

# high lights

## # 2

E-Magazine  
[nccr-onthemove.ch](http://nccr-onthemove.ch)  
#2 / October 2017



**From Temporary  
to Durable Stay:  
Integration in the  
Field of Asylum**

# high lights

## # 2

### From Temporary to Durable Stay: Integration in the Field of Asylum



The asylum system is currently being restructured in Switzerland, with the explicit aim to implement shorter and more efficient procedures. At the same time, political debates are taking place on how to improve the situation of people who are still in the asylum procedure but who are likely to stay in Switzerland for a long time. In this context, *highlights #2* discusses the integration trajectories of asylum seekers and refugees in Switzerland and the functioning of the asylum procedure.

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The National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCR) are a research instrument of the Swiss National Science Foundation

#### About the E-Magazine of the nccr – on the move

Each issue of *highlights* focuses on one key question, providing answers by combining economic, demographic, sociological and legal knowledge. With the editorial and all summaries of the articles translated into both French and German, *highlights* contributes to making scientific migration and mobility knowledge accessible to an interested public.

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# Refugee Support in Switzerland – From Emergency to Integration?



## Editorial

**Summer 2015: The arrival in Europe of hundreds of thousands of refugees from the Middle East and Northern Africa has disingenuously been called a “refugee crisis”. With the resurgence of nationalism and the rise of radical right-wing populist parties all over Europe, the ability of our societies to meet this and other emergency situations has largely been questioned in public opinion. Unjustly: many refugees have been met by volunteers who have helped and organizations and administrations that gave their best, even though their capacities were sometimes overstretched.**

What has been done so far is impressive; the motivation to help can also be described as a successful micro-policy, or governance from below. However, aside from these initiatives to deal with the unexpected number of people who arrived the fact remains that many of the people who arrived in European countries are likely to stay. Hence, the issue of integration has increasingly become central to the public debate.

This question is also important in the context of Switzerland. The asylum system in Switzerland has been restructured, with the explicit objective of implementing shorter and more efficient procedures. At the same time, there are political debates about how to improve the situation of the persons – including

those who have been granted provisional admission – who are likely to stay in Switzerland.

In order to discuss the present and coming challenges, the nccr – on the move organized an Expert Exchange Roundtable in December 2016, where the most recent research of the National Center of Competence was presented and discussed in a dialogue with representatives of the practice, including the authorities and NGOs. Based on this event, the second issue of *highlights*, the NCCR E-magazine, offers an original contribution to the debate on integration in the field of asylum. Based on empirical data, all of the articles convincingly point to the need for faster decisions on asylum claims and integration policies that start early

**Gianni D'Amato**

**Director of the  
nccr – on the move,  
University of Neuchâtel**

on and respond to the actual needs of people who require protection.

### The Contributions

Integration is a classical crosscutting theme that cannot be limited to individual policies. In policy debates it is understood as guaranteeing equal opportunities to all inhabitants in central areas of social life, particularly education, the labor market, health, and – last but not least – the political system. Studies show that successful integration is also dependent on existing institutional structures that do not specifically target migrants, such as education policy and social welfare legislation. The contributions in this issue, however, demonstrate that the specific situa-

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tion of people in the field of asylum must be acknowledged.

In her contribution, Stefanie Kurt shows that, under current legislation measures favoring integration are highly correlated to a secure legal status. Only asylum seekers who have been recognized as refugees or granted provisional admission can access integration programs, a fact she criticizes. However, she also presents recent projects that nevertheless aim to strengthen the integration of asylum seekers on the labor market. While viewing them as welcome initiatives, she pleads for the inclusion of socio-cultural aspects, including language and civic knowledge training. Her arguments are based on statistical evidence that a significant share of all asylum seekers is likely to be granted some sort of protection and will therefore stay in Switzerland over the longer term.

Taking a similar perspective, Jens Hainmueller, Dominik Hangartner, Duncan Lawrence and Alexandra Dufresne argue for faster asylum procedures. Based on innovative quantitative data analyses, they demonstrate the positive effect of a shorter waiting time before a decision is made on the subsequent labor market integration of persons having been granted subsidiary protection. Reducing the length of asylum procedure can therefore increase refugee employment rates, with important economic effects on public expenditures and tax revenues.

In his article, Philippe Wanner shows that the labor market participation of men in the field of asylum is not only substantially lower than that of the overall male population, but also of the resident foreign population in general. His original analyses of longitudinal data from the nccr – on the move also indicate that the income of people in the field of

asylum is lower on average than that of the rest of the foreign population, although the incomes of some long-established refugee groups are converging at these levels. Wanner's analyses highlight significant variations depending on the nationality but also other dimensions, leading him to plead for flexible labor market integration policies that take the diversity of this population into account.

In their contribution, Gail Womersley, Laure Kloetzer and Betty Goguian Ratcliff focus on the harmful effects of long asylum procedures on the mental health of refugees. Based on two biographies, the authors illustrate how long waiting periods and uncertain life prospects may reinforce trauma and depression. While arguing – like most other authors – for faster decisions on asylum claims, they also demonstrate the need for a better integration in the labor market and social life after the granting of refugee status as a necessary condition for improving psychological wellbeing.

Constantin Hruschka is our guest author for this issue of *highlights*. According to him, a distorted public perception of asylum seekers characterizes the political debate and integration policies in this field in Switzerland. Policies and practice focus on control, deterrence and security, rather than integration. A real integration policy should be based on participation and address all persons in the field of asylum early on without the current paternalistic attitude. The focus should be on dialogue with the people directly affected by the policies in order to provide opportunities and prevent unwanted outcomes.

### Conclusion: Returning to the Fundamentals of Constitutional Democracy

The recent arrival in Europe of large numbers of refugees has made the issue of shared values more important than ever. I am convinced that it is crucial to promote the strengthening of democratic values and constitutional ethics, but acceptance of these standards cannot be imposed. The prerequisite for this is involvement by everyone in a process where these values are practiced on a daily basis and not merely taught theoretically.

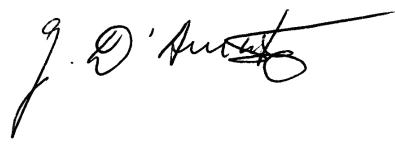
Former German Constitutional Judge Gertrude Lübbe-Wolff once wrote, "Instead of counterfactually postulating homogeneity or naively denying conflicts, we should ask ourselves what the best conditions are within our political entities to ensure peaceful coexistence and cooperation given the heterogeneity of our societies."<sup>1</sup> Her answer is: modern constitutions. Constitutions are the most important orientation for a democratic civil society. They are the "Bible of citizens"<sup>2</sup> and not only written for lawyers. Yet it remains true that many citizens are ignorant of our basic law. Clearly we cannot look down on the political culture of migrants and think we must simply teach them about democracy. Shared citizenship must be practiced by all of us and requires real interactions, including dispute and dissent.<sup>3</sup> In other words, even beyond the issue of migrants or refugees, conflicts are part of any society's integration process: they are an existential feature of democracies, since simple solutions do not exist in complex societies. And if enduring arguments are resolved successfully, then the constitution and democracy are reaffirmed.

# Refugee Support in Switzerland – From Emergency to Integration?

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Intolerance is growing in our societies. The recent tragic terrorist events as well as the rise of populist radical movements, which reinforce old forms of exclusionary policies, are two aspects of today's intolerance. They imperil our liberties. But while it is important to fight radicalism of all sorts, we must also address what we share. We must resist attempts to erode solidarity because resistance can lead to new political options and create the conditions necessary for defending the achievements of constitutional liberal democracies and

human rights. Supporting integration, then, may only be the first step in finding convincing answers to our current challenges. In this sense, the many volunteers who responded to the "refugee crisis" can show us the way forward through the commitment they have demonstrated.



Gianni D'Amato

- 1 Lübbe-Wolf 2007
- 2 Paine 1987
- 3 Kleger 2017

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# Unterstützung von Flüchtlingen in der Schweiz – nach der Notlage die Integration?



**Gianni D'Amato**

**Direktor des  
nccr – on the move,  
Universität Neuchatel**

**Sommer 2015: Die Ankunft Hunderttausender Flüchtlinge aus dem Nahen Osten und Nordafrika in Europa wurde in abwegiger Weise als «Flüchtlingskrise» betitelt. Im Zuge des neu aufkeimenden Nationalismus und erstarkender radikaler rechtspopulistischer Parteien in ganz Europa wurde die Fähigkeit unserer Gesellschaften, mit dieser und anderen Krisensituationen umzugehen, in weiten Kreisen der Öffentlichkeit infrage gestellt. Ganz zu Unrecht. Viele Flüchtlinge trafen nämlich auf freiwillige Helferinnen und Helfer und Organisationen und Regierungen, die trotz zeitweiliger Überforderung ihr Bestmögliches gaben.**

Bis heute wurde Beeindruckendes geleistet. Die Hilfsbereitschaft kann auch als erfolgreiche Mikropolitik bezeichnet werden, als Politikgestaltung von unten. Doch abgesehen von all den Initiativen, um mit der unerwartet hohen Zahl an Neuankommen fertig zu werden, lässt sich nicht leugnen, dass viele der in Europa angekommenen Menschen wohl bleiben werden. Somit rückte die Integrationsfrage zunehmend in den Mittelpunkt der öffentlichen Debatte.

Diese Frage ist auch für die Schweiz von Bedeutung. Das Asylwesen wird derzeit restrukturiert, mit dem ausdrücklichen Ziel, die Asylverfahren kürzer und effizienter zu gestalten. Gleichzeitig debattiert die Politik darüber, wie man die Lage der Men-

schen die auf längerer Sicht in der Schweiz bleiben werden, einschließlich der vorläufig Aufgenommenen, verbessern könnte.

Um über die aktuellen und künftigen Herausforderungen zu diskutieren, organisierte der «nccr – on the move» im Dezember 2016 einen runden Tisch mit Praxisakteuren, Vertreterinnen und Vertreter der Behörde und NGOs. Daran wurden die neuesten Forschungsergebnisse des Nationalen Forschungsschwerpunkts präsentiert und besprochen. Basierend auf dieser Veranstaltung liefert die zweite Ausgabe von *highlights*, dem Online-Magazin des «nccr – on the move», interessante Beiträge zu den Debatten über die Integration im Asylwesen. Gestützt auf empirische Daten zeigen sämtli-

che Artikel auf überzeugende Weise, dass wir raschere Asylverfahren und eine Integrationspolitik benötigen, die zu einem frühen Zeitpunkt greift und auf die tatsächlichen Bedürfnisse von schutzbedürftigen Menschen eingeht.

## **Die Beiträge**

Integration ist ein klassisches transversales Thema, das sich nicht auf einzelne Politiken reduzieren lässt. Im politischen Diskurs wird sie unter dem Licht der Chancengleichheit für alle Bürgerinnen und Bürger in zentralen Bereichen des gesellschaftlichen Lebens betrachtet, insbesondere in der Bildung, am Arbeitsmarkt, im Gesundheitswesen und nicht zuletzt auch innerhalb des politischen Systems. Studien belegen, dass

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sich auch bestehende institutionelle Strukturen wie das Bildungswesen oder die Sozialgesetzgebung, die nicht spezifisch auf Migrantinnen und Migranten ausgerichtet sind, auf eine erfolgreiche Integration auswirken. Die Beiträge in dieser Ausgabe zeigen jedoch, dass die spezielle Situation von Menschen in einem Asylverfahren berücksichtigt werden muss.

Stefanie Kurt zeigt in ihrem Beitrag auf, dass integrationsfördernde Massnahmen im Rahmen der aktuellen Gesetzgebung eng mit einem sicheren rechtlichen Status verbunden sind. Nur Asylsuchende die den Flüchtlingsstatus erhalten haben oder vorläufig aufgenommen wurden haben Zugang zu Integrationsprogrammen – eine Tatsache, die die Autorin kritisiert. Sie stellt aber auch jüngere Projekte vor, die trotz allem auf eine stärkere Integration der Asylsuchenden in den Arbeitsmarkt abzielen. Sie betrachtet diese zwar als willkommene Initiativen, spricht sich aber dennoch für den Einbezug soziokultureller Aspekte, einschließlich Sprachkurse und Staatskunde, aus. Ihre Argumente stellen auf verfügbare statistische Daten ab, die zeigen, dass zahlreichen Asylsuchenden ein gewisser Schutz gewährt werden dürfte und diese Menschen daher längerfristig in der Schweiz bleiben werden.

Aus einem ähnlichen Blickwinkel argumentieren Jens Hainmueller, Dominik Hangartner, Duncan Lawrence und Alexandra Dufresne ebenfalls für schnellere Asylverfahren. Anhand innovativer quantitativer Datenanalysen machen sie die positiven Auswirkungen von kürzeren Wartezeiten bis zum Asylentscheid auf die spätere Arbeitsmarktintegration von Menschen mit subsidiärem Schutzstatus sichtbar. Kürzere Asylverfahren können demnach zu einer höheren Beschäfti-

gungsquote bei Flüchtlingen führen, was sich erheblich auf die Höhe der öffentlichen Ausgaben und Steuererträge auswirkt.

Philippe Wanner legt in seinem Artikel dar, dass die Partizipation am Arbeitsmarkt von Männern aus dem Asylbereich nicht nur im Vergleich mit der männlichen Bevölkerung insgesamt, sondern auch im Vergleich mit der ausländischen Wohnbevölkerung im Allgemeinen deutlich geringer ist. Seine interessanten Analysen von Längsschnittdaten des «nccr – on the move» verdeutlichen weiter, dass das Einkommen von Männer im Asylbereich im Durchschnitt tiefer als das von der übrigen ausländischen Bevölkerung liegt, auch wenn sich der Einkommensunterschied bei einigen bereits lange ansässigen Flüchtlingsgruppen verringert. Mit seinen Analysen hebt Philippe Wanner die vorliegenden deutlichen Unterschiede hervor, bezogen auf die Nationalität und andere Aspekte. Aufgrund seiner Erkenntnisse spricht er sich für eine flexible Arbeitsmarktintegrationspolitik aus, die der Diversität dieser Bevölkerungsgruppe Rechnung trägt.

In ihrem Beitrag konzentrieren sich Gail Womersley, Laure Kloetzer und Betty Gogukian Ratcliff auf die negativen Auswirkungen langer Asylverfahren auf die psychische Verfassung von Flüchtlingen. Anhand zweier Biografien veranschaulichen die Autorinnen, wie lange Wartezeiten und ungewisse Lebensperspektiven die Folgen früherer traumatischer Erlebnisse und Depressionen verstärken können. Wie die meisten anderen Autorinnen und Autoren plädieren auch sie für raschere Asylentscheide und zeigen überdies auf, dass eine stärkere Integration in den Arbeitsmarkt und im gesellschaftlichen Leben nach der Gewährung des Flüchtlingsstatus eine wichtige

Voraussetzung für eine Verbesserung des seelischen Wohlergehens ist.

Constantin Hruschka liefert in dieser Ausgabe von *highlights* den Gastbeitrag. Für ihn ist eine verzerrte öffentliche Wahrnehmung der Asylsuchenden charakteristisch für den politischen Diskurs und die Integrationspolitik der Schweiz. Politik und Praxis konzentrieren sich auf Kontrolle, Abschreckung und Sicherheit statt auf Integration. Eine gute Integrationspolitik sollte auf Mitwirkung basieren und sich ohne die heute vorherrschende paternalistische Haltung von Beginn an alle Menschen im Asylbereich richten. Um den Menschen eine Perspektive zu geben und unerwünschte Folgen zu vermeiden, sollte ein Dialog mit den Direktbetroffenen stattfinden.

### Schlussfolgerung: Zurück zu den Grundlagen des demokratischen Rechtsstaates

Mit der Ankunft einer erheblichen Anzahl von Flüchtlingen in Europa rückte das Thema gemeinsamer Werte noch stärker ins Zentrum als früher. Ich bin überzeugt, dass demokratische Werte und verfassungsmäßige Grundsätze unbedingt gefördert werden müssen. Die Akzeptanz solcher Standards lässt sich allerdings nicht verordnen. Damit ein solcher Prozess funktionieren kann, braucht es ein Engagement von uns allen, wobei diese Werte tagtäglich erfahrbar sein müssen und nicht nur theoretisch vermittelt werden können.

Wie die frühere Verfassungsrichterin Gertrude Lübbe-Wolff einst meinte: «Statt kontrafaktische Homogenität zu postulieren oder naiv Konfliktpotenziale zu leugnen, sollten wir uns der Frage zuwenden, was innerhalb der politischen Einheiten, mit denen wir zu tun haben, die besten Voraussetzungen für friedliche Koexistenz

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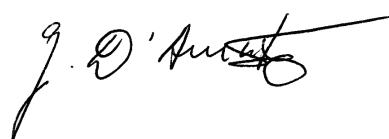
und gedeihliche Kooperation bei gegebener Inhomogenität sind.»<sup>1</sup> Ihre Antwort darauf: moderne Verfassungen. Verfassungen sind das wichtigste Orientierungsmittel für demokratische Zivilgesellschaften. Sie sind die «Bibel der Bürgerinnen und Bürger»<sup>2</sup> und wurden nicht nur für Anwältinnen und Anwälte verfasst. Dennoch bleibt es eine Tatsache, dass viele Bürgerinnen und Bürger unser Grundgesetz nicht kennen. Natürlich dürfen wir die politische Kultur von Migrantinnen und Migranten nicht von oben herab betrachten und meinen, wir können ihnen Demokratie so einfach beibringen. «Shared Citizenship» muss von allen ausgeübt werden und benötigt echte Begegnungen, die nicht immer frei von Streit und Dissens sein werden.<sup>3</sup> Mit anderen Worten: Konflikte gehen über die Migrations- oder Flüchtlingsthematik hinaus und sind Teil des Integrationsprozesses jeder Gesellschaft. Sie sind ein existenzieller Bestandteil von Demokratien, da es in komplexen Gesellschaften keine Patentlösungen gibt. Und wenn langwierige Streitigkeiten einen positiven Ausgang nehmen, gehen Verfassung und Demokratie gestärkt aus ihnen hervor.

Die Intoleranz in unserer Gesellschaft wächst. Die jüngsten tragischen Terroranschläge sowie das Aufkommen radikaler populistischer Bewegungen, die alte Formen einer Politik der Ausgrenzung fördern, sind zwei Aspekte der heutigen Intoleranz. Sie bedrohen unsere Freiheit. Es ist zwar wichtig, jede Form von Radikalismus zu bekämpfen, doch wir müssen uns auch das vor Augen halten, was uns verbindet. Wir müssen gegen jede Form der Entsolidarisierung Widerstand leisten, denn Widerstand kann neue politische Möglichkeiten eröffnen und die notwendigen Voraussetzungen schaffen, um die Errungenschaften der demokratischen liberalen Rechtsstaaten mit ihren Menschenrechtssystemen zu verteidigen. Dann ist Integrationsförderung möglicherweise nur der erste Schritt auf der Suche nach überzeugenden Antworten auf die Herausforderungen unserer Zeit. In diesem Sinne können uns die vielen freiwilligen Helferinnen und Helfer, die auf die «Flüchtlingskrise» einfach mit ihrem persönlichen Einsatz reagierten, den Weg weisen.

1 Lübbecke-Wolf 2007

2 Paine 1987

3 Kleger 2017



Gianni D'Amato

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# Soutenir les réfugié·e·s en Suisse : de l'urgence à l'intégration ?



## Editorial

**Gianni D'Amato**

**Directeur du  
nccr – on the move,  
Université  
de Neuchâtel**

**Été 2015 : l'arrivée en Europe de centaines de milliers de réfugié·e·s provenant du Moyen-Orient et d'Afrique du Nord s'est vu attribuer la désignation trompeuse de « crise des réfugié·e·s ». Avec la réapparition du nationalisme et la montée en puissance des partis populistes de droite à travers toute l'Europe, la capacité de nos sociétés à faire face à cette situation d'urgence comme à d'autres a largement été remise en question dans l'opinion publique. À tort, pourrait-on dire, car beaucoup de réfugié·e·s ont rencontré des volontaires prêt·e·s à les aider ainsi que des organisations et des administrations ayant tout donné, même si leurs capacités ont parfois été mises à rude épreuve.**

Ce qui a été accompli jusqu'à présent est impressionnant : la disposition à aider peut également être décrite comme une micropolitique réussie, comme une gouvernance venant du peuple. Cependant, au-delà de ces initiatives visant à gérer le nombre imprévisible d'arrivées, il n'en reste pas moins qu'une grande partie des personnes arrivant dans les pays européens ont des chances d'y rester. Le problème de l'intégration est donc devenu de plus en plus central dans le débat public.

Cette question est également importante dans le contexte suisse. Le système d'asile fait actuellement l'objet d'une restructuration, avec comme objectif explicite la mise en place de procédures plus courtes et plus

efficaces. En parallèle, des débats politiques ont lieu sur la question de l'amélioration de la situation des personnes qui ont des chances de rester en Suisse, y compris celles bénéficiant d'une admission provisoire.

Dans le but de discuter des défis présents et futurs, le « nccr – on the move » a organisé une table ronde d'expert·e·s en décembre 2016, lors de laquelle les résultats récents du Pôle de recherche national ont été présentés et discutés dans le cadre d'un dialogue avec des représentant·e·s de la pratique (autorités et ONG). En se basant sur cet événement, le deuxième numéro de *highlights*, le magazine électronique du NCCR, propose une contribution originale aux débats sur l'intégration dans le domaine de

l'asile. Les articles, fondés sur des données empiriques, mettent tous en évidence de manière convaincante le besoin de décisions d'asile plus rapides et de politiques d'intégration qui commencent tôt et répondent aux besoins actuels des personnes nécessitant une protection.

### **Les contributions**

L'intégration constitue un thème transversal classique qui ne peut pas être limité à des politiques individuelles. Dans les débats politiques, l'intégration vise à garantir l'égalité des chances à l'ensemble de la population dans les domaines centraux de la vie sociale, en particulier l'éducation, le marché du travail, la santé et, enfin, le système

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politique. Des études montrent que le succès de l'intégration dépend aussi des structures institutionnelles existantes qui ne visent pas spécifiquement les migrant·e·s, telles que le système éducatif ou la législation sur la protection sociale. Les articles de ce numéro démontrent toutefois que la situation spécifique des personnes du domaine de l'asile doit être reconnue.

Dans sa contribution, Stefanie Kurt montre que, selon la législation actuellement en vigueur, les mesures favorisant l'intégration sont fortement liées à la possession d'un statut juridique sûr. Elle critique le fait que seules les personnes ayant obtenu le statut de réfugié·e ou bénéficiant d'une admission provisoire peuvent accéder aux programmes d'intégration. Toutefois, elle présente également des projets récents qui visent à renforcer l'intégration des demandeur·se·s d'asile sur le marché du travail. Alors que Stefanie Kurt salue ces initiatives, elle plaide aussi pour la prise en compte des aspects socio-culturels, tels que l'apprentissage des langues et des connaissances civiques. Ses arguments se fondent sur les statistiques montrant qu'une part importante de demandeur·se·s d'asile est susceptible de bénéficier d'une forme de protection et va donc rester en Suisse à long terme.

Jens Hainmueller, Dominik Hangartner, Duncan Lawrence et Alexandra Dufresne suivent une perspective similaire et préconisent des procédures d'asile plus rapides. En se basant sur des analyses innovantes de données quantitatives, l'équipe de recherche démontre l'effet positif d'un temps d'attente plus court avant la prise de décision sur l'intégration ultérieure des personnes ayant bénéficié d'une protection subsidiaire. Le raccourcissement des procédures d'asile permet en outre une augmentation du taux

d'emploi chez les réfugié·e·s, avec des effets économiques importants sur les dépenses publiques et les recettes fiscales.

Philippe Wanner montre dans son article que la participation au marché du travail des hommes issus du domaine de l'asile est nettement inférieure non seulement à celle de la population masculine globale, mais aussi à celle de la population étrangère résidente en général. Il analyse des données originales et longitudinales qui proviennent du « nccr – on the move ». Ses analyses indiquent que le revenu des hommes du domaine de l'asile est généralement inférieur à celui du reste des habitants étrangers, même si certains groupes de réfugiés établis depuis longtemps se rapprochent de leurs niveaux. Elles mettent en évidence des variations importantes en lien avec la nationalité, mais aussi avec d'autres dimensions, ce qui amène l'auteur à plaider pour des politiques flexibles sur le marché du travail, prenant en compte la diversité de cette population.

Dans leurs contributions, Gail Womersley, Laure Kloetzer et Betty Goguikian Ratcliff se concentrent sur les effets nocifs des longues procédures d'asile sur la santé mentale des réfugié·e·s. En se basant sur deux biographies, les chercheuses illustrent comment les longues périodes d'attente et les incertitudes quant aux perspectives d'avenir peuvent renforcer les traumatismes et les dépressions. Alors qu'elles plaignent, comme la plupart des autres auteur·e·s de ce numéro, pour des décisions d'asile plus rapides, elles démontrent qu'une intégration renforcée sur le marché du travail et dans la vie sociale après l'attribution du statut de réfugié·e est aussi nécessaire pour améliorer le bien-être psychologique.

Constantin Hruschka est notre invité externe pour ce numéro de *highlights*. Selon lui, une perception publique déformée des demandeur·se·s d'asile caractérise le débat politique et les politiques d'intégration dans ce domaine en Suisse. Les politiques et les pratiques se concentrent sur le contrôle, la dissuasion et la sécurité plutôt que sur l'intégration. Une véritable politique d'intégration devrait se fonder sur la participation et s'adresser le plus tôt possible à toutes les personnes du domaine de l'asile, sans adopter l'attitude paternaliste que l'on connaît aujourd'hui. Le dialogue avec les personnes directement concernées devrait servir de ligne directrice dans le but de fournir des perspectives et d'éviter des conséquences indésirables.

### En conclusion: retourner aux fondamentaux de la démocratie constitutionnelle

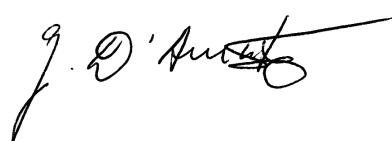
Avec l'arrivée récente d'un nombre important de réfugié·e·s en Europe, la question des valeurs partagées est devenue plus importante que jamais. Je suis convaincu que cet aspect est crucial pour promouvoir le renforcement des valeurs démocratiques et de l'éthique constitutionnelle. Toutefois, l'acceptation de ces standards ne peut pas être imposée. Le prérequis pour un processus tel que celui-ci est l'implication de toute la population, dans un contexte où la pratique de ces valeurs est vécue jour après jour, et pas seulement enseignée de manière théorique. L'ancienne juge constitutionnelle allemande Gertrude Lübbe-Wolff a un jour déclaré: « Plutôt que d'imposer un postuler d'homogénéité ou de nier naïvement les conflits, nous devrions nous demander quelles sont les meilleures conditions au sein de nos unités politiques pour assurer une coexistence pacifique et une coopération en tenant compte

## Soutenir les réfugié·e·s en Suisse: de l'urgence à l'intégration ?

### Editorial

de l'hétérogénéité existant dans nos sociétés.<sup>1</sup> Sa réponse : les constitutions modernes. Les constitutions représentent l'orientation la plus importante pour une société civile démocratique. Elles constituent la « bible des citoyen·ne·s »<sup>2</sup> et ne sont pas seulement écrites pour les avocat·e·s. Toutefois, il est vrai que beaucoup de citoyen·ne·s ignorent notre loi fondamentale. Il est clair que nous ne pouvons pas regarder de haut la culture politique des migrant·e·s et penser que nous devons tout simplement leur enseigner la démocratie. La citoyenneté partagée doit être pratiquée par nous tous et toutes et nécessite de véritables interactions, y compris des désaccords et des contestations.<sup>3</sup> En d'autres termes, même au-delà des questions de migrant·e·s ou de réfugié·e·s, les conflits font partie intégrante du processus d'intégration de toute société : ils représentent une caractéristique existentielle des démocraties, puisque les solutions simples n'existent pas dans les sociétés complexes. Et si des débats tenaces mènent à des conclusions heureuses, alors la constitution et la démocratie en sortent renforcées.

L'intolérance est toujours plus présente dans nos sociétés : les récents actes terroristes tragiques ainsi que la montée en puissance des mouvements populistes radicaux, qui renforcent les anciennes formes de politiques d'exclusion, constituent deux aspects de l'intolérance actuelle. Ils mettent en péril nos libertés. Toutefois, alors qu'il est important de combattre le radicalisme en tout genre, nous devons également nous occuper de ce que nous partageons. Nous devons résister à toute forme de désolidarisation, car la résistance peut mener à de nouvelles opinions politiques et établir les conditions nécessaires pour défendre ce que les démocraties constitutionnelles libérales et leurs régimes de droits humains ont apporté. Soutenir l'intégration ne représente ainsi que la première étape dans la recherche de solutions convaincantes pour résoudre nos défis actuels. En ce sens, les nombreux·ses volontaires ayant réagi à la « crise des réfugié·e·s » simplement par leur engagement peuvent nous montrer la voie à suivre.



Gianni D'Amato

1 Lübbe-Wolf 2007

2 Paine 1987

3 Kleger 2017

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# A Modest Start: Integration Policies in the Field of Asylum



**Stefanie Kurt**

**Faculty of Law,  
University  
of Neuchatel /  
Institute of Social  
Work, HES-SO  
Valais-Wallis**

**Integration and asylum are two much discussed topics in the current debate on Swiss migration policies, yet they are rarely discussed in conjunction. However, the number of people who have arrived through the asylum process and are likely to stay in Switzerland for at least some time – asylum seekers, persons with provisional admission, and those recognized as refugees – will increase in the coming years. Consequently, the government's integration policies will become increasingly important in the field of asylum as well.<sup>1</sup>**

In Switzerland, the protection rate – that is the rate at which asylum seekers were granted refugee status or provisional admission – has remained more or less stable over the last two years: 48.7% in 2016 compared to 53.1% in 2015. The stability of the protection rate means that significant numbers of asylum seekers are likely to be granted protection and will, thus, stay in Switzerland over the longer term. Nevertheless, the Federal Asylum Act does not mention integration or employment programs for the various stages of the asylum procedure.<sup>2</sup> Integration is only mentioned in the Federal Act on Foreign Nationals (FNA) and its specific Ordinance on the Integration of Foreigners. Article 4 para. 2 FNA clarifies that integration is aimed only at "foreign nationals who are lawful residents in Switzerland

for the longer term". Thus, there is an important legal distinction regarding integration depending on whether a person is still in the asylum procedure or not; integration policies are not aimed at asylum seekers or irregular migrants.<sup>3</sup>

**"The stability of the protection rate means that significant numbers of asylum seekers are likely to stay in Switzerland, yet the law does not provide integration programs during the asylum procedure."**

These structural and legal aspects of integration policies are embedded in a political and social environment that perceives integration as intrinsically linked to the possession of a (secure) legal status. Asylum seekers are not considered to be lawful residents as long as they are

not recognized as refugees (and do not receive a residence permit – B permit – for recognized refugees) or granted a provisional admission (F permit). Therefore, they are usually not entitled to participate in integration measures or programs. This is mostly justified by the widespread political and legal perception that it is more difficult for rejected asylum seekers to return to their countries of origin when they were given the possibility of integrating during the asylum procedure. In fact, cantons receive a unique integration allowance of CHF 6,000 aimed at professional integration measures and language courses<sup>4</sup> – but only for each provisionally admitted person, recognized refugee and person in need of protection (S permit), and not for asylum seekers.

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As a result, integration projects and initiatives only rarely focus on the integration of asylum seekers specifically.

## Main Focus of the Federal Authorities: Encouraging Integration on the Labor Market

The labor participation rate of people in the field of asylum has been stagnating for years: It is about 20% for refugees (five years after a positive asylum decision; people ages 18 to 65), and about 30% for provisionally admitted persons (seven years after a decision; people ages 18 to 65).

After Swiss voters approved the popular initiative against mass immigration in 2014, the Federal Council decided to encourage the labor market integration of the domestic workforce<sup>5</sup> (i.e., people already living in Switzerland). In particular, the elderly, women and young people, people with disabilities, persons with provisional admission, and those recognized as refugees. As one concrete measure, Parliament decided to abolish the special charges on the salaries that provisionally admitted persons and asylum seekers had to pay until then based on the Asylum Act<sup>6</sup>; the revision is not yet in force.<sup>7</sup> In December 2016, Parliament – in the framework of the latest partial revision of the Federal Foreigners Act (when it comes into force: Foreigner and Integration Act) – further supported replacement of the authorization requirement with a notification requirement when employing provisionally admitted persons. The process will, therefore, become less bureaucratic, as only notification will be required. Both legal measures facilitate access to the labor market for foreign nationals already in the country, including people in the field of asylum.

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**"In 2014, the Federal Council decided to encourage the labor market integration of the domestic workforce, including people in the field of asylum."**

Additionally, in 2015 the Federal Council announced the start of a pilot project that aims to strengthen the integration of provisionally admitted persons and refugees in the labor market (up to 1,000 people per year). These measures will be implemented in 2018 at the earliest. The pilot program is based on two pillars: first, places for pre-apprenticeship will be created for provisionally admitted persons and refugees so they can acquire the necessary job skills and professional qualifications and, second, language courses will be offered to people in the asylum process who have a high likelihood of staying.

The idea of connecting the acquisition of working and local language skills was tested in a similar project in 2006 that was also launched by the federal authorities. Selected companies from different industries (logistics, construction, retail, cleaning, etc.) started to train refugees with a view to encouraging them to integrate in the labor market. An evaluation of the project results showed that it was unsatisfactory, as the expected effect of creating jobs for the participants was not achieved in most cases. However, a similar program that combines language courses and work programs is currently underway in the Canton of Glarus. The initial experiences have been positive.

## Integration Projects at the Local Level

Some cantons and municipalities are also implementing labor market integration projects. The following section gives a non-exhaustive overview of some of the cantonal and communal integration projects, many of which focus on mentoring and networking.

The "Bernetz" project in the Canton of Bern is a mentoring program for qualified migrants who do not have a job in line with their qualifications. The objective is to enable migrants to collaborate with "gatekeepers" to better promote their labor market potential. The "Capacity" project in the Canton of Zurich follows a similar direction. This project seeks to help individuals reach their human potential. The main aims are to create opportunities for networking and collaborations, to support self-employment or employability with workshops and training sessions on business and integration, and finally to build a network.

Civil society and non-governmental organizations are also involved in the issue of labor market integration. Online platforms, such as www.jobs4refugees.ch, have been developed to better connect the needs of the economy with potential employees. Such projects are complementary to (or even the implementation of) projects initiated by the cantonal authorities. The general situation on the labor market and economic conditions in the various cantons play an important role with regard to the structure of such projects. Furthermore, the legal recognition of professional experience or education is a complex process in Switzerland, particularly for migrants from non-EU/EFTA countries. It is even more difficult (or even impossible) for people in the field of asylum if their

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original professional or educational documents are missing.

While there has been a sharp focus on migrants' integration in the labor market in the debates on the integration of people in the field of asylum, there has been little to no consideration of the role and function of socio-cultural elements in the integration process, especially with respect to asylum seekers. Nevertheless, a few projects at the cantonal level are helping to boost the active participation of asylum seekers.

**"The main focus continues to be on migrants' integration in the labor market, but there are also socio-cultural integration projects, primarily centered on the acquisition of a national language."**

Volunteers, government institutions, and civil organizations offer free (or low-cost) language classes, which are also open to asylum seekers. For example, the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Neuchatel, in partnership with the Migration Service of the Canton of Neuchatel and with the support of the Institute of French Language and Culture, has been offering French classes to people in the field of asylum, including asylum seekers, since January 2013. The Canton of Neuchatel also offers various programs on integration and civic knowledge. The Canton of Geneva created a website on which languages and literacy classes can easily be found. Thus, even if the main focus remains on migrants' integration in the labor market, various actors offer a number of socio-cultural integration projects, mainly focusing on the acquisition of a national language.

Furthermore, many cantons and civil organizations implement projects that focus specifically on migrant women and/or children. For instance, Swiss Interchurch Aid

(HEKS/EPER) rents out parcels of community gardens in Zurich and Schaffhausen. These gardens become a space where female refugees can do something useful together while simultaneously establishing social contacts. There are integration programs that are specifically aimed at women in some municipalities as well. For example, the city of Zurich offers female migrants a course on "daily life in Zurich", including childcare. The course aims to give the women an introduction to the city's culture, history and political system.

### Integration Projects for Asylum Seekers during the Asylum Procedure: A Modest Start

Most of the measures and projects presented above address the needs of migrants living in Switzerland with a lawful residence permit, but they rarely include asylum seekers. Recent initiatives, however, hint at a new push to target people who are still in the asylum procedure, but who may stay in Switzerland when a decision on their asylum application is made. The Federal Council recently published a press release about the "In-Limbo" project – a fairly (positive) surprise, given the lack of attention paid to the integration of asylum seekers until now.

**"Recent initiatives hint at a new push to target people who are still in the asylum procedure, but who may stay in Switzerland."**

The "In-Limbo" project offers asylum seekers and provisionally admitted persons<sup>8</sup> basic education and some initial professional experience. The three-phase concept is implemented in the collective asylum center in *Büren an der Aare* (Canton of Bern). Asylum seekers gain experience and skills through internal work experiences, language classes and weekly workshops during the first phase.

In the second phase, the goal is to acquire specific knowledge through participation in internal project groups, organized like companies, and later in external work projects. Phase three includes individual job coaching and support. The goal is to prepare people for future employment. The ability to participate in the program starts the second day after a person's arrival at the center. The concept of "In-Limbo" is based on asylum seekers' interests and their existing knowledge. Internal projects are, for example, related to communal kitchen tasks (cooking), working in the laundry or running a kiosk. In external projects, asylum seekers offer different services and products to authorities, organizations, businesses, and private individuals, such as gardening, manufacturing and beekeeping. Finally, the "In-Limbo" project is based on the idea that integration programs might also encourage the voluntary return of asylum seekers if their asylum application is rejected.

The private association *Lernwerk* has proposed a similar project in the Canton of Aargau. It aims to motivate asylum seekers to participate in work programs and to learn German during the asylum procedure. *Lernwerk* collaborates with the Department for Economy and Work and the Department for Migration and Integration of the Canton of Aargau, as well as with the Department for Social Affairs of the city of Zurich.

### Integration Policy: A Moving Landscape

In addition to this brief and non-exhaustive overview of federal, cantonal and local integration projects, it is worth mentioning that because of recent total or partial legal revisions the general field of integration in Switzerland is changing.<sup>9</sup> More specifically, implementation of a new

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asylum structure, which is currently in progress, will have a significant impact on integration issues. The first processing centers are already in operation, while others are in the planning stage. The aim of the revised structure is to implement faster asylum processes and, consequently, faster yet constitutional decisions regarding asylum applications. Faster decisions require integration measures to be implemented more quickly.

**"The aim of the revised structure is to implement faster asylum processes: faster decisions require integration measures to be implemented more quickly."**

However, the fact remains that the Asylum Act does not mention integration projects during the asylum procedure. The current focus on facilitating and encouraging the integration of provisionally admitted persons and refugees in the Swiss labor market excludes asylum seekers for the most part. In fact, integration is supposed to start only after a positive decision on the asylum application has been made or provisional admission has been granted.

However, federal authorities have started – albeit tentatively – to connect integration matters with people in the asylum procedure, such as the “In-Limbo” project and the private *Lernwerk* project show. It can be argued that such projects are economically attractive as they may reduce asylum costs.<sup>10</sup> Although Swiss integration policies do not require and the Asylum Act does not mention integration processes, in reality, these processes start the moment foreigners enter Switzerland. The authorities, politicians, and society in general need to be aware that, whether or not the legal and political will is there, some form of integration is taking place.

- 1 The legal framework presented in this article refers to the situation in April 2017.
- 2 The word integration is only used with regard to the application of hardship cases or with regard to refugees and persons who need protection; see art. 82 para. 5 AsylA, art. 14 para. 2 let. c AsylA.
- 3 Achermann, Alberto and Cesla Amarelle, 2017; Achermann, Alberto, 2010
- 4 Recently the *Schweizerische Konferenz für Sozialhilfe (SKOS)* published a report that demands, among other things, an increase in the integration allowance because real costs are higher.

5 Domestic workers include Swiss citizens, foreigners with a permanent residence permit and people with a residence permit who have authorization to work (art. 21 para. 2 FNA). In the future, domestic workers will also include provisionally admitted persons who have authorization to work; cf. art. 21 para 2 let. d and e, BBI 2016 8917, p. 8,917.

6 Currently, asylum seekers and provisionally admitted persons are required to pay a special charge amounting to 10 percent of their gross income in addition to regular taxes, see art. 86 AsylA, art. 88 FNA, art. 10 and 13 ff. AsyLO 2. The purpose of the special charge is to repay the costs (social welfare benefits, return, enforcement and federal appeals procedure) generated by people in the asylum procedure and their families.

7 The consultation process for the ordinances under revision is on-going.

8 The website of the project “In-Limbo” does not mention the participation of provisionally admitted persons, but it is written in the press release.

9 Cf. Total revision of the Citizenship Act and its Ordinance, enter into force on the 1st January 2018, BBI BBI 2014 5133, AS 2016 2755; Partial revision of the National Foreigners Act, BBI 2016 8917, BBI 2016 8899.

10 The website of “In-Limbo” cites a reduction of social welfare costs as one of the project’s goals.

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# Integration Policies

## A Modest Start: Integration Policies in the Field of Asylum

### Zusammenfassung

#### Ein zögerlicher Start: Integrationspolitik im Asylbereich

Die Neustrukturierung des Asylbereichs und die stabilen Zahlen anerkannter Flüchtlinge und vorläufig aufgenommener Personen stellen die Schweizer Integrationspolitik vor eine grosse Herausforderung. Im Nachgang zur Annahme der Volksinitiative «Gegen Masseneinwanderung» am 9. Februar 2014 hat das Parlament auf Vorschlag des Bundesrates verschiedene gesetzliche Massnahmen ergriffen, um die Arbeitsmarktintegration von Personen aus dem Asylbereich zu erleichtern. Gleichzeitig hat der Bundesrat im Dezember 2015 angekündigt, ein Pilotprojekt zu lancieren, das die Integration in den Arbeitsmarkt für anerkannte Flüchtlinge und vorläufig aufgenommene Personen beschleunigen soll.

Kantonale Institutionen und zivilgesellschaftliche Akteure spielen ebenfalls eine wichtige Rolle in diesem Bereich: auf kantonaler und kommunaler Ebene bestehen verschiedene Integrationsprojekte, die bewusst Vernetzung und Mentoring fördern. Demgegenüber sind Projekte mit Fokus auf soziokulturelle Aspekte unterrepräsentiert. Der aktuelle Hauptfokus liegt auf der Integration in den Arbeitsmarkt, wobei gewisse Projekte gleichzeitig Kenntnisse einer der Landessprachen vermitteln.

Offen bleibt die Frage, inwiefern sich die Neustrukturierung des Asylbereichs auf die Integration auswirkt. Denn schnellere Asylentscheide bedingen auch raschere Integrationsmassnahmen. «In-Limbo», ein anderes kürzlich vom Bundesrat vorgestelltes Projekt, ist diesbezüglich hervorzuheben, da es Integrationsprojekte für Asylsuchende während des laufenden Asylverfahrens vorsieht. Insgesamt wäre es jedoch wünschenswert, dass die Schweizer Integrationspolitik ein grösseres Bewusstsein darüber schafft, dass die Integration ab Zeitpunkt der Einreise in die Schweiz beginnt – unabhängig davon, ob der gesetzliche Rahmen oder der politische Wille dies vorsieht.

### Résumé

#### Un début hésitant : politiques d'intégration dans le domaine de l'asile

La restructuration du domaine de l'asile et les chiffres stables des réfugié·es reconnu·es et des personnes admises à titre provisoire posent un grand défi aux responsables de la politique suisse d'intégration. À la suite de l'adoption de l'initiative populaire «Contre l'immigration de masse» du 9 février 2014, le Parlement a pris diverses mesures législatives, sur proposition du Conseil fédéral, afin de faciliter l'intégration sur le marché du travail des personnes relevant du domaine de l'asile. Parallèlement, le Conseil fédéral a annoncé en décembre 2015 le lancement d'un projet pilote visant à accélérer l'intégration sur le marché du travail des réfugié·es reconnu·s et des personnes admises à titre provisoire.

Les institutions cantonales et les acteurs de la société civile jouent également un rôle important dans ce domaine: à l'heure actuelle, il existe déjà au niveau cantonal et communal divers projets d'intégration encourageant explicitement la mise en réseau et le mentoring. Cependant, on observe une sous-représentation des projets qui se concentrent sur les aspects socioculturels. Pour le moment, l'accent principal porte sur l'intégration sur le marché du travail, et certains projets en profitent pour transmettre des connaissances dans l'une des langues nationales.

Reste à déterminer dans quelle mesure la restructuration du domaine de l'asile exerce un impact sur l'intégration. En effet, des décisions plus rapides sur l'asile impliquent également des mesures d'intégration plus rapides. Il convient de souligner à cet égard un autre projet récemment présenté par le Conseil fédéral, «In-Limbo», qui prévoit des mesures d'intégration pour les personnes en cours de procédure d'asile. Dans l'ensemble, il serait toutefois souhaitable que la politique d'intégration suisse prenne conscience que l'intégration débute dès l'entrée en Suisse – indépendamment de ce que prévoit le cadre légal ou la volonté politique.

# How Well Are Asylum Seekers and Refugees Integrating into the Swiss Labor Market?



**Philippe Wanner**

**Institute of  
Demography and  
Socioeconomics,  
University of Geneva**

The integration of asylum seekers and refugees in the labor market has always been a hot topic. Evidence suggests that integration is often less than satisfactory, even after several years in Switzerland, and that the reasons for this are complex. This article highlights certain specific characteristics of this population and records the participation of male asylum seekers and refugees in the labor market, based on longitudinal analyses.

## Assessing Participation in the Labor Market: The Facts and the Challenges

Assessing the labor market participation of asylum seekers and refugees presents a challenge, and the federal statistical system is finding it difficult to document this issue. In this context, the nccr – on the move is making a useful contribution with the longitudinal data it has collected. By linking various statistical databases, it is possible to undertake a longitudinal analysis, following the progress of the foreign population in Switzerland over time and assessing changes in their income from paid employment.

At the end of 2013, there were 88,876 "people in the field of asylum" in Switzerland aged between 20 and 64 years, people in the field of asylum being defined as asylum seekers,

persons granted provisional admission, recognized refugees, or persons granted residency status on hardship grounds: they represent the sample on which our analysis is based. We analyze their participation in the labor market using two indicators: whether they receive income from paid employment and the median income (which divides a given population into two equal groups).

### *> Data and methods (see appendix)*

While this method is innovative, it does have some limitations. On the one hand, it is not possible to calculate the hourly rate or look into possible wage and salary discrimination. Furthermore, the data does not allow us to distinguish active job seekers from those who are not in the remunerated workforce. This study therefore focuses only on men – since

women are more likely to be involved in unpaid domestic tasks.

## Who Were the Asylum Seekers and Refugees Living in Switzerland at the End of 2013?

Before we analyze the participation in the labor market in more detail, we will present a few figures to describe the study population. As can be seen in Figure 1, which shows the distribution of the population in 2013 by age and gender, the majority of refugees and asylum seekers are male, with a ratio of 151 men for every 100 women.

**"Men are overrepresented, especially among asylum seekers and persons granted provisional entry, among young people, and among migrants from Afghanistan and Iraq."**

# Labor Market

## How Well Are Asylum Seekers and Refugees Integrating into the Swiss Labor Market?

This male gender bias varies depending on the age group. While the gender distribution is fairly balanced for those aged 17 years or under, from the age of 18, men strongly outnumber women, with a ratio of 230 men for every 100 women for those aged 25. This gender bias is particularly strong among asylum seekers (N permit) and persons granted provisional admission (F permit). It diminishes with age, but the ratio still remains significantly skewed with a gender ratio of 115 men per 100 women among 40-year-olds. The age distribution data also shows the predominance of 20 to 35-year-olds in the male group, whereas the age distribution among women is much more even.

> *Figure 1: Age distribution data for the population of people in the field of asylum, according to type of residence permit (age in 2013) (see appendix)*

In this population limited to persons aged 20 to 64 years and residing in Switzerland at the end of 2013, we observe a wide range of countries of origin (see Table 1). The main groups represented are Sri Lankans, Turks and Eritreans. There are also wide variations in terms of their legal status: More than two thirds of Turks with an asylum background hold a permanent residence permit (C permit for recognized refugees), the majority of Serbs and Kosovars hold an annual residence permit (B permit for recognized refugees), Somalis tend to hold a provisional admission permit (F permit), while more than 60% of Afghans are asylum seekers (N permit) or hold a provisional admission permit (F permit). Almost one in eight persons from the countries of former Yugoslavia has been naturalized.

> *Table 1: Distribution of the population of people in the field of asylum by nationality, permit type, gender and level of education. People aged 20 to 64 years, in Switzerland in 2013 (see appendix)*

The distribution by gender also differs according to nationality, with a male predominance among Afghans and Iraqis (more than two-thirds of whom are men) and a female predominance seen only among Bosnians. The level of education, while generally low, also shows national particularities: approximately 80% of Sri Lankans and Somalis of working age have a basic level of education (Secondary I), while among Iraqis, and especially among persons from other countries in Europe and Africa, as well as South America, the proportion of people who have received tertiary education is relatively high (between 18% and 30%).

### Participation in the Labor Market Is Slowly Increasing

Figure 2 shows the percentage of men who declared an income, i.e. participated in the labor market, for the years 2008 to 2013, for 12 nationalities/regions. Only men aged 20 to 64 years who were in Switzerland for the entire period are taken into account, in order to achieve a longitudinal picture of labor market integration. For comparison purposes, the graph also shows the percentage of participants in the labor market for all men aged 20 to 64 living in Switzerland (Swiss and foreign nationals) and for all male foreign nationals (regardless of their reason for entering the country). As expected, the rate of participation in the labor market is lower for people in the field of asylum than for foreign nationals overall, and even more so in comparison to the (male) population as a whole. Sri Lankans are the exception here, as since 2010, their rates of parti-

pation have merged with those of foreign nationals overall.

**"With the exception of Sri Lankans, men with an asylum background are less active in the workforce than male foreign nationals overall, and to a greater measure, than all men living in Switzerland."**

> *Figure 2: Percentage of men participating in the labor market, by nationality and year, 2008–2013 (in %) (see appendix)*

Two significant results emerge from these data. On the one hand, there are significant variations in the rates of participation in the labor market depending on nationality: besides Sri Lanka (almost 90%), the highest participation rates are seen among nationals of Kosovo and Afghanistan (more than 70% at the end of the period). Turks, Iraqis, Eritreans and Somalis had the lowest participation rates (just over 60%) at the end of the period. On the other hand, three groups showed a significant increase in rates of participation between 2008 and 2013: Afghans, Somalis and, most notably, Eritreans. The majority of migrant men from these countries arrived in Switzerland during the first decade of the 2000s: they reflect the progressive integration in the labor market that has also been highlighted in other studies.<sup>1</sup> The rates of participation in the labor market of other groups in the study, which arrived in Switzerland in the 1990s, appear to have peaked in the first few years of the 2010 decade and then to have plateaued or in some cases even fallen.

The trends for the different groups and the plateau observed since 2012 suggest that people in the field of asylum, with the exception of Sri Lankans, do not reach the level of participation in the labor market that is seen among the population of male

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foreign nationals as a whole. Factors such as their migration experience and its effect on their health (see article by Womersley et al. in this issue), insufficient education, or lack of certainty about their residence status all combined to create an obstacle to integration in comparison with foreign nationals who entered Switzerland for reasons other than asylum.

**“People in the field of asylum very seldom achieve a level of participation on a par with the foreign male population overall.”**

### Lower Income

Figure 3 shows the income from paid employment of men in the workforce. The median income (which divides the population into two even groups, orange line in the graph) and the first and third quartile (orange dots) are shown. For comparison purposes, the graph also shows the median income for the entire male population living in Switzerland (Swiss and foreign nationals), and for the population of foreign nationals (all kinds of permits combined). As can be seen, people in the field of asylum consistently lag behind in terms of remuneration, compared with the two reference groups. At best, in some communities (countries of former Yugoslavia and Sri Lanka), the best paid 25% (third quartile) have an income which corresponds to the median income for foreign nationals residing in Switzerland. But none of the groups comes near the median income for Swiss men overall. The Bosnians and Kosovars have the highest median incomes of the groups in the study – but they are still significantly behind the median income for Swiss nationals (at 58,500 francs and 55,000 francs respectively in 2013, compared with 75,000 francs for the total male population residing in Switzerland). At the other extreme, the median income for Somalis and

Eritreans is less than 35,000 francs, which is less than half of the median income for Swiss national men.

The figures also show a continued growth in median income over the period of the study, with the notable exception of Somalis, who received lower incomes in 2010 and 2011 in comparison with 2009. It should be noted that during 2010 and 2011, the rate of participation of Somalis in the labor market rose sharply (cf. Figure 2): the drop in income clearly reflects the fact that the newcomers to the labor market received a lower income than the Somalis who were already employed in 2009. However, the median income has risen most sharply among Eritreans (by a factor of 2.5) which suggests that the integration of a growing number of Eritreans in the labor market has been accompanied by a growth in the number of working hours and/or average salaries.

*> Figure 3: First and third quartile median income of men participating in the labor market, by nationality and year, 2008–2013 (see appendix)*

**“It is unrealistic to expect the income of people in the field of asylum to catch up with that of the rest of the population: while there has been a gradual increase in income from paid employment, the discrepancies still remain.”**

For the other groups, income from paid employment is rising more slowly (slightly less than 4% growth over the period 2008 to 2013 for Sri Lankans and the group of other Europeans, and 16% for Afghans). Over the same period, the median income from paid employment for all working males (Swiss and foreign nationals) has grown 4.4%, while that of foreign nationals has grown 5.5%. Thus, for several groups of people in the field of asylum there is no

obvious closing of the gap with the reference groups, which has either remained the same or shown no significant improvement.

### Conclusion: Incomplete Labor Market Integration with Very Little Improvement

Our data indicates that, with the exception of Sri Lankans, the labor market integration of people in the field of asylum remains precarious and piecemeal, even among the nationalities that arrived in Switzerland in the 1980s and 1990s. It is not going to be possible to fully overcome the disadvantage in comparison with the population as a whole, in terms of the rate of participation of men in the labor market, even if the rates of participation grow in various national groups of people in the field of asylum. The level of pay is generally low, compared to the reference values, and for this indicator, too, the disadvantage for people in the field of asylum in comparison to the population as a whole is not being overcome.

The factors that contribute to this situation, some of which have been identified in the literature<sup>2</sup>, are complex. Statistical models (not shown here) for example, demonstrate the fact that the type of residence permit and nationality are the two main factors influencing paid employment and the level of income<sup>3</sup>, ahead of other factors such as age, level of education and place of residence.

In terms of the influence of the type of residence permit, it is not surprising that a permanent residence permit or annually renewable residence permit results in better participation in the workforce than a provisional entry permit or asylum seeker status. Holding a permanent or annual residence permit gives those concerned a more stable situation in

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Switzerland, making them more attractive to employers. The administrative procedures involved with this type of permit are also much more straightforward in comparison with those required for holders of an F or N permit ([see article by Kurt in this issue](#)). The best results are seen among holders of a B permit (annually renewable temporary residence permit). This group includes those who have been granted a residence permit on the grounds of hardship<sup>4</sup>, and these cases are looked on more favorably if the applicant is in regular paid employment. As one would expect, therefore, the rate of employment is higher among holders of a B permit.

Nationality is another important factor, which influences participation in the labor market in a number of ways. These include the different ethnic networks to which migrants have access to help them in their integration. On the other hand, certain groups of migrants face significant discrimination on the part of poten-

tial employers.<sup>5</sup> A person's language knowledge certainly plays a significant role: a recent study shows, for example, that asylum seekers who are already proficient in the language of the region to which they have been assigned, or who are given the opportunity to learn that language, integrate much more easily into the workforce.<sup>6</sup> And last but not least, a person's migration experience and their future prospects in Switzerland<sup>7</sup>, which are influenced in part by their nationality, are factors which may have an impact on integration in the labor market.

**"To be effective, an integration policy has to take into account the huge diversity among people in the field of asylum in terms of their migration experience and national characteristics."**

For example, our analysis has shown that certain groups, such as Sri Lankans, have successfully integrated into the labor market, despite rather low levels of education. It can

be assumed that, in contrast to other groups, existing community networks and the fact that they are well-received by employers has an impact on their integration. To conclude, on the basis of these various factors it is clear that for labor market integration policy to achieve its objectives, it must be flexible and take into account the diversity of the population of people in the field of asylum.

1 See for example Spadarotto et al. 2014

2 See Bertrand 2017 for a review of the literature

3 Wanner et al. 2016

4 Bertrand 2017

5 For evidence of this, please refer to the works of Fibbi et al. (2003). These studies are being reproduced as part of the work carried out by the nccr – on the move.

6 Auer 2017

7 Bertrand 2017

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### Further Reading

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### Zusammenfassung

#### Wie erfolgreich integrieren sich Asylsuchende und Flüchtlinge in den Schweizer Arbeitsmarkt?

Das Thema Erwerbsbeteiligung von Flüchtlingen und Asylsuchenden löst viele integrations- und asylpolitische Debatten aus. Angesichts dessen braucht es Daten, um diese Beteiligung zu dokumentieren und die verschiedenen Einflussfaktoren auszumachen. Mit Hilfe von miteinander verbundenen statistischen Registern untersuchen wir in unserem Beitrag die Integration von Männern aus dem Asylbereich in den Arbeitsmarkt. Das hierbei angewendete neue Verfahren ermöglicht es, den Werdegang dieser spezifischen Bevölkerungsgruppe innerhalb der Schweiz über einen gewissen Zeitraum nachzuzeichnen. Gemessen wird dabei die Entwicklung der Erwerbsbeteiligung und des Erwerbseinkommens. Die Analyse erstreckt sich über den Zeitraum 2008–2013.

Eines liegt klar auf der Hand: Die verschiedenen Gruppen von Asylsuchenden und Flüchtlingen sind nicht gleich stark am Arbeitsmarkt vertreten wie die männliche Bevölkerung der Schweiz oder die in der Schweiz wohnhaften Ausländer. Auch ihr Einkommen liegt unter dem Mittel dieser beiden Gruppen. Die Längsschnittanalysen zeigen, dass diese Unterschiede sowohl im Bereich der Erwerbsbeteiligung wie auch hinsichtlich des Einkommens im Laufe der Zeit nicht wettgemacht werden.

Nebst diesen allgemeinen Erkenntnissen sind aber je nach Nationalität auch unterschiedliche berufliche Verhaltensweisen erkennbar. Trotz eines eher niedrigen Bildungsniveaus können Männer aus Sri Lanka zweifelsohne am besten auf dem Arbeitsmarkt Fuss fassen, während die Eritreer und Somalier, von denen nur wenige erwerbstätig sind und deren Einkommen auch deutlich unter dem Durchschnitt liegt, die grössten Schwierigkeiten bekunden. Für diese Unterschiede gibt es verschiedene Gründe – von der Sicherheit oder Unsicherheit im Zusammenhang mit der Aufenthaltsbewilligung über persönlich erlebte Diskriminierung bis hin zu den Netzwerken, auf die sich die jeweiligen Migrantengruppen stützen können. Die unterschiedlichen Zahlen legen nahe, dass gezielte Integrationsmaßnahmen notwendig sind, die die Besonderheiten der einzelnen Gruppen berücksichtigen.

### Résumé

#### Comment les requérants d'asile et les réfugiés s'intègrent-ils sur le marché du travail suisse ?

La participation des réfugié·es et requérant·es d'asile au marché du travail suscite de nombreuses discussions en relation avec les politiques d'intégration et d'asile. Dans ce contexte, des données sont nécessaires en vue de documenter cette participation et d'identifier les facteurs qui interviennent. A l'aide de registres statistiques reliés entre eux, notre contribution investigue l'insertion des hommes du domaine de l'asile dans le monde du travail. Cette méthodologie novatrice permet de suivre dans le temps le cheminement en Suisse de cette population spécifique : elle mesure l'évolution de sa participation au marché du travail et de ses revenus professionnels. L'analyse couvre la période 2008–2013.

Le constat est clair : les différents groupes de requérants d'asile et de réfugiés ne sont pas autant actifs sur le marché du travail que l'ensemble de la population masculine suisse ou même l'ensemble des étrangers qui y résident. Leurs revenus se situent également en-dessous de ces moyennes. Les analyses longitudinales montrent quant à elles que, tant dans le domaine de la participation que dans celui des revenus, ces écarts ne se comblent pas au cours du temps.

Au-delà de ces constats généraux, on observe des comportements professionnels variables en fonction de la nationalité. Malgré un niveau de formation plutôt basique, les Sri Lankais représentent incontestablement le groupe qui s'en sort le mieux sur le marché du travail, alors que les hommes érythréens et somaliens présentent les plus grandes difficultés – avec un faible taux d'actifs et des revenus professionnels largement inférieurs à la moyenne. Différentes raisons peuvent expliquer ces différences, qui vont de la stabilité du permis aux discriminations rencontrées, ou encore aux réseaux sur lesquels les collectivités migrantes peuvent compter. Ces différents résultats suggèrent que des mesures d'intégration ciblées, tenant compte des spécificités des différentes collectivités migrantes, sont nécessaires.

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### Appendix Data and Methods

Income from paid employment (i.e. the income used to determine contributions to federal old-age and survivors' insurance) is recorded in the register of individual accounts of the Central Compensation Office (CCO). We linked the CCO register to the population registers<sup>1</sup> so that we could identify people in the field of asylum who were receiving an income.<sup>2</sup> A total of 144,546 persons were identified as people in the field of asylum (asylum seekers, persons granted provisional admission, recognized refugees, or persons granted residency status on hardship grounds) based on information recorded about the type of residence permit they held between 1998 and 2013. At the end of 2013, 88,876 of these people, aged 20 to 64, were still in Switzerland: they represent the sample on which our analysis is based. Most of them held an annually renewable residence permit (B) or a permanent residence permit (C), which indicates that they had been recognized as refugees or had been granted residency status on hardship grounds (for people facing serious personal distress).

We define participation in the labor market as receiving income from paid employment. The register held by the CCO shows gross annual income and the type of contributions (we retained the contributions linked to carrying out paid work as a salaried employee or self-employed individual). It does not include income from occasional work that is below CHF 2,000 per year, and of course it also does not include undeclared income. Despite these limitations, this data is extremely reliable and sufficiently precise to allow analysis of participation in the labor market. Moreover, the amount of income makes it possible to determine whether the work is sufficient to guarantee financial independence. The median income (which divides a given population into two equal groups and is an indicator traditionally used in economics) has been calculated for the different nationalities.

While this method is innovative, it does have some limitations. For a start, the data collected by the CCO does not provide any information about the number of hours worked per week. It is therefore not possible to calculate the hourly rate or look into any wage and salary discrimination. In addition, the data does not allow us to distinguish active job seekers from those who are not in the workforce (due to family commitments, study or training, or for any other reason). For this reason, this study focuses only on men – the situation for women in the labor market would require a more complex discussion, as they are much more involved in domestic duties and their home life has more of an impact on their working life.

1 Population and Household Statistics (STATPOP) and Central Migration Information System (CEMIS) extracted from the Central Aliens Register (CAR) and the Register of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (AUPER) for the years of the study.

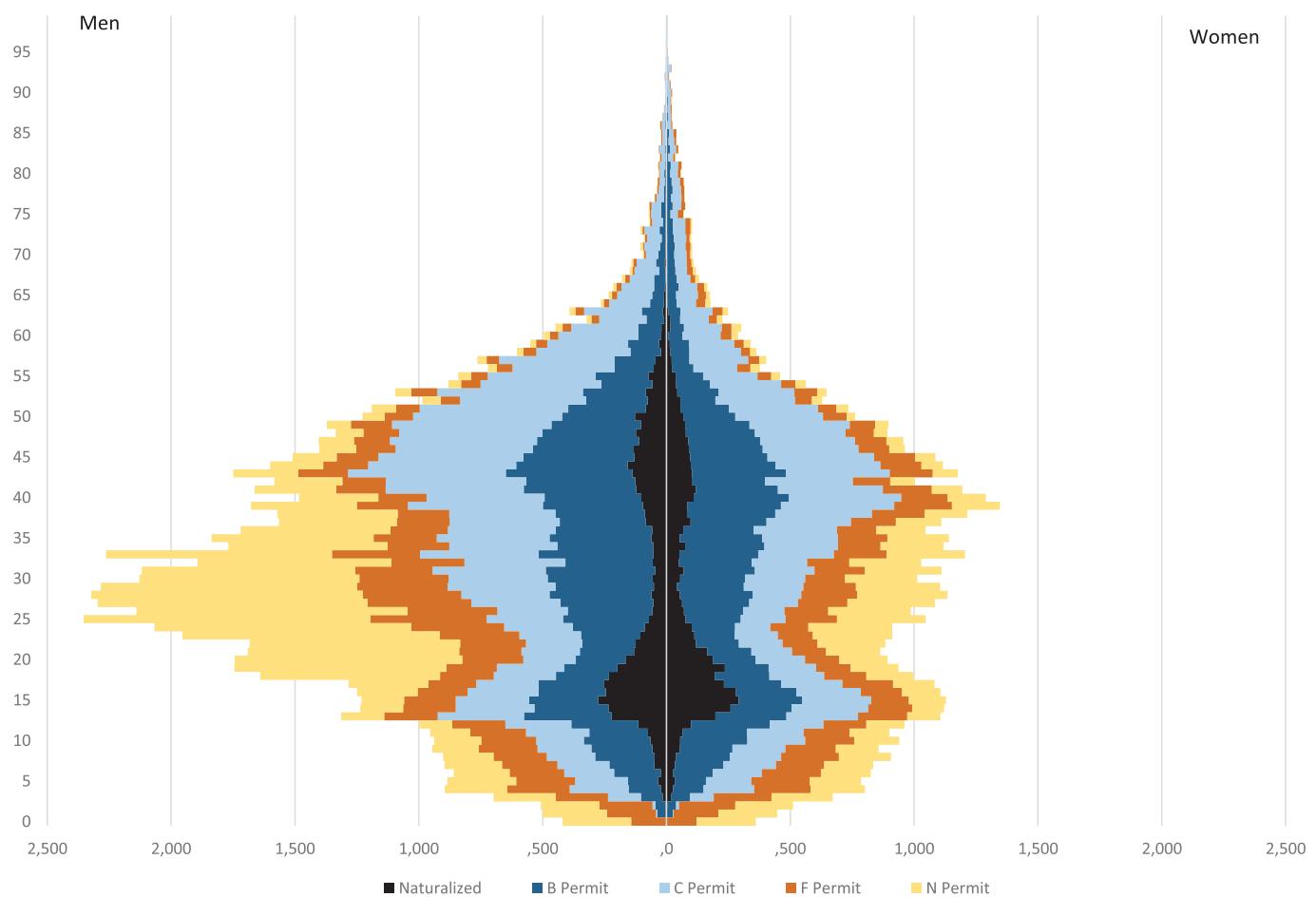
2 Wanner et al. 2016

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### Appendix

**Figure 1: Age distribution data for the population of people in the field of asylum, according to type of residence permit (age in 2013)**



Source: Federal Statistical Office STATPOP/CAR/AUPER data. The persons identified are grouped according to their age on their birthday in 2013. The residence permit is the most recent permit they have obtained.

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**Table 1: Distribution of the population of people in the field of asylum by nationality, permit type, gender and level of education. People aged 20 to 64 years, in Switzerland in 2013.**

	Number	Type of permit (in 2013)					Gender		Level of education		
		N Permit	F Permit	B Permit	C Permit	Naturalized	Male	Female	Secondary I	Secondary II	Tertiary
Turkey	10017	5.9	3.4	13.7	69.9	7.0	59.4	40.6	68.9	23.1	8.0
Serbia	5044	2.4	19.2	40.8	23.9	13.8	51.5	48.5	59.7	32.2	8.1
Bosnia-H	5738	1.4	7.2	30.1	49.8	11.4	48.7	51.3	53.7	38.6	7.6
Kosovo	4888	5.0	11.0	42.2	30.5	11.3	52.9	47.1	53.1	36.2	10.7
Other Europe	2198	15.2	14.1	25.2	33.8	11.7	51.3	48.7	38.5	38.8	22.7
Somalia	4098	6.8	51.6	26.4	8.5	6.6	65.2	34.8	81.0	12.2	6.8
Eritrea	9390	26.2	15.9	23.8	33.2	0.8	55.3	44.7	78.0	17.0	5.0
Other Africa	11322	24.6	15.9	29.4	22.9	7.2	57.6	42.4	50.3	29.1	20.6
America	736	3.3	3.7	21.5	61.1	10.5	53.9	46.1	46.0	23.2	30.8
Afghanistan	3737	32.8	28.8	21.1	11.9	5.4	72.0	28.0	70.9	20.5	8.7
Sri Lanka	14104	11.1	8.7	30.1	42.4	7.8	65.9	34.1	81.1	14.6	4.3
Iraq	4610	6.0	24.1	30.0	29.4	10.5	69.0	31.0	59.3	22.7	18.0
Other Asia	12392	34.8	18.1	16.5	26.0	4.5	62.8	37.2	59.4	27.2	13.4
Other	602	50.7	24.1	8.3	15.0	2.0	72.9	27.1	70.9	21.8	7.3
Total	88876	16.4	15.5	26.0	34.8	7.3	59.9	40.1	64.6	25.0	10.5

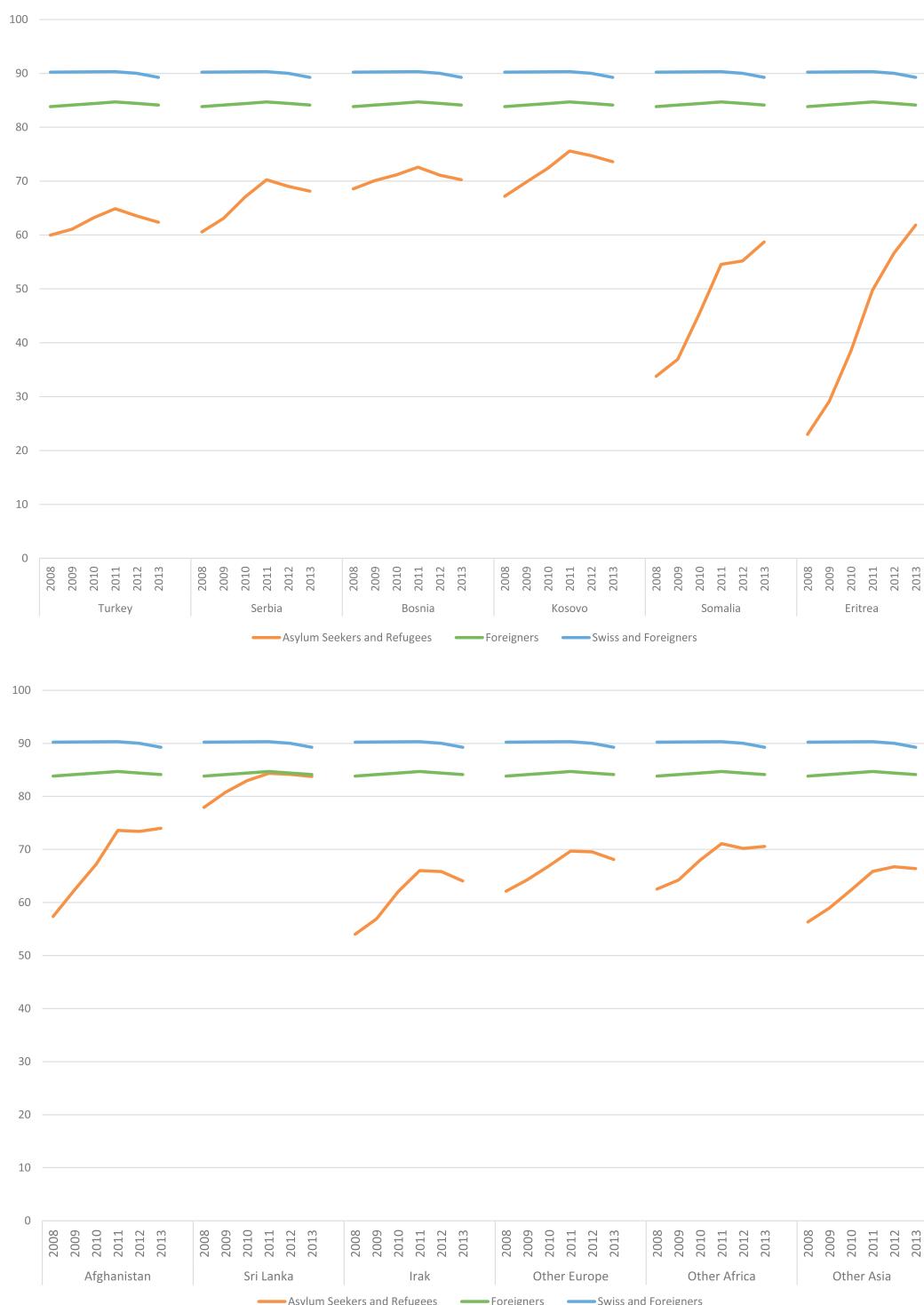
Source: Federal Statistical Office STATPOP/CAR/AUPER/SS data. The data is extracted from STATPOP statistics, except for the level of education which is estimated based on the Structural Survey.

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**Figure 2: Percentage of men participating in the labor market, by nationality and year, 2008–2013 (in %)**



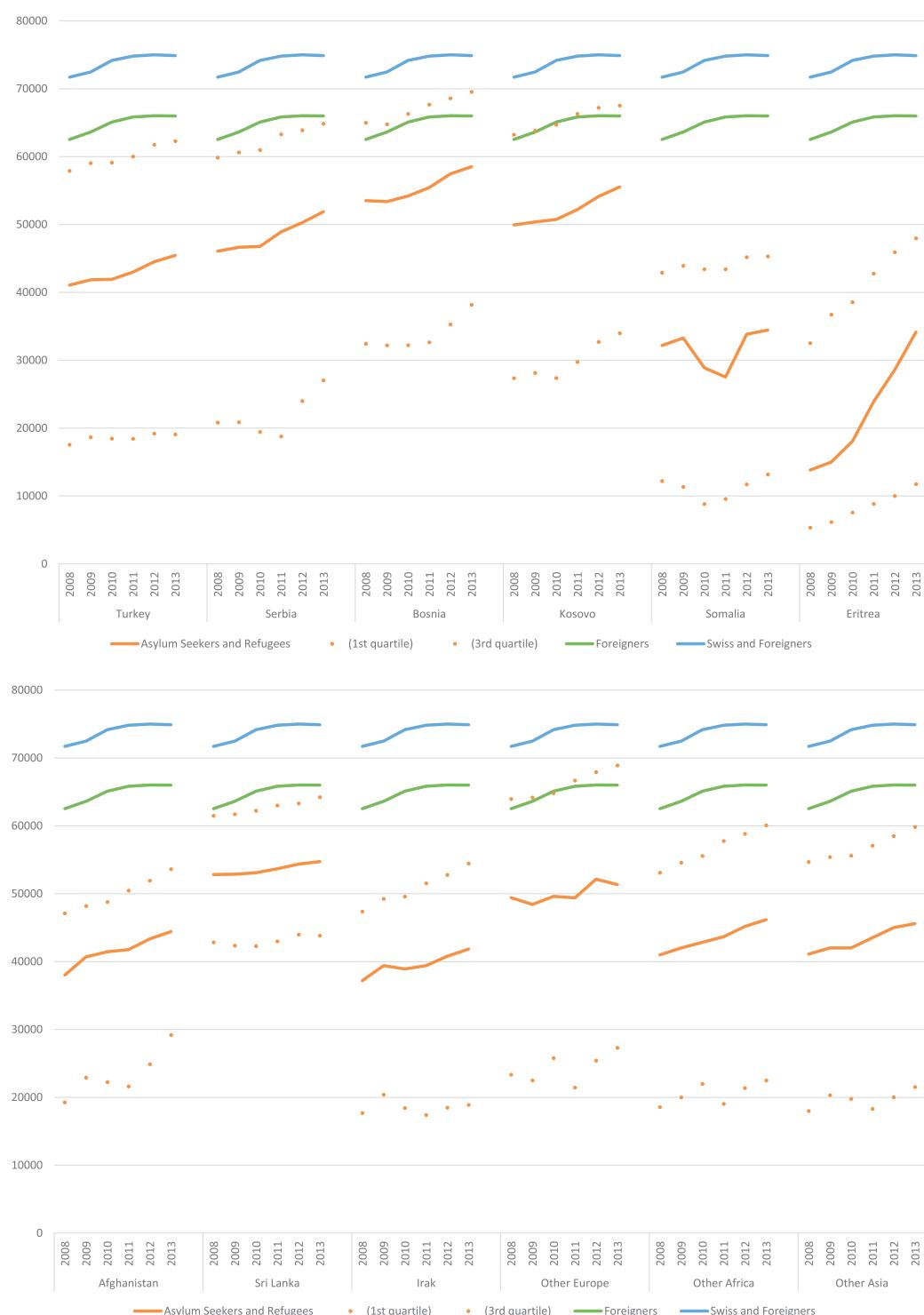
Source: Federal Statistical Office STATPOP / CAR/ AUPER/ CCO data.

# Labor Market

## How Well Are Asylum Seekers and Refugees Integrating into the Swiss Labor Market?

### Appendix

**Figure 3: First and third quartile median income of men participating in the labor market, by nationality and year, 2008–2013**



Source: Federal Statistical Office STATPOP / CAR/ AUPER/ CCO data.

# Faster Asylum Processes Save Money by Catalyzing the Economic Integration of Refugees



As more people flee war, state failure, and extreme poverty, refugee-receiving countries in Europe face an urgent and fundamental challenge: the successful integration of refugees. Labor market integration is particularly critical for both refugees and their host communities. It enables refugees to share their skills with their host communities, increases tax contributions, reduces government expenditures, and reduces the risk of local backlash against refugees, many of whom stay in their new countries long term.

In 2015, more than 1.3 million new asylum applications were lodged in Europe. This represented a sharp increase in applications compared with previous years but a relatively modest number compared with the [number of asylum claims in Middle Eastern and North African countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey](#).

Asylum seekers often risk a dangerous and sometimes deadly journey in order to flee life-threatening circumstances at home. Yet they are often met with resistance and exclusion in their new countries. The recent spike in asylum seeker arrivals in Europe

has resulted in political conflict and increasingly violent native backlash, including mass demonstrations, hate crimes, and even arson attacks on asylum housing facilities.

**“While they wait for a decision on their asylum claim, asylum seekers find themselves in a legal and social limbo in which their lives are essentially put on hold.”**

The Dublin Regulation, which applies to European Union Member States and cosignatories such as Switzerland, requires asylum seekers to be temporarily housed in the

**Jens Hainmueller**

**Stanford University**

**Dominik Hangartner**

**ETH Zurich and London School of Economics**

**Duncan Lawrence**

**Stanford University**

**Alexandra Dufresne**

**ETH Zurich**

responsible country of arrival while they wait for a decision on their asylum claim. During this waiting period – which, for many, lasts for years – asylum seekers find themselves in a legal and social limbo in which their lives are essentially put on hold. They are often required to live isolated from the native population in an assigned reception center or in collective accommodation. They typically receive welfare support and face significant restrictions on travel and employment. They live under threat of being deported, should their application be denied.

# Economic Integration

## Faster Asylum Processes Save Money by Catalyzing the Economic Integration of Refugees

If their application is eventually approved, asylum seekers receive a form of protection. This marks a crucial transition point: they are – at least temporarily – free from deportation and expected to quickly integrate into the host country and earn a living.

### Why Might Longer Wait Times Affect Integration?

There is good reason to expect that longer waiting periods hurt an individual's chances of integration. Indeed, there is a large body of in-depth qualitative work illuminating the multitude of challenges that stem from the uncertainty faced by asylum seekers and refugees while living in limbo. De facto unemployment during waiting periods can lead to depression and disempowerment; uncertainty can compound pre-existing trauma; and sheer time out of the labor market can cause refugees' skills to atrophy or become outdated. Recounting her family's experiences in waiting, an asylum seeker in Switzerland captures some of the specific challenges of an uncertain future that these studies highlight:

"We came here and my husband had high hopes; he thought he could find work here... five years living in real uncertainty, we didn't know what was going to happen with us... I can see the same with many other men, that they become a mess, and then their marriage and family and everything [falls apart]."<sup>1</sup>

However, despite substantial qualitative evidence as to the hardships asylum seekers face during lengthy asylum procedures, it remains unknown how longer waiting times causally affect the integration of refugees into receiving countries. To date, most studies have been descriptive: based on small numbers

of qualitative interviews and occasional quantitative cross-sectional studies not designed to isolate the causal effects of specific policies on refugee integration.

Our contribution fills this gap by providing new causal evidence that isolates and quantifies the effect of the length of the waiting time for the asylum decision on the subsequent employment of refugees who have been granted subsidiary protection in Switzerland.

### Data and Methods

We draw upon unique register panel data that track all individuals who applied for asylum in Switzerland between 1994 and 2004 and were subsequently granted the status of subsidiary protection within 5 years of arrival ( $n = 17,360$ ). The data are not self-reported but based on the processing records of the State Secretariat for Migration that centrally decides all the asylum claims. On average, refugees in our sample waited 665 days for their asylum decision with a standard deviation of 478 days.

### Quantifying the Impact of Lengthy Asylum Processes on Refugee Employment

We measure the effect of the length of the waiting period on the probability that refugees are employed in the year after they receive subsidiary protection. The waiting period is measured as the number of days it took from the submission of the asylum application to the decision. During their waiting period, asylum seekers are housed in accommodations in an exogenously assigned Swiss canton and they are not allowed to leave this canton. In principle, they are allowed to work while waiting but face restrictions in some cantons in the sense that they

can only take jobs after a mandatory waiting period of 3 to 6 months, and employers have to demonstrate that no Swiss native or permanent resident can be found for a given job. In addition, some cantons restrict employment to only specific permissible industries.

To identify the causal effect of waiting, we exploit the large quasi-random variation in waiting times that results from the batch processing of the asylum claims by the State Secretariat for Migration in Switzerland.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 1 shows that the average waiting times for asylum decision vary significantly by country of origin and month of arrival.

> *Figure 1 Waiting times for asylum decision by country of origin and month of arrival (see appendix)*

Table 1 shows that longer waiting periods considerably lower subsequent employment. This holds also when we control for week of entry, origin, religion, area of residency, ethnicity, assigned canton, age, and gender. Model 1 shows that being forced to wait one additional year for the asylum decision lowers the probability of being employed by about 4.9 percentage points. This effect is not only highly statistically significant, but also economically large: while the average employment rate of people with subsidiary protection within a year after the decision is about 21% (see the fifth row from the bottom of Table 1), a waiting time of one more year equates to a 23% drop in this percentage. Model 2 shows that the effect is somewhat smaller, but still statistically and substantively significant, at about 3.4 percentage points or 16% compared to the average employment rate, when we add the origin times week of entry fixed effects, thereby focusing the comparison only on asylum seekers

# Economic

## Integration

### Faster Asylum Processes Save Money by Catalyzing the Economic Integration of Refugees

that arrived from the same country during the same week.

> *Table 1: Longer asylum wait times lower the probability of subsequent employment for refugees (see appendix)*

#### How Reliable Are These Findings?

As with many empirical studies, one particular concern immediately jumps to mind: are we observing a causal relationship (here, between wait times and employment outcomes) or merely a correlation? In other words, what if asylum seekers who find work more quickly are also more likely to have their cases decided quickly? This could perhaps be due to access to more resources, higher levels of skill or better employment histories, or other factors we cannot measure and statistically adjust for. If unobserved factors are at work, then we cannot credibly claim that it is the differences in wait times that cause differences in outcomes.

To meet these concerns, we conduct a number of different “robustness” or reliability checks. All these checks, discussed in detail in our paper, suggest that the effect of waiting on employment is indeed causal.<sup>3</sup>

#### Skill Atrophy or Discouragement?

Why might additional time waiting for one’s asylum decision cause such a significant decrease in one’s likelihood to find employment? There are two main possibilities. The first is that individuals’ skills atrophy over time spent out of work. The second is that people become more and more discouraged the longer they have to wait in limbo.

**“There are two possible explanations for this causal relationship: the first is that individuals’ skills**

**atrophy over time spent out of work, the second that people become more and more discouraged.”**

Although we cannot prove for certain which of these causes is at play here, our data lends support to the discouragement theory. This is because our evidence shows that longer decision times impact all refugees similarly across the board, regardless of their gender, region of origin, age, or the language region where they are placed. However, future work is needed to more precisely understand these mechanisms.

#### How Much Money Could Switzerland Save by Marginally Reducing Waiting Times?

In June 2016, Swiss voters approved a major reform of Switzerland’s asylum system. One key component called for reducing the length of time that individuals must wait for a decision on their asylum applications. Our study shows that even a marginal reduction in wait times would yield a substantial return on investment.

**“Even reducing waiting times by a mere 10% – that is 66 days – would lead to savings of at least CHF 5.5 million per year.”**

Although we caution against extrapolating the results to extremely large reforms of the asylum process, our findings indicate that a relatively modest reduction in wait times would increase employment significantly, thereby reducing public expenditures for welfare benefits and increasing the tax contributions of newly employed refugees. A marginal cost-benefit analysis suggests that reducing waiting times by only 10% (66 days) would lead to savings of about CHF 5.5 million in a single year alone. However, because asylum application numbers today are roughly twice that of the study pe-

riod 1994–2004, we would expect cost savings to be substantially greater. In other words, modest investments in, for example, additional caseworkers who could quicker process asylum claims would yield an excellent return on investment. Finally, better economic integration of refugees would also likely help dampen the increasing backlash against refugees from local residents.<sup>4</sup>

#### Next Steps: A Scientific Approach to Asylum, Immigration, and Integration Policy

Although our study provides an important first step in understanding how the asylum process affects refugee integration, more data and research are needed to help guide policymakers who are struggling to manage refugee crises effectively. For example, we do not yet know what the long-term effects of waiting times are on employment. Nor do we know how other policy parameters – such as centralized versus decentralized housing, labor restrictions, or support programs – affect the integration of refugees into their host communities.

Compared with other fields such as medicine, public health, environmental protection and economic development, the fields of immigration and integration policy are remarkably underdeveloped. Governments and policymakers are often forced to choose from among several less-than-ideal options, based on best guesses, gut instinct, or political pressure – rather than based on empirical evidence. We would not expect a business to make strategic decisions based on best guesses; we should not expect governments deciding important matters of public policy to do so either.

# Economic

## Integration

### Faster Asylum Processes Save Money by Catalyzing the Economic Integration of Refugees

**"When emotions are running high, cool-headed calculations can show what works and what doesn't."**

One reason for this underdevelopment has been the unusual difficulty in determining causation in a system as large, complex, rapidly changing – and human – as immigration and integration policy. It is often difficult to gather large-scale, high-quality data on a diverse and vulnerable population and then to pair this data rigorously to outcome data. The self-selection of asylum seekers to destination countries, confounding effects of unobservable variables, and difficulty of measuring integration outcomes all hinder a comprehensive assessment of policy.

But this is not to say that immigration scholars are fighting quixotic battles. Methodological obstacles and data limitations can be – and have been – overcome. We are optimistic that we can continue to meet many of these challenges through new experimental methods and increased access to data, in partnership with policymakers, nonprofits and governments.

The Immigration Policy Lab, with branches at ETH Zurich and Stanford University, is working on a comprehensive research program to provide much-needed empirical evidence regarding the most pressing questions and dilemmas of immigration and integration policy. In so doing, we hope to provide policymakers with the tools to create wise public policies that benefit both host communities and refugees. For more information on our work, please see [www.immigrationlab.org](http://www.immigrationlab.org).

1 UNHCR 2014

2 A detailed description of the causal identification strategy is found in Hainmueller et al. 2016.

3 Hainmueller et al. 2016

4 Dancygier and Laitin 2014

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#### Further Reading

This article is adapted from the following article, with significant abridgements and alterations: Hainmueller et al. 2016.

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### Zusammenfassung

**Schnellere Asylverfahren sparen Geld, indem sie die wirtschaftliche Integration von Flüchtlingen beschleunigen**

Die Schweizer Stimmbevölkerung hat im Juni 2016 einer grundlegenden Reform des Schweizer Asylsystems zugesimmt. Eines der Schlüsselemente der Reform verlangt eine Verkürzung der Frist, die die Personen bis zum Asylentscheid warten müssen. Unser Forschungsprojekt zeigt, dass diese Reform – sofern entsprechend umgesetzt – nicht nur die Situation der Geflüchteten verbessert, sondern auch finanziell rentiert, weil sie die wirtschaftliche Integration von Flüchtlingen fördert und damit das Steuereinkommen erhöht und die öffentlichen Ausgaben vermindert.

Eine Analyse der exogenen Variation bei den Wartezeiten anhand von Panel-Registerdaten zu Personen, die in der Schweiz zwischen 1994 und 2004 einen Asylantrag stellten, zeigt uns, dass sich die spätere Beschäftigungsquote durch ein zusätzliches Jahr Wartefrist um vier bis fünf Prozentpunkte verringert. Dies entspricht einem Rückgang um 16 bis 23 Prozent gegenüber der durchschnittlichen Beschäftigungsquote. Insgesamt lassen unsere Ergebnisse den Schluss zu, dass bereits eine geringe Verkürzung der Wartefrist im Asylverfahren zu erheblichen öffentlichen Einsparungen führen würde.

Auf übergeordneter Ebene zeigt sich, dass neue Methoden der Kausalanalyse – gepaart mit Zugriff zu Registerdaten – den politischen Entscheidungsträgerinnen und -trägern helfen können, rationale und kosteneffiziente Verfahren zu entwickeln, die sowohl den Aufnahmeländern als auch den Flüchtlingen zugutekommen.

### Résumé

**Des économies grâce à des procédures d'asile plus rapides qui catalysent l'intégration économique des réfugié·e·s**

En juin 2016, le peuple suisse a approuvé une réforme importante du système d'asile. Un volet central de cette réforme prévoit la réduction de la durée pendant laquelle les individus doivent attendre la décision prise suite à leur demande d'asile. Notre étude montre que cette réforme – si elle est correctement mise en œuvre – améliorera non seulement la situation des réfugié·e·s en accélérant leur intégration économique, mais sera aussi financièrement rentable, augmentant les entrées fiscales tout en diminuant les dépenses publiques.

Sur la base des données du registre des personnes ayant déposé une demande d'asile en Suisse entre 1994 et 2004, nous avons analysé la variation exogène du temps d'attente. Nous avons ainsi mis en évidence qu'une année d'attente supplémentaire réduit le taux d'emploi ultérieur de 4 à 5 points de pourcentage, soit une chute de 16 à 23 % en comparaison du taux moyen. Dans l'ensemble, nos résultats suggèrent que même une réduction minimale de la période d'attente pendant la procédure d'asile aboutirait à des économies publiques importantes.

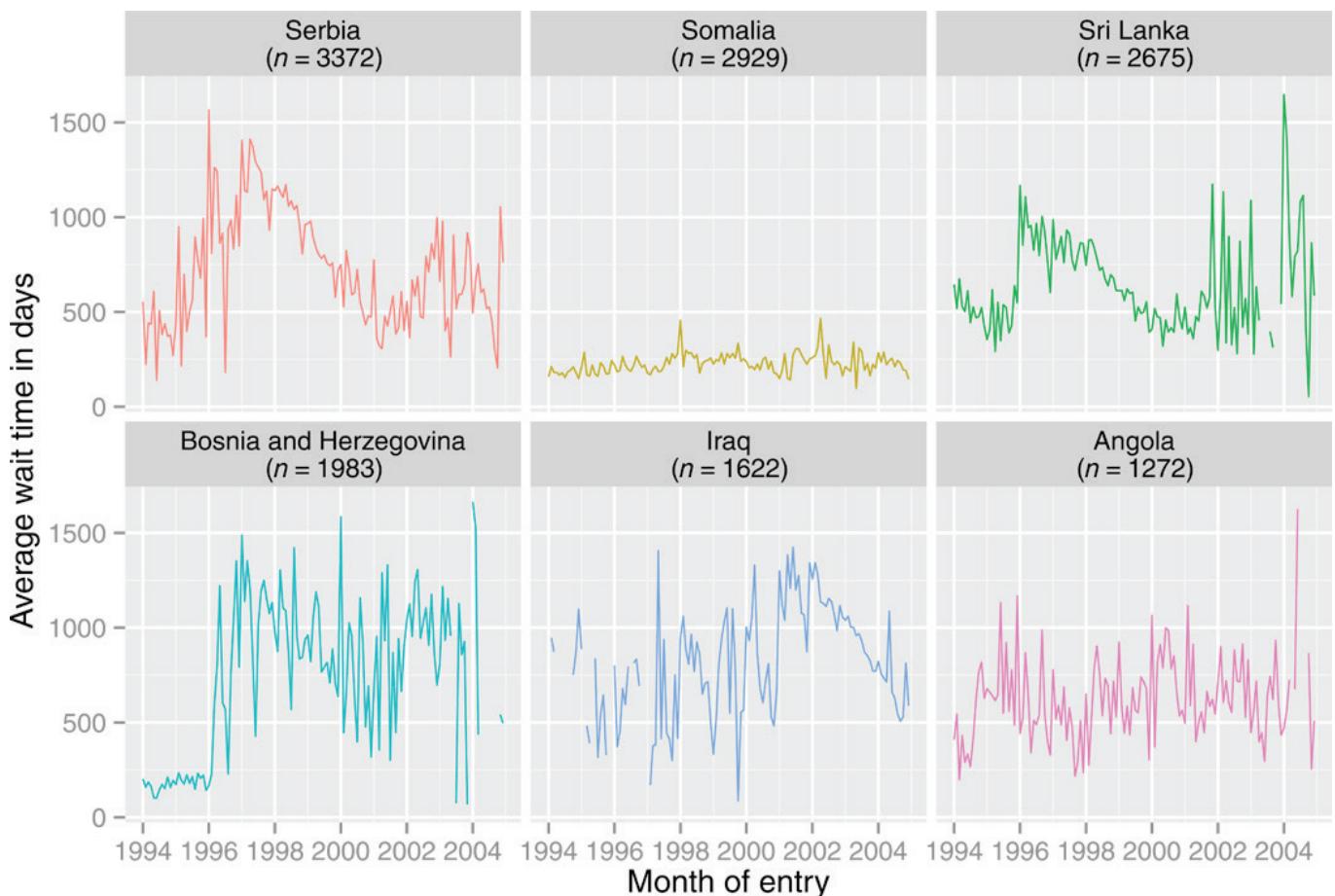
Plus généralement, de nouvelles méthodes d'analyses causales – en même temps qu'un accès aux données des registres – peut aider les décideuses et décideurs politiques à développer des politiques rationnelles et rentables qui bénéficient tant aux communautés d'accueil qu'aux réfugié·e·s.

# Economic Integration

## Faster Asylum Processes Save Money by Catalyzing the Economic Integration of Refugees

### Appendix

Figure 1: Waiting times for asylum decision by country of origin and month of arrival



The graph shows the average waiting times for the asylum decision in days by month of arrival for refugees from the top six sending countries.

# Economic Integration

## Faster Asylum Processes Save Money by Catalyzing the Economic Integration of Refugees

### Appendix

**Table 1: Longer asylum wait times lower the probability of subsequent employment for refugees**

model:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
outcome:	employed (t)										
sample mean:	21.17										
wait time (years)	-4.87 (1.18)	-3.43 (1.46)	-4.64 (1.27)	-4.79 (1.13)	-3.63 (1.47)	-5.86 (1.73)	-6.14 (1.51)	-5.04 (1.96)	-9.48 (2.48)	-9.84 (2.15)	-7.12 (3.16)
employed (t-1)			48.27 (1.33)	48.72 (1.54)		45.86 (1.54)	47.39 (1.87)		44.57 (1.95)	45.30 (2.54)	
employed (t-2)						11.49 (1.80)	6.81 (2.15)		12.60 (2.23)	8.61 (2.75)	
employed (t-3)									2.80 (2.53)	2.24 (3.33)	
n	17,360		13,877			9,108			5,437		
employed Δ (%)	-23.01 (5.55)	-16.21 (6.89)	-19.04 (5.19)	-19.67 (4.63)	-14.90 (6.04)	-20.65 (6.10)	-21.65 (5.32)	-17.78 (6.91)	-29.90 (7.83)	-31.04 (6.79)	-22.46 (9.95)
additional fixed effects:											
origin (# 96)	x		x	x		x	x		x	x	
entry week (# 572)	x		x	x		x	x		x	x	
origin x entry week (# 5,054)		x			x			x			x

Regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. Outcome is measured as 100 for employed and 0 for not employed so that effects are in percentage points. All regressions include fixed effects for gender, age, quarter of residency, religion, ethnicity, and canton. Models 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 10 also include fixed effects for origin and week of entry. Models 2, 5, 8, and 11 also include fixed effects for each origin x week of entry combination. Models 1 and 2 refer to all refugees. Models 3 to 5, 6 to 8, and 9 to 11 are restricted to refugees for which 1, 2, or 3 years are observed before the asylum decision, respectively.

# Mental Health Problems Associated with Asylum Procedures of Refugees in European Countries



**Gail Womersley**

**University of Neuchâtel**

**Laure Kloetzer**

**University of Neuchâtel**

**Betty Goguikian**

**Ratcliff**

**University of Geneva**

Events that took place before migration have an influence on the mental health of asylum seekers and refugees. But research findings show that the majority of stress factors are directly related to post-migration living conditions and restrictions. Prolonged legal insecurity, the obligation to move from one center to another, and isolation among other factors contribute to the deterioration of refugees' mental health. Implications reach far beyond the individual: it is a question of social and economic significance for Switzerland as well.

The World Health Organization defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community." An epidemiological study conducted among asylum seekers in Switzerland found that 13.7% suffered mental health disorders.<sup>1</sup> Among a clinical sample of asylum seekers in the canton of Zurich for example, researchers noted a prevalence rate of depression of 33% and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) of 24%,<sup>2</sup> a prevalence similarly noted in the canton of Geneva<sup>3</sup> and Vaud<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, the mental health of this sizable population is a public health priority relevant not only for the individuals

concerned and their communities but also for Switzerland.

What factors contribute to such high prevalence of mental health disorders? This high rate is not only linked to events experienced in asylum seekers' countries of origin. The literature also highlights the post-migration period as being critical to the mental health of refugee populations. In a multi-agency guide on the mental health of refugee populations released in 2015, UN agencies and other international humanitarian organizations have highlighted that potentially traumatic events from the past are not the only, or even most important, source of psychological distress but that the majority of mental health problems are directly related to current stress

factors.<sup>5</sup> Other studies show that post-migration factors such as unemployment, an insecure residency status, fear of repatriation, insufficient proficiency in a host language, social discrimination, and difficulties with integration are similarly significantly correlated with mental health problems.<sup>6</sup> Those living in institutional accommodation or with restricted economic opportunities are particularly affected.

**"Potentially traumatic events from the past are not the only, or even most important, source of psychological distress. The majority of mental health problems are directly related to post-migration factors."**

# Mental Health

## Mental Health Problems Associated with Asylum Procedures of Refugees in European Countries

### Asylum Seekers and Recognized Refugees: Two Distinct Phases with Different Stress Factors

The third author identified the period before and after being granted asylum as being two distinct periods in the psychological lives of migrants.<sup>7</sup> Both involve substantial psychological stress, but for different reasons.

Stresses identified during the asylum-seeking phase include:

- Delays in the processing of asylum application
- Fear of repatriation
- Exclusion from the labor market
- Forced dependence on social welfare
- Loneliness, boredom
- Discrimination, marginalization
- Poor housing conditions
- Prolonged uncertainty, insecurity, lack of control

**“A long asylum procedure is associated with psychiatric disorders: forced idleness and fear of being forced out of the country constitute significant stress factors.”**

Indeed, a long asylum procedure can be associated with psychiatric disorders.<sup>8</sup> In particular, an insecure residency status is a significant stress: lack of control over one's future and one's ability to integrate, social isolation, the continued fear associated with the risk of not being granted asylum and being forced out of the country are all factors mediating psychic suffering which might turn into mental distress. This is further worsened by conditions wherein

individuals may be forced into a rhythm of perpetual displacement by being moved from one center to another, experiencing delayed asylum procedures and poor living conditions in reception centers – often poorly accessible by public transport to main economic and social hubs. Left with a life in limbo, activities of social integration and personal development are hindered under such conditions.

Obtaining refugee status (both subsidiary protection and full refugee status) may indeed alleviate some of the stress factors specifically related to the period of requesting asylum. However, after months or years of suspended lives, this is a period where refugees are required to quickly adjust and integrate into their new environment especially by becoming financially independent. Refugees now need to fully participate in a new cultural environment and locally reconstruct their lives, all the while maintaining their cultural identity – in other words, without losing their connection to their cultural heritage or the sense of who they are and where they have come from. During this phase, a new set of stressors may be encountered. Those in the Swiss context include:

- Difficult access to employment and training, non recognition of former diploma and careers
- Poor language proficiency
- Financial and housing difficulties
- Lack of family, social and shared cultural resources

**“Difficulties in finding employment, social isolation, and differences between expectations and encountered reality may produce a vicious cycle affecting mental health.”**

Important stress factors are the difficulty in finding employment, deskill<sup>9</sup>ing and social isolation. Another factor is the substantial differences between the pre-migration expectations (of the individual as well as their family) and encountered reality on the labor market upon arrival. They are likely to produce feelings of discouragement, injustice, self-depreciation, social and occupational worthlessness, and lack of satisfaction, also worsened by the negative feelings felt during the asylum procedure. Refugees risk being trapped in a vicious cycle where these difficulties affect mental health, which in turn affects ones' capacity for social integration and accessing the labor market.

### Effects of Post-Migration Factors on Mental Health: A Tale of Two Migrants in Athens

In order to examine the complex interplay of factors between mental health and integration trajectories, we introduce an ongoing research project in Athens, Greece. The study's main question is: What are the effects of the asylum procedure on asylum seekers' mental health and capacity for integration into European societies? The answer in a word, paramount.

#### > Data and methods (see appendix)

Let's consider two participants in our research, Dilraj and Jules, whom we met during our fieldwork in Athens. Both are victims of torture because of political activism in their countries of origin. Both recently arrived in Europe to seek asylum. Both arrived alone. Both have been diagnosed as suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. We followed them over a period of 9 months, which included conducting multiple interviews with themselves as well as their doctors and psychologists.

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### Dilraj

Dilraj is a 30-year-old Indian asylum seeker referred to a center for victims of torture in June 2016, where his treating doctor describes “a clear case of post-traumatic stress disorder.” We first interviewed him in August 2016. A few weeks thereafter, he was given an appointment for his asylum interview. However, the administrator in charge was not present on the day (for reasons unclear to Dilraj and his lawyer). His status as an asylum seeker was renewed and he was given a new date for his interview in December. During this period, he was living alone in a 30 meter-squared hotel room in an old building recently repurposed to house asylum seekers:

“I don’t even know any Sikh community here. (...) When I am staying at a hotel, whenever somebody is knocking at the door, I feel scared, I never go out.”

Dilraj described feeling a sense of social isolation. He was scared to leave his home as he didn’t know many other members of the Sikh community with whom he could have contact. This made it difficult for him to feel socially integrated into his new environment. He therefore kept to himself, remaining alone. Towards the end of 2016, his psychological condition deteriorated. Due to personal financial reasons, he was forced to move out of his small hotel room. Put into shared accommodation, he accused his Pakistani roommate of spying on him. Psychotic symptoms started to emerge, including auditory hallucinations (hearing voices) and paranoia (a feeling that other people want to hurt him). Many of the voices that he heard were those of authority figures, including officials in Greece. He was

hospitalized as a result. His psychologist stated:

“One voice said: ‘You will be homeless you will be homeless.’ And there is a possibility to be homeless. Or another voice said: ‘They will not believe you, they will send you back to India.’ What he hears is normal, it’s his fear. (...) Yesterday we talked about the possibility now to communicate with his lawyer in order to see if it’s possible to make his [asylum] interview sooner.”

What is interesting to note is her understanding of his mental health deteriorating because of his current reality: “because he has not passed his interview” (meaning that he has not yet been officially recognized as a refugee in Greece) and because of the real risk of him being homeless. She therefore highlighted the fact that the current situation was having an impact on his mental health. The voices that he heard were in his mind, yet based on fears related to his real-life situation. He seemed to be as scared of the Greek authorities as he was of the people who tortured him in his country of origin. He was unsure of whether or not asylum would be granted to him, and this made him even more afraid. His doctor similarly noted the potentially harmful effect of the delayed asylum procedure on his mental health:

“It’s not a good time for him generally, because first he found himself living in an apartment with Pakistanis. They could speak the [same] language [as him]; he got afraid. They were drinking, smoking and things like that; he got very scared. That was when things really got bad. (...) Another very stressing thing for him is that his interview got postponed until August. That

made him really angry and frustrated. All these things add up.”

Already fearful and suspicious of others, he was particularly affected by living with people who spoke the same language as him but were not Sikh. He was also scared and frustrated by having to wait for the asylum decision. The delayed asylum trial and poor living conditions had a detrimental impact on his mental health.

### Jules

Jules is a 40-year-old Congolese man who, like Dilraj, sought asylum after being tortured in his country of origin. Upon arriving in Athens, he was able to find accommodation in shared state-sponsored housing with other Congolese men – which he described as being a significant resource:

“Here, we live in community. (...) I live thanks to people I know who are helping me.”

The fact that the state sponsored his housing reduced his personal financial stress. He felt socially connected to others who were “helping” him, which contributed to improving his mental health condition.

He explicitly linked an improvement in his mental health to his current social and economic reality, including free access to public transport and healthcare:

“I can travel all around Athens. The pain diminishes. (...) They give free medical care also. (...) Here, they don’t know me and I’m a black man, but nevertheless they give me free treatment.”

What helped to improve his mental health was the lack of discrimination he perceived, his access to free

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health care and the fact that he was able to travel freely without fear of being arrested. His primary concerns were to be granted asylum and freedom of movement:

"My wish, in order to be able to be calm, is to have the documents already. If they grant me asylum, it will be better. (...) When you know that you are here to stay, you can quickly find work, you can do something. You can have money, but if you have documents and can travel freely with your ideas, that would be better [than just having money]. You can survive."

For Jules, being active and able to move around in the city enabled him to be actively engaged in constructing a new life for himself in his new environment. He also spoke about the impact of the asylum decision on his life, saying the sooner he receives a decision from the asylum court "the better." This is because knowing that he was there to stay would allow him to integrate into his new environment.

### Implications for the Swiss Context

As recently noted by Alexander Betts and Paul Collier<sup>10</sup>, it's not just fleeing conflict that makes victims out of refugees, it's also denying them the means to become autonomous and productive. The results of our research indicate that asylum seekers and refugees are actively and continually engaged in their own development. However, delaying and restricting opportunities to move, to access the labor market, to integrate and create new lives has a substantial impact on the mental health of the research participants. This in turn may influence their capacity for social and professional integration.

Policies should consider the alleviation of stress factors relating specifically to the situation of the individuals, notably their legal status. Shortening procedures may help (see article by Hainmueller et al. in this issue), but so does allowing asylum seekers to participate in the social life of their host communities during these procedures. Further improvements could include, for example, avoiding displacement of asylum seekers from center to center, which create disruptions in social integration (especially for families with school-aged children) and locating reception centers within easy access to economic and social hubs. Finally, refugees tasked with integrating into the host society should be supported with policies and initiatives aimed at creating opportunities for social adaption and enhancing economic autonomy (see article by Stefanie Kurt in this issue). For example, learning a local language makes more sense if the courses are connected to opportunities for professional integration – beyond just needing to be understood and orient oneself in Switzerland.

**"Integration policies should take into consideration the personal, social and cultural needs of asylum seekers and refugees to overcome psychological stress and improve their mental health."**

In all cases, ensuring a sufficient number of trained interpreters available, as well as access to culturally sensitive quality health care, including mental health care, is crucial. Mental health, and personal, social, and cultural resources, do have a mediatizing effect on the stressors identified above and may go a long way in assisting migrants with the reconstruction of their lives – in turn benefitting Switzerland both socially and economically.

> *The Migration and Mental Health Database (see appendix)*

1 Bischoff et al. 2009

2 Maier et al. 2010

3 Premand et al. 2013

4 Faucherre et al. 2009

5 IASC 2007

6 Gogukian Ratcliff 2016

7 Abbott 2016; Jurado et al. 2017

8 Laban et al. 2004

9 Gogukian Ratcliff et al. 2014

10 Betts and Collier 2017

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### Zusammenfassung

#### Psychische Erkrankungen von Flüchtlingen in Verbindung mit Asylverfahren in Europa

Die Fachliteratur zeigt, dass Erfahrungen wie Arbeitslosigkeit, Verunsicherung bezüglich des Aufenthaltsrechts, Angst vor Rückführung und soziale Ausgrenzung, die in der Phase nach der Migration gemacht werden, mit einem verstärkten Auftreten psychischer Erkrankungen bei Asylsuchenden und Flüchtlingen korrelieren. Werden diese Menschen durch rechtliche Verfahren und unsichere Lebensperspektiven belastet, können die Folgen früherer traumatischer Erlebnisse wieder sichtbar werden und Depressionen auftreten. Psychische Probleme können zudem erneut auftreten, wenn Flüchtlinge in einer zweiten Phase, einige Monate nachdem ihnen Asyl gewährt wurde, mit schwerwiegenden Integrationshemmnissen konfrontiert werden. Änderungen des rechtlichen Status führen nur dann zu einer verminderten psychischen Belastung, wenn diese mit besseren Lebensbedingungen und Lebensperspektiven einhergehen – soziale Unterstützung, Zugang zu Arbeitsmarkt und Bildung sowie Chancen auf gesellschaftliche Integration.

Die Folgen einer schlechten psychischen Gesundheit reichen weit über die einzelne Person hinaus; sie sind für die Schweiz von gesellschaftlicher und wirtschaftlicher Tragweite. In diesem Artikel stellen wir anhand einer kurzen Präsentation von zwei Fällen unsere Forschungsarbeit vor, bei der wir den Integrationsverlauf von Asylsuchenden analysieren, die nach Europa kamen. Wir zeigen auf, wie sich Ereignisse, die nach der Migration auftreten, je nach Lebensgeschichte und psychischer Verfassung ganz unterschiedlich auf zwei Personen auswirken können. Wir kommen zum Schluss, dass bei den politischen Reformmassnahmen einer Verringerung von Stressfaktoren – speziell im Zusammenhang mit der aktuellen Situation bzw. dem rechtlichen Status der jeweiligen Personen – Rechnung getragen werden sollte.

### Résumé

#### Les problèmes de santé mentale associés aux procédures d'asile des réfugié·es en Europe

Une corrélation a été établie dans la littérature entre les expériences post-migratoires, telles que le chômage, un statut précaire, la peur du rapatriement et l'exclusion sociale d'un côté, et l'augmentation des problèmes de santé mentale parmi les demandeuses et demandeurs d'asile et les réfugié·e·s de l'autre côté. Lorsque ces personnes sont exposées à la lourdeur des procédures juridiques et à l'incertitude de leurs perspectives de vie, elles peuvent être confrontés aux effets résurgents de traumatismes et de dépression. Les réfugié·e·s peuvent être à nouveau confronté·e·s à des problèmes de santé mentale au cours d'une deuxième phase, plusieurs mois après avoir obtenu l'asile, lorsqu'ils et elles font face à de graves obstacles d'intégration. Les changements de statut juridique ne réduisent la détresse psychologique que s'ils sont associés à de meilleures conditions de vie et perspectives d'avenir: soutien social, accès au marché du travail, formation et possibilités d'intégration sociale.

Les conséquences d'une mauvaise santé mentale vont au-delà de l'individu: c'est également une question importante au plan social et économique pour la Suisse. Dans cet article, nous exposons le fruit de nos recherches sur les trajectoires d'intégration des demandeur·euse·s d'asile qui arrivent en Europe à la lumière de la brève présentation de deux cas. Nous montrons comment les événements post-migratoires peuvent affecter deux personnes de manière très différente selon leur histoire de vie et leur état de santé du moment. Nous concluons que les réformes politiques devraient envisager d'atténuer les facteurs de stress liés spécifiquement à la situation actuelle des individus, notamment leur statut juridique.

# Mental Health

## Mental Health Problems Associated with Asylum Procedures of Refugees in European Countries

### Appendix Data and Methods

This project tracks the integration trajectories of asylum seekers over a year, through repeated interviews and field observations. These asylum seekers from a variety of countries (Sudan, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Ivory Coast, Guinea, Syria and India) were all identified as victims of torture, and diagnosed with psychiatric disorders. To contextualize our understanding of issues around migration and mental health, we also conducted 31 interviews with health professionals and cultural mediators working with refugee and asylum seeking populations from a variety of humanitarian organizations. Furthermore, we conducted 21 qualitative, in-depth interviews with leaders of diverse refugee associations around Athens.

### The Migration and Mental Health Database

The ‘Migration and Mental Health’ database is a comprehensive collection of academic resources, which focuses specifically on the topic of migration and mental health. It consists of a fully searchable online version of scientific publications from the year 2000 to the present. It thus aims to provide a free major hub for those concerned about issues of mental health among migrant populations. As such, it is open to those in an academic field (researchers, teachers, students, lecturers), practitioners working clinically with this population who would like to update their academic knowledge as well as interested citizens.

The database uses bibliographic research technologies to identify new publications with the selection of keyword attributions ensured by an international scientific committee. It is compiled by international academics in collaboration with the Documentation Center of the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies / nccr – on the move at the University of Neuchâtel (Switzerland)

[migrationandmentalhealth.wordpress.com](http://migrationandmentalhealth.wordpress.com)

# Toward Better Integration of People in Need of Protection



**Constantin Hruschka**

**Swiss Refugee Council**

**There is a consensus that better integration of migrants would benefit Swiss society. Yet especially when it comes to asylum seekers and people that have been granted protection, the debate is often based on distorted public perceptions rather than facts. Shorter asylum procedures, pragmatic integration measures targeting asylum seekers early on, and a realistic dialogue with and the participation of the people who are directly concerned offer a better basis for discussion.**

Officially, Switzerland defines the aim of integration as "*the cohabitation of the Swiss and foreign populations on the basis of the values of the Federal Constitution and on mutual respect and tolerance.*"

On June 19, 2017, the third national integration conference once again brought together political, economic and social stakeholders to discuss the integration of foreigners in Swiss society. The conference marked the end of the tripartite dialogue at the federal, cantonal and local levels ("tripartite conference"), which had been underway since 2012. Looking at topics such as labor, early childhood and "living together" ("Arbeiten", "frühe Kindheit" und "Zusammenleben"), this dialogue focused on better integration policies and practices. The commitment to better integration that benefits both Switzerland and migrants was highlight-

ed in the conference press release as well as in the conference speeches. The need for more practical cooperation, especially at the local level, was also emphasized. The conference also highlighted the progress being made in this area. This all sounds well and good, but is it true? Are we actually on the right track?

The discussion of integration often focuses on asylum issues, especially on people who have a right to stay in Switzerland because their human rights might be violated if they return to their home country. This debate is overshadowed by the more general debate on the options for deterring migration as a whole, in Switzerland as elsewhere in Europe.

However, the European integration debate is not really about integration, but rather about money. In Switzerland, too, the focus on costs

creates an interesting yet worrying dynamic. The most powerful argument for integration policies seems to be that it benefits Swiss taxpayers, as it costs less if migrants pay taxes instead of being subsidized by the state. Recently, integration has also been identified as a measure to prevent the radicalization of migrants: the Swiss Security Network – part of the Federal Department of Defense – has launched a process to develop a national action plan to prevent radicalization and violent extremism. The initial report stresses that integration is one of the key factors to preventing radicalization. Both the integration and the security debates focus on the need for language training as a starting point for integration of all sorts. However, in the asylum area language training is not considered a priority as a matter of policy or in practice. Instead, the focus is on administrative measures, such as

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registering and monitoring migrants at centers as well as managing asylum applications.

**"In Europe as in Switzerland, the integration debate is not really about integration, but rather about money, which creates an interesting yet worrying dynamic."**

### Ignoring Reality: Public Perception Rather than Fact-Based Knowledge

With the arrival in Europe of large numbers of asylum seekers who are actually in need of protection over the last several years, the integration debate has become increasingly urgent. However, there is a lack of political will to accept that a majority of people who apply for asylum in Switzerland are actually in need of protection and that it is highly likely that these people will stay for a longer period of time. Instead, the debate focuses very often on people with weak asylum claims or those for whom Switzerland is not required to review their asylum application under the Dublin system. This leads to a political debate that is focused on sanctions and incentives to leave rather than on proactive integration policies from the time the people arrive. It should be noted, however, that some interesting initiatives focusing on early integration have been launched at the federal level that should be pursued and expanded.

**"The legal reality and the public perception are often completely different, a fact that does not help to create a fact-based political debate on this subject."**

More often than not, the legal reality in asylum matters does not match the public perception. For instance, whereas the wider public – based on common sense – might view

Syrians as "refugees" and even as perfect examples of people in need of protection, in administrative reality, only a small proportion of Syrians is granted asylum in Switzerland, while the majority is granted only provisional admission on the grounds that their return to Syria is unreasonable. The legal reality and the public perception are often completely different, a fact that does not help to create a fact-based political debate on this subject.

### Measuring Integration?

Debates on integration raise the more general question of how integration can be measured in the first place. Methods and ideas for measuring integration have been one of the recurring debates in the field of asylum for years. The debate in Europe over integration has changed since the riots in the Paris suburbs in late 2005 created an uproar over the failure of large groups of migrants to integrate, but we still do not know what integration really means. The question of how to measure integration is both interesting and difficult at the same time. The indicators of refugee integration are highly contested and enormous in numbers.<sup>1</sup> Yet the difficulty in deciding which integration indicators to use starts even earlier, as it is important to define what integration actually means:

**"Who is better integrated? The Nestlé manager in Vevey who does not speak a word of French or the rejected asylum seeker from Kosovo who scores a lot of goals for the local football club?"**

While the logical answer to me would be the Kosovar striker, Swiss policies exclude him from even being recognized in that debate because he is not the subject of integration policies. As the State Secretariat for

Migration website writes: "Integration shall provide foreigners with a long-term and legal stay with the possibility to participate in the economic, social and cultural life."

As a consequence, integration policies often fail to address people who lack a legal basis for a long-term stay or residence in Switzerland, but who will stay because it is not likely that they will be returned to their home country (see also the article by Kurt in this issue). One of the most striking examples of this in the Swiss asylum area is the case of people from Ethiopia. Even though it is well known that Ethiopians cannot be returned to their country because the Ethiopian government does not issue return documents to them, Ethiopian migrants are not given the opportunity to stay in the long term. As a result, 40% of asylum seekers from Ethiopia who have filed an asylum application over the last five years in Switzerland are dependent on emergency aid. This means that their asylum request has been rejected and they no longer benefit from the social aid granted to asylum seekers.

However, the rest of this article focuses on people in need of protection and the current challenges in this area.

### The Waiting Period: Decreasing Individual Agency

Currently the asylum cases of people with a strong case for protection come second in the authorities' priorities after those cases whose basis is deemed as highly likely to be weak. The current priority in Switzerland is thus on deterrence rather than on integration. Moreover, integration measures often only start once the decision on the status of the people concerned is final. The signal is: "Please leave, we (the Swiss authori-

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ties) do not have the capacity or the will to deal with you." This signal leads to frustration and a decrease in people's individual agency. The administration will not tell them how long the process will last ("you have to wait") and the people concerned are left with little choice but to try to cope with the waiting period. Even though the need for occupational programs and language courses is evident, the availability of these occupational resources are scarce during the asylum procedure. Moreover, language courses are often taught by volunteers. This fact – regardless of the quality of the language classes – sends another signal of rejection by the Swiss authorities. The need to be recognized as a person regardless of one's legal status is either forgotten or ignored in practice, thus risking a diminishment of the individual capacity of these people to act for themselves.

Here is an example:

N. M., a young Afghan man living near Weinfelden, in the Canton of Thurgau, has fought this waiting period and the accompanying rejection in his own way. He finished school and has found an apprenticeship as a paver, despite the fact that he is still waiting for his asylum decision. His case had been pending for two and a half years as of the time of writing. He says his lawyer is tired of him constantly asking when he will receive a decision. He has thought about traveling to Bern to ask the asylum authorities when they will decide his case. He has also thought about collecting signatures to force them to hear his case. Talking to him, it is evident that waiting and the uncertainty connected with it have come to dominate his daily life (see also the article by Womersley et al. in this issue). With respect to his apprenticeship, he says: "I hope that the decision will be handed down

before I start school. I am not sure I will be able to be successful with all this uncertainty."

**"The restructured asylum procedure will reduce waiting periods, but it will also lead to new challenges and the need for the cantons to develop integration programs that are adapted to the new reality."**

Studies show that lengthy asylum procedures have a long-term effect on the employment rate of people granted protection (see the article by Hainmueller et al. in this issue).<sup>2</sup> It is highly likely that the restructured asylum procedure that will be rolled out in Switzerland in 2019 will reduce waiting periods and enhance integration prospects. However, it will also lead to new challenges: cantons have not yet developed integration policies suitable for people who receive a positive asylum decision after only a few weeks. It will be necessary to develop and tailor integration programs that are adapted to the new reality.

### The Link between Secure Status and Integration

The story of N. M. also highlights that the security of the status is a very important if not the most important factor for successful integration. This is also relevant for people who have only received provisional admission. Provisional admission – or an F permit – is a non-status under Swiss asylum law that allows people to stay in Switzerland, but does not offer them the benefits of legal residence – both in terms of social welfare benefits and with regard to social rights (travel and family reunification, for example, are severely restricted under this status). A recent study shows that these people are highly likely to end up in precarious working conditions and job situa-

tions as well as doing work that does not match their qualifications and profile.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, a positive correlation exists when people receive citizenship: the attainment of citizenship fosters integration and significantly enhances the social status of the naturalized persons.<sup>4</sup> The effect is long lasting and can be found in different areas: the political integration and social situation of new citizens is far better than the situation of people who have not received citizenship in a comparable situation.

These studies show that integration is dependent on individual as well as collective factors. However, favorable conditions, such as a fair and efficient asylum procedure, attention to cultural, linguistic and family factors and a stable protection status help to enhance integration.

### Provisional Admission vs. Refugee Status

A long-term myth about Swiss integration policy in the field of asylum is that people with the less secure status of a provisional admission are economically better integrated than people with a more secure refugee status. This myth suggests that being granted asylum actually puts people in a too comfortable situation and that there is no incentive to integrate in the labor market once this status has been secured. However over the last several years, studies have dispelled this myth. A UNHCR funded study on the labor market integration of refugees and persons with provisional admission shows that in the medium term refugees are far more likely to find a permanent job matching their qualifications than persons with provisional admission.<sup>5</sup> Other research highlights the difficulties in comparing people granted asylum with persons granted provisional admission.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the labor market

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integration of persons admitted provisionally is often precarious and not stable and ultimately leads to higher costs and less stable social integration.

**"A non-paternalistic approach is, from my perspective, essential, as it is important to empower people and not try to solve all their problems for them."**

Based on these various studies, there is a need to counter the narrative that is common in public debates, according to which refugees receive benefits that are so generous that they lack the will to look for a job. Cantonal integration policies also need to acknowledge that a more secure status enhances the capacity to integrate. Research shows that the best integration policy is to open local networks to refugees and contact with the local population.<sup>7</sup> It helps to decrease fear and to enhance the motivation for integration. It would also help to remove the fear of return and the feeling – dominant among asylum seekers – of not being accepted in Switzerland.<sup>8</sup> A non-paternalistic approach is, from my perspective, essential as it is impor-

tant to empower people and not try to solve all their problems for them.

### Working toward Solutions

Refugee integration in Switzerland is currently debated at different levels. There is a clear gap between the fierce political debate on deficiencies and the alleged lack of desire to integrate on the one hand, and the practical challenges encountered at the cantonal level on the other hand. What is clear is the need for enhanced cooperation between the various stakeholders and for the inclusion of the civil society and NGOs working in that area in order to develop successful integration programs.

The recently adopted measures to lower the administrative requirements to access the labor market for refugees and persons granted provisional admission are a first and important step in this direction, moving from a mindset of control to a mindset of participation.

In this respect, the upcoming debate on the improvement of the status of provisional admission following a report by the Federal Council is of

crucial importance. There is a need for pragmatic and solution-oriented discussions on the topic of the integration of people in need of protection. Reality on the ground and facts have to feature more prominently in this debate and this should start with a dialogue with the people concerned rather than with an all-encompassing model of integration for this group. The perception that refugees and provisionally admitted people constitute a homogeneous group is, in my opinion, one of the fundamental errors in the whole integration debate. Integration is about individual participation in economic, social and cultural life and not about different groups that live together in Switzerland.

1 UNHCR 2013

2 Hainmueller et al. 2016

3 UNHCR 2014

4 Hainmueller et al. 2015

5 UNHCR 2014

6 Efionayi-Mäder and Ruedin

7 Goodall 2015

8 Costello and Kaytaz 2013

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### Zusammenfassung

#### In Richtung einer besseren Integration schutzbedürftiger Personen

Der Artikel zeigt auf, dass es vor allem Wahrnehmungen und weniger faktenbasierte Analysen sind, die die politische Debatte um die Integration von Asylsuchenden, Flüchtlingen und vorläufig aufgenommenen Personen in der Schweiz prägen. Allzu leicht werden diese als homogene Gruppe angesprochen, die der Schweiz (respektive ihrer Bevölkerung) quasi gegenüberstehen, und mit der ein modus vivendi gefunden werden muss. Dass Integration letztlich Teilhabe bedeutet und nicht auf eine rein formale, rechtliche Gleichstellung beschränkt ist, gerät so häufig aus dem Blick.

Der Beitrag plädiert für eine faktenbasierte, realistische Integrationsdiskussion und -politik, die die tatsächlichen Gegebenheiten in den Kantonen, Städten und Gemeinden berücksichtigt und gleichzeitig den individuellen Blickwinkel der betroffenen Personen einbezieht. Eine solche Integrationspolitik sollte den betroffenen Personen von Beginn ihres Aufenthalts an Angebote machen, statt (quasi elterlich) mit Sanktionen zu drohen. Sie soll so Selbstbewusstsein und Motivation stärken statt beschädigen. Frühe Sprachlernangebote, Aus- und Weiterbildungsmöglichkeiten und schnelle Klarheit über den asylrechtlichen Status sind die Schlüssel zu einer Integrationspolitik, die echte Chancengleichheit anstrebt und auch erreichen kann.

Die kommenden Diskussionen um die vorläufige Aufnahme werden zeigen, ob die Schweizer Gesellschaft und die politischen Akteure für eine solche Kurskorrektur bereit sind. Bund, Kantone, Städte und Gemeinden haben mit den Ergebnissen der dritten nationalen Integrationskonferenz den Weg gewiesen; nunmehr gilt es neben den Schulen, Bildungseinrichtungen und Arbeitgebenden auch die Gesellschaft, Hilfswerke und Betroffene einzubeziehen und die Ergebnisse in die Praxis umzusetzen.

### Résumé

#### Vers une meilleures intégration des personnes à protéger

L'article souligne que ce sont plus les perceptions que les analyses factuelles qui marquent les débats politiques relatifs à l'intégration des requérant-e-s d'asile, des réfugié-e-s et des personnes admises à titre provisoire. Toutes ces personnes sont trop facilement considérées comme un groupe homogène auquel la Suisse (et sa population) est confrontée et pour lequel un modus vivendi doit être trouvé. On oublie souvent que l'intégration implique l'inclusion et ne se résume pas à une égalité juridique purement formelle.

Cet article plaide en faveur d'une discussion et d'une politique d'intégration réalistes, basées sur des faits, qui prennent en compte la situation réelle dans les cantons, les villes et les communes, tout en considérant la perspective individuelle des personnes concernées. Une telle politique d'intégration devrait permettre de proposer aux personnes concernées des mesures dès le début de leur séjour au lieu de les menacer de sanctions (presque à l'image d'une autorité parentale). Elle devrait également renforcer la confiance en soi et la motivation au lieu de les détériorer. Des offres de formation linguistique précoces et des possibilités de formation initiale et continue ainsi qu'une clarification rapide sur le statut du droit d'asile sont les clés d'une politique d'intégration capable d'aboutir à une véritable égalité des chances.

Les prochains débats sur l'admission provisoire montrent si la société suisse et les acteurs politiques sont prêts à un tel revirement de cap. Avec les résultats de la troisième Conférence nationale sur l'intégration, la Confédération, les cantons, les villes et les communes ont indiqué la voie; outre les écoles, les institutions de formation et les employeurs, il convient désormais d'intégrer également la société, les organisations caritatives et les personnes concernées et de mettre en œuvre ces résultats dans la pratique.