



European
University
Institute

ROBERT
SCHUMAN
CENTRE FOR
ADVANCED
STUDIES

WORKING PAPERS

RSCAS 2018/48
Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
Global Governance Programme-316

The discourse on the integration of male ‘refugees’ into public and private elderly care homes in the context of the current care crisis in Germany

Caterina Rohde-Abuba

European University Institute

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

Global Governance Programme

The discourse on the integration of male ‘refugees’ into public and private elderly care homes in the context of the current care crisis in Germany

Caterina Rohde-Abuba

This text may be downloaded only for personal research purposes. Additional reproduction for other purposes, whether in hard copies or electronically, requires the consent of the author(s), editor(s). If cited or quoted, reference should be made to the full name of the author(s), editor(s), the title, the working paper, or other series, the year and the publisher.

ISSN 1028-3625

© Caterina Rohde-Abuba, 2018

Printed in Italy, September 2018

European University Institute

Badia Fiesolana

I – 50014 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI)

Italy

www.eui.eu/RSCAS/Publications/

www.eui.eu

cadmus.eui.eu

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

The Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, created in 1992 and currently directed by Professor Brigid Laffan, aims to develop inter-disciplinary and comparative research on the major issues facing the process of European integration, European societies and Europe's place in 21st century global politics.

The Centre is home to a large post-doctoral programme and hosts major research programmes, projects and data sets, in addition to a range of working groups and ad hoc initiatives. The research agenda is organised around a set of core themes and is continuously evolving, reflecting the changing agenda of European integration, the expanding membership of the European Union, developments in Europe's neighbourhood and the wider world.

For more information: <http://eui.eu/rscas>

The Global Governance Programme

The Global Governance Programme is one of the flagship programmes of the Robert Schuman Centre. It is a community of outstanding professors and scholars that produces high quality research and engages with the world of practice through policy dialogue. Established and early-career scholars work on issues of global governance within and beyond academia, focusing on four broad and interdisciplinary areas: Global Economics, Europe in the World, Cultural Pluralism and Global Citizenship.

The Programme also aims to contribute to the fostering of present and future generations of policy and decision makers through its executive training programme: the Academy of Global Governance, where theory and 'real world' experience meet and where leading academics, top-level officials, heads of international organisations and senior executives discuss on topical issues relating to global governance.

For more information: <http://globalgovernanceprogramme.eui.eu>

The European University Institute and the Robert Schuman Centre are not responsible for the opinions expressed by the author(s).

Abstract

Against the background of increased immigration in Germany since 2015, there is a largely negative public discourse on ‘refugees’ (especially Muslim young men), who are assumed to pose a threat to society and struggle to integrate due to their supposedly ancient, undemocratic and misogynist values. Due to the severe lack of elderly care workers in Germany, integration projects have been established that train ‘refugees’ for elderly care work in homes. The discourse on participants runs counter to the image of ‘dangerous foreign masculinity’ and constructs male ‘refugees’ as ideal elderly care workers. Based on the theoretical concept of othering, this article shows how by intermingling culture, religion and gender a subaltern masculinity is constructed to depict ‘refugees’ suitability for elderly care work. It is suggested that these young men respect and subordinate themselves to the elderly as if they were their own relatives. The image of the devoted care worker seems to contrast the perception of young Muslim men as being dangerous, although both interpretations prompt the notion of a traditionalist value system that is assumed to be the essential and static characteristic of mi-grants from ‘Muslim countries’. Presenting the success of integrating ‘refugees’ in elderly care work allows the German society and more specifically elderly care providers to position them-selves through “welfare narratives” as charitable actors who offer ‘refugees’ a chance of integration into the labour market. Accordingly, it is de-thematised that ‘refugees’ provide extensive unpaid or low-paid work in the name of integration and training, as well as covering necessary tasks in the understaffed care system.

Keywords

Care work, refugees, masculinity, othering, critical discourse analysis.

1. Introduction *

The year 2015 marked a peak in the current migration of persons to Germany, who fled Syria as well as other countries like Afghanistan and Eritrea in large numbers. Media and politics strongly discuss this ‘refugee’ immigration: While the acceptance of ‘refugees’ who ‘deserve’ help could be observed in the media in the first weeks of summer 2015, Vollmer and Karakayali (2017) detect a subsequent shift of the discourse in the matter of a “re-demonizing process of refugees”, which led to the labelling of ‘refugees’ as undeserving migrants or illegitimate “economic migrant[s]”. The dominant discourse line after 2015 specifically focuses on men as they represent the largest number of ‘refugees’ and depicts them as a threat to the German society due to their presumed traditionalist, misogynist and undemocratic values (DISS 2017: 182).

The public discourse after 2015 is focused on the question of whether ‘refugees’ – among them especially Muslims – will integrate into the German society. Starting in 2015, a large number of initiatives and projects by public and private social actors were established to support the integration of ‘refugees’ into the labour market. As Germany is currently facing a severe lack of elderly care workers due to low wages, poor working conditions and low prestige of this labour market sector, migrant workers mostly from Eastern European countries have already been covering (often illegally) a large share of elderly care in private households for more than a decade (Lutz and Pallenga-Möllenbeck: 2010). By contrast, care homes have only recently begun to search for options to employ migrant workers¹. In-home care work of migrants benefits from the ideological notion that care work is a private matter and responsibility of families, while the employment of migrant workers by public and private care institutions opens up these work relations for the attention of the public as well as certain interest groups, such as labour unions and professional associations. This goes along with a public and political discourse about the formalisation of integration processes of foreign workers into the German elderly care system by defining conditions of the transferability of foreign qualifications and necessary trainings. However, as will be shown in this article, the public discourse is not confined to formal qualifications of foreign care workers, but is very much focused on ‘soft skills’ that are connected to certain cultures or religions.

As these integration projects for placing ‘refugees’ in elderly care homes have gained some attention in the public media, the research question explored in this article is whether and how participants in these projects are constructed as ‘suitable’ workers, resulting in a counter-discourse to their depiction as dangerous and “unproductive migrants” (Mühe 2017: 23).

Previous research has shown that the recruitment of migrant workers to cover workers’ gaps in low-paid jobs is associated with a positive stereotyping of these workers as being especially suitable for this work (for example MacKenzie and Forde 2009). Scrinzi (2011) shows that migrant women in France who are trained to become domestic workers are idealised to hold certain ‘cultural predispositions’ necessary for these jobs. Similarly, in her study on migrant care workers in Finland, Näre (2013b) finds that migrants are assumed to be especially respectful to the elderly and hold high work ethics, but they are also assumed to lack skills and qualifications. Gallo (2018) shows that the ‘suitability’ of Asian migrant men for reproductive work in private households in Italy is connected with their Catholic

* I thank the members of the EUI Migration Working Group for the fruitful discussion of this paper and for partly funding my travel and accommodation in Florence. I also gladly received a travel stipend of the Center for German and European Studies.

¹ Up until now, in-home care of the elderly is in Germany the most common care setting. In 2015, 73% percent of all persons depending on care stayed in their own house or the family’s house, while only 27% were cared for in elderly care homes (destatis 2015: 5). A little more than half of the persons remaining at home are solely cared for by their relatives, while in the other cases professional care workers are used (destatis 2015: 5). However, it has to be taken into consideration, that these statistics do not show, how many migrants illegally work in in-home care (Lutz and Pallenga-Möllenbeck 2010).

identity, while Muslim workers do not benefit from sharing a religion with the receiving society (compare also Scrinzi 2016). Furthermore, as Gallo shows, the Catholic religion plays an important role in feminising these men (as religious practice is largely associated with femininity) and constructing them as being ‘reliable’ and ‘devoted’ workers.

The case of ‘refugees’ integrated in elderly care homes in Germany differentiates from the above-named cases: in the German context, currently the largest group of available care workers are Muslim men. Hence, work relations have to bridge religious differences. In addition, representing ‘refugees’ as desired or needed labour force contradicts their dominant representation as persons whose presence in Germany is tolerated for humanitarian reasons.

This study adopts a critical perspective on the narrative mechanism of othering (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007; Spivak 1985) employed in public and media discourses to differentiate social groups and locate them in a hierarchy to each other. Othering is informed by various social categories of differentiation such as culture, religion or gender, whereby the investigation of the subjectification of ‘refugees’ in elderly care work depends on an intersectional analysis (Winker and Degele 2011). As this article aims to investigate the discourse on ‘refugees’ in elderly care homes, the methodology is based on Critical Discourse Analysis. This approach allows understanding discourses as carriers of current “power of knowledge” for the regulation and interpretation of reality (Jäger 2015, 30).

The study adopted a twofold approach to investigate the public discourse on male refugees employed in elderly care homes: first, the public media discourse of 2014 to 2018 was analysed in German regional and federal online and print newspapers and journals that reported about integration projects placing ‘refugees’ in elderly care homes; and second, managers responsible for creating and running these integration projects were interviewed, including managers of elderly care homes or elderly care colleges as well as managers in non-profit and commercial employment agencies. This allows investigating whether persons who are in charge of channelling the labour market integration of ‘refugees’ through actual programmes deploy similar meaning structures in their narratives that constitute the media discourse, or whether they react to this discourse and transform it.

After elaborating the theoretical concept and the methodological approach, the article will first explain the particularities of the Germany elderly care system. The first analytical chapter will show how integration projects in elderly care work are discursively constructed as a ‘win-win scenario’, which upholds the interpretation that elderly care homes contribute to the welfare of ‘refugees’ by offering them a chance to work. The second analytical chapter will show how the ‘suitability’ for elderly care work is constructed in the intersection of gender, culture and religion as a naturalised desire to ‘help’ the elderly. The third analytical chapter will show how a subaltern masculinity of Muslim care workers is constructed by assuming that they subordinate themselves to the elderly. The fourth analytical chapter shows that this subaltern masculinity in the eyes of care home managers includes forms of hegemonic masculinity, because these ‘refugee’ men are constructed to be ‘better workers’ than their female counterparts.

2. Theoretical approach

The subjectification in the discourse of ‘refugees’ in elderly care homes is multidimensional as it deploys meaning structures that construct the social positions of being a ‘refugee’, being from a ‘Muslim country’ and being a ‘care worker’. Meaning structures that construct these categories rely on narratives of othering that differentiate these social positions from those of other population groups.

The analytical concept of othering – derived from postcolonial studies – describes a mechanism to establish power relations in discourses as a form of narrative distancing and constructing a hierarchy between persons belonging to different cultures, nations, religions or ethnicities (cf. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, 156; Spivak 1985). With the help of the narrative strategy of othering, power relations are established by representing persons as different and thus unequal others. Narratives that use othering

may include forms of cultural essentialism, which is the “conception of human beings as ‘cultural’ (and under certain conditions territorial and national) subjects, i.e. bearers of a culture, located within a bounded world, which defines them and differentiates them from others” (Grillo 2003, 158). Using cultural essentialism in othering means that certain attributes or behaviours that are ascribed to a cultural group are viewed as being inherent and static, whereby they appear independent of the context (Watkins, Ho and Butler 2017, 2284).

Following Niedrig and Seukwa (2010), the use of the term ‘refugees’ itself displays a postcolonial perspective on this form of migration, mirroring the self-definition of the social majority by “rescuing” the “true refugees” (Niedrig/Seukwa 2010: 181). Central to the discourse on ‘refugees’ immigration in Germany is the term ‘integration’, which suggests the inclusion and participation of migrants, but denies diversity and heterogeneity among migrants and demands that migrants adopt an imagined homogenous German culture (Georgi 2015). In this interpretation pattern, the receiving society is understood as a “homogenous construct” that sets “an almost mythical norm” for migrants (Riegel 2016: 104, 105). Friedrich shows that the current discourse on ‘refugee’ integration has replaced former racist discourses interpreting that ‘refugees’ are biologically different with a “merits paradigm”, which provides that migrants are integrated into society based on their merits, while their non-performance (for example, in the labour market) is attributed to culture or ethnicity (Friedrich 2011: 26–27). By this, othering is connected to cultural differences, which are naturalised by assuming that they are essential and static.

In Germany, the othering of Muslim migrants intermingles categories of religion and culture in the imagination of a cultural homogenous group of ‘the Muslims’ (Shooman 2014, Amirpur 2015, Attia 2018), which is often stereotyped for violence and terrorism, intolerance and the suppression of women (Naumann 2006). This perception of migrants with a Muslim background is characterised by an essentialising dichotomy of traditionalism opposed to the modernity in European societies (compare also Nökel 2002). Attia argues that there is an anti-Muslim racism based on the intersection of religion with other categories such as culture, gender, class, race, sexuality, etc. (Attia 2013). In this model, geopolitical borders and religious-cultural identities are related to each other to construct Muslim people as ‘strangers’ (Attia 2013) who fundamentally differentiate from ‘the Germans’ regarding their culture (Attia 2018: 107).

The sector of care work is an example of constructing a specific merits paradigm on migrants as ideal care workers by naturalising assumed cultural skills that differentiate migrants from the local population. This may result in the racialisation of work relations in this sector (Marchetti 2015: 137). The intersection of gender and colonial structures in domestic and care work is shown by Rerrich, arguing that there is a widespread assumption that women from less-privileged countries still hold “natural competencies” for care work (Rerrich 2006: 48- 49). Care work is most often transmitted to female migrants, whereby Sarvasy and Longo (2004) argue that the globalisation of care has to be analysed as feminised neo-colonial relations of care. However, there is some research on men in this feminised work sector, which is associated with a re-masculinisation of paid domestic and care work in Europe (Kilkey et al 2013) and may result in the construction of “subaltern masculinities” about male migrants. In her study on male domestic workers from Sri Lanka in Italy, Näre (2010) shows that employers construct them as “effeminate, asexual, and unthreatening” (Näre 2010: 65). Similarly, Gallo (2018) shows that the Catholicism of Asian workers in Italy is used as a reference structure for constructing “gendered models of the legitimate and trustable worker” (ebd. 180). This de-sexualisation is based on the “naturalised association between feminising notions of ‘oriental faith’, ‘family devotion’ and ‘labor inclination’” (ebd 184). Scrinzi (2016) shows that the intersection of gender, migration and religion in Italy is the basis for constructing migrants as “Christian racialized Others” (Scrinzi 2016: 1) who are trustful domestic and care workers. While Muslim migrant men are othered as a danger to society through stigmatisation and sexualisation, Christianity is used as a central category of differentiation between “the ‘good’ migrants that are easy to integrate and those whose integration is deemed impossible because – it is assumed – their culture and religion are radically different and do not fit Western liberal democratic standards” (Scrinzi 2016: 5) However, other research highlights that even in

subaltern social positions of men, forms of “hegemonic masculinity” (Connell 1995) may be reproduced. Gallo and Scrinzi’s (2016) study on male migrant care workers in Italy and Rohde’s (2014) study on male au pairs show that men and women are allocated different tasks or work in different settings and they are not occupied in the same way with ‘dirty work’ as women (Gallo/Scrinzi 2016: 366; compare also Rohde 2014).

3. The methodology

For the general public, the employment of ‘refugee’ care workers is a phenomenon still only known through mass media and not as a primary experience. Following Foucault’s perspective on discourses, media (such as written or spoken language) do not only represent reality, but rather produce reality through the implementation of categories and differentiations (Felder 2012). In specific discourses of power, individuals are transformed into subjects of specific forms of knowledge within their socio-historical circumstances (Foucault 1990). In this article, the media is regarded as one place where this subjectification of individuals occurs, while expert interviews with managers in elderly care is another. Employing the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, this article focuses on how power and inequality are established in this discourse through the implementation of categories and differentiations between ‘refugees’ and locals as well as by legitimising the employment of ‘refugees’ through integration projects. The analysis of this article aims to study “the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk and political context” (Van Dijk 2001: 352).

The discourse term in Foucault's approach refers to the conglomeration of texts that are related regarding their content. Discourses are social interaction as they are constructed intertextually and intermedially (Frass and Klemm 2005). A discourse comprises a number of statements (also called "epistemic elements" of "segments of knowledge") that belong to a common system of formation (Frass and Klemm 2005: 3).

For the methodological procedure, sequential analysis oriented on the hermeneutic technique of Oevermann (1973) is used, which aims to reconstruct manifest and latent meaning structures of the data. The researcher discusses the possible meaning that is conveyed in single sequences of a text or interview transcript with a group of people² and checks whether the identified meaning structures can be falsified or verified in the interpretation of following sequences.

The sample comprises twenty articles in German online and print magazines (daily and weekly) published between 2014 and 2018 as well as websites of organisations that hold relevant integration projects. The articles were searched by browsing results for the terms “refugees + care” and “refugees + elderly care”³. All magazines that appeared in the browsing results were listed (about 200 different articles) and randomly chosen in succession for the analysis. After analyzing 20 articles, no new discourse structures appeared and the sample was closed. As this is a qualitative research, the sample is not representative.

Furthermore, fifteen interviews were conducted using the technique of problem-centred interviewing (Witzel 2000) with directors or managers of elderly care homes, non-profit and commercial employment agencies that integrate ‘refugees’ in elderly care. About two-thirds of these managers were women. With the exception of one woman who was in her late-twenties, all of them were 35 years old or older, which accords with their status as senior staff members or directors. Most of the interviewed managers hold a university degree. The names of the interviewees and their locations have been anonymized to protect their privacy. Fictitious names have been used instead.

² This group does not necessarily need to consist of researchers. To include as many different interpretations as possible, it is useful to invite persons with different professions and educational backgrounds to interpretation sessions.

³ “Flüchtlinge (Geflüchtete) + Pflege” and “Flüchtlinge (Geflüchtete) + Altenpflege”

Interviewees were found either by browsing institutions that run relevant projects or through snowball sampling. When recruiting these interviewees, I specifically asked office assistance or staff members to connect me to the person who is responsible for executing an integration project carried out in their institution. During the interviews, stimuli and open questions were set to encourage long narratives by interviewees, which were influenced as little as possible by the researcher. Closed questions were only asked to clarify details if they were not given in the primary narrative. Stimuli and open questions concerned the following topics:

- Professional background of the manager, position in the institution and responsibilities
- The background of creating or running a project that integrates 'refugees' in elderly care homes
- The process of searching for, recruiting and selecting participants
- The national, educational, biographical/family, gender, etc. background of participants
- Contents of the training of participants, demands and requirements
- General experiences with the project, project members (trainers, etc.) and participants
- The performance of participants and their inclusion in the team
- Future plans and chances of participants to enter into regular jobs in elderly care
- Plans to continue or modify the project

4. The professional system of elderly care homes in Germany

In Germany health and elderly care workers are trained vocationally and only physicians hold an academic background. In the occupational hierarchy in health and elderly care in Germany, physicians examine patients, clarify and classify symptoms into a diagnosis and define treatment procedures to cure and prevent illnesses. Skilled health and elderly care workers are enabled to care for patients independently. They are responsible for basic care and treatment care, which includes – for example – the washing of patients, changing their dressings and the administration of drugs according to a physician's prescription. Moreover, skilled health and elderly care workers assist physicians, monitor the medical equipment, for example infusion pumps, and prepare care plans and documentations. Skilled workers are assisted by so-called health and elderly care assistants (*Gesundheits- bzw. Kranken- und AltenpflegehelferInnen*), who are mainly concerned with the basic care and the preparation of diagnostic or therapeutic procedures. Below this position, paid additional care staff and unpaid volunteers and interns are also employed to cover basic care.

The occupational training of certified health and elderly care workers generally takes three years, is carried out equally across Germany by vocational schools and predisposes that applicants have either graduated from a secondary school (Mittlere Reife) or hold a basic school qualification (Hauptschulabschluss) as well as one- or two-year training (depending on the Federal State of Germany) as a health or elderly care assistant. The training of health and elderly care assistants predisposes a basic school qualification (Hauptschulabschluss), while additional care staff do not need to prove any education at all.

The increasing lack of care workers – which is especially pertinent in elderly care – has been observed in Germany for more than ten years. Already in 2009, Habermann and Stagge argued that Germany – like other countries that recruit and employ foreign staff – holds a "hidden reservoir" of local staff, e.g. educated and trained workers who do not work in their profession (Habermann/Stagge 2009:48), which hints at the unfavourable working conditions in this employment sector. Against the background of the lack of elderly care workers, many elderly care homes have started to look for opportunities to fill their vacant positions with migrant workers. At present, two different strategies are discussed in Germany: first, to recruit skilled care workers from abroad; and second, to integrate 'refugees' in elderly care jobs.

Integration projects in the elderly care sector normally do not focus on ‘refugees’ who already hold medical or care qualifications that they are able to prove with certificates, because these persons usually enter through the regular recognition process into skilled care work⁴; rather, integration projects focus on ‘refugees’ who have not worked in professional elderly care before. The main aspect of these projects is to place participants in unpaid positions in elderly care homes in the form of volunteering, interning or work shadowing, so that they gain first experiences with this employment sector (up to three months). Depending on the project, this may be combined with individual counselling, language classes or theoretical classes about care work. Depending on the educational level of the participants, the aim of most of the integration projects is that after completing the project they either start working as additional care staff or enter into a training for care assistance or even skilled care work, depending on their educational level. For the training of skilled care work, language skills at the B2 level are required.

After having introduced the hierarchical structure of elderly care homes in Germany in this chapter, the next chapter will present the analysis of the media coverage on ‘refugees’ in elderly care homes.

5. Integrating ‘refugees’ in elderly care work as a “win-win scenario”

A typical example for the media discourse about the integration of ‘refugees’ in elderly care work is the weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* (1st of December 2017), which introduced the topic by citing the “Pflegerreport 2030” (“Care Report 2030”) study by the Bertelsmann Foundation claiming that in fifteen years about 500,000 full-time care workers will be missing in Germany. The immigration of ‘refugees’ is interpreted as a “giant challenge for Europe: millions of refugees have to be integrated”. After portraying the male ‘refugee’ “Zia Hayafi” – who is undertaking an apprenticeship in care assistance, and extensively describes his devotion for elderly care work – it is reasoned:

“And suddenly it is there- the idea that someday in the future you will wait for death in the circle of foreign people [meaning: being cared for by migrants, CRA]. Will you have somebody around you who is as affectionate as Zia Hayafi? Whose humanity navigates him through the everyday care like a passenger in an overcrowded train compartment.” (*Der Spiegel*, 1st December 2017)

Hence, the ‘refugee’ here is presented as the saviour of the elderly, because he offers them good, emphatic care despite understaffed care homes. This narrative already reveals the main image of the media discourse: ‘refugees’ are not only additional workers, but they are also ideal workers.

In the online newspaper *tz* (1st September 2016), integration projects in the field of elderly care are interpreted as a “win-win situation” because “trainees in care work are badly wanted.” Furthermore, the aim of this project is that “young refugees are integrated into the labour market and particularly into the social life”. Similarly, in the online magazine *NDR Info* (10th March 2016) the managing director of the care congress “Deutscher Pflergetag” (“German care day”) is cited as stating that: “[r]efugees may contribute to solve the situation of the skilled worker market. I believe that elderly care contributes to the integration, which is socially really needed.” These examples show that the discourse line of a “win-win scenario” implies that the elderly care sector is constructed as a specific labour market niche suitable for the integration of ‘refugees’ and that ‘refugees’ are constructed as suitable workers for the elderly care sector.

⁴ Migrants, who hold professional qualifications in care work, which were acquired outside the EU, have to go through a case by case examination, in which it is tested if the existing qualification accords with standards of German qualifications of skilled care workers. In this recognition process the professional experiences of the migrant can be taken into consideration for acknowledging the qualification. If differences between the foreign and German occupational training are detected, migrants either may participate a three-year-long “adaption training” (“Anpassungslehrgang”), which is completed with an examination about contents of this training (according to § 4 Absatz 3 Satz 6 KrPfl G), or they may participate a “knowledge test” (according to § 2 Absätze 3 bis 6 KrPfl G, § 2 Absatz 3 to 5 AltPflG) (compare Arbeitsagentur 2014). All of the foreign applicants have to proof knowledge of the German language (§§ 2 Absatz 1 Nr. 4 KrPfl G, § 2 Absatz 1 Nr. 4 AltPfl G). The knowledge level of B2 is required.

From the micro perspective, the employment of 'refugees' in low-paid or unpaid elderly care jobs is presented as a form of 'refugee aid' by care homes that supports the integration of these persons, which calls up the social position of 'refugees' as being dependent on the receiving society. This interpretation pattern becomes visible – for example – in the online newspaper *Westerwald Kurier* (13th February 2017) reporting about a local conference on the topic of "refugees in elderly care". A director of an elderly care home who is characterised as being "engaged" in 'refugee' aid is cited as stating: "When so many refugees entered the country, we asked ourselves what we could do as an elderly care home and quickly found an answer." The strategy of this employer is to offer a long-term internship to 'refugees' to prepare them for their future career in terms of learning the language and acquiring professional skills. On the website of the *Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund* (hereafter: ASB/Workers' Samaritan Foundation),⁵ it is argued that the organisation aims to help 'refugees' beyond "relief assistance" ("Nothilfe"). Offering 'refugees' the possibility to undertake voluntary work in elderly care is presented as a form of "help for the start of their new life" in Germany. It is explained that voluntary work in elderly care is a "good chance to learn German and to gain insights into elderly care – an occupational sector with very good job prospects." In the *Torgauer Zeitung* (8th November 2017), the internship of three participants is interpreted as "a chance to test themselves". Very similarly, my interviewee Ms. Müller – who is working for a large national humanitarian aid NGO, which among other things runs elderly care homes – introduces the motives for starting her 'integration project':

"We thought 'We have many different homes, we are active in elderly care [...] and it would be great', because we have this high lack of skilled workers in elderly care [...] The optimal outcome would be to find somebody who maybe wants to do the training in our homes or wants to work as a care assistant, but the first thought was to offer work shadowing and internships and volunteering to give the displaced persons an opportunity to gain insights in our working world and to train the language." (Ms. Müller, Bremen)

The projects of the ASB and Ms. Müller involve non-paid elderly care work in the form of volunteering, work shadowing and interning⁶. They are framed as integration projects designed to offer 'refugees' a chance to prepare their labour market entry by gaining their first work experience and training their language skills. In both statements, the aspect of the care gap is mentioned and it is interpreted that participants would have good chances to find jobs in elderly care work in the course of their labour market integration.

Due to the care gap, elderly care homes not only desperately search for skilled care workers; moreover, it is even more difficult to find locals who are willing to volunteer in elderly care homes to support the over-burdened skilled workers. However, when the volunteering of 'refugees' is discussed, often only the positive effects for them rather than the care system itself are mentioned, even though volunteers cover indispensable tasks like feeding the elderly. In this line of interpretation, the care work of 'refugees' is often framed as a phase of practical language learning. My interviewee Ms. Klaus – who is the director of an elderly care college – argues for the participation of 'refugees' in the national volunteering service as a form of language training:

"They learn much, much quicker because they are placed in the workspace. This is great [...] because they normally live in these dormitories or with their families and they only speak their own language and have relatively little opportunity to apply [their language skills, CRA]. But once they are at work, it is a different thing." (Ms. Klaus, Bremen)

On the website of ASB, it is reported that one male 'refugee' from Somalia is taking a language class every morning and is able to apply his new language skills in the afternoons while undertaking one year of voluntary work in elderly care. It is reported how he does a memory exercise with some residents of the elderly care home, through which he learns new words that he has not heard before. The participant

⁵ <https://www.asb.de/de/unsere-angebote/integration/fluechtlinge-als-freiwillige-der-pflege> [downloaded: 2017/05/08]

⁶ The difference between work shadowing and interning is that interns are allowed to cover tasks by themselves, while work shadowing means to observe the work of others.

is cited as saying: “I would like to be able to communicate with the Germans. Here, I learn something new every day.”

These data examples show the “welfare narrative” that is widespread in the care sector employing migrants from economically less-privileged countries (Anderson 2007), which positions employers as charitable actors who “rescue” ‘refugees’ (compare Niedrig/Seukwa 2010: 181) by offering them a chance to enter the German employment market. It is de-thematised that volunteers or interns actually work in elderly care homes and cover tasks that benefit employers and the elderly, while it is rather interpreted that elderly care homes contribute to the ‘integration’ of ‘refugees’ by offering them a context to learn the language.

Marchetti’s argument about the “racialization” of the care sector (Marchetti 2015: 137) can be applied to the case of ‘refugees’ in elderly care work, because the least favourable positions in elderly care (as measured by the professional hierarchy and income) – which can no longer be placed with local staff – are included in integration projects that only aim at newly-arrived migrants with little language skills and thus little prospects to find paid work. As volunteering is not paid, the benefits of these positions are assumed to result from insights into the German occupational system and language improvement, as aspects that are not relevant to large parts of the local population. Therefore, unpaid positions in care work – which were formerly placed with volunteers, who did this work for charitable reasons, or young men who denied military service, which was obligatory until 2011 – are now offered to ‘refugees’. In the case of ‘refugees’, volunteer positions are interpreted as training positions and their work is not regarded as a service to the community, but rather it is interpreted as the employers’ charitable contribution to integrate ‘refugees’ into society.

This welfare narrative not only appears in relation to non-paid work as a strategy to legitimise the use of additional workers as volunteers or interns. In an interview with a commercial recruitment agency, the owner Mr. Lammer explained to me about placing skilled ‘refugees’ who have worked in health care before in paid elderly care jobs:

“The Germans reluctantly employ people from conflict areas [...] such as Iraq or Iran, that is very difficult to find employment for them in Germany. You can observe now that increasingly ‘refugees’ are employed in Germany, because this is a kind of pity, because you want to help those people and you do what you can.” (Mr. Lammer, Hamburg)

Another issue that goes unmentioned is that many elderly care homes struggle to find apprentices. If they cannot fill vacant apprenticeship positions, these care homes cannot receive subvention of the health insurance for the training of skilled workers. Moreover, already in the first year of their apprenticeship, apprentices autonomously cover tasks in the care process. However, as displayed in the *Aachener Zeitung* (7th July 2015), employing a ‘refugee’ as an apprentice is interpreted as a “risky” strategy because it is uncertain whether this person may obtain a permanent or temporary permission to remain in Germany. In this source, it is reported about a young male ‘refugee’ who for the first time after two years in Germany “finally can see light at the horizon again”. Despite only having a temporary residence permit, the director of an elderly care home offered him an apprenticeship position as a skilled elderly care worker. The director is cited as stating: “I consciously run this risk, because Mister Islam interacts with our residents in an absolutely dignified way”. Hence, again the employer positions himself as a charitable actor who offers the ‘refugee’ a chance to find employment, which in this case is not legitimised by the need for workers but rather the ‘refugee’s’ exceptional suitability for care work.

As shown in this chapter, the interpretation of a win-win scenario by using ‘refugees’ as elderly care workers is based on the reclassification of unpaid positions that have always been a part of the elderly care system – like volunteering and interning – in integration measurements. It is interpreted that employers will win by attracting future staff, and ‘refugees’ will win by language learning and labour market insights. The actual output of ‘refugees’ and their economic value in understaffed elderly care homes is not discussed as ‘refugees’ are not paid for their work. Thus, as long as they are participants of integration projects, ‘refugees’ are presented as unproductive members of society (compare Mühe

2017) who passively receive support for their integration but do not actively contribute to the care system.

6. Suitability for care work based on a desire to help the elderly

According to my interviewee Ms. Schmidt – who is the manager of a non-profit project that helps 'refugees' to start vocational trainings in elderly care – the need for care workers is so severe that employers do not show the typical discrimination against migrants that is evident in other employment sectors (compare for example Schneider et al 2014).

“There is such a huge demand for workers [...] especially in elderly care. Workers, who sincerely want to work in care, are desperately wanted. There are little reservations of employers, like resentments or concerns that somebody wears a headscarf. In opposite [...] employers are happy about everyone who is willing to do this work and who does it heartily.” (Ms. Schmidt, Frankfurt am Main)

As shown in the quotation above, due to the gap of workers the elderly care sector is an employment sector that is assumed to be comparatively accessible for 'refugees', because employers cannot afford to discriminate candidates based on gender, religion, culture, etc. According to Ms. Schmidt, the only criteria of 'suitability' are the willingness to work in elderly care and to enjoy this work.

My interviewee Mr. Huber – who is the director of a nursing college in Bamberg, which is involved in the recruitment of skilled care workers from abroad – criticises the strategy for placing 'refugees' in elderly care jobs irrespective of their personal and professional background and motives:

“There is such a tendency, whenever it becomes difficult [to integrate a specific population group in the labour market, CRA], they are put into elderly care. It does not matter if they have any experience, if they can do it, if there is an empathy [...] The refugee aid workers come to us 'I have got a Syrian who has to work in elderly care' and we don't say 'No', we talk to them, but we find out that they don't want to do it.” (Mr. Huber, Bamberg)

Mr. Huber suggests that many integration projects that place 'refugees' in elderly care work do not check whether their participants actually want to work in this occupation or participate for other reasons. In his narrative, the core of 'suitability' for care work is again being willing to do this work and being able to empathise with the patients.

The motivation of 'refugees' to become elderly care workers is generally questioned if it is discussed that they are able to obtain a residence permit through starting an apprenticeship, which shows that the differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate 'refugees' is inherent to the othering of 'refugees'.

In the magazine “Der Schlepper” of the 'refugee' council Schleswig-Holstein (1st December 2016), the manager of a local project states that it is essential that “no one, who actually wants to do something else, feels pressured” to work in elderly care.

Ms. Schmidt takes a more pragmatic stance, arguing that the practical work experience functions as a selection mechanism of 'suitable' candidates:

“Most of them, who come to us, are aware that a three-year-long training has a positive effect on their residential status. Many are aware of this and therefore they think 'Well I am tough, I am strong, I can do this'. In practice, it sometimes looks completely different. Some say 'No, no, I want to do this, I have to do this, because I need it for my residential status', but these are only very few [who endure the training, CRA]” (Ms. Schmidt, Frankfurt am Main)

Hence, elderly care work is constructed as a profession that – despite its chances for earning an income and securing a residential permit in Germany – is so challenging that only workers who have a specific affinity for caring the elderly are able to do these jobs. Furthermore, Mr. Brand says that participants have to show their 'suitability' for elderly care in a practical work situation:

“It has to be demonstrated that they are interested, that they are really interested and motivated to learn something in this field and look for a career here. [...] It shows when people start working if they like it, if they are interested, if they are motivated, then it works out and they receive positive feedback, which stimulates them so that they want to continue.” (Mr. Brand, Cologne)

In these integration projects, ‘suitable’ candidates for an apprenticeship are selected by their ability to demonstrate motivation and interest in elderly care work, while the motive itself for working in elderly care does not hold interest of the managers of integration projects.

By contrast, in media articles the presentation of ‘refugees’ as specifically engaged elderly care workers is often reasoned by a specific motive of these persons. Many articles state that elderly care is the career wish or even dream job of those ‘refugees’ who are introduced in these articles. In order to support this argument in media articles, commonly positive emotions of ‘refugees’ talking about this job are described. For example, in the Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung (20th June 2016), the caption to a photo of a group of apprentices says: “They are delighted that they are permitted to learn the profession of elderly care assistants.” In the magazine “Der Schlepper” of the ‘refugee’ council Schleswig-Holstein (1st December 2016) a group of ‘refugees’ is introduced who aim to become elderly care assistants, which is presented as their “common new career wish”. This presentation of ‘refugees’ as workers who enjoy elderly care can be interpreted as an additional aspect of the welfare narrative and the interpretation pattern of the win-win scenario, because employers offer ‘refugees’ a chance to work in their desired profession.

Very often the motive of ‘refugees’ to work in elderly care is referred to as the wish “to help the elderly”. In “Der Schlepper” (1st December 2016), one young man is quoted as stating: “Today for the first time I have bathed a person. That was a happy feeling for me – to be able to help a bit.” This interpretation pattern can be analysed as a form of positive othering, because solidarity with the elderly does not sufficiently mobilise the local population to work in elderly care. This positive othering of ‘refugees’ as devoted elderly care workers negates the discourse on poor working conditions in elderly care, which is usually presented in the media coverage about the reluctance of the local population to work in elderly care. This becomes apparent in the Berliner Zeitung (26th February 2014): a young man argues that he would preferably undertake an apprenticeship in elderly care work and is currently working as additional care staff. He also says that it is more important to him to leave work every day with a good feeling rather than to earn much money. He says: “The people are grateful, that you care for them. That makes me very happy.” As in this example, in many articles it is emphasised how much the elderly enjoy the devoted care by ‘refugees’, which suggests that the integration of people like him in elderly care is of mutual benefit because the elderly are grateful for his care.

Moreover, experiences on the flight to Germany are also constructed as motives to work in elderly care. For example, in Westerwald Kurier (13th February 2017) a 25 year-old ‘refugee’ is featured who talks “with sparkling eyes” about “his career wish”. He enjoys elderly care work because on his flight he took care of an old lady in Greece and based on this experience he knew that he “wanted to help old people” in Germany. In the online magazine Deutschlandfunk (1st March 2018), Khadim – a young man from Afghanistan – is introduced, who has taken a four-month long course in basic care and now works in elderly care for dementia patients. It is stated that he is working “with care and naturalness, like he has never done something else before”. He says that on his flight to Germany he lived in different countries but never received any help from the people or governments. In Germany, he has decided to undertake an apprenticeship in elderly care or health care so that he can return something for the help that he has received in Germany.

The data examples in this chapter show that ‘suitability’ for elderly care work as a personal attribute is assessed differently in the media and by managers. Managers determine ‘suitability’ as the ability to get through the practical work phase of integration projects. It is assumed that elderly care is very challenging work, especially regarding the large amount of basic care. In their interpretation, ‘suitability’ is the ability to cope with this work and demonstrate the motivation to pursue a career in this employment sector, while the specific motives of their participants are not discussed. Media articles

offer a much more positive impression of 'refugees' intrinsic motives to become elderly care workers to "help the elderly" despite the poor working conditions. In line with the interpretation pattern of a 'win-win scenario', it is interpreted that 'refugees' step in to support the elderly care system in a reciprocal relation to the help that they have received in Germany.

7. The construction of a culture-specific relation of respect for the elderly and the according skills of family-like care

Aside from the intrinsic or biographical motive to 'help the elderly', the discourse on 'refugees' in elderly care work also refers to meaning structures that connect suitability to (intersecting) categories of culture, religion or gender. For example, on the website of the vocational college Peter-Bruckmann-Schule⁷ in Heilbronn, the manager of the vocational college is cited as stating that 'refugees' "stem from cultures, which grant a lot of respect to the elderly – this is a good precondition." In the Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung (20th June 2016), it is explained that more men than women participate in apprenticeships for care assistance because according to a male participant "in the Muslim culture the care of an older person is granted with a lot of social prestige. That is not a typical female occupation there." Hence, in a homogenising way, it is interpreted that in the cultures of origin the elderly are respected, which makes elderly care a respectable task. In interviews with the managers as well as in media articles, it is argued that in the contexts of origin elderly care is handled within families, which enables 'refugees' to transmit their experience with caring for elder relatives to the professional care settings in Germany.

In media articles – unlike the interviews – suitability for care work is often connected to previous experiences with caring for a family member. On the website of the ASB, the director of the ASB elderly care home talks about the young male Somalian volunteer who is featured in this article: "In Isse's case for example we knew right away, that he is a jackpot, because he was so patient and friendly with the seniors. You recognise that he is experienced in dealing with older people, because he took care of his grandmother at home." (Quote from ASB website)

My interviewee Ms. Müller explains in her interview that: "Especially people from Syria said, 'This is normal for us, the elderly are cared for, they stay in the house and the younger take care of the elderly, that is very natural. It is not a job, we just do it.'" In the magazine "Der Schlepper" of the 'refugee' council Schleswig-Holstein (1st December 2016), a male 'refugee' states that he thinks it is sad that many old people in German elderly care homes are not visited by their relatives. By contrast, many old people in Afghanistan are cared for by their relatives. He states that we should remind ourselves what our parents have done for us, suggesting that we are obliged to reciprocity. In this section, the specific suitability for elderly care work is constructed as the personal ability of 'refugees' to be compassionate about the elders' loneliness, as well as their culture-specific respect for older people and obligation for reciprocity. This shows that the narrative of cultural suitability draws on the assumption of a value system that subordinates young Muslim men to their elders in the role of sons and grandsons. This suggests that values of care within families are transmitted to the professional care relation and that care workers provide a family-like care relation.

In the Aachener Zeitung (7th July 2015), it is described that the male 'refugee' from Bangladesh is beaming when doing his job in elderly care. It is further explained that one can see that he enjoys dealing with the residents of the elderly care home. The director of the elderly care home explains that the 'refugee' deals with the old people with dignity. According to the director, he immediately approached the residents of the elderly care home open-mindedly and emphatically, because in Bangladesh children still care for their parents when they are old. In Der Spiegel (1st December 2017), it is also explained that the male 'refugee' took care of his grandfather until his death, because "in his homeland you do not know elderly care homes". His care manager is cited as stating that "refugees often have exceptionally

⁷ http://www.pbs-hn.de/pbs_aktuelles_und_projekte/20170126_3bfahm/20170126_2bfahm.html [downloaded: 2018/03/06]

much empathy, more than Germans.” She explains that: “I believe, many still have a different respect of the elderly than us Germans. There it is much more common to take care of each other.” These statements show a form of positive othering of ‘refugees’ who are constructed as morally superior because they care for the elderly. However, this narrative shows the neo-colonial interpretation that people in less-privileged countries hold “natural competencies” (Rerrich 2006: 48-49) for care work, which have vanished in the post-industrialised world.

In the article in online newspaper tz (1st September 2016) it is written that “refugees innately hold an attitude, which is strongly desired in the elderly care centre”, which is the assumed culture-specific respect for the elderly. In the online magazine NDR Info (10th March 2016), the managing director of the congress “Deutsche Pflergetag” (“German care day”) – as an expert for the elderly care sector – argues that ‘refugees’ “innately hold the right preconditions for the elderly care occupation. In Afghanistan and Syria care within families is very important”. The assumption that care skills are innate depicts how cultural skills are naturalised in the discourse on ‘refugees’, which is – according to Friedrich (2011) – the current version of racism against migrants. This narrative of innate care skills allows suggesting that these skills are so essential to the personality of ‘refugee’ workers that they will be shown irrespective of the context, e.g. poor working conditions in elderly care homes (compare also citation about the care worker “Zia Hayafi” before).

In the online magazine NDR Info, the managing director of the elderly care home reasons that “this could be turned into a chance for the professional elderly care in Germany.” This statement about the chances of commodifying the assumed cultural care skills of ‘refugees’ may be understood as the employer-led construction of an “ethnic niche” in the employment market based on the ascription of a specific suitability of ethnic groups for certain professions (compare Friberg and Mitdtboen 2017). In the discourse on integration projects in elderly care work, ‘refugees’ are constructed as passive participants who only become productive members of society because managers detect and commodify their specific care skills. While for the local population it is sufficient to demonstrate willingness to work in elderly care due to the gap of care workers, the media discourse constructs a professional image of ‘refugees’ as ideal care workers (for basic care) that is bound to biographical or cultural aspects that are assumed to essentially differentiate them from the local population.

Hence, the assumption of a collective (male) ‘refugee’s respect for the elderly’ contrasts the dominant discourse on ‘dangerous foreign men’ (Scheibelhofer 2016), although it is based on the same ideas of a ‘traditional culture’, which results in a cultural subordination of ‘refugees’ to the local population. The data at hand shows forms of positive othering that ascribe specific care qualities to ‘refugees’. This interpretation pattern on ‘refugees’ ability to provide family-like care may be analysed as cultural essentialism according to Grillo (2003) and Watkins et al. (2017), because in a homogenising way it is assumed that ‘refugees’ are defined by their ascribed culture intermingled with religion, which is viewed as inherent and static. Therefore, in this interpretation it is ascribed to the cultural background of ‘refugees’ to provide high-quality (basic) care for the elderly, while structural pressures on these persons are neglected, such as the requirement to undertake an apprenticeship to gain a residence permit. Furthermore, it is neglected that ‘refugees’ themselves may contribute to their professional image by strategically deploying certain stereotypes (compare Näre 2010).

8. Managers reflecting the stigmatisation of young Muslim men in the dominant public discourse

It is remarkable that in the media discourse topics of gender and sexuality are not mentioned at all, whereby elderly care is constructed here as an asexual relation between workers and patients. As elaborated before, young male ‘refugees’ in elderly care work are constructed not as adult men but rather in a quasi-filial relation that subordinates them to the elderly. By contrast, the interviewed managers not only discuss the relation of ‘refugees’ to the elderly but also to themselves. In the latter relation between the manager and project participants, the ‘refugees’ are constructed as adults entering into contact with

superiors and colleagues who – as women and members of sexual minorities – partly belong to groups that are assumed to be threatened by young Muslim men. In this process, managers reflect the negative stereotyping on male 'refugees' with their own experiences. This also shows the impact of these stereotypes and prejudices on the content of classes in integration projects.

Mr. Brand explains that his male participants “in contrast to the public discourse, have a lot of respect, a lot of attention, also in the sense that they want to do it right” and that “the people are generally motivated, polite, respectful, there are no – well this kind of – Arabic machos.” However, in teaching in the 'integration project', he has integrated sessions about anti-discrimination in his classes: “From the start we talk about respect for women but of course also for every kind of diversity in our classes.” The examples of Mr. Brand and Ms. Klaus (see following quotation) show that managers are aware of their prejudices, but nevertheless they affect their choices (teaching about respect/trying to work with women). Ms. Müller explains that in her environment she was warned to work with male 'refugees' because they would not respect her, but it only happened once that a participant rejected shaking her hand and looked her in the eyes. Therefore, she argues that these stereotypes were mostly untrue.

Regarding the suitability for elderly care work, gender in intersection with religion becomes relevant for the managers in relation to specific forms of care. Ms. Klaus originally wanted to start an 'integration project' for female 'refugees' but then had to collaborate with a secondary school class, which mainly comprised young men.

“Everyone preferred women. This has something to do with prejudices. Well, I thought about myself differently, but I felt the same way. I was really shocked to find out that we will get fourteen young men from Somalia, Afghanistan and Syria and they are supposed to intern in elderly care. Well, in my head, that did not work out. You have these images, which were not correct, but with regard to women you can better imagine it [that they work in elderly care, CRA]. In fact, women of this group ['refugees' with Muslim background, CRA] have more difficulties because of exposure [nakedness, CRA]. There are more impediments than in the case of men. I believe- meanwhile I would rather say that young men are almost less complicated.” (Ms. Klaus, Bremen)

This quotation shows that gender and religion are intersected in an interpretation pattern assuming that Muslim women's difficulties in coping with nakedness result from their religious background. Ignoring the reluctance of the largest parts of the local population to work in elderly care, this interpretation pattern denies the notion that opposite-sex basic care may be difficult for women generally resulting – for example – from concerns about possible sexual assaults by male patients. Connecting the reluctance of intimate care to religion negates the notion that the intimate care of strangers is a task that the large majority of the German society would not be ready to undertake.

This narrative suggests that the non-performance of 'refugees' is connected to their ethnicity and gender (compare Friedrich 2011). Here, a form of hegemonic masculinity is constructed by presenting male Muslim participants as better workers, who are better able to cope with challenges of opposite-sex care and more quickly overcome their cultural boundaries compared with female workers. Moreover, this narrative prompts the idea of a patriarchal culture, which hinders women from participating in working life through religious norms. Ms. Klaus continues to explain that wearing a headscarf in elderly care is not a problem, but care workers in Germany must not cover their arms for hygienic reasons. In a very similar statement, Ms. Müller explains that it was more complicated to work with female participants because she was not initially aware that some Muslim women do not want work in short-sleeved uniforms. As with Ms. Klaus, she says that usually it is a longer process to persuade women to work in short-sleeved uniforms and some of them rather drop out. Both managers individually conclude that for this reason they rather prefer to work with Muslim men.

9. Conclusion

The article has discussed the media discourse regarding the inclusion of ‘refugees’ in Germany’s elderly care system in the context of a severe gap of care workers. In contrast to the partly illegal use of migrant workers in private in-home care – which started after the dissolution of the Soviet Union– care migrants in homes work in a much more public space. Therefore, the inclusion of migrants in this care sector is discussed more openly by different stakeholders, who act on a ‘elderly care market’.

The discourse on ‘refugees’ in elderly care work produces and reproduces “social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people” (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 258), which maintain the social status quo by subordinating ‘refugees’ through the mechanism of narrative othering to the local population.

This article shows that the employment of ‘refugees’ in elderly care homes is legitimised in the respective discourse on this phenomenon as a charitable welfare-strategy of care providers that offer ‘refugees’ in integration projects a chance to prepare their entrance to the German labour market. This form of othering maintains the status of ‘refugees’ as receivers of humanitarian aid and as economically-unproductive migrants, because their work in elderly care is interpreted as a phase of language learning, gaining insights into the labour market and testing their suitability for elderly care work but they do not produce any output with economic relevance. This interpretation pattern accords with the practice to position them in unpaid rather than paid work, such as additional care staff.

At the same time, an image of a homogenous ‘Muslim culture’ is used in forms of positive othering to argue that ‘refugees’ are especially suitable for elderly care work, due to their ‘respect for the elderly’ and desire to ‘help the elderly’. Even though this notion of young Muslim men as ideal elderly care workers seems to diametrically contradict the dominant negative stereotyping of this population group as ‘dangerous foreign men’, both notions rely on the same narrative of a traditionalist patriarchal ‘Muslim culture’, which is the core of islamophobia in Germany. In the context of elderly care work, ‘refugees’ are not constructed as hypersexual adult men, but rather by suggesting that they would care for the elderly as if they were their own family members they are subordinated to them in the role of quasi-sons and -grandsons. Hence, the care relation is constructed as non-gendered relation determined by the respect and authority of the elder. The chapter on the managers’ reflection on the negative stereotyping of ‘refugees’ shows that in this relation ‘refugees’ are constructed as adult men and managers scrutinise whether they treat them and their colleagues respectfully.

This image of specific traditional care skills of respect and devotion for the elderly – which are assumed to be inexistent among the German population – allows care providers to commodify the care skills of their migrant workers. In comparison with research on Christian migrant care workers, this study shows that the construction of care skills is not bound to a specific religion, but rather to the postcolonial assumption of traditional cultures in the sending countries, which enables migrants to enjoy care work that is avoided by the local population. Opening the least favourable jobs in elderly care homes for ‘refugee’ workers may consequently lead to the racialisation of the labour market sector if the phenomenon increases in numbers, which paradoxically is justified by specific skills of these workers. However, it is also possible that the inclusion of these young Muslim men in professional care work may help to reduce cultural distance and bring different social groups into contact with each other, who otherwise would never meet.

References

- Amirpur, D (2015): Othering-Prozesse an der Schnittstelle von Migration und Behinderung – „Die muslimische Familie“ im Fokus. Zeitschrift Für Inklusion, (3). <https://www.inklusion-online.net/index.php/inklusion-online/article/view/299> [downloaded: 2018/07/23]
- Anderson, B (2007): 'A Very Private Business. Exploring the Demand of Migrant Domestic Workers', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, vol.14, no.3, pp. 247-264, DOI 10.1177/1350506807079013.
- Ashcroft, B, Griffiths, G & Tiffin, H (2007): *Post-colonial studies. The Key Concepts*, (2. edition), Routledge, London.
- Attia, I (2013): Privilegien sichern, nationale Identität revitalisieren. *Journal für Psychologie*, 21(1), pp 1-30 <https://www.journal-fuer-psychologie.de/index.php/jfp/article/view/258/289> [downloaded: 2018/07/23]
- Attia, I (2018): Was ist neu und was rechts am antimuslimischen Rassismus extrem rechter Argumentationen? In: Gomolla, M; Kollender, E; Menk, M (eds.): *Rassismus und Rechtsextremismus in Deutschland*. Weinheim Basel, pp 93–109
- Butterwegge, C (2006): Migrationsberichterstattung, Medienpädagogik und politische Bildung. In: Butterwege, C; Hentges, G (eds.): *Massenmedien, Migration und Integration*. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, pp 187- 237
- Connell, R (1995): *Masculinities*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press/Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- destatis (2015): *Pflegestatistik* 2015. https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Gesundheit/Pflege/PflegeDeutschlandergebnisse5224001159004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile [downloaded: 2018/07/21]
- Dietze, G(2016): Das ‚Ereignis Köln‘, *Femina Politica*, 1, 2016, pp 93-102.
- DISS (Duisburger Institut für Sprach- und Sozialforschung) (2017): Von der Willkommenskultur zur Notstandsstimmung. Der Fluchtdiskurs in deutschen Medien 2015 und 2016. <http://www.diss-duisburg.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/DISS-2017-Von-der-Willkommenskultur-zur-Notstandsstimmung.pdf> [downloaded: 30.03.2018]
- Esser, H (2000): *Soziologie. Spezielle Grundlagen. Band 2: Die Konstruktion der Gesellschaft*. Studienausgabe. Frankfurt- New York. pp 261-306.
- Fairclough, N. & Wodak, R. (1997): "Critical Discourse Analysis," in T. van Dijk (ed.) *Discourse as Social Interaction*, London: SAGE, pp. 258-84.
- Felder, E (2012): Linguistische Mediendiskursanalyse. Zur Bestimmung agonaler Zentren in der pragma-semiotischen Textarbeit. In: Grusca, Franciszek (ed): *Tagungsakten zur Sektion 53 „Diskurslinguistik im Spannungsfeld von Deskription und Kritik“ des Warschauer IVG-Kongresses*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, pp 407–415.
- Frass, C; Klemm, M (2005): Diskurse – Medien – Mediendiskurse. Begriffsklärungen und Ausgangsfragen. In: Fraas C; Klemm, M (eds): *Mediendiskurse. Bestandsaufnahme und Perspektiven*. Frankfurt am Main u.a.: Lang , pp. 1 – 8.
- Friberg, J; Midtbøen, A (2017): "Ethnicity as skill: immigrant employment hierarchies in Norwegian low-wage labour markets". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2017.1388160
- Friedrich, S (2011): „Rassismus in der Leistungsgesellschaft. Einleitung“. In: *Rassismus in der Leistungsgesellschaft. Analysen und kritische Perspektiven zu den rassistischen Normalisierungsprozess der »Sarrazinebatte«*. edition assemblage, pp 8–38.

- Gallo, E (2018): Religion, Masculinity, and Transnational Mobility (2018). In: Brown, B; Yeoh, B (eds.): Asian Migrants and Religious Experience: From Missionary Journeys to Labor Mobility. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp 177-199.
- Gallo, E; Scrinzi, F (2016): Outsourcing elderly care to migrant workers. The impact of gender and class on the experience of male employers. *Sociology*, April 2016 vol. 50 no. 2, pp 366-382.
- Georgi, V (2015): Integration, Diversity, Inklusion. www.diezeitschrift.de/22015/einwanderung-01.pdf [downloaded: 2018/09/08]
- Grillo, R (2003): "Cultural Essentialism and Cultural Anxiety". *Anthropological Theory*, 3 (2): pp 157-173
- Habermann, M; Stagge, M (2009): Nurse migration: a challenge for the profession and health-care systems. In: *Journal of Public Health* 18 (2009), pp 43-51
- Jäger, M (2015). „Skandal und doch normal. Verschiebungen und Kontinuitäten rassistischer Deutungsmuster im deutschen Einwanderungsdiskurs“. In: Friedrich, S; Wamper, R; Zimmermann, J (eds): *Der NSU in bester Gesellschaft: zwischen Neonazismus, Rassismus und Staat*. Edition DISS, pp 30–48.
- Jensen, SQ (2011): 'Othering, identity formation and agency', *Qualitative Studies*, vol., no 2: pp 63-78
- Johnson, J ; Bottorff, J; Browne, A (2004): "Othering and Being Othered in the Context of Health Care Services". *Health Communication*, 16(2): pp 255-271, DOI: 10.1207/ S15327027HC1602_7
- Kilkey, M; Perrons, D; Plomien, A; Hondagneu-Sotelo, P; Ramirez, H (2013): *Gender, Migration and Domestic Work. Masculinities, Male Labour and Fathering in the UK and USA*. Basingtole: Plagrave MacMilan.
- Lutz, H.; Palenga-Mollenbeck, E. (2010): 'Care Work Migration in Germany: Semi-Compliance and Complicity'. *Social Policy and Society* 9(3): pp. 419-30.
- MacKenzie, R.;Forde, C. (2009): 'The rhetoric of the "good worker" versus the realities of employers' use and the experiences of migrant workers'. *Work Employment and Society* 23(1): ppb 142-59.
- Marchetti, S (2015): Resentment at the Heart of Europe. Narratives by Afro-Surinamese Postcolonial Migrant Women in the Netherlands. In: Ponzanesi, S; Colpani, G (eds.): *Postcolonial Transitions in Europe. Context, Practices and Politics*, Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 135-150
- Mühe, M (2017): *Rassistische Diskurse im Einwanderungsland Deutschland, Das Aushandeln von Flucht und Asyl über soziale Medien im lokalen Raum*, Working Paper Nr. 15 | Februar 2017 , Center for North African and Middle Eastern Politics, Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin,
- Naumann, T (2006): *Feindbild Islam. Historische und theologische Gründe einer europäischen Angst – gegenwärtige Herausforderungen.* http://www.uni-siegen.de/phil/evantheo/mitarbeiter/naumann/dokumente/feindbild_06_druckfsg.pdf [downloaded: 2018/07/23]
- Näre, L (2010): *Sri Lankan Men Working as Cleaners and Carers: Negotiating Masculinity in Naples. Men and Masculinities. Vol 13, Issue 1, pp. 65 - 86*
- Näre, L (2013): "Migrancy, Gender and Social Class in Domestic Labour and Social Care in Italy: An Intersectional Analysis of Demand". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39(4): pp 601–623.
- Näre, L (2013b) 'Ideal workers and suspects. Employers' Politics of Recognition and the Migrant Division of Care Labour in Finland'. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 3(2): pp 72-81.
- Niedrig, H; Seukwa, L (2010): *Die Ordnung des Diskurses in der Flüchtlingskonstruktion: Eine postkoloniale Re-Lektüre. Diskurs Kindheits- und Jugendforschung Heft 2-2010, pp 181-193*

- Nökel, S (2002): Die Töchter der Gastarbeiter und der Islam : zur Soziologie alltagsweltlicher Anerkennungspolitiken ; eine Fallstudie. transcript, Bielefeld.
- Oevermann, U (1973): Zur Analyse der Struktur von sozialen Deutungsmustern. <http://www.agoh.de/cms/en/downloads/overview/func-startdown/57/> [downloaded: 2012/03/07].
- Rerrich, M (2006): Die ganze Welt zu Hause. Cosmobile Putzfrauen in privaten Haushalten. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition.
- Riegel, C (2016): Bildung – Intersektionalität – Othering. Pädagogisches Handeln in widersprüchlichen Verhältnissen. Transcript: Bielefeld.
- Rohde, C (2014): Gibt es Au-pair Jungen? Jungen Männer in der Kinderbetreuungsarbeit der Au-pair Verhältnisse. In: Rose, L; May, M (eds.): Mehr Männer in die Soziale Arbeit?! Budrich Verlag, Opladen, pp 59-71
- Rosenthal, C (2000): Zur medialen Konstruktion von Bedrohung. In: Schatz, H; Holtz-Bacha, C; Nieland, JU (eds.): Migranten und Medien. Neue Herausforderungen an die Integrationsfunktion von Presse und Rundfunk. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, pp196-206
- Rosowski, M; Ruffing, A (2012): Auf fremden Terrain - Wenn Männer pflegen. Herausgegeben vom Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend. http://www.bmfsfj.de/RedaktionBMFSFJ/Broschuerenstelle/Pdf-Anlagen/Auf-fremdem-Terrain-Wenn-M_C3_A4nner-pflegen,property=pdf,bereich=bmfsfj,sprache=de,rwb=true.pdf [downloaded: 2013/02/24]
- Sarvasy, W; Longo, P (2004): The globalization of care. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*. 6(3): pp 392-415.
- Sarti, R; Scrinzi, F (2010): Introduction to the Special Issue: Men in a Woman's Job, Male Domestic Workers, International Migration and the Globalization of Care. *Men and Masculinities*. Vol 13, Issue 1, pp. 4 - 15
- Sayer, A (2010): Class and Morality. In: Hitlin,S; Vasey S (eds.): *Handbook of the Sociology of Morality*. Springer: New York, pp. 163- 178, DOI 10.1007/978-1-4419-6896-8_9
- Scheibelhofer, P (2016): Konstruktionen von Männlichkeit und Gewalt in Debatten um „Köln“. *AEP – Informationen. Feministische Zeitschrift für Politik und Gesellschaft*, no 2, 2016: Flucht. Debatten & Realitäten aus feministischer Perspektive
- Schneider, J; Yemane, R; Weinmann, M (2014): Diskriminierung am Ausbildungsmarkt
Ausmaß, Ursachen und Handlungsperspektiven. Bosch Stiftung. https://www.bosch-stiftung.de/sites/default/files/publications/pdf_import/SVR-FB_Diskriminierung-am-Ausbildungsmarkt.pdf [downloaded: 2018/09/19]
- Scrinzi, F (2011): Gender, migration and the ambiguous enterprise of professionalizing domestic service: the case of vocational training for the unemployed in France. *Feminist Review*, 98, pp. 153-172. (doi:10.1057/fr.2011.6)
- Scrinzi, F (2016): Latin American migration, Evangelical Christianity and gender in Italy. EUI Working Paper RSCAS 2016/41 http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/42842/RSCAS_2016_41.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y [downloaded: 2018/07/20]
- Shooman, Y (2014). „... weil ihre Kultur so ist“: Narrative des antimuslimischen Rassismus. Bielefeld: transcript.
- Spivak, G (1985): The Rani of Sirmur. *History and Theory*, vol.24, no. 3, pp. 247-272, DOI: 10.2307/2505169.

- Van Dijk, T (2001): Critical Discourse Analysis. In: Schiffrin, d; Tannen, D; Hamilton, H: The Handbook of Discourse Analysis. Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, pp. 352-371
- Vollmer, B; Karakayali, S (2017): The Volatility of the Discourse on Refugees in Germany, *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, vol. 16, no1-2, pp 118-139
- Watkins, M; Ho, C; Butler, C (2017): Asian migration and education cultures in the Anglo-sphere. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 43, no. 14, pp 2283-2299
- Wengeler, M (2006): Zur historischen Kontinuität von Argumentationsmustern im Migrationsdiskurs. In: Butterwege, C; Hentges, G (eds.): *Massenmedien, Migration und Integration*. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: Wiesbaden, pp 13-36
- Winker, G; Degele, N (2011): Intersectionality as multi-level analysis: Dealing with social inequality. *European Journal of Women's Studies*. Vol 18, Issue 1, pp. 51 - 66
- Witzel, A (2000). Das problemzentrierte Interview. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 1(1), Art. 22, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0001228> [downloaded: 2018/09/08]
- Zeit Online 28th February 2018: "Ich bin keine Flüchtlingshilfe". <http://www.zeit.de/2018/10/tafel-essen-joerg-sator-deutschland-fluechtlinge-ehrenamt/komplettansicht> [downloaded: 30.03.2018]

Author contacts:

Caterina Rohde-Abuba

Centre for German and European Studies, University Bielefeld

Faculty of Sociology

Postfach 100131,

33501 Bielefeld

Germany

Email: Dr. Caterina Rohde-Abuba <caterina.rohde@arcor.de>