



Refugee Integration – A new field of CSR?

Abstract

The refugee crisis of 2015/2016, has not only challenged the political actors and the civil society of Germany, but also its businesses. Appealed by politicians, few German companies have started contributing to the integration of refugees into the labour market, mainly in form of donations, employee commitment and occupational preparation courses. This constitutes a new field of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for business, which has been analysed in this study. The research was driven by the interest to find out how the DAX 30 (the 30 largest and highest-selling German companies) have motivated their CSR exhibited in the field of refugee integration. This was realized through drawing upon CSR theory and analysing the corporate communication displayed in webpages, press releases and sustainability reports with the help of a qualitative content analysis. It could be shown, that companies face difficulties in reasoning their CSR in the field of refugee integration, which manifests itself in an inconsistent corporate communication. It was furthermore argued that this inconsistency in communication reflects the inexperience of corporations to deal with the social process of refugee integration and the conflicting intra-organizational interests. The study suggests that the role of companies in this field has to be re-negotiated within and outside the company in order to foster a successful and long-term oriented labour market integration of refugees.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR, labour market integration, refugees, refugee integration, DAX 30

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1 Introduction

Germany has been widely portrayed as an example-setting country in the recent refugee crisis of 2015/2016. The pictures of Munich main station, displaying thousands of Germans greeting refugees, received international press coverage. It seemed as though the welcoming culture (“Willkommenskultur”) of the largely optimistic population and civil society had outshined the hesitant attitude that the German government had displayed in weeks (Joffe 2015). Very soon the spirit of optimism was challenged when it became obvious that the integration of refugees into the German society would be a Herculean task. One of most pressing questions debated was how to facilitate a successful and speedy labour market integration. Politicians solicited businesses to contribute. German chancellor Angela Merkel and the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Andrea Nahles, have especially appealed to the 30 largest and highest-selling German companies, listed in the German stock index (hereafter: the DAX 30), to contribute to the labour market integration of refugees (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2015).

The diverse reactions of German businesses reflect the complexity of the social problem at hand. Dieter Zetsche, the CEO of the Daimler AG, one of the biggest automotive cooperation in Germany, went as far as declaring publicly that refugees could contribute to realizing a second German economic miracle (*Wirtschaftswunder*) which would be desperately needed in times of skill shortage (Kröger 2016). Other companies refrained from communicating big visions or chose not to commit to the field of refugee integration at all. Language courses, internships and mentoring programs were among the most prominent forms of corporate commitment (Aumüller 2016, p. 32). The object of analysis of this thesis is the Corporate Social Responsibility (hereafter CSR) displayed by the DAX 30 in the field of refugee integration. More specifically the focus is on their corporate communication regarding their commitment in this field.

1.1 Motivation

There are several reasons why the CSR displayed in the field of refugee integration is worth studying. Firstly, and most importantly refugee integration as a social process is an untypical field for businesses to be active in. In contrast to environmental protection, sustainability or diversity, which are established areas within CSR (Nielsen & Thomsen 2006, p. 286), it is not very obvious why contributing to the integration of refugees is a responsibility of business in the first place. From a theoretical point of view this constitutes a new case that can contribute to a very fundamental debate within the scholarly field of CSR, namely how does one decide what business responsibility is and how far it reaches? From a practical perspective, it is justified to ask if business is adequate to fulfil such a difficult task. By deciding to take responsibility the DAX 30 have certainly taken on a role model position, hence their way of contributing will be used as a yardstick by many other companies (Müller & Schmidt 2016, p. 139). The commitment of business in the field of refugee integration is crucial because it introduces a new perspective, namely that of business, on a social process.

Secondly, the projects were launched within a short period of time, in which businesses were faced with great external pressures from stakeholder such as the state and the public. Social commitment of corporations ideally needs to be decided internally, reasoned to stakeholders and shareholders, adapted to corporate vision and goals, planned and designed in form of concrete projects and programs, and finally communicated (Morsing & Beckmann 2006). It is to be expected that the corporate communication of the refugee projects reflects this pressure to some degree. What is being communicated about the projects is therefore highly suitable for analysis.

Thirdly, a look into the press coverage shows that the projects have gained public attention. Key media has brought up the question what the big and well-known companies are doing for the refugees and how their praised projects and programs are going (Kröger 2016; Baurmann et al. 2016; Steiner 2015 etc.). Headlines like “Which corporations help refugees – and which do nothing” (Steiner 2015) illustrate that businesses are not only under pressure to perform well on their projects but are also compared to each other.

Finally, thinking in broader terms, policies of integration have always been under scrutiny and have caused many public debates in Germany. In the country that in the 1960ies asked for workers and soon realized that human beings came (as Swiss author Max Frisch has put it), integration as a social issue has been neglected for a long time. However, in the course of the refugee crisis most actors were arguing in favour of a fast integration. If nothing else, the civic commitment exhibited by millions of citizens, and the high cooperation between federal and state agencies, NGOS, unions, employer representatives (Han-Broich 2015) indicate that Germany wants to do it right this time. Therefore, it is important to find out how companies will contribute to the refugee integration. For all these reasons, the integration projects launched by businesses constitute a very interesting and new phenomenon that challenges the conventional role of companies in the society and can contribute in developing the meaning of CSR in the 21st century.

1.2 Research Question & Design

The purpose of the thesis is to gain a deeper understanding of how the DAX 30 reason their social commitment in the field of refugee integration, which they have displayed in the course of the refugee crisis. The focus thereby lies on the external communication of the corporations, which will be examined through a qualitative content analysis using webpage material, press releases and sustainability reports of the corporations. On top of that, the study draws upon a three-part theoretical foundation, taken from the CSR literature to approach the research question.

More specifically the research question is:

How do the DAX 30 motivate their Corporate Social Responsibility exhibited in the field of refugee integration?

This question has three dimensions. First, since refugee integration is a new field for business to be active in, the questions aims at shedding light on the reasons, why companies have

decided to contribute to this cause in the first place. Secondly, it is to be found out what role companies ascribe to themselves in the integration process. Thirdly, insights are to be gained, about how companies have positioned themselves communicatively in this field.

1.3 Delimitations/ Research Boundaries

Firstly, considering the focus of the study, it was decided to solely analyse publicly available documents publicized by the corporations on their website. The author has abstained from conducting interviews with employees responsible for CSR, HR or the CEOs of corporations. Such an approach might have contributed to understanding how the projects were initiated, what obstacles were faced and how decisions were made internally. However, it would have put the spotlight on certain companies and their experiences, whereas the aim of this study is to get an overall picture of the DAX 30 as to how they communicate where their responsibility stems from. Furthermore, CSR activities in general are subject to criticism (Morsing & Schultz 2006, p. 136) and the refugee integration as a new matter approached by businesses are conflict-laden topics. Thus, the risks of obtaining answers in interviews, which are distorted due to social desirability has been considered too high.

Secondly, the aim of this thesis is not to compare companies against each other in terms of who has done the most or how much money has been spent. Next to the fact that this information is not always made public, it is also impossible to grasp for the discrepancy between corporate communication and CSR in action by reviewing electronic documents made for the public. On the other hand, constructivist approaches have not been chosen because the companies have displayed different forms of communication (e.g. storytelling, blogs), requiring an in-depth analysis of fewer companies. As mentioned however the aim is to get an overview in a new CSR field, finding out what the main concepts are upon which responsibility is based.

Thirdly, the choice of companies constitutes a delimitation. The DAX 30 have been chosen as unit of analysis because they already constitute an influential and norm-setting group of companies whose CSR activities have been analysed in other studies (e.g. Kilian & Hennigs 2012). Also, since the political sector has specifically addressed the DAX 30 it makes sense to analyse how the very same companies have responded to this appeal.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is very strongly organized around the three theoretical perspectives used. In chapter 2, background information is given on the topic of labour market integration in Germany, including first studies on the experiences made by business in the field. Chapter 3 presents three theoretical groups within CSR literature and how the theory was used to extract pre-defined categories for the analysis. Thereafter, chapter 4 describes the methodological approach chosen and its limitations. In chapter 5 the findings are presented, following the structure of the three theoretical groups used. In chapter 6 the findings are discussed and put

into perspective using the theory and previous publications on the topic. After that, chapter 7 presents the limitations to be kept in mind when reading the findings of the study. Suggestions for further research are given in chapter 8. Finally, chapter 9 sums up the most relevant insights that the study has revealed and what they mean for CSR and refugee integration in Germany.

2 Labour Market Integration of Refugees in Germany

This chapter provides a brief background on the topic of labour market integration of refugees in Germany. In the first part, the legal and political circumstances of refugee integration are shortly outlined. In the second part, the focus is on studies that touch upon the commitment of business displayed in the field.

2.1 Legal & Political Circumstances

The debate around labour market integration has shifted from seeing refugees as a solution for the skill shortage and demographic development in Germany to realizing that their level of qualification calls for long-term oriented integration efforts, requiring the joint effort of all labour market actors (Aumüller 2016, p. 30; Geis & Nintcheu 2016, p. 15). Although it is hard to assess the qualification levels of the people arriving in Germany, first assessments have indicated, that the majority of the refugees are poorly educated (Knuth, 2016, p. 4; Aumüller 2016, p. 8; Geis & Nintcheu 2016, p. 15). Against the backdrop of this initial situation, the most successful and efficient way to integrate has been fiercely debated. There is a general trade-off between trying to avoid long-term unemployment of refugees and therefore creating short-term job opportunities and building upon developing given skills and expertise that refugees already have. Germany has generally focused on the latter (Aumüller 2016, p. 47). On top of the challenges of assessing and adjusting qualification levels, labour market actors are challenged by a complex legal framework. The procedures around asylum applications, which in turn determine the labour market integration remain complicated, not coherent and especially inscrutable for the refugees arriving (Aumüller 2016, p. 52; Knuth 2016, p. 3, Garloff 2016, p. 690). Despite the obstacles faced, it is commonly agreed that the diversity and scope of projects launched in the course of the refugee crisis by civil society and business deserve praise and acknowledgement (Knuth 2016, p. 3; Rietig 2016, p. 1; Aumüller 2016, p. 30).

2.2 Business and Refugee Integration in Germany

It has generally been argued that business has communicated an open-minded attitude regarding the labour market integration and employment of refugees (Aumüller 2016, p.32). Giving an overview over the concrete contribution of companies has proven difficult, because companies have not only launched different projects, which are hard to be kept in record, they also sometimes refrained from communicating the employment of refugees (ibid. p. 33). Most companies have contributed to the cause through financial donations, leave of absence for employees, information and exchange-events, language courses, internships and mentoring

programs (Aumüller 2016, p. 32; Enste et al. 2016, p.23). A survey by the Bertelsmann foundation including 600 German companies with 250 and more employees shows that “74 percent of these companies have committed to assisting refugees with direct aid, primarily in the form of material donations” (Enste et al. 2016, p. 8). Furthermore, a considerable amount of the surveyed companies has contributed by providing its business service for free. Interestingly, large companies have used business service to a lesser degree but have therefore more often implemented projects aimed at the labour market integration of refugees (ibid. p. 22-23). In a study by Battisti, Felbermayr & Poutvaara (2015) 59% of 3000 surveyed businesses claim that refugees have high chances to be employed as temporary workers or trainees, but only 22% believe that they can find skilled workers within the group of refugees (p. 22). Legal obstacles such as the minimum wage, bureaucratic structures and a lack of language skills and professional trainings among the refugees are said to be the main problems (ibid.).

Regarding the topicality of the refugee integration projects, previous research on the experiences made by business so far, is rare. However, a relevant study was found in which Müller & Schmidt (2016) have analysed 12 large companies in Germany (metal, steel, chemical & electrical industry) through interviews touching upon their initiatives launched to support and integrate refugees into the labour market. Their main finding is, that companies are not committed to the cause because they anticipate skilled workforce within the target group of refugees, but rather because they want to contribute to their integration into the labour market. This insight is supported by the fact that the companies, being large and well-known, do not experience a lack of suitable applicants yet (Müller & Schmidt 2016, p. 7). However, the companies have also revealed, that the commitment in the field of refugee integrations has also led to considerably big tensions within the corporation, initiated by the discontent of employees and/or works councils (see also, Knuth 2016, p. 21). The main concern debated internally has revolved around the question if the employment of refugees constitutes a competition for young Germans and temporary workers (ibid, p. 7 & 62). The companies have tried to solve this problem by launching or enlarging programs, that include not only refugees but also young unemployed and children of employees within the company. The authors argue that these intra- organizational conflicts could cause the companies to refrain from further commitment in the field of refugee integration (Müller & Schmidt 2016, ibid., p. 10). This would be especially unfortunate, since small and medium sized companies cannot stem the task of offering language courses, job trainings and the like (ibid., p. 139).

Finally, some interesting insights were revealed concerning the role of large companies and how their commitment can be understood. As one would expect the companies have stressed repeatedly that their commitment does not follow a motive of creating a caring image on the surface, but is especially for many employees “a matter of the heart” (ibid., p. 130). If understood in this way, the contribution of especially large and popular companies also functions as a powerful message of affirmation of refugee integration (ibid., p. 131).

3 Theory

This chapter gives an introduction into the field of Corporate Social Responsibility starting with definitional debate of the concept. Thereafter three theoretical groups of CSR are being presented in chapter 3.2-3.4. Each of the theoretical groups illustrated provide a different conceptual angle through which the commitment of companies in the refugee crisis could be explained. The focus is however not on penetrating one theory (or theoretical concepts within it) but rather to extract from them their main assumption and thereby create a theoretical toolbox needed for the analysis. This approach has been chosen because of two reasons: First a diverse theoretical foundation provides a useful starting point for analysing a new phenomenon such as the refugee-related CSR displayed by the DAX 30. Secondly, since several companies are involved it is to be assumed that different CSR theories can account for differences in the companies better than a single one. The question leading this chapter therefore is: *How do the different theoretical groups explain corporate social responsibility?* Each chapter ends with a summary on how the theoretical group can shed light on the objects of analysis. To this end categories are extracted from the theory, which will be used as starting points for the analysis in chapter 3.5.

3.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

The idea of business responsibility is as old as economic activity itself. Ancient Greek philosopher Plato already argued that good leaders see their craftsmanship in yielding profits, not to themselves first but to everyone involved and affected by the business (Ciulla 2011, p. 338). The drive for profit on the other hand has been seen as the source of unethical behaviour displayed by businessmen. Ancient Greek Historian Polybius complained in 149 BC that Carthage fell because “nothing that leads to profit [was] considered disgraceful” (in Ciulla 2011, p. 335).

Although fundamental thoughts and debates about the responsibility of business have been under discussions in different societies for a long time, they have not been translated into management language until the modern era of the scholarly field of CSR has emerged around the 1950s in the US (Carroll 2008, p. 19/20). While terms and context have been adjusted, the scope of the CSR field and the plethora of definitions (see e.g. Crane et al. 2008, Moon et al. 2005, Baron 2001, Sethi 1975 etc.), show that what constitutes the social responsibilities of business, remains contested. Lockett et al. assess appropriately that CSR should not be understood as a single concept or theory but as a field of scholarship (in Crane et al. 2008, p. 6). The advocates of CSR commonly believe that businesses have social responsibilities towards society which exceed their mere functioning as an economic entity. They differ however from each other in two aspects: the scope of social responsibility that they attribute to business (what classifies as a socially responsible action?) and the reasoning for social responsibility (what can this responsibility be attributed to?). In an attempt to summarize all definitions and approaches McWilliams et al. argue in the Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility that the field of CSR deals with “social obligation and impacts of

corporations in society” (2008, p. 6). The SAGE Brief Guide to Corporate Social Responsibility offers a similarly vague definition:

“The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to the general belief held by many that modern businesses have a responsibility to society that extends beyond the stockholders or investors of the firm. [...] These other societal stakeholders typically include consumers, employees, the community at large, government, and the natural environment” (2012, p. 2).

For the purpose of this thesis it is not necessary to settle on one definition. As explained previously different definitions and theories offer an analysis of the phenomenon to be studied from different angles. The following chapters present three theoretical groups of CSR, namely political, integrative and instrumental theories, a categorization developed by Garriga and Mele (2004).

3.2 Political Theories

In the political theories business responsibility is largely justified through the social power of corporations (e.g. Davis 1960) and/or their business citizenship (e.g. Matten & Crane, 2005), a concept which is compared to the citizenship of individuals (Garriga & Mele 2004, p. 63). Keith Davis, one of the founding fathers of CSR, voiced as early as in 1960 that “social responsibilities of businessmen need to be commensurate with their social power” (1960, p. 71). Davis’ argumentation today is more valid than ever considering that multinational corporations are increasingly influential and not only exercise economic, but also political and social power (Donaldson 1982, p. 7 in Whitehouse 2003, p. 302).

The argument that social power requires socially responsible actions goes hand in hand with the idea of business citizenship. After all, power entails dependency, which not only characterizes the relationship between the state and its citizens but also the state and business in general or corporations as major players. The term Corporate Citizenship (hereafter CC) has entered the academic field, and more importantly the managerial practice in the 1990s (Mele 2008). Since then numerous companies have taken on the terminology of CC, which is noteworthy considering that other concepts such as corporate social responsiveness and corporate social performance have been picked up to a lesser degree within the business sphere (Matten & Crane 2005, p. 167). From an academic perspective, this has tried to be explained by defining and analysing what CC in fact entails. This definitional debate (what is “real” CC? How does it differ from CSR?) reveals, similar like in the case of CSR, the discrepancy between academic definitions and managerial use.

Most authors begin with tracing back or conceptualizing citizenship and thereupon engaging in an argument about whether a business organization can be treated as an individual concerning rights and obligations (Logsdon & Wood 2002; Moon et al. 2005; Matten & Crane 2005 etc.). Moon et al. (2005) argue that citizenship applied to businesses should be understood in a metaphorical sense. Meaning that the actions and the substance of corporations are comparable to citizens and citizenship (p. 432). The comparability is sufficient for the authors to conclude that if there is such a thing as business citizenship, it

goes hand in hand with obligations that need to be fulfilled (p. 448). In a similar vein, Matten & Crane (2005) argue that making the argument for business citizenship, does not require viewing corporations as citizens, instead they should be seen as being “active in citizenship and exhibit[ing] citizenship behaviour” (p. 175). Hence, when the state does not guarantee citizenship rights fully, corporations step in and administer citizenship rights.

It is safe to argue that CC offers a possibility for corporations to redefine their role in society, stepping away from an image of merely profit-oriented towards contributing business entities. In fact, governments already encourage corporations to administer citizenship rights and often corporations fulfil this function without even being appealed in the first place (Matten & Crane 2005, p. 173). This cooperation between corporations, government and non-governmental organisations, also called new governance (Moon 2002 in Moon et al. 2005, p. 448), shows that CC understood in this way “goes beyond the voluntaristic view” (Moon et al. 2005 p. 448). From an intra-organizational point of view corporate citizenship moves beyond its voluntary nature and becomes ‘holistic’ when it is “intrinsic to every facet of a company’s profile” (Birch 2001, p. 55).

CC however is also a heavily criticized concept. First, there lies a problem in equating citizens with humans, when it comes to citizenship. Whitehouse (2003) illustrates this as follows:

„If, by virtue of law, companies are endowed with the capacity of a natural person then it seems logical to extend the analogy so as to afford them, wherever possible, the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens. What this fails to recognize, however, is that the large corporation is not equivalent to other citizens in terms of its economic, social and political power“ (p. 304).

Corporations are criticized for exploiting this imbalance of power relations and reducing the idea of CC so that their obligations become the lowest possible commitment towards society. If CSR is seen as the “morally robust” concept and CC as the “watered-down concept” (Whitehouse 2003, p. 305) demanding from corporations not more than voluntary philanthropy (Logsdon & Wood 2002, p. 158), then it makes sense to accuse capitalist corporations, for choosing the limited concept or defining it for themselves in a limited way (Whitehouse 2003, p. 305). Despite its conceptual weakness, or vagueness, CC should not be neglected. Not only because the term has become popular in business language, but also because each corporation fills its definition with life differently.

The political concepts provide an explanation of what place corporations can seize within society, how they see and portray themselves and how they are seen by other actors of society. To this end they draw on political thought, more specifically the make use of codified relationships, characterized by dependency and a contractual nature. Having laid out the main characteristics of the political theories, it can be stated that they prove especially promising to think through the different motives presented by the DAX 30 as to why they feel responsible for refugee integration.

3.3 Integrative Theories

Integrative theories offer another approach of explaining CSR by acknowledging corporations as an integral and necessary part of the society to begin with. Business behaviour is seen as a result of interdependency and interconnectedness with other groups of the society. From this point of view CSR is less a question of why business should be held accountable but more if and how it integrates the social demands of the society it operates in (Garriga & Melé 2004, p. 63). This constitutes a more descriptive way of explaining corporate commitment, focusing on how companies react to social problems and analysing their “repertoire” of dealing with the latter.

Despite the less normative nature of integrative theories, scholars imply different assumptions about business and business motives. Social responsiveness, as understood by Sethi (1975) for instance, is the ultimate stage of adapting corporate behaviour to social needs (p. 62). It goes beyond merely describing how corporations react to social pressures, questioning what role corporations take in the long-term within society (p. 63). Corporations exhibiting social responsiveness in their daily operations thus are characterized as preventive and anticipatory, taking into account changes and challenges within the social system they operate (Sethi 1975, p. 63 & Jones 1980, p. 65). But more importantly, a responsive corporation “advocates institutional ethical norms even though they may be detrimental to its immediate economic interest or prevailing social norms” (Sethi 1975, p. 63). The corporation within this understanding of social responsiveness acknowledges its actions as inextricably from the expectations of and responsibilities towards society within which they are embedded.

Another way of explaining corporate social responsiveness is through analysing the many interests a corporation is composed of. Stakeholder have different, sometimes conflicting, demands and interests, which especially big corporations are challenged to balance. The academic literature refers to this process as stakeholder management, which is “oriented towards stakeholders or people who affect or are affected by corporate policies and practices” (Garriga & Mele 2004, p. 59). In stakeholder theory, the interdependence of business is spotlighted through focusing on the relationships between actors involved in and affected by a corporation. Hence the rationale for acting is not ethical norms any more (as described by Sethi), but to find a common ground with stakeholders.

Finally, corporate social responsiveness can also be analysed through a critical approach, in which corporation’s responsiveness is primarily explained as the outcome of a business strategy. From this point of view ethical norms are not necessarily driving motives, and corporations do not always choose the most pressing social issues. Instead the latter are chosen strategically depending on their likeliness to help grant corporations legitimacy and prestige (Garriga & Mele 2004, p. 57). Within this conceptualization of business strategies, also called issue management, corporations actively search for issues “which may impact significantly upon [them]” (Wartick & Rude 1986, p. 124 in Garriga & Mele 2004, p. 58). It is not seldom that corporations thereby adapt their response to their core business or/and their corporate need (Holmes 1976, p. 87 in Carroll 1979, p. 501).

In this chapter corporate social responsiveness has been illustrated from an ethical approach (as responsibility to anticipate social challenges), a more practical approach (as the outcome of stakeholder management) and a strategic approach (as business strategy to gain legitimacy and prestige). The spotlight of the integrative theories is process and outcome focused,

analysing possible ways in which corporations anticipate, react to, administer and take advantage of social issues. Compared to the political theories, the integrative theories look at CSR more from a management perspective and include intra-organizational factors also. An advantage of the integrative approaches is, that they leave more room for creatively thinking of ways in which business could bring itself in and also learning from practical examples. In this way, one can avoid getting stuck in the normative discussion over whether and why business should contribute in the first place. The integrative theories were included precisely because their emphasis is less on motivations and intentions and more on responses in form of actions. With this emphasis, the integrative approaches prove especially useful for analysing how companies communicate and portray their CSR activities.

3.4 Instrumental Theories

Instrumental CSR theories are applied to analyse if and to what extent the pursuit of economic and social goals through business is reconcilable. More specifically the ability and suitability of business entities to pursue social goals is questioned as well as who benefits from this corporate responsibility taken.

The emergence of CSR and its implementation in business practice has quickly elicited critiques from the business sector and academia. The latter have argued that economic objectives are essential to business while social activities threaten the value maximization (Friedman 1970; Levitt 1958; Manne 1970). Underlying this notion of the corporation is a strong belief that all corporate activity can be categorized as profit or non-profit maximizing, reducing CSR to merely a cost (Manne 1970, p. 536). One of the most cited critiques of CSR is Milton Friedman who argued in 1970 that “there is one and only social responsibility of business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits” (p. 178). Because management is foremost accountable to the owners of the corporation, it cannot decide to spend their money for a social cause and thereby neglect its main responsibility of increasing profit (*ibid.*, p. 174.) This does not mean that there should not be any corporate social responsibility, but that it should only be pursued if it creates shareholder maximization (Garriga & Mele 2004, p. 53).

Acknowledging the profit-driven nature of corporation however can also lead to different conclusions, for example that business should under no circumstances pursue CSR. This is because it would be wrong if corporations took their rationale of making profit into social and political discussions, intervening and misusing their power in other societal spheres (Levitt 1985; Klonoski 1991). Levitt (1985) illustrates very well what CSR means practically from this point of view:

“[The corporation] will always remain narrowly materialistic. What we have, then, is the frightening spectacle of a powerful economic functional group whose future and perception are shaped in a tight materialistic context of money and things but which imposes its narrow ideas about a broad spectrum of unrelated noneconomic subjects on the mass of man and society” (p. 44)

Not only is it being argued that business nature is inherently contradictory to the social sphere, it is also being questioned if corporations and managers are in fact able to fulfil a social function. After all business executives are neither trained nor experienced in solving social problems (Manne 1970, p. 536).

The notion that economic and social objectives are completely separable has lost prominence over time however. Instead CSR supporters claim that social and economic goals can be reconciled, a view that has also been referred to as the business case for CSR (Varadarajan & Menon 1988; Porter & Kramer 2002; Prahalad & Hammond 2002). From this point of view corporations are believed to be active social partners, who acknowledge that they have the power to improve society while at the same time benefiting from their social activities in economic terms. For example, Prahalad & Hammond (2002) in their article called “Serving the World’s Poor Profitably” claim that business should enter BoP (Bottom-of-the Pyramid) markets because they promise huge potential growth, low-cost labour markets and innovation. But also, and not less importantly, because they would provide goods, services and workplaces to the poorest socio-economic group of the population, improving their living standard (p. 6). After all, “big corporations should solve big problems” (ibid. p. 11).

Not only is it legitimate to pursue economic and social goals, corporations should also strategically decide how to flesh out their commitment. This as Porter & Kramer argue (2002) does not diminish the goodwill of companies but rather enables them to contribute in a way that is most beneficial for the corporation itself, the industry, location and society they operate in. The main goal therefore is to improve the “competitive context”, which can manifest itself through e.g. investing in factor conditions through financing a scholarship aimed at getting more trained workers. Or support transparency organizations in order to improve the context for strategy and rivalry (p. 61). Another example for strategic CSR is cause-related marketing, defined as “a marketing program that strives to achieve two objectives—improve corporate performance and help worthy causes- by linking fund raising for the benefit of a cause to the purchase of the firm’s products and/or services” (Varadarajan & Menon 1988, p. 59).

Unfortunately, as Porter & Kramer (2002) lament, many corporations still try to separate their philanthropy from their core business activity and are “often distracted by the desire to publicize how much money and effort they are contributing in order to foster an image of social responsibility and caring” (p. 67). This phenomenon can probably best be ascribed to the fact that it is a balancing act for corporations to profit from their CSR activities in terms of reputational capital, competitive advantage and reputation (Gardberg & Fombrun 2006; p. 45) while at the same time trying to prove that their contribution is driven by responsibility and “the value of the cause” (Varadarajan & Menon 1988, p. 70). This double-edged role is problematic to occupy, because business is under constant surveillance and must prove its sincerity when it comes to its CSR.

The instrumental theories will be useful in analysing the integration projects of the DAX 30 because they illuminate corporations’ social role without neglecting their inherently economic rationale. Thereby they offer explanations for business behaviour which goes beyond a polarizing view of the corporations as either bad or good. The instrumental theories differ from the integral theories in that they point out win-win situations focusing more on the outcome for both parties than solely on the intentions of corporations. This constitutes both a chance and a risk for explaining corporate behaviour. The chance is the space to creatively think about how to generate win-win situations, the risk is that the social issue addressed is

not approached and pursued in the best possible way or even superficially dealt with by corporations.

To apply instrumental theories to the case at hand is especially challenging because as one might assume no corporations will portray themselves as connecting their integration efforts to a profit-making rationale. However, it is crucial for the careful researcher to have the instrumental point of view in mind when analysing the empirical material. Especially the reconciliation of social and economic goals should be paid attention to.

3.5 Building from the Theory

The attentive reader might have noticed that the theoretical groups do overlap. This was also experienced by the author in the coding process. However, in order to bring structure into the material (Flick, 2015, p. 429), the pre-defined categories extracted from the theory, proved to be useful. An overview is given below.

Political theories:

- codified /contractual relationship
- economic and social power
- responsibilities and obligations towards society

Integrative theories:

- interdependency/ interconnectedness
- integration of social demands
- stakeholder management
- gaining legitimacy & prestige

Instrumental theories:

- economic/profit-driven rationale
- strategic commitment
- win-win situations

4 Methods

4.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

The methodological approach of this paper is a qualitative content analysis. This approach has been chosen because it acknowledges both, the importance of theory and the empirical evidence in developing a coding framework (Flick 2014 p. 429). A central element of this method is the development of a coding frame, with categories being extracted from the theory or the research interest (see chapter 3.5). Categories can also be added as they evolve from the material analysed. This flexibility is one of the advantages of qualitative content analysis, which is crucial for the research at hand in which the empirical evidence provided by the companies is tested against theory-based categories (ibid. p. 429). It should be noted however, that the flexibility of this approach is not as high as in thematic coding or grounded theory, in that the pre-defined, theory-based categories are supposed to offer a more systematic way of making sense of the data (Schreier 2014 in Flick 2014 p. 429). The mixture of flexibility and system retrieved in the qualitative content analysis is suitable for this research project since the topicality of the object under investigation calls for an open strategy but also a plan of how to approach the vast amount of material.

4.2 Sample

In qualitative research, the question of which cases or examples to include into a study depends on the extent to which they speak to the research question (Bryman 2008 p. 575). Hence, the selection is based on specific features or characteristics that individuals, groups, organizations etc. exhibit (Ritchie et al. 2014 p. 113 & Flick 2014 p. 168). It is crucial to acknowledge that qualitative sampling does not aim to satisfy criteria such as distributional representation, generalizability or scalability, which is important in quantitative research (Ritchie et al. 2014, p. 113). Instead, cases are chosen on purpose, often fulfilling selection criteria, set by the researcher. This is also referred to as purposive sampling.

In the research at hand all companies part of the DAX 30, are analysed. Thus, the choice of cases has to some degree been pre-decided, in that the companies, commonly referred to as the DAX 30 already constitute an economically established and defined group. Their commonality is being noted on the German stock index, the DAX (Deutscher Aktien Index). However, for this study their salient feature is not primarily their activity on the stock exchange but rather their economic power/success, which in turn ensures them a prestigious social role within the political sphere and presence in the press coverage. The appeal by the

political actors described in chapter 1, is a manifestation of this characteristics; the DAX 30 were entrusted to contribute to the field of refugee integration with their knowledge and expertise. Finally, it is also crucial to mention that these companies have a role model function, hence their actions in the field of refugee integration constitute a landmark in the German society (Müller & Schmidt 2016 p. 139).

The companies under study are presented in table 1. This presentation includes names, industry branch, revenue and number of employees. This background information is supposed to give the reader some orientation about the DAX 30. Since this study does not take organizational factors in account, it was decided to keep this description rather brief. The data was retrieved from: Statista Database 2017; Deutsche Bank Annual Report 2016 and Commerzbank Annual Report, 2016.

Table 1: Background Information DAX 30

Company	Industry	Employees 2016	Revenue 2016 in million euros
Adidas	Sportswear	60.617	19.291
Allianz	Insurance	140.253	122.416
BASF	Chemicals	113.830	57.550
Bayer	Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals	115.200	46.769
Beiersdorf	Chemical and Consumer Goods	17.934	6.752
BMW	Automotive	124.729	94.163
Commerzbank	Banking	49.941	1.399
Continental	Automotive	216.000	40.550
Daimler	Automotive	284.957	153.261
Deutsche Bank	Banking	99.744	30.014
Deutsche Börse	Shares and Securities Trading	5.176	2.389
Deutsche Lufthansa	Civil Aviation	123.287	31.660
Deutsche Post	Logistics	498.459	57.334
Deutsche Telekom	Telecommunications	221.000	73.095
E.ON	Energy	43.138	38.173
Fresenius	Health Care	232.873	29.083
Fresenius Medical Care	Health Care	109.319	17.911
HeidelbergCement	Building Materials	60.424	15.166
Henkel	Chemical and Consumer Goods	51.350	18.714
Infineon	Semiconductors	36.299	6.473
Linde	Chemicals	59.715	16.948
Merck	Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals	50.414	15.024
Munich Re	Insurance	43.428	48.900
ProSiebenSat.1 Media AG	Media	6.054	3.799
RWE	Energy	58.652	45.833
SAP	Software	84.183	22.062
Siemens	Industrial Manufacturing	351.000	79.644
ThyssenKrupp	Industrial Manufacturing	156.000	39.263
Volkswagen	Automotive	626.715	217.267
Vonovia	Real Estate	7.437	5.548

4.3 Material

The CSR of the aforementioned companies is analysed through their communication on refugee-related topics on company websites and press releases. This choice of web-based documents must be justified in two ways: regarding the choice of these *type* of documents and the corpus of documents chosen, namely the *material sampling*. On a related note this chapter will also touch upon the specifics when working with documents, especially web-based documents, and how the author has practically gone about limiting the study time-wise and sample-wise (*sampling within the material*).

The choice and analysis of documents presupposes the acknowledgement of them as more than merely “information containers” (Wolff 2004 in Flick 2014, p. 357). The researcher must consider many factors when analysing documents: their authorship, their purpose, the target group addressed through them, how they relate to other documents (Flick 2014 p. 355). Apart from their content, it is through these factors that documents create their own reality (Coffey, 2014 p. 371 in Flick 2014 p. 355). In this study, the choice of the type of documents was made because corporate communication in webpages and press releases was believed to be more elaborated than for example speeches of CEOs.

Websites are dynamic, multimedia products containing text, images, pop-up pages etc. (Flick 2014, p. 361). Through their websites, organizations are supposed to provide the interested internet user with information, that is easily accessible, user-friendly and appealingly designed. Moreover, they serve as latest information channel for stakeholders, business partners and employees. *Press releases* are usually characterized by a clear and informative language and a compact text addressing a current issue, that concerns the organization, its industry branch or its customers. Regarding the extensive media coverage on corporate commitment in refugee integration during the refugee crisis, it is assumed that press releases have been produced as an answer to inquiries on the side of different actors of society, such as NGOs or simply critical readers.¹

Considering that 30 companies were under study and some of them have produced quite a lot of documents that touch upon their commitment in the refugee integration, the choice of documents to be analysed had to follow a designated logic. Flick (2014) suggests, that decisions about *material sampling* should orientate towards the purpose of the study (p. 356). Consequently, the documents chosen had to fulfil two criteria, which are here presented as two questions:

- 1) Does the document entail information on the topic of refugee integration?
- 2) Does the document speak to how the company portrays/communicates their responsibility in the (labour market) integration of refugees?

This approach is referred to as purposive sampling (see Flick 2014 p. 362) and was also pursued in the choice of relevant parts within the material (*sampling within the material*). Documents that overlap, were only considered once. Overall 29 webpage texts, 67 press

¹ Sustainability/ annual reports were consulted in six cases, where information was nowhere else to be found

releases and 6 annual/sustainability reports have been analysed, with the documents for each corporation ranging from 0 up to 14.

The most challenging part of the methodological procedure of this paper is related to the fact that the author has worked with Internet-based data. Although websites are commonly used as sources of data for qualitative content analysis (Bryman 2008 p. 629), they also entail difficulties regarding the choice of documents and traceability of the research. As mentioned before websites constitute multimedia products whose different form of data is characterized by intertextuality and non-linearity and whose boundaries are thus hard to define. Intertextuality describes the fact that documents on the Web refer to each other and are linked with each other electronically (e.g. through hyperlinks). Non-linearity on the other hand is manifested in the build-up of web-texts, which does not resemble the linear structure of traditional documents. Instead it is up to the users to navigate their reading within the structure of the website (Flick 2014 p. 360/361). Another problem is the fact that websites are continually updated and their content is due to change (Bryman 2008 p. 631). Bryman (2008) illustrates the struggle of social researchers using web-based data very accurately:

“Most researchers who use documents as the basis for their work have to confront the issue that it is difficult to determine the universe or population from which they are sampling. [...] the rapid growth and speed of change in the web accentuate these kinds of problems for social researchers who are likely to feel that the experience is like trying to hit a target that not only continually moves but is in a constant state of metamorphosis” (2008 p. 631).

With that said, it is crucial to 1) find a way of limiting the amount of text that can be found, not only on a website or webpage of interest, but also related pages (Flick 2014 p. 361) and 2) to be aware that the texts and documents chosen might be biased depending on the search criteria, search items and the time of access (Bryman 2008 p. 631).

4.4 Time & Practicalities

In the study at hand firstly, the websites of the companies were visited and the topic of refugee integration was searched for under tabs such as CSR or Sustainability or Social Commitment. This was a more intuitive approach that has also provided an insight in how easy the topic under study could be found on the corporate websites.² Sometimes the topic of interest could be found easily, other times it could only be found applying the second approach, namely using the search function of the websites. The search term used was the German word for refugee/refugees (*Flüchtling/Flüchtlinge*). Press releases were sometimes given as a result of the search, other times the author has searched in a specific database tab within the website where such public documents were saved.

² Note that although the dimension of how companies have organized their communication in form of layout or accessibility was not part of the research, it has contributed to get an insight for how corporations classify their refugee CSR in comparison to other CSR activities/ corporate commitment

The time span of interest starts around the peak of the refugee crisis (as seen from a German perspective) which was during the end of 2015. Most documents found were dated 2015. However, most of the websites under study were accessed in May 2017³. This means that a considerable time span, in which webpages might have been updated, texts deleted/changed, cannot be taken into consideration. Any previous commitment in the field of labour market integration of refugees by one of the companies under study was not taken into account either. Also, as mentioned when talking about the practicalities of using internet-based data, changes in webpages and press releases in the time span between accessing and analysing them could not be traced. Such an approach would require constant monitoring of 30 companies, which is beyond the time and space limits of this thesis. The content of the webpages chosen for analysis and several press releases that did not exist in a pdf format, were copy pasted into Microsoft Word to save them (Flick 2014, p. 362). Finally, the webpages used for analysis are indicated, including the date of access.

4.5 Limitations

The biggest challenge of analysing thirty different companies, clearly lies in setting a focus on what to analyse. Using a qualitative content analysis with pre-defined categories had the advantage of being able to bring structure into the material, which was not only rich regarding scope but also variety. The different companies have chosen very different ways of talking about refugee integration and the CSR activities pursued in that field. However, the method has also lead to an analysis, in which the author has actively searched for the pre-defined categories, thereby running the risk of neglecting important findings that could contribute to answering the research question. Therefore, the method has not only guided the research but also to some extent distorted it. Flick (2014) argues that this method resembles the ideal of quantitative methodology, which does not allow the researcher to analyse the text in its depth and in its context (p. 435/436).

Secondly, regarding the choice of documents analysed, both websites and press releases are to some degree addressed towards the interested reader. This neglects the part of corporate communication that exists outside of these documents. This thesis does not claim that the actual CSR in form of actions, processes and relationships within the corporations and its partners is fully reflected in the written communication made available by the latter. Also, efforts that have not been communicated by the corporations have not taken into consideration.

Finally, a limitation lies in the choice of companies, which cannot stand representatively for all German companies. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) might have communicated their role in the refugee integration completely different or might even have

³ Initially the author wanted to analyse only 15 of the DAX 30 corporations. The material of those 15 corporations was saved in May 2017. The other 15 corporate websites (with much less material to analyse) were accessed in July 2017.

been more committed but have communicated less, because they are not exposed to pressure exerted by the press or political actors.

5 Findings

This chapter provides an overview over the type and scope of CSR activities found in the material. Thereafter, the category- related findings are presented, within the umbrella of the three theoretical groups, presented in the theory chapter. Note that different webpages on the corporate websites were labelled with letters (e.g. Commerzbank a, Commerzbank b etc.), press releases and (sustainability/annual) reports were indicated with the name of the corporation and the year published. When two or more were published in the same year, a letter was added to differentiate them (e.g. Commerzbank 2016; Commerzbank 2017a; Commerzbank 2017b etc.). For a detailed listing of all the electronic documents analysed, consult the reference list.

5.1 Type and Scope of CSR activities

Before presenting on what the DAX 30 have based their CSR in the field of refugee integration, an overview is given on the type of CSR - actions (projects) the different corporations have focused on. It should be understood as a background information, which can contribute to getting an overall picture of the DAX 30 and differences/similarities in their CSR activities. Table 2 presents a summary of the communicated CSR activities of each company.

Table 2: CSR activities of the DAX 30 in the field of refugee integration

Company	Activities
Adidas	internships as part of a 2-year occupational integration programme, cooperation with NGOs, paid leave of absence for committed employees, "Wir Zusammen" member
Allianz	training day for refugees in cooperation with the jobcentre Munich and NGOs providing internship opportunities (very limited information), offering insurances for refugees, volunteers and hosts, donations, offering corporate building as accommodation, employee commitment, online coordination platform
BASF	offering internships, pre-start projects (3 months of prep-course including language course, job training, application training etc.) and ½ -1 year-long pre-vocational trainings, cooperation and financial support to 50 initiatives in the region with focus on refugee integration
Bayer	pre-vocational trainings, employee commitment, paid leave of absence for committed employees, different cooperation with NGOs, donations
Beiersdorf	-
BMW	internships, language courses, enlargement of existing projects for occupational integration, cooperation with NGOs and the state
Commerzbank	support of an occupational integration project for refugees (in cooperation with other companies and NGOs), employee commitment in form of language teaching and mentoring (paid leave of absence), Commerzbank Foundation support refugees in Wiesbaden: (language & intercultural trainings, occupational integration), regional integration project in Hessen, donations, "Wir zusammen" - member
Continental	donation to a NGO active in aid to refugees
Daimler	internships, vocational trainings, employee commitment (e.g. donations, social activities), paid leave of absence for committed employees, donations
Deutsche Bank	employee commitment (donations, social & sports activities etc.), offering corporate buildings as accommodation, Deutsche Bank Foundation in cooperation with the city of Frankfurt coordinates & bundles refugee commitment, financial support for start-ups dealing with refugee integration, expansion of existing youth programmes, "Wir zusammen" - member
Deutsche Börse	-
Deutsche Lufthansa	Task force and platform coordinating employee commitment (donations, cooperation with other NGOs, mentoring, coaching projects), "Wir zusammen" -member
Deutsche Post	internships, vocational trainings, regular jobs, donations, employee commitment, cooperation with state & non-state actors, sending of employees to ministries & public administration, providing accommodation, "Wir zusammen" member
Deutsche Telekom	internships, vocational trainings, integration- & language courses, scholarships for university education, provision of WiFi & accommodation, employees send temporarily to work for the Federal Office for Migration & Refugees, support for committed employees, donations, "Wir zusammen" member

Company	Activities
E.ON	project for occupational integration in cooperation with other companies (language courses & introduction into the German labour market), offering vocational trainings (very limited information), donations, paid leave of absence for committed employees
Fresenius	donations to NGOs, labour market integration project in cooperation with state & non-state actors (very limited information!)
Fresenius Medical Care HeidelbergCement	-
Henkel	occupational integration program for low-skilled refugees (internship + direct employment) in cooperation with Deutsche Telekom & Deutsche Post, application and language trainings, cooperation with state and non-state actors, employee commitment, paid leave of absence for committed employees, donations to refugee housings, financial support for the provision of language courses by the Fritz-Henkel-foundation, "Wir zusammen"-member
Infineon	-
Linde	internships & trainee-jobs for refugees (very limited information)
Merck	Occupational integration project for refugees (language courses, intercultural & professional training) as preparation for a vocational training, donations, offering accommodation in the region
Munich Re	cooperation with and financial support to NGOs, employee commitment (social activities)
ProSiebenSat.1 Media	platform coordinating employee commitment (donations & social activities), cooperation with initiatives in the region, "Wir zusammen" member
RWE	language courses, employee commitment (e.g. translation-services, integration contact persons), financial support & leave of absence for employee commitment, own website for corporate volunteering, "Wir zusammen"-member
SAP	internships and job offers, launching of a job platform for refugees and potential employers, support of other initiatives & start-ups, employee commitment (donations, social activities, cooperation with local NGOs etc.) open-SAP course for language teachers, coding & web design courses for refugees
Siemens	internship programme for refugees, donations, provision of accommodation, employee commitment, paid leave of absence for committed employees, "Wir zusammen"-member
ThyssenKrupp	internships, vocational trainings, coaching, language and intercultural courses, "Wir zusammen" member
Volkswagen	internships, language and job training, corporate platform for coordination & information of refugee aid, provision of accommodation and transportation, financial support for university education, "Wir zusammen"-member
Vonovia	cooperation with the local unemployment agency, few vocational training possibilities (very limited information)

As one can withdraw from table 2 the corporate websites range from providing no information at all on the topic of refugee integration to displaying multiple webpages and press releases on the topic to hyperlinking related online-platforms launched to coordinate e.g. employee commitment. Overall the most prominent CSR activities pursued by the DAX30 can be said to be financial donations, financial supports of NGOs and initiatives dealing with refugee integration, coordination of employee commitment (through online platform or project groups), paid leave of absence for committed employees, language courses, application trainings, courses and trainings on intercultural understanding and introduction into German work culture and/or job market, pre-vocational trainings and internships. Finally, the “Wir zusammen” initiative⁴ is mentioned by multiple corporations as important platform for cooperation and realizing of different projects.

5.2 Findings seen from three Perspectives

The previous chapter has given a descriptive overview over type and scope of activities. This chapter analytically classifies the findings using the three theoretical angles of political, integrative and instrumental theories.

5.2.1 Citizenship, Power & Obligation

All categories within the political theories could be found in the material analysed. However, regarding the amount, less material was found than in the two other theoretical groups.

Codified /contractual relationship

The idea of a codified or contractual relationship between business and society could be found in a mitigated form in the material analysed. Few companies were presenting their CSR activities as part of their corporate citizenship (Deutsche Bank; Henkel 2016a; Bayer 2017). However, the idea of corporate citizenship is not elaborated upon in connection to the case of refugee integration. No corporation based their commitment on a contractual relationship with society but few communicated that they have promised to provide (a certain number of) internships (ThyssenKrupp 2016, E.ON 2016) or mentors (Deutsche Bank) for refugees within a certain time-frame. ThyssenKrupp for example is very specific in their promise:

⁴ “Wir Zusammen“ is an initiative of German corporations launched to facilitate the collaboration between the corporations in their effort to integrate refugees into the German labour market. It also provides a platform for exchange and bundles different projects and ideas. For more information see: <http://www.wir-zusammen.de/home>

“Within the scope of “we help” [refugee integration program] thyssenkrupp and its works council have promised in September 2015 to create and occupy 230 internships and 150 vocational training opportunities within the next two years” (ThyssenKrupp 2016).

Economic and social power

Justifying responsibility through economic and social power could be found to be a very common way of reasoning for the DAX30. When responsibility towards the society or the refugee cause is specifically spelled out, it is not seldom mentioned together with corporate size, internationality (Lufthansa 2015), reputation (Volkswagen 2017b), and being a big employer of the region (BMW 2016; Daimler 2016c; Deutsche Post 2016e). Daimler motivates very clearly that corporate size, calls for corporate commitment:

„We are aware of our societal and social responsibility as a big corporation and therefore provide our infrastructure. We are sure we can achieve more than small and medium-sized enterprises, which do not have our possibilities” (Daimler 2015c).

The corporations also illustrate their economic and social power through touching upon their experiences, expertise and know-how in providing vocational training and imparting specialized industry knowledge (Henkel 2016a; Siemens 2015b; Volkswagen a & 2017b). Henkel for example explicitly states, that *„beyond state-driven educational opportunities, companies are demanded with their expertise in vocational trainings” (Henkel 2016a)*. Volkswagen states in a similar vein: *“With our know-how we want to contribute to improve language skills and industry knowledge [of the refugees]” (Volkswagen 2017b)*. The example of Deutsche Telekom shows furthermore that companies not only help because they have the capabilities and competences to e.g. provide WLAN and accommodation (Deutsche Telekom a & 2015c), which were very present topics at the peak of the refugee crisis in 2015. They also justify their commitment by reasoning that state actors need help in providing basic needs for the refugees (Deutsche Telekom 2015a; SAP 2017). Deutsche Telekom writes:

“Deutsche Telekom supports the efforts of aid associations and the state sector in providing accommodation and care for the refugees. This has been promised by Telekom CEO Tim Höttinges in a phone call with Minister of the Interior Thomas de Maiziere” (Deutsche Telekom 2015a).

On a similar note, corporations also express that they hope their commitment will have a positive signal effect on other companies (Henkel 2017; Deutsche Telekom, 2017a; Siemens a, ThyssenKrupp a, ThyssenKrupp 2016, BMW b). Siemens for instance portrays its project leader in charge of coordinating internships for refugees: *“He hopes that the effort that Siemens is achieving, will inspire other companies to take action in these times of crisis by creating their own programs” (Siemens a)*. In a joint press release by Henkel, Deutsche Telekom and Deutsche Post it says: *“With their commitment the three corporations want to contribute towards to the awareness of the social responsibility of large companies” (Henkel 2017 & Deutsche Telekom 2017a).*

Duties & obligations towards society

The companies analysed communicate that they feel an obligation to become involved because of reasons such as: strong ties to the region or city they operate in (Lufthansa 2015; Fresenius 2015; Deutsche Post 2016d), humanitarian reasons considering the hard fate and neediness of the refugees (Lufthansa, Allianz b; Volkswagen a; Deutsche Telekom 2016a), contributing to the social and economic integration of the refugees into the German society (Siemens 2015b; Volkswagen a; Bayer 2015a; Daimler 2016d&f; Deutsche Post 2016d) contributing to social cohesion of the German society (Volkswagen a, Deutsche Telekom, 2016a; BMW b) or providing professional knowledge and starting opportunities for the refugees (Bayer 2015a; Bayer d; Daimler 2016d&f). It is needless to say that these reasons blend into each other and are mentioned together. It is however interesting to see that the companies have illustrated the concept of responsibility differently. Three examples are offered below:

“For Volkswagen and its employees taking social responsibility belongs to the core of its corporate culture. Therefore, it is a matter of course for us, to contribute to the emergency aid and integration of refugees” (Volkswagen a).

„Through our support measures, we want to create opportunities for a first contact and support the understanding between people (...) It is about the human being, about one destiny amongst many, which have fled to Germany in the past years. Integration succeeds especially through the understanding between each other within everyone’s personal environment” (Deutsche Telekom 2016a).

„As the biggest employer of the city it is a matter of course to us, to contribute to the integration of refugees. We are looking forward to the interns and want to impart a lot of knowledge to them for their future in the German industry” (Daimler 2016d).

Volkswagen links its responsibility to its corporate culture. Deutsche Telekom takes a more emotional approach spotlighting the refugee and an idea of integration. Daimler puts the emphasis on its corporate size and its expertise in the industry and in education, thereby focusing on the challenge of integrating refugees into the labour market.

5.2.2 Interdependency & Quest of Legitimacy

Within the integrative theories, all categories could be found in the material analysed as well. Furthermore, quantitatively most material analysed was to be found in this group.

Interdependency/ Interconnectedness

The theoretical assumption that corporations see themselves as part of the society and therefore act within this interdependency, could be found in the material analysed in different forms. First of all, almost all companies communicate that they work in cooperation with or financially and/or actively support projects and initiatives by other companies, NGOs or the state sector. This goes hand in hand with their promotion of the common initiative “Wir zusammen” on their websites (e.g. ThyssenKrupp a) and actively encourage other companies

to follow their example (see table 2). Furthermore, companies point out the consequences of the refugee crisis for the region or city they operate in, emphasizing their local ties and thereby also justifying local commitment (Lufthansa 2015; BASF a). Most companies communicate that they see the social integration of refugees as “*a task for the society as a whole*” (Deutsche Telekom 2015b), demanding from all societal actors to contribute (BASF 2016; Henkel, 2016b & 2017; Volkswagen a; Bayer 2015a; ThyssenKrupp, 2016; Daimler 2016a). Cooperation is not only mentioned as necessary to coordinate the integration process, but also because different expertise and expert knowledge is necessary to realize occupational integration (Henkel 2017; Siemens 2016; Deutsche Post 2015). Siemens for example states that it needs to exchange information with associations, schools and the Federal Employment Agency in order to ensure a regulated integration of refugees into its vocational trainings (Siemens 2016).

Integration of social demands/needs

The integration of social demands and the concept of social responsiveness, could be found very clearly in the material analysed. The companies illustrate the needs of the refugees and describe how they contribute to meet those needs (Lufthansa a; Henkel, 2016a; Deutsche Post 2016d; Deutsche Telekom 2015a; Deutsche Bank). See for example Deutsche Post and Telekom:

“Currently 3.800 refugees from 44 different nations live in Bonn in temporary residence and collective accommodation. People have to be provided with basic needs: clothes, shoes, bedding, bags, toiletries and commodities. Not all institutions have sufficient capacity for a collection and donation point. (...) For this reason, a main donation camp will be opened in a property of Deutsche Post DHL Group today (...)” (Deutsche Post 2016 d).

„The provision of WLAN in the refugee accommodations plays an important role. In many cases contact via E-Mail or Messenger- Services is the only possibility for the refugees to keep in touch with their relatives. That is why Telekom supports aid organizations and the state sector with the setup of a respective infrastructure” (Deutsche Telekom 2015a).

Social responsiveness, could be found in the references to flexibility, availability and readiness. Deutsche Bank for instance, states that they will enlarge and adapt their Corporate Citizenship Programs so as to include the special needs of the refugees (Deutsche Bank). Deutsche Telekom communicates that they are willing to send more employees to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Deutsche Telekom, 2016b) or increase the number of internships for refugees (Deutsche Telekom 2015a) if needed. Deutsche Telekom furthermore states that their help has shifted its focus from arriving and a first orientation in 2015 to clarification of residence permit, living situations and integration into society and labour market in 2016. A very interesting example of integrating social demands is also recognizable in the example of SAP. The company has organized a design-thinking- workshop including employees, NGO representatives and refugees, targeted at including different point of views before developing a corporate concept of refugee aid:

“Gabriele Hartmann and Sabine Herzberg, working for the CSR department of SAP, initially explain what the workshop is about: The aim is to find practical ideas for how SAP could contribute. Eventually the suggestions will be analysed and summed up into a general

concept. So, the concrete task was: “Develop a concept, answering how SAP can contribute to the integration of refugees in the short and long run” (SAP 2015a).

As one can withdraw from the examples, many corporations have illustrated a problem situation calling for action as a starting point for explaining their contribution in meeting that social demand.

Stakeholder Management

Evidence for different stakeholder interests concerning the field of refugee integration could also be found by the alert reader. However most of those statements in the text touch upon the employer as an internal stakeholder and the internal harmony of the corporations as such.⁵ Some corporations have communicated that their newly created internships or vocational trainings for refugees are additional to their regular vacancies (Linde 2016; Bayer 2015a, Daimler a & 2015c & 2016b). Daimler states this in multiple documents, in one of them through the voice of Michael Brecht, chairman of the Daimler works council:

“We diligently support the [internship] program (...) However, it also has to be clear: The internships are not in competition with our temporary workers or even core workforce. No one has any disadvantages from them” (Daimler 2015c)

Some corporations pay very special attention in communicating that the refugee integration projects have been jointly decided by e.g. the management and the works council (ThyssenKrupp 2015; Daimler 2015b). Deutsche Post (2016e) makes very clear that the corporate commitment meets with the approval of its employees.

“The newcomers can count on the solidarity of the rest of the employees: “There are no acceptance problems”, says Eva Maria Brückner” [employee Deutsche Post]“ (Deutsche Post 2017).

Finally, concerning employee commitment, two positions could be found. On the one hand, almost all corporations praise their employees for their commitment or communicate how amazed they were by their willingness and motivation (Lufthansa; RWE 2016; Deutsche Bank; ProSiebenSat1 2016; MunichRe, Henkel 2016a & 2017; Siemens a & 2015b; BMW, 2016; ThyssenKrupp a & 2017; Daimler b & 2015b; Deutsche Post 2016b; Deutsche Telekom 2015 a & b & 2016a). On the other hand, it could also be found that the paid leave of absence or additional vacation days are to be seen as motivation (Volkswagen a; Adidas; Bayer 2015a) or strengthening of the social responsibility of employees (Deutsche Post 2016b). Volkswagen provides an example, which indicates that it aims at increasing employee commitment.

“The aim of the refugee work (...) is also to confirm the commitment of the employees, encourage further employees to commit in volunteer aid and also give ideas and suggestions for further organizing and providing aid in cooperation with the municipalities and NGOs” (Volkswagen, a).

⁵ note that the state and society as external stakeholders have been touched upon in the previous categories.

Gain legitimacy & prestige

To find evidence, showing that the corporations seek legitimacy and prestige proves challenging. However, a common approach that could be found, was the communication of praise regarding their commitment through letting a third person such as an employee, state/non-state representative or the refugees themselves speak (e.g. BASF 2016; Henkel 2017; Bayer b; SAP 2016c; Daimler 2016b, 2016c; Deutsche Post 2016d). BASF quotes an executive of the Federal Employment Agency:

“We do especially appreciate initiatives such as the program ‘Start Integration’ by BASF, which is strongly focused on the qualifications of refugees for their career start” (Raimund Becker in BASF 2016).

Bayer on the other hand lets portrays a refugee, who has been admitted for a vocational training:

“Bayer is a very lucky chance for me. I have already been involved in chemistry, in my hometown Damascus. (...) Bayer has offered me an opportunity here” (Feras in Bayer b).

Deutsche Post includes the quote of a civil servant, responsible for temporary and emergency accommodations:

“Regarding the viewpoint of the social service department, I am very happy that this project has succeeded. Deutsche Post DHL Group (...) is making a valuable contribution, which does not only support the logistics, but also setting an example of appreciation towards the numerous volunteers (Peter Tilgen in Deutsche Post 2016d).

ThyssenKrupp (2016) provides an example that shows, that corporations also actively invite political actors to have a look at their commitment, thereby attracting praise and publicity:

“The federal president Joachim Gauck has acknowledged the refugee- commitment of the corporations, part of the “Wir zusammen” initiative. At the invitation of thyssenkrupp, Gauck has gained insight into chosen integration projects of the “Wir zusammen” members amongst them the thyssenkrupp refugee-program “We help”, in the thyssenkrupp headquarters in Essen” (ThyssenKrupp 2016).

Finally, corporations also legitimize their efforts and trough communicating prizes and awards won for their commitment (e.g. Deutsche Telekom 2017b & 2016c).

5.2.3 Economic Rationale & Strategy

Within the instrumental theories, all categories could be found in the material analysed as well. Furthermore, two categories, namely performance-oriented language and experiences with other social groups, were added during the analysis.

Profit-driven/ economic rationale

That corporations act out of a pure profit-driven rationale could not be found in the material. This might not seem surprising considering the nature of the material analysed and the topic under investigation. However, considerable differences have been found, in how companies communicate their benefits or challenges of contributing to the refugee integration and in how far their target group is specified. Vonovia (2015& 2016) for instance states very clearly that it needs workforce:

“As a growing corporation, we are looking for a large variety of workforce in different work areas. A majority of those we need in manual jobs or in gardening and landscaping, but commercial occupations are important work areas too. Of course, we also want to give refugees the chance to apply for these jobs (Vonovia 2015a).

The company adds that it sees immigration as a chance to attract new, motivated employees (Vonovia, 2015b). Some corporations are more specific than that, clearly communicating that their projects are targeted at qualified refugees or refugees who have a high probability of getting a residence permit (e.g. Siemens a; Volkswagen 2017b; Bayer 2015a, BASF 2016). Corporations furthermore communicate, that they see a lot of potential within the target group of qualified and talented refugees:

“We will also offer internships in our company and an individual mentoring program for particularly talented refugee children next year” (Bayer 2015a).

„We have noticed quickly, that many refugees belong to a great target group. They are motivated and committed people, who want to get into the labour market as fast as possible” (Deutsche Telekom 2016d).

„Next to the German language courses for the wide target group, special language courses are developed for technically qualified refugees – because in the combination of foreign language and connecting expertise lies an opportunity for successful competence development (Volkswagen 2017b).

Another interesting observation made, is the fact that companies portray their internships or vocational trainings as promising chances and rare opportunities to the refugees (Deutsche Telekom b, SAP 2017; Deutsche Post 2016f) also addressing them directly as shown in the example of Deutsche Telekom below:

“We offer an opportunity for a successful new start in Germany – an internship even during the asylum procedures (...) In our company you cannot only get an insight into the German work culture but at the same time improve your language skills, get in touch with nice and helpful colleagues and deepen your know-how in a desired field” (Deutsche Telekom b).

„Getting one of the 100 internship spots offered by SAP in 2016, can become a stepping stone for other tasks in the corporation. More than a fifth of our interns has gotten a follow-up employment – no matter if temporary or permanent jobs or jobs as working students” (SAP 2017).

„He made it. Ahmad Khalil, who fled from Syria to Germany, has now found steady work at Deutsche Post in Offenbach. The 35-year-old had completed a six-week long internship first. Now he has a permanent working contract in the mail centre at Sprendlinger Landstraße (Deutsche Post 2016f).

Finally, two interesting examples could be found, in which companies openly spell out that they do not want their commitment to be seen as stemming from an economic rationale:

“The journey from an internship via an entry-level qualification and vocational training through to a permanent job has proven successful, but is very work-intensive for both sides. The employment of refugees is no solution to the skill shortage but one of the most important contributions to the successful integration and part of our corporate responsibility” (ThyssenKrupp 2016).

Does Allianz see the insurance of refugees and asylum seekers as growth market? : No. Through the uncomplicated insurance of refugees we live up to our social responsibility, we do not pursue a profit motive” (Allianz b)

Performance oriented language

The category of performance-oriented language emerged as a subcategory within profit-driven/economic rationale. However, what was noticed here, is less concerned with communicated (non-) economic motives, but rather with the use of a performance-oriented language. The latter could be seen in that corporations portray themselves as having reacted quickly to the refugee crisis, thereby playing the first-mover card (Bayer d; SAP 2016a; Deutsche Telekom a). The two examples of Deutsche Telekom and Bayer illustrate this well:

“We were one of the first industrial companies, that has begun to commit ourselves to refugees in autumn 2015” (Bayer d).

“In August 2015, the management board has reacted immediately to the rapidly increasing numbers of people seeking refuge in Germany and launched the task force „DT hilft Flüchtlingen” [DT helps refugees] “(Deutsche Telekom a).

Furthermore, corporations portray their effort through listing all their refugee related CSR projects, - expenses, -cooperation etc. (e.g. Siemens a; Deutsche Post 2016b; Lufthansa 2015; Daimler b; Daimler 2015a; Bayer 2017; Deutsche Telekom 2015b). A specific focus on displaying their variety of CSR activities could be found here. Enumerations, concrete figures and percent value are often used (e.g. Siemens 2016). On a similar note, targets set and achieved were often communicated (e.g. Deutsche Telekom 2015c & 2015b; Bayer c). This was very clear in the example of Deutsche Telekom:

At the end of the year Deutsche Telekom can draw a positive conclusion concerning our support measures in coping with the refugee crisis in Germany. “We have reached our objectives, which the “Taskforce” has set in September”, says Christian P. Illek, Telekom- chief HR (Deutsche Telekom 2015c).

First results of the refugee aid are available:

- refugee portal "refugees.telekom.de" launched in 8 languages
 - 30 reception centres supplied with WLAN
- almost 100 buildings offered as refugee accommodation
(...) (Deutsche Telekom 2015b)

Companies are also not hesitant to write that, their CSR efforts have proven very successful and that they have already considerably contributed to integration (e.g. Bayer 2015a, c; Deutsche Telekom 2016b; Deutsche Post 2017; Volkswagen 2016; BASF 2016). Most of them reason their success by emphasizing that many refugees have found subsequent employment within their corporation or elsewhere in the labour market after having taken part in their integration projects. See below the examples of Siemens and Daimler:

“The sustainability of the concept shows i.a. in the follow-up employments such as temporary employments, recruitments as working-student, integration into support class or integration into a vocational training (...) All participants could be qualified for a follow-up education or a vocational training:

- 60 percent have started a vocational training (18 at Siemens & partners, 20 at external companies)
- 10 participants continue school in order to achieve a higher education level
 - 7 participants get an internship with good chances of take over
- 9 participants are currently in a selection process for a vocation training” (Siemens, 2016).

The internship or refugees and asylum seekers at Daimler is a success. Almost all 40 participants of the first program will get job offers from temporary employment agencies for an ongoing employment in the industry, or in trade or a vocational training at Daimler (Daimler 2016b).

Strategic Commitment

It is safe to say that the corporate communication analysed has revealed differences in the presentation of refugee commitment as part of a bigger CSR strategy, its connection to other social issues/groups and the adaption to the core business of the corporation. Some corporations have presented their integration projects as one of many activities in the bigger field of refugee aid, including refugee aid abroad (e.g. Adidas & SAP 2017, Daimler a; BASF 2016). Others have enlarged existing activities, initially targeted at migrants at teenagers, migrants or (young) unemployed (e.g. Deutsche Bank, BMW b, Merck 2016b). Furthermore, it showed that beyond the more “usual” CSR activities such as donations and providing internships, some corporations have launched projects in line with their core business and more importantly benefiting third parties (e.g. Allianz b, SAP 2016c, Deutsche Telekom 2016b). SAP for example has launched an online-learning platform (openSAP) for volunteers who want to become language teachers for refugees (SAP 2016c). Allianz provides insurance not only for refugees but also volunteers, who work with and host refugees (Allianz b). Some companies also stress that their commitment is long-term oriented (e.g. Continental 2017, ThyssenKrupp a, Henkel, 2016a, Volkswagen 2016, Deutsche Post a).

The material analysed moreover showed, that companies understand the positive outcomes of their CSR efforts not only as beneficial for themselves but also for their industry and the German labour market in general (Deutsche Post 2017; Bayer 2015b&c; Daimler 2015a,

Volkswagen 2016; Siemens 2016; BMW b). Daimler for example clearly states that it sees itself as educator but not necessarily future employer of the refugees:

“Overall several hundred refugees are to be qualified for a job in the German industry. Successful participants will be passed on to other companies, temporary employment agencies or in a vocational training” (Daimler 2015a).

Siemens communicates on a similar note that their internship has a „door-opener” function for finding work in other corporations (2016). And Volkswagen sees its support concerning university education for refugees as promotion of “prospects for highly qualified employment in the automotive industry” (Volkswagen 2016).

Win-Win situation

It could be found that few corporations have communicated the corporation’s benefit of CSR in refugee integration together with the advantages this yields for the refugees themselves, the job market or the society in general. RWE for instance elaborates how their apprentices have enlarged their perspective and practiced their project management skills through organizing an activity for refugees (RWE 2016). Deutsche Telekom explains how its newly launched jobportal “careers4refugees” benefits all parties involved:

“With our new job portal we can get through to refugees much easier in the future (...) This benefits employers and refugees to equally, because many refugees are well educated and have a lot of Know-how. At the same time, we facilitate their integration into the labour market. Job seekers can search within one single portal for jobs in their area” (Deutsche Telekom 2016c).

Experiences with other social groups

The category experiences with other group has been added as subcategory because the analysis revealed that many companies draw upon their experiences with other social groups, and concepts such as internationality or diversity in their communication of refugee-related CSR activities. Other social groups referred to are (young) migrants (Adidas 2016; BMW a & 2016; Vonovia 2015a; Daimler 2015a; Lufthansa; Bayer a & 2015a; Deutsche Post 2016a), long-term unemployed (Vonovia 2015b) young unemployed (Merck 2016b; ThyssenKrupp 2015) and Gastarbeiter (Daimler 2016e; ThyssenKrupp 2015). ThyssenKrupp explains where their experience, which will be needed for refugee integration comes from:

Qualification is especially for young refugees the key to work and thus to integration. (...) The corporation has trained employees in structurally weak regions for decades and has extensive experience in the integration of young people who are not mature for a vocational training yet. Integration courses are offered for instance, in which young people are prepared for a vocational training (ThyssenKrupp 2015).

On top of that it could also be found that companies draw upon their internationality and diversity reflected in their staff, thereby pointing to experiences in the integration of different cultures (e.g. Daimler, 2015a; Deutsche Post, 2016a, g; BMW 2016; Deutsche Telekom, 2014

& 2016c). Daimler presents an interesting example by comparing the refugees to the Gastarbeiter:

The Mercedes-Benz factory has a more than 100-year long tradition and we can also look back to a success story when it comes to the topic of integration. Amongst our colleagues there are several, whose parents or grandparents have already pitched in as Gastarbeiter in the factory. We are happy to welcome the interns with the same openness. Professionally and personally our team is well equipped to facilitate a good start for the participants (Daimler, 2016e).

6 Discussion

This chapter discusses how the findings can be interpreted and understood in the context of the theories used and the previous research on labour market integration of refugees in Germany. It also suggests implications for theory and CSR practice.

6.1 Overview DAX 30 in action

This thesis has aimed at finding out how the DAX 30 motivate their Corporate Social Responsibility regarding the refugee integration, a hitherto untrodden field within CSR. This has been done by drawing upon CSR theory and examining the external communication of the companies. The main motivation for this approach was to reveal what concepts Germany's biggest corporations have drawn upon in order to reason their responsibility and how they have responded to the external pressures of the political and public sphere.

The first finding, presented as background information in table 2 is that the corporate commitment varies considerably in terms of scope and type of CSR activities. In line with previous research, it can be noted that direct aid (donations, social activities etc.) was more prominent than the launching of labour market integration projects (see Enste et al. 2016, p. 23). It is crucial to recognize however that this overview is a result of *what companies have chosen to communicate* in the material analysed and can therefore *not* be seen as an assessment about which corporations have exhibited the highest corporate commitment or the like. As Morsing & Schultz argue, companies can refrain from communicating CSR activities because they are under scrutiny or they don't want to be perceived as doing PR (2006 p. 146). The differences are nonetheless meaningful because they show that not all corporations of the DAX30 who were called upon to contribute to the labour market integration of refugees, have responded to that appeal. The reasons for not becoming involved in this cause cannot be revealed through the approach taken in this study. In view of the fact that some very active companies have portrayed themselves as first movers (e.g. Deutsche Telekom & Bayer), it could be assumed that other companies with "lesser" commitment refrained from communicating their "smaller" contributions. Companies like Deutsche Telekom and Deutsche Post seem to portray themselves as being in a role model position, not only through the amount and variety CSR activities communicated but also through reference to their close connection to state actors (see e.g. Deutsche Telekom 2015a).

6.2 Refugee Integration – A new field for CSR?

As illustrated in the previous chapter, all three theoretical groups applied could be found in the material analysed. This speaks for their applicability in describing the reality of companies doing CSR in the 21st century. In the following the findings of the three groups will be discussed separately, before implications for theory and practice are presented.

6.2.1 Political Theories

The fact that the idea of a contractual relationship was not found explicitly in the material is not that surprising since it remains a very theoretical concept. However, one can argue that the idea of corporate citizenship has been translated into a more graspable language by the corporations. This has been done for example by drawing upon promises and setting targets, which is a considerable commitment regarding that the electronic documents are publicly available, putting the corporations into the risk of being held accountable for not living up to their promises. Furthermore, if we recall the definition of corporate citizenship as the guarantee of citizenship rights in spheres where “the administration of citizenship rights may be beyond the reach of the nation-state government” (Matten & Crane 2005, p. 172), than it can be claimed the provision of basic need such as accommodation, food, clothing or even WLAN (see commitment of e. g. Deutsche Telekom, Deutsche Post) constitute a situation in which corporations live up to their duties entailed by corporate citizenship. The same can be said about promises that companies give to political actors such as to the Minister of the Interior (Deutsche Telekom 2015a). On a similar note the appeal of the political leaders to the DAX 30 and the resulting partnerships/cooperation with public institutions and societal organizations are an example of new governance, in which corporations directly participate, thereby exhibiting citizenship features (see Moon et al. 2005, p.448). Finally, it is suggested that those corporations who have referred to size, expertise and their role model effect, seem to, at least, be aware of their power, both in terms of economic and social terms. If they then fully live up to their responsibilities that comes with it, is another question.

The categories within the group political theories overlap quite a lot. This is because duties/obligations can be seen as stemming from economic and social power or a contractual relationship to the state. Nonetheless the findings obtained in this category are relevant because they address the reasons communicated by the companies as to why they commit to the cause. Mentioning strong ties to the region for example is a way of conveying to the society and political actors of the region, that the company sees itself as primarily responsible towards the region and its people. Linking social responsibility to corporate culture or the wish to contribute to social cohesion (see p. 28) on the other hand, could be understood as a way of corporations to verify that CSR is intrinsically and not just an obligation that stems from norms or regulations. The variety of reasons mentioned also indicates that different stakeholder groups were addressed. Therefore, it makes sense that more than one reason for getting involved was included by the companies so as to satisfy different groups. This will be further discussed in the next subchapter.

Before moving on to the integrative theories it should be noted that with their normative character the political theories are most prone to be retrieved in the material as a result of

meeting social expectations on the part of policy makers but also citizens and corporate critiques. It is also safe to say that corporations have been influenced in how they write about the responsibility of integrating refugees by the political discourse and meetings or initiatives with political actors.

6.2.2 Integrative Theories

It was laid out that the integrative theories vary between acknowledging that business is dependent upon society and therefore needs to integrate its demands (Garriga & Mele 2004, p. 57) and that business pro-actively takes a role in meeting social challenges because it regards the latter as its own and acknowledges a close connection between its own actions and societal expectations. The findings presented within this group indicate that in the example of the refugee crisis the DAX30 have tried to integrate social demands caused by the crisis, coordinate their cooperation with state and non-state actors effectively, and at the same time balance the different interest of their stakeholders.

The explicit reference to the integration of social demands was primarily found in various examples concerning the help offered in crisis management and the willingness to contribute to the occupational integration of refugees. Reacting to a crisis situation, albeit very important, does not require having a long-term plan about what role to take in refugee integration (see Sethi 1975, p. 63). Therefore, the examples provided are examples of responding to refugee needs in a crisis situation, and not of long-term social responsiveness. Contributing to occupational integration would offer a possibility to formulate long-term commitment. However, this issue is only marginally touched upon by few companies (e.g. Deutsche Telekom, Deutsche Post, ThyssenKrupp) and statements contain information of a 2-3-year span. Also, as one can see in table 2 only 16 out of the DAX30 have launched their own (pre-)vocational program (with three companies offering very limited information). Supporting other projects of third parties through e.g. financial support or employee commitment is definitely a contribution but it leaves big corporation in the role of the supporter, not the active member of society. One could argue that the hesitation in playing a role can be explained by the fact that no one could predict how long the refugee crisis would last or how many refugees would be granted asylum. Nonetheless regarding that Germany has been an immigration country for a considerable while and that the wars in the Middle East are not likely to find a sudden end, one could expect more concrete statements on how the social demand for refugee integration would be tackled by the companies in the long-run.

The cooperation with state and non-state actors has been presented as a sign of interdependency and interconnectedness between companies, the state and society in general. However, companies deal differently with this relationship and it is against this background that their decision to contribute through joint efforts has to be understood. The collaboration of those companies who have not launched their own labour market integration projects for example (e.g. Commerzbank & Deutsche Bank) but have instead supported third party projects, can be understood in two ways: On the one hand, it might be argued that this is a way of shifting responsibility over the execution and success of the project towards NGOs and state institutions, while still enjoying the benefits of publicizing the projects as own CSR activities. The social commitment of NGOs and the state are also generally perceived as more legitimate, while CSR in general is subject to criticism (Morsing & Beckmann 2006). On the other hand, considering that refugee integration is unknown territory for companies, joining

forces with more experienced third parties seems plausible. That being said, the emphasis on integration as “a task for the society as a whole” (p. 29) can also be understood as a reminder that corporations alone cannot fulfil the task of integration. Their appeal to the political actors to facilitate the asylum procedure and working regulations in general (Aumüller 2016, p. 52) is in line with this reminder.

The different interests of stakeholders are not explicitly stated however the findings indicate, that the companies have considered it necessary to verify an image of unity from within. This is done by referring to the consent of the works councils. Works council are special features of German corporations and constitute very important corporate bodies, who represent the interest of the employees. The highlighting of vocational trainings as additional spots can be understood as reassurance to the core workforce that refugees will not be privileged. This is in line with the study of Müller & Schmidt (2016) who have found that the fear of competition among temporary workers at Daimler⁶ has provoked a hostile attitude towards refugees (p. 22). This stands in contrast to the harmonic picture of the welcoming employees, which companies have also drawn upon (see p. 30). Any corporation is of course composed of different people, who even within a group such as the works council or the management have their own opinions and attitude towards refugees. The material analysed is hence an outcome of an intra-organizational dialogue. Also, as can be seen on table 2, employee commitment was found to be one of the most prominent CSR activities. It cannot be answered if in those companies, where employee commitment is the biggest contribution (e.g. RWE, Deutsche Lufthansa), management has decided against launching an occupational integration program because of the costs or other reasons. It could also be debated if in those cases CSR has been shifted to the employees. After all, coordinating the projects of employees who want to contribute is not the same as creating new job positions and thereby touching upon the core business. The paid leave of absence for employees has to be understood in that light. On the one hand, it entails a cost for corporations, on the other hand employee commitment can be presented as a corporate CSR activity and is less costly than launching integration programs (see also Müller & Schmidt 2016, p. 131).

Finally, the question has to be asked if the efforts of the DAX30 have followed a strategy of gaining legitimacy and prestige. The theory has predicted that corporations will choose issues strategically. In this case of refugee integration, the issue was not chosen but in a way unescapable. Having been appealed to contribute by the political actors, every corporation had to at least deal with the question if and to what extent it was going to become involved. As mentioned previously, the findings suggest that companies have responded very differently to that appeal, at least regarding their communication, which can also be seen in the way they have chosen to talk about their commitment. It was shown for example that praise and approval was communicated through quoting third parties by few companies. This can definitely be said to constitute a way of reinforcing the importance and relevance of one's own CSR activities. Especially portraying refugees, so to say the target group itself, seems to be a very promising approach to gain legitimacy, because the contribution is communicated on a very personal level and thereby made graspable for the reader. It also seems like the form of indirect appraisal was mostly used by the most active companies, maybe because their projects are big enough to be commented on by e.g. state actors.

⁶ Note that Müller & Schmidt have anonymised the companies analysed in their study. However, they talk about a “Brückenpraktikum” (bridge internship), which is the term that only Daimler has used for their internships.

6.2.3 Instrumental Theories

The instrumental theories have provided a wide scope of conceptualizations regarding the reconciliation of economic and social goals. It is interesting to see that this scope can also be observed in the findings. The communication of the corporations shows that most companies clearly put an emphasis on presenting all their CSR activities so as to verify an image of caring for “the value of the cause” (Varadarajan & Menon 1988, p. 70). This is strengthened through the highlight of corporate expertise, an effort to justify their skills in dealing with refugee integration. On the other hand, the reader can also identify that talented and experienced refugees are especially targeted and that it does not always become clear in what role the DAX30 see themselves.

It was argued that an economic rationale does not necessarily contradict contributing to a social cause. However, one has to distinguish between actively spending resources (money, time, skills) on a social cause and selling a regular economic activity, such as employing someone, as CSR activity. Vonovia for instance state very blatant that it needs workforce and that it wants “to give refugees the chance to apply” (p. 32) for jobs. What sounds like a favour, is in fact a regular process for the company, namely scanning applicants for their suitability (no matter if they are refugees or not). Unless there are specific job positions reserved for refugees, the company cannot be said to have exhibited corporate social responsibility. One could of course argue that the employment itself brings many advantages for refugees (e.g. work experience, improvement of language skills etc.), however those advantages can be enjoyed in any job and the company has again not actively realised them.

Furthermore, by clearly targeting refugees with a good chance of being granted residence permit, companies suggest that at least their occupational integration programs, are not to be understood as a humanitarian act. Instead they want to at least contribute to the industry branch or in the best case win qualified employees, who stay in the company on the long-term. Educating and preparing refugees for the labour market, without the motive of winning them as workforce can be understood in two ways. On the one hand, if this process proves successful, big corporations continue with playing the role of the educator (which is a normality in the German labour market characterized by vocational trainings). On the other hand, if refugees cannot make their way in the labour market, the social problem has not been met, while corporations can still reap the rewards of having fulfilled their educational function and executed their CSR projects.

The business perspective also becomes apparent in the explicit target of talented, experienced and young refugees. The examples of Deutsche Post, Deutsche Telekom and SAP (p. 32) have been chosen because they show how odd it sounds, when the economic rationale penetrates a social issue. If the integration projects are to be understood as CSR, why are refugees, who have just fled war and terror, addressed as though they were regular job applicants on the job market, who have to be able to compete? In this light, Levitt’s (1985) concern about business imposing its materialistic ideas on social issues (p. 44), seems justified. At this point it has to be mentioned as well that the refugee is portrayed positively (motivated, committed, talented etc.) throughout the material analysed. This strengthens the positive image of the CSR efforts, but might also be a way of persuading stakeholders and partners, criticizing the refugee-related CSR activities as merely costs, that it is worth to invest in refugees.

The performance-oriented language goes hand in hand with the fact that content-wise most companies communicate more about what has been done than why it has been done. This confirms Porter & Kramers (2002) argument that companies put too much emphasis on showing how much they have contributed (p. 67). However, the focus on outcome could also be understood as an effort to use CSR in this new field as a unique selling point, thereby translating social goals into economic ones. Unfortunately, this also leaves the reader in scepticism or at least wonder, about questions such as, if there are or have been any difficulties with the integration programs or why the company has decided to contribute to the cause in the first place. The emphasis on performance does not necessarily provide an answer to the question which role companies want to take in the integration process. Although most companies mention social activities and coaching programs for refugees, the latter are mostly organized by employees, depriving the corporation itself of a social role. The fact, that companies have felt the need to specifically confirm that their commitment is a contribution to integration or emphasize win-win situations, can be seen as a sign that corporations are aware that their activities in this field are under scrutiny and that they have to stress their sincerity.

In a similar vein, it can be determined that the differences displayed regarding the extent to which refugee integration is integrated into a bigger CSR strategy and adapted to the core business, creates different effects for the reader. Companies such as SAP, Deutsche Telekom and Allianz, who have contributed in line with their core business, might be perceived as more credible in their efforts because they have chosen an approach that fits their company best. There is however always a trade-off between taking the time to develop a strategy that is both suitable and realisable, reacting fast as was needed in the case of the refugee crisis and choosing the easiest way of making a financial contribution.

Finally, the reference to other social groups, which have been targeted in previous CSR projects, is a clear referral to qualification. Corporations thereby show, that they seek approval of the new role they are taking. However, it is questionable if today's refugees can be compared to the Gastarbeiter of the 50s and 60s or unemployed migrants. Every social group has its own needs and constitutes its own challenges. By only referring to talented and motivated refugees, the companies have neglected to provide the full picture of the target group that they claim to address.

6.3 Implications for CSR Theory and Practice

Summing up this chapter, it can be said that the findings have implications for researchers and those responsible for CSR in corporations. From a scientific perspective, the findings have contributed in getting a more comprehensible picture of how a very influential group of German companies communicate their responsibility in the new CSR field of refugee integration. This is especially important regarding that there is a lack of research regarding the labour market integration of refugees (Garloff 2016, p. 690; Aumüller 2016, p. 47). And since companies constitute very important actors of the labour market, their CSR efforts deserve special attention.

From a practical perspective, the findings have revealed that in their corporate communication, companies draw upon different concepts to reason their responsibility in the

field of refugee integration, often not providing a coherent or sufficient picture of their motives. It is being assumed that this inconsistency and the strong focus on a performance-oriented language stems from the fact, that refugee integration has suddenly become a CSR field, forcing the companies to react quickly. The findings can help CSR practitioners in reflecting in how far their corporate communication regarding refugee integration reflects why they have chosen to commit to the cause and how they see their long-term role in the field. This could also kick-off a new intra-organizational discussion about the question if CSR in this field is reasonable, especially regarding different internal and external stakeholder interests.

7 Limitations

Firstly, the findings of the study have to be tested regarding their validity. The question of validity is the question of whether “the researchers in fact see what they think they see” (Flick 2014, p. 483). In the thesis at hand validity is challenged through the fact that the material analysed, is throughout treated as “the communication of the corporation”, neglecting how these documents came into being and in how far they are linguistically and substantially shaped by the personal views of their authors or co-creators within the corporation. It furthermore has to be questioned, if a specific field such as refugee integration can be analysed without taking into account the general CSR strategy and communication of the corporations. This goes hand in hand with the limitation that the single corporation and its organizational processes have been neglected. On top of that, some companies have only produced very little material, which was included in the analysis, but has challenged the author during the analysis, since context was not given. This accounts for the fact that some companies have been quoted more often than others (since it was clearer in those cases what the company is trying to communicate). The reader should also keep in mind that the analysis can neither account for the discrepancy between corporate communication and CSR in action, nor explain why the extent of communication varies between companies.

Secondly, objectivity, which describes the “degree in which a research situation (the application of methods and their outcome) is independent of the single researcher” (Flick 2014 p. 540) has to be considered. The selection criteria, illustrated in the method chapter are a guideline but it was in the judgement of the author to decide if a document spoke to refugee integration and how companies portray their role. Another researcher would have probably chosen another sample. It would have been beneficial to have a co-researcher analysing the same material and to see if he/ she categorizes similarly and arrives at similar conclusions.

Thirdly, regarding reliability, it has to be asked in “how far a particular method can consistently lead to the same measurements or results” (Flick 2014, p. 481). Flick (2014) suggest, that researchers should pay special attention when distinguishing between information found in the data and their own interpretation of it, and that the whole research process should be documented as detailed as possible (p. 483). This was paid attention to in this study. However as mentioned previously, reliability is limited through the continuously changing nature of websites and webpages.

Finally, it is justified to ask on which period of time this thesis is focused, considering the creation date of the material analysed. A look into the electronic reference list (see reference list) reveals that most documents analysed are dated 2015 and 2016. Webpages are constantly updated and their last date of update is not always indicated, making it hard to know when their text was written. However, a considerable amount of them does not seem to have changed a lot since 2015/2016. One would expect more information on the experience made with the integration programs, how the refugees have integrated into work life and how the commitment is going to be organized in the next years. This lack of information is probably due to the decrease of refugees arriving in Germany since 2017 and that the issue has lost its topicality. For the research at hand this means that, the approach chosen cannot account for the latest development in the field (if there are any). However, one would expect

communication on reasons for commitment to be found in the first texts released, which again speaks for the research approach chosen.

8 Suggestions for further research

The author suggests that future research should focus on the experiences made with CSR activities in the field of refugee integration. These experiences should be analysed from three perspectives, 1) the perspective of the companies in Germany (one could focus on small and medium-sized companies also) 2) the perspective of the refugees, who have been targeted with those CSR activities and 3) the perspective of political actors responsible for the field of refugee integration.

Regarding the perspective of the companies, one focus of these studies could be on how the companies choose candidates for their labour market integration programs, a question that was scarcely addressed in the material analysed in this study. Such an approach could uncover in how far companies are driven by economic motives when doing refugee-related CSR. The perspective of the refugees themselves could be analysed through a micro-perspective, with a focus on their experiences during and after having taken part in CSR activities. Quantitative studies, trying to track long-term integration of refugees in Germany are also crucial, especially regarding the research gap in this field. Finally, the perspective of political actors should be studied, especially considering their view on the long-term role of business in the field of labour market integration.

9 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to reveal how the DAX 30 motivate their Corporate Social Responsibility regarding the refugee integration, a hitherto untrodden field for business. It was assumed that companies will motivate their CSR in their external communication and that the latter could be analysed using concepts from CSR theory. This study has revealed that companies implicitly and explicitly draw upon different concept, such as interdependency, to reason their responsibility. More importantly however, it could be shown that the communication of the DAX 30 mirrors 1) their inconsistency in reasoning their motivations of their CSR 2) their inexperience in the field of refugee integration and 3) the pressure that the companies were faced with in the course of the refugee crisis.

The *inconsistency in motivating CSR in the field of refugee integration* was shown in that companies, albeit mentioning that they acknowledge a responsibility, could not convey a coherent picture of why they commit themselves to the cause and how they see their own role in it. More specifically, across the group of the DAX 30 and even within the single company, different, not uncommonly conflicting motives were communicated. An example of this incoherence is to be seen in the fact that many companies specifically target talented and qualified refugees but also acknowledging their role in educating and preparing refugees for the labour market, independently of their prior education and without the motive of winning them as labour force.

The *inexperience in the field of refugee integration* becomes very apparent not only regarding the fact that a performance-oriented language is used to grasp a social process such as integration. Companies also strongly measure their success in the new field through the provision of employment. This results in the fact that their social activities (such as employee commitment) are to some extent degraded and that the different activities are not integrated well into an overall CSR strategy for the field. Furthermore, the integration process is unnecessarily divided into an economic and a social rationale and more abstract values, such as intercultural understanding within the workforce, are portrayed as side benefits. Finally, the idea that companies are ready to take a role in the integration of refugees because they already possess a lot of know-how in dealing with other social groups, such as young unemployed, is to be questioned. The tensions within the company regarding the privileging of refugees indicates, that the role of the companies might have to be negotiated once more internally before it can be re-defined and communicated.

Finally, the *pressure faced through the political and public sphere* can be said to have further contributed to the incoherent communication of the DAX 30. The latter has to be seen as a result of trying not only to conciliate political demands and expectations but also the interests of the industry and stakeholders. It could also be seen, that the decline in public awareness in the refugee topic (due to the decreasing influx of refugees) has again led to a decline of communication on the side of the companies. Furthermore, there is a general scepticism regarding the success of the refugee integration projects in the media (e.g. Kröger 2016). For all these reasons, it has to be questioned to what extent companies have been pushed into the field of refugee integration. The excessive demand in trying to live up to social expectations, which contradicts the economic rationale, does not only harm corporations but also the cause

of integration itself. Refugees, with their different social needs, run risk of being overstrained in the labour market by corporations who try to execute “successful” CSR projects.

Concluding, it can be said that refugee integration as a new field within CSR has to seriously be questioned. The thesis at hand has shown that the difficulties of companies to position themselves communicatively within the field, reflect their insecurities in a new role, which is far from being convincingly elaborated. A new dialogue within the corporations but also with the state and business actors should be encouraged in Germany, so that refugee integration can be successfully developed in the long run.

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