



# LUND UNIVERSITY

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS HOW FACEBOOK USERS ARE INFLUENCED BY  
MEDIA ARTICLES ON REFUGEES AND REFUGEE LAW DURING THE GERMAN  
REFUGEE CRISIS IN OCTOBER 2015

Annabell Curci-Wallis

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Lund University  
Sociology of Law Department

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Supervisor: Dr. Reza Banakar

Examinator: Dr. Eva Schömer

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## I. Introduction

*“ ‘Die Würde des Menschen  
ist unantastbar...’ das ist  
der Artikel Eins unseres  
Grundgesetzes und das gilt  
für jeden der sich in  
unserem Lande aufhält.  
Egal ob er Deutscher ist,  
Gast, oder Flüchtling...”  
-Angela Merkel*

*(“ ‘Human dignity shall be inviolable...’  
this is the first basic law (German law)  
and shall apply to everyone who stays  
in our country (Germany) no matter if one is  
German, a guest (foreign), or a refugee...”)*

### 1.1 Abstract

This thesis is a contribution to the analysis of the news media’s influence on Facebook users, guided by the use of Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis (CDA). The aim of this thesis is to analyze how two news media articles can influence Facebook users’ perceptions on refugees and refugee law. This analysis tries to gain further knowledge on the dominance effect the media has on users of social media networks. The two articles that were analyzed were published in the German media and shared on Facebook, during the German refugee crisis, in October 2015. The articles were chosen by searching on Germany’s Facebook platform using the hashtag #Flüchtlinge (refugees) and #Deutschland (Germany).

## **1.2 Introduction**

In September 2015, Europe woke up to an image of a three-year-old refugee boy who laid face down on a beach in Turkey; the little boy had drowned in the Mediterranean Sea while fleeing the war in Syria (BILD.de, 2016). The photo caused a wave of empathy for refugees. At the time, the most popular German newspaper *Bild* started a refugee initiative to increase humanitarian actions. The newspaper pledged to report about people who help refugees (BILD.de, 2016). The image of the dead boy, and the positive portrayal of refugees in the news media motivated Germans to welcome and help newly arrived refugees (BILD.de, 2016). A couple of days after the image of the dead Syrian boy was published, German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced that Germany will grant asylum to all Syrian refugees ('The German crisis,' 2016 p.1). Germans were so excited they "gathered at train stations with hot food and flowers to welcome tens of thousands of refugees" ('The German crisis,' 2016 p.1). But the help was short lived, and by December of 2015 Germany counted over 200 arson attacks on refugee homes, and many Germans wanted the refugees out (Blicke et al., 2015). The general welcome attitude was replaced with fear "in many towns and cities, flowers and food have been replaced by unrest and hostility" against refugees ('The German crisis,' 2016 p.1).

This thesis analyses the discourse in the news media and how it increased the dislike towards refugees in Germany. A discourse that is responsible for an increased hostility towards refugees that manifested itself into physical attacks on refugee homes. A discourse that lead to anti-refugee demonstrations, in which some Germans marched on the streets yelling Nazi slogans demanding to kick all refugees out (Kopietz, 2015).

## **1.3 Research question**

Since the initial welcome of refugees in Germany, the attitude of many Germans has changed and hostility towards refugees spiked in Germany (Leonard, 2016). The objective of this paper is to critically analyze how Germany's news media discourse represents refugees, within Germany's Facebook community, throughout the use of language and images. This can be formulated to ask the following research question:

*How did the representation and discourse of refugees and refugee law in two German articles, shared on Facebook, increase the dislike attitude of German Facebook users towards refugees, during the 2015 German refugee crisis?*

## 1.4 Theoretical Framework

This thesis uses Jürgen Habermas's *Theory of Communicative Action* (TCA) as a framework to help analyze the influence the news media had on how refugees were perceived during the German refugee crisis of 2015. TCA postulates by suggesting the problem of rationality of action is the central problem in sociological theory (Habermas, 1995). Habermas differentiates between two concepts of rationality. The important one for this paper is the second one communicative rationality, which is applicable for actors towards a mutual understanding (Habermas, 1995). Habermas focuses on the claims in the use of speech acts among people to reach understanding, and notes that the validity of such speech acts is in general not questioned because they take place within a given context which Habermas refers to as *Lebenswelt* [lifeworld] (Habermas, 1995). *Lebenswelt* is defined as all the values, norms, and other social patterns in a society that remain unquestioned (Habermas, 1995). Further, Habermas argues that systems of capitalism have colonized the *Lebenswelt* on the basis of power and money. This can also be said about today's media. The media publishes stories for monetary gain; therefore, the stories that bring the most readers also bring the most money. Hence, these stories are preferred even if the information is less valuable.

Another point to consider, the news media is often unable to fulfill the requirements for a rational accepted argument because the audience is unable to communicate back to the news media. Habermas argues in TCA, rationality denotes a disposition of speaking and acting subjects, whose assertions and behaviors of an issue in the public sphere can be accessed by everyone equally (Gareis, 2010).

TCA also focuses on how fair coordination of human life should look like or be. It is a tool that reasons how rational arguments between members [discourse of the public sphere] in society should agree on new societal norms that apply to everyone equally. It is important to analyze how the news media, which is part of a contemporary public sphere, influences people's perception on refugees, since the media has such a far reach into society and public opinion. Often the media contributes to increase the pressure for politicians, and so politicians have to make quick decisions without enough time to discuss issues thoroughly to find the best possible solution (Robinson, 1999). According to Habermas, a rational discourse and an ideal speech situation would ensure "communication free from dominance," which means everyone involved, the media and the reader, would have a real chance of participating in a reason based discourse (Banakar & Travers, 2002, p: 86).

In regards to Facebook and the public sphere, Habermas discusses in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* that something is “public” if it is “open to all” (1991, p.1).

From the discussion, one can derive that the task of the public sphere is to engage in a “critical public debate” (Habermas, 1991, p. 52). Hence, a public sphere could therefore be a sphere, which allows access to all people, and these people then debate critically. Facebook has by this definition several different social spheres some are private and some are public. The average Facebook user generates private and social data depending on the date he or she posts using either a private setting (friends only view) or a public setting (visible to all Facebook users). By posting publicly Facebook users create a public sphere that is as Habermas said open to all and can be used for critical public debate. Therefore, one could argue that in Habermas’ terms, Facebook has a potential to be a public sphere, but the public sphere is limited by the quality of critical public debate by Facebook users.

### **1.5 Contextualizing the 2015 German refugee crisis**

Refugees, and migration are not a new phenomenon (Freeman, 2006). In 2015, Germany experienced a 150% increase of refugees compared to the year prior (Bundesregierung.de, 2016). Since the beginning of the Syrian war, in 2011, Germany has received a steady yearly increase of refugees (Bamf.de, 2016). Most refugees are forced migrants who flee from war or other human rights violations. During the 2015 German refugee crisis, Syrians were the largest group of refugees with 48%, followed by refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Nigeria and Pakistan (Bundesregierung.de, 2016). The increasingly large numbers of refugees who arrived in Germany in the second half year of 2015 lead to a massive increase in discourse on refugees in news articles that were shared and debated on the German Facebook community.

### **1.6 Contextualizing the German Facebook community**

Germany’s Facebook community is 27 million people large, and everyday millions of users share private and public posts on the website (Facebook, 2014). Many Facebook users share news media articles and debate them on the platform. The German Facebook platform provides a space in which users can freely discuss current social or political issues. Facebook is also an online space that allows activist to communicate and organize political movements that reflect their individual believes. Therefore, Facebook can be seen as a public sphere, because people engage in critical public debates, but in social research there is a division if social media can function as a public sphere or not (Lindberg, 2015).

Online news media websites usually does not provide platforms that allow for a discourse on an article's topic. However, articles shared on Facebook always have a comments section that allows for discourse to happen.

### **1.7 Contextualizing news media and authority**

To understand how the news media influences people's perceptions one needs to first understand the concept of perceived media authority. The news media, and the people working for it, are in most cases perceived as a form of authority, a common source of believable knowledge (Adler & Clark, 2011). This means most people take the information provided by the news media as face value and do not questioned the source of the information (Adler & Clark, 2011). For nearly all information people deal with, a reality is constructed by the news media (McCombs, 2015). The news media is most people's source of information on current events, but the news media does more than to keep people up to date on current events. The news media's selection and display of certain events influences people's perception on what issues are considerate most important at a certain time and place (McCombs, 2015).

## **II. Literature review**

### **2.1 How the public sphere perceives issues reported by news media**

The news media plays a key role in how the public sphere perceives an issue and discourses it. For example, a paper titled *the CNN effect*, postulates that the 24-news format has such a major impact on the public sphere that it has the power to change political and social agenda (Robinson, 1999). The author argues, the access of a 24-hour real-time news communication creates the urgency that an issue needs a fast response by politicians to keep the audience content (Robinson, 1999). Alvin Vista argues that the mass media has the ability to spread messages and that the truth of these messages can change the audience's collective perception (Vista, 2015).

McCombs, co founder of the Agenda-Setting-Theory, also argues that what society understands is based off the medias narrative. Meaning the issue prioritized, by the news media, as important influences public opinion (McCombs, 2014). McCombs lists several research studies that concluded that when people are surveyed for their perceived most prominent public issues their responses closely reflect the patterns of recent news coverage topics. For example, a weekly comparison study in all of 1986 showed that the news television had a significant impact on Germans public opinion.

When the news coverage of a topic increased then the public concern increased as well (McCombs, 2014). Other surveys also concluded a correlation between ranking in news media and ranking of issues in public opinion. In contrast, the concept of selective perception assumes that an individual tends to pay attention to news media that reflects his or her existing attitudes and opinions. But further comparison saw a stronger correlation with the agenda-setting correlation than the selective perception correlation (McCombs, 2014).

McCombs does not stop there; he concludes the influence of the news media goes further than the focus on a certain topic in particular. McCombs reasons that the media also influences people's perception of a topic (n.d, p.4).

## **2.2 How the news media uses different approaches to attach importance to topics**

The news media uses several approaches to attach importance to a story. For example, the placement of an image plays a key role if a story is deemed to be important or not important. News media layout designs use such tricks as putting stories on the front page; large bold letters; repetition, or the length of a story to get the audience attention. The image of the dead little Syrian boy is an example for this approach. Several popular media platforms published an image of the drowned boy on their front page drawing the audience attention right to the story. *The Bild*, for example, blacked out their whole website and displayed just the one image of the dead boy (Bildblog.de, 2016). It was impossible not to recognize the importance of the story. And aside from the scale of the refugee crisis that particular image was published by all the news media, even though there were many other photographs of drowned refugees. Also, the news media tends to report more when visual images of a disaster are available (Wright, 2016).

Terence Wright argues that the pattern of human migration changes the pattern in the news media as well (2016). The news media tends to report more on marginal countries when there is a connection to the West (Wright, 2016). The Syrian conflict that started in 2011, out of the Arab Spring protests, had been going on for several years, but before refugees arrived in West-Europe the armed conflict in Syria was a side topic for most German news media outlets.

Additionally, words and phrases have a big impact on how a story is perceived. In *Forced Migrants as 'Illegal' Migrants*, the authors, Scheel and Squire, examine how many refugees are classified as irregular migrants (2014). The authors discuss the framing and targeting of refugees in the literature as illegal immigrants and highlight the use of labels (Scheel & Squire, 2014). The phrase, *forced migrants*, implies that people are forced out of their country for reasons such as war and because of that label *forced* these refugees are perceived as legal (Scheel & Squire, 2014). In comparison, the term illegal migrant is associated with illegal

behavior therefore the migrant is perceived as illegal (Scheel & Squire, 2014). The news media tends to pick up labels such as illegal refugee or economic refugee on a continuous basis. Too often, the news media generalizes all refugees and further increases the negative public opinion on refugees. The power words carry in communication has been discussed for a long time. Habermas has with his theory established a communication free of dominance that could guide society into establishing a better argument based on reason not wording alone. For instance, the Canadian press was identified as reporting negatively about economic migrants and their allegedly abuse of Canada's generosity or that they are infected with highly infectious diseases such as tuberculosis (Wright, 2016). When an average, non-medical person hears that refugees carry infectious disease into their country they may get scared, which then could result in an increase of dislike towards refugees. However, if the media would also state that doctors say it is rather easy to diagnose and treat tuberculosis then the news media would create an argument based on rational knowledge.

### **2.3 How the news media often reports incomplete truths on refugees and refugee laws**

Terence Wright (2014) argues that the increase of global migrations often highlights refugees as a group, not the individuals they are. Too often the media fails to make a connection "between 'there' and 'here': sympathetic coverage of those in far-off lands affected by disaster and war appears in stark contrast to the media treatment of those seeking asylum in the West" (Wright, 2014, p.2).

Last year, during the height of the refugee crisis in Germany most news media discussed the issue of refugees and European refugee laws. Such as, the news medias debate on the Dublin II regulation in several articles (BILD.de, 2016). In the debate it is assumed that refugees have to file for asylum in the first safe European country that they set foot in, and if they do not follow that rule they can be send back to the first safe country they crossed into Europe. Although, this assumption in its entire is not incorrect it is also not correct. The focus in the Dublin II regulation, where and when refugees can file for asylum, is often misunderstood. When one reads the Dublin II regulation the first statements is:

"This Regulation establishes the principle that only one Member State is responsible for examining an asylum application. The objective is to avoid asylum seekers from being sent from one country to another, and also to prevent abuse of the system by the submission of several applications for asylum by one person" (EU no 343/2003).

Geoff Gilbert explains that the original aim of the Dublin regulation was to prevent "refugee ping-pong," which mean if a European country has denied a refugee asylum, they cannot apply for asylum in another member state (Gilbert, 2015, p. 531).

The Dublin II regulation was not passed to establish a system that forbids refugees to apply in the second safe EU country they set foot in. Additionally, these misinterpretations of the Dublin II interpretations have already caused a significant burden to certain EU members such as Italy, which has a difficult time to manage the situation as the flow of refugees have increased. So it would meet approval, from a burden-sharing perspective, to allocate asylum-seekers between member states more evenly (Gilbert, 2015).

#### **2.4 How social media attitudes relate to German laws on free speech**

Free speech is a basic right in the German constitution. Article five of the German Grundgesetz [German basic law] states, every person shall have the right to freely express and disseminate his or her opinions in speech, writing, and pictures (Artikel5.de, 2016). The article goes on referring to the press and that the freedom to report is guaranteed and there is no censorship (Artikel5.de, 2016). That being said, free speech in Germany does not allow to propagate xenophobic ideas. Part two of article five limits the rights of free speech by provisions of general laws (Artikel5.de, 2016).

A recent study that examined how Muslims are viewed on Facebook found that Muslims are demonized, which manifests itself “through negative attitudes, discrimination, stereotypes, physical threats, and online harassment, which all have the potential to incite violence“ (Awan, 2016). The evidence found, showed that islamophobia on Facebook is more prevalent than expected (Awan 2016). The study further highlights that discourse of this nature cannot be ignored, to not further increase the rise of an intolerant society (Awan 2016).

In 2015, Germany started an investigation against Facebook’s European executives because the website facilitated anti-immigrant hate speech (Luckerson, 2015). The German government tried to curb hate speech on all social media platforms because more and more Facebook users posted hateful comments about the influx of refugees in Germany (Luckerson, 2015). There have been a couple of incidents that caused German prosecutors to start investigations against Facebook. In September of 2015, a Facebook account named ”Berlin Defends Itself“ gloated about the three-year-old Syrian boy who had drowned (Smith, 2015). There were incidents in which Facebook refused to delete hateful posts. One post suggested, hang refugees by their neck and throw them out (Smith, 2015). After several people complained, Facebook administrators stated that the post did not violate community standards (Smith, 2015).

The German ministry for refugees stated that attacks on refugees have increased from 196 in 2014 to 576 (only till October) in 2015 (Smith, 2015).

It was further said that although it is difficult to provide a causal link, the rise in hate speech within social networks is accompanied by a very real rise in attacks against refugees (Smith, 2015). By December of the same year Facebook had agreed to delete hateful messages within twenty-four hours (Luckerson, 2015). In May 2016, the European Commission together with Facebook and other social media platforms announced a code of conduct on illegal hate speech, and that the social media sites will stay committed to continue efforts to tackle illegal hate speech (Europa.eu, 2016).

### **III. Research Design**

#### **3.1 Methods**

Qualitative research is the analysis that results in the interpretations of representation of meanings in the researcher's own words (Adler & Clark, 2011). This thesis will use a qualitative research design to evaluate how textual and visual representation of refugees and refugee law in Germany's news media increased the dislike attitude towards refugees within Germany's Facebook public sphere.

More specifically, I will utilize critical discourse analysis (CDA) based on Norman Fairclough's book, *Critical Discourse Analysis (1995)*. CDA, as a method, considers the concept of power as the ratio of inequalities in social structures. It assumes that each speech situation is distorted by such power structures. Language is not the cause of power, but as a medium of domination it enables the expression of domination. CDA makes these linguistic forms, which are used in the handling and the use of power, to its object of study. And as Habermas points out only a communication free of domination would ensure a rational discourse, and an ideal speech. Therefore, it is important to identify the linguistic forms the media uses that express and create domination, which can change people's beliefs and attitudes towards refugees and refugee law.

CDA considers language to be an ideological tool that reflects and consist of conscious and unconscious ideas. The use of critical discourse analysis allows systematically collecting and analyzing two news media articles that were chosen for this thesis. The in-depth analysis, through systematic observations, will contribute to how language and images can increase the dislike sentiment towards refugees and refugee law.

Ideologies that are found in written words and sentences express an individual's or a group's beliefs. Ideologies and social practices are related to a specific historical context and "the means by which existing social relations are reproduced" (Janks, 1997, p.329).

Thus, the use of CDA helps to understand how ideology construction and political positioning happens (Janks, 1997). CDA further explains social effects of discourse, which are often opaque to many people. Adopting CDA means to investigate verbal interactions to see determinations of social structures, such as the news media and the public opinion shared by German Facebook users. I will carry out a text analysis guided by Fairclough's 1995 model of CDA, which consists of three interrelated processes of analysis tied to three interrelated dimensions of discourse:

- "A The object of analysis (verbal, visual or verbal, and visual texts),
  - B The processes by means of which the object is produced and received (writing/speaking/designing and reading/ listening/viewing) by human subjects
  - C The socio historical conditions which governs these processes
- He emphasizes that each of these discourse needs a different kind of analysis  
He suggests:
- A requires a Text analysis (description)
  - B processing analysis (interpretation)
  - C social analysis (explanation)" (Janks 1997, p: 329).

In CDA, lexical analysis is the basic linguistic way to analysis what it means to look at vocabulary used in the text (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Certain words, or phrases allows communicators to set up a social world in which they can highlight some kind of meaning and push other meaning into the background (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Lexical analysis enables the discourse analysis to focus on signifiers that make up the text, specific linguistics selections, the juxtaposition and their sequencing. This approach recognizes the historical importance of these selections and that these choices are tied to the conditions of possibility of that utterance (Janks, 1997). Therefore, I will analysis each article identifying certain lexical choices to understand how these contribute to the understanding of refugees and refugee law within the German Facebook community. Last, I will incorporate the images attached to the articles in my analysis because "critical visual analysis offers an interdisciplinary method for understanding and contextualizing images – crucial concerns, given the cultural centrality of vision" (Belk, 2006, p. 2).

- a. Language and identity: There is no neutral language in representing people and their identities (Machin and Mayr, 2012). Lexical tools allow the communicator to create a discourse that places participants in a certain social world, drawing attention to particular aspects the author wishes to highlight (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Aggregation, suppression and "us and them division"(Machin & Mayr, 2012, p.84).

- b. Structural Oppositions: A way to create an identity. In the theory of social semiotics, Halliday states that words have not just a meaning but are part of a network of meanings (1978). In a text (and images) this can be opposite concepts such as good-evil (Machin & Mayr, 2012)
- c. Quoting verbs: Communicators can shape perceptions and opinions simply by the choice of words they use to describe how something was said. This allows transferring values and beliefs onto the reader. The analysis of quoting verbs helps to understand what is connoted through the use of quoting verbs (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Quoting verbs can direct readers to believe a participant has a negative or positive attitude (Machin & Mayr, 2012).
- d. Iconography: The analysis of an image asks what an image denotes, meaning what or whom it depicts; and what the image connotes, meaning what ideas or concepts are communicated to the viewer (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

### **3.2 Data analysis**

To answer the research question, I will analyze two news media articles. I choose articles that have been shared on Facebook during the height of the German refugee crisis in October 2015. I choose Facebook as a platform for four reasons. First the German Facebook community is 27 million people large (Facebook, 2014). Second, the Facebook comments and like section provides users the possibility to reflect on the discourse in the shared article. Third, shared articles show that Facebook users have an interest to debate that particular topic. Fourth, all kinds of random people see these shared articles, most Facebook users have very little control of what posts they see.

The utilization of convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, allowed me to immediate access articles on Facebook that I searched for by using the [#hashtag] #Deutschland (Germany) and #Flüchtlinge (refugees). From the list of results, I choose the first two articles that had at least fifty comments and fifty Facebook shares. A high amount of shares and comments could be an indicator that people are debating the topic. Other criteria for a text to be chosen were a minimum of five hundred words. All articles analyzed were written in German. In the analysis text part, I will write the original word, phrase, or sentence followed by the English translation in parentheses.

### **3.3 Limitations**

The limits of this study are identified as follows. Non-probability sampled articles are based on the judgement of the researcher and are not representative of similar articles shared on Facebook. Also, I have not differentiated between articles from established news media or private blogs because all texts are considered available data on Facebook. Thus, the results of the study can only be applied to the sample I choose (Wallimann, 2005).

The limited scope of the paper only allows for two articles to be analyzed in depth. By using a well define research question, a qualitative study, clear defined categories I will limit my own biases as much as possible. Still, the analysis depends on my analytical skills and can therefore be influenced by such.

The articles analyzed are written in German and are translated for the purpose of this thesis. Although, I am a native German speaker, I am aware that translations in English can be tricky because direct word translations are not always possible. Sometime, a meaningful translation is more appropriate to present the text in the right context, so the translations are bound by my normative thinking and understanding of the context.

## **IV. Analysis**

### **4.1 First article**

<https://www.facebook.com/kopponline/posts/1038128992893961>

Ausnahmezustand: Das Militär übernimmt (Martial law: the military takes over)

The article was shared on Facebook 22th Oct. 2015. It received 1.1k likes; 1,284 shares; 107 comments.

#### *First article layout*

The article is written in black standard font on white background. The headline is in bigger letters than the text. Underneath the headline the first paragraph is in black bold letters. The author references certain statements, but the references the author provides are links to other articles on the same website. The article itself has no unusual features to draw in extra attention. However, the image provided with the text can draw some additional attention to the article because of a large fire depicted on it.

#### *First article summary*

Europe's borders are threatened by a massive amount of refugees who are fleeing to come to Germany. Europe's military forces, and the German military (Bundeswehr), have are trying

to secure Europe's borders. Merkel's failed politics have polarized the German people and as a result public opinion is divided. Germans are demonstrating against demanding refugees and the escalated violence that is caused by the flood of refugees. The violence that erupted on Europe's borders increased the danger to public order and is uncontrollable by administrative forces. The German police forces are overwhelmed with the situation. The current state of Germany is seen as so critical that the situation suggest calling for a state of emergency.

*First article language and identity (aggregation)*

Throughout the text there is repetition of aggregation. Refugees are treated as numbers, in seven instance words are used that imply large number. "Europas Grenzen werden von einem nicht enden wollenden Flüchtlingsstrom überrannt, allein in Deutschland wurden in 40 Tagen 409 000 neue Flüchtlinge registriert." (Europe's borders are overrun by a never ending flood of refugees, in Germany alone, 409 000 new refugees were registered in just 40 days); "Zwischen dem 5. September und dem 15. Oktober wurden vom Innenministerium 409 000 zusätzliche Flüchtlinge registriert." (Between Sept.5th and Oct.15th, 409 000 additional refugees were registered by the Interior Ministry); "Was, wenn in den nächsten 40 Tagen wieder 400 000 Flüchtlinge einreisen?" (What if in the next 40 days another 400 000 refugees enter?); "Und danach wieder 400 000!" (And after that another 400 000!); "Zehntausende Flüchtlinge" (tens of thousands of refugees). The author also uses words that communicate very large quantities of people "...die Flüchtlingsströme..." (floods of refugees [is used twice in text]); "Völkerwanderung" (migration of a nation). The constant repetition of numbers depersonalizes and dehumanizes refugees as just numbers in a statistic. The reader will feel no personal connection or empathy for refugees.

*First article language and identity (suppression)*

The author chooses to suppress information, by doing so refugees are further framed as dangerous. In the article, the author talks about migrating refugees and how much problems refugees have caused in Germany and Europe. "Kurz darauf haben Flüchtlinge in Brežice aus Protest die Zelte angezündet, die sie vor Kälte und Regen schützen sollen" (Shortly after refugees, out of protest, burned down the tents that were protect them from the cold and rain, in Brežice); "Doch wie sollten die Sicherheitsbehörden reagieren, wenn Zehntausende Flüchtlinge durch die Städte marschieren, es zu Verwüstungen und Plünderungen kommt..." (How should security authorities react, if tens of thousands of refugees march through the towns, causing devastation and looting...); "Die Polizei ist bereits völlig überfordert und verheizt, diese Zustände wäre sie nicht mehr in der Lage, zu bewältigen."

(The police are overwhelmed and burned out; under this circumstance the police would not be able to stabilize the situation). The reader is not told why these events are happening. The author chooses to suppress the information that would complete the whole picture of the refugee crisis. The information would be necessary so the reader could make an informed decision. However, the reader is not told about the five year long civil war in Syria and the other human rights violations that causes the refugee crisis. The discourse communicated is that of an unstable, dangerous Europe in which the police and the military are called to secure public order at the borders. The discourse in this article communicates that refugees are people who want to come to Germany to get free money, “Angelockt von Bargeldzahlungen und einer grenzenlosen Willkommenskultur...” (Lured by cash payments and a boundless welcome culture). No information is provided that a refugee is a person who flees his or her country out of fear from persecution, violence and/or war (USA for UNHCR, 2016).

*First article language and identity (us and them division)*

The words and phrases discoursed in the text create an identity that portrays refugees as enemies (them) of the state (us).

It starts with the title, in large bold black letters “Ausnahmezustand: Das Militär übernimmt” (Martial law: the military takes over) is the reader introduced to the topic. The author goes on talking about, “An Europas Grenzen marschieren Soldaten mit Sturmgewehren auf und stoppen gewaltsam erste Flüchtlingsströme”(On Europe’s borders soldiers are marching with assault rifles forcefully stopping first arriving floods of refugees); “In den Denkfabriken von Militärs und Staatsrechtlern wird mittlerweile ein Begriff ins Spiel gebracht, der noch vor wenigen Monaten lediglich ein mitleidiges Kopfschütteln ausgelöst hätte: Staatsnotstand” (In the think tanks of military and constitutional lawyers, a concept is brought into play, a word which would have only cause a pitiful shake of the head a few months ago: state of emergency); ”Schließung der Grenzen ist, um die Flüchtlingsströme zu stoppen” (Closing of the borders to stop the floods of refugees); the term is used twice “Staatsnotstand” (State of emergency); this term is used three times throughout the article “Ausnahmezustand” (Martial law); “...die Bundeswehr flächendeckend einzusetzen, im Inneren, wie zur Grenzsicherung” (comprehensively deploy the German army, inside, and for border security); “dass sich die Deutschen nach Stacheldraht und Zäunen zurück sehnen, um Sicherheit und Wohlstand zu schützen?” (that Germans want back barbed wire and fences to protect their security and prosperity);

“Der Staatsnotstand bezeichnet einen Zustand drohender Gefahr für die öffentliche Ordnung oder die Sicherheit und den Bestand des Staates, der nicht mehr mit üblichen politisch-administrativen Mitteln zu bewältigen ist” (A state of emergency is a state of imminent danger to the public order or the security and existence of a state, which is no longer manageable with the usual political and administrative resources); “Für Fälle des Staatsnotstandes gelten in Deutschland die im GG enthaltenen Regelungen der Notstandsverfassung” (In case of a state of emergency, the provisions contained in basic law are applicable in Germany.); “Die Situation in Deutschland könnte jederzeit bedrohlich eskalieren und genau diese Zustände auslösen” (The situation in Germany could at any time escalate and trigger [violence] just that); “...Länder haben bereits Militäreinheiten an die Grenze abkommandiert...”(countries have send military units to their borders); “...Militär- und Polizeieinheiten den Auftrag erhielten, den Flüchtlingsstrom gewaltsam zu stoppen” (Military and police units received orders, to stop the refugee flow forcibly); “...wie sollten die Sicherheitsbehörden reagieren, wenn Zehntausende Flüchtlinge durch die Städte marschieren, es zu Verwüstungen und Plünderungen kommt...” (how should security authorities respond when tens of thousands of refugees march through towns causing devastation and looting); “Was, wenn die Unruhen sich auf mehrere Städte ausbreiten...” (what if riots spread to several cities); “...die Situation an den Südgrenzen gänzlich außer Kontrolle geraten...”([what if] the situation on southern borders gets entirely out of control); “Als letzte Maßnahme bliebe der Einsatz des Militärs gegen Flüchtlinge...” (a last measurement is the use of military against refugees).

#### *First article quoting verbs*

There is only one quoting verb in the text, “...das Klagen der Flüchtlinge...”(the lament of the refugees) is a metapositional verb. The author used the verb lament to interpret how the refugees have expressed themselves when they said that they got pasta to eat. By using the word lament, the text communicates that refugees are complaining about their food options and therefore are ungrateful for the food/help they have received.

#### *First article iconography*

The vantage point of the viewer is in the foreground and it looks directly at scene that is set at an unnamed location. In the left corner (foreground) the image depicts two camouflaged armored fighting vehicles. Barriers in the middleground of the image suggest a border, and behind the barriers, in the background, is a crowd next to a large fire. The fire dominates the image.

Also, in the middleground, around the barriers, are people dressed in dark uniforms who wear helmets and appear to be police officers. The large fire centered in background dominates the image. The fire has a large burning base and a huge block of black smoke rises into the sky. The camouflaged armored vehicles are vehicles associated with a combat zone; therefore, the vehicles imply a threat. In combination with the text that talks about a massive flood of refugees who had set tents on fire out of anger, the viewer connotes that refugees are violent and a security threat to Europe's safety. Further, the connotation of the crowd in the back that is behind the barriers, and the policemen who are around the barriers could be seen by viewers as the police is securing the barriers from the crowd crossing. These associations imply an imminent security threat for Europe's borders that is caused by a violent crowd. The repetition of the phrase state of emergency, in the text, further emphasizes the connotation that the image reflects a combat zone. There are several symbols; in the image readers would associate with a combat zone such as military vehicles, people in uniforms, fire, and barriers.

The image also reflects structural oppositions. The crowd in the back that set a fire and seems violent and cannot control their anger compared to the orderly dressed police officers that just seem to stand around. The symbols in the image, and connotations, are able to communicate that refugees are a threat to public order and would not be able to fit in a peaceful society such as Germany. Presenting the identities of refugees as dangerous denies them empathy. If a reader feels empathy there are more likely to see the need for refugees to get to safety and the protection of EU law that guarantees a safety net.

#### *First article CDA*

The author has used all listed lexical tools to communicate a discourse that is anti-refugee, aside from quoting verbs. The discourse the author communicated is that of the refugee enemy. They [refugees] causing all the problems in Germany [us] and on Europe's [us] borders. Germany [us] has to send military to keep refugees [them] from destroying public order "...tens of thousands of refugees march through towns causing devastation and looting...". At no point, does the discourse communicate that Germany/Europe [us] refuse to let refugees [them] cross the borders to receive protection, even though refugees are protected by the European Union's (EU) regulations and directives, which are ratified and binding by all EU member states. According to the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), people who flee their countries scared of persecution and serious harm have a right to be protected (Ec.europa.eu, 2016). Furthermore, all EU member states, such as Germany, have the responsibility to welcome refugees ensuring a dignified treatment and a fair examination of each individual's case (Ec.europa.eu, 2016).

For example, the EU directive 2003/9/EC of 27 January 2003 clearly states, “laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers. Further, EU directive 2001/55/EC of 20 of July 2001, states EU member states should establish minimum standards to give temporary protection in the case of a mass influx of refugees. It does not say that EU member states should send out military forces to make sure refugees are unable to cross Europe’s borders. The discourse in the text is that refugees [them] are the enemy who burn down everything in their way to get to Germany [us] to receive free money, “...Angelockt von Bargeldzahlungen...” (lured in by cash payments).

#### **4.2 Second article**

<https://www.facebook.com/Sat.1Nachrichten/posts/946311165430741>

The article was shared on Facebook 24 Oct. 2015 and it received 82 likes; 53 shares; 84 comments.

Neuer Flüchtlingstreck auf dem Balkan (New refugee route at the Balkan)

##### *Second article layout*

The article has two headlines. The first one is the same size as the text and hides in the upper left corner. It asks, “Neue Zäune für Europa?” (new fences for Europe”). The article is written with a standard black font on light blue background. An image is depicted showing people.

##### *Second article summary*

Thousands of refugees are crossing throughout the Balkan route into West Europe. Western nations are looking towards an EU crisis meeting, hoping for solutions in the refugee crisis, but with growing concerns. EU member states saying that the escalated situation calls for new fences on Europe's borders. Police officers and soldiers are securing the border between Germany and Austria. Authorities say that the presence of so many refugees and police officers has frightened the public. The foreign ways of refugees are frightening to locals who see refugees as strangers. The EU Balkan nations are hopeful that the special scheduled meeting of EU leaders can help tackle the refugee crisis on EU borders. The nations further hope that the meeting will lead to a better communication between the EU member states, but not all leaders agree that the meeting will solve the issues. Several nations even threatened to close their borders if Germany and Austria will close theirs.

### *Second article language and identity (aggregation)*

The communicator represented refugees as numbers, the discourse quantifies refugees into a statistics similar to the first article, “...Zu Tausenden sind die Flüchtlinge...” (Thousands are refugees); “Zu Tausenden strömten die Menschen...” (in the thousands people are coming); “...rund 13.000 Menschen aus Kroatien eingereist...” (around 13,000 people entered [the country from] Croatia); “Knapp 4.000 Flüchtlinge warteten...” (almost 4000 refugees waited); “3.000 Flüchtlinge übernachteten...” (3000 refugees stayed over night); “Einige Flüchtlinge” (some refugees); “Viele andere Flüchtlinge...” (Many other refugees); “Unter den Flüchtlingen sind auch viele Frauen und Kleinkinder” (Among the refugees are many women and small children); “Tausender Flüchtlinge” (thousands of refugees); “...so eine große Zahl an fremdländischen Menschen...” (Such a large number of unknown foreign people ); “...seien täglich 3.000 Migranten...” (3,000 migrants daily) ; “in der Woche zuvor bis zu 6.000 Man” (in the week before up to 6000 man; Flüchtlingsströme (floods of refugees).

In this article the numbers of refugees presented are lower in comparison to the numbers listed in article one, and although the numbers are subtler they are still numbers. The numbers of refugees are also constantly repeated this too quantifies refugees as simple a statistic, and not humans. Considering other parts in the article, the discourse creates a world in which German people are afraid of so many foreigners and their unknown ways, “Den Leuten ist nicht wohl dabei, wenn sie so eine große Zahl an fremdländischen Menschen mit fremden Sprache sehen, sagt der konservative Politiker” (people don’t feel comfortable if they see such a large number of unknown foreigners with their unknown language, said the conservative politician).

### *Second article language and identity (suppression)*

The first headline leads the discourse into a direction by asking, “Neue Zäune für Europa?” (new fences for Europe?). Then the author talks about “Die bedrängten Staaten blicken auf ein EU-Krisentreffen am Sonntag” (the corned nations are looking up on an EU crisis meeting on Sunday). But the reader does not get an answer the discourse is incomplete because the reader does not find out why nations feel cornered, and why do these nations feel cornered about? These questions are not answered. Are the nations worried about their borders? It could be because the text vaguely communicates that several EU member states are worried how to protect their borders from refugees:

“Allein über das kleine Grenzdorf Rigonce im Osten Sloweniens mit nur 170 Einwohnern seien innerhalb von nur zwei Tagen rund 13.000 Menschen aus Kroatien eingereist, meldete die slowenische Nachrichtenagentur STA” (Over 13,000 people [refugees] have crossed the border from Croatia and traveled to the small border village Rigonce in eastern Slovenia, a village with only 170 residents, reported the Slovenian news agency STA).

More discourse about refugees who are waiting at the borders “4.000 Flüchtlinge warteten in der slowenischen Gemeinde Sentilj an der Grenze zu Österreich noch auf ihre Weiterreise gen Norden” (4000 refugees waited at the Slovenian/Austrian border to continue their travels to the north). Another 3000 refugees are waiting on the border Spielfeld, “3.000 Flüchtlinge übernachteten nach Polizeiangaben am Übergang Spielfeld” (3000 refugees sleep according to police information at the border Spielfeld). “Viele andere Flüchtlinge waren am Vortag in den grenznahen Gemeinden Leibnitz und Wildon” (the day before many other refugees were at the border communities Leibnitz and Wildon). Politicians are worried about what will happen, “Es muss endlich gehandelt werden, damit die Situation an der Grenze nicht endgültig eskaliert, verlangte auch der steirische Landeshauptmann” (Action needs to be taken before the whole situation at the borders escalates said the Styrian Governor). Other countries are threatening to close their borders, “Bulgarien, Rumänien und Serbien drohten mit der Schließung ihrer Grenzen für Flüchtlinge” (Bulgaria, Rumania, and Serbia are threatening to close their borders for refugees). Even the foreign minister of Austria states fences could protect borders, “Außenminister Sebastian Kurz gesagt, Zäune könnten zum wirkungsvollen Schutz der Grenzen beitragen” (foreign minister Sebastian Kurz said, fences could become effective protection for the borders).

Readers could interpret the discourse that is created as a legitimate discussion on border protection. The reader could get the impression that several nations have a lawful discourse on how to protect Europe’s borders from refugees. The communicator does not inform why so many refugees are coming to Europe. Nor is the reader informed of the fact that EU law requires all EU member states to take care of refugees, if the refugees are on the border or have crossed the border of an EU member state and are seeking protection (Eur-lex.europa.eu, 2016). Chapter II article 3. 1 of the REGULATION (EU) No 604/2013, also known as the Dublin Regulation states:

“that Member States shall examine any application for international protection by a third-country national or a stateless person who applies on the territory of any one of them, including at the border or in the transit zones.”

Therefore it does not matter if EU member states build fences to protect their borders they are still required to take action if a refugee is at their border. The author suppressed the information about EU law and its application in a refugee crisis. For the discourse to be neutral the information, prior stated, would be necessary, so the reader could make an informed decision.

The author communicates to the reader a social world that is missing an important agent that can recreate the whole context that is represented in the article. All EU member states are part of a bigger organization as a result of the political ideologies they share and these established and shared values have shaped Europe and its borders.

*Second article language and identity (us and them division)*

Some of the discourse in this article is subtler in comparison to the first article but the author still indirectly aligns Germans on one side and refugees on the other side. The text is introduced with a smaller titled before the main title asking, “Neue Zäune für Europa? (new fences for Europe?). The conversation over fences creates a discourse that can be interpreted as a communicated division between refugees (them) and Europe (us). Most Germans associate fences with barriers that are build to mark a territory, divide a property, or are setup to keep things out or in. So when the author speaks of thousands of refugees, who are crossing into Europe, and of fences in the same text the message is subtle but it is understood. Fences are needed to protect Europe because we [Europe] do not want them [refugees] here. “Angesichts wachsender Sorgen vor einer Eskalation der Lage werden inzwischen die Rufe nach neuen Grenzzäunen in Europa lauter” (With growing concerns, afraid that the situation [to many refugees] will escalate, calls for new fences at the borders are getting louder); “Viele andere Flüchtlinge...” “...Sie hatten zuvor die Absperrungen durchbrochen und waren zu Fuß über die Bundesstraße nach Norden losmarschiert” (Many other refugees had previously broken through barriers and marched away on foot along the main road to the north).

There is more discourse created that communicates the us and them division in the text, “Tausender Flüchtlinge [them] auf den Straßen und starkem Polizei- und Armeeaufgebot sei die Bevölkerung [we] ‘äußerst beunruhigt’ ”(thousands of refugees [them] on the streets and the large force of police and military presence seems to worry the local population [us]); Den Leuten [us] ist nicht wohl dabei, wenn sie so eine große Zahl an fremdländischen Menschen [them] mit fremder Sprache sehen (the people [us] do not feel comfortable if they see such a large number of outlandish people [them] speaking an outlandish language [them]); “Kroatien [us] werde Flüchtlinge [them] nicht über längere Zeit aufnehmen...” (Croatia [us] will not take in refugees [them] over a long period); “Bulgarien, Rumänien und Serbien [us] drohten mit der Schließung ihrer [us] Grenzen für Flüchtlinge [them]...” (Rumania, Bulgaria, and Serbia [us] are threatening to close their [us] borders for refugees [them] ); “Wir [us] werden unsere [us] Völker nicht zur Pufferzone für die Flüchtlingsströme [them] werden lassen...” (We [us] will not let our [us] people be the buffer zone for the floods of refugees [them]).

### *Second article quoting verbs*

Seven out of nine quoting verbs found in the text are neutral, “... meldete die slowenische Nachrichtenagentur...” (reported the Slovenian news agency); “...sagte der Deutschen Presse-Agentur...” (said the German press agency); “...sagt der konservative Politiker...” (said the conservative politician); “Ein Sprecher sagte...” (A speaker said); “...sagte er...” (said he); “...sagte der bulgarische Regierungschef...” (said the Bulgarian head of state); “...Außenminister Sebastian Kurz gesagt...” (foreign minister Sebastian Kurz had said). Said, had said, and reported are all neutral verbs that introduce a saying without giving meaning to it. One of the quoting verbs was a bit more expressive but still somewhat neutral “...betonte der bürgerliche Regierungschef...” (emphasized the civil head of state). If a person emphasizes a statement they find it especially important to be heard, which gives the statement more validation/truth. However, the reader is not influenced by the use of a one-time emphasis if all other quoting verbs are neutral.

Just one time did the author use a metapropositional verb that was expressive, “...verlangte auch der steirische Landeshauptmann...” (demanded the Styrian governor). Metapropositional verbs are the interpretation given by an author of what had been said. In this article, it can be said that the author did not interpret how statements were expressed and therefore did not influence the reader's perception by using quoting verbs.

### *Second article iconography*

The image denotes people walking on an unpaved road. The vantage point of the viewer is in the foreground looking directly at scene that is set at an unnamed location. Everyone on the image walks directly towards the viewer's vantage point. To the right and left of the unpaved road the viewer can see a bit of garbage. Only one person is clearly visible, the other people are located in the background and middleground. Aside from the person in the foreground everyone is blurry and has no recognizable facial feature. The front person is covered in a light grey blanket. At first it appears to be a woman but it is a man. The way the he is wearing the blanket, over his head like a scarf, gives of the impression of a woman. The man gazes right at the viewer but his eyes are not visible. The other people in the back also carry blankets but over their arms, and some carry plastic bags.

To the viewer the image connotes a discourse of strangers. Although, there are people in the middle and background of the image they seem unimportant to the discourse because they are all blurred out. The only one in focus is the man who walks towards the viewer's vantage point. At first glance the man could be confused with a woman.

A woman that covers her head with a grey scarf and wears a pink skirt. But a second look reveals the woman is a man, the grey scarf is a blanket, and the pink skirt is a plastic bag. This confusion alters the discourse of the image, and the man in the foreground seems to be out of the norm, an outlandish stranger, someone who does not fit in. A subtle message that mirrors part of the discourse in the text. The discourse about the outlandish stranger, “Leuten ist nicht wohl dabei, wenn sie so eine große Zahl an fremdländischen Menschen mit fremder Sprache sehen” (people do not feel comfortable when they see a large number of outlandish people speaking an outlandish language).

The blanket the man wears over his head further connotes the stereotypical image of a Muslim wearing a Hijab. The Hijab is a veil that covers the head and chest and is a strong cultural symbol that [can] connote suppression of women. The ongoing discourse about the ban of Hijab’s in several European countries (Windle, 2004) just further increases the discourse of the outlandish stranger that is unwanted in Germany.

### *Second article CDA*

The author has used several lexical tools to communicate the discourse of the outlandish stranger that is unwanted in Europe. The author has not utilized quoting verbs. The aggregation and repetition of the amount of refugees, who are coming to Germany and other member states in Europe, quantifies refugees into a statistic, not humans. “Zu Tausenden strömten die Menschen...” (thousands of people are coming). The discourse of border fences leaves the reader with the impression that EU member states have a lawful discourse on how to protect their borders from the large numbers of refugees. The author suppresses the necessary information that a reader needs to understand the whole context of the discussion in regards to borders and fences. EU law requires all member states to help refugees, if they are at the border, or if they have crossed the border of an EU member state to seek protection (Eur-lex.europa.eu, 2016). Chapter II article 3.1 of the REGULATION (EU) No 604/2013, also known as the Dublin Regulation explains that. So border fences can be a means to register and check refugees, but border fences should not stop refugees from seeking asylum.

The discourse further alienates the reader from the refugees by communicating the division between us [Germany/Europe] and them [refugees]. “Wir [us] werden unsere [us] Völker nicht zur Pufferzone für die Flüchtlingsströme [them] werden lassen...” (We [us] will not let our [us] people be the buffer zone for the floods of refugees [them]).

The discourse of the image is one of a stranger that brings unwanted otherness such as unfamiliar religions and foreign languages.

The blanket the man wears communicates, to the German reader, a cultural symbol, the Tschador. The head covers worn by some Muslim [can] connote oppression of women. The ongoing discourse about restrictions or possible bans on Burqas and/or Burkinis in several European countries (Windle, 2004) just further increases the discourse of the outlandish stranger that is not wanted in Germany.

### **4.3 General Analysis**

Facebook users who have read the two articles were not provided with all necessary information, in regards to the German refugee crisis, to make informed decisions. Both authors have created a discourse that chooses selective information to create a social sphere in which no rational discourse happens. The analysis of both articles shows that the discourse communicated is overall anti-refugee.

In the first article, the author uses lexical tools and a visual representation to create a social context that is dangerous and comparable to a combat zone. With the use of aggregation of numbers, suppression of information, and iconography the author influences readers' perceptions to see refugees as the enemy of the state. By identifying these lexical tools, it is clear that no ideal speech act occurred. The discourse, within the article, is not free of domination, which according to Habermas is the only way to ensure a rational discourse. It is obvious that the author constructed a discourse that was not questioned in its rationality and is therefore invalid. The text and the image presented in the discourse, constructs a social reality of the violent refugees who burns down tents and breaks through barriers to go to Germany to receive free money, "...Angelockt von Bargeldzahlungen..." (lured in by cash payments). The discourse communicates a social reality that suppresses the real identity of refugees and refugee law, which are both protected by EU law.

In the second article, the discourse communicates that refugees are outlandish strangers who need to be kept behind border fences. The second author also uses lexical and visual representations to create discourse. The discourse in the second article is much more subtle in its anti-refugee message. By aggregation of refugee numbers and suppression of information, the author creates a social context in which the identity of a refugee is far from reality. Again by identifying the lexical tools, one can see that no ideal speech act has occurred. The discourse within the second article is also not free of domination, and since no rational discourse has happened the discourse is invalid. At the same time, the social discourse the second article communicates is easier to accept as factual because of its subtleness.

The discourse communicated in the first article is so outrageous and over the top that the reader may recognize it as factual incorrect, but the discourse communicated in the second article conveyed that the debate on fences for EU borders might be legitimate. “Die bedrängten Staaten blicken auf ein EU-Krisentreffen am Sonntag” (the corned nations are looking up on an EU crisis meeting on Sunday). Still, the discussion of EU border fences does not matter because border fences, or no border fences, EU law gives refugees the right to cross borders if they seek protection in Europe.

According to Habermas (1995), a rational discourse would ensure communication free from dominance, which can be interpreted that everyone involved, the author and the reader, would have all the information and facts needed for a reason based discourse. In the case of the German refugee crisis, the social context that both authors created have the power to influence Facebook users to change their socially constructed realities in which refugees are perceived as strangers and/or enemies. Therefore, it is important that Facebook users understand how the media transforms public opinions on topics of relevance. These constructed realities can be transferred into real realities in which real anger builds towards refugees. This is where one sees the importance of social issues in the news media and how these issues can influence observable behavior that explain hateful actions towards refugee. Such as it was the case during the refugee crisis when in December of 2015 Germany counted over 200 arson attacks on refugee homes (Blicke et al., 2015). The analysis of the two articles showed that the public sphere that emerged from these media’s outputs on Facebook did not allow for a proper discourse.

## **V. Conclusions**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

The aim of this thesis was to analyze how news media articles can influences Facebook users perceptions on refugees and refugee law. The two articles analyzed gave an insight on how communicators create discourse that is socially constructed. By using lexical and visual tools articles (authors) can change perceived social realities of Facebook users.

Especially interesting was the discourse that was constructed by repression of information. Both articles were a repetition of similar information. The communicators focused on one topic, for example border fences and repeated similar information throughout the article, which reinforced their own discourse.

The critical discourse analysis has indicated that there can be a connection between what discourse a communicator creates and how Facebook users can perceive these socially constructed realities. However, the limited scope of this thesis only allowed the analysis of two articles in depth. Also, the findings of this thesis are not applicable to similar articles shared on Facebook. That being said, it would be interesting to see if other shared articles are similar in their overall context.

Therefore, I would suggest further research using critical discourse analysis, analyzing more shared articles on Facebook to see if and how these articles construct social realities. It would also be interested to analyze the adjoining comments of Facebook users, who have read the articles. By also analyzing comments, researcher could do a direct analysis of the discourse constructed in the articles and the discourse that gets picked up by Facebook users. This would be an opportunity to further investigate how socially constructed discourse influences people's perceptions of refugees and refugee law. Especially, considering the size of social media communities. The German Facebook community is 27 million people big that are one third of all German people. Articles shared on social media platforms might have a further, more random, reach than articles published in popular newspapers because articles on Facebook are often visible to random Facebook friends.

An important conclusion I am taking from this research is the fact that there are no neutrally written media articles.

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