulties: one from the immigration authority and the other from the Job Center. Xelat’s (32, Kurdish) situation with education was described in the previous section 5.1.4. She realized that she needed to go to school and educate herself in able to gain a job and start vocational training in elderly care. After being sent from cleaning job, to supermarket, to fast food restaurant by the Job Center she had had enough. She did not want to do it anymore. She wanted to start her education:

“I can’t continue to work like this, I thought I can do my Mitte my Mittelschulabschluss and I personally went there [Job Center] and said I am not going to work anymore. I want to go to school and do a vocational training afterwards in [location] in elderly care and then things will be calm.”

The Job Center however did not want to pay for her to go to school. They wanted her to continue to work and sent her to an agency in the city which assisted with writing and sending applications. She explained her situation to a woman who worked at the agency and what she wanted to do. This woman then wrote a letter to the Job Center explaining that they needed to support Xelat and to pay for her to do her *Mittelschulabschluss*:

“And for that I had this from the application assistance service. They wrote a letter for me that they [the Job Center] had to pay for me, for my books everything, because I always paid for myself. Believe me [...] The application assistance service wrote a letter and said you have to, I don’t have to work because I am going to school [...] I don’t want to have so much to do with both sides. Because I have um, what is it, from school and homework and I have to have time to do my homework [...] I cannot work and go to school at the same time [...] And then they also wrote for the school ah money must also be for that.”

Through the support and help from this woman at the application assistance service the Job Center is now paying so that Xelat can get her *Mittelschulabschluss*. She does not have to work so she can fully concentrate on her schooling and afterwards she will start vocational training in elderly care.

Nancy (29, Ugandan) had a similar experience but with much more confusion as it was also connected to obtaining a residence permit. In order to get a residence permit she was told she needed a language certificate. She found a school which would let her just take the exam and she obtained the

certificate. Once she presented the paperwork to get her residence permit she was told that she needed to take the citizenship exam. She was confused. When she went to register for the citizenship exam she explained the situation to the woman at the school:

“I went there to register and it’s like I asked, I told her about my issue. I said: ‘Look here, I have already my German certificate. I did the school here. And it’s like I have it (unintelligible) in German so they can’t tell me to do again these questions. These questions like... I don’t want to be... I am not applying for German citizenship. I am just applying for German residence permit’. And it’s like... she also didn’t have (unintelligible). Then she sent me home. She is like: ‘I am going to keep you on the list and then I’ll make some calls. If it’s needed, really needed I’ll call Bundesamt. If it’s really needed, then I’ll tell you to come’.”

It turned out that Nancy did not have to take the citizenship test. She had her language certificate and all that was left was the *Mittelschulabschluss* in order to start her vocational training. She reviewed for and took the exam and passed. The confusion and difficulty however did not stop there. Her story here is a bit longer than the others but it is important to give her the space to be heard:

“The mittlere Reife I had it and I was already in the course of Altenpflege. At the end of that course (unintelligible) Fachhelfer, my were not... I didn’t have the residence permit. So they told me I have to look for a job. I have to show the government that I can care for myself without any government help. Because if I was living on the government Sozialhilfe, and they [immigration authority] told me ‘if you want to live in Germany you have to show us that you can take care of yourself with your kids without needing any help from the government’ [...] So and... the Ausbildung I was doing it was not paid. I was just living from the government. So they told me ‘you have to get an income’. I had... I had to (unintelligible) my Ausbildung and we were soon closing towards the end of the year. We are soon I think had only one month until the exams or two months. I had two options: Either go back to my country, or to stop the course I was doing and start working. Because what I was doing they weren’t paying me. But then, I explained to them... I told my lawyer how can I... how can I stop now at the end of the Ausbildung and... it’s sure if I finish this Ausbildung I can work. I can get work. And I applied for the working permit. They [immigration authority] rejected it. I applied also to go to the next course. They [immigration authority] rejected me. I was like what do you want me to do? And at the end I already was misunderstanding because I had too many things to do and my applications were mixed up. They didn’t know what really I wanted [...] I had before the course ends I had already written applications so that I can go for further studies, but they [immigration authority] rejected it. I applied another one for working...for the working permit, because I didn’t have the working permit. I needed to get a working permit. They [immigration authority] rejected it also. So I was confused. And then through the lawyer and this... Oh, it was a mix up. And then they say ok, you can come. But this course for further studies, they [immigration authority] rejected it. So I had to... after my course I had to go to work. But I would have wanted to continue with further studies, but they only told I had to work. So they only gave me a working permit.”

After this experience Nancy felt like the immigration authority didn’t care what story people had: “They don’t care which story you have, what efforts you have done, or you speak the language”. One employee at the immigration authority said to her in German “Why don’t you try to work here legally?” She responded:

“It’s like: I’m trying. But if you stop me to like... if you stop me to go to school then how can I manage? You want me to go... look for work. But before I need a working permit and you don’t

want me to go and make 400 Euro job. That's what you are given to. And it's like 'Ja, du musst raus'. So it's like you have to go back to your country [...] It's not that easy. It's not that easy, but what can I say? (unintelligible) I was lucky or what? The only like advantage is like I can express myself to the lawyer in German and I can express myself also to the Ausländerbehörde. But if you don't have any... You need a Dolmetscher and can't be moving out to and from every time with the Dolmetscher. So it's like that's the only... like the only advantage I have. I can explain, hey, look, I forwarded my papers here. Look, I have my papers here. I don't need to go to the German class now like you were telling me to do."

Although Nancy and Xelat's situation was not shared by other women, it nonetheless raises questions. Both women wanted to obtain the required qualifications to be able to do a vocational training in order to work and provide for themselves and their families. They were however blocked by either the Job Center or the immigration authority. Why? They described themselves as extremely motivated and determined women who wanted to do a vocational training in a field where there is a known lack of specialists. It could be thought that it would be in the interest of the local Job Center and immigration authority in Wuerzburg to support these women in achieving that. If Xelat had not come into contact with the woman at the application agency who supported her in attending school so that she could start a vocational training she could still be in the situation of being sent from job to job knowing that she will not be able to progress due to a lack of qualifications. The question must be raised of how many other women are in this same situation. Nancy was already doing a vocational training in elderly care when she was made to stop by the immigration authority in Wuerzburg so that she could work. Her confusion is understandable. Especially after she was told to end her training so that she could work only to be denied a work visa. It is only natural to wonder why the immigration office in Wuerzburg thought it was more efficient and beneficial to have Nancy end a vocational training in an area where there are a lack of workers and where she was guaranteed a job. The situation of Xelat and Nancy must be looked at in more detail. It must be researched in more detail the support, if any, that female refugees are obtaining from local government agencies to gain qualifications and to start vocational training. Are barriers perhaps being put in their way by the same agencies. Through her own determination and motivation Nancy was able to obtain a working permit and start her vocational training again and is almost finished.

Before moving to the next section it is important to take a moment to look at programs offered for female refugees. Did any of the women come into contact with programs from the city or state they live in or perhaps from the federal government? The short answer is not really. It must be said that the topic of special meetings or programs organized by each city or state very rarely came up. The women either found support or assistance through other refugees, on their own, or through German acquaintances and friends. Nancy and Milana in Wuerzburg were the only women interviewed who discussed specific meetings or courses they took part in. Nancy had come into contact with a meeting

organized by the city to assist women and families with migration backgrounds. She however did not learn about it from any of the local agencies but through friends.

"[...] but I don't know actually where you go to get this information because like for me, sometimes I get through friends like contacts you have. And there is meetings. We also have to be ready or willing to go to meetings with parents of the programs which are there like to use them. If you don't use them, sometimes you are not getting the information [...] The integration program. Because... I don't even know who introduced me to that group... Parents, like parents meeting with kids... those kids. It doesn't matter which background you have. But there, at least for those women with migration background, you have some information. They can... they can tell you 'Oh this one can help you'. They can also help you with some formula or what you need. You can ask them any question you want. And that's where I got some information like ah, you can go here. They can help you if you need anything. If you are pregnant, you can go to some church organization [...] If Sozialhilfe they will see how much you get it from the government and how much they can (unintelligible) for you. But you supposed to... you are supposed to be ready to go to these meetings. And if you don't go there, you don't get the information [...] The...actually the meetings I think it comes also from Stadt Würzburg. Familienstützpunkt. It's from Stadt Würzburg. Yes, Familienstützpunkt is from Stadt Würzburg. But not many people I think really know that [...] I found out through a friend [...] She is from Somalia."

In addition, Nancy briefly mentioned taking part in what she called 'integration programs'. Nancy sometimes went with her children to a swimming group organized just for women so that Muslim women could also go swimming without men. The swimming group was led by volunteers and organized by an organization in the city. It was unfortunately not possible to find out if the organization was supported or funded in any way by the city or if it ran independent from it.

Just like Nancy, Milana came upon a course by chance at a language school in the city. She saw an advertisement for the course and decided to go as it was free:

"[...] but in [name of language school] that was different. Everything about daily life. What happens in daily life, maybe freedom, maybe laws for women [...] There was an organization, something like an organization, and they uh do a lot for women and give a lot a lot of information [...] Only for women. Women in Bavaria, so, how women live in Bavaria so ah with others yeah. [Name of the teachers] ah from Tunisia."

Milana then quickly changed the topic during the interview and it was not possible to ask a follow-up question if she knew if the organization was directly from the city or perhaps from the state. The author did not have Milana's contact information as the interview was set up through the cooperating organization. The author however reached out to the contact person after the interview and asked if it would be possible to ask Milana if she knew who exactly organized the course and what was discussed. Through this follow-up question the author was able to learn that the course was called *Alltag in Deutschland*. It lasted one month and covered the following topics: 1) The various religions in Bavaria, 2) How to separate garbage properly, 3) The school system in Germany, 4) Women's Rights, 5) Violence and aggression against women and children, 6) Vocational training, 7) Life in Bavaria, and 8) Women at home.

Nothing more can be commented on the topic of assistance through programs and meetings organized by the cities or states as Nancy and Milana were the only women who had come into contact with them. Nancy kept emphasizing that she was not sure how other women could find out about such programs and meetings as she was lucky to find out about it through a friend. Perhaps nothing else needs to be said. If such information does not travel through word of mouth, or if it is not well advertised, then it may not reach the intended target group as they are not learning about the programs and meetings directly from local government agencies.

5.1.6 German Laws and System

When coming as a refugee the women have to work through laws, policies, and a new system. Their experiences at the government agencies as described in section 5.1.5 play a role in how they perceive the laws and the system and if they feel like they are being assisted in making their way through it all. During the interviews, just as with the other topics, the women's experiences with German laws and systems were individual. There was not a group of women in one city who had all experienced something similar which women in another city had not. There were however two topics that came up regardless of where the women were: becoming a German citizen and the situation of children born in Germany.

For the women currently in the process of becoming German, or those who already have, the process has been, or was, extremely difficult. It is important to mention first that Germany does not allow dual-citizenship. If you are a citizen of another country German requires you to give up that citizenship before you can become German. The reason for this was briefly described in the analysis in chapter four. There are however two exceptions: 1) A person was born in Germany and at least one parent has German citizenship or 2) When neither parent has German citizenship but at least one has been living legally in Germany for at least eight years and has permanent residency, or has Swiss citizenship, or is from a country within the European Union. This means that a child who was born in Germany to refugee parents who do not fulfill these exceptions, and who has spent their whole life in the country, does not have the right to become German. Some children born in Germany to refugee parents thus find themselves stateless as their parents may be unable to produce certain documents required by Germany from the country they fled.

Two of Zia's (31, Lebanese, Magdeburg) children were born in Germany. They are however stateless. In order to get a birth certificate in Germany so that they can at least have Lebanese citizenship Germany requires both parent's passports, their birth certificates, their wedding certificate, a marriage contract, and a few other documents. They have to then translate all of the documents and get a special certification at the Lebanese Embassy. At this point in the interview Zia's husband had come home from his vocational training and had sat down. He explained the difficulty they were having

with producing documents as it was mostly due to his situation. It was difficult for him to obtain certain documents due to the reason why he fled Lebanon. The citation is thus from him. He is the only man cited in this analysis. An exception was made due to the immense difficulty they are having and the author felt it was important that Zia, and her husband, be heard:

“Certification in in the Ger in the Lebanese in the Em the German Embassy. Ah that was way too difficult for us and with the costs ah no no one here helped us with translating our documents. They said ah I spoke with the Job Center and said I have so many documents, I have to translate these documents and they said no: ‘We only pay for degrees and certificates if you want to stud study but just for verification purposes we don’t do that’ [...] Yeah you have to pay privately.”

Zia’s husband continued to explain how he has to apply for a passport at the Lebanese Embassy and it costs 350 Euros. He told the immigration authority in Magdeburg that while doing his vocational training he only earns 700 Euros a month. How is he supposed to pay 350 Euros to renew his passport as well as pay for the translations and certifications of all of the other documents? The issue of being able to obtain the documents required by Germany came up.

“Yeah, yeah exactly the Registry Office they, they, the Registry Office such documents and with so much wedding certificate, a marriage contract ah they need my birth certificate, the birth certificate for my ah my wife, passports ah what do they think? I am not in Lebanon. I fled to Germany from Lebanon. How am I supposed to get these papers? I can’t.”

Due to the situation the parents cannot register their children with the Lebanese Embassy so that they can at least get Lebanese citizenship. This will result in a fine if one day they are able to. They are not able to register them because they have no proof of birth or any information about the children as Germany will not provide it due to the missing documents their father is having trouble obtaining. Zia also explained that since 2014 her son’s first name is missing on his German residence permit. Only his last name is written. In addition, the last name is spelled incorrectly. They went to the immigration office multiple times to have it changed and corrected but they will not change it until the parents produce the documents discussed above which they cannot at the moment.

Zia and her husband are not alone in their difficulty regarding their children. Nancy (29, Ugandan, Wuerzburg) has two children and both were born in Germany. Due to her precarious situation with her own status in Germany for many years her children were also stateless. They have however recently obtained Ugandan citizenship. Nancy has tried to inform herself about what needs to be done so that her children can become German. She was sent from office to office and was finally told she needed to apply for German citizenship herself. Through that her children could then become German. Once she finishes her vocational training she will start the process of becoming German:

“The reason why actually is to apply because I think for they kids they don’t know that. It’s like ‘Mama I was born here’. If you tell him he’s Ugandan it’s like ‘but Mama ich bin hier geboren’. It’s like for them they don’t understand it and also the renew process for our passports, our Ugandan passports it’s not that easy [...] Yes, I have also to get more information like what are

the criterias? What do they need? But I think if I am working and they are born here, I have been here for a long time. So I think they come, and the kids they are in school. Like, how they call it, fully integrated [...] They don't understand. They were born here and you say you are Ugandan and, it's sadly enough they have never been to Uganda."

Although it was only two women with children who were, or are currently, stateless, it is not difficult to imagine that many children may also find themselves in this situation. Although they were born in Germany, are growing up here, and like Nancy's children identify themselves as German, due to German laws and the difficulty of obtaining certain documents they are not allowed to be German and are made to be stateless. What type of consequences may this have for the children's integration? This lays outside the scope of this study but is a topic that deserves more attention. When children are in a precarious situation it is not hard to imagine that this may also affect their parents.

Arya (28, Kurdish, Magdeburg) was not born in Germany but came as a young child and grew up here. She received her permanent residency in 2016 but has not been able to obtain German citizenship:

"There is a problem with our passports. My passport was renewed two and a half years ago but they do not want to allow me to give up my citizenship in Iraq and therefore it is a bit difficult for me [...] We have three lawyers but I think slowly something will happen [...] I have already paid 2,500 Euros so that they will let me give up my citizenship [...] It isn't working for us, I don't know why. There is no reason. We have birth certificates, everything is there, but they are taking their time and we have to pay for it."

Arya was then asked how she will feel once she becomes German, what type of difference that would make in her life: "I think I will really celebrate. It is a step in the right direction, to independence, and much more." Rina (25, Kosovar, Wuerzburg) was born in Germany but like Arya is also having difficulty obtaining German citizenship. When she was 16 she wanted to apply for German citizenship. When she went to the immigration authority in Wuerzburg she did not experience what she had expected:

"I went to the City Hall then and I asked, I said, I still know exactly who it was, it was Mr. [name of the employee], I said to him that I wanted to apply for a German passport because I was 16 and I thought yeah in Germany, I said I was born here and I think I have the right to have a German passport. Then he looked at me and in a really really mean voice he said to me 'Just because you were born here doesn't mean you are German. That does not give you any right to be German'. I just looked at him. I was 16 and completely intimidated. I started to cry and said 'ok' and I left."

Rina tried again a few years later to apply for German citizenship and ran into new and unexpected hurdles:

"[...] Then at some point my Serbian passport expired and we were an independent country, Kosovo won independence, and I got an Albanian um a Kosovo passport. With this I now have permanent residency but Bavaria ah I I have a very small chance of becoming German because Bavaria requires me to give up Serbian citizenship although I do not have it. On the other hand, the Serbian Secretary of State requires that I apply for citizenship and then get rid of it at the same time. That costs almost 700 Euros and I just can't afford that right now because of all of the trips to Munich and everything involved or simply altogether my German passport would

cost me almost 1,500 to 2,000 Euros. I just don't have that right now and I find it pretty annoying or quite disappointing because Bavaria has actually recognized us as an independent country and I don't know what the problem is. I am still somehow disadvantaged based on something neither me nor my family have control over [...] They are requiring something that I simply do not have. I had asked about it in the past and because of my question they wrote it as something extra in the documents in the City Hall, that I have Serbian citizenship, although that isn't true but ok [...] I do not own one single Serbian document. My birth certificate are all, I have this one birth certificate that you get in Germany, the German birth certificate, and everything else I have is Albanian, Kosovar."

Rina was then asked if it was possible to go to the Serbian Embassy in Germany to obtain some type of proof that she does not have Serbian citizenship. She stated that it would be possible but they would not give her the document she needs due to the hate between the two countries. The Serbian Embassy does not help those from Kosovo, and the Kosovo Embassy does not help those from Serbia. The policy in Bavaria regarding Serbia and Kosovo is however not the policy in every state in Germany. If Rina lived in Baden-Wuerttemberg should would be able to become German:

"I have a friend and I have already told her if she buys a house I would move in there for a short period of time in order to do it. The guy from the City Hall however of course told me that that would be corruption and that I would have to go to court or something similar. I said that no one knows where I will move to or why I will move there [...] I wanted to have my second place of residence there but it won't work because I work in Wuerzburg and you have to work in order to get a German Passport."

Rina was then asked what it would mean for her to have German citizenship. What changes it would mean in her life.

"They could say today it is like this and then tomorrow they could say no everyone who does not have a German passport has to leave. That is the problem and the reason why I want a German passport because there is legal security [...] I have noticed disadvantages. I am not allowed to participate in elections, I always have to show my visa, I have an Albanian identity card but it is not valid here. I am always afraid that I will lose my visa somehow and then somehow have more problems or something and therefore I am always careful with my wallet. Not because of my bank information, just because of my visa because as if there was gold in it. Yeah if my visa was gone I always have, I know that isn't the case. I think, I think I could apply for a new one but I am always afraid that something could happen to me, that they wouldn't give me permanent residency again, or that some type of problem could develop and issues could arise. Due to this I have developed a real phobia that I never leave my visa anywhere or that I don't lose it somehow. That is really exhausting because it is such an important document and always, because if, if a German loses their identity card then they lose it, they can apply for a new one, they are Germans. But if I lose it then I always think like this, ok, you are really under a lot of pressure."

Rina herself acknowledged that her fear of losing her visa is extreme but it is understandable. When a child is born in Germany, or came at such a young age that they grew up here, it is a precarious situation. They are either stateless, have the nationality of a country they have perhaps never been to, or they may encounter difficulties in gaining the citizenship of the country they grew up in. They are potentially living between 'two worlds': that of the countries their parents came from and the country

they were raised in. It should not be underestimated what effects this could have on their integration. This will be looked at a bit more in section 5.1.9. Obtaining citizenship as described in chapter two is the ultimate goal of integration: the last step. What does it mean if a person has fulfilled all requirements, has integrated in every part of society, but they are denied citizenship for reasons that have nothing to do with them?

Sahin (26, German, Magdeburg) came as a young girl to Germany and described what it was like after obtaining permanent residency and then German citizenship:

“We had to go to the immigration authority every five or six months and fill out new forms but afterwards we only had to go to the immigration authority every five years. Now that I have German citizenship I only have to go every ten years. There are many reasons why it is easier. I was also able to study. When I did not yet have a residence permit I could not study or do my Fachabi. Once I obtained my residence permit I knew that I could finally study later. These are the reasons why it got easier. You also feel more comfortable. Before we always thought that we would have to go back to Syria and that my father would have to go back to jail. But not anymore. We feel like we will stay here forever and my parents as well. My father now has his own barber shop and my brother also opened his own barber shop and restaurant.”

Obtaining German citizenship, and permanent residency, can mean security and knowing that you can stay and be able to build your life here. You can study and work and perhaps open your own business. It is highly suggested that more research be done on the steps required to obtain German citizenship and what barriers might be in the way that are not due to the women but rather the laws and systems in place. Obtaining citizenship is a part of integration and should not be overlooked.

The other discussions on German laws and the system did not focus on citizenship but rather individual situations. Two interesting points raised by Hani (63, German, Cologne) were the situation of women under German laws and policies when they suffer abuse by their husbands and the dependency refugees are put into:

“It is therefore important when we say racism, sexism, classism. Classism, this social dependency, lack of money, without a job, always dependent on the Job Center or the Social Welfare Office, and especially low-income housing. I mean we also experience that the biggest hurdle for women in situations of violence to separate themselves from that situation of violence is an apartment. They can't find an apartment [...] We have so many in an apartment but separated. That doesn't work. It is very difficult.”

Milana (36, Syrian, Wuerzburg) came through family reunification and suffered abuse from her husband. She knew however that it was important for her to apply separately for asylum. If she had not done this and her asylum had been connected to her husband's she would have been sent back to Syria upon separating from him. It was difficult for her in the beginning but she was able to eventually find an apartment and start organizing her life here with her children.

“Um after my problem with my husband I didn't know anyone anymore. I did everything on my own and um thank thank God, thank God, um I did it alone, I went to court on my own and um I found a way and yeah afterwards everything was ok.”

The points raised by Hani and demonstrated by Milana are important. What situation do female refugees find themselves in who have come through family reunification but have abusive husbands? If they are not able to apply separately for asylum like Milana did, or are not lucky enough to find an apartment, they are forced to stay with their abusive partner and remain dependent. Racism, sexism, and classism affect female refugees as Hani pointed out. This echoes back to the idea of intersectionality. After separating from her husband Milana had to do everything on her own. It is not possible from this study to know if this was just an individual experience or if other refugee women who have separated or divorced their husbands are left on their own. Being alone and with children can be an immensely overwhelming situation, especially in a new country. It is thus important and highly recommended to look at the integration situation of female refugees who have separated or divorced their husbands in Germany. This was also a question raised by parliamentarians in the Bundestag to the federal government, discussed in section 4.1.4, without an adequate response.

The other women also had very individual experiences with German laws and the system here. Most of the experiences were connected with confusion. Mina (German, Cologne) for example divorced her husband after they had both become German. She however had to divorce him based upon Persian and not German law. Her lawyer could not explain to her why this was the case:

“They had, my lawyer told me I had to print everything out and read it all to know what rights I had although I have absolutely, I don’t recognize these laws at all and I do not accept them. I am here because I no longer accepted what happened with my rights and what was done. And now here in Germany I have to [...]”

Melika (Iranina, Cologne) also experienced confusion in Germany. In Iran her husband did not allow her to play volleyball because she could possibly meet other men in the team or club. Once in Germany she wanted to play volleyball but again her husband would not let her. She decided to take legal action and went to German lawyers but they told her if her husband would not let her then she could not play. She went to the lawyers five times but they still would not help her. Saya (22, Syrian, Wuerzburg) described how she wanted to renew her annual ticket for public transportation at the local transportation office. Her residence permit was however scheduled to expire in a month and she was in the process of renewing it. Due to this she was not allowed to renew her annual ticket and was made to buy a monthly ticket which was very expensive. She inquired at the immigration authority about this:

“Exactly and now I asked the immigration authority how I would be able to do this until I get my residence permit again and they said ‘hey what is going on with [name of the transportation company]? It sounds strange. Why did they say that to you without submitting an application?’ I have no idea. They just said your residence permit isn’t enough and therefore you aren’t allowed to complete your application.”

Saya and her mother Lava (44, Syrian, Wuerzburg) also discussed the changes to the *Widerrufsverfahren*. These changes were discussed briefly in chapter four. Saya described the situation as follows:

*“Everyone is afraid, everyone is afraid of deportation [...] Everyone talks to each other. They hear something and then they always pass it on and they ask if you have heard anything. They are doing the *Widerrufsverfahren* for everyone. Deportation is relevant, they can easily deport people back to Syria [...] Yeah we have to work or do a new language exam. Yeah, they are, it is scaring the people.”*

Rina (25, Kosovar, Wuerzburg) also spoke about a confusing situation with her father. He received a letter that he would be deported but he had permanent residency in Germany.

“And ah the government agency in Nuremberg said that Kosovo was a safe country of origin and he had to go back. That was a shock for all of us. My siblings and I tried to figure out how we could share an apartment, how we could manage that. My mother had already packed her things (unintelligible) ‘yeah I have to go. I can’t leave him on his own’. She would have never come back because she had permanent, she had temporary status. And then we somehow (unintelligible) we got him a Kosovo passport quickly and then everything was taken care of and it was ok. They were going to deport him because of his passport although he had permanent residency. Still today we don’t understand what this attempt was. Maybe it was just an attempt. Maybe they knew that it wasn’t possible but they thought maybe we wouldn’t realize it. No idea.”

From this analysis, altogether, there does not seem to be one issue or experience with German laws and systems that are specific to one city or state. Most of the experiences seem to be individual and most often connected with confusion. This could also relate back to the previous section and the experiences with government agencies. These experiences were often highly dependent on the employees working at the various agencies. If the women are confused about something that is happening based upon German law, but feel that the person at the Job Center or immigration authority is not helpful, then the situation could become very stressful and be viewed negatively. The only similar experience to arise with German laws was naturalization and becoming a German citizen. This was experienced by women in the various cities and states. As already suggested, this should be looked at in further detail in future studies.

5.1.7 Contact with Germans

As with the other sections there were no experiences with Germans, or lack thereof, that were specific to one city or that affected only one group of women. The experiences were again individual. What was similar amongst all of the women however was that they wanted contact, and more, with Germans. For almost all of them a main reason for the wish for more contact was above all to practice their language skills and to learn about German culture and life. In addition, for women who did have contact with Germans, they found the majority of the people very friendly and helpful.

“When I first arrived in Germany and was in the reception facility the people who lived there told me that Germans were unfriendly. I however met them with an open mind. It doesn’t matter if I was in Magdeburg or elsewhere in Germany they were friendly and helpful. Sometimes I was afraid to speak with people because I couldn’t speak the language well. There are bad and good people and it is like that in every country. Thank God I haven’t yet met someone who wasn’t nice. I always find open and friendly people [...] When you are open you can have more friends than when you are closed. When you can speak the language very well you can be open and find more friends.” (Aamiina: 24, Somalian, Magdeburg)

Aamiina was then asked what she would say to someone who had yet to connect with people in Magdeburg and who says that the people are not open and do not want to speak with them.

“I would first say you have to trust yourself. Second you have to learn the language. How can you speak with someone if you don’t know the language? It doesn’t work! For example: you don’t have a residence permit, you are new in Germany. You have many options: You can learn the language online through various teachers, you have to pay maybe 20 Euros and then you can use it. And there are also many translation websites. You can also find and search for everything online.”

Sesuna (28, Eritrean, Magdeburg) found that it was easier to have contact with Germans through her children: “I have contact through the children. German people like to talk to children and to have fun with children. With children it works well”. She does not believe she would have as much contact with Germans if she did not have a child. Nancy (29, Ugandan, Wuerzburg) also has the majority of her contact through her children due to school. The parents are very friendly and open and have formed groups to talk about things pertaining to school. When her children go to play at another’s house she automatically meets the parents and vice versa. Nancy also takes advantage of special offers organized by volunteer groups such as swimming for women. Through these events she also meets German women and friendships form. She was asked if it was important for her to have contact with Germans.

“Yes. I think really it’s, is important. Because you also get to socialize with people and you know how like, how other people they live (unintelligible) or you get to see how they live, how they think. Yes, how they, what they expect from you or what they think from you. Or they, they ask you even, in some issues we educate them. Some things they don’t know them. It’s like ah, they people they are coming here, they live, they are taking our money. It’s like, so in some things we have to educate them (unintelligible) Muslims in many things I have to educate them. They ask me: ‘Does your husband force you to put on this cap or (unintelligible)’. We have to educate each other. They will tell me ‘Germany is like this and this’ and I say ‘ok, for us foreigners is like this and this’. It’s like ‘your kids are born here, but why are they not German?’ It’s like ‘according to your law’, that’s what I tell them, ‘according to your law these kids are born here, I don’t have the German residence permit, so they have to be my origin’. It’s like ‘oh but we didn’t know about that’. It’s like ‘these are your laws’. You are supposed to (unintelligible) because they have never been in that situation. They don’t know. They only know a kid which is born in Germany is German. That’s not the case. So we get information from each other.”

Marla (39, Syrian, Wuerzburg) also expressed the same feeling that it was important to have contact with Germans to learn the language and about life here:

“When we first came, yeah, because of the language so that we could speak and to learn about the new life. But now they are people, they are friends, they are in our, I wouldn’t say family

circle but rather circle of friends, they are friends. Yes it is important. And you, I learn so much from such people. I learn a lot. They say 'we learn from you too' but I have really learned a lot [...] I would say the Germans are nice people. There are, every society has 10 percent of its people they should get rid of. I am sorry. Yeah there are good and bad people but Germany, in Germany there are really a lot of nice people."

It is the same for Faven (28, Eritrean, Magdeburg). Through contact with German women she has learned about German culture and life here. Three women in Magdeburg - Qudsia (50, Afghan), Elaha (39, Afghan), and Yana (22, Syrian) - agreed that Germans were friendly and that they had nice neighbors. They said however that they only spoke to Germans who looked friendly and smiled. Through contact with Germans Diana (34, Syrian) and Zia (31, Lebanese) in Magdeburg learn about special events and often go to them with their families. Through these events they also meet other people. Zia however noted that "I know at first they are shocked because I have a Hijab" but that is normal. Lida (Afghan, Wuerzburg) was able to connect with a German woman at the reception facility where she first was and through her she met another German woman who became her friend. This woman helps her with German and sometimes assists her family with taxes connected to their business. Saya (22, Syrian) and her mother Lava (44) in Wuerzburg also discussed how nice and friendly people can be:

"Yeah you can say that some people are really very nice. They don't pay attention to where you are from or what you look like but rather focus on communicating with us as normal. The people are really very kind and some uh know what a refugee is or where some refugees are from."

Not every experience has however been as positive. Some women have unfortunately not been able to meet or connect with Germans. Ella (Eritrean, Magdeburg) felt that the people in Magdeburg did not want contact with her:

"No, they don't want it, no, no contact. You say hello to everyone and they don't reply. They don't want any contact. I feel it myself. They look at me strangely sometimes [...] It is hard to learn German in school. I have to practice it with Germans. I have tried to have contact with my neighbors but it unfortunately did not work. You learn German better when you have contact with others [...] It is like that in Magdeburg for about 90 percent. I can't say anything about Germany. When we meet other people from Eritrea and talk about how it is in Magdeburg it is hard for everyone [...] On the other hand I am also sad that the people don't have much contact. If a foreigner comes to us then we have contact with them but it isn't like that here."

Senait (29, Eritrean, Magdeburg) has had the same experience as Ella. She has been in Germany for five years and has had no contact with Germans. She admits however that this is partly due to having children. For three years she was at home with them and did not go out. It was very stressful for her to not have any contact. She is now taking German classes and thinks once they are over it will be easier to have contact as she will be able to speak better. Milana (36, Syrian, Wuerzburg) also has had no contact with Germans but for a different reason.

"I live in [name of area of the city]. My people are from Russia um and Arab, from Syria and I have a lot of friends but they are all Arabs. All of them are Arab, there are, no, I have a lot of

friends also (unintelligible) India, uh Georgia, and I don't know what it's called mmm I think it is near Russia. Um we speak a bit of German but not anymore, they don't have any time."

There are unfortunately no Germans where she lives, only foreigners. In order to have more contact with Germans and to practice the language Milana signed up for a tandem language partner. She met with a German woman for three or four months but then her cellphone stopped working and she lost the number. She was not able to get back into touch with the woman.

Xelat (32, Kurdish, Wuerzburg) has been in Germany for ten years and the author of this study was the first German to visit her at home. She was extremely excited about this. She was asked why she thought this was the case.

"Because I don't really have contact, it is correct that I am an actress, but I have only done theatre with Afghans and Arabs. There is no contact with Germans [...] Believe me I don't know anyone."

She would like to have more contact with Germans also to improve her German. At home she only speaks her native language with her family. She also finds the Germans extremely friendly and has never experienced racism or had any problems except when she has shown up for appointments very late without informing them beforehand. She can however understand this. Xelat was then asked why she decided to join a theatre group: "It doesn't really matter to me. I wanted to meet new people, new people, go on vacation". Joining the theatre group was a way for her to get out of her daily routine, meet new people, see new places, and have new experiences. Unfortunately for her she did not meet any Germans. Nazia (17, Afghan, Wuerzburg) also has not been able to meet many Germans like Milana or Xelat because they simply are not where she is.

"The thing is, I am, I would say, at a German school so a municipal Wirtschaftsschule. There are no integration classes and in our class there are really only two Germans (laughs) [...] All of the rest are foreigners and um Germans with background ah integration backgrounds [...] um yeah so I don't really have a lot to do with real Germans (laughs)."

Nazia said she would like to have more contact with Germans. When asked if she knew where she could have contact with Germans her answer was full of humor:

"Um I would think at a German Gymnasien [...] Um but because I don't know (unintelligible) any Gymnasium it would be difficult for me. I wouldn't for example go in and say: 'Hey who wants to be my friend?' (laughs)"

Sahin (26, German, Magdeburg) was put into the fifth grade when she arrived in Germany. She was the only foreigner or child with a migration background. Being in a class with only Germans however did not mean contact with them.

"I came into the classroom and everyone looked at me as if I wasn't a person so to speak. As if I had another skin color or I don't know, as if I looked different, as if I wasn't a person. Everyone looked at me and no one dared to speak to me. I don't know what the reason was. Still up to today I would like to know why. I don't know if the children learned that at home or on the

street. I came into the classroom, I was somehow ignored by everyone and probably because I didn't speak German very well, probably broken German. I always cried on the way home."

She tried to have contact with the German children during recess but they would walk away. The teachers never intervened to help her and neither did the school counselor. She had to switch schools two more times due to her family moving and it was the same situation at the second school. At the third school however there were more foreign students, or students with migration backgrounds, and the school made it a point that the students interacted and played with each other. It was first at this third school that she could connect with other children and make friends. Although the integration of refugee children lays outside the scope of this study it is nonetheless important. Both Nazia and Sahin wanted contact with Germans. Nazia is at a school with hardly any Germans and Sahin was at schools where the German children, and the teachers, perhaps had no experience with foreign children who spoke another language. Intercultural training was missing to make sure that Sahin could be integrated and become a part of the class. This experience has stuck with Sahin and has played a role in her integration. Her situation at the university was discussed in section 5.1.2. The other students at the university not wanting contact with her brought her back to her time at school when she experienced the same. Due to this childhood experience she has never felt like she really belongs in Germany. It should not be underestimated how such an experience as a child or adolescent can affect a person's integration. Especially combined with difficulties of obtaining German citizenship. This will be looked at in more detail in section 5.1.9.

When looking specifically at refugee women and their contact with Germans, three Syrian women in Wuerzburg - Saya (22), her mother Lava (44), and Milana (36) - brought up a very interesting observation.

"Yeah the majority of people say yeah we are trying, as Germans, to have contact with refugees but the refugees don't have time or they react in a different way. I think however that the Germans prefer to have contact with young men and not a lot with women. They actually ignore women sometimes or don't find it interesting. Many, older or younger women, prefer to spend time with young men." (Saya)

Saya was then asked why she thought this was the case:

"I don't know. Through my experience yeah because I always try to find interesting topics to spontaneously talk about with Germans but other women don't do it as often sometimes because of the language ah difficulties or but the young men are more interesting than the women."

Milana was then asked if she also had this experience: "Yes exactly. Because they don't know my culture, our culture and everyone knows ah yeah the woman with a Hijab is ah" - Saya interrupted her and said "no experience, they can hardly speak" regarding the picture Germans have of women with Hijabs and then Milana continued – "but we aren't like that. We have Hijabs but we want to speak and [...] have fun and also do sports. Yeah and we can do things with a Hijab."

Milana, Lava, and Saya were the only women to discuss the observation that they felt Germans preferred to spend more time with young, refugee, men. It is therefore not possible to know if other women may have this feeling as the majority of the women interviewed did have contact with Germans. For those who did not it was, according to them, mostly due either to where they lived, where they went to school, or being home with their children. It is nonetheless an interesting observation. Milana, Saya, and Lava however attributed this only to women wearing Hijabs connecting back to the idea of intersectionality. It would be important to research if women with Hijabs mostly experience this or if women with other characteristics also feel the same way.

As stated at the beginning of the section, the female refugees interviewed had very individual experiences regarding contact with Germans. All of them however wanted contact and were actively trying to find it in various ways. Most of the women found Germans friendly and helpful regardless of which city or state they lived in including the women who did not have regular contact with Germans. Through contact with Germans women were able to find jobs, get spots for their children in kindergartens, come into contact with other people, and learn about events. Despite their contact with Germans being very individual, there are some aspects that came up during the interviews that could be looked at in further studies in an attempt to increase contact between female refugees and women. Firstly at school. If a young refugee or a child of a refugee is sent to a school with very few Germans this could also affect their integration and interaction. If a young refugee or child is sent to a school with primarily Germans but is having trouble connecting with them teachers or school officials should have training in order to assist. Intercultural training in kindergartens and schools for example and their effect on integration should not be underestimated and looked at in more detail. Where a female refugee lives can also play a central role. If it is only possible for a refugee to find an apartment in an area where only foreigners are it is not far-fetched to assume that she may have difficulty in having contact with Germans. Housing and the location within a city could affect a refugees integration chances. This should be looked at in more detail in further studies. Lastly the idea of intersectionality in regards to contact with Germans. It would be a very interesting, and useful study, to know if women with various characteristics, for example a Hijab or darker skin, have more or less contact with Germans. This is of course a very simplified version of the research suggestion as many other factors can play a role such as language proficiency. Nonetheless, it could potentially provide further important findings. In addition, it should be critically looked at further if it is the job of the federal, state, or local government to facilitate contact between recognized female refugees. This lays outside the scope of this study but is extremely important as almost every woman expressed a desire for more contact while citing difficulties.

5.1.8 Discrimination

As with the other topics brought up during the interviews, discrimination was touched on by almost every single woman. Of the 32 interviews used for the analysis in this study, all of the women except one had, according to them, experienced some form of discrimination or stereotyping. Discrimination was not limited to one city or state but was felt everywhere. The level of discrimination did however differ between the cities. It spanned from stereotyping due to how the women looked to being yelled at on the street and spit at. Some of the women who have lived in Germany for over 20 years described differences within German society pertaining to refugees and foreigners they have seen develop over the years. Two of the women brought up the idea of intersectionality although only one directly referenced it. This is a good place to start with the women's experiences as each woman described the discrimination or stereotyping in connection with a specific characteristic they had or a certain group they belonged to.

Hani (63, German, Cologne) briefly described a situation she had on a streetcar. She was reading a newspaper and her arm accidentally touched the woman who was sitting next to her. The woman yelled at her to "move your foreigner's arm away". Hani did not allow the woman to say this to her and they proceeded to get into a heated argument. Directly after this description she discussed the idea of intersectionality and racism:

"I have, I mean it has, it is also our our concept, yeah it is intersectionality. That means racism, sexism, classism, and everything else. If I can speak German, I have a job, I know my rights, I will defend myself differently than a female refugee who is new, has two children, and lives in a reception facility. Therefore it is different, yeah that means it also has something to do with me, and with my behavior, and with my position in society. It is therefore important that we empower the women psychologically and socially. It is really important [...] If now, for example I was at an event for the [name of the political party] and there was a woman from the [name of the political party] at the table. She asked me which nationality I had. I looked at her and I said German. The woman was so shocked. Then I asked her if she wanted to see my identity card [laughs] No no no no but I mean of course I will react differently to such a question, yeah, than a woman who speaks little German or does not have much confidence."

Hani continued focusing on the changes and developments she has seen in society since she arrived in Germany in 1986.

"Yeah I mean in 93, 93 the then CDU government also in cooperation with the SPD changed the Constitution and eliminated the right of asylum. 93. And before that it was very bad in 91,92,93. That means and then 93 brought Solingen, so many fires and that was really bad. At that time I thought hmm: 'Now I fled to come here to live in safety and now I am not safe'. And actually when my children went to school I was always afraid. It was always the same, so much panic and fear, what could happen, if they would come home or not. During that time I thought about going elsewhere. I thought hmm I have to look where I can go. I thought about Canada and I thought I had to flee again. The situation was unbearable. Yeah. And after that they changed the law and things calmed down. After I started to work at [name of organization] and then I said 'ok I have to try to achieve something here'. Um and um now throughout the years now with the AfD now since the AfD is here I don't only see the AfD but the AfD effect everywhere. That means people who never dared to express their racist thoughts or for a long time I told

myself that it was illegal to say 'foreigners out'. It was punishable for a long time, not it is so much I mean as an insult, we had a criminal offence insult. And at that time you could as a foreigner as an insult and then you only had to find a judge who also viewed it the same way. Now that isn't the case. Now Gauland can say anything to the Integration Commissioner of the Federal Government I have to, you have to, you have to dispose of Anatolia, and nothing happens. That is freedom of speech. And that is really, the development is uh really really um scary. Really."

This idea of the 'AfD effect' is very interesting. Hani was the only woman who has lived in Germany for over 20 years to describe in such detail the development and changes in society regarding racism. This could be attributed to the fact that many of the other women came as very young children and were perhaps not as aware of the situation when they first arrived as Hani as she came as a young woman. This description is very important. When she first arrived Hani saw such discrimination and violence in Germany that she was ready to flee to another country. She has seen insults directed at foreigners become common place and normal in society. What could this mean for German society if it is becoming more openly racist? What in turn does this mean for the integration of female refugees who have fled to Germany for safety and security? This connects back to the idea of intersectionality as discussed by Hani. If they do not yet speak the language, are dependent on government agencies, do not yet have a job or an apartment, and have children, they may not be able to defend themselves. This leads to ideas of empowerment during situations of discrimination.

Diana (34, Syrian, Magdeburg) unfortunately described that she experienced such intense discrimination from co-workers that she had to quit her first job and is prepared to quit her second one in order to work full-time at her family business. Just like Hani she touched on the idea of intersectionality in regards to why she felt she was maltreated by German co-workers but did not name it directly. Before describing the situation at her jobs she briefly discussed two situations where she felt she experienced discrimination. It was her first month in Germany and she and her husband had not yet learned German. They were outside on the street and her husband was talking on his cellphone in Arabic to his brother. A stranger approached them and screamed at them to speak German. Due to him screaming the children became frightened. She said: "We of course have people who are nice but the problem is that mean people make a bigger impact [...] Because it is loud and conveyed with violence". During another experience she was shopping and an older woman for no reason pushed her arm and looked at her very angrily. Diana's response to this was interesting: "But I could understand why she did that [...] because she was against foreigners [...] I don't think it was against me personally but rather against foreigners. For her I represent a certain group that she hates for some reason." In this situation Diana felt just because she looked like a foreigner, that she belonged to a certain group, that the woman treated her in a physically aggressive way. Diana then described the discrimination and mistreatment she felt she experienced at her jobs. It is important to note that Diana was able to

get a job almost as soon as she arrived in Germany as she obtained refugee status just after her arrival and her level of German was very good.

“The experiences were good that you can even work in Germany. That you can directly see how work in Germany is because there is so much bureaucracy here. There is really so much. Employees have to fill out so many lists and so many experiences. How everything is organized, I learned everything at my first job, and that was good, but I had a horrible colleague at work. She hated me so much and I don’t know why. She was really like hell on earth. She always said to me: ‘Yeah you don’t even speak good German. Why are you even here? Go get money from the Job Center and do a German course’. That was really very rude and really bad. I am however not a person who just takes such insults without defending themselves. Interestingly enough that was good because through that I could improve my German because I had to respond to everything she said to me. I decided that I had to respond and not just be quiet.”

Another colleague tried to help and support Diana. Through this however the colleague who was treating Diana badly turned on the other woman. She became so aggressive and mean to the supporting colleague that the colleague who wanted to help Diana had to quit. No one else dared say anything to the aggressive colleague after that. Diana eventually had to quit this job due to the maltreatment and discrimination she experienced from her colleague. Her situation however did not improve at her following job:

“I also have problems at work. I wanted to say that. That is my second experience and unfortunately we are always treated as if we are the weakest employees and all of the other employees are, no one of course said it directly to me, but it is somehow.... For example we are also a team. There is a teacher who is the unofficial leader. She organizes everything and that is the main task for her as a teacher. I am the translator and I have another task, a pedagogical task, that isn’t only related to translating. And we have childcare. Those who do childcare are not really teachers or something like that, they are either students or someone who wants to work. Or we had someone for childcare who is over 30 and she had not done any vocational training, she did not have a real job, but she is German. And somehow she thinks that she is more important than me. She also started to do pedagogical tasks and she thought for some reason that she could do them better than me. It bothered her that I have a bachelor. Because of that I have a certain salary per hour. It bothers her that I have a real contract, that I work 22 hours, that I am directly employed, and that she has less hours, and that she does not have any vocational training. And it is fair that if someone does not have vocational training that they cannot be a doctor, a minister, or do what Ms. Merkel does. If someone does not have vocational training it doesn’t matter if they are German. Someone who is over 35 and does not have vocational training... I don’t want to say anything because maybe she has had bad experiences in her life. But it bothers me that she thinks that she should be more important or that she can do it better than me just because she is German [...] She has said it to me directly! We argued with each other and she said everything. And she was simply horrible and said everything to me [...] She always compares us and you have to ask why? Why would a woman do that who has no experience and no vocational training? Why does she think she is better than me? Everyone can see that I have much more experience. That I have much more training than her and why? There is only one answer for me: just because she is German. What other reason could there be? Why doesn’t she compare herself with the other Germans? Why does she compare herself with me? I am the only employee who isn’t German. All of the other employees are German and she only does it with me. I don’t know if there is another reason but that is my experience and I believe it.”

Diana unfortunately did not only have a negative experience with this employee but also with another one at the same job. The other employee wanted more hours and only asked Diana if she could change her contract and give up some of her hours so that she could have more. Diana responded no and just as with the other colleague it was like 'hell on earth' because she had not said yes. She had to ask herself again why she was asked and no one else.

"But I think that we are just seen as such, that we are weak. That we have to do what the others expect. And through that I decided that I did not want to be a part of the project anymore. That is my second experience. I think we are like that everywhere. I wanted to say that: you do it like that everywhere. I wanted to say it very clearly: we are not treated equally and fairly. When we are employed at businesses or when the colleagues are German we are not treated equally. It is completely unfair how the others treat us and what they expect from us. That we simply have to do everything that they want. And if you say no they are shocked [...] The Constitution in Germany is for everyone. They can't force me to give up my hours but you still feel it. Her face when she looked at me. As if she had said 'You? You said no?' She didn't say it but that is the feeling. They don't expect a no. And if it doesn't work for us then we say no and they don't want that. And therefore I made the decision that I would not do that anymore. Done."

Diana was then asked why she thought she, personally, experienced such discrimination at both jobs. Her German is fluent, she is highly educated, and she has worked in Germany since she first arrived.

"No no that does not have anything to do with the language. It is based on where you are from. It is connected to the passport that you have. You aren't German. That's all. It doesn't matter how good your German is. It doesn't make a difference. I don't know. I don't want to sound crazy but it is more than that. Just because you have black hair, or I wear a Hijab, as a woman with a Hijab, with dark eyes and hair, all of that counts. You simply don't look German. There are many Germans who have African mothers or fathers and they are also German. But they have dark skin, dark eyes, dark hair, and they also suffer due to this. You have a problem just because you look different. Can you imagine how it is when a woman has a Hijab, in addition to that she is from Syria, and if in addition to that she is a refugee? Of course you would see everyone as being weak. Like I said we have to always be Yes-People. We can't say no. And I am just not that type of person. Because of that we started our own business. We really understood that there is unfortunately no place for us on the labor market with Germans. Us refugees. We unfortunately have no chance to work with German colleagues. We could do it but as I said for a price. If you don't have any honor. If you always say yes to what the others say. We are not like that and therefore we said we are just going to start our own business. I am not sure if you have noticed that, but there are a lot of foreigners who want to be self-employed and there is a reason for that. If there is no spot for you then you have to create your own spot."

Diana's words and her experiences are very powerful. They can stand for themselves and require no comment. Her statement: "You have a problem just because you look different. Can you imagine how it is when a woman has a Hijab, in addition to that she is from Syria, and if in addition to that she is a refugee?" reflects the experiences that the other women have had. As stated earlier the feelings of being discriminated against or being stereotyped were always connected to some characteristic. For many of the women it was more than just their clothes, it was also their skin color or the group they

belonged to like Diana expressed. Sesuna (28, Eritrean, Magdeburg) feels that she has had difficulty finding a doctor because of the color of her skin:

“What is written in the Constitution. Many don’t know that they would have to pay a fine if they say no to a foreigner. That they can fight for their rights [...] There are also people in Magdeburg who are against others because of their skin color [...] The people don’t say it but they have hate in their heart [...] I just want to know [...] Why is that? I would like to ask the people.”

Aamiina (24, Somalian, Magdeburg) has applied for jobs but has not had much luck. She feels that it is due to her wearing a Hijab. Her teacher even told her that it would be difficult for her to find a job because of that. When asked how she knew the problem was due to wearing a Hijab she answered: “I can explain it. I waited for two hours. When I entered they looked me up and down and said to me that I did not get the job”. She once applied for the same job as a friend of hers. They both wear Hijabs. On the application however her friend used a picture without a Hijab, Aamiina’s picture was with one. Her friend was called for an interview, Aamiina was not. Her friend arrived to the interview with a Hijab and the potential employer was very upset. They told her that the woman in the picture was not the same standing before them and she did not get the job. Yana (22, Syrian, Magdeburg) and Qudisia (50, Afghan, Magdeburg) feel that they are looked at strangely on the streetcar because they wear Hijabs. Two of Qudisia’s daughters have even stopped wearing their Hijab altogether in order to avoid the uncomfortable stares. Zia (31, Lebanese, Magdeburg) has also had bad experiences due to wearing a Hijab. She has been yelled at on the street, called a ‘fucking foreigner’, and insulted. She however does not let it bother her anymore: “Oh that is a small word yeah but um it is normal for me. Before I had a lot of stress and wondered what did they say and why why but now it is normal and I say I laugh I only laugh”. She has heard the following statements from strangers on the street regarding her Hijab: “Yeah why are you ah here with ah Hijab? We are ah here in Germany and you are not at home. You have to ah put your Hijab away”. Zia knows women who have moved to other cities because they felt that people did not like their Hijab in Magdeburg and they encountered many problems. For her however the situation has gotten a bit better: “I think it is better. It is maybe just a feeling because there are more people with Hijabs. I have seen it now. But when I first arrived I was alone. Alone with a Hijab.” Zia feels that the majority of the comments come from older men and women. This was echoed by other women as well that it is this group of Germans who are the most vocal in speaking to them or insulting them on the street.

Women in Magdeburg are however not the only ones to have such experiences due to wearing Hijabs. Female refugees in Wuerzburg also discussed such situations. It is important to note however that none of the women interviewed in Cologne wore Hijabs therefore they did not have any experience regarding this topic. In Wuerzburg, Saya (22, Syrian) and her mother Lava (44) described situations on the street with strangers. Their experiences were rather with stereotyping and

uncomfortable questions and assumptions than being insulted or yelled at on the street. They are often asked by strangers why they are wearing Hijabs in the summer time, if it is mandatory, why the youngest daughter does not wear a Hijab, they are told that they are pretty and why not remove their Hijab, or they are asked if their husbands or fathers force them to wear it. According to Saya, the people who approach them on the street think that “women with Hijabs are, they are, they haven’t learned anything or they haven’t studied. They are simply at home and they cook, clean, and always have kids, lots of kids (laughs)”. Saya and Lava were then asked how it makes them feel when they are approached by strangers on the street with such questions and stereotypes:

“Hey, we, I, I mean hey I am a person. I am a person for example [...] I say that is my religion and I respect (unintelligible) therefore I wear a Hijab [...] Exactly. I said yeah maybe I will get a tattoo on my face. Would you also ask me why I got a tattoo on my face? It is the same thing. It is my Hijab and I, it is mine and not yours and you can ask questions but not such dumb questions [...] I have already told many Germans that it is voluntary, it is something voluntary. But they hear something on the radio or TV and say yeah it is the same situation for everyone.” (Saya)

Saya and Lava feel that discrimination is expressed in different ways in Wuerzburg:

“For example in Berlin or North Rhine-Westphalia there are a lot of foreigners, more than Germans, and they work as cashiers, or they are teachers, or they work in a bakery. For example here if you are in Wuerzburg and you want to buy bread and they say yeah the seller has a Hijab, you think, maybe the German thinks for about half an hour if they should go to this shop or not. What happened? She has a Hijab, she is Muslim, hey should we, are we allowed to, and then they buy from someplace else [...] And for example, a simple example, if we are in the train or on the bus and an older woman or someone looks and sees there is a spot free next to us and they say ‘yeah I would prefer to stand than to sit next to this woman, this Muslim woman’ and they stand [...] Or they are afraid to sit next to us and to have a simple conversation.” (Saya)

Lava and Saya have however experienced situations where people have come up to them on the street and insulted them and said “fucking foreigner”. Lava said that they are sometimes afraid in these situations. One time Saya did a test to see how people would react to different answers to their question of where she was from:

“One time, one time I tested it. A woman was sitting at the train station and asked us where we were from. In the beginning my sister and I were afraid [...] I said ah are you refugees, or foreigners, or immigrants? I said no immigrants. And she then said ok are you from Turkey? I said yes. Ah ok um good. And with the other example someone asked me and I said refugee. We are refugees. And they said ‘hey don’t you want to go back to Syria [...] or do you want to go back to Syria’ and I said no [...] No, she said ‘no you have to go back to Syria and rebuild your country’. Yeah. That’s how it was. You aren’t allowed to live in Germany anymore. We need our country. You have to leave our country (laughs).”

Lava added to the point and said how she is also often asked why she does not go back to Syria. Saya said that sometimes when she is really annoyed during such conversations she directly tells the person that their opinion does not matter to her. She was asked how people respond when she says that to them: “They insult me, they leave me alone, or they go someplace else”.

Nancy (29, Ugandan, Wuerzburg) explained that she has never had a negative experience at work or a very bad experience with discrimination. However, like the other women, stereotypes are put onto her due to how she looks: a black woman with a Hijab.

“Actually, with me the work experience is that I haven’t experienced really some like you can say it’s negative. Everywhere you went you meet some people they are like they will look you in the (unintelligible). I have a colleague here (unintelligible). The first time I was doing my Fachhelferkurs, they would meet me outside: ‘Was machst du hier?’ It’s like: ‘what are you doing here?’ I say: ‘Yes, ich bin Praktikantin’. It’s like ‘ah in die Küche? It’s like ‘no, Altenpflege’. So there was some, they have already their, how do you call it in English, judgment already. They have already judged you. You, you going to the kitchen or you are going to be cleaning [...] First, yes, because like first of all (unintelligible) they don’t like expect you a black woman with a Kopftuch to be like, like to be (unintelligible). You are not intelligent enough to do what they, what you are doing. I think that’s what they think [...] So this is like, you are taken to be like the low class and you have no knowledge to do something. And, yes, and at work like some, the patients and the clients they also think you are just there to watch them and finish. You know nothing. And the visitors who come they were like, they come to you it’s like ‘is no one here?’ It’s like ‘I am here!’ It’s like ‘I am looking for a nurse’. It’s like ‘I’m here!’ [...] But actually I had, I didn’t experience anything like you can say oh that was really bad. The (unintelligible) were really nice. And, like, the clients, I didn’t meet anyone who can say ‘oh, that one shouldn’t touch me’. Such kind.”

Nancy further discussed how she feels she is always stared at in the city due to being black and wearing a Hijab. She recounted one experience on the streetcar when she had her stroller and her sons. She went to the designated area for the strollers and a man was sitting there. She asked him if he could make room for her and he responded that he would not share his space with “cockroaches” and complained. Nancy immediately stood up for herself and a few other passengers on the streetcar also intervened. In another experience Nancy often shops at the same grocery store and there is also an older man who is often there. She feels he always looks negatively at her and makes comments about how her two young boys are loud. One time she decided to approach the situation with humor. As she was walking by him she complained to him about how the foreigners buy all of the food and take everything. He was shocked. In another situation Nancy was at a playground with her children and other women from Somalia and their families. A white woman approached them and complained about how they had so many children and were not able to take care of them. She had a packet of cigarettes and threw this at the children and told them they could eat it. Nancy picked up the packet and threw it back at the woman. Nancy said that she could insult her but to keep the children out of it as they were innocent. The woman threatened to call the police and Nancy said she would help her.

In situations where she experiences discrimination or is insulted Nancy – just like Diana, Saya, Zia, and the other women – stands up for herself. This echoes back to what Hani described and intersectionality. If a woman has a job, speaks German well, knows her rights, and is confident among other things, she will defend herself differently than other women might. The women discussed thus far have been such women. Nancy, Diana, Saya, Lava, and Zia are educated and confident women who

speak German fluently. Despite this they still face discrimination and stereotyping. Yet at times it is even too much for them as seen in Diana's story. It is important to raise the question of what happens to women who do not speak German as well as these women or who are not as confident in similar situations. How does this affect their integration? Especially when taking into account Diana's situation that she quit two jobs and started her own business with her husband due to discrimination. Not every woman may be able to do that and then may be stuck in a negative and harmful environment emotionally and psychologically.

Nazia (17, Afghan, Wuerzburg) also described that she has felt that she has not gotten internships or jobs due to wearing a Hijab and that she feels she is often stared at and treated differently. She however sees her situation in Germany in the face of discrimination positively:

"Um, but, what is good about Germany is that you can also, um, if I don't like something then I can say it, so different opinion and freedom of speech and um and you can also learn, ah, it isn't 'you are just a woman therefore you can't do that'. As a woman you have the same rights as a man. You can also learn and ah I find that really good."

She has also had problems at school because of how she looks but she knew that she could speak to the teachers about it and they would help her. The teachers spoke with the parents of the students who were treating her badly and the situation improved. Nazia said:

"If that had happened in my home country I wouldn't have been allowed to say anything. If I did say something they would not have done anything. And, ah, it is good that they listen to us [...] and that they say something for us [...] Or if I don't like something that has happened, or when something really bad happens, I can file a complaint."

Rina (25, Kosovar, Wuerzburg) explained that when she was young her father did not allow her to speak Albanian in public:

"Everyone does not need to know that we are from elsewhere. Other people always looked at us and from the very beginning we wanted to avoid any situation that could lead to confrontation. You noticed when others would look at you differently if you spoke differently [...] Yeah I find it a bit sad. I have noticed it. I was often spoken to in the streetcar. Yeah we are in Germany, we have to speak German. When I turned around [...] and in absolute perfect German said 'I am perfectly aware that I am in Germany and I have mastered the German language. I am not sure what the issue is.' They would just look at me as if I had come from the moon. I think it is enriching. The more languages you know the richer your knowledge of the world. But I feel sorry for people who do not view it that way."

Rina has felt that at times she has not been taken seriously because her family is from another country. She has felt the reluctancy from others who say that she is different or that she thinks differently. She is also often told by many that they do not think she is German based upon her appearance with dark hair, dark eyes, and a slightly darker skin complexion. She has however had the most problems, and felt discriminated against, when it came to employment. It is important to note that she has done vocational training in childcare and currently works at a kindergarten:

"I had many problems because I am also Muslim. My chances of getting a job were very low. Thank God there are women who get pregnant and then do not return because every catholic establishment did not accept me. Some of the catholic establishments even told me it was because I was not a member of the Catholic Church. I had, that hurt me, because what do I teach the children that a catholic woman would not? I know so many people who are just members of the church so that they can work somewhere but are actually not religious. I find that a shame because I am actually quite religious, um not so strong in that, um, I am a Muslim and I am not so radical compared to how strongly I believe in God and I find that pretty tough when someone, that for me is like lying to God. And that is even worse for me than that you somehow yeah. I don't know. I don't think that my colleagues do anything different than me."

Sahin (26, German, Magdeburg) described how insults on the street have become a daily part of her life. Nonetheless, she feels that Magdeburg is her home and she feels comfortable and happy there:

"I have to say I really had a lot of difficulties. Up to today I still have a lot of difficulties. You are looked at strangely on the street, spit at, or spoken to. I have really experienced a lot. That is the reason why for years I didn't want to live in Magdeburg. At that time I thought maybe. If I go into the city now for example, into the center and someone says to me 'Make room. Can't you see that I am coming?' When I start to speak then they realize 'oh, she can speak German'. As I said we had many problems. I still have these problems today, that I am insulted on the street. When I walk around in Magdeburg I feel, since the refugee wave, that the people here have gotten worse [...] But it has become normal for me. When I am called a 'fucking foreigner' then I am a fucking foreigner when that is what they think. But you can't put everyone into one basket [...] The city has done more but the people are still the same as before. They are probably a bit more aggressive now because more people are coming from different cultures."

Sahin was then asked why she thinks there is the impression in Germany that the situation is worse for refugees in the East and that there is more racism and discrimination there.

"Yeah, oh, I would say that what is described has to do with customs and traditions. It is really exaggerated. I live here. Of course you will come across bad people, they are probably also in the West, but how you deal with it is important or how you perceive it. Maybe I would, if I lived in Syria and all of the Germans came to us and were criminals, then I would probably also think 'why are they doing that? Why did they come to our country?'. That also has to do with how you accept or view the matter. I understand sometimes why people treat me badly because they probably think that I am a criminal, or that I don't work, or I don't know [...] There is also against refugees in NRW. I saw a report. There are two differences. If for example a German is a criminal then no media outlet reports on it. If a refugee however does something criminal all media speak about it. That is the first difference. The second difference: When there is violence against refugees in Saxony-Anhalt, every media source reports on it because it is the East. If something happens in NRW no one reports it. I recently heard from my uncle in Dortmund that Germans beat up a refugee so badly that his whole mouth bled and he lost teeth. I didn't see or hear about that in any media. If something happens in Magdeburg it is immediately reported on. That is sad. You shouldn't scare people. If you walk around in Magdeburg it is a very pretty city. There is a city park, the Elbe, many tourist attractions. It is really a very pretty city. You also meet good people, not just bad people. They are everywhere, not just in Saxony-Anhalt. As I said this is my home. If I were to move away I would still come back because I just feel comfortable here. I have visited many cities and countries but nevertheless I want to stay in Magdeburg. It is like my home."

It is fascinating that despite the fact that insults are a daily routine for Sahin she still calls Magdeburg her home. She still defends the, for her, exaggerated reporting on the situation in the city and in the

East. She almost has empathy for those who insult her or spit at her on the street and understands why they do that. She thinks maybe she would do the same if the situation were reversed. She makes it a point not to generalize everyone as bad and explains that there are also many good people in Magdeburg. The other women interviewed did the same. Despite experiencing discrimination they all made it a point to emphasize that not all Germans are mean or insulting but that many of them are very kind and helpful people.

Arya (28, Kurdish, Magdeburg), just like Sahin, came as a very young girl to Germany. Arya did not have any problems at school but her family did experience very direct and aggressive discrimination where they lived due to being the only foreigners.

"We were in an area with many neo-Nazis. We always had to pay attention because at that time it was really bad. It has however gotten better since then [...] For example when you walked down the street bottles would be thrown at you or you would be attacked. We were chased away from the playground. It was really bad back then. Therefore we weren't allowed to stay long at the door or even stand there. We always had to drive someplace else so that we were allowed to play on the playground [...] We had disputes with people. For example they said that we didn't properly separate our garbage but my father didn't know in the beginning that you had to separate the garbage in Germany. Really he didn't know. Once we learned we said we would definitely do it, we didn't know [...] I have to honestly say at some point we started to like them. That was really strange. In the beginning they had stereotypes, they threw things at us, but we tried to deal with them. My father always said that we were guests here and we had to act like that. We should not fight with them or cause any problems [...] Then they really came to drink tea and they drank tea with us [...] I think one time the son walked in front of a car and my father pulled him out from in front of it. He thanked my dad and at some point apologized [...] Yeah exactly, but other than that, you noticed the looks sometimes, especially in the beginning. In the beginning I never wanted to go out with my parents. I was ashamed. But as I got a bit older I understood [...] Yeah because we were different. In Magdeburg you walk into a shopping center and you were the only one with black hair. It was weird [...] Who is that? Where are they from? What type of people are they? That is how I experienced it. But I don't know what the people thought. I learned a bit later that when people look at you it doesn't mean that they are mean."

As a young girl Arya had bottles thrown at her, her family was attacked, and she was chased away from playgrounds. She came to be ashamed of how she looked which had a direct impact on her integration. She felt in order to fit in she had to look like a German. This will be discussed in section 5.1.9. Despite the discrimination and the attacks her father made sure the family remained respectful and friendly as they were guests. Through contact with her family a German family that had been neo-Nazis and who had insulted and attacked them came to realize that their stereotypes and discrimination may have been misguided. It took her father saving a young boy from being hit by a car for the German family to realize how they had been acting and to apologize. They even started to like each other and would spend time together. This is meaningful for Germans. The discrimination the women have faced has come from Germans. The women have been stereotyped, assumed to be unqualified due to their appearance, they have been spit at, insulted, yelled at, and denied jobs due to wearing a Hijab or their

religion by Germans. What has stood out during all of this is that not one woman generalized. They made it clear that there are good and bad Germans. On the other hand the women are put into groups by those discriminating against them. Those calling them ‘fucking foreigners’ are not differentiating between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ foreigners. They are viewing them as the same. This connects directly to the previous section, 5.1.7, and contact with Germans. Despite experiencing intense, and at times, physical violence all of the women wanted more contact with Germans. Every woman said that most Germans were friendly and helpful. They seem to separate their experiences of discrimination from the personal contact they have with Germans.

The idea of intersectionality is extremely important here. As stated before the women faced discrimination based upon characteristics they had and groups they belonged to. It is thus extremely important to conduct further research specifically on intersectionality and its impact on female refugee’s integration. In addition, German society’s image of female refugees seems to play a large role. Many of the women commented that due to their appearance or the group they belonged to they were automatically put into generalizations. Through the research in chapter four it can be concluded that not much is being done to inform German society about the situation of female refugees. Intersectionality is becoming more prominent in government policy and migration research yet more must be done to address intersectionality and to find solutions to minimize discrimination and stereotyping that refugee women face on a daily basis.

5.1.9 Adjusting to and Integrating into Life in Germany

Some of the women discussed what they felt was important in order to adapt and integrate into German society. They also described how they have adjusted and feel in Germany. Although not many women touched on this topic, it is important nonetheless to hear what some of the women have done to adapt to society. As discussed in chapter four, integration is viewed by the federal government, the states, and cities as being a two-way street. The government is expected to assist but the refugees are also expected to do certain things. Arya (28, Kurdish, Magdeburg) described the situation as a Muslim woman and integrating into German society:

“I don’t know if it is too tough, I don’t have anything against Hijabs, I am a Muslim, I love my religion, but I don’t think you have to show so much to the outside. You can live it just as well in your heart. I also pray but I don’t have to tell anyone about it [...] That doesn’t mean that you will become a Christian or something. But it is nicer when other people who live here see that people are also like them. You shouldn’t change who you are but stay true to yourself but you can nonetheless adapt a bit [...] I wouldn’t say remove your Hijabs because there are many other people who also cover their heads and no one says anything to them. I think it is something against the religion, what people see in the media and therefore they view the women like this. Or many people do not know why they wear it and are discriminatory. If people would learn much more about it then I don’t think they would think that way. I would say to them ‘stay true to yourself but still try to integrate more’. Because if you wear a Hijab it doesn’t have to be so thick in the summer. You can play a bit with the colors. It doesn’t have to be

completely black. Those are some things. You can integrate more even with a Hijab. There are very nice Hijabs [...] Yeah but I think if you wear a Hijab you have to integrate much more. You shouldn't think that you need pity or feel bad for yourself. You have a Hijab and now you have to integrate a bit more [...] Because otherwise you will have problems here, emotional problems [...] Mental also and you will feel like you are in a corner because you also didn't really do anything. Then you remain where you are [...] I think for example that it should also start with the parents. I always had problems because of culture and religion. There were always blocks in the road. Maybe I also excluded myself a bit through that until I understood that even if you are different you can still be a part of society."

In continuing with the idea brought up by Arya that integration should start with the parents, Zia (31, Lebanese, Magdeburg) discussed how she wants to raise her children in German society. She thinks that raising children in Germany will be one of the most difficult things:

"Yeah only raising children. I think it is difficult here. Yeah because ah we I have seen that the children have a lot of freedom here [...] That children at ah 13 or 14 already go off alone with ah a boyfriend or something or drink or and ah I don't think that is good for the children [...] Therefore or ah I have a friend, a German friend, she has a daughter. She is ah 14 yeah and she she said [Zia] I am really excited, my daughter is going on ah what is it called a date ah with a boy. But I said why are you so happy? She is so young. I am sorry she is young. Why are you ah, I don't know, I don't think that is good [...] and ah I don't want my children to live so freely like here. That is why I think ah if my child, ah my son is seven years old and I think from seven to ah ten years of age I can ah tell my children what is right and what is wrong. What I have to do for my religion that or that or that and then ah after ten or 11 or as a teenager I think that ah he will do what he wants to do therefore I am trying now to tell [name of her son] what is wrong and right, we can do that we can't do that."

It is interesting to see the different perspectives on the topic of integrating and growing up in Germany from a girl who came as a young child and the mother of a young son. Arya viewed the connection to culture and religion as something that put hurdles in her way and something that she used which marginalized her. Zia on the other hand sees her religion and the way children are raised in her country of origin as a way to properly raise her son and other children so that they make the right choices in a society where, for her, children have too much freedom. This can affect the integration of female refugees who have come at young ages. Growing up in one culture but being raised by parents from another. This will be looked at more in detail a bit later on.

Nazia (17, Afghan, Wuerzburg) came as a young girl to Germany. It however does not seem that she has been affected by, or views it as relevant, that her parents are from another country or culture and that she is growing up in Germany.

"Meanwhile I actually feel comfortable. I don't view myself anymore as a foreigner. I view myself as, I feel like Germany has become my home. So, I, yeah really. Last year in August we went somewhere... we flew to Iran [...] and I actually really missed Germany [...] And then I thought: Germany is my home (laughs) because I grew up here [...] Of course I see myself as Afghan. I can't deny that. Um but I also see myself as German, also as an Afghan. My parents are from Afghanistan and of course that is also my home. But Germany, in Germany I feel safer and more comfortable [...] because when we came here I was a small child and I can't really remember much from Afghanistan [...] I have grown up here."

Nazia's mother Lida was then asked how she feels that her daughter views herself as German. For her it did not make any difference. She is actually happy that Nazia feels that way and is comfortable. The most important thing for her is that Nazia continues to study and that she can live freely.

Like Arya, Yana (22, Syrian, Magdeburg) also touched on wearing a Hijab and being in Germany. There are women who do not want to wear a Hijab but have to in their home country because of their family. In Germany you can have money as a woman and you do not have to do what your husband or family expects from you:

"Because here in Germany it isn't a problem. You have money and can tell your husband to go yeah ah she can Germany doesn't have any problems with (unintelligible). She wants to, she wants to but in Syria or Afghanistan she can't do it because her family will talk about it but here it doesn't matter."

She continued that the family will not come with an airplane to make the women put it back on. Yana ended the topic by describing how in the Kurdish culture once you get married the woman has to wear a Hijab. She knows however that in Germany she does not have to do that and she is not afraid to say no. In this society she can marry who she wants and her husband has to love her how she is. For her that is an important aspect of adjusting to society. Realizing the freedoms you have as a woman.

Sahin (26, German, Magdeburg) described integration as learning the language. For her without the language it is not possible to do anything else in Germany.

"I understood integration as, for example, as I said, when I accompanied my mom to the doctor's, why doesn't she speak any German. You have to learn German. You are here in Germany. If you tried at a government agency or at the doctor's it was always dismissed. In Germany English is always dismissed. They only speak the official language here [...] If you speak in English they won't listen to you."

Marla (39, Syrian) and Saya (22, Syrian) in Wuerzburg raised the topic of recognition. Adjusting to and integrating into life in Germany for them also means gaining recognition that they are doing something. They are working. They are not just sitting at home doing nothing. Marla commented that many people say "refugees just sit on their couch the whole time, they don't get up off their asses" but that is not the case for everyone. Many are hard working.

"I have also experienced, I want to, I have two or three jobs at the same time and I can't give up one job. Therefore, to prove that I am here in society. I am not just a sad refugee but I am like a person. You work just like other Germans. That we, we have to present ourselves to society [...] That is why she is putting in a lot of effort, energy, and time in order to find a better position in society. Not to just be a woman or a girl who doesn't do anything except raise children, clean, cook, and she is just stupid or dumb – in the opinion of the Germans." (Saya)

This was a very important point for Marla. She has worked her whole life and does not want to be seen as someone who is lazy and does not do anything:

"I already worked in Syria. I worked in a school and my husband worked. And that is, that is my system, that is the system I live by. I worked. I do not just sit at home. I am not a housewife."

That is not just for society that is also just for me. I studied and learned for 30 years and as a result I do not want to be a housewife and just sit at home."

Each of these experiences are important and, again, are individual. The idea of recognition is important. There are a lot of stereotypes about female refugees, and refugees in general, and the women are very aware of them. Integrating and adjusting into society also means that German society should recognize what the women have done and that they are trying to build a life here. This is often neglected. The deficits are shown more often instead of the major strides women are making in integrating into society.

There was one similarity that arose between a certain group of women independent of where they were located. Each woman who had come as a young child, or had been born here, and had been in Germany for 20 years or more felt like they were stuck between two cultures. At first glance it may not seem that this directly affects integration but it is an important aspect. If you do not feel fully accepted or wanted in a society it may not be easy for you to integrate. This may lead women to interpret certain situations of perhaps not finding a job, having difficulty connecting with Germans, or how others speak with them based upon their difficulties between these two cultures. Arya (28, Kurdish, Magdeburg), Sahin (26, German, Magdeburg), and Rina (25, Kosovar, Wuerzburg) discussed this situation in-depth. It was very important for them. This feeling of being between two cultures and not really belonging to one is something that has been a part of their lives since they were young. It is important therefore to not overlook the role this can play in integration. The women's feelings are fully expressed in the following excerpts from the interviews and therefore do not require comment. No one else can better explain their situation than they can.

"My whole life I always liked being with Germans. It started already at school which is obvious. When I wanted to learn to be a pharmaceutical technical assistant, and did it for two and half years, there were a lot of foreigners in the class. I was always in the middle. When I was with the Germans I was an outsider for them. When I was with the foreigners I was different. I couldn't really find my way. I don't know why. It is still like that today [...] They [the Germans and foreigners] separated themselves. I tried to have contact with both, with many, but for example when I was outside with them they wanted to go someplace and we were too religious and for example couldn't go swimming. That was always such a back and forth [...] For example I had a friend and we always say her mom was like a second mom to me. If I had problems I always went to her instead of to my mom. That was a bit strange, I love my mom, she is an angel, but I couldn't talk with my mom about German society. She always said 'No, don't do that, you shouldn't do that, we are different'. She didn't know anything else. You have to know on your own which path you want to take [...] My parents were never too strict. They are religious but they never forced me to do anything. But it already started when my brother for example was in eight or ninth grade and he was always allowed to stay out longer than me. At some point I asked why we couldn't go home together, we had the same circle of friends. My parents just said no. At some point I understood why they thought that way because maybe you could be raped, yeah that is extreme, or something like that. Those were my parent's principles. They just didn't understand how it was in western culture [...] There were definitely fights. There was always an argument when my brother was allowed to stay outside longer or go swimming. One time I secretly went swimming [...] My dad always went swimming with us

until we were in eight grade and then I was not allowed to anymore [...] I did it so that I did many things that they didn't know about. If however they had found out about it we would have had many more arguments. I tried to take the other path without hurting them. My parents are sacred to me. That is how it is." (Arya)

Arya is in the process of becoming German and was asked if she feels like a German. If she would describe herself that way: "Yes but also no. I try to but somehow it doesn't work because I would say I look different and I am still a bit into my culture and through the religion. I would say I am a bit in the middle". Appearances were a theme throughout Arya's interview. She was then asked why she thinks her appearance influences her so strongly.

"Yeah I have to explain something to you, listen, look. Six years ago my hair was completely blond. You probably can't picture that. My hair was completely blond and I did not have black eyebrows. I tried to look completely German. I wore contact lenses, I always looked perfect when I went out, until I understood that despite that I was still not German, even if I looked like that. I have to love myself how I am and I can still be German even if I have a different hair color [...] I think that is my problem and not from anyone else, but rather my problem inside. I don't know. I can't say why. No [...] Or maybe it is because I grew up so strict, I don't know."

Arya is trying to learn that, for her, she can look 'different' and still be German. She however still feels that she cannot be German and she cannot be Kurdish. She is just somewhere in the middle.

"Yeah, in 2010 for example we went back to Kurdistan. We were however only allowed to go to the border, we didn't have any visa. My mom wanted to see her mom, she was sick, and so we drove to the border and there for example I met my cousin and I felt foreign, good but foreign and I also feel foreign here. I can't explain it. It is hard when you grow up between two countries and multiple generations and in cultures, religions, and society."

Rina also brought up the topic of appearances like Arya. Unlike Arya however Rina could never really connect with Germans or create friendships with them. Just like Arya she does not feel like she belongs in either culture, that of her parents or that in Germany.

"I am pretty sure that we were different. We were different. I noticed, so it already started when all of the German children had, in quotations marks, 'bread boxes', and my bread was wrapped in aluminum foil [...] I am not really at home anywhere because here I am the foreigner and in my home country I am the German."

Rina was then asked if she felt German because she was born here: "No. Actually yes because I was born here but based upon acceptance no. I don't really feel like it." She was then asked how it is for her that she is not accepted as a German in Germany but she is viewed as a German in her family's home country:

"It annoys me somehow. I wouldn't say that it affects my identity because I am who I am. But it annoys me somehow. Then on the other hand there are moments where I say yeah I don't want to be German because it doesn't matter what I say it is always 'because you were raised that way'. I don't agree with some things and then that is how it is, I don't think it is ok and that has nothing to do with my culture. But it is always connected back to my culture [...] or because of my religion."

Sahin expressed similar experiences and feelings with growing up between two cultures.

“I have to say I grew up in two cultures. At home the Syrian and outside the German. You have to adapt somehow, who do I belong to now? I grew up here but my roots are there. What am I? I really don’t know what I am. I am a naturalized German citizen but still I have to handle myself based upon where I am from so that I do not forget my roots. Still today I am confused about who I really am. I ask myself that question everyday: ‘Who am I?’ [...] As I said, I said, that I don’t really feel like I can fit in to either culture. I feel like a German person. What I do is only relevant for me. But to come back to your question I also don’t think I should forget my roots because that also counts for me. I don’t feel comfortable in either culture. Of course I have German friends and when I say that I don’t drink alcohol they connect that automatically to my culture although it has nothing to do with that. That has to do with me because I don’t want to drink, because I want to pay attention to my body. Or for example when I am within my culture and I wear something it automatically means that it doesn’t belong to us. When for example I have shorter pants, or ripped jeans, they say ‘that doesn’t go with us’. Do you understand what I mean? I have to honestly say I don’t feel comfortable in either. The question still today is ‘Who am I really?’ I still have not found an answer.”

Sahin was then asked how it felt for her to become German.

“No, once I became German that wasn’t really anything new for me because I grew up here. I was a kid and now I am an adult and still in Germany. Once I had mastered the German language and I knew that I could stay here, that is what mattered to me, more than this piece of paper that I now have. What is inside counts for me and not that it is written on this piece of paper that I am now German. It was however of course really nice because I was stateless my whole life and somehow now I belong to a country. Of course that was nice but other than that it didn’t really change anything. If someone insults me on the street they don’t want to see my identity card. He only sees me. I can’t change anything so that I look more German.”

5.1.10 Appreciation

When discussing the topic of integration concrete measures first come to mind: language acquisition, employment, housing, learning the rules and laws, education and training, and others. Appreciation at first glance does not seem to fit into this. Almost every woman interviewed however expressed their gratitude and appreciation to Germany. For them this was a very central part of their integration. Without Germany allowing them to stay they would not have been able to integrate or build a life. No matter what difficulties they have had with finding a job, problems with government agencies, confusion with laws, or discrimination they have faced each woman still expressed gratitude. It was thus seen as extremely important to include this in the study. To allow the women the opportunity to express their thankfulness and to be heard. It is also thought that sharing such sentiment can assist in breaking down stereotypes that refugees are simply taking and living off from society and not doing anything to contribute. Various women will be quoted from the different cities without comment as they can best speak for themselves.

“Therefore it is important when the women come to us they come with problems, but it is important that they also realize what they have achieved and what they have brought with them. And because of this it is always um when we look at the path the women have behind them and how far they have come then they have to value what they have achieved. And that which was achieved: I achieved it. That is important for our work and to say and to say, ok, it is

not thankful but rather to value it yeah value what they have done here, that they have come to Germany. Because they have fled war, they have come from social disadvantages, from various unemployment situations, everything with health, a lack of healthcare, and everything else or women related Human Rights violations, Female Genital Mutilation, forced marriage, anything is possible. But despite that it is important to value what they have achieved. And when we look, ok, first for example the people from Syria. Then we say ok there is no war here. At least appreciate, pay attention to that there is no war here. And then the women have a whole different mentality and that means they become stronger instead of only thinking about problems. I mean as I said it isn't easy but we always try and it is important to say what they have achieved, what there is here, also that we profit from it [...] It is important to say there are rights for everyone, democracy for everyone, then we have to ah, democracy is not 100 percent anywhere. Here it is 60, 65, 70 percent. We have to make it 75 percent. That is our job and the women can also say 'ok I will fight for my rights'. That is important. There are laws and I am happy that I am here and that I have these rights, information about rights, but I have to fight for my rights." (Hani: 63, German, Cologne)

Layla (Iranian, Cologne) also expressed her appreciation with Human Rights and laws in Germany.

Faezeh (Iranian, Cologne) also spent the majority of her interview expressing how happy she was to be in Germany, to be free, and how it is so different from her home country Iran:

"Here I am free. I can think freely and if I want to and to dress good or not and without a Hijab but there it isn't possible. And someone always always asked why why why are you not wearing a Hijab [spoke in Persian], no nail polish, nothing, no skirt, but I am happy to be in Germany. We have been here for 31 years and I am proud of my family. My husband is working and my children are also working now and I am so happy."

Faven (28, Eritrean, Magdeburg) also expressed her happiness and gratitude with being in Germany away from war and conflict.

"The good thing in Germany is peace. In my country Eritrea there is no peace. There is a lot of fear. Everyone is afraid there but in Germany there is no fear [...] My country is not good. This is not my country but I want to stay here together. Thank you Germany."

Rina (25, Kosovar, Wuerzburg) was also happy to be in Germany so that her family did not have to experience war: "I am happy to be here. I am happy that I wasn't there because during the war, I don't know, they could have killed us, they could have killed my father. I am really happy to be in Germany".

The topic of war also came up when Xelat (32, Kurdish, Wuerzburg) discussed why she appreciated being in Germany:

"In my home country it is really bad. It is better here. For example I could not go into the city, but now I know how the streetcar goes into the city, or how this person was, ah, how I can have contact with others, how I can go to the Job Center, or if they offer a certain course. But in my home country it was like that because of the war. You could not have contact or go further [...] Because I didn't have any contact with my neighbors, I didn't see anyone, I did not go into the city, or say hello to anyone [...] But here I can say hello, I can go to the theatre, I can see many people, I have gone on vacation. I had never gone on vacation alone until I was 31 [...] That was all great."

Ella (Eritrean, Magdeburg) expressed her happiness with being in Germany because there is freedom here. For her Germany is much better than her home country: "You get everything you need for yourself and your children." Senait (29, Magdeburg) who is also from Eritrea continued with the feelings of gratefulness for being in Germany. She particularly likes kindergarten here. There is no such thing in Eritrea. Regarding her happiness in Germany she said:

"Germany is nice. I love it [...] I have my documents already, my children and my husband have their documents already. I am working. I will stay in Germany. I love Germany [...] Germany is nice. You can go to work. Democracy. Everything is nice. In Eritrea there is no democracy."

Qudsia (50, Afghan) and Elaha (39, Afghan) in Magdeburg were happy to be in Germany because they could attend school. In Afghanistan they would have to be at home. Elaha said "The old people sit at home, cook, bake, and clean" but in Germany they can go to school and they do not have to sit at home. In addition, for Qudsia she is appreciative that Germany pays so that her children can go to school. Like Ella from Eritrea, Qudsia expressed her love for Germany. Also like Ella, Yana (22, Syrian, Magdeburg) was also thankful for democracy in Germany. For her this meant equality: "The laws are the same for everyone. Everyone German and Arab". This also brought about a discussion on the equality between men and women. Five women taking part in an interview together in Magdeburg were grateful for that:

"We see that men and women are equal. You go to work, men and women also go. Yeah. The husband also um picks up the children from kindergarten and the women too. They are the same. They do not say 'you are a woman and you have to sit at home and I am a man and I go to work'. No. Everyone is the same." (Elaha: 39, Afghan)

Fateme (Iranian, Cologne) also expressed her appreciation for equality between men and women in Germany:

"Yes. And um it is very important for a country to have freedom. Especially for women. I am happy because I am alone or when (unintelligible) it is dark I am not afraid to be on the street or if I am far from my apartment. There is also good public transportation, very good, and um and there are mm careers for women. Yes. You can simply have a career. And if someone is talented it is easy easy um ah to achieve yes and there are a lot of uh advantages in Germany. But in Iran it is simply not allowed. For example for women to ride a bicycle. But here no [...] And ah men and women have the same rights here. But in other countries, especially the third world, men have a lot of rights. I am happy. Life is good in Germany."

Saya (22, Syrian, Wuerzburg) and her mother Lava (44) also touched on riding bicycles. It is not banned for women to ride bicycles in Syria but it is seen as something embarrassing and only men do it. But here in Germany it is not viewed that way and women can ride bicycles. For them the worst thing that can happen to you in Germany is that you are stared at for being a woman wearing a Hijab on a bicycle. Zia (31, Lebanese, Magdeburg) focused her appreciation on the infrastructure in Germany. For her Germany had the best infrastructure for electricity, water, and the internet. The possibility to earn

money and to work was also important for her and she was thankful for that. The only thing missing for her was her family. If they were here she said “I don’t need anything else”.

Nazia (17, Afghan, Wuerzburg) expressed appreciation for many things in Germany: as a woman she could speak her mind, if something happened to her she could go to the police, and that there were rules and laws. In addition she felt safe in Germany:

“So, um, I said that I, ah, that we flew to Iran. I was also, when it was light, I couldn’t go out on my own because I felt threatened and but here no, I can, I can go to another city alone, so, without feeling strange or threatened. That also has something to do with German ah laws [...] Um you just feel safer here because you know nothing can happen [...] I would say that ah Germany has really helped us because our life wouldn’t be as good if we were still in Afghanistan and therefore I would never think about moving to another country [...] Due to this we thank Germany for, ah, also the people in Germany, ah that they have helped us, and put a roof over our heads, and gave us the opportunity to even learn so that we can make something of ourselves. I am really thankful for that. It isn’t self-evident [...] and you should use this opportunity and make something out of yourself.”

For Marla (39, Syrian, Wuerzburg) the topic of respect and appreciation played a substantial role in the interview. Despite the difficulties that a refugee may face in Germany, Germany deserved respect and appreciation. Marla could not find the word in German but she felt that the refugees needed to bow in gratitude. She felt the country, along with the cities, have done a lot to assist refugees and help them build new lives:

“The city really did do its best. It had everything in its hands. It gave everything. I believe that. You have the chance to take classes. That costs money. I noticed that. I paid for C1 myself. The exam alone cost 350. 350 [...] Yes I think and the city, and, the volunteer groups are always evaluated poorly. No. There are many volunteers, they, they were the first ones to take our hand. They hugged us. They are, they were nice people [...] But that is, I think it is good in Germany. If you are, it is not so easy. The path is very very very very difficult. The path is very hard. Our path is very very difficult. Not so easy [...] Life is not that easy (unintelligible) was easier but nonetheless Germany gave a lot. Germany has earned peoples respect. That is my opinion. German hugged, the Germans took us into their arms. They have, many of them, I don’t want to generalize, many of them tried their best. Not everyone. But many of them, for example the man, the, saw my husband and said: ‘no for that I want, I will ask, where I can find something for him’. Many of them, they have earned respect. From my, that is my version. The Germans have earned our respect. Last week I was at (unintelligible) my sister’s. My sister said: ‘If all of us refugees together would give a statement then we would all have to for Germany’, I don’t know what it is called [speaks in Arabic] If someone in front of another, not to take off your hat, for example, if someone does me a favor then as a thank you we all have to stand up and thank such people [...] I don’t know what it is called in German [...] The Germans have earned a lot. Germany took the people with open arms. Yes. The Germans took us with open arms. Although my husband has had many problems with the Job Center, but despite that we came here at the begin, we had to start from zero. Nonetheless they took us. They have earned our respect [...] Yes I am thankful [...] Yes that we, we are supported. The people have fled, they have fled death. With their children. How? A, a, a woman with five children? She had nothing but risks in her path. She had to carry everything. Why? She wants support for her children. The children. They are under, everything was destroyed except their suitcases. Everything destroyed. Then the people fled and Germany gave its best.”

5.1.11 Overall Experience and Advice

At the end of each interview the women were given the final word. They were free to discuss any last topic or experience that they had forgotten or just thought of. The majority of the women however used this final thought to give an overall evaluation of their integration in Germany so far. They also used it to give suggestions to Germany as to how the integration process and the experience of female refugees could be improved. When integration policy and its effectiveness is discussed it is exactly the voice of the female refugee that is missing. They are the target group of the policies but are not asked how the programs or the processes are actually working and where improvements could be made. Only through the evaluation of their experiences and suggestions for improvement is it possible to gain a full picture of integration policy in Germany. The women's last words in this section are divided between their experience and advice for other refugee women and advice for Germany. Excerpts from various interviews will be cited here without comment. The women are the experts on their experiences and the most qualified to give suggestions as to what improvements could be made. Their words do not require interpretation or comment.

"First, the foreigners who are new in Germany think that it is hard in Germany, that the language is difficult, and life is difficult because we can't do this and that. You have to be open and you have to think about that you have a goal you want to achieve. You can think about anything but if I sit here and say 'oh everything is so hard. How am I supposed to do it?' then you will not achieve your goal. I think that is obvious. I have a goal and I hope that I will achieve it. I don't want to be at the Job Center forever. You have to finance your life on your own. I think that is good. You have to have a goal. There are however people who say: 'I failed the exam three or four times. German is a difficult language and I can't speak it.' Yeah then go to YouTube. There are three or four channels there. Or Kika. That is for children and you can easily understand it and learn the language that way." (Aamiina: 24, Somalian, Magdeburg)

Faven (28, Eritrean, Magdeburg) also focused on learning the language and once that had been achieved things will get easier. She agreed that it is difficult in the beginning but once you learn German, people get to know you, and they realize that you are a nice and open woman things get easier. More people will speak with you and they will be more helpful. Sahin (26, German, Magdeburg) used her final thought to briefly look back at her life and experiences in Germany. She described her path as difficult and could only hope that the refugees who come after her do not have to experience the same:

"What I would like to say is that I hope no one will have to experience the situation I had to back then. Like I said you come to a country, you are blind, you don't understand anything, and all of a sudden you have to try to communicate and start your life anew. That is the worst thing that can happen to someone: to have to start a new life without language skills and without knowing what will happen. If we will really be able to stay or not. I know a lot of people who have gone back. They then came back to Germany and then went back again. Those are simply days that pass by without being able to experience life. I mean that for the children, the parents also of course, but especially for the children. I hope that what has happened in Syria will find an end. I have seen how people have died, how children have died, and sometimes I ask myself

what for? Why does all of that have to happen? The children have nothing to do with it. I hope that the world at some point will find peace."

Saya (22, Syrian, Wuerzburg) also took her last thought as a reflection on her life so far in Germany. For her through her new life in Germany she has found empowerment and strength. Although she may not have been able to do exactly what she wanted she is happy about her integration success.

"Ok how can I say it? I am now working in social services although that was not my area of study but I am very happy because as a woman in Germany I can always present the best because I have the power. No one can tell me what to do. I have freedom. I am from Syria but I am, I am a very hard-working and decent person. I can integrate well even if society does not like me because I wear a Hijab and they think that women with Hijabs are um they are uneducated or they just always sit at home and do what men say. Yeah and the women are always forced, always forced. But I always want to reflect reflect or show something else and when the Germans or others get to know me they they they know what I want to show [...] Yeah but I am really happy that I have achieved that with integration, with the language, but at the same time I am very sad that it still has not worked to get a spot at a university."

Like Saya, Nancy (29, Ugandan, Wuerzburg) also reflected back on her experiences in Germany. It has been a wakeup call for her:

"It has been good and it, somehow it's like a waking call for me, like I have, if I need information I have to look for it and I have, yes, it will not come to me. Every time I am like, I have to (unintelligible) and like integrate with people. And I think I have to educate (unintelligible) to the laws. Like I know if I am in this situation what can I do? Or what am I supposed to do? Yes, I have to educate me, myself more."

In moving the focus to Germany and suggestions as to what could be done regarding female refugees, Lava (44, Syrian, Wuerzburg) focused on the image of Hijabs in German society:

"The people in Germany are doing a good thing for the refugees and a good thing for ah ah we can do everything ah ah thanks to Germany and the Hijab doesn't ah always [...] have to cause fear. That would be nice for Germany and for everyone. That is my opinion."

Marla (39, Syrian, Wuerzburg) reflected on her experience in Germany and used her last thought to reach out to volunteers in Germany and to give them advice on how to best interact and support refugee women:

"[...] Regarding volunteer groups. I noticed that they are, they were there for people. That is good. But, I don't know, if they would just a little, for the people just a little, how can I say it, show some consideration that they are also people [...] They [refugees] are also people and they can also think. They can also plan their own lives. Of course they need guidance, they need help, they need someone to show them the right way [...] But not so controlled like the volunteers do it. You have to, for example, 'no the child can't eat these chips. Two bags of chips they can't, they can't open it. They can't eat it. Your child didn't wash their hands.' That isn't ok. That is my life and that is my child."

Rina (25, Kosovar, Wuerzburg) brought up many aspects while discussing her final thoughts on integration in Germany. She felt that Germany tolerated a lot and she could understand why it is said the country cannot take everyone. She finds generalizations of foreigners however unfair. She also

brought up international politics and the, for her, contradictory stance of Germany. In addition she briefly touched on the idea of access to information like Nancy had:

"I think that Germany has a lot of tolerance. Its level of tolerance is very high. There are a lot of people who take advantage of that and therefore the more often you are disappointed, the more reluctance you will develop for something. However, you should not throw everyone into one basket. There are people like me who have integrated really well. There are people like my parents who didn't have any other choice although they tried. My parents aren't as well integrated as I am but they still tried not to cause any problems like when they would not allow us to speak Albanian. Not every person is the same. Germany is a safe country of origin. I can understand why it is said that they can't take everyone. Sometimes it doesn't work, the capacity isn't enough. I can understand that but it is unfair to deport people back to war zones or to expect people to work who are sick but to leave people alone with German citizenship who are lazy. I think Germany has to do more in this respect. Politics in general is its own thing. We never have enough money. Never enough money for the refugees, never enough money for that but for bombs and everything connected to that. We create war in Germany. We create war in that we send bombs, equipment, and everything else into the world and then we shouldn't wonder when these worlds want to come to us and want safety because we have destroyed their world and their security [...] I think that you can really get a start in Germany. There just has to be more information. I think however that that has to do with the Germans, they don't give a lot of information because they don't want to [...] You can see that, that is always forced upon us, yeah the foreigners they always want to have everything cheaper. I have heard that so many times [...] Whenever we ask about special offers it is always 'the foreigners again. They always want to have everything cheaper.' Of course there are those who act like animals but not everyone and I think if a German has that right then so do I because I view myself as a German even if I don't have a German passport."

Jana (27, Syrian, Wuerzburg) had concrete suggestions for how Germany could improve the situation of female refugees. She described what she would do if she were the one developing integration policy:

"I would definitely, what is it called, I am not entirely sure but birth, that it would be limited for children [...] That is the very first thing I would do for women and not for men because they suffer a lot, the women, from the first hour or from the first second when they become a mother. They are a part of it all until they die, until the child dies, it doesn't matter how old it is, but the father doesn't even realize half of what goes on but he still always complains anyway. I would definitely do that first. Then I would work on making sure that women were forced to go to school um now for example for the refugees, for the immigrants, that they first learn the language and integrate. I would definitely make that mandatory and not because the husband doesn't want it 'ok she isn't allowed'. I would definitely do that first."

She also discussed what integration meant to her:

"For me integration is first to learn the language of the country so that I can communicate, I can understand everyone, and to definitely be disrespectful ah respectful because, it is sad to say, people from my country are completely disrespectful. If you are in a country then you have to respect, if you don't want that then you can go away, definitely. That is integration for me. Good I don't have to have contact with every German and be with all of them but if I, then, have that or have to do that then respect is first for me and to know who I am with, why I am with them, how to interact with them when I don't like something then it is definitely respect [...] Having a good job also definitely means integration. I can't say I didn't get a spot to study so I am just going to sit at home until I get a spot and then (unintelligible) I will work. That isn't integration for me. I have always done volunteer work. Unfortunately I have not been able to

do that in Wuerzburg but it was always a great help for me to integrate into society, to know how the people think, what the traditions are, how the culture is."

Arya (28, Kurdish, Magdeburg), like Jana, also gave suggestions how Germany could improve the integration of female refugees and discussed Germany's expectations. She also said what she would do if she were in charge of developing integration policy.

"I think Germany wants too little from them [refugees]. Much too little. It could be much more. I think Merkel, Ms. Merkel sorry, introduced an article in 2018 where she said that she wanted to organize more projects for women, also for refugee women because many are still at home as housewives because they don't dare, because of the language, they stay. Yes exactly. That could definitely be done better. When I work in social work later I want to develop a few projects for female refugees."

Arya was then asked in what areas Germany could expect more from refugees.

"Much more with language. Much more. Many more courses, faster access to the labor market, also that women can more often work in the field they were in before, be active again and organize it. Workshops or something like that."

In response to what programs she would develop for people who came to Germany Arya responded:

"I would make it so that you came into contact with a German family right away. For example if you have two children, for example a German family with two children um to see how daily life is, just once a week via video and just see how they move and live. You don't have to be exactly like them, it isn't about being the same, it is about that you see how you can live because many don't know how they can live therefore they just live how they did in their original culture."

Arya also touched on what integration meant to her:

"For example to have a circle of friends and to go out with them. Integration already starts there. That you allow your children to do things instead of not allowing it due to religion or just to experience a bit of German culture."

Arya ended with giving advice to refugees and others coming to Germany:

"Don't be so shy and don't be so slow in reaching your goal but do more, the refugees who are coming now. Do much more. They have of course suffered much more, traumas, etc. but despite that you can't just give 100 percent but I think instead 200 percent so that you can keep up."

Milana (36, Syrian, Wuerzburg) ended her interview with two 'letters'. Her first letter was for Arab women who were in Germany and the second for German society. The way she spoke was full of conviction and eloquence. This was one of the most impactful moments of the interviews experienced by the author. There were three other women in the room. Before the atmosphere had been relaxed and with an air of fun as the women were friends. Once Milana started delivering her letters everyone grew silent and focused on what she said. In the end they broke out in applause because they felt she had not only spoken for herself but for them and all other Muslim refugee women in Germany.

"I have two letters ah for German society and for Arab women. Yes. First for Arab women: Ah you have to be ah you have to be strong. She is not alone ah she has ah strength um [translated

by Saya] she is not alone in Germany. She has to be independent, brave, very brave, and confident. She should not be afraid of anyone. You have power here without a husband. It doesn't matter how it is you can achieve everything [Milana begins speaking in German again] And the second letter is for German society. Yes I am an Arab woman, I wear a Hijab, but I am very very very very ah um open yeah open mind. I like sports, I like I play with my children everywhere in kindergarten [...] I don't have a problem with contact with men ah but of course there are boundaries. Ah I respect ah other religions and please please please everyone ah respect my religion [...] I can do things. I can work ah with a Hijab and without a Hijab. I am a person [...] Ah um I left um mhm I left Syria [...] or course because of war. Without war I love my uh my country and ah I had I had a good life in my country but unfortunately unfortunately that is what happened. But uh we are in Germany so that my children, or our children, can have and find a good future [...] and and and and yeah I hope I hope I hope in the future that everyone will understand us."

5.1.12 Summary

After analyzing the interviews and comparing the responses of the women in each section it is clear that experiences with integration are often individual. Not once did a situation arise that was experienced more by women in one city or state over another. When similarities did arise they were between certain groups of women in each city and state. Women who had arrived, or were born, in Germany before 2015 did not have the support from government agencies that women who had come after 2015 did. This did not matter if the women were in Cologne, Magdeburg, or Wuerzburg. Before 2015 the structures were simply not there. For women who had come as young children, or were born here, the process of becoming a naturalized German citizen was long and difficult and they felt caught between two cultures. Of the three young women who had been in Germany for over 20 years only one had been able to become German. The others were having difficulty due to German, and in the case of Bavaria, state laws. This was also the case for women with children born in Germany. It was German law, and documents required by local immigration authorities from the countries they had fled, which caused their children to be stateless. The issues of naturalization and statelessness were independent of the city or state the women were in excluding the situation in Bavaria regarding Kosovo and Serbia. In addition, women with young children, or women who had come as young children, did not have any help with learning about the school system in Germany or higher education. This caused disadvantages for them in gaining the specific requirements they needed for pursuing their desired studies. Discrimination and stereotyping were also experienced by all of the women regardless of where they were. The women in Magdeburg did experience the most intense forms of discrimination ranging from physical violence to being spit at. The women in Wuerzburg and Cologne were however also insulted and yelled at on the streets. Women who wore Hijabs described more situations of discrimination or stereotyping than those who did not. Women in Wuerzburg particularly discussed the difficulty of gaining employment or the reluctance of Germans to buy from sellers with Hijabs or to sit next to a woman with a Hijab on the bus. Intersectionality played a major role in the experiences of discrimination. Many of the women discussed being stereotyped or discriminated against because

of the group they were a part of, their appearance, and the color of their skin. Discrimination was not limited to one factor but made up of many. While the women noted that government agencies have continued to improve and provide more services for refugees, German society as a whole has seemed to stay the same or become worse regarding discrimination.

At the individual level each of the women demonstrated similar characteristics: they were highly motivated to learn German, determined to get a job, wanted contact with Germans, and were grateful to Germany and volunteers for allowing them to be here and assisting them in building their lives. The women avoided generalizations and seemed to separate instances of discrimination from Germans as a whole. They were open about what they had done to integrate into society, to discuss what they understood as integration, to give suggestions to other refugees on how they could better integrate, and to give suggestions to Germany on what could be improved. Based upon the results of the interviews concrete areas which require further evaluation and study have arisen: more focus on speaking in language classes, the naturalization process, the nationality of children born to refugee parents, assistance of government agencies most specifically immigration authorities, state of dependency on social services, support for abused women who have come through family reunification, support with pursuing education and gaining qualifications, getting information about the school system and higher education in Germany, discrimination and stereotyping by Germans and society as a whole, the generalization of female refugees most notably who wear Hijabs, and incorporating intersectionality into all aspects of integration . In addition, much can be done with the fact that female refugees want to learn German, they want to work, and they want contact with Germans. Combining the concrete areas of policy with the individual motivation and determination demonstrated by each woman can help to greatly assist in the evaluation and development of integration policy in the future. In addition, the results of the interviews have shown that the women are individuals and female refugees are not made up of one specific type of woman. Generalizations when developing integration policy or discussing issues regarding female refugees must thus be avoided as they may not truly represent this dynamic group of women.

6 Comparison of Integration Policy at the Federal, State, and City Level with the Interviews

The interviews are not only important for giving female refugees a space to speak and to have their voices heard but also to fill in the gap of information on their direct situation connected to integration policy. Through the interviews with the women it is possible to gain a full picture of integration policy in Germany. Most importantly if the policy is affecting the lives of the women and if the programs developed are reaching them. In this chapter the results of the policy analysis from chapter four will directly be compared with the findings of the interviews from chapter five. It will be broken up between the federal, state, and city level. Through this, initial findings will be gained on the effectiveness of policy and programs, where there are potential problems with reaching the intended target group, and if programs and policies are more effective on the federal, state, or city level or if there is no difference.

6.1 Federal Integration Policy and Programs

As discussed in chapter four, before the 'refugee crisis' began in 2015 female refugees were virtually absent from federal integration policy and debate on the topic. It was through the 'refugee crisis' that they entered the integration policy debate stage and became a target group for programs and policies. They however simply took on the rhetoric that had been used for immigrant women since 1998. They were generalized into one homogenous group represented by the suppressed, abused, childrearing, low-skilled, Muslim woman caught between two cultures, and with major integration deficits. A group that was victimized and needed special care and attention. They were quickly boxed into the realm of the family, as the 'other', and left there just as immigrant women had been before them. Here begins the first discrepancy with the findings of the interviews and federal integration policy: the generalization and depiction of female refugees. How female refugees are depicted plays a major role in which policies and programs will be developed for them. When looking at the interviews and the way the women who took part described themselves and their situation the generalization of the federal government could not be further from reality.

The group of women interviewed was a diverse and dynamic group. To homogenize them takes away from their unique experiences and portrays a false picture. It is true that the majority of the women interviewed were Muslim and that about half of them were mothers and married but they viewed themselves as much more. Reducing female refugees to being suppressed, abused, focused on raising their children and the family, low-skilled, caught between two cultures, and with major deficits almost insults and belittles the motivation and determination expressed by each woman interviewed. Abuse and being suppressed are very intimate experiences and not easily shared with others. One woman interviewed however did share her story of abuse by her husband but it did not define her.

She found the strength within herself and in the laws of a country she did not know, to separate from her husband, find her own path with her children, and begin to build a new life. She did not allow herself to remain a victim. When she does not view herself as a victim why does the federal government continue to? About half of the women interviewed had worked in Germany and just under half had some form of education or training in their country of origin or were gaining it in Germany. This is the very opposite of being low-skilled. Many of the women had university degrees and professional training. Major integration deficits were nowhere to be seen in the analysis of the interviews. The women all spoke German, they were highly motivated to continue improving their language skills, and each woman was determined to work in Germany. The question is thus why has the federal government decided to label refugee women in such a negative way? Why has the federal government decided to give into, and spread, stereotypes which connect female refugees with only deficits and difficulties? Female refugees are often depicted as being caught between two worlds: their 'traditional' culture and 'modern' German society. It is the case that the women interviewed who had either come to Germany as young children, or were born here, and had lived in Germany for at least 20 years felt caught between two cultures. This was however not solely due to their 'traditional' cultures. German society and their interaction with Germans played a major role in them not feeling like they belonged anywhere. They did not feel accepted by those from their culture or religion but also not by German friends and acquaintances. The federal government depicts the situation however as one where the women are being held back solely by their culture and that they need to be 'saved' and 'freed' by modern German society. As seen through the interviews this is however not the case. For the women to feel like they belong, Germans and German society need to begin to view these young women who have grown up here also as Germans and a part of society. Appearance has played a central role in the women feeling like they do not belong in German society. This acceptance, no matter how they look, can only come if German society, and the federal government, acknowledge their role in stereotyping and address the situation.

This false and homogenized depiction of female refugees in turn has a direct influence on the programs which will be implemented. In order to support female refugees the federal government has focused on programs and policies which protect them from violence, provide them with freedom and self-determination, increase their access to language courses through special courses for women, increase their participation (as mothers) onto the job market, and integrate them through sport. Although protecting women in general from violence is important, as already discussed in chapter four, there have been no concrete, long-term, representative studies showing that female refugees suffer higher rates of violence or abuse than other groups of women. Having this as a constant focus simply reinforces unfounded stereotypes pertaining to female refugees. The goal of the federal government to provide female refugees with self-determination and freedom is also admirable but based upon the

interviews may not be representative of the actual situation of female refugees. Almost every woman interviewed had the freedom to decide what she wanted to do with her life in Germany and was able to plan her own path and future. There were a few women who were told by their husbands that they had to stay at home with the children and they could not work, that they could not practice a certain type of sport because men were there, or that they could not have a certain job because men were also there. It is important to support these women but based upon the findings of the interviews they were not the majority. In addition, these women interviewed knew their rights in Germany and tried to go against their husbands wishes and understood if they had perhaps come as younger women they would view the situation with men differently. In constantly having this aspect as a focus at the federal level it paints a picture that all refugee women are suppressed and not able to make decisions for themselves which based upon the women interviewed is simply not the case.

The goal of the federal government to increase female refugee's access to language courses compared to the findings of the interviews supports a conclusion already made in chapter four. All of the women interviewed were extremely motivated to learn German. The women had either already taken German courses or were in the process of taking them. It was a minority of the women who had not yet had the opportunity due to having small children at home. Some women with small children were still able to take German courses because their language school offered daycare. None of the women were in special courses for women or parents. Something that has been focused on by the federal government in each integration plan and at each integration summit. Statistics after statistics have shown that most women are in regular integration courses and not in special courses, yet the federal government continues to push for these special courses. The findings from the interviews support the statistics from chapter four that the majority of women take regular integration courses. It must yet again be stated that if the federal government wants to improve female refugees' access to integration courses, they should guarantee childcare in all integration courses and not just special ones. In addition, most of the women stated that they needed more practice with speaking German as part of learning the language. This has however never been a topic of the federal government in regards to language acquisition demonstrating a disconnect between policy makers and the target group.

The federal government's push to integrate women through its program *Integration through Sport* has not made it to the women who were interviewed for this study. The topic of sports was only raised by women in Wuerzburg who wore Hijabs. They wanted to dispel stereotypes of women in Germany who wear Hijabs by stating that they enjoy doing sports and do not sit at home. None of the women however mentioned that they were a member of any sport club or organization. Their contact with Germans was based almost solely around experiences with volunteer groups or at work. Through these interviews it is apparent that this campaign by the federal government has not reached the

women interviewed in any of the states or cities. Any activities they do take part in have been organized by volunteer groups. Other concrete programs developed and supported by the federal government have been in the realm of employment. Supporting female refugee's integration onto the job market has been a main focus of the federal government. This would seem to match with the interviewed women's strong determination to work. In the development of programs however female refugees have continually been depicted as mothers, low-skilled, and disadvantaged. For the refugee women interviewed who arrived before 2012, and more specifically before 2015, there were no programs in place to assist them with accessing the labor market as refugee women were not yet a target group.

Between 1999 and 2017 ten short-term programs were developed and implemented by the federal government as described in detail in chapter four. These programs are listed in Table 12. Five of them were primarily for immigrant women, two of these were consequently expanded to include female refugees after 2015, and two of the ten programs were developed specifically for female refugees. At the time of this study of the ten short-term programs developed and implemented by the federal government only three of them were still running: *Stark im Beruf*, *PerF-W*, and *Frauen mit Fluchterfahrung gründen*. *Frauen mit Fluchterfahrung gründen* is however scheduled to end leaving only two programs active.

TABLE 12 Programs Implemented by the Federal Government for Immigrant and Refugee Women

| Duration | Name | Organizing Agency | Objectives | Target Group |
|----------|---|--|--|---|
| 1999* | INTEGRA-Project | European Social Fund as part of the EU joint programming initiative 'Employment' | Improve integration onto the job market | Immigrant and Refugee Women |
| 1999* | Neue Berufschancen für Migrantinnen | Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training | Improve chances of employment | Immigrant women (refugee women mentioned) |
| 2001* | Kompetenzen fördern – Berufliche Qualifizierung für Zielgruppen mit besonderem Förderbedarf | Federal Ministry of Education and Research | Create regional information centers | Immigrant Men and Women |
| 2002* | Aktionsprogramm Verbesserung der Bildungschancen von | Federal Ministry of Education and Research | Improve chances of obtaining vocational training and getting a job | Young immigrant men and women |

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--|--|---|--|
| | Migrantinnen und Migranten | | | |
| 2007* | NetWork.21 | Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth | Mentoring program for students to help them along their career path | Men and women with and without a migration background |
| 2012-2013 | Ressourcen stärken – Zukunft sichern: Erwerbsperspektiven für Mütter mit Migrationshintergrund | Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth | Improve employment opportunities and address the lack of information and reservations of employers | Mothers with a migration background |
| 2014-2020 | Stark im Beruf – Mütter mit Migrationshintergrund steigen ein | Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (European Social Fund) | Ease the transition onto the job market and improve access to already existing offers | Mothers with a migration background – As of 2015 refugee women who are mothers |
| 2015 (for two years) | Migrantinnen gründen – Existenzgründung von Migrantinnen | Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth together with jump – Ihr Sprungbrett in die Selbständigkeit e.V. | Support with starting a business or company | Women with a migration background |
| 2016 – present | Perspektiven für weibliche Flüchtlinge – Potentiale identifizieren, Integration ermöglichen (PerF-W) | Federal Employment Agency | Support in gaining knowledge of the job market, assistance with finding childcare, information on the educational and vocational systems, information on the application process, gain job experience in companies, and improve language skills for the job | Female Refugees |
| 2017-2019 | Frauen mit Fluchterfahrung gründen | Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and | Support with starting a business or company | Female Refugees |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | Youth together with jump – Ihr Sprungbrett in die Selbständigkeit e.V. | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|

* The exact date or duration of the program was not possible to find

Stark im Beruf – Mütter mit Migrationshintergrund steigen ein is the program most often referenced by the federal government as its most ‘successful’ and impactful program for immigrant women and female refugees. This program is however not nationwide but only in certain cities. Of the cities where interviews were conducted it was only located in Cologne. Furthermore, as already discussed in chapter four, the program is coordinated in the city by one organization in cooperation with the Job Center, the *Volkshochschule*, and one other organization. There is no obvious connection between it and the city itself. There is no information on the impact of the program, how women can become a part of it, or how many women have taken part. The program was launched in 2014, at least 20 years after the majority of the women interviewed in Cologne had arrived. They were attempting to find a job and integrate onto the job market during a time when such projects did not exist. Therefore, based upon this study it is not possible to know if female refugees are coming into contact with the program. It is important to note that the organization coordinating the program in Cologne has listed women with migration backgrounds as its target group. Female refugees are not mentioned. The question is then if female refugees are even being informed about the project in Cologne. Many of the women interviewed in Cologne could be able to take advantage of the program due to falling into the target group. This begs the further question if perhaps the program is only focused on newly arrived immigrants or if those who arrived before the implementation of the program are also being targeted.

Two federal programs were developed focused on assisting women with starting their own businesses: *Migrantinnen gründen* (2015 and 2016) for women with a migration background and *Frauen mit Fluchterfahrung gründen* (2017-2019) for female refugees. Two of the women interviewed for this study had started their own businesses together with their husbands. They however did not have any assistance from either of these federal programs or any program for that matter. They either founded their business themselves or had support from German friends. A final program, *Perspektiven für weibliche Flüchtlinge – Potentiale identifizieren, Integration ermöglichen*, was introduced by the BA in 2016. None of the women who were working, or had worked in Germany, had had any support from this program, or any other, in finding a job. Assistance from the Job Center in finding a job was highly dependent on who the employee was and if the women felt like they were helpful or not. Many of the women described situations of being offered low-skilled jobs by the Job Center although they had university degrees or professional qualifications.

When comparing federal integration policy with the findings of the interviews two main conclusions emerge. First, the federal government is potentially depicting and describing female refugees in ways that do not match reality. They are minimizing them to specific characteristics or difficulties that do not represent the reality of female refugee's lives as based upon the interviews. The federal government is using and perpetuating stereotypes which in turn is supporting the questionable narrative of female refugees which currently exists in German political and public debate. Secondly, based upon the interviews in this study the programs developed by the federal government are not reaching their intended target group. Where the female refugees interviewed have all taken general integration classes and want more practice with speaking, the federal government is pushing for special integration courses that only a minority of women take. The women interviewed for this study are highly motivated to work and are finding jobs either on their own, through German friends and acquaintances, or with assistance from the Job Center. They have not received assistance from any programs developed and financed by the federal government. The major campaign *Integration through Sport* is also not reaching female refugees. These initial findings are extremely impactful. Although this study is non-representative the conclusions cannot be denied. It is therefore highly important that these findings be taken seriously and more in-depth and representative research be done about the possible difficulties of federal programs and campaigns to reach female refugees and the potentially misrepresentative depiction of this group of women that the federal government is perpetuating.

6.2 State Integration Policies and Programs

Since 2007 when the first *Nationaler Integrationsplan* was released, integration has been an official policy priority of the German states. They carved out various (voluntary) obligations for themselves along with areas of responsibility. For the states however, integration could only happen when all groups were involved: the federal government, states, cities, and civil society. In 2012 with the *Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration* the states reiterated their commitment to integration. They highlighted however that their work was dependent on the decisions of the federal government. They could only take action and implement integration measures within the federal framework. They were further influenced by budget decisions at the federal level. Female refugees were however not mentioned as a specific target group for integration at the state level in either the NIP or the NAP. The focus was on women and girls with a migration background in the areas of education, vocational training, employment, equal opportunities, and self-determination. In this section the integration policies and programs of North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria, and Saxony-Anhalt will be compared with the findings of the results of the interviews. The goal is to discover if their integration policies and

programs have impacted the lives of the women interviewed or if the women have come into contact with them.

6.2.1 North Rhine-Westphalia

North Rhine-Westphalia is viewed as the 'integration state' of Germany. On February 14, 2012 the official act on integration entitled *Gesetz zur Förderung der gesellschaftlichen Teilhabe und Integration in Nordrhein-Westfalen (Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz)* was enacted. It focused most prominently on equal participation and creating legally anchored structures within the state to manage local integration policy. Neither women nor men were however directly referenced in the *Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz* meaning also that no specific role or focus on female refugees was discussed. It was not until 2016 that a list of programs specifically for female refugees in the state was compiled and made available. The very first studies on the situation of female immigrants were subsequently released in 2017.

Almost all of the women interviewed in Cologne had been in Germany for at least 30 years. Most of them had remained in NRW since arriving in Germany. This means that they were in the unique position to have experienced the long-term development of integration policy and society regarding the topic in the state. Despite this, the women did not discuss or comment on any programs they were familiar with in the state or specific activities they knew about or had been involved in. There is one important reason for this: no specific programs focusing on female refugees existed in NRW until 2007. At that time most of the women interviewed had already been in the state for at least 20 years. As discussed during the interviews they had to find their own way. There were no structures or programs in place to recognize the qualifications they brought with them, there were no projects to help them find a job, and the Job Center and immigration authorities were, according to them, not nearly as helpful as they are today. Many of the women had older children who also would have grown up in the state during a time when the programs did not yet exist. For the two women interviewed in NRW who had come in 2017 after specific programs had been implemented, neither one spoke of any state programs or activities they knew about. One of these women was traumatized due to the reasons she had to flee Iran and her son having been killed while imprisoned there. The other woman focused on her new found freedom and equality as a woman and was taking German classes. These two women rather had support and contact with other refugee women, and German women, through volunteer groups and took advantage of activities organized by these groups and local organizations.

Another reason why the women may not have come into contact with any state programs or projects is because the majority of the programs and projects were not statewide but rather coordinated in certain areas and cities or focused on certain groups of women. If a woman does not live in a city with a program funded by the state or does not fit into the target group of a program,

then she will of course not benefit from or come into contact with it. This was also the case for the women interviewed in NRW. For example, between 2007 and the end of 2014 a state initiative was developed called *NetzwerkW: Netzwerke(n) für den qualifizierten Wiedereinstieg*. Through this initiative 25 local activities were funded in order to support re-entry back into the work force. The target group was however only women with a migration background. Female refugees were not mentioned. By 2007 the women interviewed for this study in NRW already had jobs and did not need such assistance. If however they had needed this type of support, and one of the 25 local activities did not take place in Cologne, then they would not have had access to it anyway. A second project was developed in 2013 as part of the state initiative to help women find employment. The project was entitled *Herzlich Willkommen in der Altenpflege*. It targeted both women with a migration background and female refugees with the goal of gaining them as employees in the field of elderly care. None of the women interviewed in NRW however stated that they worked in this field. One woman had been a nurse and did her training in Germany but this program did not exist at that time.

In 2015 the state created and implemented the project *Beratung und Unterstützung von Gewalt betroffenen Flüchtlingsfrauen*. This time the target group was only female refugees. It was the first concept of its kind nationwide offering counselling and therapy for traumatized female refugees. One of the women interviewed in NRW was traumatized due to her experiences and reasons for fleeing. The target group for the program in NRW however was for female refugees affected by intimate partner violence, rape, FGM, or gender-related persecution. Her trauma was based on political persecution. She arrived in NRW in 2017 when the project was scheduled to end in 2018 due to the low numbers of refugees coming to the state. It appeared during the interview that she did not have any professional counselling to help her with her trauma. She was extremely anxious and full of fear for herself and her family in case Germany told them one day they had to go back to Iran. Her support seemed to come from the other female refugees at the women's breakfast where the interview took place.

One of the state's biggest projects was *Spin – Sport interkulturell*. It was started in 2007 with the goal of enabling sports clubs to better take on the long-term role of facilitating integration into their neighborhoods. The target group was children and adolescents with a migration background, particularly young women and girls. Female refugees were not mentioned as a specific group. The women interviewed in NRW, along with their children, no longer fit into the target group of the program as they were all adults by the time it was developed. Nonetheless, the project was only implemented in five cities in the state: Duisburg, Essen, Gelsenkirchen, Oberhausen, and Recklinghausen. Even if the women, or their children, had met the criteria they would not have had access to the project due to being in Cologne.

The analysis of integration policy and programs in NRW in chapter four did find that NRW reacted quickly during the 'refugee crisis' to support female refugees and implemented some projects which were first of their kind nationwide for example the app *RefuShe*. Nonetheless, these projects are targeted either at specific groups of women or only implemented in certain cities in the state. When comparing the state programs with the findings from the interviews it is evident that the women interviewed did not have any contact or connection with state-run programs and initiatives due to living in the city of Cologne. Furthermore, for programs that were statewide such as supporting women to start a job in elderly care or to assist traumatized female refugees, the women interviewed did not fit into either of these groups. Therefore it could be seen that they had multiple barriers, created by the state, which kept them from benefiting from state-run initiatives: 1) The majority had arrived at least 20 years before the first programs for immigrant and refugee women were implemented and before the enactment of the *Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz*, 2) They were not located in a city where major state programs and projects were implemented, and 3) They did not match the target group of state programs and projects. Due to this it can be concluded that there is a high chance that female refugees in NRW do not encounter programs implemented and funded by the state government and its various ministries. Therefore, NRW state integration policies and programs may play a negligible role in the integration of female refugees. It must however be said, and it was acknowledged by the women interviewed in NRW for this study, that the government agencies have improved since the enactment of the Immigration Law in Germany and the implementation of the various federal integration policies. It must be highlighted however that this improvement was attributed to federal integration and not state policy.

The results of the interviews in this study did however support the findings of a qualitative study in NRW on the situation of female refugees released in August of 2017. It was released by the organization *innovaBest* and funded by *NetzwerkW* as well as the North Rhine-Westphalia Ministry for Community, Building, and Equality. The study was non-representative but gave a first look into the lives of female refugees in the state. The study found, in contrast to public perception, that the female refugees interviewed were well educated and highly motivated to work. They were ready to start further education measures and understood the importance of learning German. They were motivated, strong, and optimistic. These are similar findings from the interviews conducted in NRW for this study. Further qualitative studies which took place in NRW, described in chapter four, also came to similar conclusions and that more programs needed to be offered in order to assist women for example in gaining employment. The information is thus available for policy makers in NRW that their programs are not reaching the intended target group and that female refugees have been potentially misrepresented in public perceptions. They have however not yet acted upon this information to improve (access to) integration programs and policies within the state.

6.2.2 Bavaria

The *Bayerisches Integrationsgesetz* was passed on December 13, 2016 and came into effect on January 1, 2017. It was influenced by the debates surrounding the 'refugee crisis' in 2015 and 2016. Its main focus was on the cultural integration of immigrants. Christian traditions and values were important to the law as well as education and learning the German language. Female refugees were directly referenced in the *Integrationsgesetz* although no role or specific place for them within the law was created. On its website the STMI acknowledged that the integration success of immigrant women was essential for that of their whole family. It also commended their attitude, willingness, and drive. The goal of Bavarian integration policy was thus to support them with their integration efforts to the best of its ability. Female refugees were however not directly named.

In contrast to NRW, Bavarian integration policy and programs are fairly new and most were implemented after 2015, except for one in 2013. Also unlike in NRW, the majority of the women interviewed in Bavaria had come just before, during, or after the enactment of the *Integrationsgesetz* and the development of programs. A major difference between NRW and Bavaria was the amount of information available. It was quite easy to find all programs and studies related to female refugees in NRW as transparency, monitoring, and sharing information was an important part of its *Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz*. This was not the case in Bavaria. The state did not mandate itself to share information or to monitor the effectiveness of its integration policy and respective programs. It was therefore not as easy to find all possible programs or studies. Nonetheless, five projects and programs were found which were funded by the state and its various ministries, as detailed in chapter four, which could be compared with the findings from the interviews conducted in Bavaria.

At the time of this study, four projects (named below) were listed on the STMI's website as model programs they were funding in order to reach and assist immigrant women. Only one of these programs, *JUNO – eine Stimme für Flüchtlingsfrauen*, specifically targeted female refugees. Although these programs are funded by the state, just as with NRW, they are coordinated by various groups in individual cities. There are no statewide programs initiated and coordinated specifically for female refugees by the state government. The project *Lebenswirklichkeit in Bayern – ein Projekt für Frauen und Kinder mit Migrationshintergrund*, which was launched in 2017, is only coordinated in the cities of Munich, Regensburg, Nuremberg, Prien am Chiemsee, Kronach, Schweinfurt, and Aschaffenburg. A second program financed since 2013, *Starke Mütter – Starke Kinder*, is only active in the city of Erlenbach am Main and the surrounding area. A further program funded by the STMI focuses on contact points for immigrant women. It is coordinated by the *Interkulturelles Begegnungszentrum für Frauen e.V.*. There was no information on STMI's website where the program was located. Upon further research however Schweinfurt was found as a possible location. The fourth and final project

listed was initiated in the city of Munich specifically for female refugees in 2016: *JUNO – eine Stimme für Flüchtlingsfrauen*.

It is commendable that Bavaria has immigrant women as a target group but a focus on female refugees is missing. The comparison between the programs offered by the state and the findings from the interviews must thus stop here. The women interviewed for this study were located in Wuerzburg. Only one program funded by the state government, however not listed on the STMI's website as being directly funded by them, is coordinated by the city. This means that outside of this one program the women interviewed did not have access to them. This also hints at the possible situation that Wuerzburg has not created any programs for female refugees, at least listed by the STMI, that have gained funding from the state government. The program which is funded by the state government and coordinated in Wuerzburg is *Mother Schools*. The goal of the project is to sensitize mothers, regardless of their background, to the dangers of radical ideologies and to give them the tools to be able to prevent their children from becoming radicalized. Just as with the programs and projects listed on the STMI website, *Mother Schools* are only coordinated in certain cities. None of the women interviewed in Wuerzburg with children however discussed the topic of radicalization. It played no part in their life in general or in their integration. Therefore, at least for the women interviewed in this study, the project was of no relevance to them although it was located in their city.

Just as with NRW, the location of the women in Bavaria seems to play an important role in if they receive any support or have access to programs and projects funded and developed by the state government and its ministries. If the women are not in the coordinating cities then they do not profit from them. If a project or program is coordinated in the city where a woman is, as with Wuerzburg and *Mother Schools*, their access or use for the program is dependent on the target group just as in NRW. In the case of Bavaria and Wuerzburg the target group was very specific: mothers worried about radicalization. If the women do not fit into this target group, as was the case with this study, then they do not need the program. The same can thus be said for Bavaria as for NRW: state integration policies and programs may play a negligible role in the integration of female refugees. In addition, of the five programs and projects listed which are funded by Bavaria, only one of them is specifically for female refugees. This makes the hurdle even higher for female refugees to benefit from integration policies funded and developed by the state.

6.2.3 Saxony-Anhalt

As discussed in chapter four, Saxony-Anhalt does not have an integration act.²⁷ Integration policy in Saxony-Anhalt has largely been guided and led by federal integration policy. The state did create a type

²⁷ After the writing of this study Saxony-Anhalt passed the *Landesintegrationskonzept Sachsen-Anhalts* on December 23, 2020. It listed seven areas of focus and had intercultural opening, language acquisition, and societal engagement and participation of and for immigrants as main priorities. Refugee women were specifically mentioned. Instead of dedicating a

of integration monitoring and released reports between 2011 and 2016 to assist in guiding integration in the state. In addition, a commission was developed to look more closely at the integration situation of immigrant women within the state and what could be done to assist them with integration. There was however no information on the results of the commission and the workshops which took place. In addition, female refugees were not mentioned as a target group. Due to the changing migration situation and legal framework nationwide, as well as the new diversity of immigrants within the state, the state government felt it was time to develop an integration act. It thus began the process in 2019. Based upon this there are no known programs or projects in place specifically for female refugees supported by the state government and focused on the various aspects of integration. A comparison between state policies and the results of the interviews with women in Saxony-Anhalt is thus not possible.

As discussed in chapter four, statewide campaigns to focus more on, and assist, female refugees, and immigrant women, seem to be coming from the IQ Network of Saxony-Anhalt and the Caritas Association for the Diocese of Magdeburg. Together, these organizations have organized events on various topics important for immigrant women and female refugees and have always invited the Commissioner for Integration of Saxony-Anhalt. Statewide offers coordinated by the IQ Network focused on assisting female refugees, and immigrant women, with finding jobs are funded and supported not by the state but by the ESF and the Federal Ministry for Labor and Social Affairs. Although the Caritas Association for the Diocese of Magdeburg has worked on creating flyers and developing support for female refugees, and immigrant women, throughout the state, the majority of its work is conducted in Magdeburg. It is important to note that the women interviewed in Magdeburg did not mention getting any support from the IQ Network but all of them knew the Caritas Association for the Diocese of Magdeburg and the various offers they had for female refugees. Many of them had or were taking part in their various offers and programs.

6.2.4 Comparison

The initial findings which have arisen in comparing the results from the interviews with those from the policy analyses of each state from chapter four are quite surprising and insightful. There are two trends which can be seen. Firstly, a strong focus on female refugees is lacking in each state regardless of if there is an integration act or not. Even without an integration act, Saxony-Anhalt created a commission to look at the situation of immigrant women and how they could best be supported. Female refugees were not mentioned. Bavaria and NRW also focus more strongly on supporting immigrant women with integration or when developing programs and projects. In both NRW and Bavaria there was only one

section of the integration concept to them, the state decided to consider them as a specific target group in every area of focus. Projects and programs connected to integration were also mentioned in the integration concept. Information that otherwise was not possible to find while conducting the research for the study.

project funded by the state which targeted only female refugees. It is however important to note that there was one other project in NRW which was developed with both female refugees and immigrant women in mind. It is apparent that female refugees are underrepresented and there is an overall lack of information and understanding of their situation in each of the states. Much still needs to be done in order to gain an understanding of the situation of female refugees, what needs they have, and how they can best be supported. Through this initial study it seems that when a state does have an integration act there is a higher likelihood that female refugees may at least be included in programs with immigrant women if there are no programs specifically for them. This hints at the importance of state integration acts in perhaps setting the tone for a state to focus more on integration and to try to assist all groups.

Secondly, in states with integration acts and programs with female refugees as a target group, a woman's access to these programs is highly dependent on where she lives in the state. In both NRW and Bavaria there were no statewide programs. Each program targeting female refugees, and immigrant women, was limited to just a few cities. If a woman does not live in one of the cities coordinating a state-run or funded program, then she has no access to it. In addition, many of the programs had specific target groups: vocational training in elderly care, de-radicalization of children, traumatization through gender-based forms of violence, and others. If a woman lives in a city where such state programs are coordinated, but does not fit into the target group, then she also cannot take part in it and benefit. Based upon the results of the interviews it seems that there may be a disconnect between the focus of the programs offered by states and the needs of the women. What connected all of the women interviewed in each of the three states was that they were motivated to learn German and wanted more opportunities to practice speaking, they were determined to work, and they wanted more contact with Germans. Almost none of the projects and programs run or funded by the state governments in Bavaria and NRW focused intensely on any of these aspects. One program in NRW did have re-entry onto the job market as its focus but has ended. A second program in NRW focused only on gaining immigrant women and female refugees as employees in elderly care. This is a very important point. It leads to the question why programs and projects are being developed and implemented that do not seem to match what female refugees really need. As has been noted numerous times in this study female refugees are a very heterogeneous group. Nonetheless, through the interviews it became apparent that there were similarities between all of the women regardless of their background, their religion, their age, their skin color, or where they were located. The programs and projects that Bavaria and NRW offer seem to reflect the image of female refugees perpetuated on the federal level. Projects and programs are then developed or funded based upon this. As was already discussed when comparing federal policies with the findings of the interviews, this image of female refugees seems to be misleading and based upon stereotypes. The question must then be asked what

consequences it can have if state governments are funding and creating projects and programs for women that are rather based upon stereotypes instead of reality? An answer to this may lie with the results of this study: they simply are not reaching the intended audience.

Based upon the results of the comparison with the interviews and the integration policies of the three states, state programs and policies seem to play a marginal role, if at all, in the lives of many female refugees. The effectiveness of state integration policies and programs regarding female refugees has been brought into question throughout this analysis. Although non-representative, it has provided important initial findings which must be looked into further. States must vastly increase their knowledge and information on the female refugees who live there, reassess if they are simply following and spreading stereotypes regarding this group of women, and look at if the focus of their programs and projects truly match the reality of the female refugees they are targeting.

6.3 City Integration Policies and Programs

It has been recognized on the federal, state, and local level that integration takes place locally first and foremost. Before the federal government enacted the Immigration Act in 2005, began organizing integration summits in 2006, and began creating official integration policies in 2007, the job of integration in Germany had been left to cities and local communities. Before the states officially acknowledged their role in integration through the NIP in 2007 and began enacting their own state integration acts and policies, it was again the cities and local communities responsible for integration within a state. Integration offers and assistance within each city is however highly dependent on the circumstances there. Most importantly financially. This was discussed in chapter four. In this section the results of the interviews with the women will be compared with the results of the analyses of the integration policies in Cologne, Wuerzburg, and Magdeburg from chapter four in order to discover if they are effective, if women are able to access them, and if they focus on the actual needs of the women.

6.3.1 Cologne

In 2011 the city of Cologne passed and enacted the *Konzept zur Stärkung der integrativen Stadtgesellschaft*. In every section of the document women with a migration background were mentioned including female refugees with regards to areas such as health and language. Both of these groups therefore were taken into account with the development of the concept for the city. Cologne also has a *Kommunales Integrationszentrum* which is anchored in the NRW *Teilhabe- und Integrationsgesetz*. These community integration centers are viewed as the central structures in all cities in NRW from which integration policies are to be coordinated and integration supported. As discussed in chapter four the integration center in Cologne offers a variety of programs, most often

connected to education, for immigrants and refugees. In addition to the integration center the city itself offers an array of support and information for all immigrants and refugees. As stated in chapter four, the city itself does not seem to fund or support any projects specifically for female refugees. The question arose however if such programs were necessary in a city like Cologne with a strong structure to support integration and a concrete concept on integration which includes female refugees. Due to there being no programs specifically for female refugees funded or supported by the city it is not possible to conduct a comparison on their effectiveness in regards to the results of the interviews with the women in Cologne. In addition, it is important to note that almost all of the women interviewed in Cologne had been living in the city for at least 30 years. They had thus been in the city long before integration centers were created or a concept for enhancing integration in the city had been enacted.

Despite having built their lives in the city before integration became a main policy focus, almost all of the woman expressed their appreciation for being in a country with freedom, democracy, and equality between men and women. They were able to find the work they wanted and their children had been able to study and start their own careers. One woman often referred to Cologne as a 'welfare state'. She stated that the structures in the city, the immigration authority, and the Job Center had improved over the years and more of an effort was being made in the city to assist female refugees. She commented however that there is still discrimination against women who do not speak German. They are sometimes denied a spot in women's shelters or are not accepted for counselling or assistance due to a lack of language skills. It is also difficult for women to find a job. In addition, the lack of affordable housing in Cologne sometimes leads to situations where women are forced to stay longer in reception facilities although they could move out or those suffering from abuse by their husbands must continue to live with them. She emphasized however that despite these few problems things in the city were constantly improving.

The women interviewed in Cologne seemed to be happy with their life there and some even expressed pride at what they and their families had achieved. Some of them had even lived in other cities previously but wanted to move to Cologne specifically to live there. This was before integration was a main policy focus in the city. A lack of specific programs for female refugees funded and developed directly by the city was not a topic and did not seem to negatively affect the women's overall integration experiences. The improvement in government agencies was the only specific topic discussed regarding the city. These improvements were however attributed to changes at the federal level, as well as the work of NGOs, regarding integration and not the local level. The women in Cologne seemed to have been successful, based upon their descriptions, in creating a life for themselves that they were happy with without having had any programs or specific structures in place to assist them at that time. It is suggested that further interviews be conducted with women in Cologne who arrived

around the same time or after specific integration structures and policies were implemented in the city to see if that makes any difference in the integration experiences of women in the city.

6.3.2 Wuerzburg

The city of Wuerzburg officially released its integration concept in April 2019. This concept was looked at in detail in chapter four. Female refugees were specifically mentioned as a target group. The city felt they needed particular attention due to the fact that they, according to the city, had more difficulty in accessing education offers, as well as the job market, due to a lack of childcare possibilities, family structures, and gender roles. Through its integration concept Wuerzburg seemed to view female refugees first and foremost as mothers within the realm of the family. It focused strongly on gender roles and family situations in connection to difficulties for women. It must be said that the city supports and offers a variety of programs for immigrants as well as specific ones for immigrant women and female refugees. In the integration concept for the city it was stated that more focus needed to be put on integration onto the job market for immigrant women and female refugees. The city has however not developed or presented any programs related to this which could be found. The programs that it offers and supports are centered on supporting the integration of Muslim women, women's groups, language courses, swimming courses, assistance with local authorities, parenting skills, play groups for female refugees with their children, sport and recreational activities, and a course on how to learn to ride a bicycle. The city of Wuerzburg also directly coordinates the project *Mother Schools* funded by the Bavarian state government discussed earlier. This is in contrast to the federal program *Stark im Beruf* in Cologne. The program is funded by the federal government but is *not* coordinated by the city of Cologne but rather an organization.

The programs funded and supported by the city of Wuerzburg and the image portrayed of female refugees does not match with what was discussed by the women interviewed. Wuerzburg seemed to fall into the same trap of stereotyping this group of women as the federal government had. It portrayed them first and foremost as mothers and emphasized difficulties. Although many of the women interviewed in Wuerzburg were mothers, like the other women interviewed they were independent, motivated, and full of determination. Being a mother was only one aspect of who they were and they did not view themselves as disadvantaged. Through the interviews in Wuerzburg it became clear that the women wanted to work, and many of them had, but there were certain difficulties with obtaining the needed qualifications and perceived discrimination based upon wearing a Hijab and appearance. Two of the women wanted to pursue vocational training in elderly care. For one woman the Job Center would not support her in obtaining the required school certificate in order to begin training. She was lucky to meet a woman at an application assistance center who supported her and sent letters encouraging the Job Center to support her studies and training. The Job Center

ultimately did. For the other woman she had already started her vocational training in elderly care when the immigration authority in Wuerzburg made her end it prematurely to work but then subsequently denied her a work visa. Instead of supporting and acting out the integration concept of the city, these two government agencies worked against a main focus of promoting the education and employment of female refugees. Also related to education, one of the women interviewed in Wuerzburg had immense difficulty in working through the process required for recognizing her degree from Syria, mostly due to the translations and certifications, and in applying to study at the university. Despite the city stating in its integration concept that it wanted to do more to assist female refugees with education, there was no program in place to help this young woman. The topic of discrimination when applying for a job due to being a Muslim and wearing a Hijab was most present in the interviews with women in Wuerzburg. The city has created a program with Muslim women as its main target. Breaking down stereotypes within the city is however not a stated objective of the program. The program for Muslim women is focused on language courses, women's cafes, and parenting skills. Based upon the interviews however this is not what the Muslim women interviewed needed.

Some of the women interviewed in Wuerzburg discussed steps a woman needed to take in order to build her life here and to find a job. She first needed to learn the language, gain the qualifications she needed, and then have the opportunity to apply for jobs. One woman looked down upon the promotion of activities such as learning how to ride a bicycle when women first arrive. She felt that this was the wrong priority. For her learning how to ride a bicycle was nice but it is not a foundation for starting a life here. Integration programs should work on qualifying the women and giving them the language skills they need. When looking at the programs supported and offered by the city of Wuerzburg they are for the most part programs that, according to this woman and others, do not provide any important foundation for a woman to integrate and improve herself.

It must be said that in comparison with Cologne, Wuerzburg offers many programs and has put in a lot of effort to advertise these offers on various platforms. Out of all of the women interviewed in each of the cities for this study only two of them had taken part in activities or programs for women. Those two women were in Wuerzburg. One of them has attended meetings coordinated by the Family Support Center (*Familienstützpunkt*). She knew that this offer came directly from the city. She however only learned about it through another female refugee who had attended meetings. Other than learning about the meetings through a friend she was not sure how other women could learn about them. Despite this it seems that this offer has been advertised well enough that it is making it to some female refugees. In addition, this woman also sometimes took her children to a swimming program organized only for women so that they could go swimming without men there. The woman did not say the name of the program but simply called it an 'integration program'. It is led by volunteers and run by an organization in the city. It is not possible to know if it is funded or supported by the city in any way.

The other woman in Wuerzburg took a course called *Alltag in Deutschland* offered by a language school in the city specifically for women. Although the title was centered on Germany, the content was a combination of information pertaining to life in Germany as well as in Bavaria. The woman said that it was organized by a specific organization that does a lot for women in the city. It is however not possible to know if the course is funded by the city, the state, the federal government, or if it is something that the organization developed itself. Nonetheless, the course was advertised widely and did seem to reach its intended target group.

Although the city of Wuerzburg seems to be portraying an image of female refugees that does not match the findings from the interviews, its integration concept has picked up on and has focused on those topics most important to the women interviewed: employment and education. It is unfortunate that the programs supported and funded by the city however do not seem to reflect this and government agencies are appearing to work against it. The integration concept is however new and should be reviewed again to see if more programs have been introduced which focus on employment and education. Particularly in regards to women wearing Hijabs and their difficulty in obtaining jobs in Wuerzburg. Although it was only two women who mentioned contact with programs in the city this is encouraging. In comparison with the states of NRW, Saxony-Anhalt, Bavaria, and the city of Cologne, Wuerzburg is the only one which has potentially reached female refugees with some of its offers. If the city continues to develop its integration concept and programs to better represent female refugees, and offers them programs which truly support their needs, it could create an environment where these women are perhaps getting the support they need and, most importantly, access to the programs.

6.3.3 Magdeburg

Magdeburg began its focus on integration before Cologne or Wuerzburg. It first began viewing integration as a policy priority in 2003. As described in chapter four, the city viewed itself as cosmopolitan and thought that integration had to play a role in every aspect of the city. It developed an official conceptual framework on integration in 2006. Immigrant women and girls were mentioned throughout the document but female refugees were not. As has been the trend, Magdeburg viewed immigrant women only in the realm of difficulties, gender-based violence, and discrimination. Just as in Cologne and Wuerzburg, Magdeburg offers an array of information and assistance to immigrants and there are programs specifically for immigrant women. Only a few are however directly funded or coordinated by the city and they are mostly in the area of violence prevention and support. There is one information center which is funded by the city with a focus on integration onto the job market. It is open to male and female immigrants with special courses for women providing childcare. None of the programs however list female refugees as a target group. Due to this no projects or programs were

found in the city focused on this group of women. A comparison between the programs and the results of the interviews with women in Magdeburg can thus not take place as was the case with Cologne. The overall situation of female refugees in relation to the focus on integration by the city can however be compared.

Just like the women in Cologne and Wuerzburg, the women in Magdeburg were highly motivated and determined. Although each experience was individual, each woman expressed a desire to continue to improve their language skills and to obtain employment. Despite the wide array of offers for immigrant women by the city none of the female refugees mentioned having taken part in a program or project. Instead, each woman had at least once gained support from the Caritas Association in the city and knew of their offers and services. Many even spoke of specific assistance they had received. This echoes the analysis on the state of Saxony-Anhalt in comparison with the interviews. It has been the Caritas Association, along with the IQ Network Saxony-Anhalt, which has led the push in the state to put more focus on female refugees and to offer them more support. Caritas appears to be doing an effective job of reaching this group of women and assisting them. It became apparent during the interviews that when looking for help the women would first go to Caritas before inquiring for assistance from a government agency or information center in the city. This brings into question the overall effectiveness of the integration policy the city has had since 2003 and officially implemented in 2006. The Caritas has seem to become the first stop for female refugees pertaining to aspects of their integration. Another important finding when comparing integration policy in the city with the interviews is connected to discrimination. Although integration has long been a policy focus of the city, the women in Magdeburg faced the most intense forms of discrimination in comparison with the others including physical violence. The question arises why the city has not done more to counter discrimination when this has been a focus since 2003. Some of the women did however mention that structures were improving in the city and that, at least, the Job Center was becoming more helpful and providing more assistance to refugees. The immigration authority on the other hand was viewed negatively by many of the women and no changes or developments had been seen throughout the years.

The conceptual framework for integration policy in Magdeburg is in the process of being changed. The project *Integrationskonzept 2020-2023* has been developed and workshops have been taking place throughout the city focusing on various aspects of integration. The results are scheduled to be presented in the first quarter of 2020. It is important to follow the development of the concept to see if female refugees do become a target group and if specific programs or projects are then developed or funded as a result. In addition, the role of the Caritas Association within the city should continue to be studied. Based upon the interviews it was only in Magdeburg that an organization played such a central role in the integration of female refugees. This does not mean that they do not

in the other cities, but it was only the women in Magdeburg who discussed their connection to such an organization. It is important to follow the development of the Caritas Association in the city, and the state, to see if they continue to be one of the main drivers in pushing for more support and programs for female refugees. If so, it must be asked what this means for the city and its integration policies and programs and if they perhaps are not regarded as important or essential as those from Caritas. If that is the case it should be looked at further if this is something negative or if it represents another aspect of integration policy within states and cities that did not come out in the analysis in chapter four.

6.3.4 Comparison

The analyses in this section were short but that does not mean they were not insightful or complete. Out of three cities looked at only one supported, funded, and promoted programs specifically for female refugees: Wuerzburg. Wuerzburg was however the last city to develop and enact an official integration concept in 2019. In addition, it was only in Wuerzburg that women had come into contact with integration programs, special courses for women, or informational meetings coordinated by the city. It was however not possible to know if all of these were directly sponsored by the city or rather by local organizations, the state, or the federal government. Despite this, based upon the interviews it cannot be concluded that the cities are effective in reaching or supporting female refugees. Just as at the federal level, each city seems to be depicting an image of female refugees which does not necessarily match that of the women interviewed. As a result, when programs were developed or supported by the city, even if just for immigrant women, they were not in areas that female refugees specifically needed support in: employment, education, and speaking German. The women in each city seemed to get support and assistance either from German friends and acquaintances or local organizations and associations. Many of them were however simply finding their way on their own.

What this section has uncovered is that it may not make a difference how long a city has been focused on integration policy or how long an official integration concept has been in place. Magdeburg has the longest history with integration policy and incorporating it into all aspects of the city. Despite this, the women interviewed in Magdeburg faced the most intense forms of discrimination and were looking for support from associations and not from the city. Wuerzburg on the other hand has only had an official integration concept since 2019 but has been able to reach female refugees with some of its programs. Although Cologne has also had an integration concept longer than Wuerzburg there are no specific programs for female refugees. The improvements in government and local agencies are attributed by the women in Cologne to changes at the federal level. Cologne was described as a 'welfare state' by one of the women but this was not in direct connection to integration.

Based upon this analysis, initial findings suggest that integration policies and programs of cities may play a marginal role, if at all, in the integration of female refugees. It seems to be luck if women take part in programs or projects advertised or funded by the city. The combination of a depiction of female refugees that may not match reality with programs that are not centered on areas in which female refugees need support seems to lead to the situation where female refugees may not benefit from policies or programs created or supported by the city. It is important that more research is done on integration policies and programs in cities in combination with interviews with female refugees. These initial findings could have important consequences for the development of integration policies and programs in cities and should be studied further.

6.4 Comparison

When comparing the findings of the analyses of the integration policies on the federal, state, and city levels from chapter four with the results of the interviews with female refugees from chapter five, two similarities become apparent: the image portrayed of these women at each level do not seem to match reality and the programs offered are not in areas that the women interviewed need. This has led to a potential situation at the federal, state, and city level that the programs may not be reaching the women. Furthermore, federal, state, and city integration policies and programs seem to barely play a role in female refugee's integration. This became evident through the coding and analysis of the interviews. There were hardly any relevant differences, advantages, or disadvantages in the integration experience of the women interviewed based upon which state or city they were located in. Any relevant advantages, similarities, or disadvantages were centered on characteristics the women had, such as wearing a Hijab, or a specific group they were a part of, such as having come as a young child. Although the experiences were individual there were certain concrete similarities between the women irrespective of where they lived: they were highly motivated to learn more German, they were determined to find a job, they wanted more contact with Germans, and they all faced various levels of discrimination and stereotyping. Despite these similarities there were hardly any concrete programs on the federal, state, or city level specifically focusing on them.

Through the analysis it was found that if programs did indeed focus on certain aspects that were relevant to female refugees at the federal and state level, a woman's access to them was solely dependent on where she lived. For example, the most promoted program developed and funded by the federal government regarding employment of immigrant women and female refugees is *Stark im Beruf*. It is however only active in around 90 cities nationwide. One of those is Cologne. It was however shown in this study that it is not coordinated by the city of Cologne but rather a private organization. There is also no hint at how it is promoted or if female refugees are a target group. If a federal or state program is not coordinated in a city where a female refugee lives, then she cannot benefit from it. The

most common issue regarding programs however at all levels was that, based upon the interviews, they were simply not offering what the female refugees needed. If a woman does have access to a federal, state, or city program but it is not what she needs then it will play no role in her integration.

The programs at the federal, state, and city levels seem to be greatly influenced by the image of female refugees. At each level primarily deficits were highlighted and female refugees were almost solely put into the realm of the family. If this is how they are viewed then it makes sense that programs will be implemented based upon this. The central finding of this analysis has been that programs at the federal, state, and city level play a marginal role, if at all, in the integration of female refugees. Integration classes must however be kept separate from this. Due to the 2005 Immigration Law requiring recognized refugees to take integration classes, each woman interviewed benefited from this. Their main critique was the need for more practice with speaking. Any negative experiences were mainly connected to the teachers or the school and not the integration course itself.

Although this analysis only looked at three cities and states and the interviews were not representative, the initial findings are still alarming. Female refugees seem to be on their own with integrating in society. They must find jobs on their own, work through German systems and laws on their own, gain access to further qualification on their own, learn about the educational system on their own, look for contact with Germans on their own, and deal with discrimination and stereotyping on their own. Their experiences are often dependent on who the employee at the Job Center or the immigration authority is and if they come into contact with Germans or organizations which can assist and support them. Integration has been an official policy priority of the federal government since 2005 and integration summits have been taking place since 2006. Almost all of the states in Germany have their own integration policy and the cities and communities have been dealing with integration since before the federal government and states have. Nonetheless, based upon the findings in this study, how long a city or state has focused on integration does not seem to play a role in the integration of female refugees. It is much more important how this group of women is depicted, which programs are offered, and how widely accessible they are. In addition, contact with Germans, services and offers from volunteer groups and various organizations, as well as employees at government agencies play an important role in female refugee's integration experiences. Based upon these initial findings it is imperative that follow-up analyses be conducted nationwide together with representative interviews of female refugees. If the same conclusions are found they could have serious consequences for integration policy at all levels of policy making.

Despite primarily being left alone with their integration, the female refugees interviewed were all confident, motivated, determined, and most importantly optimistic. They were grateful that they were in Germany and were ready to build their life anew. Despite hurdles that may have been put in their way they worked through them. They found ways to reach their goals or to work towards

objectives even when government agencies or German laws may have made it difficult for them. They were frustrated at times but did not give up. In the face of discrimination from Germans the women did not generalize. Their appreciation to the people and to the country remained and they made it a point to separate between the Germans who helped them and those who insulted or discriminated against them due to how they looked or who they were. The women were very aware of the reasons why they were discriminated against or stereotyped. They understood that their clothing, the color of their skin, the religion they belonged to, and the group they represented all contributed to difficulties they experienced. They however found ways to work through this. If they were denied a spot at the table due to one or more of these characteristics they simply built their own chair as the woman in Magdeburg had done with her own business. This is perhaps the most poignant conclusion of the study. At each level of policy female refugees have been generalized and put into one homogenous group. This has taken away each woman's unique identity and experiences. This homogenization has reduced them to mothers, the 'other', confronted only with deficits, and stuck in a suppressive and traditional culture. Through the interviews with the women their voices were however able to be heard. They are vibrant, determined, motivated, and optimistic women. They are not disadvantaged or suppressed but qualified and in charge of their life. In continuing to represent female refugees in a way that as shown through this study may not truly depict reality, federal, state, and city integration policies are keeping German society from experiencing how female refugees truly are and keeping their voices and stories from being heard.

7 Summary

What does it mean to be a woman? What does it mean to be a man? What does it mean to be a person? For many people these are personal questions based upon culture, tradition, religion, gender, and nationality. For others they are outdated. We are all people. Equal no matter where we come from or how we look. When asked this question we answer as people with agency. Able to describe ourselves and express our thoughts. In Germany and in Europe we value freedom, individuality, and independence. Every person should be able to decide their path and who they want to become. It would be an absurd thought for us to allow another group of people in another country who do not know us, our history, or our backgrounds to decide who we are. Yet this is what happens to people fleeing war, violence, and destitution when they come to our countries. In the humanitarian discourse they are labeled as passive victims without agency homogenized as one group (Krause 2017a: 82). This in turn leads to them becoming speechless (Freedman 2010: 603; Malkki 1996). This is above all the case with female refugees who have been used by international aid organizations, including the United Nations, as the face of victims who need outside funding and support (Johnson 2011). This type of stereotyping and putting female refugees into one label has assisted in creating the narrative around women that they are voiceless, passive, weak, almost equal in agency to children, and without their own individual story. Forced Migration has increasingly become 'feminized' as discussed at the beginning of this study.

In academia in Germany, and around the world, there has been more attention paid to refugee women and more research conducted on their situation and integration. As stated at the beginning of this study however German academia tends to focus more on refugee women in the Global South compared to female refugees within the country. Once a woman has received refugee or protection status it is not always clear if research or studies are being conducted on them or if they are still being grouped together with women going through the asylum process. As discussed in chapter one women who have received protection status and those still in the asylum process have different legal rights and do not generally have the same access to programs and projects. It is women who have been recognized who have gone through the asylum process, are targets of integration projects and programs, and are often able to start the path towards permanent residency or citizenship if they choose. This group of women have yet to be a *named* specific target of policymakers. On a policy level they have simply been put into the group of immigrant women. This study has attempted to fill the gap on the lack of information regarding these women on a policy level and to draw focus to them and German integration laws and policies.

7.1 Summary of Findings

Two research questions were developed around which this study focused. The first of those was how recognized female refugees are taken into account with the development and formulation of integration policy in Germany. An interpretive policy analysis based around the theoretical framework in chapter two and the methodological framework in chapter three was used to analyze German integration policy on the federal, state, and local level in chapter four. The findings from chapter four regarding federal integration policy led to the conclusions that recognized female refugees have simply been grouped together with immigrant women and have not been a stated target group. Grouped together means that they have simply taken on the same rhetoric and narrative as immigrant women. Since 1998 immigrant women have been categorized and labeled as passive victims within the realm of family often associated with Islam and suppressed by culture and gender roles. At the federal level whether it be policies, programs, summits, reports, or special briefings they have consistently been connected and discussed within the context of deficiencies and difficulties with their only chance of help and being able to 'succeed' coming from outside. Through the policy analysis in chapter four it was clear that once female refugees became a target group for integration at the federal level after 2015, the rhetoric surrounding immigrant women was simply used for them. They were described as a 'new' group within the German integration context and it was asserted that more research needed to be done on their needs and difficulties. Despite this, programs which had been developed for immigrant women were either expanded to include female refugees who had good prospects of being able to stay in the country, or who already had refugee or protection status, or 'new' programs which were almost exact copies of those for immigrant women were initiated.

The analysis in chapter four has explored developments over a long period of time of German integration policy in connection with statistics and programs pertaining specifically to recognized female refugees and immigrant women. It is evident that despite integration policy immigrant women have been shown statistically for over 20 years to perform at lower levels on the job market, to have higher rates of poverty, and to have less access to qualifications and higher education in comparison with immigrant men and German men and women. These findings have been similar regarding female refugees in the studies released by the federal government since 2016 which were analyzed in chapter four. The only difference is that female refugees perform the lowest in all areas when compared to refugee men, immigrant men and women, and German men and women. The source of the difficulties has continuously been put on the immigrant woman and now the female refugee highlighting her connection almost solely to the private and family realm within the German policy narrative. The policy analysis in chapter four on federal integration policy has led to findings that despite integration policies being renamed and updated and new short-term projects for immigrant and refugee women being developed, for over 20 years the statistics regarding this group of women have remained almost the

same. Based upon the policy analysis there have been no noticeable improvements in their access to the job market, their level of poverty, or their access to higher education or qualifications. At the federal policy level however the reason for this stagnation has consistently been put on the women themselves.

Chapter four also analyzed integration policy regarding recognized female refugees in three states and cities in order to further answer the first research question. The three states being Bavaria, NRW, and Saxony-Anhalt. Based upon the findings of this study it can be said that federal policy, and above all rhetoric, guides state integration policies to some extent. Just as at the federal level female refugees were being put into the same narrative with immigrant women and simply took on the same homogenized labels. (Recognized) female refugees were also not a specific target group for most of the integration policies or programs at the state level. Integration focused mostly on language acquisition, violence, empowerment, sport, and the job market almost mirroring the policy objectives at the federal level. Despite setting the impulses for integration policy and rhetoric, the federal level does not seem to have much influence or effect on the state outside of this. None of the state governments mentioned any of the programs the federal government developed or 'praised' as important and 'successful'. There did not seem to be any coordination on projects or programs between the federal and state level besides perhaps funding. It actually appeared that state integration policies relied heavily on local actors and organizations to create programs or conduct studies which the states would then fund and support. This could lead to a potential situation where a woman's integration success within a state highly depends on where she is. If there is a local actor or organization in her region of the state with a focus on women and integration, she may receive assistance and help. If not, she may be very limited in where she can access resources.

This conclusion from chapter four that a woman's integration success may depend largely on where she lives was further solidified through the analysis of the integration policies of the cities of Wuerzburg, Cologne, and Magdeburg. In comparison to the states, each city provided a large amount of information for immigrants. Outside of Wuerzburg however (recognized) female refugees were not a main target group for integration but rather immigrant women. This reflects the federal level where refugee women have mostly been added to the group of immigrant women. Thus, without an active city or local actors and organizations with a focus on refugees and integration little support may be available. The rhetoric and narrative set at the federal level regarding female immigrants, and with them (recognized) female refugees, seemed to also influence the city level as similar labels, assumptions, and homogenizations were used. Just as at the state level there seemed to be little coordination between the federal, state, and city level. Only the city of Wuerzburg had a program, *Mother Schools*, coordinated with and supported by the state it was located in (Bavaria). It was only in Cologne that a federally developed and sponsored program for integration was to be found: *Stark im*

Beruf. This program was however not coordinated by the city of Cologne but rather an independent organization. The city did not reference the program and the organization did not list the city as a cooperation partner.

The findings from chapter four create a picture that there is little coordination on a policy level regarding integration between the federal, state, and city levels. Programs and projects seem to depend highly on local actors and organizations. Federal and state governments are willing to fund and support projects but it seems that the active development and running of integration programs and projects takes place at the local level either by cities, organizations, or local actors. Programs that are implemented by federal and state governments are not nation or city wide and most often have very particular target groups such as gaining women in elderly care. If a woman is not in a city with a federal or state-run program, she may not have access to it. If she is located in a city with a federal or state-run program but is not interested in going into elderly care for example then it may not also benefit her. This reiterates the conclusion that a woman's integration chance and experience may be highly dependent upon where she lives no matter what state or region of Germany. The current structure of integration programs and policies in Germany may seem to have created a situation where federal, state, and city governments are working parallel to one another instead of together. Based upon the statistics in this study regarding immigrant women and female refugees it can initially be concluded that this current structure may not be benefitting them. This could in part be due to the federal nature of Germany as was discussed in chapter 3.3. and that each level of government has different tasks independent from the other.

One of the most important contributions this study has made to current research is giving recognized female refugees the space to speak and to stand as experts of their experience. Despite the potential lack of coordination regarding integration policy at the various levels of government in Germany, when looking at refugees in general policymaking can be described as top-down. Refugees are most often excluded from these processes (Deardorff Miller 2014: 509) although they are directly affected by them. Through including interviews with recognized female refugees in chapter five this study was able to generate findings on the integration experience of these women in three different cities: Wuerzburg, Magdeburg, and Cologne. These interviews were used to answer the second research question of this study: how recognized female refugees view their situation and integration. Through the interviews it became clear that integration is often an individual experience. There was no situation that arose which was experienced more by women in one city or state over another. If there were similarities it was most often amongst women with similar characteristics such as religion, style of dressing, the year they arrived in Germany, or language competency for example. Based upon the interviews, women who arrived in Germany before 2015 had more difficulty with the integration process, and less resources for assistance than those who arrived after 2015. In all cities there were

similar experiences with difficulty pertaining to naturalization for themselves or obtaining citizenship for their children born in Germany to avoid statelessness. Many of the women had similar experiences of difficulty navigating through the German education system and almost all had experienced various forms of discrimination, racism, and stereotyping. Women who wore Hijabs seemed to experience the most amount of discrimination independent of which city they lived in.

Despite individual integration experiences almost all of the women expressed similar characteristics: they were highly motivated to learn German (almost all of them already did), they wanted to have a job, they actively sought contact with Germans, and they were grateful to Germany and volunteers for allowing them to be here and helping them to start new lives. They were optimistic, hopefully, and grateful. For almost all of the women the most important aspects of integration were: employment, education, and speaking German. These self-descriptions are in stark contrast to how they are labeled and described on a federal, state, and policy level. What was common amongst the women is that the majority of their support and assistance came from individual people or organizations. They did not receive help from the federal, state, or local governments outside of language classes and monetary assistance when they did not have employment. In addition, none of the women knew of or were taking part in any federal, state, or city programs except for two women in Wuerzburg who heard about local programs from friends. They were searching for jobs on their own, were founding businesses on their own, were navigating through the educational system not only for themselves but for their children on their own, were fighting either for citizenship or permanent residency for themselves or family members on their own, and were looking for contact with Germans on their own. Some of the women did have support from individuals or local organizations but other than that they were finding their way through Germany and integration as individuals.

Chapter six rounded up the empirical analysis of the study. The results of the interviews from chapter five were compared with the results of the policy analyses from chapter four. The objective of this comparison was to come to initial findings on the potential effectiveness of policies and programs, where there may be problems with reaching the target group, and if programs and policies are more effective at one level of government (federal, state, city) or if there is no difference. The first finding that arose during the comparison was that the way (recognized) refugee women were being portrayed and labeled at all levels of government appeared to be very different from the way the women described themselves in the interviews. At the federal, state, and city level immigrant and refugee women are most often described as being mothers, with low education, held back by culture and religion, at a higher risk of violence, and needing empowerment. These labels in turn seem to be guiding programs and projects which are being implemented at each level of government. The findings that this homogenization of refugee women (and immigrant women) may not be correct does not mean that there are not women who are low-skilled, held back by culture and religion, experiencing

violence, and in need of empowerment and support. It however presents the situation that the majority of programs for immigrant and refugee women (which often are not supported by statistics most notably in the assumption of higher rates of violence) may not actually meet the needs of this group. In addition, almost none of the women had heard of or benefited from any federal, state, or city-run integration program or project. Only two women in Wuerzburg had taken part in a city-run program and that was due to hearing about it from a friend. This connects back to the findings from chapter four that federal and state-run programs are not implemented in every region or city. If a woman is not in a city where a federal or state funded program is located, they may not have access to or know about it. If the program is located in their city but not coordinated by the city, as was the case in Cologne with *Stark im Beruf*, they may also not know about it. This further supports the conclusion that a (recognized) female refugee's integration experience may be largely influenced by where she lives.

Based upon the findings presented in this study it can be said that integration policy on the federal, state, and city level is potentially not reaching (recognized) female refugees, programs are perhaps not focusing on what female refugees truly need, and the programs and policies surrounding them are being created based upon descriptions of this group of women that may not match reality. This can have important implications for integration policy in Germany. If the programs and policies are potentially not reaching and benefiting (recognized) female refugees this could also point to a situation where they are also not reaching immigrants, male refugees, LGBTQI refugees, or other groups they are intended for. The *12. Bericht der Beauftragten der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration* from December 2019 summarizes the integration efforts of recent years, emphasizes positive developments, and points out where further work needs to be done. Despite a wide range of local policies, perceived 'successful' projects, an increase in funding for certain programs, and positive developments regarding immigrants and employment, the report shows overall that clear guidelines and a vision for the future of integration policies nationwide are still missing. The results of the analyses in this study support the findings of the report.

When looking at the results of this study within the context of current research as discussed in chapter one, it supports the critique that women, and with them other refugees, are homogenized, made voiceless, and turned into passive victims with no agency. This study supports the new research focus that refugees should be looked at and viewed as partners and that they are resilient. This study however goes one step further. Instead of just looking at the effects of policies it studies the policies themselves. If we are to truly get to the 'root' of the problem as to why after 20 years immigrant women, and with them now (recognized) refugee women, are not progressing and improving, academia and policy must shift from just looking at effects and outcomes to studying German

integration policy in-depth, why it has developed the way it has, and what can be done to improve it in order to address the stagnation of refugee and immigrant women in German society.

7.2 Research Limitations

What became clear early on in the study was that female refugees in general were barely mentioned at the federal policy level outside of the context of flight and asylum, and almost exclusively within the context of gender-based persecution and violence, before 2015 with the so called 'refugee crisis' in Europe. Female refugees as one group gained attention but *recognized* female refugees were difficult to find if at all. The official 'start' of the debate on integration on a policy level and how it should look within Germany began in 1998 as discussed in this study. This means between 1998 and 2015, approximately 17 years, (recognized) female refugees were not considered within policymaking at all. This presented the first difficulty within the study: analyzing policies that provided insight on the research objectives. For this study which spanned a timeframe of 21 years there were no known studies or policy analyses specifically on *recognized* female refugees and their integration on a *policy level*. The research questions and goals were centered on integration *policy* and how recognized female refugees were taken into account with the formulation and development of policy and how they themselves viewed their own integration. Thus, known sources on a *policy level* regarding the integration of (recognized) female refugees could only be provided for approximately three of the 21 years within the timeframe of the study. In other words, this meant that there were no known documents, policies, or papers released by any level of government researched for this study regarding *recognized* female refugees which could be used for the policy analysis making up the methodology and focus of this study. This not only underlines the significance of this study but also brings into question how the lack of focus on recognized female refugees may affect their children, grandchildren, or family members. In addition, it raises the question that other groups who have also received refugee status may also be equally underrepresented and understudied.

The methodology was thus strained for this study. There is research comparing the integration policies of various countries and cities within Europe and the integration of specific nationalities within the European context (Konle-Seidl 2018; Dekker et al. 2018; Avci 2006). A comparative analysis with another country was however not the aim of this study. If that had been the case regarding recognized female refugees the same hurdles would have presented themselves with the lack of information on a policy level. In looking for reliable information that could be drawn from perhaps similar studies in academia conducting a *policy analysis* on integration and *recognized* female refugees the same issues arose: a lack of known sources. No known in-depth *policy analyses* were found which were conducted regarding *recognized* female refugees and integration *policy* within Germany or outside. Instead, studies and reports were found citing problems female refugees encountered with integration, gender

analyses of integration *outcomes* in order to pinpoint social policies which may need to be adjusted, women-friendliness of asylum policies, and the integration situation of female refugees in specific areas, most often the labor market (Sansone 2016; Cheung and Phillimore 2017; Emmenegger and Stigwall 2019). These however did not look at the policies themselves but again focused on outcomes and effects. Due to the immense lack of sources and comparison points to draw from, within and outside of Germany, regarding integration policy and recognized female refugees there was a limitation on how many sources could be referenced both within academia and at a policy level. This was however not viewed as a disadvantage for this study by the author. On the contrary. It made it even more apparent that there is very little focus on the actual development and formulation of integration policy regarding (recognized) female refugees not only in Germany but in the EU as a whole. The author was thus left with the task of developing the empirical findings regarding integration policy and female refugees with little support from current or past policy analyses and research.

This lack of information led to the second difficulty with the methodology: how to conduct a policy analysis on integration policy regarding recognized female refugees when they are not referenced in policy and there are no known studies to refer to. This point was already discussed in chapter three when laying out the methodological framework. As stated in chapter three, it had to be assumed that because female refugees have access to the same integration programs immigrant women do once they have received refugee status, they are put into this group by the government and policymakers. It was assumed that by conducting the policy analysis based upon how immigrant women were taken into account with the development of integration policy initial findings could be discovered pertaining to recognized female refugees. This however was done with caution as immigrant and (recognized) refugee women are two very different groups with different backgrounds. Their arrival in Germany and process to gaining recognition are different. Once a female refugee however has gained protection status she is, in most cases, in the same legal realm as an immigrant woman and has almost the same access to rights, programs, and projects.

7.3 Perspectives for Further Research

The objective of the study has not been to prescribe any interventions or to develop solutions to potential policy problems. The findings and conclusions of the study summarized in section 7.2 lead to a potential situation where a group of women, recognized female refugees, are virtually non-existent at all policy levels: federal, state, and local. Together with them female refugees as a group are often not a specific target of integration policies either. Recognized female refugees, and often with them refugee women as a whole, may be simply grouped with immigrant women. There is clear homogenization and victimization of both immigrant and refugee women in rhetoric at all policy levels. The way recognized female refugees described themselves in the interviews conducted in chapter five

do not match this rhetoric at all. These findings call for academia to put a larger focus on conducting *in-depth* policy analyses regarding integration instead of often just looking at effects and outcomes.

Based upon the findings in this study, a situation may have developed within Germany that two groups of women, recognized female refugees and refugee women still in the asylum process, are barely mentioned or are often not the target of integration programs and projects at all levels of government when looking at it from a policy perspective. In addition, based upon the findings from chapter four, there is a group of women, immigrant women, who have been a target of integration for over 20 years but are not improving and instead are stagnating. Refugee women are often simply added onto programs originally meant for immigrant women or almost exact copies of programs for immigrant women are simply renamed and ‘packaged’ as being for refugee women. This has led to a crucial crossroads where German academia must become active. It is not far-fetched to assume that the integration trajectory of refugee women, both recognized and still in the asylum process, will follow that of immigrant women based upon the current situation and findings of this study. German academia must put more emphasis on studying integration policy relating to immigrant women starting from its formulation continuing through its development as this study has done. This can then be connected to integration policy for (recognized) refugee women. The objective must go further than that of this study: to provide suggestions and solutions for how integration policy can be improved in an attempt to end the stagnation of immigrant, and with them, refugee women. It can be studied if special programs and projects are really needed for (recognized) refugee women or if programs and projects that already exist for immigrant women can be improved and enhanced so that they can be used for both. Academia must work together with policymakers in order to achieve such studies. Further research on this would not only have implications for integration policy regarding (recognized) female refugees but also male refugees and other groups such as LGBTQI refugees who garner little attention.

Together with more in-depth and holistic policy analyses, the semantics surrounding integration and immigrant and refugee women should continue to play an important role in academia. It is highly advised for further studies to look at if the rhetoric and narratives surrounding immigrant and refugee women are playing a role in the types of integration programs and projects offered and how integration policy is developed and formulated. An example of this could be that many programs and projects developed to help refugee and immigrant women access the job market at all levels of government center on elderly care. It could be looked at if this is because there is simply a lack of workers in the field or if it is due to immigrant and refugee women being put into the private and family realm. When looking at language acquisition it was shown in the policy analysis in chapter four that immigrant and refugee women most often take part in general integration courses, not in the specific courses for parents and women. There is however the narrative at each policy level that women need

these special courses for parents and women in order to access language courses. This narrative does not however match the statistics, facts, and realities. Could this push in special language courses for women and parents be driven by semantics instead of facts and statistics? This type of research connecting programs and projects with semantics could be done in all areas of integration.

Another area for further research building upon the findings of this study would be looking at integration policy within the federal structure. The findings of this study have come to the conclusion that a woman's access to integration programs and projects may be highly dependent upon where she lives. There is an obvious situation within Germany that female refugees may be having very different integration experiences simply based upon their location. Researchers should conduct more in-depth representative studies on the influence that federal, state, and local integration policies have including their coordination. If integration has been described as one of the most pressing issues by the federal government and national integration policies are being developed together by federal, state, and local governments then it must be looked at why there appears to be a lack of coordination. It must be studied if this is something that could potentially be detrimental to integration policy long-term in Germany and if the federal structure of Germany is hindering integration. In addition, local actors and organizations seems to be leading governments at all levels with providing resources and support for (recognized) female refugees. It should also be looked at if this is an effective method to integration or if the government at all levels should become more active.

Further, research must also study what short and long-term repercussions it could have when a part of German society is not improving, is having less access to moving up within society, and less chances at obtaining education and further qualifications. This group of people could be marginalized affecting not only those who are here now but their children and generations after. This may seem far-fetched but is extremely relevant. It must be looked at what long-term effects this could have for societal cohesion and acceptance when in 2019 11.2 million foreigners were living in Germany and 26% of the German population had a migration background (Statistisches Bundesamt 2020). Every year these numbers increase. It is important for German academics and policymakers to build upon the findings of this study not only to attempt to discover why German integration policy is not improving the chances and situation of (recognized) female refugees, and immigrant women, but also to look at the situation of German society as a whole. In addition, this study can lend to new approaches and thoughts on integration. Should the social process of integration be separated from integration as a durable solution? The results from the interviews with recognized female refugees in chapter five show that for many the social process of integration as well as obtaining permanent residency or citizenship are intertwined. Often access to permanent residency or citizenship is dependent upon aspects of social integration such as a job and language. Perhaps instead of making separations German academia could move towards a more integrated approach of studying policies, putting the social process

together with the durable solution of integration, and including (recognized) female refugees and immigrant women as partners. Through this it may be possible to work together better with policymakers to develop and implement integration policies and programs that benefit those it has been developed for.

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