

***Willkommenskultur: A Computational and Socio-linguistic Study of
German Discourse on Migrant Populations (1800/2000)***

An Honors Paper for the German Department

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Using computational analysis, this project reveals linguistic nuances in the portrayal of migrant populations in German news media in 1800 and 2000. For the 1800s, the metadata for 130 journal articles were collected from the *Journals from the German Enlightenment* database. For the 2000s, over 1,000 articles were collected from *Die Zeit*, *Der Spiegel*, *Berliner Zeitung*, and *Der Tagesspiegel*. The 21st century corpora were then interpreted using topic modeling.

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The foundations of this study exist in 18th century linguistic norms and the history of German journalism. My visit to the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, as funded by this research award, allowed me to find a number of sources relevant to my study. I used encyclopedias of German newspapers in the 18th and 19th century, a lexicon printed in the 1860's, and literature on the history of the 21st century newspapers used in this study to contextualize and support my findings.

Ultimately, this project investigates the changes in definition for each term in this study (*Emigrant*, *Ausländer*, *Flüchtling*, *Ausgewanderte*, *Auswanderer*, *Einwanderer*, *Migrant*, *Immigrant*, and *Aussiedler*) from 1800 to 2000. Finding, in large, that migrants are defined in these newspapers by the German political parties that act on their behalf, the institutions put into place to support them and the ways in which their actions are perceived by the German people. No significant portion of the discourse (and thus, no representative topic in any of the models) reports news *for* migrant populations in Germany or through the perspective of migrants. Rather, migrant populations become a subject for the German people to report on. This sentiment is furthered by the number of overarching and statistically-focused topics in this discourse. Migrant populations are often reduced to the statistics referencing the number of incoming people and geographic locations from which they came. Additionally, the correlation between the influx of migrants with an erosion of German national identity reveals an unwillingness by the German people to change what constitutes 'Germanness'. Rather than a possible alteration of what constitutes German identity, the focus here is on the negative effect of migrant populations on this identity. This focus on German identity reveals a nationalist theme within the discourse. Portraying migrants in reference to how they affect German society and the German economy, further highlights the German-centric focus of German news media. An in depth study of the discourse surrounding migrant populations in Germany reveals that '*Willkommenskultur*' is confined to the types of accommodations and legal status awarded to those migrant people.