

MASTER PROGRAMME PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

New publication by Tim Heinkelmann-Wild, Daniel Beck and Alexander Spencer

ABSTRACT

An increased number of refugees entering Germany between 2013 and 2017 has resulted in a fierce political debate on the potentials and dangers of increased immigration and the meaning of refugees in the country. So far, most studies on the social construction of the refugee either have focused on the linkage between immigration and threats, such as terrorism, or examined the process of constructing the refugee as a positive actor without regard to adopting a post-structuralist perspective and considering insights from discourse theory and reception analysis. In this article, we examine the social construction of the refugee in the German tabloid media. We investigate an instance in 2016 in which specific refugees from Syria were constructed not as terrorists or as victims but as heroes following their help in the arrest of a terrorist in Chemnitz. While this constitution of the heroic refugee appears to be a positive development at first, we argue that the celebration of the good refugee is in fact counterproductive as it reinforces the idea that it is unusual for refugees to oppose terrorism. By celebrating the unique heroic refugees, the German tabloid media unwittingly constitutes the large majority of refugees as 'others', cementing the understanding of the German self.

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The article by **Tim-Heinkelmann-Wild, Daniel Beck and Prof. Dr. Alexander Spencer**

([http://www.pacs.ovgu.de/Team/Prof_+Dr_+Alexander+Spencer-p-](http://www.pacs.ovgu.de/Team/Prof_+Dr_+Alexander+Spencer-p-468.html)

[468.html](http://www.pacs.ovgu.de/Team/Prof_+Dr_+Alexander+Spencer-p-468.html)) examines the social construction of the 'refugee' in the German

◀ Vorherige Meldung

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