

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/towards-a-low-ambition-equilibrium/>

This video provides an overview of a dissertation focused on the educational and occupational aspirations of refugees, emphasizing the influence of integration policies on these aspirations. Initially, the study aimed to explore various theories related to refugees' post-migration experiences but was narrowed down to specifically examine aspirations.

The researcher highlights a common oversight in existing literature, which predominantly addresses the aspirations of potential migrants rather than those who have already arrived in their host countries. They introduce the concept of a "policy dance environment," illustrating the complex interplay between refugees' aspirations and the policies they encounter in their new societies, particularly in Switzerland.

The researcher also differentiates between ambitious and realistic aspirations, incorporating a dynamic perspective that considers how aspirations evolve over different life phases. Furthermore, they discuss the concept of collective aspirations, where the goals of individuals are influenced not only by personal ambitions but also by community and state expectations.

The study is qualitative, involving interviews with 29 refugees in Switzerland, and aims to understand how various integration policies shape their aspirations. Three main policy themes emerged from the interviews, leading to the identification of a "low ambition equilibrium" where the combination of restrictive policies and the refugees' personal circumstances results in a focus on short-term, modest goals rather than more ambitious long-term aspirations.

The researcher critiques existing integration policies for prioritizing quick labor market entry over fostering the broader potential of refugees, and emphasizes the need for more inclusive, holistic policies that recognize the diverse backgrounds and experiences of refugee populations. The findings suggest that successful integration requires collaboration across various sectors and a more nuanced understanding of the aspirations and capabilities of refugees.