Cities of Oblivion - Refugee Potential and Integration in Rural Localities

A case study of the German municipality of St. Ingbert

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Abstract

Even though the scientific community has long disregarded refugee integration in rural localities in Germany, interest in the topic has increased as a result of the 2015/16 large-scale arrival of refugees. This thesis provides insights into rural refugee integration since 2015 by using the German town of St. Ingbert as a case study, thereby investigating the relationship between local receptivity and refugee integration in rural towns in Germany that face population decline and aging of the population. Moreover, the refugees' potential to contribute to solving the two above-mentioned demographic challenges was investigated.

Building on in-depth qualitative interviews with municipal employees, representatives of network partners of the municipality, and refugees, the analysis revealed the following. Firstly and in connection to local receptivity, the local economy in St. Ingbert is well equipped to integrate refugees that have arrived in the town since 2015/16. Nonetheless, there are limited resources in schools, housing, and healthcare. Regarding the governance structure, administrative restructuring took place through the creation of a so-called "staff unit integration" that was specifically tasked with creating an integration infrastructure in St. Ingbert. Regarding the societal structure, St. Ingbert is described as open and friendly, where the diversity of refugees is mostly accepted. Lastly, advantages of the rural context are social proximity, short channels in the administration, and the pronounced role of associations. Amongst others, disadvantages include the poorly developed public transport. Second, regarding integration of refugees, it is found that socio-economic integration and cultural-religious integration of the refugees that arrived in 2015/16 took place in St. Ingbert. However, legal-political integration is lagging behind. Third, the municipality and societal actors view the potential of refugees in contributing to the workforce, keeping services in the town running, and counteracting the aging of the population.

These findings contribute to better understanding integration of refugees in rural localities in Germany and show that refugees and their successful integration can contribute to upholding the prosperity of towns like St. Ingbert.

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Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Integration of refugees takes place locally (Caponio & Borkert, 2010). This local integration happens at the place where refugees arrive, which can be cities and towns, but also rural municipalities. In fact, in Germany, researchers and practitioners have become more interested in the integration conditions of rural regions since the large-scale influx of refugees in 2015/16 (Glorius, Bürer, & Schneider, 2021). In line with the research on rural regions, this case study focuses on the integration of refugees that have arrived in the German town of St. Ingbert since 2015/16.

With its population of 34,971, St. Ingbert is a so-called 'kleine Mittelstadt' (small middle-sized town) (Statistisches Amt Saarland, 2021). In June 2022, 1556 refugees resided in St. Ingbert. St. Ingbert, like many small and rural municipalities in Germany, is experiencing a two-fold demographic challenge. Firstly population decline. Since 1980, the town's population has decreased by around 17% (Statistisches Amt Saarland, 1982, 2021). Second, there is an aging of the population. 65-year-olds and above constituted 22% of the local population in 2013. This number is expected to increase to 32% by 2030 (DNS, 2022). In addition to the demographic challenges, St. Ingbert is experiencing economic restructuring. With the removal of the traditional economies of coal, glass, and steel (Tao, 2011), St. Ingbert had to reinvent itself economically. Today, the town tries to attract IT companies and aims to become "a Silicon Valley of Cybersecurity in Saarland" (CISPA, 2020; Saarbrücker Zeitung, 2021). Due to these demographic challenges coupled with the economic restructuring of the town, it is important to attract and integrate newcomers. Given the fusion of these two factors in St. Ingbert, the novelty of this research lies in demonstrating how refugees are perceived to overcome the demographic challenges and contribute to the town's prosperity. This research uses St. Ingbert as a case for rural towns that experience demographic challenges coupled with economic restructuring.

The demographic challenges and the economic restructuring mean that integration conditions of towns like St. Ingbert must be differentiated from integration conditions of larger towns and cities. In order to paint an adequate picture of refugee integration conditions in smaller towns and rural localities, Glorius et al. (2021) developed a framework for rural receptivity. Receptivity is defined as "the ability and willingness to open up to newcomers and develop an inclusionary perspective within a local society" (Glorius et al., 2021, p. 56). This case study applies the receptivity framework of Glorius et al. (2021) to the town of St. Ingbert. Thereby, it is investigated how the local receptivity of St. Ingbert shapes the integration of

refugees that have arrived there since 2015/16, using the framework of Penninx and Garcés-Mascarenas (2016a). Importantly, creating the integration infrastructure cannot be achieved solely by the municipality, but a network of actors is needed (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Therefore, this thesis aims to examine the entire network of actors that is involved in the integration of refugees in St. Ingbert. To this end, semi-structured qualitative interviews were executed with municipal employees, representatives of network partners of the municipality, and refugees themselves that live in St. Ingbert since 2015/16.

The scientific relevance of this research is two-fold. Firstly, the scientific debate on refugee integration has focused on larger towns and cities for a long time (Glorius et al., 2021; Rösch, Schneider, Weber, & Worbs, 2020). Contrastingly, rural areas have not received enough attention, even though 52% of refugees in Germany live in rural areas (Rösch et al., 2020). Thus, more research on refugees in rural areas in Germany must be conducted to paint a complete picture of how integration takes place in the country. Secondly, most integration research focuses on how newcomers behave and integrate into a locality (Glorius et al., 2021). Contrastingly, this research focuses on stakeholders of the receiving society and how an actual integration infrastructure is built by a municipality in cooperation with network partners. The societal relevance of this research is two-fold as well. Firstly, and coupled with the scientific relevance, refugees in Germany are spread equally throughout the country according to a distribution formula called the *Königsteiner Schlüssel* (Staatskanzlei Saarland, 2016). This means that all German rural towns and their administrations are confronted with the arrival of refugees that must be integrated. To this end, this thesis develops recommendations that other rural municipalities in Germany can build on. Secondly, there is societal relevance for towns like St. Ingbert that experience population decline and aging of the population. An influx of people in these towns is needed to safeguard these towns' prosperities. The integration of refugees can play a vital role herein.

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 provides a literature review and outlines the most important theoretical concepts in a theoretical framework. Chapter 3 constitutes this study's research design, including research question, sub-questions, research method, operationalization, and expectations. Following the structure of the operationalization, Chapter 4 presents the analysis and findings. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings and links them back to the literature, thereby acknowledging the shortcomings of this research. Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by answering the research question, highlighting limitations, and proposing recommendations for practitioners.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

This chapter constitutes the theoretical framework of the study. First, a literature review is given, which outlines the theoretical debate on integration and introduces the concept of local receptivity. Furthermore, it is discussed what research reveals about how a network is formed within a municipality to realize the integration of refugees. Given the rural focus of this study, it is also considered how newcomers can contribute to overcoming specific challenges experienced in rural localities. Lastly, resources that municipalities have at hand in order to realize the integration of refugees are outlined. Based on this literature review, gaps in the literature are identified. Afterward, the theoretical framework of this research is presented. This includes a discussion of the study's main concepts, namely local receptivity and integration, coupled with other relevant concepts, such as refugee potential in rural localities and the role of the municipality in the integration of newcomers.

2.1 Literature review

2.1.1 Integration

As I want to study the integration of refugees in St. Ingbert, it is important to recognize that there is no widely accepted definition, theory, or conceptualization of refugee integration (Castles, Korac, Vasta, and Vertovec, 2001). Rather, the concept remains debated within academia. Similarly, Ager and Strang (2008) claim that integration is a chaotic concept characterized by a definition that is highly dependent on the context. Consequently, there are many different definitions of integration. Jesse (2017) argues that integration asks how to include newcomers into the receiving society. Contrastingly, Penninx and Garcés-Mascarenas (2016a) utilize a broader definition of integration, namely "the process of becoming an accepted part of society" (p. 14). Glorius et al. (2021) define integration as "a multidimensional, non-linear set of independent processes through which new population groups are included, to different gradients, into existing systems of socio-economic, legal and cultural relations" (p. 52).

In order to understand the various definitions of integration, one must highlight how different scholars have attempted to conceptualize integration in the local context. Ager and Strang (2008) argue that there are ten domains of refugee integration that can be separated among four lines: a) markers and means: including employment, housing, education, and health; b) social connection: including social bonds with other refugees, social bridges with members of the host society, and social links between the state and the refugees; c) facilitators:

including language and cultural knowledge of the host society as well as general feelings of safety and stability; and d) foundations for refugee integration, concerned with the understanding of citizenship and rights that refugees have. In contrast, Garcés-Mascarenas's (2016a) conceptualization shows that integration is a continuous "two-sided process of mutual adaptations, as opposed to an one-sided assimilation of the immigrant to the receiving society" (Jesse, 2017, p, 25). Penninx and Garcés-Mascarenas (2016a) differentiate three dimensions of integration: socio-economic integration, cultural-religious integration, and legal-political integration. These will be further outlined in section 2.3.2.

2.1.2 The local turn in migration studies and rural focus

For my study of St. Ingbert, it is important to acknowledge that there is consensus in the scientific debate that integration of migrants takes place locally rather than on the national level (Caponio & Borkert, 2010, Zapata-Barrero, Caponio, & Scholten, 2017). Two streams of literature on local migrant integration can be identified (Caponio & Borkert, 2010). First, a bottom-up perspective, focusing on the role local governments play in immigrant integration. Studies within this stream argue that local governments are better equipped to deal with immigrants' needs compared to national ones (e.g., Mahnig, 2004). Second, a top-down perspective, focusing on the local implementation of nationally determined integration policies. Research in this strand argues that local governments are limited in their integration efforts by national legislation (Koopmans, 2004). My thesis mainly follows the first stream.

In line with the localist, bottom-up perspective, Scholten and Penninx (2016) argue that local integration policies diverge so much from national integration modes that one must speak of a local turn in integration policymaking. Several studies investigate when and why large cities develop immigrant integration policies that diverge from national ones (e.g., De Graauw & Vermeulen, 2016; Koopmans, Michalowski, & Waibel, 2012). A study by Doomernik and Ardon (2018) is relevant to my own research as I want to investigate how the local response to integration in St. Ingbert evolved since the arrival of refugees in 2015/16. The authors show that one of the explanatory factors of why cities are becoming more independent concerning the integration of refugees is the unforeseen high influx of refugees in 2015, which confronted European cities with challenges that national governments were too slow to respond to.

When considering the local turn of integration studies, it must be highlighted that most of these studies focus on large cities and so-called "global cities" that occupy leading positions in the worldwide economic network (Glorius et al., 2021; Sassen, 2001). However, St. Ingbert is not a global city but a rural, middle-sized town. Therefore, it is important to include several

studies that show that there is a large variety of cities where refugees and migrants reside. Glick-Schiller and Caglar's (2009) study is one of the first to systematically investigate the diversity of cities of migration. The authors argue that one can compare the integration opportunities for migrants by putting towns on a scale that assesses their post-industrial economic, political and cultural positioning. Based on this, the authors differentiate four types of cities: top-scale, up-scale, low-scale, and down-scale cities. *Top-scale cities* are well-connected to global economic, political, and cultural networks. Migrants have the best chance for integration in top-scale cities. *Up-scale cities* have accumulated political, cultural, and economic capital and need migrants in order to secure their positions. However, they are not as significant to the global post-industrial economy as top-scale cities. *Low-scale cities* are characterized by a single type of industry, meaning that integration pathways are limited. *Down-scale cities* do not have economic, political, or cultural importance in the world. This results in few or no opportunities for the integration of newcomers. For the case of St. Ingbert, this study is relevant as based on the town's post-industrial standing; one can develop expectations towards migrants' chances of integration in the town. Another relevant study is that of Pisarevskaya, Scholten, and Kasli (2021), who develop a systematic comparison of cities' diversity based on three dimensions: *volume of diversity, variety of diversity,* and *segregation.* They differentiate five types of cities: *superdiverse cities,* characterized by high volume and great variety of diversity as well as above national-average economic prosperity; *migrant minority cities*, characterized by high volume and low variety of diversity; *new diversity cities*, characterized by low volume and great variety of diversity as well as high levels of segregation; *low-migration cities*, characterized by low volume and low variety of diversity as well as low segregation; and *segregated cities* that are non-diverse and strongly segregated.

The two described studies, however, do not specifically focus on rural municipalities. As St. Ingbert is considered a rural town, it is thus important to include studies that focus on refugee integration in rural contexts. Gruber (2013) argues that factors such as the strong role of associations/clubs or the higher potential for social relationships play a specific role in the rural integration of refugees. She thereby also highlights the challenges associated with the rural context, such as the lack of professional integration actors. Moreover, the smaller number of refugees in rural areas makes it more difficult for refugees to organize themselves. A more systematic study by Rösch et al. (2020) identifies advantages and disadvantages connected to refugee integration in rural localities. Advantages are greater social proximity, inexpensive and available housing, and short channels in the administration. Disadvantages are social control, problems with long distances, lack of integration offers, and lack of migrant self-organization.

In fact, studies on the local integration of migrants highlight that each locality might develop different integration concepts based on local circumstances. The rural vs. urban distinction is only one of the relevant factors that explain various integration approaches in different localities. In line with these differences, the term *local receptivity* has been developed to emphasize that each municipality experiences its own local factors that influence refugee integration. This will be further discussed in the next section.

2.1.3 Local receptivity

The term *local receptivity* has been coined in response to the local turn in migration studies. Earlier studies on local receptivity can be found in the United States, like that of Johnson, Johnson-Webb, and Farrell (1999). In this study, the scholars differentiate between positive and negative receptivity of Hispanic immigrants in the US. Positive receptivity is evident in businesses where Hispanic immigrants are welcomed as ambitious workers. Negative receptivity can be seen in the belief that Hispanic immigrants and locals compete over jobs in the locality. In contrast to Johnson et al. (1999), McDaniel (2013) argues that local receptivity relates to the collective experience of a locality in connection with immigrants. McDaniel's (2013) study focuses on the city of Charlotte in North Caroline. Likewise, many other studies on local receptivity focus on cities (Glorius et al., 2021). As these studies give important insights into how the concept of local receptivity can be applied to a locality, they are relevant to my own study. For example, Spicer (2008) finds that at the neighborhood level, urban neighborhoods with a collective history of immigration are more receptive and inclusive toward newcomers. However, these studies do not focus on the rural context. As St. Ingbert is a rural locality, two studies on local receptivity in the rural context are added to the discussion. Soholt, Stenbacka, and Norgaard (2018) find that economic and social factors play into the local receptivity in five rural municipalities in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. Their study is relevant to my own thesis, as I investigated which contextual conditions influence the local receptivity of St. Ingbert. More recently, Glorius et al. (2021) defined local receptivity as "the ability and willingness to open up to newcomers and develop an inclusionary perspective within a local society" (Glorius et al., 2021, p. 56). Glorius et al.'s conceptualization of local receptivity will be further described in section 2.3.1. I use Glorius et al.'s (2021) definition of local receptivity in my own study because it shows that many partners are involved in the integration of refugees in a locality. How the network between municipality and network partners has been reviewed empirically will be discussed in the next section.

2.1.4 Municipal network for integration

Studies on the municipal network for integration are relevant to my thesis as I am also interested in how the municipality of St. Ingbert works together with network partners for the integration of refugees. Spencer and Delvino (2018) argue that working relations between municipalities and NGOs are becoming increasingly important for the integration of refugees. To sustain their argument, they build on the framework of Najam (2000), who differentiates four types of relationships between NGOs and governments. This framework can also be applied to the cooperation between municipality and network partners for the integration of refugees. The first type of relationship is *cooperation*, characterized by similar views between the municipality and the network partners. In order to achieve their shared goals, they work together closely. Secondly, there is *confrontation*. This type of relationship is characterized by feelings of threat between municipality and partner organizations. Thirdly, *complementarity*. In this type of relationship, municipality and partners aim to achieve similar ends but the means to do so are different. Lastly, there is *co-optation*, where municipalities and partners want to achieve different end results but use similar means to do so. Glorius and Schondelmayer (2018) and Schiffauer, Eilert, and Rudloff (2017) argue that municipalities and network partners must cooperate successfully in order to achieve refugee integration.

In addition to showing that cooperation between municipality and network partners is paramount, I also want to analyze the role of the municipality of St. Ingbert in the network of actors involved in the local integration work. Several studies of the German context show that the municipality is responsible for building and coordinating a network of all partners concerned with refugee integration (Hunger & Kersting, 2019; Schamann & Kühn, 2017; Ulusoy, Halm, Sauer, & Kersting, 2016).

2.1.5 Refugee potential in rural areas

One important consideration of my study is to analyze how refugees can contribute to overcoming challenges that St. Ingbert is experiencing due to its rural character. One of these challenges is of demographic nature. Danson (2007) argues that many rural regions face a two-fold demographic challenge, namely population decline and aging of the population. Attracting newcomers can help to counter these challenges. Similarly, Gauci (2020) argues that attracting migrants can provide economic revival of rural regions. This also means that attracting migrants is beneficial for upholding the provision of basic services, such as schools, shops, and hospitals in the rural regions. Additionally, Gauci (2020) claims that faced with these challenges, the affected municipalities display greater openness to receiving refugees, which

he demonstrated in the West-German rural municipalities of Hofheim and Gronau. The influx of refugees as a consequence of the refugee crisis of 2015/16 was viewed as an opportunity by these two municipalities (Gauci, 2020). Similarly, research in Sweden showed that the rural municipality of Strömsund welcomed newcomers openly and aimed to integrate them swiftly (Cvetkovic, 2009). This argument is also supported by Berg-Nordlie (2018), who analyzes how Swedish local media in rural regions cover the potential of migrants. They show that newspaper reports were mostly appreciative of immigrants and highlighted the economic benefits that immigrants bring to these rural regions. In contrast to the positive receptivity evident in these research reports, Glorius's (2017) study on rural municipalities in East Germany shows that asylum seekers felt not welcomed by the local population and were verbally and physically assaulted. In the case of St. Ingbert, it is relevant to consider how the municipality and its network view the potential of immigrants to address the demographic challenges. Moreover, it will be relevant to see how this consideration of the perception of the refugee potential translates into the local receptivity of the municipality and how the municipality of St. Ingbert is willing to implement resources for the integration of refugees. A discussion of municipal resources for the integration of refugees follows in the next section.

2.1.6 Resources for refugee integration

As I want to analyze the resources that St. Ingbert has at its deposal for the integration of refugees that arrived there since 2015/16, a discussion of municipal resources for refugee integration must be included. One relevant study is that of Gesemann and Roth (2016). The authors show that municipalities have three resource bundles relevant to refugee integration. Firstly, the citizens, including their voluntary efforts, openness of local clubs, and the general mood towards newcomers in the population. Secondly, the local government and the local cooperation culture, including good cooperation relations in the municipality, coordination of voluntary work by the administration, and a municipal concept for the integration of refugees. Thirdly, contextual factors, such as well-resourced educational and community facilities, refugee-friendly companies, and a favorable labor-market situation (Gesemann & Roth, 2016). While Gesemann and Roth (2016) only look at the municipal resources for refugee integration, Glorius et al. (2021) go a step further and differentiate between the resources for refugee integration and their implementation. For my thesis, it is relevant to consider the framework of Glorius et al. (2021), as I look at the integration resources the municipality of St. Ingbert has at its disposal and how these resources are implemented. A further outline of the framework of

Glorius et al. (2021) will follow in section 2.3.1. Next, gaps in the literature and how my research aims to close these are discussed.

2.2 Gaps in the literature

As argued, Scholten and Penninx (2016) show that there is a local turn in integration policymaking. It is thus logical that research has been conducted on the municipal approach to integration. Within this localist stream of migration research, much research focuses on why certain municipalities develop their own concepts of refugee integration (e.g., Koopmans et al., 2012; De Grauuw & Vermeulen, 2016). Moreover, it has been shown that towns of migration are diverse, and the focus on "global cities" fails to paint a representative picture of integration in towns and cities that are not "global" (Glick-Schiller and Caglar, 2009). Additionally, it has been argued that cooperation between municipalities and partners is important for the successful integration of refugees (e.g., Spencer and Delvino, 2018) and that municipalities often have a coordinating role within these networks. Moreover, the concept of local receptivity has been introduced to highlight that each locality has its own spatial and temporal peculiarities that must be taken into account when analyzing refugee integration (Glorius et al., 2021).

Based on my literature review, it is possible to identify gaps in the literature that my research tries to close. Firstly, most research on local receptivity has thus far focused on larger towns and cities (Glorius et al., 2021). However, the literature review showed that there is a large variety of towns of diversity (Pisarevskaya et al., 2021) and that population size is only one of the relevant factors when analyzing the integration pathways for newcomers. By focusing on St. Ingbert, a small, rural municipality, and the entire network of actors that is involved in the local integration of refugees, my study aims to contribute to more nuanced research on the concept of local receptivity. Furthermore, former studies have focused either on the concept of local receptivity or the concept of integration. However, what remains understudies is how local receptivity actually shapes the integration of newcomers in a locality. By combining these two concepts, my research aims to close a further gap. Moreover, the literature review showed that studies on German rural localities disagree on how receptive these localities are towards refugees (Glorius, 2017; Gauci, 2020). In combination with considering the potential of refugees to combat (demographic) challenges these rural places are experiencing, my study contributes to a better understanding of how the consideration of the refugee's potential mediates the relationship between local receptivity and integration. How exactly the different concepts are conceptualized is further outlined in section 2.3.

2.3 Theoretical concepts

This section identifies necessary theoretical concepts for my study. I will start with a discussion of theories relevant to the rural context. This includes the potential of refugees in rural municipalities and local receptivity. Moreover, it is highlighted that one must employ a whole network approach when analyzing the integration of refugees in a locality. Secondly, the concept of integration is discussed, including municipal refugee integration, to highlight that in a multilevel governance framework, municipalities play a special role in the integration of refugees.

2.3.1 Local receptivity and governance networks

Glorius et al. (2021) develop an analytical framework for the local integration of refugees and the specific role played by the host society. Thereby, they use the concept of local receptivity. The discussion of local receptivity is relevant because I want to study how this local receptivity shapes the integration of refugees in St. Ingbert. In the framework of Glorius et al. (2021), one can differentiate between the resources that rural municipalities have at their stake and the implementation of these resources (see figure 1). Based on this distinction, the authors suggest three dimensions that are relevant in the context of receptivity. Firstly, the structural frame, including material and structural resources of a locality: such as the economy, housing, healthcare, and schooling. This is similar to what Gesemann and Roth (2016) call contextual factors. However, the framework of Glorius et al. (2021) goes a step further and also considers how these resources are implemented, e.g., whether the host society is willing to provide housing for the newcomers. Secondly, the resources of the political actors and governance structure, including the size and structure of the municipal administration. Gesemann and Roth (2016) describe this as the local government and local cooperation culture. However, Glorius et al. (2021) look at the implementation of these resources, such as whether there is a proactive governance approach to integration. Thirdly, society and societal structure refer to the resources the local population has at hand, such as attitudes towards refugees or whether social networks exist that are able to interact with the newcomers. What Glorius et al. (2021) call "society and societal structure" is called "the citizens" in the framework of Gesemann and Roth (2016). Regarding the implementation of these societal resources, one must consider how open the local population actually is to using its resources to the end of refugee integration. Even though Glorius et al. (2021) argue that their framework is specific to rural localities, their three dimensions - structural framing conditions, political actors and governance structure, and

society and societal structure - can be equally applied to urban localities. This means that the three dimensions alone fail to reflect the uniqueness of rural contexts. As a solution to this shortcoming, I conceptualize a fourth dimension which I will add to the framework of Glorius et al. (2021) (figure 1). This fourth dimension includes the advantages and disadvantages of refugee integration in the rural context based on Gruber (2013) and Rösch et al. (2020). Advantages include greater social proximity, available housing, and shorter channels in the administration. The disadvantages are social control, long distances, lack of integration offers, and a lack of migrant self-organization.

Figure 1: Local receptivity for the integration of refugees
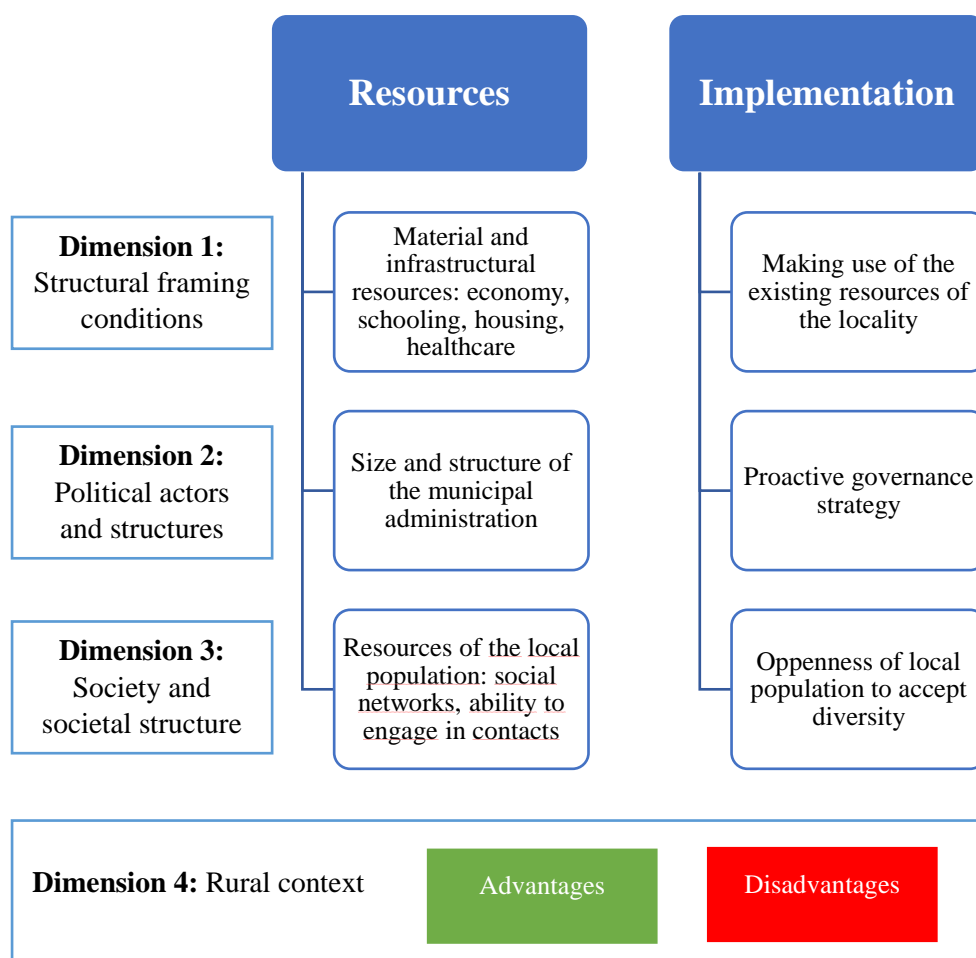
Note: Figure adapted from Glorius et al. (2021, p. 56)

The comparison between Glorius et al. (2021) and Gesemann and Roth (2016) shows that the scholars use different terms to describe similar things. However, it has been highlighted that Glorius et al. (2021) go a step further than Gesemann and Roth (2016) and also ask how relevant resources are implemented. For my study, it is important to recognize that the

municipality of St. Ingbert is only one part of the local receptivity arrangement of St. Ingbert. In order to cover all three aspects of the framework of Glorius et al. (2021), as well as the fourth dimension I conceptualized, I want to consider the entire network of actors involved in the integration governance in St. Ingbert. The theoretical foundations for studying this network are discussed below.

Local refugee integration is realized by a multitude of actors (Glorius and Schondelmayer, 2018). This is why it is important to consider the governance network that is involved in the integration process. Klijn and Koppenjan (2016) provide a definition of governance networks. According to them, governance networks are "more or less stable patterns of social relations between mutually dependent actors, which cluster around a policy problem, a policy programme, and/or a set of resources and which emerge, are sustained, and are changed through a series of interactions" (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016, p. 11). These networks must solve complex policy problems, which cannot be resolved by a single actor. For my study, this means that the municipality cannot realize the integration of refugees that have arrived there since 2015/16 by itself. However, the municipality is dependent on the cooperation of other actors. The integration of refugees is realized through "inter-organizational service delivery and policy implementation" (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016, p. 22). How successful this service delivery in a network is, depends on the type of relationship that exists between the different actors within the network. The earlier discussed framework of Najam (2000) becomes relevant again here. When the relationship between actors is characterized as cooperative, services can be delivered more smoothly. In the case of St. Ingbert, it must thus be analyzed how the different actors involved in the integration network work together and how their relationship can be defined. Having discussed the potential of refugees for rural localities, local receptivity, and the network approach, the theoretical discussion can now move on to considering another fundamental concept of this study, namely refugee integration.

2.3.2 Refugee integration and the role of the municipality

In my study, I use the conceptualization of integration of Penninx and Garcés-Mascarenas (2016a). This is because their conceptualization does not only look at the achievements of immigrants but also at their relationship with the host society. As argued before, this focus on the host society is central to my own study. Penninx and Garcés-Mascarenas (2016a) differentiate three dimensions of integration: socio-economic integration, cultural-religious integration, and legal-political integration. Firstly, socio-economic integration looks at the economic and social position of immigrants in the receiving society (Penninx & Garcés-

Mascarenas, 2016a). Here, the access of immigrants to the labor market, housing, education, and healthcare can be looked at. Secondly, cultural-religious integration considers the extent to which immigrants can manifest their culture and religion in the host society and whether this is accepted by the host society. In this dimension, the interaction between host society and immigrants comes to the forefront strongly. According to Penninx and Garcés-Mascarenas (2016a), there are two extremes of cultural-religious integration. On the one hand, the host society might completely discard the diversity of the immigrants. Consequently, immigrants would be forced to assimilate into the existing culture of the host society. On the other hand, a pluralistic societal system might come into existence, where different cultures are treated equally. Thirdly, legal-political integration looks at the political and legal participation of refugees, as well as the residence status and political rights they receive along the way. Importantly, Caponio (2014) argues that indicators such as access to citizenship or access to political rights cannot be changed by the municipality itself.

After having discussed the general concept of integration as well as different dimensions related to it, it is important to also theoretically discuss how municipal refugee integration policy differs from integration efforts pursued by other actors higher up in the government chain. Therefore, it is relevant to first discuss the concept of local refugee integration; afterward, focus will be put on the role of the municipality in the integration process.

Migration integration policies have become increasingly distributed among various levels of government (Scholten & Penninx, 2016). However, it must be recognized that integration of migrants has become approached from the local level increasingly. This is because the local level is confronted with integration problems in other ways than the national level. This means that in terms of refugee integration, one must look beyond the national level (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2009). Zapata-Barrero et al. (2017) differentiate two dimensions of local refugee integration. First, a horizontal dimension. This dimension considers the coordination process of the municipal government with other local actors in order to facilitate the integration process of refugees. Second, a vertical dimension that looks at the relation between the local government to other government levels. In addition to these two dimensions, Caponio and Borkert (2010) argue that within these dimensions, one can differentiate two approaches. Frist, a bottom-up approach that looks at how various local actors involved in integration efforts form a larger governance network. Second, a top-down approach that examines how local governments translate national integration requirements to the local context.

For my study, I will utilize a combination of the conceptual approach to local integration governance from both Zapata-Barrero et al. (2017) and Caponio and Borkert (2010). I will employ the horizontal approach put forward by Zapata-Barrero et al. (2017) by looking at the entire network of local actors that is involved in the integration of refugees in St. Ingbert. The municipality of St. Ingbert is the main focus within this horizontal approach; however, network partners that the municipality works together with are also analyzed as well as the relationship that exists between the different partners. At the same time, I will use the bottom-up perspective from Caponio and Borkert (2010) as I will focus on the larger governance network that is formed between the different actors that are involved in the integration of refugees in St. Ingbert irrespective of actors that are higher up in the governance hierarchy.

2.3.3 Refugee potential in rural localities

As I want to study how refugees are seen to contribute to St. Ingbert's prosperity, it is necessary to provide an overview of how refugees in rural localities are viewed by the municipality and what the potential of refugees in the rural context might be. Research by Gauci (2020) shows that migration to rural areas in Germany helps to address two demographic challenges. First, a general depopulation and, second, aging of the population. Research shows that due to these demographic challenges, the affected municipalities might display a greater openness to the integration of migrants, viewing the arrival of migrants and refugees as an opportunity (Natale, Kalantaryan, Scipopni, Alessandrini, & Pasa, 2019). As the two demographic challenges outlined above can also be witnessed in St. Ingbert, it is relevant to research how the municipality of St. Ingbert views the potential of refugees for the locality in combating these challenges. In addition to tackling these two demographic challenges, it is necessary to analyze other potentials of refugees that arrived in 2015/16 to St. Ingbert. One of these potentials includes that established refugees assist newly arrived refugees in navigating and understanding the service system of the place where they arrive, which can be compared to the help provided by professional case workers (Gonzalez Benson, 2020).

2.4 Chapter conclusion

The goal of this chapter was threefold. First, the relevant literature was reviewed. Secondly, and based on this literature review, gaps in the literature were identified that my research aims to close. Thirdly, theoretical concepts were discussed that are relevant to my study. The local receptivity framework of Glorius et al. (2021) was explained, extended, and compared with the

approach of Gesemann and Roth (2016). Moreover, it was shown that a network of actors is needed for the local integration of actors. Furthermore, the contested concept of integration was discussed, and the conceptualization of Penninx and Garces-Mascarénas (2016a) with its three dimensions was chosen due to its focus on the host society. Moreover, it was highlighted that the municipality plays a special role in the integration of refugees in consequence of the local turn to refugee integration, which moves away from conceptualizations of integration purely based on the nation-state. The framework of Glorius et al. (2021), together with the conceptualization of integration of Penninx and Garcés-Mascarenas (2016a), constitute the theoretical centers of this study and will allow me to answer my research question. Moreover, it will be analyzed if the perception of the refugee potential for the rural locality mediates the relationship between local receptivity and integration. The interplay between the different concepts is visualized in figure 2. In the next chapter, an operationalization will follow that shows how I will empirically apply the theoretical concepts of my study.

Figure 2: Theoretical foundation and interaction of concepts
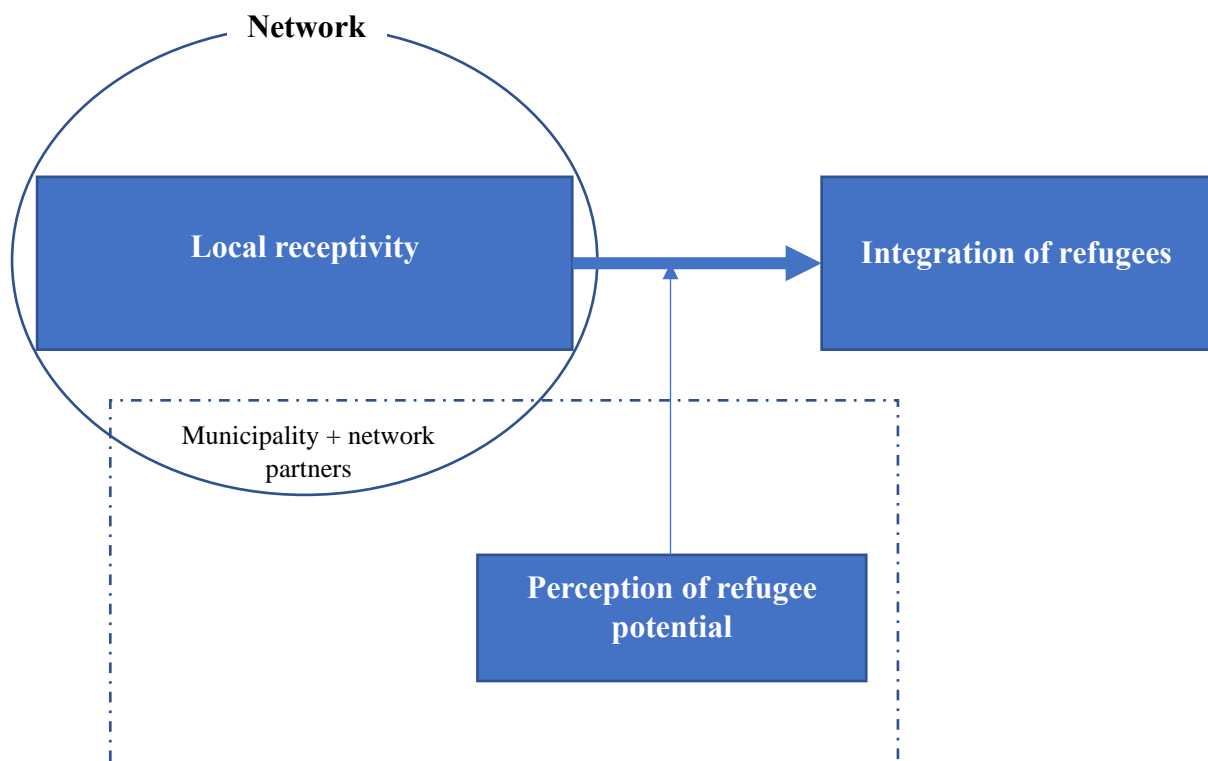
Chapter 3 – Research Design

In this chapter, the research design of my study is described. First, the research question and sub-questions are stated. Second, my research methods are described. Third, the selection of the municipality of St. Ingbert is justified. Fourth, the operationalization of my most important concepts follows. Fifth, I develop expectations of my study. Lastly, ethical considerations are reflected upon.

3.1 Research question

My thesis seeks to answer the research question: *How does the receptivity offered by the municipality of St. Ingbert and its network shape the integration of refugees that have arrived in St. Ingbert since 2015/16?*

The research question is divided into five sub-questions:

1. *What does the network of actors that are involved in the integration of refugees in St. Ingbert look like?*
2. *How does this network shape the local receptivity in St. Ingbert?*
3. *How does the local receptivity in St. Ingbert translate into the integration of refugees that have arrived in St. Ingbert since 2015/16?*
4. *How does the municipality of St. Ingbert and its network perceive the potential of the refugees that have arrived in St. Ingbert since 2015/16?*
5. *What role does the perception of the refugee potential play in mediating the relationship between receptivity and integration?*

3.2 Research methods

3.2.1 Data collection

I used a deductive case study strategy with semi-structured qualitative interviews (SSIs) for my data collection (Kothari, 2013). There are several arguments for this method´s appropriateness. Firstly, I want to analyze the complex actor-network that is involved in the integration of refugees in St. Ingbert. Cresswell and Poth (2017) argue that qualitative interviews allow the researcher to understand the interactions between multiple partners in a detailed manner. Secondly, I want to see how this network provides real-life integration for refugees. This means that I want to hear about the own perspective of refugees. Qualitative interviews allow me to give refugees a voice about their lived experiences in my research. (Babbie, 2016).

Nonetheless, the limitations of this approach must be noted. Firstly, the case study design of this research makes it difficult to generalize my findings. Secondly, as I will be conducting interviews, I must rely on the statements of my interview partners about processes that have been taking place since 2015. Nevertheless, the chosen method can provide a valid answer to the research question. This is because SSIs will provide the in-depth insights (Babbie, 2016) needed to understand the role the St. Ingbert municipality and its network play in refugee integration. I conducted interviews with officials and employees working for the municipality of St. Ingbert, people working for organizations that are involved in refugee integration in St. Ingbert, and refugees that have arrived in St. Ingbert since 2015/16.

3.2.2 Sampling

I used purposeful sampling (Cresswell & Poth, 2017). For municipal employees and employees of partner organizations, I used snowball sampling in combination with purposive sampling (Babbie, 2016; Patton, 2001). Based on my access point in the municipality of St. Ingbert, I made a judgment about which interviewees might be the most useful for my research. Moreover, through this same access point, I snowballed the relevant stakeholders who are involved in the network and proceeded with a request to interview them. For refugee interviewees, I also relied on my access point in the municipality and subsequently used snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is justified for all three types of actors as it was difficult to find members of these populations otherwise (Babbie, 2016). In total, I have conducted 17 interviews with 19 interview partners. I interviewed five refugees (R), five employees of the municipality (M), and nine network partners (N). An overview of the interviewees can be seen in table 1. The interview guides can be found in appendix 1.

Table 1: Overview interviewees

Interviewee	Role
Refugees	
R1	Syrian. In St. Ingbert since 2015. Male.
R2	Syrian. In St. Ingbert since 2016. Male.
R3	Syrian. In St. Ingbert since 2015. Male.
R4	Syrian. In St. Ingbert since 2016. Male.
R5	Syrian. In St. Ingbert since 2015. Male.
Municipal employees	
M1	Municipal high-level functionary.
M2	Municipal social worker.
M3	Municipal social worker. Specialized in refugee integration.
M4	Municipal high-level functionary.
M5	Municipal social worker. Specialized in refugee integration.
Network partners	
N1	City council member and primary school teacher.
N2	Kindergarten manager.
N3	Employee of local community college.
N4	Employee of local community college.
N5	City council member and volunteer.
N6	Employee of the *Jobcenter* Saarpfalz-Kreis.
N7	Employee of the *Jobcenter* Saarpfalz-Kreis. Specialized in refugee integration.
N8	Representative of local associations/clubs.
N9	Representative of St. Ingbert's *alliance for cosmopolitanism, diversity, and tolerance*.

3.2.3 Data analysis

To analyze my interviews, I transcribed them in *Word* and proceeded with the qualitative analysis of the interviews in Atlas.ti. There, I coded the interviews following an abductive approach (Reichertz, 2007). This approach overcomes the weaknesses of applying a purely inductive or purely deductive approach. This means that I will start coding with a coding book that has been developed based on the theoretical framework. This coding book can be found in appendix 2. However, I switched to open coding once new information was identified that was not covered by the coding book.

3.3 Case selection

In Saarland, the German federal state where this case study is situated in, there are a total of 52 municipalities. These municipalities are organized within districts (*Kreise*). In total there are six districts in Saarland (Statistisches Amt Saarland, 2021). The district where the town of St.

Ingbert is located is the *Saarpfalz-Kreis*, which has 140,960 inhabitants (Statistisches Amt Saarland, 2021). According to the Berlin Institute for Population and Development (2019), the *Saarpfalz-Kreis* is a cluster 5 rural district. This means that within this district, residents cannot be provided with the same services as can be found in cities. Nonetheless, no alarming challenges regarding social participation opportunities can be found in these districts.

St. Ingbert has a population of 34,971 (Statistisches Amt Saarland, 2021). Since 2015, 1556 asylum seekers and refugees have arrived in St. Ingbert. The case of St. Ingbert was selected for two reasons. Firstly, demographic challenges, including population decline and aging of the population. Like many small towns in Germany, St. Ingbert is experiencing a population decline: since the 1980s, the town has lost around 17% of its inhabitants (Statistisches Amt Saarland, 1982, 2021). The main cause for this decrease is the natural birth deficit and the constantly falling migration balance (Tao, 2011). Furthermore, the town is experiencing an aging of the population. Estimates show that until 2030, the number of inhabitants under the age of twenty will fall by more than a quarter (Ertl, 2010). Moreover, the proportion of people over 65 was 22% in 2013. In 2030, it is expected to be 32% (DNS, 2022). A second reason why St. Ingbert was selected, is the economic restructuring the town is experiencing. With the removal of traditional industries such as glass, coal, and steel, the town experienced economic decline since the 1980s. (SZ Redaktion, 2021). Nonetheless, it must be recognized that instead of the traditional industries, St. Ingbert has become home to companies in the high-tech and service sector (Tao, 2011).

3.4 Operationalization

This part of the chapter describes the operationalization of my study. First, *the local integration network.* It has been argued that the municipality is only one of the relevant actors involved in the integration of refugees. The network of the different actors participating in refugee integration must thus be analyzed. To analyze this network, officials and network partners were asked what other organizations in St. Ingbert they work together with. Moreover, to identify which type of relationship can be found in the network (Spencer & Delvino, 2018) - cooperation, confrontation, complementarity, co-optation - officials and network partners were asked about how well the network works together and what the roles of the actors within this network are.

Second, *local receptivity* is "the ability and willingness to open up to newcomers and develop an inclusionary perspective within a local society" (Glorius et al., 2021, p. 56). In my

study, I will include four different dimensions of this concept. These four dimensions are displayed in table 2.

Third, *integration.* As discussed in the theoretical framework, I will use the definition of integration as provided by Penninx and Garcés-Mascarenas (2016a). This concept also includes different dimensions, which are operationalized in table 2.

Fourth, *refugee potential in rural localities.* The municipality of St. Ingbert faces a two-fold demographic challenge. This means that population decline is coinciding with an aging of the population (Statistisches Amt Saarland, 1982, 2021; Tao, 2011). Consequently, the population of working age is shrinking. According to Gauci (2020), small towns can address these challenges by attracting migrants. Migrants can contribute to the workforce, which also means that basic services in St. Ingbert, such as education, hospitality, and medical care, can be upheld. It must thus be researched how the municipality views the potential of refugees and whether this is in line with the demographic challenges the town faces. To do so, interviewees were asked about how they perceive the potential and added value of refugees to the locality.

Table 2: Operationalization

Variables	Broad definition	Theoretical concepts	Conceptual definition	Attributes	Operational definition	Indicators	Sources
Local receptivity	"[…] [T]he ability and willingness to open up to newcomers and develop an inclusionary perspective within a local society" (Glorius et al., 2021, p. 56).	**Structural framing conditions**	The economic, financial, housing, and social structure of a certain locality are a "prerequisite for reception and integration processes […]" of refugees (Glorius et al., 2021, p. 56).	**Resources**	What are the material and structural resources of a locality that are required for the integration of refugees? (Glorius et al., 2021)	Economic situation of St. Ingbert. Housing situation in St. Ingbert. Schooling situation in St. Ingbert. Healthcare situation in St. Ingbert.	Officials/Network Officials/Network Officials/Network Officials/Network
				Implementation of resources	Is the locality willing to provide structural and material resources for refugee integration? (Glorius et al., 2021).	Availability of housing for refugees. Is the municipality of St. Ingbert willing to provide the municipal housing stock for refugees? What does the municipality of St. Ingbert do to integrate the children of refugees into the public educational system?	Officials Officials Officials
		Political actors and governance structures	"[…] [T]he range of local governance competences which are necessary to deal with integration processes on the local level". (Glorius et al., 2021, pp. 56-57)	**Resources**	What are the resources resulting out of the municipal governance competences for the integration of refugees? (Glorius et al., 2021).	The structure of the municipal administration St. Ingbert. The size and structure of the St. Ingbert municipal parliament. Human resources of the part of the municipality of St. Ingbert and its network that deals with the integration of refugees. Financial resources attributed to the municipality of St. Ingbert and its networks involved in the integration of refugees.	Officials Municipal parliament Officials Officials/Network
				Implementation of resources	How are the resources of the municipal governance competence implemented	Is there a proactive governance strategy regarding the integration of refugees? Is there an immigrant board in the local political structure?	Officials Officials

					to facilitate the integration of refugees? (Glorius et al., 2021).	How has the municipal concept of integration developed since 2015?	Officials
						How has the organization of the municipality of St. Ingbert changed since the arrival of refugees in 2015?	Officials
						How has the resource attribution of the municipality of St. Ingbert changed since the arrival of refugees in 2015?	Officials
		Society and societal structure		**Resources**	What are the resources of the local population to integrate refugees? (Glorius et al., 2021).	Attitudes and experiences towards refugees in St. Ingbert.	Network
						Ability of St. Ingbert natives to engage in social contacts.	Network
						Are there civil society actors in St. Ingbert that can build bridges between refugees and natives?	Network
						The collective memory on migration in St. Ingbert.	Network
						Pool of volunteers working with refugees in St. Ingbert.	Network
				Implementation of resources		How open is the native population of St. Ingbert in regard to ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity of refugees?	Network
		Rural context		**Advantages**	What are the advantages of refugee integration in the rural context? (Gruber, 2013; Rösch et al., 2020)	Role of local associations/clubs for refugee integration in St. Ingbert.	Officials/network
						How easily can social relationships be formed in St. Ingbert?	Officials/network
						Are there short channels in the administration in St. Ingbert?	Officials/network
				Disadvantages	What are the disadvantages of refugee integration in the rural context? (Gruber, 2013; Rösch et al., 2020)	Is there a lack of integration offers in St. Ingbert?	Officials/network
						Is there a lack of migrant self-organization in St. Ingbert?	Officials/network
						How well does public transport function in St. Ingbert?	Officials/network
Integration	"[A] multidimensional, non-linear set of independent processes through which new population groups are included, to different gradients, into the existing systems of socio-economic, legal and cultural relations" (Glorius et al., 2021, p. 52; Penninx & Garcés-Mascarenas, 2016b).	**Socio-economic integration** (Penninx & Garcés-Mascarenas, 2016a)	"[…] refers to the social and economic position of residents, irrespective of their national citizenship. Within this dimension, the position of immigrants can be analyzed by looking at their access to and participation in domains that are crucial for any resident" (Penninx & Garcés-Mascarenas, 2016a, p. 15).	**Work** **Housing** **Education** **Health care**	Analyzing the position of refugees "by looking at their access to and participation in domains that are crucial for any resident." (Penninx & Garcés-Mascarenas, 2016b, p. 159).	Do refugees in St. Ingbert have equal access to institutional facilities for finding work, housing, education, and health care?	Officials
						Do refugees in St. Ingbert use these facilities?	Officials/refugees
						How do refugees and natives that have comparable qualifications compare in terms of participation in St. Ingbert?	Officials/refugees
		Cultural-religious dimension (Penninx & Garcés-Mascarenas, 2016a)	"[…] pertains to the domain of perception and practices of immigrants and the receiving society as well as their reciprocal reactions to difference and diversity. […] [T]he receiving society may or may not accept cultural or religious diversity." (Penninx & Garcés-	**Language (of the receiving state and of migrants)**	*Note:* Focusing on so-called *input indicators*. Those are the indicators that refer to what the host society offers in order to facilitate the integration of newcomers. (Gońda, Pachocka, & Podgorski, 2020).	Availability of language courses for refugees in St. Ingbert: • Different proficiency levels • Financed/co-financed by the state Language support for refugees in official contexts.	Officials Officials

				Religion (of migrants)		Do refugees have the possibility to practice their religion in St. Ingbert?	Officials/refugees
			Mascarenas, 2016a, p. 15).	Symbolic culture (of the receiving society)		In how far are diplomas of refugees recognized in St. Ingbert?	Officials/refugees
						Are there programs to support the existing education of refugees in order to increase their suitability for the labor market in St. Ingbert?	Officials/refugees
						Does the municipality of St. Ingbert make use of "cultural mediators" so that refugees are enabled to access official institutions?	Officials
						Are the activities of migrants´ associations accepted ad supported by the municipality of St. Ingbert?	Officials
				Preserving and transmitting cultural patterns (of the sending country)		In how far are cultural artifacts transmitted from refugees to the receiving society in St. Ingbert?	Network
		Legal-political integration (Penninx & Garcés-Mascarenas, 2016a)	"[…] refers to residence and political rights and statuses. The basic question is whether and to what extent are immigrants regarded as fully-fledged members of the political community" (Penninx & Garcés-Mascarenas, 2016a, p. 14).	Access to citizenship	Under what conditions may refugees acquire national citizenship? (Caponio, 2014)	Year of residence whereafter refugees can acquire citizenship.	Officials
						How many refugees have acquired German citizenship in St. Ingbert since 2015?	Officials
						Does the municipality of St. Ingbert facilitate the acquisition of German citizenship for refugees?	Officials/refugees
				Direct political inclusion	Do refugees have local voting rights, and are they incorporated into mainstream political institutions? (Caponio, 2014)	After how long do refugees in Germany acquire local voting rights?	Officials/refugees
						Does the municipality of St. Ingbert stimulate refugees to participate in the local political institutions?	Officials/refugees
				Indirect political inclusion	How are refugees politically represented (Caponio, 2014)?	Are there consultative committees or immigrant councils in St. Ingbert?	Officials/refugees
						Can refugees in St. Ingbert voice their views and interests in local policymaking?	Officials/refugees

3.5 Expectations

Based on the earlier-developed theoretical framework, a number of research expectations are proposed. Firstly, based on research by Gruber (2013) and Rösch et al. (2020), it is expected that St. Ingbert experiences similar advantages and challenges in the integration of refugees as other rural municipalities in Germany. In terms of advantages, this means that in St. Ingbert, I expect that associations/clubs play an important role in the integration of refugees, which might make it easier for refugees to foster social relationships. In terms of disadvantages, I expect that there might be a lack of a conceptual approach to integration, a lower availability of language classes, and badly developed public transport.

Secondly, based on research on refugee potential in rural localities (Gauci, 2020; Natale et al., 2019), it is expected that the municipality of St. Ingbert views the arrival of refugees as a chance in order to combat the demographic challenges the town is experiencing.

Thirdly, based on the theories of governance networks (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016), it is to be expected that the municipality of St. Ingbert achieves the integration of refugees in cooperation with other organizations. I expect that the municipality plays a central role in coordinating the integration efforts of different actors.

Fourthly, based on research by Caponio and Borkert (2010) and Zapata-Barrero et al. (2017), I expect that the municipality of St. Ingbert follows a bottom-up approach to the integration of refugees. Even though St. Ingbert is a rural municipality, and one might argue that, therefore, it cannot follow a creative approach to integration, I expect, based on previous knowledge of the locality, stemming from informal conversations with residents and employees of the municipality, that St. Ingbert has the resources to develop a bottom-up approach.

Fifthly, it is to be expected that the municipality of St. Ingbert has multiple resources at its hand in order to achieve the integration of refugees. Based on the study of Gesemann and Roth (2016), resources that are expected to be especially important are: 1) whether or not the local population is open to engaging with refugees, and 2) the organization and coordination efforts of the municipal government concerning refugee integration.

3.6 Ethical considerations

A number of ethical considerations arise in relation to my research. First, I interviewed a vulnerable population (Babbie, 2016), namely refugees. I was especially careful when interviewing this group and made the participants feel comfortable during the interview. This means that I stressed that they might stop the interview at any time, that the information will be anonymized, and that I will not share any of the information with the municipality. Second, as I conducted qualitative interviews, there were ethical concerns regarding informed consent (Babbie, 2016). Therefore, I reassured interviewees that their participation in my study is voluntary and that the information they provide will be treated confidentially. This also includes that all my interviewees had to sign an *informed consent form*. In order to safeguard the security of my data, I stored the interviews in a safe folder that requires a password to access it.

Chapter 4 – Analysis and Findings

This chapter constitutes the analysis and presents the findings. Starting with the description of the network of players that is involved in St. Ingbert's integration infrastructure, the chapter moves on to analyzing St. Ingbert's local receptivity based on the framework of Glorius et al. (2021). Afterward, integration in St. Ingbert based on the three dimensions of Penninx and Garcés-Mascarenas (2016a) is investigated. Lastly, the chapter describes how the municipality and network partners perceive the potential of refugees to combat (demographic) challenges in St. Ingbert, and whether this perception mediates the relationship between receptivity and integration. The German originals for the used quotes can be found in appendix 3.

4.1 The local integration network

The network of organizations that the town can build on is described as essential for successfully integrating refugees by all municipal employees and network partners. M2 and M5 argue that the network is one of their most valuable resources. Next to the municipality, other organizations are involved in the integration of refugees, such as the local community college (*Volkshochschule, VHS*), the employment agency (*Jobcenter*), local associations/clubs, the large stock of volunteers, schools, and a local citizen's initiative called *alliance for cosmopolitanism, diversity, and tolerance* (*Bündnis für Weltoffenheit, Vielfalt und Toleranz*). It must be noted that there are other network partners that I, however, was not able to interview. Each partner within this network has its own tasks and resources for the integration of refugees. Nonetheless, it must be stated that the municipality has a special function within this network. Firstly, the municipality is the "initiator" of this network, as the following quote of M5 shows:

> *[The network] was primarily built up by the municipality simply because, in order to be able to really help these people, you need this entire network to offer holistic help.*[4]

Secondly, the municipality functions as the "coordinator" of the network. M2 uses the metaphor of a general practitioner to describe the municipality's coordinating role:

> *I always say that if I were a doctor by profession, I would be the general practitioner and would always follow up with the specialists, but then I would also get all the findings, and the conjuncture takes place [at the municipality].*[5]

Thirdly, the municipality is the main "mediator" within this network. This means that the municipality refers the refugees to other organizations in the town. In order to fulfill this role, the employees of the municipality have "a broad knowledge of where partners are based that can help in individual cases" (M2). However, the municipality remains the primary point of contact for refugees throughout their integration process. This is shown by the following quote of M4:

> *It doesn't matter what the questions are. And whether it is a question in health care, at work, in education, or in housing matters, the municipality must always be the point of contact in order to be able to show the migrants a direction, how they can get along better or how they can find their way around.[6]*

When being asked about how the different network partners judge the relationship within the network, all interviewees argue that the different network partners work together well. M4 states that municipality and network partners "pull together". N1 says that the key to success in St. Ingbert is that different organizations "work together and not against each other." The network and the role of the municipality within it are displayed in figure 3.

Figure 3: Local network of organizations involved in refugee integration
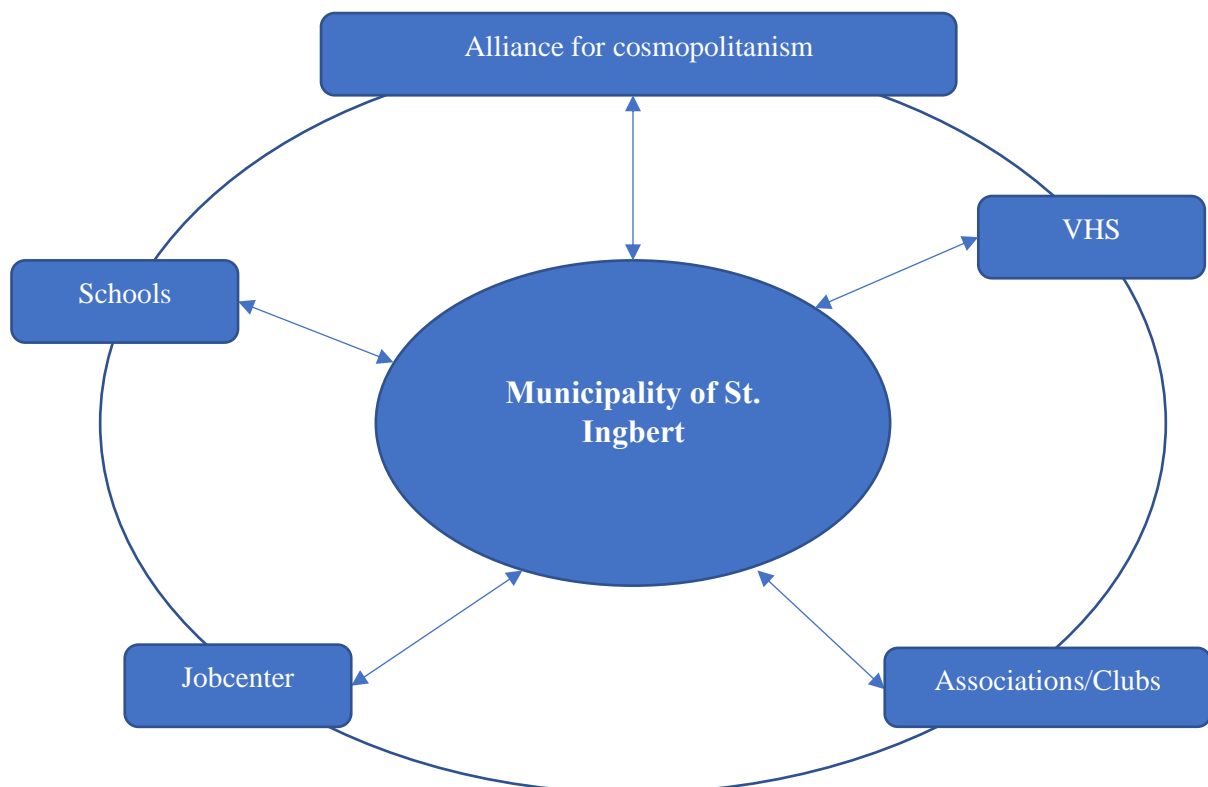
4.2 Local receptivity

In this part of the chapter, the local receptivity of St. Ingbert will be analyzed according to the framework of Glorius et al. (2021).

4.2.1 Structural framing conditions

Economy

The *Saarpfalz-District,* within which St. Ingbert is located, is the wealthiest district in the Saarland. The disposable per capita income in 2019 was 24,357 €. This is slightly above the German average of 23,706 € (WSI, 2019). Likewise, M4 and N6 agree that there is a "good economic structure" in St. Ingbert, characterized by a multitude of firms. Moreover, St. Ingbert aims to become an IT hotbed in Germany. Software producer SAP has a headquarter in the town. Moreover, CISPA, a company specializing in information security, will build its "Innovation Campus" in St. Ingbert. Also, refugees (R4, R5) agree that generally, there is enough work in St. Ingbert. Regarding the implementation of the local economic resources, people working for the municipality and for the *Jobcenter* (M3, M4, M5, N6) argue that there were some companies that specifically aimed at involving refugees in the local economy. However, there were also some companies that did not want to hire refugees anymore after some time. The following quote from a *Jobcenter*-employee (N7) shows this:

> *We have also often received feedback, especially in the last two years, when we wanted to place a [refugee], where it was said: No, well, I won't hire a Syrian because we have had such bad experiences with him, with the Syrians.[7]*

Schooling

Regarding schooling, St. Ingbert is home to five elementary schools and four secondary schools. Interviewees (M1, M3, M5, N1, N5, N7) agree that the educational system in St. Ingbert does not have enough resources. This already starts in kindergartens where there are not enough spots and continues throughout primary and secondary education. Regardless of this lack of resources in terms of available sports for children, M1 and N1 also argue that the existing resources are implemented well. This is because there are language support teachers whose task is to teach German to children of refugees. Moreover, at every elementary school, there are people who speak the mother tongue of the refugee children. Lastly, a primary school teacher, N1, argues that even though there were not enough resources, "there was a great deal

of motivation in the schools to really integrate these children," which is why the integration of children was "a success."

Housing

Interviewees (M1, M3, M5, N1, N2, N5) also agree that there is a lack of available housing in St. Ingbert for refugees and German welfare recipients. M3 argues that "from sides of the municipality, there is not enough living space for the socially disadvantaged." N1 argues that the municipality sold some of its property which is problematic when taking into account the increased arrival of refugees since the war in Ukraine. Regarding private housing, M3 argues that "maybe there is living space, but it's not made available." However, what interviewees (M2, M3, M5, N1) also agree on is that the municipality is very willing to provide the municipal housing stock for refugees. This municipal housing stock is especially used when refugees first arrive as transitionary homes, where a larger number of refugees are housed immediately after their arrival in the town. In addition to the transitional municipal homes, the municipality provides social housing "where [refugees] can live longer because we don't throw them out," as M2 states. In terms of the provision of private housing, the municipality also plays an important role as mediator between refugees and private landlords. Landlords can contact the municipality if they want to rent out their privately-owned apartments. The municipality then links the refugees to these landlords.

Healthcare

In terms of healthcare, municipal employees (M2, M3, M5) and refugees (R1, R5) agree that there are enough general practitioners in St. Ingbert and that refugees have "received good medical care" (M2). However, interviewees also argue that in terms of access to specialized healthcare, there are some issues. Firstly, the "psychological care of refugees" cannot be covered adequately "because there simply aren't the structures to have them treated here" (N7). Moreover, there is a lack of children's doctors and not enough doctors who speak the mother tongue of the refugees.

4.2.2 Political actors and governance structure

When looking at the resources of the municipal governance, two important structures must be mentioned that have been developed since the arrival of refugees in 2015/16. Firstly, there is a *representative of the mayor for social affairs and integration* who works for the integration of refugees. Secondly, there is a separate *staff unit integration* that directly worked under the

mayor before being transitioned into its own department within the municipality in November 2021. N1, a member of the city council, argues the following:

> *I think [the "staff unit integration"] is the most important body, the most important department, in which we not have only translators but also social workers and administrators who simply support all refugees in everything they need.[8]*

R2, an employee of the staff unit who is also a refugee, argues that "there is not a municipality anywhere else that does the same thing as" St. Ingbert. The person argues:

> *[Refugees] always come here when they have something, no matter what the problem is. That is solved here. Applications, school registrations, clothing applications, apartment searches. I didn't hear that the thing we do here is done somewhere else.[9]*

Moreover, it must be mentioned that the financial resources of the municipality are good and that St. Ingbert used to be a financially "balanced" municipality without debts before the Corona pandemic. N1 argues that the availability of money was one of the main reasons why the municipality was able to create the structures needed to help refugees to integrate in the town. Moreover, municipal employees (M2, M4, M5, N1) agree that the *staff unit integration* makes good use of its financial resources and that it was able to keep its own expenses on a low level because it received subsidies from the federal, state, and district governments; and aimed at "sustainable solutions" in the accommodation of refugees by, for example, using "donated furniture" in transitionary homes (M5).

Another important resource of the municipality and specifically the *staff unit integration* are its human resources. Interviewees (M1, M3, M5) argue that in comparison to other municipalities in the region, the municipality of St. Ingbert invests much in its human resources, especially in terms of social workers. Additionally, the staff unit employs four language mediators. However, the employees (M1, M3, M4) also argue that there can never be enough human resources when considering integration work. M3 argues that at the moment, the *staff unit integration* is limited to the first aid and consultation of refugees, but if they had more human resources, they could provide greater integrational measures. However, interviewees (M1, M3, M5) agree that there are enough employees to meet the goals that are stipulated by municipal politics. In addition to purely looking at the human resources in terms of numbers, it is also important to consider how these human resources are implemented.

Employees of the *staff unit integration,* network partners, and refugees (M2, M5, N1, N5, R1) argue that one of the biggest assets is the ethical motivation of employees. Lastly, M5 also argues that professionalization took place over time. This means that employees have increased knowledge of and ability to work with refugees, resulting in more efficient use of the human resources that the municipality has at its hand.

Within the city council, there is a committee on culture, education, and social affairs. This committee is also responsible for matters surrounding the integration of refugees. Employees of the *staff unit integration* (M2, M5) argue that they have always received support from the city council, especially concerning decisions regarding staff expansion within the staff unit. N1 argues that the city council also supported the *staff unit integration* financially with a "broad majority."

Lastly, it must be considered how the governance structure has changed proactively with the arrival of refugees in 2015. This is also displayed in figure 4. According to municipal employees (M2, M4, M5) reasons for this change were first, the large arrival of refugees; second, a proactive consideration of municipal employees regarding what structures are needed to receive and integrate the refugees; and third, good communication with and support of the city council. M2, M3, and M4 explained that in 2015 there was a department *culture, education, and family.* The social affairs division was part of this department. Within the social affairs division, one social worker was responsible for the reception of refugees. At a certain point, the staff of the social affairs division was expanded, and it was decided that a separate administrative unit was needed for refugee work. This resulted in the creation of the *staff unit integration*, which worked directly under the major. The task of this *staff unit integration* was to optimize the municipal integrational work. Interviewees (M5, N1, N5) agree that the formation of this separate staff unit was paramount for being able to respond quickly to the arrival of refugees in 2015/16. However, with increasing expansion of the s*taff unit integration*, it was decided that the staff unit would be put together with two other divisions, namely, social affairs and family, to form its own department *family, social affairs, and integration*.

Figure 4: Development of the governance structure since 2015

2022

2015

Before 2015
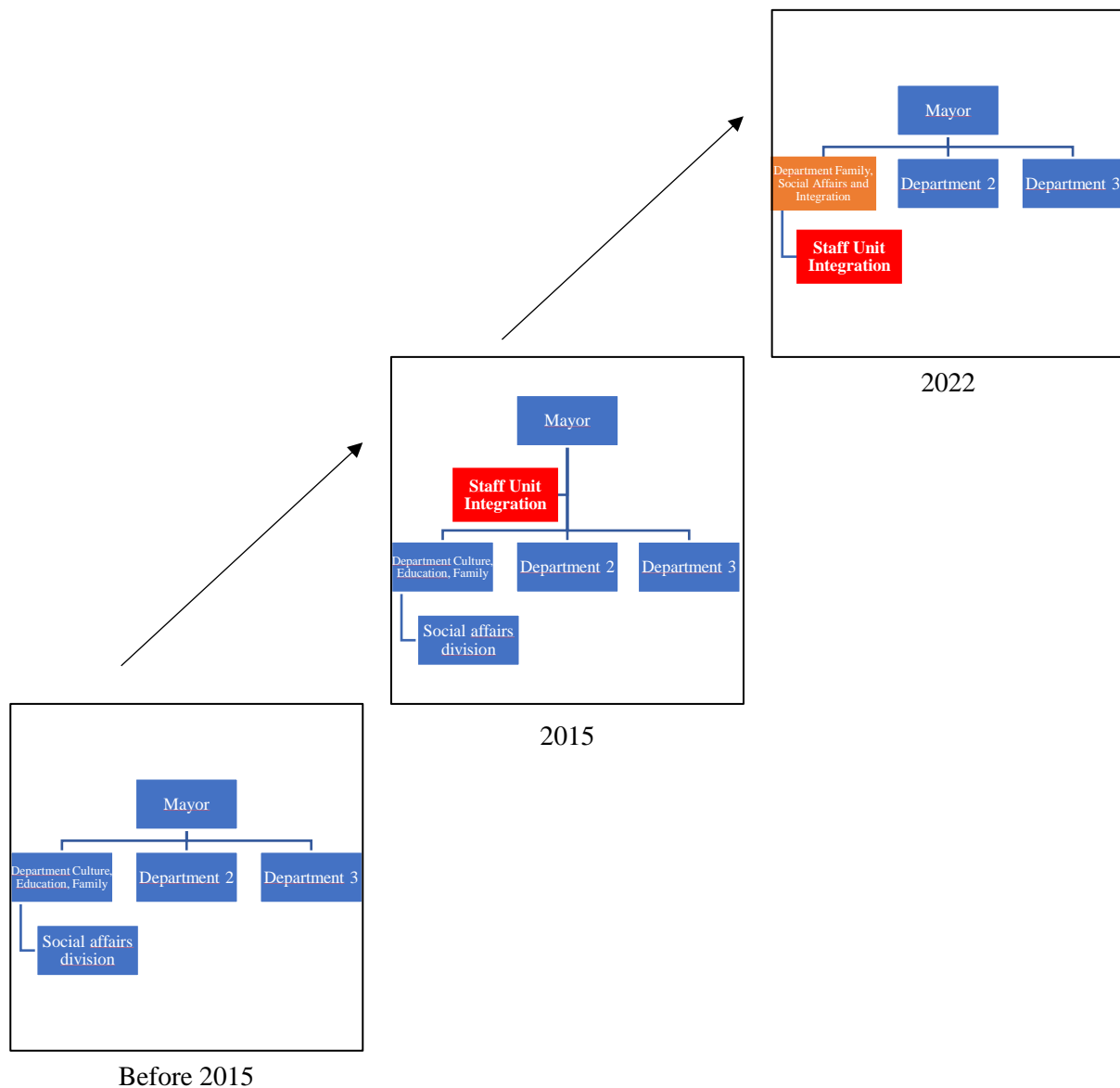
4.2.3 Society and societal structure

St. Ingbert's local community has important resources to achieve the integration of refugees. Refugees, network partners, and the municipality (M5, N9, R1, R3, R5) agree that people in St. Ingbert are "open and friendly" and like to engage in social contacts, also with newcomers. Furthermore, there is a broad collective memory of migration in the town, starting with the arrival of guest workers in the 1960s and continuing throughout the 1990s with the fall of the Soviet Union and the arrival of refugees in the 2000s as a consequence of the war in the Balkans. Already in that time, citizens in St. Ingbert formed an *alliance against xenophobia,* which dissolved over time. Nonetheless, residents in St. Ingbert that used to be part of this alliance were still able to make use of these structures in 2015 to form a new alliance, as N9 argues:

And when the wave of Syrian refugees came here in 2015, especially Syrian refugees, we said: No, we absolutely have to do something again. […] People who were in this alliance before met again, and we added more [people]. And then we just founded this alliance […] [for cosmopolitanism, diversity, and tolerance] since 2015.[10]

The *alliance for cosmopolitanism, diversity, and tolerance* can be described as an important societal actor that can build bridges between refugees and the local population. Additionally, there is a large stock of "far more than 300 volunteers" (M4) that the *staff unit integration* works with. The *staff unit integration* coordinates these voluntary efforts. A member of the city council who is also a volunteer, N5, argues that the cooperation between volunteers and municipality is "going very well." On the downside, employees of the *staff unit integration* and members of the city council (M2, M3, M5, N1, N5, N9) are worried that the local population treats Ukrainian refugees better than Syrian refugees. For example, there are some landlords in St. Ingbert who say that they only want to rent out their apartments to Ukrainians and not to Syrians.

When looking at how the local community implements its resources, refugees, municipal employees, and societal actors (M3, M4, N5, N9, R1, R4) agree that generally, the local community is open to accepting the cultural and religious diversity of the refugees. Moreover, interviewees of the *VHS* (N3, N4) and an interviewee of the before-mentioned alliance (N9) argue that the local population has become more open "for people who were not born in St. Ingbert or in Saarland" than before through the arrival of refugees. Nonetheless, the interviewees also argue that there are some people in St. Ingbert who have difficulties coming to terms with the increased diversity in St. Ingbert, as this quote of N1 shows:

Muslim women, women with headscarves, different attitudes, different values, different cultural conditions. There are definitely still people who perhaps, I don't want to say, have problems with it but simply have a certain distance.[11]

However, interviewees (N5, N7, N9) agree that this is not the majority of the local population. Also, the municipality actively stimulates the interaction between refugees and locals through different activities, like barbecues in the city park or picking up trash together. Municipal employees (M2, M5) argue that these activities were important for people to get to know each

other. N1 argues that this interplay between municipality and local society is responsible for the well-functioning integration apparatus in St. Ingbert:

> *[…] I think we have a very good social structure here in St. Ingbert. We have very, very many associations; we have a lot of dedicated volunteers. But also here in the administration, we have the will, the drive to make progress here. And I think this mixture of municipal administration, guidelines, volunteers, and associations makes the social part [of this town].[12]*

The role of local associations is mentioned by several interviewees (N5, N8, R1) as an advantage of the more rural area that St. Ingbert is located in. How these rural characteristics of St. Ingbert contribute to the local receptivity will be specified in the next part of the chapter.

4.2.4 Rural context

Both, municipal employees (M4, M5) and refugees (R4, R5), argue that St. Ingbert can be described as a town that lies in between urban and rural characteristics. This is because St. Ingbert is a so-called "middle-sized town." Refugees (R4, R5) value that in St. Ingbert, one can find everything that is necessary for everyday life, like supermarkets and a train station. However, at the same time, interviewees (M1, M2, M3, N5, N6, R3) describe that in St. Ingbert, there are still many characteristics of a village that can be advantageous for the integration of newcomers. A characteristic mentioned by many interviewees is the social proximity in the town. N5, a member of the city council, argues the following:

> *Well, it's definitely a big advantage that we still have a bit of a village character in the middle-sized town. That people […] live closer together, that you are not just a number, but that you are really taken along as a human being. […]. But yes, everyone knows everyone a little bit.[13]*

Furthermore, interviewees (M1, M3, N7) argue that it is an advantage that there are short channels in the municipal administration. This means that refugees know exactly who their point of contact in the municipality is. Also, people in the administration and the network know where their partners are and can contact them easily.

As mentioned earlier, St. Ingbert is characterized by a multitude of local associations and clubs. A network partner of the municipality (N8) argues that it is the task of these

associations to "welcome newcomers, no matter where they come from." A refugee (R1) explains that the voluntary fire department was one of the most important factors in his integration because, through them, he found employment and learned German.

Nonetheless, there are also some disadvantages connected to rural areas. Firstly, interviewees (N1, N5) mention the poorly developed public transport, especially in the outer districts of St. Ingbert. Secondly, interviewees (M5, N6, N7, R5) also argue that when refugees first arrive, they often think that they have worse chances of integration in a middle-sized town like St. Ingbert and would rather move to larger cities. However, an employee of the *Jobcenter* (N6) argues that there are "definitely opportunities for integration" in St. Ingbert. How this integration exactly looks like in St. Ingbert is discussed in the next part of this chapter.

4.3 Integration

4.3.1 Socio-economic integration

Work

When an asylum seeker's asylum procedure is still running, the refugee is not "recognized." In this time period, asylum seekers are only allowed to work with the permission of the immigration authorities (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2022). After refugees have received a residence and working permit, they come into contact with the *Jobcenter* in St. Ingbert. This means that as soon as asylum seekers become recognized refugees, they have equal access to the resources of the *Jobcenter* as Germans (Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration, 2022). The *Jobcenter* is responsible for matching the skills of refugees to the needs of the local labor market. Moreover, the local *Jobcenter* finances further education of recognized refugees in order to improve their match with the German labor market. An employee of the *Jobcenter* (N7) argues that many refugees that have arrived in St. Ingbert since 2015/16 are now actively contributing to the workforce. Nonetheless, there are also some challenges concerning integration into the labor market. Something that is described by refugees, *Jobcenter* employees, and municipal employees (M4, N6, R3, R5) is the non-transferability of foreign skills, for example, of lawyers who studied Syrian law, which is not compatible with the German law system. Another challenge is the integration of older people into the labor market. A refugee (R3) described that because of his old age, he was not able to follow new vocational training. This was confirmed by an employee of the *Jobcenter* (N7) with the following example:

A 41-year-old Syrian who has never worked in the field of electricians. It will be difficult for him to do an apprenticeship again. It's not impossible, but it's not the rule that he does regular training as an electrician.[14]

Another difficulty is the integration of female refugees into the labor market, which is also connected to the low capacity of kindergartens in St. Ingbert. Consequently, refugee women must take care of their children instead of working. Furthermore, refugees (R2, R4, R5) perceive the *Jobcenter* as not supportive enough. They argue that they were often advised to do vocational training, even though they wanted to study at the university. Regardless of these challenges, the *Jobcenter* (N6, N7) states that they have integrated around 50% of the Syrian refugees that have arrived since 2015/16 into the labor market, which is seen as very successful by them.

Education

Children of refugees must go to school from day one. This means that they have immediate access to the educational system in St. Ingbert. In order to enable children to learn German as quickly as possible, there are special language teachers in schools in St. Ingbert. Also, the municipality helps refugees to access education by employing two social workers that are tasked with enrolling children of refugees in the schools. Thus, even though it has been described that there is a lack of resources in the local educational system, the integration of these children into the educational system works well. A municipal employee (M4) argues that children of refugees are "very well received and closely cared for."

Regarding tertiary education, refugees I interviewed disagree on how equal their access in Saarland is compared to that of Germans. Before being able to study, refugees must be recognized and be able to speak C1-level of German. Two refugees (R2, R3) argue that it is as easy for refugees to enter tertiary education because there are special programs for refugees. However, another refugee (R5) who studies medicine in the nearby city of Saarbrücken argues differently:

In medicine, for example, there are 300 students, and there are only, I think, 10 or 15 places for foreign students.[15]

He thus thinks that it was more difficult for him to access education compared to Germans. Nonetheless, it must be argued that another refugee I interviewed (R1) completed a vocational

education, which all refugees have access to after they received their residence permit and learned B2-level of German.

Housing

The most important role in integration into housing is played by the municipality. As described before, the municipality provides its municipal housing stock for refugees and also helps refugees with finding their own apartments after they leave the transitional municipal houses. This help is offered by two real estate agents who are directly employed by the municipality. Refugees (R1, R2, R3) are satisfied with the help they receive from the municipality to find housing; as an example of a refugee shows who is also an employee of the municipality (R2):

> *So, as I said, I've been working here since 2016, and I know the cases here. I know a lot of Syrians who came here, don't have any apartments and asked for apartments, and we found them.*[16]

Even though municipal employees argue that there is not enough housing space in St. Ingbert, they also state that the municipality is successful with its housing policy. This is because they spread refugees well throughout the town. A municipal employee (M2) argues that in St. Ingbert, there are "no streets where ten houses are only occupied by people with a migration background, but there is a good mix of Germans and people of other origins." Another municipal employee (M4) argues that for the municipality, it is also important not to make a difference between Germans and refugees. This means that since 2015 the municipality has helped around 1,300 refugees to find private housing, but also the same amount of Germans have found housing with the help of the municipality. This shows that the access to the facilities to find housing is equal between Germans and refugees in St. Ingbert. Also, refugees (R2, R3, R5) feel that they are treated equally in terms of housing access.

Healthcare

Refugees who are not (yet) recognized or have been rejected cannot receive German health insurance (Deutscher Bundestag, 2018). This means that for every month, they must request a so-called *treatment certificate* at the municipality, which reimburses necessary medical expenses, meaning that treatments are limited to cases of pain and acute illness but also include necessary vaccinations (Staatskanzlei Saarland, 2016). However, refugees (R1, R5) argue that

access to healthcare was not problematic in St. Ingbert because they were still able to go to the doctor even when they were not yet recognized.

After refugees become recognized, they receive normal health insurance. Technically, this means that they have equal access to healthcare as Germans. However, what remains is the language barrier between refugees and healthcare professionals. Here the municipality comes in as they provide language mediators that accompany the refugees to the doctors. The municipality thus tries to ensure that also refugees that do not (yet) speak German well can access healthcare in St. Ingbert on an equal level to Germans.

4.3.2 Cultural-religious integration

Language

The most important player for German language learning in St. Ingbert is the local community college (*Volkshochschule, VHS*). The *VHS* teaches the official language and integration courses of the *Federal Office for Migration and Refugees*. In St. Ingbert, these courses continue until the B2 level. Moreover, the courses are financed by the state for recognized refugees and asylum seekers with a good prospect of becoming recognized (BAMF, 2018a). When large numbers of refugees came in 2015/16, the municipality rented a house so that multiple language courses at different proficiency levels could take place. Refugees (R2, R3) are generally satisfied with the availability of the language courses, but one refugee (R2) states that it took a long time until he got a spot in the language course. A city council member, N1, argues that when large numbers of refugees arrived in St. Ingbert in 2015/16, it was initially difficult to organize enough language courses, "but meanwhile, everyone has had the opportunity to attend a lot of language courses and to be able to speak the language."

What is problematic about these official language courses is that they are not open to refugees who are not recognized. However, in cooperation with volunteers, the municipality provides voluntary language courses that are also open to unrecognized refugees.

Lastly, it is important to mention that refugees receive language help in official contexts. As mentioned earlier, the municipality employs four language mediators, three for the Arabic language and one for the Ukrainian and Russian languages.

Religion

There are two mosques in St. Ingbert. Nonetheless, refugees are limited to going to the mosques in St. Ingbert for two reasons. Firstly, the mosques are Turkish-speaking. A refugee (R5) argues that he went to the mosque in the beginning after his arrival in St. Ingbert but stopped going

because he did not understand anything. Secondly, the main day of prayer for Syrian refugees is Friday, but most of the refugees that have arrived since 2015/16 now have to work on Fridays. As a consequence, many of the refugees I spoke to (R1, R3, R5) practice their religion in their own homes and do not go to the mosque.

With regards to the acceptance of religious diversity by the local population, I observed mixed answers. One refugee (R5) argues that he hasn't "had any bad experiences in St. Ingbert." However, another refugee (R4) argues that his wife was mistreated because she wears a hijab. Similarly, employees of the *VHS* (N6, N7) argue that in 2015/16, women who wore hijabs were looked at in a certain way, but that this is a decreasing phenomenon, which could be a sign that St. Ingbert has become more accepting towards expressing religious diversity. Probably, it is difficult to generalize whether the whole town accepts religious diversity. When asked whether he thinks it is accepted in St. Ingbert that he has a different religion, R4 argues:

> *Generally yes. I would say out of 10, 9 yes and 1 no. Personally, […] no one ever told me that I'm not welcome here or that I'm not allowed to come here. I've never experienced it like that. But I heard.[17]*

Symbolic culture

Regarding symbolic culture, the municipality plays an important role in explaining "German norms and rules" to refugees when they first arrive in St. Ingbert. This includes things such as trash separation.

Moreover, with regards to the recognition of foreign diplomas, the *Jobcenter* is the main actor in St. Ingbert. They do so in cooperation with other actors in the nearby town of Saarbrücken and cover the costs of this recognition process. However, an interviewee of the *Jobcenter* (N7) argues that it can take a very long time until the diplomas are recognized. Furthermore, diplomas of some people cannot be recognized at all because their skills do not match those required for the German labor market. Some refugees (R3, R5) described that the process of getting a foreign diploma recognized in Germany is difficult. A refugee (R5) argues that he started over with a new study because only half of his existing study would have been recognized in Germany. Also, a member of the municipal council (N1) argues that oftentimes refugees do not get their foreign qualifications recognized in Germany, which is why they must work in jobs below their qualifications and abilities.

Additionally, there are programs to support the existing education of refugees in St. Ingbert. A volunteer (N5) describes that she knows many refugees in St. Ingbert who did

internships in order to get their foreign qualifications recognized. Moreover, the *Jobcenter* finances classes to support the existing education of refugees. However, a refugee (R4) has had bad experiences with the *Jobcenter* regarding the provision of classes to support his existing education:

> *I am a computer scientist. I was fit when I came here. I could speak English. My information, IT information was fresh, and I just needed either a special course in the technical language or further education in the IT field to be suitable for the market. But I didn't get that.*[18]

Preserving and transmitting culture

In order to preserve and transmit their culture, refugees in St. Ingbert formed a cultural association with the help of a member of the city council. However, this Syrian cultural association was not able to organize any activities yet. The person of the city council who was involved in the formation of the association (N5) argues that this is because the interests of the people who formed this association are diverging:

> *And it's been in limbo now for two years because one person has one interest and the other has another interest. And it's a very difficult thing to bring together more than five people who have the same interest.*[19]

Another problem that the cultural association has is that they did not find a building yet. Furthermore, the Corona pandemic meant that the association could not organize activities. Another way how Syrian refugees in St. Ingbert preserve their culture is by enrolling their children in private Arabic lessons that took place on Saturdays. However, since Corona, these lessons did not take place any more.

With regards to cultural transmission, refugees (R3, R4) argue that Syrian culture can now be visible in the food Germans eat in St. Ingbert. An interviewee (R3) states that he realized that "the German people like Syrian food." However, other than that refugees, I interviewed (R2, R3, R4, R5), agree that not much cultural transmission is taking place. When asked if there is a way the culture of refugees can be visible within St. Ingbert, a refugee (R5) argues the following:

I don't think the Germans accept that. I do not believe that. Honestly. […] The Germans are not like the Americans or the French. You can't compare them; you can't mix them either.[20]

Another interviewee (R2) argues similarly. According to him, the Syrian culture is a "completely different culture, just a completely different system, life system." This is why he thinks that cultural transmission also will not take place in the future.

4.3.3 Legal-political integration

Access to citizenship

All the refugees I interviewed do not yet have German citizenship. This is because one needs to be a resident in Germany for eight years until one is eligible for applying to German citizenship. However, there are exceptions, and when one is "well integrated," one can already apply for German citizenship after six years (BAMF, 2018b) . Generally, refugees (R2, R3, R5) agree that it is difficult to obtain German citizenship and that rules are not clear. Several interviewees (R2, R5) argue that they did not obtain German citizenship yet because they do not have valid Syrian passports, which is a requirement for obtaining German citizenship in Saarland. At the same time, R5 states that they know that there have been cases when Syrian refugees got German citizenship even though they did not have a valid Syrian passport:

Then you suddenly hear that someone got a German passport and didn't have a valid Syrian passport. Nobody knows why. But it is the case. For example, there are the people who work at [the Interior Ministry]; for one it doesn't matter if you have a Syrian passport or not. The other one really cares.[21]

When asking employees of the *staff unit integration,* I observed mixed answers about their role in the acquisition of German citizenship. Whereas one social worker (M2) argues that the staff unit has "already developed a standard letter to apply" for German citizenship, another social worker (M3) argues that it is not the role of the municipality to help people to acquire German citizenship because "someone who wants German citizenship should be able to do it themselves."

Direct political inclusion

Refugees who do not have German citizenship (yet) cannot participate in municipal elections. Due to this lack of German citizenship, there is also no direct political representation of refugees in the city council of St. Ingbert or in other municipal political bodies. An employee of the municipality (M5) argues that "it's actually not really possible to integrate yourself politically if you don't have a say." A refugee (R5) argues similarly. He is not interested in local politics because he cannot vote anyways. Another social worker of the municipality (M3) explains the lack of direct political inclusion as follows:

> *I think that [the refugees] don't even have the idea to [become politically active]. I don't know what it's like in their respective home countries either. Depending on what the regime is like, people don't have much of a say and aren't used to it being like that.[22]*

It must thus be said that there is a lack of direct political inclusion of refugees in St. Ingbert.

Indirect political inclusion

Indirect political inclusion of refugees in St. Ingbert happens through two organs. Firstly, through the cross-party influence of the *representative of the mayor for social affairs and integration*. Secondly, through the *alliance for cosmopolitanism, diversity, and tolerance.* A member of this alliance (N9) argues that they try to include the political concerns of refugees in the municipal administration by staying in close contact with the mayor. However, it is questionable the what extent the alliance has a real political influence as they do not have any members who are also representatives in the city council. In fact, an employee of the municipality (M3) argues that the *alliance for cosmopolitanism, diversity, and tolerance* cannot accurately represent the political interests of refugees because "it's a group of […] 15 people" that is "threatened with extinction because they're all very old." Moreover, a member of the city council (N5) argues that in St. Ingbert, there is no "interest group […] that deals specifically with the problems of refugees". It thus must be argued that there is also a lack of indirect political inclusion of refugees in St. Ingbert. This could also be observed in interviews with refugees. When being asked whether there are any organs in St. Ingbert that represent their political interests, refugee interviewees (R2, R3, R5) argue that there are none, and if there were any, they would not be aware of their existence.

4.4 Perception of refugee potential

The aging of the population and population decline were identified as challenges in rural localities (Danson, 2007). The following quote from N6, an employee of the *Jobcenter*, shows the local problem of population decline:

> *We have a population decline, also in Saarland. And without this immigration, we run the risk of not being able to maintain our economic location.*[1]

Additionally, N5, a member of the city council, argues that many refugees "came with children" and that "a lot of them are having children right now," which contributes to a "rejuvenation" of Sankt Ingbert as the town has "a lot of older generations."

Corresponding to the aging of the population is the shortage of skilled workers in St. Ingbert. The potential of refugees mentioned most often by interviewees (M2, M3, M5, N1, N6, N7, N9) is that of contributing to the local labor market, where open positions can oftentimes not be filled by the local population. Another potential that was mentioned by interviewees was that services in the town could be kept running; for example, local bus services are kept alive by employing refugees, as M2 states.

Another added value of refugees that have arrived in St. Ingbert since 2015/16 is that these refugees can help other newcomers. A volunteer, N9, describes the situation as follows:

> *What we are seeing right now is that Syrian people […] are now also committed to helping Ukrainian refugees […] I think that's great.*[2]

Lastly, an added value of the arrival of refugees mentioned by many interviewees (M1, M3, M5, N1, N5) is that they contribute to the town's social and cultural diversity. An interviewee, M5, argues that this is very important because it enables refugees and locals to "mutually enrich each other."

When asked about whether there is a difference in the potential between Ukrainian refugees and refugees who came in 2015/16, the interviewees agree that it is too early to judge (M3, N3, N4, N5). M3 argues the following:

> *I think it's too difficult to judge now because it's not even clear whether [Ukrainian] people are here for long, medium, or short term. It is clear that the people who fled in*

2015/16 will probably not go back or not in the near future. […] And with the Ukrainians, they're still a bit reluctant because I think there's hope that they can just go back in the medium term. So I think it's hard to judge at this point.[3]

4.4.1 Perception of refugee potential as a mediator?

Lastly, this chapter considers how the perception of refugee potential mediates the relationship between local receptivity and integration. When being asked in how far the perception of the potential of refugees is linked to how resources are implemented in the integration work in St. Ingbert, interviewees (M3, M5, N5) agree that the way the municipality of St. Ingbert and its network use their resources to achieve the integration of refugees is not coupled to how the potential of these refugees is perceived. When being asked about how the perceived potential of refugees influences how the municipality uses its resources, a social worker (M3) argues the following:

This is not what motivates us employees in the social affairs department. Because in the end, it is irrelevant to me what potential the person has for society. We also take care of people who have no added value, who have deviant behavior. So if they fail all the structures and are dropped by everyone, we're the ones who catch the people and try to integrate them again somehow.[23]

Similarly, a member of the city council (N5) argues that in her decisions for the city council, she is not motivated by the potential of the refugees but for her, it is about the humane aspect:

It's just humane work, but absolutely there is no focus on any resources or any education or… Absolutely not. No. Everyone is treated the same, regardless of whether they came from the deepest Syria with a donkey cart or from Damascus as a highly educated engineer. From the side of the municipality.[24]

It must thus be stated that the motivation of the municipality to provide resources for the integration of refugees is not coupled with how they view the potential of these people for St. Ingbert.

4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter constituted the analysis and presented the findings. The following section will summarize these findings by linking them back to the sub-questions' concepts. The integrational offers in St. Ingbert are realized through a multitude of actors that come together in a network. Next to the municipality, important actors are volunteers; schools; *the association for cosmopolitanism, diversity, and tolerance*; the *VHS*; the *Jobcenter*; and local association. This network shapes the local receptivity through a multitude of resources. However, the analysis also revealed that in specific fields, like housing and specialized medical care, there are scarce resources. Furthermore, it was shown that the rural characteristics of the town play an important role in shaping receptivity in St. Ingbert. This includes advantages such as close social proximity and short channels in the administration, and the role played by local associations. However, there are also disadvantages, like the poorly developed public transport or the wish of many refugees to relocate to larger cities. The analysis revealed that through the implementation of the resources, integration takes place in different fields, including socio-economic, cultural-religious, and legal-political. In the field of socio-economic integration, refugees experience assistance from the municipality and network partners. However, challenges remain, such as the difficult socio-economic integration of older refugees, unrecognized refugees, and refugee women. Concerning cultural-religious integration, it has been shown that the local *VHS* plays the most important role in language learning. Moreover, refugees that arrived since 2015/16 have founded a cultural association to preserve and transmit their own culture. Regarding legal-political integration, it has been shown that this type of integration is lagging behind in comparison to the other two types. Possible explanations were the difficult and untransparent procedure to obtain German citizenship and the failure of local players, such as the *alliance for cosmopolitanism, diversity, and tolerance,* to represent the interests of refugees adequately. Lastly, the analysis revealed that the perceived potential of refugees is to contribute to combating demographic and labor-market challenges the town is experiencing. Moreover, it has been argued that refugees contribute to the town's cultural diversity and can help other newcomers with their process of integration. However, the perception of the potential of refugees does not mediate the relationship between receptivity and integration.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

5.1 The local integration network

Existing literature argues that complex policy problems, such as integration, are solved within networks of actors (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). This network approach is confirmed by my analysis. In line with my third research expectation, the municipality of St. Ingbert works together with many different local actors, such as the *VHS*; the *Jobcenter*; local associations/clubs; and *the alliance for cosmopolitanism, diversity, and tolerance*.

Research by Hunger and Kersting (2019) and Schamann and Kühn (2017) argues that municipalities often play a coordinating role within the network of actors that are involved in the integration of refugees. This can also be seen in the analysis of St. Ingbert. The municipality has two fundamental roles within the network. First and in line with the third research expectation, the municipality coordinates the different activities in the network. Second and beyond the third research expectation, the municipality is the initiator of this network.

Based on the framework of Najam (2000), I differentiated four types of relationships between municipality and network partners: cooperation, confrontation, complementarity, and co-optation. The analysis showed that the relationship is characterized by cooperation as network partners work together closely and want to achieve the same goal. Nonetheless, it must be mentioned that due to my own position within the municipality of St. Ingbert as an intern, I interviewed network partners that the municipality itself considered important. It is thus possible that there are more organizations that are involved in the integration of refugees in St. Ingbert that do not want to cooperate with the municipality. This means that my findings might be incomplete in this regard.

5.2 Local receptivity

My study applied the framework of local receptivity of Glorius et al. (2021) to the town of St. Ingbert. Glorius et al. (2021) differentiate three dimensions that are relevant to the integration of refugees in a locality. Similarly, Gesemann and Roth (2016) argue that there are three resource bundles that are important for the integration of refugees. In line with the fifth research expectation, different resources for the integration of refugees could be found in St. Ingbert. Regarding the contextual factors, it was shown that in some areas, there are scarce resources, like schooling, housing, and healthcare.

Regarding the local government and cooperation culture, the analysis confirmed that good cooperation culture in the local administration is advantageous for the integration of

refugees. Moreover, the analysis has confirmed the importance of a proactive governance approach (Glorius et al., 2021). It has been shown that in St. Ingbert, the adaptability of the local governance structure allowed for a quick reaction to the arrival of refugees in 2015/16. This finding is also in line with the fourth research expectation, namely, that St. Ingbert is following a bottom-up approach to integration. The analysis revealed that due to the specific integration challenges experienced, the municipality developed measures that are specific to its context and cannot be found in neighboring municipalities. However, because of the single case study design of this research I did not compare St. Ingbert to another municipality. This means that comparable municipalities might have reacted faster and better to the arrival of refugees than St. Ingbert. It is thus difficult to generalize my findings.

Regarding the societal structure, the analysis revealed that in St. Ingbert, there is generally a positive mood and openness towards newcomers. However, it has also been shown that a minority in the town keeps its distance from the refugees. In line with the fifth research expectation, the importance of the openness of local clubs can be confirmed. Moreover, and also in line with the fifth research expectation, it can be confirmed that voluntary commitments of the local population play an important role in the integration of refugees.

Also, the difference between the available resources and the implementation of the resources was demonstrated by the analysis (Glorius et al., 2021). Regardless of the lack of resources in multiple areas, such as housing, or specific fields of healthcare, it has been shown that tasks are still performed well because of solution-oriented thinking on the side of the municipality and the way the municipality implements its resources.

In addition to these three dimensions, I extended the framework of Glorius et al. (2021) by an extra dimension, namely the rural context. Rösch et al. (2020) argue that there are some advantages and disadvantages to the rural context regarding refugee integration. In St. Ingbert, these advantages are greater social proximity and short channels in the administration. However, the advantage of large availability of housing cannot be found in St. Ingbert. As disadvantage, Rösch et al. (2020) mention lack of integration offers, which cannot be confirmed for St. Ingbert, where there is broad availability of language classes. Another disadvantage is the lack of migrant self-organization. This can be partially confirmed in St. Ingbert. There were enough refugees to form their own cultural association. However, this cultural association did not initiate any activities yet. In my first research hypothesis, I expected that St. Ingbert is experiencing the same advantages and challenges in the integration of refugees as other rural municipalities in Germany. The analysis showed that this expectation could only be partially confirmed. A main explanatory factor of why some of the integration

disadvantages of rural localities that have been shown by other research cannot be found in St. Ingbert is that the town must be defined as being in between rural and urban. This means that important integration infrastructure, like the availability of language classes can be found in the town, coupled with the advantages of a rural locality, such as social proximity and the pronounced role of clubs.

5.3 Integration

Research by Glick-Schiller and Caglar (2009) argues that pathways for integration are best in top-scale cities that are connected to the global economy. Even though the analysis did not focus on where to place St. Ingbert on the scale of Glick-Schiller and Caglar (2009), it can be argued that St. Ingbert is in between a low-scale and down-scale city. The town aims to achieve economic restructuring by attracting IT firms, which is a new industry of global importance. At the same time, the town's small size and rural character limit its importance in a globalized world. According to Glick-Schiller and Caglar (2009), these characteristics negatively influence the integration chances for newcomers. In contrast to Glick-Schiller and Caglar (2009), the analysis revealed that there are multiple opportunities for integration in St. Ingbert, regardless of the town's post-industrial positioning. This has been shown by applying the framework of Penninx and Garcés-Mascarenas (2016a) with its three dimensions. Regarding socio-economic integration, the analysis showed that recognized refugees have equal access to institutional facilities for finding work, housing, education, and health care as Germans in St. Ingbert. However, it has also been revealed that problems in the socio-economic integration remain, such as the fact that refugees must work in jobs below their qualifications, the socio-economic integration of refugee women, and the exclusion from institutional facilities of asylum seekers who are still in the process of being granted asylum or rejected asylum seekers.

Regarding cultural-religious integration, Penninx and Garcés-Mascarenas (2016a) argue that there are two extremes of cultural-religious integration. For St. Ingbert, it can be argued that the local cultural-religious integration lies in between these two extremes. On the one hand, there is general acceptance of diversity of the local population. It has also been shown that this acceptance has increased with the arrival of refugees since 2015. On the other hand, there are also some locals who have difficulties accepting the increased diversity. Moreover, the analysis showed that German culture is still dominant in St. Ingbert and that refugees also do not think that this will change in the future.

Regarding legal-political integration, the analysis showed that in St. Ingbert, this type of integration is lagging behind. This is both in terms of direct and indirect political inclusion. This lack can be partially explained by an argument of Caponio (2014), who states that the municipality cannot change access to citizenship. In fact, the analysis showed that the lacking access to citizenship is a possible explanation for why refugees are not integrated into the local politics.

Moreover, the analysis showed that the perception of refugee potential does not act as a mediator between local receptivity and integration. Rather than focusing on the potential that refugees have for St. Ingbert, it has been revealed that there is an ethical motivation of municipal employees to help people in need.

5.4 Perception of refugee potential

Danson (2007) argues that refugees can contribute to solving specific challenges a rural locality, like St. Ingbert, is experiencing. The main challenges identified in the theoretical framework were population decline and the aging of the population. In my second research expectation, I argued that the municipality of St. Ingbert views the arrival of refugees as a chance to combat these demographic challenges. The analysis confirms that the municipality views the potential of refugees as contributing to solving these demographic challenges. The arrival of refugees helps to counter the population decline. Moreover, many refugees come to St. Ingbert with children or also get children now, which helps to combat the aging of the population. Furthermore, the analysis brought forward different potentials of refugees that are related to these two demographic challenges, such as the shortage of skilled workers or the contribution of refugees to keep services in St. Ingbert running (Gauci, 2020).

In addition to the contribution of refugees in the demographic field, two other potentials of refugees in the rural context could be identified that go beyond my second research expectation. Firstly, cultural diversity. Research by Gauci (2020) shows that one potential of refugees in rural localities is the diversity that results from their arrival. The theoretical framework argued that this diversity is viewed as an opportunity by the West German rural municipalities of Gronau and Hofheim. Contrastingly, research by Glorius (2017) in East Germany shows that rural municipalities are less welcoming toward refugees. This split between West and East Germany seems to be supported by the analysis. The analysis showed that in St. Ingbert, the arrival of refugees is seen as enriching the locality's diversity, which is mostly seen as positive by the municipality and the inhabitants of the town I interviewed.

However, as I relied on qualitative interviews with a small N, it is difficult to conclude that the entire town perceives this increased diversity as positive. Surveys could have provided a more complete picture in this regard. Secondly, and in line with research by Gonzales Benson (2020), the analysis demonstrated that another potential of refugees that arrived in 2015/16 is that they can help newcomers that are arriving now.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

This study aimed to answer the following research question: *"How does the receptivity offered by the municipality of St. Ingbert and its network shape the integration of refugees that have arrived in St. Ingbert since 2015/16?"* To this end, I applied a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews with employees of the municipality of St. Ingbert, representatives of organizations who are part of the municipality's network, and refugees who have arrived since 2015/16.

6.1 Answering the research question

To answer the research question, five sub-questions were asked. The first sub-question investigated the integration network in St. Ingbert. It was shown that a multitude of actors is involved, each with its own resources. The municipality coordinates the activities of the different actors.

The second sub-question asked how the local receptivity in St. Ingbert is shaped by this network. Four dimensions were taken into account for the analysis of local receptivity. Firstly, the contextual factors. The economic structure in St. Ingbert plays an important role as there are enough available jobs and, for the most part, willingness of local firms to employ refugees. However, there are also employers who are skeptical towards hiring Syrian refugees. Furthermore, in other areas of contextual factors, a lack of resources has been identified, such as available housing, kindergarten spots, or the availability of psychologists and doctors who speak the mother tongue of refugees. With regards to the implementation of these resources, it has been shown that the municipality is willing to help refugees to obtain access to these contextual resources. Secondly, political actors and governance structure. The municipality's financial and human resource structure allowed the municipality to react promptly to the large arrival of refugees in 2015/16. This includes expansions of personnel and creating the *staff unit integration*. Thirdly, society and societal structure. Voluntary commitments of the local population play a fundamental role in the integration of refugees. Moreover, the openness of the local population and the ease with which locals can make contacts supports refugees' integration. Fourthly, rural context. It has been shown that St. Ingbert is in between rural and urban. On the one hand, this enables the town to organize integrational offers that can often only be found in bigger cities, like a broad range of language classes. On the other hand, short channels in the administration and social proximity, both characteristics of rural localities, have been identified as advantages to the integration of refugees.

The third sub-question asked how this local receptivity translates into the integration of refugees that have arrived in the town since 2015/16. Integration in St. Ingbert can be witnessed in three different fields: socio-economic, cultural-religious, and legal-political. Firstly, socio-economic integration. Recognized refugees have equal access to institutional provisions for finding work, housing, education, and employment in St. Ingbert. Nonetheless, socio-economic integration of refugee women, asylum seekers who are still in their procedure, and rejected asylum seekers is lagging behind. Secondly, cultural-religious integration. Language courses in St. Ingbert are available in multiple proficiency levels. Religious integration is more problematic, as the two mosques in St. Ingbert are Turkish. Moreover, the transmission of the culture of refugees that have arrived since 2015/16 is limited even though a cultural association has been founded. Thirdly, the least advanced aspect of refugee integration in St. Ingbert is legal-political integration. It must, however, be awaited how the legal-political integration of refugees will change when more refugees that arrived since 2015/16 have obtained German citizenship.

The fourth sub-question investigated how the municipality of St. Ingbert and its network perceive the potential of refugees that have arrived since 2015/16. It has been shown that refugees are perceived to be part of the solution to the town's two-fold demographic challenge. Moreover, refugees are an important contributor to the workforce in St. Ingbert, which helps local businesses to keep running and also ensures that essential services in the town are upheld. Lastly, it has been shown that another perceived potential is the increased cultural diversity and the help that refugees who have been in the town for some years can offer to other newcomers. The fifth sub-question asked whether the perception of the refugee potential mediates the relationship between local receptivity and integration. This is, however, not the case.

The answers to the sub-questions allow answering the general research question. The receptivity offered by the municipality and its network shapes the integration of refugees that have arrived since 2015/16 in St. Ingbert fundamentally. Socio-economic integration is shaped by the municipality in terms of providing housing and access to schools. Moreover, the *Jobcenter* plays the largest role when it comes to integration into the labor market. Cultural integration is shaped by the openness of the local population. This means that refugees in St. Ingbert (mostly) feel accepted in their diversity and are not discriminated against. Consequently, refugees can live their culture in St. Ingbert, even though the German culture is still dominant. However, it was also shown that a minority of residents keep their distance to refugees. Lastly, there is a connection between receptivity and legal-political integration. As

refugees do not have voting rights, they cannot participate in elections and are thus not directly politically integrated.

6.2 Contribution

This study contributes to the existing research on rural refugee integration. This is because it is one of the first studies that applied Glorius et al.'s (2021) framework on local receptivity to an actual case. The important role of the municipality within this framework has been uncovered, as the municipality of St. Ingbert plays a role as mediator within the dimensions of contextual factors and the societal structure. Regarding contextual factors, the municipality plays a role in providing access to housing, healthcare, schooling, and work. Regarding the local societal structure, the municipality stimulates contact between refugees and locals. Furthermore, it was shown that a fourth dimension was necessary to adequately paint the picture of St. Ingbert's integration infrastructure. Moreover, this research combines Glorius et al.'s (2021) framework with the integration framework of Penninx and Garcés-Mascarenas (2016a). Thereby a unique feature of this study was to investigate how refugees can contribute to combating demographic challenges the locality is experiencing and whether this perception of refugee potential mediates the relationship between local receptivity and integration.

6.3 Limitations & future research

The limitations of this research must be mentioned. Firstly, I was not able to interview all network partners that are relevant for the integration of refugees in St. Ingbert. This is because representatives of some organizations did not respond to my e-mails after contracting them multiple times. Future research could thus aim to include all network partners that are relevant to the integration of refugees. Secondly, I only interviewed male refugees from Syria as my interviews with female refugees were cancelled. Future research should include female refugees to add more nuance to the analysis, especially given that the socio-economic integration of female refugees is lagging behind. There are two possible explanations for the failure of this study to include female refugees. On the one hand, I am male, which means that female refugees might not feel comfortable enough to be interviewed. On the other hand, the problematic integrability of female refugees could also be one of the reasons why it was more difficult to find female refugee respondents for my study. Third, my interview partners were restricted to the people I snowballed through my access point in the municipality. This means that the analysis is limited to interviewing network partners, as well as refugees that are in close

contact with the municipality. This means that my research might have provided a positive picture of the municipal efforts for refugee integration that are not shared by everyone in the town. Fourth, as my research relies on 19 interview partners, the N of my research is relatively low. An alternative approach to reach more respondents could have been to distribute surveys. This could have provided more generalizable findings. Fifth, a limitation arises out of the fact that I applied the framework of Glorius et al. (2021) purely to the municipality of St. Ingbert and not to the entire *Saarpfalz-Kreis*. This is because the *Saarpfalz-Kreis* also takes on relevant tasks in the integration of newcomers. Future research could analyze multiple municipalities within the same district to see how different municipalities compare in terms of their local receptivity and what this actually means for the integration outcomes within these municipalities.

6.4 Recommendations for practitioners

Lastly, recommendations for practitioners in other (rural) municipalities are provided. Firstly, my research shows that building a municipal network is important for the integration of newcomers. This is because, through this network, the municipality can reach partner organizations and civil society actors more easily and obtain a more complete picture of how integration is proceeding in different areas. Therefore other municipalities are advised to build a network of different actors that support the municipality in providing integration offers. These integrational offers must be coordinated by the municipality.

Secondly, the analysis uncovered that good communication between municipal employees and the municipal council is essential for creating the necessary integration governance structures, both in terms of human and financial resources. In St. Ingbert, municipal employees argued that due to the good communication between them and the council, they were able to achieve the support of the municipal council to provide the necessary resources. It is thus recommended that regular communication between council and municipal employees takes place.

Thirdly, in St. Ingbert, it was shown that due to the formation of the *staff unit integration* that was directly positioned under the mayor, the municipality was able to respond quickly to the arrival of refugees in 2015/16. Other municipalities that experience a large inflow of refugees are also advised to create a separate staff unit that is responsible for refugees. This ensures that there is a central access point in the town that refugees can rely on in case of

questions or problems. Moreover, accumulation and transfer of information can take place in such a unit.

Fourthly, the analysis showed that political integration of refugees is lagging behind in St. Ingbert. For other municipalities and also for St. Ingbert, it is thus recommended that structures are created that ensure the political integration of refugees even if they do not (yet) have voting rights. This can be done through the creation of a refugee board, where refugees discuss and share their concerns with the municipal council.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Guides

Interview guide officials from municipality

1. Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed for my study. Before I will ask more specific questions towards you, I want to give you a quick overview over what exactly I am studying.

I am studying how the municipality of St. Ingbert realizes the integration of refugees into the local context. I am interested in different types of integration. I will specify what exactly I mean in a later stage of the interview, when I will talk about these specific kinds of integration. From you I would like to know, how you describe the role of the municipality and also partners of the municipality in the integration of refugees that have arrived there since 2015. This includes refugees that have come to St. Ingbert in 2015/16 connected to the refugee crisis and also more recent arrivals of refugees, connected to the war in Ukraine.

I also want to reassure you that the information in this interview will be treated confidentially, I will never mention your name in any of my research.

Before we start, I would like to ask you to read through the consent form and sign it. If there are any other questions, please let me know. I also want to remind you, that there are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your view and your story.

2. View of the potential of refugees

In the beginning, I want to ask how you view the potential of refugees that come here. With potential I mean the benefits that refugees bring to St. Ingbert. More specifically, I am interested in how refugees might contribute to overcoming challenges that the municipality is facing. I am interested in the potential of refugees that have arrived here in 2015/16 and in the potential of Ukrainian refugees.

- How did the municipality of St. Ingbert perceive the potential of the refugees that came in 2015/16?
  - *Depending on answer ask more specifically about positive and negative aspects of presence of refugees*
    - How do refugees help to mitigate challenges that the locality is experiencing?
      - Demographic decline
      - Aging of the population

- ▪ What new challenges come into play through the arrival of refugees?
- • How does the municipality of St. Ingbert perceive the potential of the Ukrainian refugees that have arrived more recently?
  - o *Depending on answer ask more specifically about positive and negative aspects of presence of refugees*
    - ▪ How do refugees help to mitigate challenges that the locality is experiencing?
      - • Demographic decline
      - • Aging of the population

3. General questions about the position of the official

Now, I would like to ask you some general questions about your work in the municipality of St. Ingbert and how that work relates to the integration of refugees that have arrived here since 2015.

- • What is your current job at the municipality?
- • How long have you been doing this job?
- • How does your work relate to the integration of refugees?

4. More specific questions about the role of the municipality? (Local receptivity)

I am interested about the role of the municipality and the services the municipality offers when it comes to the integration of refugees. I would first like to ask some general questions about the context that you are working in and then I will ask more specific questions about the role of the municipality.

Structural framing conditions
- • Resources:
  - o Economic:
    - ▪ How has the local economy reacted to the arrival of refugees in St. Ingbert in 2015/16?
    - ▪ How does the local economy react to the arrival of refugees in St. Ingbert now?
  - o Housing:
    - ▪ How has the housing of refugees been organized in St. Ingbert?

- How has the housing of refugees changed since 2015/16?
    - Was there enough available housing to cope with the arrival of refugees in 2015/16?
    - Is there enough available housing to cope with the arrival of refugees now?
- Schooling:
    - How has the schooling of refugees been organized in St. Ingbert?
    - Were there enough resources in the local schooling system to cope with the arrival of refugees in 2015/16?
    - Are there enough resources in the local schooling system to cope with the arrival of refugees now?
- Healthcare:
    - How has the healthcare of refugees been organized in St. Ingbert?
    - Were there enough resources in the local healthcare system to cope with the arrival of refugees in 2015/16?
    - Are there enough resources in the local healthcare system to cope with the arrival of refugees now?
- Resource implementation:
    - Is the municipality of St. Ingbert willing to provide access to refugees in terms of:
        - Labor market
        - Housing
        - Schooling
        - Healthcare
    - If yes, how exactly is access provided?
    - How has this access provision changed since 2015/16?

Political actors and governance structure (municipality of St. Ingbert)
- Resources:
    - How well is the municipality, in terms of its financial resources, equipped to deal with the integration of refugees?
    - How well is the municipality, in terms of its human resources, equipped to deal with the integration of refugees?

- o Is there an active governance strategy regarding the integration of refugees and what does it look like?
- o Does the municipality have its own concept of integration?
  - If yes, how has this integration concept changed since 2015/16?
- o How well are different political actors in St. Ingbert involved in the integration of refugees? (*Think of debates in the municipal councils, committees in the municipal council occupied with the integration of refugees*).
- Resource implementation:
  - o Is the municipality of St. Ingbert willing to spend resources on the integration of refugees (*Think of different resources*):
    - Housing
    - Education
    - Employment
    - Healthcare
  - o How has the resource attribution of the municipality of St. Ingbert changed since the arrival of refugees in 2015/16?
    - How does this help with the integration of these refugees?

- Own work of the official:
  - o What competences do you have in your work and how does this result in the integration of refugees?
  - o Do the resources you have, match with your task?

Society and societal structure
Now, I would like to ask some more specific questions about the general attitude of people in St. Ingbert related to refugee integration.
- How are general attitudes and experiences towards refugees that have arrived in St. Ingbert since 2015/16?
  - o Do you think there is a difference in attitudes towards refugees that have arrived in 2015/16 in the course of the refugee crisis and the attitudes towards refugees that have arrived more recently in the course of the war in Ukraine?
- What is the collective memory of St. Ingbert in relation to refugee migration?
  - o E.g. has St. Ingbert experienced arrival of refugees before 2015?

- What role have these memories/experiences played concerning the integration of refugees 2015/16?
- What role do these memories/experienced play concerning the integration of refugees now?

- Resources:
  - Does the municipality of St. Ingbert work together with the local residents to achieve the integration of refugees?
  - Does the municipality of St. Ingbert keep stock of volunteers that work with refugees?
- Implementation of resources:
  - Does the municipality of St. Ingbert stimulate interaction between refugees and non-refugees in St. Ingbert?
    - If yes, how so?

Role within the network of actors involved in the integration of refugees
- What do you think is the role of the municipality of St. Ingbert in relation to other actors that are relevant for the integration of refugees?
- What do you think about the communication between municipality and other actors?

5. Municipal integration measures and resources

If you think back about the things we just talked about, how do you think this context and also the role of the municipality facilitates the integration of refugees that have arrived since 2015 in different areas? I will specify what areas I mean when we are talking about the specific area.

Socio-economic integration
- How does the municipality facilitate the integration of refugees in terms of:
  - Work
  - Education
  - Housing
  - Healthcare
- What resources does the municipality have to foster the socio-economic integration of refugees and how are these resources used?

Legal-political integration

- Access to citizenship
    - Does the municipality of St. Ingbert encourage refugees to do efforts to acquire German citizenship, how so?
- Direct political inclusion
    - Does the municipality of St. Ingbert help/encourage refugees to participate politically, how so?
        - E.g. vote in municipal elections, encourage political participation in parties, etc.
- Indirect political inclusion
    - How are the political interests of refugees represented in the town of St. Ingbert?
        - E.g. committees in the municipal council
    - Are there consultative committees or immigrant councils in St. Ingbert?
- What resources does the municipality have to foster the political integration of refugees and how are these resources used?

Cultural-religious integration

- Language
    - How does the municipality of St. Ingbert assist refugees in learning German?
    - Are there any language/integration courses that are organized by the municipality?
        - Are there courses for different proficiency levels?
        - Does the municipality finance or co-finance these courses?
    - What resources does the municipality have to foster the language acquisition of refugees and how are these resources used?
- Religion (argue that I am aware that this is a sensitive topic).
    - In how far does the municipality of St. Ingbert encourage refugees to practice their own religion and culture? (e.g. financial support for Mosque)
- Symbolic culture (of the receiving society)
    - Does the municipality support programs to increase the suitability of refugees for the local labor market.

- o Does the municipality of St. Ingbert facilitate "cultural mediators" so that refugees can integrate more easily?
- o Does the municipality of St. Ingbert support activities of refugee associations, how so?

6. Rural refugee integration

The last topic I want to ask you about, is very specific to the local context of St. Ingbert, given that it is a smaller municipality.

- What are the strong suits concerning refugee integration in St. Ingbert? (Think of the role of clubs/associations, closer social contacts, shorter distances, availability of housing)
- What are some of the weak points concerning refugee integration in St. Ingbert? (Think of more conservative population, fewer language/integration courses, not as many refugees as in a bigger town)?
- Overall, do you think that the advantages of St. Ingbert outweigh the benefits, or the other way around?

Is there anything you would like to talk about, that has not been mentioned yet?

Interview guide municipal network

1. Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed for my study. Before I will ask more specific questions towards you, I want to give you a quick overview over what exactly I am studying.

I am studying how the integration of refugees is organized in the local context of St. Ingbert. I am interested in different types of integration. I will specify what exactly I mean in a later stage of the interview, when I will talk about these specific kinds of integration. From you I would like to know, how you describe the role of the organization you work for in the integration of refugees that have arrived there since 2015. This includes refugees that have come to St. Ingbert in 2015/16 connected to the refugee crisis and also more recent arrivals of refugees, connected to the war in Ukraine.

I also want to reassure you that the information in this interview will be treated confidentially, I will never mention your name in any of my research.

Before we start, I would like to ask you to read through the consent form and sign it. If there are any other questions, please let me know. I also want to remind you, that there are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your view and your story.

2, General questions about the organization

In the beginning, I would like to ask some general questions about the organization you work for.

- What organization do you work for?
- How is your organization related to the municipality of St. Ingbert and to other organizations in St. Ingbert that are involved with the integration of refugees?

3. View of the potential of refugees

Now, I want to ask how you view the potential of refugees that come here. With potential I mean the benefits that refugees bring to St. Ingbert. More specifically, I am interested in how refugees might contribute to overcoming challenges that St. Ingbert is facing. I am interested in the potential of refugees that have arrived here in 2015/16 and in the potential of Ukrainian refugees.

- How does the organization you work for, perceive the potential of the refugees that came in 2015/16?
  - *Depending on answer ask more specifically about positive and negative aspects of presence of refugees*
    - How do refugees help to mitigate challenges that the locality is experiencing?
      - Demographic decline
      - Aging of the population
    - What new challenges come into play through the arrival of refugees?
- How does the organization you work for, perceive the potential of the Ukrainian refugees that have arrived more recently?
  - *Depending on answer ask more specifically about positive and negative aspects of presence of refugees*
    - How do refugees help to mitigate challenges that the locality is experiencing?
      - Demographic decline

- Aging of the population

<u>4. Questions about the resources of the organization for refugee integration</u>

Society and societal structure

Now, I would like to ask some more specific questions about the general attitude of people in St. Ingbert related to refugee integration.

- How are general attitudes and experiences towards refugees that have arrived in St. Ingbert since 2015/16?
  - Do you think there is a difference in attitudes towards refugees that have arrived in 2015/16 in the course of the refugee crisis and the attitudes towards refugees that have arrived more recently in the course of the war in Ukraine?
- What is the collective memory of St. Ingbert in relation to refugee migration?
  - E.g. has St. Ingbert experienced arrival of refugees before 2015?
  - What role have these memories/experiences played concerning the integration of refugees 2015/16?
  - What role do these memories/experienced play concerning the integration of refugees now?

Integration

Now, I want to address the role of your organization as well as the resources your organization has in order to integrate refugees.

- What is the general role of your organization in the realization of refugee integration of refugees that have arrived in St. Ingbert since 2015?
  - Socio-economic integration
  - Legal-political integration
  - Cultural-religious integration
- What are challenges you encounter when offering this kind of integration work?
- How has the role of your organization changed in the face of the arrival of a large number of refugees in 2015/16?
- How has the role of your organization changed more recently in the face of the arrival of Ukrainian refugees?
- What are the resources (e.g. financial resources, human capital resources, knowledge) your organization has in order to realize the integration of refugees?

5. Rural refugee integration

The last topic I want to ask you about, is very specific to the local context of St. Ingbert, given that it is a smaller town:

- What are some of the strong suits of refugee integration work in St. Ingbert? (Think of the role of clubs/associations, closer social contacts, shorter distances, availability of housing)

- What are some of the weaknesses of refugee integration work in St. Ingbert? (Think of more conservative population, fewer language/integration courses, not as many refugees as in a bigger town)?

- Overall, do you think that the advantages of St. Ingbert outweigh the benefits, or the other way around?

Is there anything you would like to talk about, that has not been mentioned yet?

Interview guide refugees

1. Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed for my study. Before I will ask more specific questions towards you, I want to give you a quick overview over what exactly I am studying.

I am studying how the integration of refugees takes place into the local context in St. Ingbert. I am interested in your life since you came to St. Ingbert. From you I would like to know, how you experienced the efforts of the municipality and also partners of the municipality since you have arrived in St. Ingbert. I also want to reassure you that I am independent from the municipality and will at no point share information with the municipality that can be traced back to you.

I also want to reassure you that the information in this interview will be treated confidentially, I will never mention your name in any of my research.

Before we start, I would like to ask you to read through the consent form and sign it. If there are any other questions, please let me know. I also want to remind you, that there are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your view and your story.

2. General questions

At the beginning of this interview, I would like to ask you some general questions about your background. This information will be anonymized in my research.

- How old are you?

- When did you come to St. Ingbert?

- What is your country of origin?

- What is your highest level of education?

- Are you in St. Ingbert with any other family members?

3. Experience with the municipality of St. Ingbert and its partners

Now I would like to ask you some questions about how you experienced the role of the municipality of St. Ingbert and also organizations related to it in your integration process.

- When you first came to St. Ingbert how did the municipality welcome you?

- What organizations (related to the municipality) did you come in contact with and what was the role of these organizations in relation to your integration process?

- What do you think of the way the municipality helps refugees in finding their way in St. Ingbert?

4. Specific fields of integration

In this part of the interview, I want to ask some more specific questions about your life since you came to St. Ingbert.

Socio-economic integration

Let me start with the situation around work, housing, education, and health care.

- Work:
  - What is your current job?
  - Did the municipality or an organization related to it help you in finding this job? Did they give you any advice or refer you to another organization when seeking employment?
  - Do you think that you can access services of the municipality in regards to finding employment as easily as natives in St. Ingbert?
- Education
  - What is your highest level of education?

- o Did you follow any new education since you came to St. Ingbert?
- o Did the municipality or an organization related to it help/ encourage you in following education in Germany?
- o Given your qualifications, do you think you can access educational provisions as easily as natives in St. Ingbert?

- Housing
  - o What do you think of your current housing situation?
  - o Did the municipality of St. Ingbert or a related organization help you in finding housing?

- Healthcare
  - o Do you visit a doctor regularly in St. Ingbert?
  - o Do you make use of other healthcare facilities in St. Ingbert?
  - o Did the municipality of St. Ingbert help you to access local healthcare?
  - o Do you think you can access the healthcare system in St. Ingbert as well as natives in St. Ingbert?

Legal-political integration

Now I want to ask some questions about your political inclusion in St. Ingbert. I want to start more general with questions around German citizenship and will continue with political inclusion in St. Ingbert.

- Access to citizenship
  - o Did you acquire German citizenship?
    - ▪ If not, do you plan to acquire German citizenship? Why (not)?
  - o Does the municipality of St. Ingbert or an organization related to it, provide information/guidance/motivation to acquire German citizenship?

- Direct political inclusion
  - o Can you vote in municipal elections?
  - o Do you make use of these voting rights?
  - o Do you think that refugees are politically represented in the local political institutions? (*Think of the "Stadtrat" or representation in political parties*).
  - o Does the municipality or an organization related to it, stimulate you to participate politically?

- Indirect political inclusion

- How do you think are the political interests of refugees represented in the municipality?
- Are there any immigrant councils in the municipality?

Cultural-religious integration

Now, I would like to ask you some more specific questions about the role of the German language and learning it as well as the role of religion in your integration process

- Language
  - How well do you think you speak the German language?
  - How did you first start learning German? (*Think of different ways: e.g. through a volunteer, language classes, etc.*).
  - Did you participate in any language learning programs?
    - If yes, by whom were these courses organized?
  - What was the role of the municipality or any organization related to it, in learning German?
  - Is there any language support for refugees in official contexts?
- Religion (argue that I am aware that this is a sensitive topic).
  - How would you describe your religious orientation?
  - Do you have the possibility to practice your religion in St. Ingbert?
  - Do you think it is publicly accepted to practice your religion and show signs that you are affiliated with a certain religion?
- Symbolic culture (of the receiving society)
  - Are your diplomas recognized in Germany?
  - Did you attend any programs that support your existing education in order to increase your suitability for the labor market in St Ingbert?
  - Did the municipality of St. Ingbert facilitate "cultural mediators" so that you had it easier to access institutions when you first came to St. Ingbert?
- Preserving and transmitting cultural patterns (of the sending country)
  - Do you think that the culture you brought from your home country influenced/changed the local culture? (You can think of different things: food, lifestyle, festivities, holidays (e.g. days off when there is a religious holiday), etc.)

5. Rural refugee integration

The last topic I want to ask you about, is very specific to the local context of St. Ingbert, given that it is a smaller municipality.

- What are some of the advantages of coming to St. Ingbert as a refugee? (Think of the role of clubs/associations, closer social contacts, shorter distances, availability of housing)

- What are some of the disadvantages of coming to St. Ingbert as a refugee? (Think of more conservative population, fewer language/integration courses, not as many refugees as in a bigger town)?

- Overall, do you think that the advantages of St. Ingbert outweigh the benefits, or the other way around?

Is there anything you would like to talk about, that has not been mentioned yet?

Appendix 2: Coding book

Appendix 2 provides an overview of the coding book.

General codes	Official	Current job	Current job of official
			Relation between work and integration of refugees
		Own work of official	Competences of the official
			Resources of the official
	Refugee		Age refugee
			Duration of stay in St. Ingbert
			Place of stay before St. Ingbert
			Country of origin refugee
			Education refugee
			Family refugee
			First days in St. Ingbert

Network			Inter-organizational cooperation Position of the organization in the network
	Type of relationship between network partners		Cooperation Confrontation Complementary Co-operation
Perception of refugee potential	Refugees 2015/16		Population decline Aging population Contribution to workforce Keeping services running Challenges
	Refugees Ukraine		Population decline Aging population

			Contribution to workforce Keeping services running Challenges
Local receptivity	Structural framing conditions	Resources	Local economy Healthcare Housing Schooling
		Implementation of resources	Provision of municipal housing stock Change of resource attribution
	Political actors and governance structure	Resources	Human resources Financial resources Structure of municipal administration Integration concept

			Size and structure of municipal parliament Political position towards refugees
		Implementation of resources	Proactive governance strategy Immigrant board
	Society and societal structure	Resources	Attitudes and experiences towards refugees Ability of natives to engage in social contacts Civil society actors that build bridges Collective memory on migration Municipality working together with local population

			Municipal stock of volunteers
		Implementation of resources	Openness of native population to accept diversity Municipal stimulation of interaction between natives and refugees
	Rural refugee integration	Advantages	Great social proximity Short channels in administration Available of housing Inexpensiveness of housing
		Disadvantages	Social control Lack of integration offers Lack of migrant self-organization Problems with long distances

Integration	Socio-economic integration	Work	Access to work
			Use of facilities to access work
		Housing	Access to housing
			Use of facilities to access housing
		Education	Access to education
			Use of facilities to access education
		Health care	Access to healthcare
			Use of facilities to access healthcare
	Cultural-religious integration	Language	Availability of language courses
			Different proficiency levels of language courses
			Financed/co-financed by state
			Language support for refugees in official contexts

		Religion	Possibility to practice religion
			Legal regulations regarding usage of religious symbols in public spaces
			Rules regarding religious education at school
		Symbolic culture	Recognition of diplomas
			Programs to support existing education of refugees
			Use of cultural mediators
		Preserving and transmitting cultural pattens	Migrants associations
	Legal-political Integration	Access to citizenship	Years of residence for citizenship
			Facilitation of citizenship acquisition by municipality

		Direct political inclusion	Local voting rights Municipal stimulation to participate in local political institutions
		Indirect political inclusion	Consultative committees or immigrant councils Ability of refugees to voice political opinions

Appendix 3: German originals of quotes

Appendix 3 provides an overview of the used quotes in the original German language.

1	Wir haben einen Bevölkerungsschwund auch im Saarland. Und ohne diese Zuwanderung laufen wir Gefahr, dass wir unseren wirtschaftlichen Standort nicht halten können.
2	Wir sehen jetzt gerade, dass […] die Leute, die aus Syrien gekommen sind […] jetzt auch sich engagieren für ukrainische Flüchtlinge. […] Ja, das finde ich einfach klasse.
3	Und ich denke, dass es jetzt schwer zu beurteilen, weil noch gar nicht klar ist, ob die [ukrainischen] Leute lang-, mittel- oder kurzfristig hier sind. Bei den geflüchteten Personen 2015 16 ist klar die werden vermutlich nicht mehr zurückgehen oder nicht in nächster Zeit. […] Und bei den Ukrainern, die sind noch ein bisschen zurückhaltend, weil, glaube ich, die Hoffnung besteht, dass sie auch einfach jetzt, ganz mittelfristig wieder zurückkönnen. Deshalb denke ich, ist es jetzt zu dem Zeitpunkt schwer zu beurteilen.
4	[Das Netzwerk] hat primär die Kommune aufgebaut, einfach weil man, um diesen Menschen wirklich helfen zu können, dieses ganze Netzwerk gebraucht hat, um eine ganzheitliche Hilfe anbieten zu können.
5	Ich sage immer, wenn ich vom Beruf Ärztin wäre, wäre ich die Allgemeinärztin und würde immer zu den Fachärzten weiterverfolgen, aber ich bekäme dann schon alle Befunde und es läuft bei mir dann zusammen.
6	Egal, welche Fragen es sind. Und sei es eine Frage im Gesundheitswesen, im Beruf, in der Bildung, in der Wohnraumangelegenheit muss die Kommune immer Ansprechpartner sein, um den Migranten eine Richtung zeigen zu können, wie sie besser klarkommen oder wie sie sich orientieren können.
7	Wir haben auch oft die Rückmeldung bekommen, gerade in den letzten zwei Jahren, wenn wir einen Kunden unterbringen wollten, wo es dann hieß: Nee, also ein Syrer stelle ich nicht ein, weil wir haben so schlechte Erfahrungen ihm, mit den Syrern gemacht. Wahrscheinlich mit einem Syrer.
8	Ich finde [die Stabstelle Integration] die wichtigste Stelle, das wichtigste Gremium, die wichtigste Abteilung, in der wir nicht nur Übersetzer, sondern auch Sozialarbeiter, und Verwaltungsleute habe, die einfach alle Geflüchtete unterstützen in allem, was sie brauchen.
9	Hier kommen die [Geflüchteten] einfach immer, wenn sie was haben, egal was für Probleme. Das wird hier gelöst. Anträge, Schulanmeldungen, Kleiderantrag, Wohnung gesucht. Alles, also alles was hier gemacht wurde, habe ich nicht gehört, dass das woanders gemacht wurde.

10	Und als dann 2015 hier die Welle der syrischen Flüchtlinge kam, speziell syrischen Flüchtlinge, dann haben wir gesagt: Nein, wir müssen unbedingt wieder was tun. […] Leute, die frühere in diesem Bündnis waren, haben sich noch mal getroffen und wir haben noch weitere [Leute] dazu genommen. Und dann haben wir gegründet dieses Bündnis […] [für Weltoffenheit, Vielfalt und Toleranz] seit 2015.
11	Muslima, Frauen mit Kopftüchern, andere Einstellungen, andere Werte, andere kulturelle Gegebenheiten. Da gibt es durchaus noch Leute, die damit vielleicht, ich will nicht sagen Probleme haben, sondern einfach eine gewisse Distanz haben.
12	[…] Glaube ich an sich eine sehr gute gesellschaftliche Struktur haben hier in Sankt Ingbert. Wir haben sehr, sehr viele Vereine, wir haben sehr viele engagierte Ehrenamtler. Wir habe aber auch hier in der Verwaltung den Willen, das Treiben, hier voranzukommen. Und ich glaube, diese Mischung aus Verwaltung, Vorgaben, Ehrenamt, und Vereinen macht das Gesellschaftliche aus.
13	Also, es ist auf jeden Fall ein großer Vorteil, dass wir in der Mittelstadt doch mehr so ein bisschen den dörflichen Charakter noch haben. Dass die Leute enger zusammen leben und wohnen, dass man nicht nur irgendeine Nummer ist, sondern halt wirklich als Mensch auch mitgenommen wird, dass kulturell viel gelaufen ist, jetzt mal unabhängig von Corona. Aber das ja, dass da jeder jeden ein bisschen kennt.
14	Ein 41-jähriger Syrer, der noch nie auch in dem Bereich Elektriker gearbeitet hat. Das wird schwierig sein, dass der noch mal eine Ausbildung macht. Es ist nicht unmöglich, aber nicht die Regel, dass der noch mal eine reguläre Ausbildung macht als Elektriker.
15	Hier in Medizin zum Beispiel, ungefähr 300 Studenten und gibt's nur, ich glaube 10 oder 15 Plätze für ausländische Studenten.
16	Also, wie gesagt, ich arbeite hier seit 2016 und ich kenne die Fälle hier. Ich kenn viele Syrer, die hierhergekommen sind, keine Wohnungen haben und nach Wohnung gefragt haben und wir haben sie vermittelt.
17	Im Prinzip ja. Würde ich sagen von 10 ja, und 1 nein. Persönlich […] habe ich gar nicht, dass ich hier nicht, nicht willkommen oder dass du hier nicht dürfen kommen. So habe ich das nie erlebt. Aber ich habe gehört.
18	Ich bin Informatiker. Ich war fit, als ich hier kam. Ich konnte Englisch sprechen. Meine Information, IT Information war frisch und ich brauchte nur so entweder ein besonderer Kurs in Fachsprachen oder eine Weiterbildung in IT Bereich, damit ich im Market geeignet. Aber habe ich das nicht bekommen.

19	Und das dümpelt jetzt seit zwei Jahren so vor sich hin, weil der eine das Interesse hat und der andere dieses Interesse. Und das ist eine ganz schwierige Sache, da mehr als fünf Leute zusammenzubringen, die die gleichen Interessen haben.
20	Ich glaube die Deutschen akzeptieren das nicht. Ich glaube das nicht. Ehrlich gesagt, ich bin ehrlich. Ich bin so. Die Deutschen sind nicht wie Amerikaner oder Französisch oder kann man nicht vergleichen, kann man auch nicht mischen.
21	Dann hörst du auf einmal, dass jemand hat da deutsche Pass bekommen und hatte keine gültige syrische Pass. Wieso, weiß man nicht. Aber ist so. Zum Beispiel sind zwei Leute dort, die arbeiten [für das Innenministerium], für eine es egal ist, scheißegal ob du hast syrische Pass oder nicht. Die andere will unbedingt.
22	Ich denke, dass [die Geflüchtete] überhaupt gar nicht auf die Idee kommen [politisch aktiv zu werden]. Ich weiß auch nicht, wie es in den jeweiligen Heimatländern ist. Je nachdem, wie das Regime ist, haben die Leute gar nicht viel Mitspracherecht und sind das auch gar nicht gewohnt, dass das so ist.
23	Das ist nicht die Motivation von uns Mitarbeitern der Abteilung Soziales. Weil im Endeffekt ist es für mich irrelevant, was für einen Mehrwert die Person für die Gesellschaft hat. Wir kümmern uns auch um Personen, die keinen Mehrwert haben, die abweichendes Verhalten haben. Weil ich sehe uns als letztes Rettungsnetz. Also wenn die durch alle Strukturen durchfallen und von allen fallen gelassen werden, sind wir die, die die Personen auffangen und versuchen noch mal irgendwie einzubinden.
24	Das ist einfach ein menschliches Arbeiten, aber absolut liegt da nicht der Fokus drauf auf irgendwelchen Ressourcen oder irgendwelche Bildungen oder. Absolut nicht. Ne. Da wird jeder Mensch gleich behandelt, egal ob er, ob er jetzt mit dem Eselskarren aus dem tiefsten Syrien kommt oder aus Damaskus, als hochgebildeter Ingenieur. Von städtischer Seite.