

„Refugees welcome“ – Motives and Challenges of urban networks of Solidarity

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Questions

- How can the welcome culture be framed conceptually?
- Who are the actors of this movement? What are the motives for volunteering for refugees?
- What are they engaged in? What kind of challenges are they facing and how do they deal with the present right wing movement?

Intro – what is the welcome culture?

- I. Paradigmatic shift? (Merx, Ruster, Szukitsch 2014)**
- II. Utilitarian dealing with migration? (Castro Varela 2014)**
- III. Attitude of Acceptance and Openness on 4 levels (Heckmann 2014)**
 1. Personal Level
 2. Interpersonal Level
 3. Level of Organizations and Institutions
 4. Society as a whole

Yvonne Szukitsch, A. M. (2014). Inklusiv, offen und gerecht? Deutschlands langer Weg zu einer Willkommenskultur. IQ - Fachstelle Diversity Management, VIA Bayern - Verband für interkulturelle Arbeit

Actors: who are they and what are their motives?

Social Structure

- 52 % Germans have had no past experiences with refugees (Ahrens 2015)
- 70 % female
- Predominantly high educated, relatively good professional position (Karakayali/Kleist 2014)
- Higher percentage have a history of migration
- Afflux increasing

Motives:

helping on a personal level, social contact, repressing right wing activities

Effects 1

Activities:

1. Language Lessons: before regular Integration Courses
2. Counseling: Housing & Labor Market, Foreigners
Registration office
3. Support: Accompanying to Authorities
4. Social Activities: Neighborhood feasts and Encounter-Cafés

Effects 2

Volunteering against right wing protest:

1. On the local level: repress right wing propaganda against refugees and migration
2. Motivation: to engage not only *against* right wing movements, but *for* refugees
3. While protests against grow – so do volunteers numbers for refugees
4. By consciously acting publicly for refugees, volunteers make the welcome culture hegemonic

Integration vs. Welcome Culture – a paradigmatic shift?

1. Integration > Sanctions and Suspicion
2. No longer a one-directional process on the personal and interpersonal level
3. Missing: to establish a welcome culture at the institutional level and the societal level

Thank you!

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