Needs, Barriers, and Support Systems for Refugee Students in Germany

Bernhard Streitwieser
George Washington University

Maria Anne Schmidt
HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences

Katharina Marlen Gläsener
Beuth University of Applied Sciences Berlin

Lukas Brück
Robert Bosch Foundation

Abstract

This paper details the results of a study of 25 students of refugee background (SoRB) from Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan at two technical universities of applied sciences in Berlin who were participating in preparatory courses to matriculate or were already engaging in their first semesters of study. The research shares what these refugee students feel they need in order to succeed in German higher education, and what they see as barriers. The data are organized around Baker, Ramsay, Irwin and Mile's (2017) analytical framework of hot (familiar-informal), warm (familiar-formal) and cold (unfamiliar-formal) sources of support. This study is relevant at a time of both a massification of participation in higher education leading to greater student diversification and the development of more holistic support for all students, and an increasing mood of political agitation in countries traditionally open to migration.

Keywords

Higher education, Germany, integration, refugee crisis, refugees

Introduction

One skewed perception of a refugee is an exhausted, desperate person subsisting on the margins of society who was once a doctor, lawyer or tradesman in their home country but has now been reduced to taxi driver, invisible worker, or poverty stricken burden on society. On the other end of the spectrum and equally extreme, a positive picture of a refugee is a historical figure like Albert Einstein, rescued from Nazi Germany by the United States in 1940 and planted at Princeton University to live out his days in calm sanctuary (Brian, 1996).The true picture of refugees today approximates neither of these two extremes. There is tremendous diversity in the demographic of those now traversing the globe, and each of their stories is idiosyncratic and shaped by extrinsic opportunity and determined by intrinsic agency.

_____

Corresponding Author
Bernhard Streitwieser , Graduate School of Education and Human Development, The George Washington University, 2121 I St NW, Washington, DC 20052
Email: streitwieser@email.gwu.edu

Ironically, today we are witnessing a tragic situation in reverse of the one that rescued Professor Einstein over seventy-five years ago. While Germany between 2014-2017 took in over 1.6 million asylum seekers, the United States has been increasingly closing its immigration pipeline. Despite some political tensions (the current German leadership is suffering for its large refugee intake) the country still by and large appears to recognize the benefits of migration (Eckert, 2018). While that initial influx has now receded, with only 93,316 asylum seekers entering Germany in the first half of 2018 (BAMF, 2018b, p. 3), much of the rest of the world saw Germany's government and its civil society as exemplary in their response and openness. How the country will deal with the more recent political backlash has yet to be determined (Die Zeit, 2017).

Meanwhile, the current administration in the United States seems to disregard the country's long history of economic and social gains from migration (National Academies, 2017; Davis & Sengupta, 2018). Between January 2016 and January 2018 there has been 70% drop in refugee admissions, according to a report to Congress from the Refugee Health Technical Assistance Center (RHTC, 2018; Jackson, 2018). While during the last year of the Obama administration 98,266 refugees were admitted into the country, during President Trump's first year in office only 29,722 were allowed in, according to the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS).

In Germany, a numerically small but not insignificant segment of its newest refugees are becoming eligible to enter its universities and resume or begin their academic careers. In this paper we share data from a study of refugees who made their way into Germany in 2015-2016 and have been actively seeking opportunities to begin or resume their university studies at Berlin's universities of applied sciences (*Technische Fachhochschulen*).

The Global Refugee Context and Germany

Today the largest displacement has been recorded since WWII. This has great ramifications on educational access where, according to the UNHCR, only 1% of this global refugee population will have the opportunity to find a place in tertiary education. For those who do manage to find places, the pathway into the higher education system is fraught with significant obstacles (Ager & Strang, 2008; Benezer & Zetter, 2014; Ives, 2007). These include possibly having to learn a foreign language (Watkins, Razee & Richter, 2012), having their credentials evaluated and approved (Loo, 2016; Streitwieser & Taylor, 2016), navigating the demands of a new academic environment (Block, Cross, Riggs & Gibbs, 2014; McBrien, 2005), and dealing with psychological trauma (Fazel, Wheeler & Danesh, 2005). Perhaps most significantly, they may need to renegotiate their intellectual identities to join a new academic culture and adhere to its norms of behavior and expectations (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003; Esses, Hamilton & Gaucher, 2017; Matthews, 2008).

What if the global 1% who currently manage the transition into higher education were larger, perhaps closer to 5%? While politically in much of the world right now the mood seems to be turning against rather than for refugees, some countries are making noticeable gestures that appear to recognize their potential as a source of talent and a future workforce, even in the face of political movements that agitate against them (Funk, 2016). The years 2015-2016 saw the heaviest exodus of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) into Europe. For Germany, August 2016 signaled the apex of its so-called "refugee crisis," where 90,000 first asylum claims were registered (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF, 2018a). Between 2014-2017 more than 1.6 million

asylum seekers made their way into the country (BAMF, 2018a, p. 9). Among these were Syrians escaping their ongoing civil war, who accounted for more than 500,000 of the asylum claims registered that year, doubling those from Afghanistan and Iraq, the two next largest refugee groups (BAMF, 2018a). By January of 2018, up to 19% of all refugees in Germany originated from Syria, followed by Iraq, Nigeria, Iran and Turkey; 37.2% were between the ages of 16-30, and roughly 68% were male (BAMF, 2018a).

Three years after the initial scramble to manage what the German and global media called the 2015-2016 "refugee crisis" (Haller, 2017), researchers have begun to study this population when time has allowed for deeper reflection on the challenges they face and its implications. For refugees and their host societies, access to or resuming education is a first step into eventually fostering successful integration (Ager & Strang, 2008). The return to a learning routine can pave the way back into society and serve to offset the trauma of forced migration (Crea, 2016; Dryden-Peterson, 2015). As international studies show, with new educational perspectives, refugees have often proven to be the most resilient and ambitious learners (Mangan & Winter, 2017; Shakya et al., 2010; Joyce, Earnest, DeMori & Silvagni 2010; Morrice, 2013), even as they face extraordinary challenges (Joyce, Earnest, deMori & Silvagni, 2010; Stevenson & Willott, 2007).

Besides access to primary and secondary education, young refugees also hope to have the opportunity to study. That group is the target of the research presented in this paper. Although refugee students account for only a relatively small proportion of all students in Germany (about 2%, Federal Statistical Office, 2017, p. 6), the goal of integrating them into higher education presents many institutions with organizational, curricular and pedagogical challenges (Streitwieser, Schmidt, Brück & Gläsener, 2018). At the same time, refugee students also face a host of challenges, which

the research detailed in this paper presents from their perspective.

In this discussion we purposefully look at only one setting in one country and a small selection of students at two technical universities of applied sciences in only one city, Berlin. Our sample consists of two-thirds male and one-third female students of refugee backgrounds (SoRB), which approximates the general demographic breakdown of the broader refugee population that entered Germany in 2015-2016, and includes students from Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. The two main research questions that drove our study were, 1) What do SoRB think they need to succeed in German higher education? 2) What do SoRB see as barriers to achieving success?

Theoretical Framework and Literature Support

In addition to aspects of daily life (e.g., accommodation, financing living expenses while studying, and securing residency status), SoRB also must navigate an unfamiliar university entrance system for which they can resort to a variety of forms of support. To understand and categorize the different needs that refugees identified to succeed, this research draws on Baker, Ramsay, Irwin and Mile's (2017) analytical framework of "hot" (familiar-informal), "warm" (familiar-formal) and "cold" (unfamiliar-formal) sources of support. Based on Ball and Vincent's (1998) hot and cold knowledge to which Slack et al., (2014) added the concept of warm knowledge, Baker et al.'s analytical frame helps to categorize different types of support that SoRB access. Using this analytical framework helps to conceptualize what SoRB think university programming for them ought to be reinforced, adapted or newly established to address their particular needs and to help them to feel integrated and eventually succeed in their studies. This is particularly relevant in times of massification of higher education and simultaneously increasing student

diversification that is calling for responsive and holistic support models that can serve all students (David, 2010).

To access study related support (understood in this paper as topics directly related to studies) such as mastering enrolment requirements and compiling a personal study plan; but also topics related indirectly to studies, such as federal student financial aid program (BAföG) and general college life, different layers/dimensions are important. In this context Baker et al.'s (2017) analytical frame offers a useful construct, with hot support being understood as information and support accessed through friends or community members, and cold support on the other hand being information and support offered by official channels through representatives of the university, e.g., office hours or online accessible information on the university's website. For the intermediate space, Slack et al., add an additional dimension, warm support, which we see as signaling those *"'trusted individuals' who refugee students perceive as offering more formal support than friends but less formal support than 'officials,'"*, such as the administrative and teaching staff at universities (2017, p. 7).

Categorizing needs identified by the refugees is crucial for future university programming towards refugees, as former studies have shown (Naidoo et al., 2015; Ramsay et al., 2016; Baker et al., 2017). Students of refugee background tend to make greater use of warm and hot support systems than formal-institutional so called "cold" support systems. This fact must be taken into account when establishing programs for refugees and, as such, became the primary issue we investigated in our study.

The Path into Higher Education for Refugees

When refugees first arrived in the largest numbers in 2015-2016 to the Arrival Centers erected in each of Germany's 16 federal states,

there was a procedure they had to go through before they could begin to seek access into education or employment. The German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) provides a comprehensive Integrated Refugee Management brochure (2017) in German and English with a roadmap for refugees going through the asylum process. Their online and print document is replete with easy to understand illustrations and simplified text. The document details the asylum process from beginning at the Arrival Center, to registration, through the asylum procedure, and to integration into education and the labor market. The booklet also includes information in cases of voluntary or forced repatriation.

With their *Ankunftsnachweis*, or proof of arrival from the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), refugees are granted essential state benefits, including housing, a food allowance, and medical care. The law for asylum applicants (*Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz*) grants them the right to housing, food, clothing, and specific healthcare provision. The Arrival Centers follow the *KoenigsteinerSchlüssel,* or federal distribution quota system, which transitioned individuals or families to initially makeshift housing, as was the case with Berlin during the height of the crisis. The idea behind this distribution is both to share cost among states, and to facilitate the opportunities for integration and to not permit migrant groups to collect in larger metropolitan centers or particular city districts to overwhelm a local population (Bennhold, 2018). Initial housing included makeshift placement in airport hangars, for example at Berlin's famous Tempelhof Airport, in school gymnasiums, in unoccupied buildings, in former barracks, or in unoccupied apartments. While refugees had the option to move from camps to independent housing, if they could find alternatives with financial help from a local job center, many have remained in shelters for months or even years. As part of the asylum process to receive

permission for residency (*Aufenthaltsgestattung*), refugees are fingerprinted, interviewed, and undergo a background check before a further determination is made about their status; this process can range from several months to over a year (DW, 2018).

While the process of placement into housing, school, and employment   has been conducted in a streamlined way that may serve as an exemplar to other countries, it has not been without its tensions, particularly as the presence of refugees has become a fact of daily life in some areas of the country. For example, in 2018 some towns and food banks serving a local clientele publicly advertised a "Germans first" policy, which for obvious historical reasons was highly contentious (Bennhold, 2018). How such tensions play out and, if preventing the migration of refugees and migrants to cities with concentrations of like ethnic groups will succeed, remains to be seen, but tensions are already clear in the rise of the anti-immigration, right wing party, Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) since 2016 (Zick, Küpper & Krause 2016).

For Germany's higher education sector, which is comprised of 400 research universities, technical universities, and vocational training programs – more than 30,000 to 50,000 new SoRB between 2015 and 2020 will have completed the Integration Class (*Integrationskurs*) required for all asylum seekers, as well as basic language training at the B1 level, which falls on a language competency scale from A1 to C2 (Streitwieser, Schmidt, Gläsener & Brück, 2018). Eligibility for residency status in Germany requires participation in an *Integrationskurs* to learn general facts about German history, culture, and social norms. At B1 language proficiency level, speakers can engage on familiar topics in an educational and professional setting and understand and compose simple texts (Streitwieser, Schmidt, Gläsener & Brück, 2018). To become eligible to enter the

university, however, they must augment these basic qualifications with additional higher-level language training up to the C1 level, where speakers are able to understand theoretically more complex texts and write for specific scientific disciplines (European Council's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2018, p. 34). To become eligible to enter a university, applicants must also have their academic credentials from their homeland assessed and accepted, and in some cases undergo additional subject-matter testing in their discipline or in a new discipline if they are retraining.

Only after passing these hurdles can a refugee become qualified to apply to formally enroll as a student (Rüland, 2016; Stifterverband, 2017). To facilitate this rigorous training or retraining, in 2015 the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) granted the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) 100 million Euros through 2019 to develop the necessary higher education programming to help refugees gain access to university study. This initial funding was recently approved to continue through March of 2020 (DAAD, 2018). Through funding mechanism like the "Integra" Program (Integrating Refugees in Degree Programs) and "Welcome" (Students Helping Refugees), both managed by the DAAD, Germany's higher education institutions were granted the tools to help integrate this these new arrivals.

A number of studies over the past three years have begun to investigate the complexity of the university administrative process for refugees (Schammann & Younso, 2016; Streitwieser, Brück, Moody & Taylor, 2017; Streitwieser, Schmidt, Brück & Gläsener, 2018; SVR Forschungsbereich, 2017; Trines, 2017), including the support structures they receive through the DAAD's programs (Fourier, Kracht, Latsch, Heublein & Schneider, 2018), and the hurdles they must overcome, such as learning the German language, taking university preparation courses, having their credentials

assessed through the Anabin database, and having their subject matter competency tested via TestAS.

In order to officially enroll in a Germany university, a student must be able to show proof of having earned a university entrance qualification and an advanced German language level for studies in German. The uni-assist e. V. is a service agency that offers support for all universities in the assessment of educational certificates from around the world. The agency provides external credential assessment services as a way to reduce the workload of university admissions officers, for a fee. Most universities use this service to handle international student applications, which includes refugee document processing. For SoRB, the application process is to a large extent for free.

For some refugees it can be challenging if their documentation was destroyed; either because they were unable to gather their paperwork together before fleeing, or if their documents were taken from them or lost during their journey, as happened in cases of Mediterranean passages in particular. In the absence of credentials to compare against an existing database, higher education institutions can consult the Anabin database, and also administer the TestAS examination system to assess a student's competency. Anabin (*Anerkennung und Bewertung ausländischer Bildungsnachweise*) is a database against which anyone's credentials can be matched vis-a-vis an original copy of a document from over 25,000 higher education institution in more than 180 countries in order to verify its authenticity for eligibility to study at the bachelor's, master's, and vocational levels in Germany (Anabin.de., n.d.). The system is administered by the German *Kultusministerkonferenz*, the assembly of ministers of education from the 16 German federal states.

The TestAS (*Test für ausländische Studierende*) is a standard assessment test of general university-level competency that can be taken in a variety of languages, including English and Arabic, and is free of charge for refugees (TestAS, n.d). The test is supported by the DAAD and sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). Currently, some 60 universities make use of TestAS for their admission processes for both preparatory courses as well as for general admission (g.a.s.t., 2018, p. 16). TestAS helps students to realistically assess their ability to study successful in a desired program and the university to choose those students with best test results. Depending on results, some universities offer very strong candidates the chance to do a subject-specific test at the university and enter the higher education system without documents from their home country.

After language and general competency hurdles are overcome and an applicant is deemed to be sufficiently qualified, subject-level testing becomes the responsibility of a receiving university program and department. SoRB also must compete for limited university placements next to all non-EU international students who may already have prior years of German language ability and cultural familiarity. Finally, refugees have to work through socio-emotional trauma (Yakushko, Watson & Thompson, 2008), asylum and legal uncertainty (Mountz, Wright, Miyares & Bailey, 2002), and in some cases a societal backlash against them (Gale, 2004), while facing competition in Germany for coveted university spots.

In the scramble to get programming off the ground with trained personnel, however, there has been little time to study how integration at universities is actually happening (Schammann & Younso, 2016; SVR, 2017). Even less research has addressed how SoRB are engaging with the German university system, what they bring to it, and how their background experiences, expectations, and beliefs about education interact in this new educational

environment. SoRB bring with them different educational backgrounds and experiences, possibly distinct ideas about the structure of political, economic and social life, and in many cases trauma and disruption that mass displacement has caused. On the receiving end, German faculties, administrators and students also face challenges adjusting to and accommodating these new members of their learning communities (Streitwieser & Brück, 2018).

The Research Project: Sample & Method

The data for this study was collected during an intensive week-long interview in June 2018. The four researchers—three German and one American—formed in 2017 as the Berlin Refugee Research Group (BRRG) to conduct field research around the topic of refugee education. There were 16 items in the semi-structured interviews divided into three sections. Our open-ended questions addressed issues such as, "How are you doing at the university right now? How well integrated do you feel here?" or "Are there any factors at the university that prevent you from achieving your goals?" All interviews lasted more than one hour.

Our sample included 25 students who came to Germany as refugees two to three years ago and are still in preparation courses (financed through the program "Integra" from the DAAD) to prepare to matriculate (16 of the students) or are already fully matriculated and have overcome all barriers and are in their first or second semesters (9 of the students) at two different state universities of applied sciences in Berlin. The interviewees were 20-30 years of age, 4 women and 16 men from Syria (20), Iran (2), Iraq (2) and Afghanistan (1). See Appendix for further details. Our sample mirrors the proportions in the Integra population, namely 75% from Syria, 6% from Afghanistan, 6% from Iran, and 3% from Iraq, and 81% males and 19% females (Fourier, Kracht, Latsch, Heublein

& Schneider, 2018). To guarantee anonymity for our interviewees, each person received a unique code, which consisted of a mixture of numbers and letters: 1 for male and 2 for female, first letter of father's and mother's given name, and the year of birth.

All interviews were audio recorded and conducted in German and participants signed a consent form authorized by the lead author's Institutional Review Board. The interviews took place in German, which was at the request of the interviewees who were also offered the chance to speak in English, and took place in an available room in the same building in which the students were taking their course. The meetings were scheduled at convenient times for the students, who came in on a voluntary basis. There was one male and one female interviewer at each sitting. While the German research team members conducted the interviews, the American researcher simultaneously transcribed the interview from German into English to create the written transcript. After each interview, the researchers briefly discussed the main points of the conversation. Shortly after completion of all interviews, the research team checked each transcript with the audio recording and, where necessary, corrected or added detail to the initial translations of the interviews. The research team then compiled its notes and organized the information into two thematic categories (Patton, 2002) that resulted in six distinct subthemes, along with supportive testimonials from the interview recordings. The team then conducted numerous follow up group meetings to comb through the series of themes and to narrow them down to the distinct categories we describe in detail in the following sections.

We divided our interviews according to two main thematic categories: (1) Participation, and (2) Needs and Barriers. These two codes are divided into three sub codes each, resulting in six different sub codes: (1.1) Participation through every day student life, (1.2)

Participation through German language and friendship with Germans, (1.3) Participation through appreciation of skills, (2.1) Need for more (preparation) courses, (2.2) Barriers to integration due to absence, and (2.3) Barriers due to lack of language skills. All sub codes are supported with quotations taken directly from our interviews.

Findings

In the following sections, we organize our data findings around Baker et al.'s analytical framework of "hot" (familiar-informal), "warm" (familiar-formal), and "cold" (unfamiliar-formal) sources of support. This framework helps conceptualize how SoRB conceive of their universities' programming and how they believe it might best address their needs and eventually foster their feeling of integration and success in their studies.

(1) Participation

When asking prospective and current students of refugee background about the most important factors for feeling like they have arrived and are starting to feel accepted and appreciated in the German higher education system, across the board all cite making new contacts, German friends and language skills as the most important factors. As one student put it, *"I am still in my first semester, I think my feeling of only being 50% integrated will grow in the future, I hope so. I am getting to know the technical terms better, knowing more people, and so I think this percent will grow"* (1MI1988[1]). Other interviewees confirmed this perspective: *"First, the communication with students and staff, second passing the exams and understanding the courses"* (1TA1990). A third said, *"When I can understand what the teacher says, and it's not foreign anymore, then I can say I am integrated"* (1LM1988). For him, integration was coupled primarily with overcoming the language hurdle.

1.1 Participation through every day student life
Prospective students experience a feeling of well-being at a university by having to do tasks also expected of regular students, even if they are not yet matriculated as international students. In their preparatory programs at Beuth University and the HTW Berlin, for example, in which they receive higher level language training and information about the university system, they begin to experience how it might be in the future as a regular student, for example by giving presentations, being creative to resolve a problem, having lunch in the cafeteria, or chatting with German students. As one student explained, *"The presentations are great. […] We feel well integrated. The presentations really help"* (2HM1995). The feeling of "doing something" is an important factor. Another student professed, *"I feel like a student now, I go to school and university. I feel like I can do something, it is a lot better than just sitting around"* (1SO1995).

This perspective does not differ from those of refugees who are already enrolled, even if their beginning at the university was seen as being a little harder: *"At first I felt totally hopeless, I could spend hours on a task and still got it wrong. But I realized that others all have the same problem too. Now, I feel better because we worked in groups and I learned that it's tough for us all"* (1SM1995). Other students also found *"no difference from others"* (1NE1989), noting, *"We all have to do the same work here at the university. We are all just normal students"* (1SA1993).

Next to *doing the same things*, our subjects explained that participation is also about experiencing *normal student life*: *"When I go in the Mensa (dining hall) and the atmosphere and mood feels like a university, that reminds me of my time at the Syrian university, I really missed that"* (1FS1991).

The above quotes help to illustrate how successful integration at the university is about much more than simply succeeding in academics, but also about feeling like being part

of the regular student body. Cold support in the form of preparatory programs is essential in this regard as a way to help new students acclimate into the community. SoRB, as all students, simply want to feel like they are part of the normal university community, as any other students do. This is a predictable human emotion and not necessarily specific to their particular context, time or circumstance.

1.2 Participation through German language and friendships with Germans
According to our sample's testimonials, German language was one of the main factors that contributed to feeling like they were participating in the community. As one explained it, *"At first it was tough, I did not feel accepted, had no friends, but once I learned the language, I made friends, Germans and international friends, and feel now more like part of the society"* (1BH1996). Another student felt *"80% [...] good; the problem is the language. If I could speak 100% I would probably feel like any German student. I feel normal but the language gets in the way and destroys everything, but it's getting better and better [...]"* (1AA1995).

When asking refugees from the preparatory courses *why* they did not feel accepted and integrated at the university, many equated their still small number of German contacts and the interactions with local students, along with German language difficulties. As one noted, *"I feel very good here, we work with the mentors, get to know some other students. Before, I had no contact with other students"* (1GK1997). Another interviewee, however, felt less positive since, *"we don't have any real German friends yet, but maybe when we are students for real here we will make some"* (1AG1995). The international students of refugee background in our study confirmed that making friends helped them greatly to feel part of the wider student body. As one triumphantly stated, *"Yes, I feel good. I have friends from higher semesters,*

and I often ask them for help and advice" (1TA1990).

But it is not only about the number of German friends, it is also about equality and topics, which are offered in addition to the preparatory course supporting SoRB during their first courses at a German university (as experienced in the Beuth University mentoring program). As one explained, *"The mentors are very nice, we have a good team spirit. We are nice to each other, we also meet outside the university and do things besides study[ing]"* (1FS1991). The refugees in the preparatory courses did not feel like mentees, but rather *"just talk as friends"* to their mentors (2NN1998) *"about the World Cup"* and laugh together (1MG1994).

The sample we interviewed made it clear that learning German and connecting with other is sometimes not easy, however. Some refugees explained the effort was required: *"I feel integrated, but it takes a lot of work. I have to do more with Germans, talk to them more, I am a bit lazy in that regard"* (1NA1992). But they also noted that courage was also necessary to really get into contact with German students: *"In the beginning I was afraid to talk to other students, I think I was shy. [...] Now, I try to meet people, I try to be funny, I try through social actions and it helps"* (1AA1995). The same appears to be relevant for professors, lecturers, and employees as one explained: *"Some teachers also help. But sometimes we are too shy to ask"* (1LM1988).

The warm support provided by mentoring can become hot support as mentors become friends, as the quotes above demonstrate. When an essentially formalistic, university provided mentoring relationship develops into a genuine friendship, for example through watching sports or having a laugh together, warm support becomes hot support.

1.3 Participation through appreciation of skills
Many of our interview partners talked about the appreciation of their skills when being asked

about their feeling at Beuth University or at the HTW Berlin. It seems to be an important aspect to be recognized for skills acquired in the home country: *"Some students asked me about statistics. It is nice if you can help others with your background from Syria. My schooling there was very helpful"* (1ZO1994). It might also be the fact that they see the chance to give society something in return, because some talked about their feelings to *"owe the Germans"*.

Especially in the first semester, this appreciation was somehow hard to receive: *"The other students are not in the mood to work together with me [in] group work because of the language or because they are afraid that my performance is not so good"* (2SF1988). *"This might not be about racism. [...] I have the feeling that we [the refugees] sometimes limit a group. If he works with us in a group, he does more with us in a group than when he is in a German group, where he does just as much as anyone else. [...] But it gets better as they realize we are good, and eventually we all do work equally"* (1AA1995). Being "good," whatever that means for students, appears as helpful factor for integration into the German student body. As one explained to us, *"If someone is good at math, all love him, but if someone does not understand, no one wants to be his friend. That is standard for people, not just us or Germans. I'm good at math so everyone is nice to me"* (1SM1995).

Next to the appreciation of skills from other students, demonstration of skills was also seen as important in communication with lecturers and professors at the university. As one student noted, *"Two weeks ago I had a test, with lots of new terms. The lecturer was helpful. I told him that German was tough, but he helped me a bit, he didn't give me the answer but he helped a bit with some points where he could see my language deficiency. That was nice and he understood me. Little things like that can really make a difference.*

Indirect understanding can be so helpful. It can help you feel more integrated" (1MM1989).

Participation in the higher education system demands self-assurance, sufficient German skills, the courage to approach students and professors, and sometimes some empathy from others, as summarized so well by one HTW Berlin master's student. *"I feel 100% integrated. I am a normal student, I do group work, I do my exams. It feels the same as when I did my BA in Iraq. I am 100% integrated. It's those who don't want to talk to me are not integrated! [laughs] But sometimes a lecturer says something and I don't understand it because my German is not so good, then I don't feel so integrated. If he says something really complicated, I have to study it more at home, most likely the other students, Germans have to study more too. So it's not about the language in that case. The language issue is not necessarily the reason for not being integrated"* (1NE1989). So the student did not blame the language challenge for difficulty integrating, but rather emphasized the challenge of mastering the subject matter, and saw that level of mastery as the conduit to integration, and language competency as more of a pathway to it, and necessary byproduct of it, in the end.

The above testimonials illustrate how accessing hot support through an "exchange of skills" can function as a sort of transactional mechanism that can potentially but not necessarily lead to establishing friendship networks. The student who proclaimed, *"I'm good at math so everyone is nice to me"* feels that his math skills are a gateway into friendship. He thereby shows that he essentially understands there to be a bartering type of relationship: if he has something to offer (i.e., good math skills), then the other non-refugee classmates may be willing to also give him something in return (i.e., their friendship). So it is not just a take arrangement by him from the community, but also a give transaction from him back to the community. This shows how

this game of acceptance and integration is in many ways a strategic one, as in *"because I have something my classmates admire (my math skills), they are willing to be nice to me, but I have to earn it and that takes time and passing a sort of unspoken test."*

(2) Needs and Barriers
When asking our interview partners about the most important needs they have and barriers they face to feeling integrated at the university, they described: (1) Needing more preparation and other help type courses; (2) Barriers to integration due to absence; and (3) Barriers due to lack of language skills.

2.1 Need for more (preparation) courses
Our group of enrolled student interviewees had an especially strong desire for additional supportive courses. Important for many of our interview partners was support from a tutorial. They expressed a need for more explanation about the regular course content. As one put it, *"It depends on the lecturers, their language and teaching type. Sometimes a bit more explanation would help, a tutorial"* (1NE1989). Others especially wished for a tutorial in Information Technology: *"More tutorials would be helpful, like software programs"* (1TA1990).

Some prospective students in the preparatory university program mentioned the need for a wider offering of courses to prepare them for study. Even if preparatory math courses exist, as they do for those in our sample, some students wished for more basic math courses, explaining, *"The problem for me is math, I forgot all of math. I need a preparatory course, here is a course, but I need a course from the beginning"* (1HS1996). But some enrolled students also wished for a support course in math: *"For me it is about math, math, math all the time. We need some extra preparation courses. It's been 8 years since I studied math last. Now, almost everything is gone"* (1SA1993).

The above statements show that the enrolled students and prospective students from the preparatory program wanted more cold formal support in the form of more supportive courses.

2.2 Barriers to integration due to absence
Many of the interviewees in the preparatory program talked about having little time on the university campus with only one class per week. That lack of more regular, sustained time at university hurt their feeling of being more integrated. As one noted, *"I feel good here too, I want to begin my study life here, but I do not feel so much integrated in the study system yet because it's only 1 day per week."* (1MG1994), *"We are only here each Friday from 9-15 o'clock. I look forward all week to Fridays, when I can go to the university. Nevertheless, I do not feel integrated"* (1ZO1994), *"The courses are great but it is only once a week. Maybe [I would feel more integrated] if it is a daily course"* (2NN1998). Another added, *"We do not yet feel like students because we are here only a day a week. We experience university life from 9-4 and can eat in the dining hall, be around students doing normal things"* (1GK1997). All interviewees mentioned that they want to begin their study life and that they like going to the preparation courses and they enjoy eating in the dining hall, but nevertheless, they do not yet feel integrated with such little time on campus.

This shows that a warm integration is only possible if a regular contact to the university occurs. In those preparatory programs that take place only once a week, limited contact hinders the feeling of being more fully integrated.

2.3 Barriers due to lack of language skills
Students of refugee background felt a strong barrier because of their lack of language skills. They described that they feel only 50-70% linguistically integrated: *"I only feel about 50% linguistically integrated"* (1MI1988). Another

noted that *"I feel 70% linguistically integrated so far"* (1TA1990). This feeling of not being fully linguistically integrated also exerted a strong impact on their overall level of feeling integrated at the university. As one put it, *"For example, last month we had a group work project, three Germans and me. We had to do a project and we discussed it a lot, but I think the Germans do not take me seriously. I'm not sure why, I don't use the right terms, maybe because my language ability is not as good? Other international students told me they have the same problems [...]. In retrospect afterwards when German students see that I was actually right on a problem, and after the test they realize, then they come to me and ask me to explain it, and then I've won their confidence. It seems as if they do not trust my opinion"* (1MI1988).

Some students mentioned that as a consequence they had problems following the content in the class and had to ask other students for support. *"We also ask other students if we do not understand some words. I also told the lecturer and he said he would try to speak more clearly, but he just needs more time, it's his habit"* (1NE1989) or *"some teachers have to be better organized, or sometimes they are hard to understand. I sometimes have to read something twice to begin or to understand it"* (1TA1990).

Other students stated that for their studies they had enough language skills, but in terms of contact with other students, certain types of language skills were still missing. One explained it this way: *"For my studies it is enough, but for contact with students many have dialects and I can't always understand them"* (1TA1990).

In summary, a hot integration for the SoRB, for example friendship with German-speaking students, becomes more challenging if sufficient language skills are missing. Language competency is important to building a friendship, and friendships serve to develop and build language competency, but if language

ability is absent, then friendship cannot ensue as easily.

Discussion

To return to Baker et al.'s (2017) notion of hot (familiar-informal), warm (familiar-formal) and cold (unfamiliar-formal) sources of support, our data indicates that all three "temperatures" are necessary for learning the language as a way to better participate and eventually integrate into the desired learning community. The additional dimension of warm support, to signal those "trusted individuals" whom the students in our sample saw as offering a more formal type of support than their friends, but a less formal type of support than the "officials", was also critical. Universities provide cold support through the infrastructure they offer, which includes language and subject-related preparatory courses and regular office hours for refugees, among other services. The provision of warm support is manifested through additional programming, such as mentoring, buddy programs, sports programs, theatre and other after-hour offerings, where language may not be as great a factor. It is in this special enabling environment that universities make their greatest impact, and provide refugees with an environment where, of their own volition, they can begin to establish the hot support networks that will truly lead to integration over time.

The three most important factors for SoRB wellbeing and eventually acceptance, as they see it, hinge on gaining language competency, building friendships, and thus overcoming socially imposed but surmountable "Othering" barriers (Holliday et al., 2017). Othering is the notion that people project and ascribe generally positive identities to themselves but more negative characteristics to others. Researchers have found that, particularly in circumstances in which immigration is at play, these most basic psychological needs arise when people feel under stress are experiencing some type of

upheaval (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995).

Perhaps the most important takeaway message expressed by our sample was that they think of themselves as differing very little from international students and domestic students with regard to general adjustment challenges to university life that all students face. These are as simple as just wanting to fit in and feel included. The greatest barrier comes out when the challenge of language comes into play, where their status then as refugee students and outsiders seeking entry into the system becomes apparent and can trigger mechanisms of "othering".

But our refugee sample has demonstrated, perhaps most overtly by insisting on conducting their interviews with us in German, that they have been working quickly and deliberately to overcome this barrier. The other barriers imposed by systemic factors associated with legal hurdles and enrollment issues are in some ways much more minor. So, it seems that most aspects of adjusting to university life and study are as relevant for German students as they are for all students, international, refugee, domestic or otherwise. When it comes down to it, SoRB have the same wants, needs, feelings of inclusion or exclusion, and aspects they appreciate or find troublesome in their learning environment as do all other students. It is the refugee status or label that sets them apart and needs to be overcome. However, once they can begin to melt into the regular student pool they shed those overt differences and may begin to develop trust, which then functions as a way to counter the negative effects of "Othering".

In a previous study carried out by this team of authors (Streitwieser, Schmidt, Brück & Gläsener, 2018), the main finding was that university administrators at some of the same institutions we have profiled in this paper saw the refugee influx of 2015-2016 as not a full-blown "crisis" so much as simply a "coping challenge." They did not see new refugee students as presenting an outright crisis, but rather saw their arrival as an opportunity to usher in much needed reforms to improve the general higher education system in Germany, and provide better services to refugee students but by extension also to all university students. While they acknowledged that refugee students indeed required additional, and in some cases more sustained support at the university than international and domestic students, the "coping challenge" gave them a chance to create new programming that would become beneficial to everyone at the institution. This additional support is important for newcomers to the institution to help them get oriented into the curriculum and in some cases to be sustained throughout the course of their studies. But along the lines of adjusting to university life and essentially normalizing into that culture, the major supports identified by our refugee students were basic ones: learning the language to be able to make friends with Germans and so to engage more productively in an exchange of academic skills accepted as mutually beneficial to all students. Through this mutual acceptance they felt integration would eventually become most possible.

Conclusion

Our study of 25 students of refugee background from Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan at two technical universities in Berlin contributes to research that has been emerging in the post "refugee crisis" period. The heaviest refugee influx into Germany has now abated and legal processing has settled many into more secure living, education and employment situations. Many of those who came to Germany with dreams of realizing higher education aspirations have now completed the preliminary steps and requirements of the system in order to begin entering universities. This study has been conducted at a time when we are witnessing both greater streams of diverse and non-traditional students using university study as a pathway to achieve a better career and life, but

also a distressing political polarization in some countries that have traditionally been open to migration and the purposeful integration of "Others".

To succeed so far in achieving their dreams, the students in our sample have worked to overcome, or at least to meet head on, many of the challenges that might well allude others: learning a difficult foreign language, going through credential evaluation, navigating the demands of a new academic environment, coping with psychological trauma, and perhaps most significantly, even renegotiating their intellectual identities in order to join a new learning culture. As the previous refugee research we have alluded to has shown, resuming a routine through purposeful education can provide a powerful antidote to the trauma of displacement, and those who find this path have been shown to be resilient learners despite difficulties.

In this study we set out to address first, what SoRB believe they need to succeed in German higher education, and second, what they see as barriers to achieving that success. These two categories divided into specific mechanisms that are related to participating in the regular life of the institution and also learning the language in order to make friends. A critical element of friendship formation was the mutual recognition of and appreciation for the skills that one had to share with others, or could benefit from others. This "bartering" of sorts went both ways.

Using the Baker et al. framework, we know that universities are able to provide the critical infrastructure that makes a learning community function through the "cold support" offered by instruction and classes. But our refugee students alluded to a bargaining game that was at play in the "warm support" phase of becoming acquainted with non-refugee peers when the establishment of hot support networks over time through friendships build mutual respect for one another's skills and create trust that can lead to genuine integration, rather than dividing those

who at first glance might seem too different to ever be friends. Refugee students, as all students anywhere, want to feel that they are part of a community that accepts and supports them. As long as the refugee label makes them the "Other", their ability to normalize into the culture will remain inhibited, and for this reason, the SoRB in our sample wanted very much to participate and overcome these barriers, most importantly linguistic, that they felt were holding them back.

Our findings accord with the conclusions of previous studies undertaken by Naidoo et al., (2015), Ramsay et al., (2016), and Baker et al., (2017) illustrating how students of refugee backgrounds make use of warm and hot support systems more than formal-institutional cold support systems. They do this apart even from language preparatory classes. These findings also suggest that in order to feel able to participate in their new academic environments, with the eventual purpose of wider societal integration, newly arrived SoRB seek out possibilities to form friendships with their classmates, take advantage of opportunities to engage in their learning community, work diligently to prove their competence and participate on equal footing, and most of all seek to build relations of trust.

It is important for future programming at universities to understand how students of refugee background think about and make use of warm and hot support systems. These perceptions must be taken into account when establishing programs for refugees, training the staff and faculty who work with them, and sensitizing all students who, in the end, serve as the most critical lynchpin for forming the friendship and relations of trust that make genuine integration eventually happen.

Limitations

This study had several important limitations that must be acknowledged. As with any qualitative study, the findings are not generalizable. However, they bring issues to

light with rich, personal detail that could be expanded into survey items and administered to a larger population. The context of Germany presents only one case of refugee integration, with distinctive characteristics that may be significantly different in other countries. Berlin is also a more progressive and diversified metropolitan center than other cities throughout Germany or Europe. Our sample are students at universities of applied sciences and not those studying at traditional research universities, which have different characteristics, offerings and expectations.

Future Research

The students in our sample might be considered to be the "cream of the crop" of their home countries, which also sets them apart from many other refugee populations, not only in Germany but more generally. They are the 1% who, according to the UNHCR, have managed to find a way into higher education. Not only have they succeeded in gaining a high level of education in their homelands before fleeing, but they have also managed to make their way into Germany and to find quick footing there by navigating the considerable process of learning the German language, having their credentials verified, successfully testing into the system, and persevering in a new and very demanding course of studies, not to mention a distinct cultural environment. For many of these remarkably resilient students, this has meant beginning all over again "from zero" as some of them put it. This exceptional resiliency must be acknowledged and should be further researched. These significant contextual and personnel differences aside–or perhaps precisely because of these differences–other countries can learn from the German case as they engage in processing their own newest population of refugee arrivals. We hope other countries will also recognize the struggles that SoRB have endured along with the great potential they offer when they are given higher education access,

opportunity and eventually employment to be able to integrate into society.

Notes

1. Explanations for codes are in the Sample & Method section. More details of each interviewee can be found in the Appendix.

References

Ager, A., & Strang, A. (2008). Understanding integration: A conceptual framework. *Journal of refugee studies, 21*(2), 166–191.

Anabin.de (n.d.). Über uns. [About us]. Retrieved from https://anabin.kmk.org/anabin.html

Baker, S., Ramsay, G., Irwin, E., & Miles, L. (2017). "Hot", "Cold" and "Warm" supports: towards theorising where refugee students go for assistance at university, *Teaching in Higher Education, 23*(1), 1–16.

Ball, S., & C. Vincent. 1998. "I Heard it on the Grapevine": "Hot" Knowledge and School Choice. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 19*(3): 377–400.

Bennhold, K. (2018, March 15). Germans First? A Food Bank Bars Migrants, Setting Off a Storm. *New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/15/world/europe/germany-food-bank-migrant-ban.html

Benezer, G., &Zetter, R. (2014). Searching for directions: Conceptual and methodological challenges in researching refugee journeys. *Journal of Refugee Studies, 28*(3), 297–318.

Block, K., Cross, S., Riggs, E., & Gibbs, L. (2014). Supporting schools to create an inclusive environment for refugee students. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 18*(12), 1337–1355.

Brian, D. (1996). *Einstein: A life*. New York, Chichester: Wiley.

Colic-Peisker, V., & Walker, I. (2003). Human capital, acculturation and social identity:

Bosnian refugees in Australia. *Journal of community & applied social psychology, 13*(5), 337–360.

Crea, T.M. (2016). Refugee higher education: Contextual challenges and implications for program design, delivery, and accompaniment. *International Journal of Educational Development, 46*, 12–22.

Davis, J. H., & Sengupta, S. (2018, September 18). Trump Administration Rejects Study Showing Positive Impact of Refugees. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/18/us/politics/refugees-revenue-cost-report-trump.html

Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD) (2018). Integration von Flüchtlingen ins Fachstudium (Integra). [Integration of refugees into specialist studies (Integra)]. Retrieved from https://www.daad.de/hochschulen/ausschreibungen/projekte/de/11342-foerderprogramme-finden/?s=1&projektid=57450432

Deutsche Welle (DW) (2018). Asylverfahren dauern fast elf Monate. [Asylum processes take almost eleven months]. Retrieved from https://www.dw.com/de/asylverfahren-dauern-fast-elf-monate/a-42104775https://www.dw.com/de/asylverfahren-dauern-fast-elf-monate/a-42104775

Die Zeit. (2017, August 21). AfD will Asylbewerber nach Afrika schicken. [AfD wants to send asylum seekers to Africa]. Retrieved from https://www.zeit.de/politik/2017-08/alternative-fuer-deutschland-asylbewerber-afrika-mittelmeerrroute

Dryden-Peterson, S. (2015). The Educational Experiences of Refugee Children in Countries of First Asylum. Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved from: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/educational-experiences-refugee-

children-countries-first-asylum <9 February 2018>.

Eckert, D. (2018, January 30). Ohne Zuwanderung sähe Deutschlands Zukunft duster aus. [Germany's future would look bleak without immigration]. *Die Welt*. Retrieved from https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article172987599/Migration-Deutsche-Wirtschaft-braucht-Zuwanderer.html

Esses, V. M., Hamilton, L. K., & Gaucher, D. (2017). The Global Refugee Crisis: Empirical Evidence and Policy Implications for Improving Public Attitudes and Facilitating Refugee Resettlement. *Social Issues and Policy Review, 11*(1), 78–123.

European Council's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2018). *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989

Fazel, M., Wheeler, J. & Danesh, J. (2005). Prevalence of serious mental disorder in 7000 refugees resettled in western countries: a systematic review. *The Lancet, 365*(9467), 1309–1314.

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) (2018a). Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2017: Asyl, Migration und Integration. [The Federal Office in figures 2017: asylum, migration and integration]. Retrieved from https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Broschueren/bundesamt-in-zahlen-2017-asyl.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) (2018b). Aktuelle Zahlen zu Asyl. [Statistics: Asylum Figures]: Issue June 2018. Retrieved from http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Statistik/Asy

l/aktuelle-zahlen-zu-asyl-juni-2018.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) (2017). Brochure: Integrated refugee management--A new system for Germany. Retrieved from http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Publikationen/Broschueren/broschuere-integriertes-fluechtlingsmanagement.html

Federal Statistical Office – Statistisches Bundesamt (2017). "Studierende an Hochschulen: Wintersemester 2016/2017" [Students at universities: Winter term 2016/2017]. Retrieved from https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Hochschulen/StudierendeHochschulenVorb2110410178004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

Funk, N. (2016). A Spectre in Germany: Refugees, a "welcome culture" and an "integration politics". *Journal of Global Ethics, 12*(3), 289–299.

Fourier, K., Kracht, J., Latsch, K., Heublein, U. & Schneider, C. (2018). The integration of refugees at German higher education institutions. DAAD and DZHW. Retrieved from https://www.daad.de/medien/der-daad/studie_hochschulzugang_fluechtlinge.pdf

Gale, P. (2004). The refugee crisis and fear: Populist politics and media discourse. *Journal of Sociology, 40*(4), 321–340.

Gesellschaft für Akademische Studienvorbereitung und Testentwicklung e. V. (g.a.s.t.) [Society for Academic Study Preparation and Test Development e. V.] (2018).*Compact data 2018*. Retrieved from https://www.testdaf.de/fileadmin/Redakteur/PDF/Verwaltung/Daten-kompakt_2018_Web.pdf

Haller, M. (2017). Die "Flüchtlingskrise" in den Medien. [The "refugee crisis" in the

media]. *OBS-Arbeitsheft*, *93*. Retrieved from https://www.otto-brenner-stiftung.de/fileadmin/user_data/stiftung/Aktuelles/AH93/AH_93_Haller_Web.pdf.

Holliday, A., Kullman, J. & Hyde, M. (2017). *Intercultural Communication*. London & New York: Routledge.

Ives, N. (2007). More than a "good back": Looking for integration in refugee resettlement. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees, 24*(2), 54-63.

Jackson, B. (2018, January 19). Trump's numbers. *FactCheck.Org*. Retrieved from https://www.factcheck.org/2018/01/trumps-numbers/

Joyce, A., Earnest, J., de Mori, G. & Silvagni, G. (2010). The Experience of students from refugee backgrounds at universities in Australia: Reflections on social, emotional and practical challenges. *Journal of Refugee Studies, 23*(1), 82–97.

Kanno, Y. & Varghese, M. M. (2010). Immigrant and refugee ESL students' challenges to accessing four-year college education: From language policy to educational policy. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, *9*(5), 310–328.

Loo, B. (2016). Recognizing Refugee Qualifications: Practical Tips for Credential Assessment. New York: World Education Services (WES).

Mangan, D. & Winter, L. A. (2017). (In)validation and (mis)recognition in higher education: the experiences of students from refugee backgrounds. *International Journal of Lifelong Education,36*(4), 486–502.

Matthews, J. (2008). Schooling and settlement: Refugee education in Australia. *International studies in sociology of education, 18*(1), 31–45.

McBrien, J. L. (2005). Educational needs and barriers for refugee students in the United States: A review of the literature.

Review of educational research, 75(3), 329–364.

Morrice, L. (2013). Refugees in Higher Education: Boundaries of Belonging and Recognition,Stigma, and Exclusion. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 32*(5), 652–668.

Mountz, A., Wright, R., Miyares, I. & Bailey, A. J. (2002). Lives in limbo: Temporary protected status and immigrant identities. *Global Networks, 2*(4), 335–356.

Naidoo, L., J. Wilkinson, K. Langat, M. Adoniou, R. Cuneen & D. Bolger (2015). *Case Study Report: Supporting School-University Pathways for Refugee Students' Access and Participation in Tertiary Education*. Penrith: University of Western Sydney.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2017). *The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (3rd. Ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ramsay, G., Baker, S. Miles, L. & E. Irwin, E. (2016). Reimagining Support Models for Students from Refugee Backgrounds: Understandings, Spaces and Empowerment. In M. Davis & A. Goody (Eds.), *Research and Development in Higher Education: The Shape of Higher Education* (pp. 279–288). Fremantle: Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia.

Refugee Health Technical Assistance Center (2018). *Summary of proposed refugee admissions forfiscal year 2018: report to the congress*. Retrieved from http://x9yjk2t4l9ghu7ty7bhu81ac.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/RHTAC_Summary_FY18Admissions.pdf

Rüland, D. (2016). Öffentliche Anhörung des Ausschusses für Bildung, Forschung, und Technik folgen Abschätzung des deutschen Bundestages am 24. February, 2016. Stellungnahme: ÖffentlichesGesprächzumThema "Bildung in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft." Deutscher Bundestag. [Public hearing by the committee for education, research and technology impact assessment of the German parliament. Public discussion on the theme of education in an immigration society.]

Schammann, H. & Younso, C. (2016). *Studium nach der Flucht? Angebote deutscher Hochschulen für Studieninteressierte mit Fluchterfahrung* [Studying after flight? Offers by German universities for prospective refugee students]. Hildesheim: Universitätsverlag Hildesheim.

Shakya, Y. B., Guruge, S., Hynie, M., Akbari, A., Malik, M., Htoo, S., Khogali, A., Mona, S. A., Murtaza, R. & S. Alley (2010). Aspirations for Higher Education among Refugee Youth in Toronto: Expectations, Challenges and Strategies. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees, 27*(2): 65–78.

Slack, K., Mangan, J., Hughes, A. & Davies, P. (2014). "Hot", "Cold" and "Warm" Information and Higher Education Decision Making. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 35*(2), 204–223.

Stevenson, J. & Willott, J. (2007). The aspiration and access to higher education of teenage refugees in the UK. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 37*, 671–687.

Stifterverband (2017/2018). *Jahresbericht. Höhere Chancen durch höhere Bildung? Stifterverb und in cooperation with McKinsey. Hochschulbildungsreport 2020*. Retrieved from www.stifterverband.org

Streitwieser, B.,Brück, L, Moody, R. & Taylor, M. (2017). The Potential and Reality of New Refugees Entering German Higher Education: The Case of Berlin Institutions. *European Education,49*(14), 231–252.

Streitwieser, B. & Brück, L. (In press). Competing Motivations in Germany's Higher Education Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees.*

Streitwieser, B., Schmidt, A., Gläsener, K. & Brück, L. (2018). Not a Crisis but a Coping Challenge: How Berlin Universities Responded to the Refugee Influx. In K. Arar, K. Haj-Yehia, D. Ross & Y. Kondakci (Eds.), *Higher Education Challenges for Migrant and Refugee Students in a Global World.* Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Streitwieser, B. & Taylor, M. (2016, August 19). Credentialing Procedures for Migrants Seeking Entrance to German Higher Education. International Enrollment Management Spotlight, 13(2). NAFSA: Association of International Educators.

SVR Forschungsbereich beim Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration [Research Unit at the Expert Council of German Foundations for Integration and Migration] (2017). *Wie gelingt Integration? Asylsuchende über ihre Lebenslagen und Teilhabeperspektiven in Deutschland.* [How can integration be accomplished? Asylum seekers on their livelihoods and participation prospects in Germany]. *A study by the SVR Research Unit and the Robert Bosch Foundation*, Berlin.

Suárez-Orozco, C. & Suárez-Orozco, M. M. (1995). *Transformations migration, family life, and achievement motivation among Latino adolescents*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

TestAS. (n.d.). About us. Retrieved from http://testas.de/en/ueber_uns_en.htm

Trines, S. (2017, May 2). Lessons from Germany's Refugee Crisis: Integration, Costs, and Benefits. *World Education News and Reviews*. Retrieved from https://wenr.wes.org/2017/05/lessons-germanys-refugee-crisis-integration-costs-benefits

UNHCR (n.d.) Tertiary Education. Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/tertiary-education.html

U.S. Department of State. (2018, January 18). Arrivals by state and nationality under Obama. *WRAPS*. Retrieved fromhttps://cdn.factcheck.org/UploadedFiles/Map-Arrivals-by-State-and-Nationality-under-Obama.pdf

Watkins, P. G., Razee, H. &Richters, J. (2012). "I'm Telling You… The Language Barrier is the Most, the Biggest Challenge": Barriers to Education among Karen Refugee Women in Australia. *Australian Journal of Education, 56*(2), 126–141.

Yakushko, O., Watson, M. & Thompson, S. (2008). Stress and coping in the lives of recent migrants and refugees: Considerations for counseling. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 30*(3), 167–178.

Zick, A., Küpper, B. & Krause, D. (2016).Gespaltene Mitte – Feindselige Zustände: Rechtextreme Einstellungen in Deutschland 2016 [Divided centre (of society) – hostile conditions: far right attitudes in Germany 2016]. Bonn: Verlag J. H. W. Dietz Nachf. GmbH.

About the Author(s)

Bernhard Streitwieser (PhD, Columbia University) is an Assistant Professor of International Education & International Affairs and UNESCO co-Chair in International Education for Development at George

Washington University in Washington, DC. His research looks at access and integration of refugees and migrants into German and U.S. higher education; internationalization of higher education and global competition; and student exchange and study abroad. In 2016 he established the Berlin Refugee Research Group to study Germany's response to its refugee crisis, and in 2017 he joined the steering committee and leads the research arm of the U.S. University Alliance for Refugees and at-Risk Migrants. He has written over 45 articles and book chapters and three edited books.

Maria Anne Schmidt is coordinator of the refugee program at HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences and part of the Berlin Refugee Research Group since 2016. Her research interests include social business, religion, refugee integration, and international education. Maria's work has previously appeared in the Business & Professional Ethics Journal.

Katharina Gläsener is a Guest Professor for Digitization of the Economy in a multicultural Society at the Beuth University of Applied Sciences Berlin, Germany. She received her PhD in Business Administration from the

University of Hamburg, Germany. Since 2016 she has been part of the Berlin Refugee Research Group and the Refugees@Beuth Group and she gives lectures for refugees on the subjects Society, Economy, Responsibility and Problem-oriented Learning. Her research focuses on diversity management, power, human resource management and design thinking.

Lukas Brück holds a joint master's degree in Education Policies for Global Development from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, University of Oslo, Malta and Amsterdam and currently works as a junior project manager for the Robert Bosch Foundation. Prior, he worked for the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) in Germany and Georgia and in 2016 was a visiting scholar at the George Washington University School of Education and Human development. His research focuses on the integration of refugees in national education systems, both in Germany and in developing countries. Besides his academic interest in refugee education, he started a volunteer-run language school for refugees in his hometown, for which he received an honorary award from the Mörlenbach City Council.

Appendix

	Code	Preparatory Course or enrolled student	University	Gender	Age	Nationality
1	1ZO1994	Preparatory Course	Beuth University of Applied Sciences Berlin	male	24	Syria
2	1MG1994	Preparatory Course	Beuth University of Applied Sciences Berlin	male	24	Syria

3	2NN1998	Preparatory Course	Beuth University of Applied Sciences Berlin	female	20	Syria
4	2HM1995	Preparatory Course	Beuth University of Applied Sciences Berlin	female	23	Syria
5	1FS1991	Preparatory Course	Beuth University of Applied Sciences Berlin	male	27	Syria
6	1GK1997	Preparatory Course	Beuth University of Applied Sciences Berlin	male	21	Syria
7	2EM1991	Preparatory Course	Beuth University of Applied Sciences Berlin	female	27	Iran
8	1SO1995	Preparatory Course	Beuth University of Applied Sciences Berlin	male	22	Syria
9	2SN1997	Preparatory Course	Beuth University of Applied Sciences Berlin	female	20	Syria
10	1HS1996	Preparatory Course	HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences	male	21	Syria
11	1AG1995	Preparatory Course	HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences	male	22	Syria
12	1BH1996	Preparatory Course	HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences	male	21	Syria
13	1NA1992	Preparatory Course	HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences	male	26	Syria
14	1TG1996	Preparatory Course	HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences	male	22	Syria
15	1EA1996	Preparatory Course	HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences	male	21	Syria
16	2HA1996	Preparatory Course	HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences	female	21	Afghanistan

17	1MI1988	Enrolled student	Master student economics at HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences	male	30	Syria
18	1TA1990	Enrolled student	Master student engineering at HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences	male	29	Syria
19	1LM1988	Enrolled student	Bachelor student informatics at HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences	male	30	Iraq
20	1MM1989	Enrolled student	Bachelor student engineering at HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences	male	29	Iran
21	1SM1995	Enrolled student	Bachelor student engineering at HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences	male	22	Syria
22	1NE1989	Enrolled student	Master student engineering at HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences	male	29	Iraq
23	1AA1995	Enrolled student	Bachelor student informatics at HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences	male	22	Syria
24	1SA1993	Enrolled student	Bachelor student engineering at HTW Berlin University of Applied Sciences	male	25	Syria
25	2SF1988	Enrolled student	Master student engineering at Beuth University of Applied Sciences Berlin	female	30	Syria