

Unity in Diversity: Integration in a Post-Migrant Society

Introduction

“We are Christians, we are Muslims, we are Jews, we are Charlie!” said the banners held by the people in front of the Brandenburg Gate on January 11, 2015. They had gathered for a vigil to commemorate the victims of the terrorist attacks in Paris four days earlier. Radical Islamist extremists had killed twelve people inside and outside the editorial office of the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* as well as a police officer on the street and four other people in a Jewish grocery store. The solemn vigil was organized by the Central Council of Muslims (ZMD) and the Turkish Community in Germany (TGD) to promote tolerance, freedom of expression and human rights as well as to protest religious fanaticism and to clarify that the murderers did not act on behalf of Muslims but as representatives of a radical ideology. It is an ideology that promotes itself as the true Islam and for years has therefore marginalized countless Muslims as not belonging to the faith and legitimized their killing. Studies show that the overwhelming majority of victims of Islamist terrorism are themselves Muslims.¹ While in Western countries that have large immigrant populations and are partially affected by Islamist terrorism fear often causes people to blame Islam itself for terrorist attacks, Muslims clearly position themselves against this opinion and refuse to equate Islam with Islamist terrorism. Aiman Mazyek, Secretary General of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, took a clear stand in his speech, saying, “With their deeds, the assassins have committed the greatest blasphemy. They have betrayed Islam with their terrible act and dragged it through the mud. Today, we unequivocally address all terrorists: We will not allow our faith to be abused. We will commit ourselves even more strongly to further this Germany of ours. Today we take a firm stand and commit ourselves against hatred and violence. What unites us is our opposition to violence and intolerance. We all are Germany!”² The Coordinating Council of Muslims in Germany (KRM) and the Shiite umbrella organization (IGS) forcefully condemned the attacks and expressed their sympathy for the bereaved.

While these clear positions and reflections on reform and Koranic interpretations within Islam show that the Muslim world is negotiating a wide range of interpretations and a struggle for interpretational sovereignty, the wave of anti-Islamic, nationalistic and right-wing populist demonstrations that, disguised as strolls, has been ongoing for several months under the name PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West) and consists of a heterogeneous citizens’ movement against foreign infiltration is continuing to swell. Even if this movement is no longer asserting itself quite as strongly on the streets, its development has revealed the dynamics that anti-Islamic and xenophobic positions can generate and the extent to which national self-image is expressed as a force in opposition to Islam and Muslims, who are the current stand-ins for all foreigners and migrants.

If we retrospectively analyze the German conception of integration, we can see that integration efforts have focused exclusively on migrants and their descendants for too long. The fact that whole segments of the majority population have drifted out of focus and have been unable to keep up with the country’s new cultural identity has not been perceived and discussed in terms of social

Narratives

Narratives are stories or their structures that concern communities and are reproduced across time and space. They are not necessarily based on empirical facts but may be based on interpretations that only arise retrospectively or with a view toward a future goal. They acquire legitimacy and influence political action based on the assumption that they have always existed in this form.³ Their function is to construct a collective memory and thus to construct past and present reality.⁴ They are “central to the representation of identity, to individual remembering, to the collective well-being of groups, regions, nations, to ethnic and gender identity.”⁵

disintegration. Politics has failed to provide this new heterogeneous Germany with a narrative (see box on narratives for a definition) that could have served as a guide for action. The idea of migration as exceptional and an emergency response has been maintained despite the fact that, in Germany, migration has been part of the family background of one in three children for a long time – and they are no less German for it.

How do we want to (and how can we) live together in a society characterized by diversity? This is one of the central issues suggested by the developments of recent years, during which Germany has become a country of immigration – not only empirically but also narratively. This raises the question of how the concept of integration can be rethought in a heterogeneous society characterized by cultural, ethnic, religious and national diversity, and pluralistic approaches to life.

Post-Migrant Society

As a country of immigration, Germany is now experiencing a process in which affiliations, national (collective) identities, participation and equality of opportunity are being renegotiated and adjusted in a post-migrant state, i.e. *after* migration has happened and has been recognized by the government, academia and the public as inevitable.⁶ The prefix “post” here does not signify the end of migration but describes social negotiation processes that occur in the phase *after* migration has occurred. Post-migrant societies are societies in which:

- a. Social change towards a heterogeneous underlying structure has been acknowledged (“Germany is a country of immigration”) regardless of whether this transformation is seen as positive or negative,
- b. Immigration and emigration are recognized as phenomena that have a tremendous impact on the country, which can be discussed, regulated and negotiated but not reversed,
- c. Structures, institutions and political cultures are adapted *ex post* to the identified migration reality (i.e., post-migration), resulting in, on the one hand, greater permeability and upward mobility but, on the other hand, also in defensive reactions and distributional conflicts.

Migration has become a part of everyday life in a German society in which one out of three persons identifies a migration narrative as a familial reference point.⁷ Large German cities in particular have become increasingly diverse, which is reflected in schools, day-care centers and cityscapes. In Frankfurt, 75.6 percent of all children under six have migration backgrounds. In Augsburg, that figure is 61.5 percent, Munich 58.4 percent and Stuttgart 56.7 percent (see Figure 1). National identities are changing in light of this. A growing number of people are calling them-

selves German despite the fact that their ancestors have not always lived in Germany.

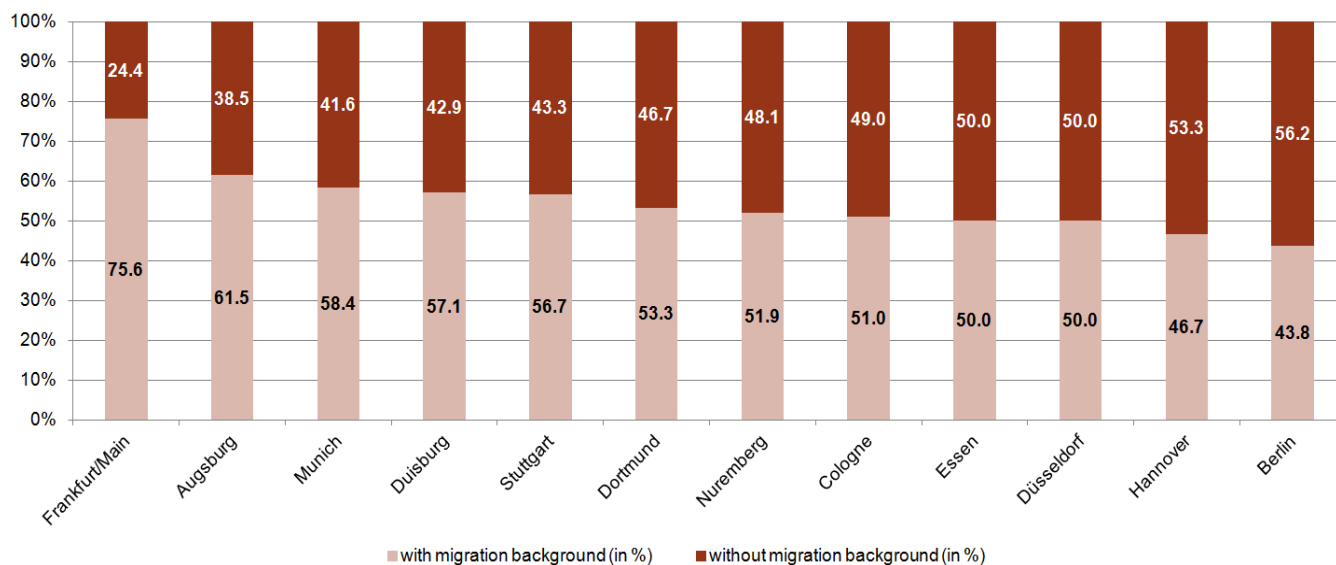
Let’s just call them “New Germans,” argued three journalists in 2012.⁸ But such efforts to create new labeling practices hardly exist in the public awareness. “Foreigners,” “migrants” or “people with a migration background” are still the most common terms used for all those who are perceived as non-German because of their appearance or their different-sounding names, regardless of how long they have lived in this country or if they ever even migrated to Germany. Empirical reality, therefore, has not yet entered a phase of narrative reinterpretation in which everything German is perceived as heterogeneous and pluralistic as a matter of course.

Nonetheless, immigrants and their descendants are increasingly claiming the right to participate in shaping the collective narrative. Accordingly, the following call was issued at the first national congress of New German Organizations (“Neue Deutsche Organisationen”) in Berlin in early February 2015⁹: “We are German and want to participate in the decision-making process.”¹⁰ People from immigrant families participate as politicians, in legislative processes at the federal, state, and local levels, influence public opinion in their role as journalists and become teachers. In all cases, however, there are still gaps in representation. Although 20 percent of the German population counts as “New Germans,” i.e., has a migration background as defined by the Federal Statistical Office, they nonetheless constitute:

- only ten percent of public service employees,¹¹
- an estimated two percent of journalists,¹²
- about four percent of the council members in German cities,¹³
- and nine percent of the managerial staff of German foundations (only three percent in the 30 largest foundations).¹⁴

Although a third of all children between ages five and 15 come from immigrant families, only around six percent of teachers have a migration background.¹⁵ Following the 2013 Bundestag elections, 37 of 631 parliamentarians have a history of migration, resulting in less than a six percent share of representatives with migrant backgrounds.¹⁶ According to an OECD survey, the employment rate among migrants with a university degree is more than 12 percent lower than among non-migrants with a university degree.¹⁷

These gaps in representation should be addressed in a post-migrant society. This also requires an expanded conception of integration that identifies gaps in representation as a shortcoming in societal integration that should now be addressed collectively, which will require structural change and a removal of structural barriers. Post-migrant societies are negotiation societies. Established cultural, ethnic, religious and national elites must learn that positions, access, resources and social standards are being

Figure 1: Share of persons under six years of age with and without migration background in selected German cities, 2011

Source: Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder (2013), *Bevölkerung nach Migrationsstatus regional - Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2011*, Wiesbaden; own calculations.

renegotiated. All parties should open themselves up to this negotiation process. For those already “established,” this also means that they would have to become used to this negotiation society and integrate themselves into this post-migrant structure.

The Established Concept of Integration

Since the 1970s, migration research has primarily regarded integration as something concerning “foreigners,” “migrants” or “people with a migration background” and their involvement in German society. Related terms such as “refusal to integrate,” “progress towards integration” or “willingness to integrate” are primarily linked to the idea that there is an established core or host society that unilaterally motivates people with migration biographies to integrate into it.¹⁸ This process has primarily been understood as a one-sided activity.¹⁹ In line with this paradigm, integration policy measures require a needy other on which to focus. By contrast, this concept lacks the integrative adjustments or efforts in which the societal majority would have to engage, including greater structural and institutional freedom. Accordingly, it is not established barriers and closure processes on the part of society²⁰ that are being addressed as particular obstacles to integration but certain religious and cultural differences. Instead of considering structural barriers, a lack of integration is thus redefined as a personal and/or cultural problem on the part of migrants.²¹ At the same time (and this is exemplified by the PEGIDA protests), there are elements in the population without migration backgrounds who cannot cope with the new, diverse society and who seem poorly integrated. Integration policy should address them as well.

Paradigm Shift

Since the early 2000s, German politics has increasingly acknowledged that Germany has become a country of immigration. In addition, integration measures have been gaining momentum over the last ten years. For the independent Council of Immigration (“Zuwanderungsrat”) in 2004, migration researchers Klaus J. Bade and Michael Bommes defined integration as “the measurable participation of all people in the key areas of social life, namely child raising, education, training, the job market, the legal system and social matters, including political participation.”²² This definition makes it clear that the last decade witnessed a paradigm shift regarding the definition of integration and that the concept of integration is, at least theoretically, no longer intended solely for minorities and migrants but has been expanded. However, this paradigm shift has not yet been adopted as part of the general understanding of integration, where the term continues to be perceived primarily as an adaptive effort on the part of migrants. Such an expanded conception of integration is connected to older sociological theories that defined integration as a process pertaining to society as a whole and not as a requirement of individual groups.²³

The incipient paradigm shift, which is increasingly expanding the conception of integration into society as a whole, should now also be evident in integration policy. Integration policy needs to develop integration incentives and sanctioning mechanisms for all of society – a society that, since the 2000s, has been trying to define itself as a society shaped by immigration. Integration thus becomes a political rather than a personal obligation. As political scientist and migration researcher Dietrich Thränhardt

noted in 2008, there is increasingly a “far-reaching consensus on the need for integration and government aid for integration, including the fundamental realization that not only immigrants but also society must play a part.”²⁴ This points to the integration efforts that society must make to establish equal structural and institutional social access for all citizens, to address discrimination and exclusion more clearly, and to anchor sanction modalities more firmly. In addition, German society (understood here as an association of citizens, institutions, and normative entities in a nation-state regulated by legislation) should more clearly define the heterogeneity of its collective as the starting point for negotiating values and norms that can co-exist on even footing.

Specific integration efforts can and must continue to be offered to new immigrants, such as new political measures to promote an immigrant-friendly culture of welcome (“Willkommenskultur”). But beyond that, approaches to integration should provide access to limited material and immaterial resources such as education, livelihood, income and social recognition for *all* citizens to the extent that systematic inequalities based on social, religious, cultural or national status no longer exist. That is why migration researcher Klaus J. Bade together with the Rat für Migration (Council on Migration) and the association DeutschPlus have called for integration policy to be removed from the Ministry of Interior’s jurisdiction and instead made the responsibility of labor and social affairs.²⁵

Do We Still Need the Concept of Integration?

The call to replace the term “integration” with, for example, “inclusion” has been raised repeatedly in recent years. But because the public understanding of the concept of inclusion is associated with people with disabilities, an expansion of that concept is not possible at the moment.

In addition, the question remains: Would abolishing or banning the concept of integration ultimately have any meaning if the underlying structures are preserved? Böcker, Goel and Heft have already rejected this idea in their critical reflection on the concept of integration: “The violence of the discourse around integration cannot be counteracted by choosing an alternative term. It is less the word ‘integration’ that is problematic than the racist exclusion underlying the discourse that is reproduced by any uncritical mention of integration.”²⁶

It is easier to decouple the word integration from the notion of migration and to define it in line with its original meaning and purpose for all of society than to fill an entirely new word with this semantic content. In view of the paradigm shift of the concept of integration, the following would indicate the meaning and purpose of integration:

1. equitable economic, legal and political participation of all citizens in society’s central assets

2. for the purpose of creating equal opportunities

3. and eliminating discrimination and inequality.

4. In addition, symbolic recognition and therefore belonging and participation would need to be included as a meaningful end point in the narrative of a new integration paradigm.

5. And it would have to be made clear that integration is not just a question of cultural, ethnic, religious or national origin but just as much a matter of social stratum and class, gender, sexual orientation, etc. All this defines the heterogeneous society that is given as the empirical basis. Integrating into this society is a great challenge.

6. Integration would thus be a metanarrative that gives meaning and purpose to heterogeneity. Simply saying that “Germany is diverse” without explaining the tasks and requirements that accompany such heterogeneity seems to overwhelm many people.

The objective of policy would then be to give all citizens the chance to integrate into a heterogeneous, post-migrant society and to facilitate this integration while simultaneously making the process more equitable. Integration would therefore be more than the sum of its parts. Simply replacing the term with the word “participation” would deprive us of a concept that is worth fighting for as a society.

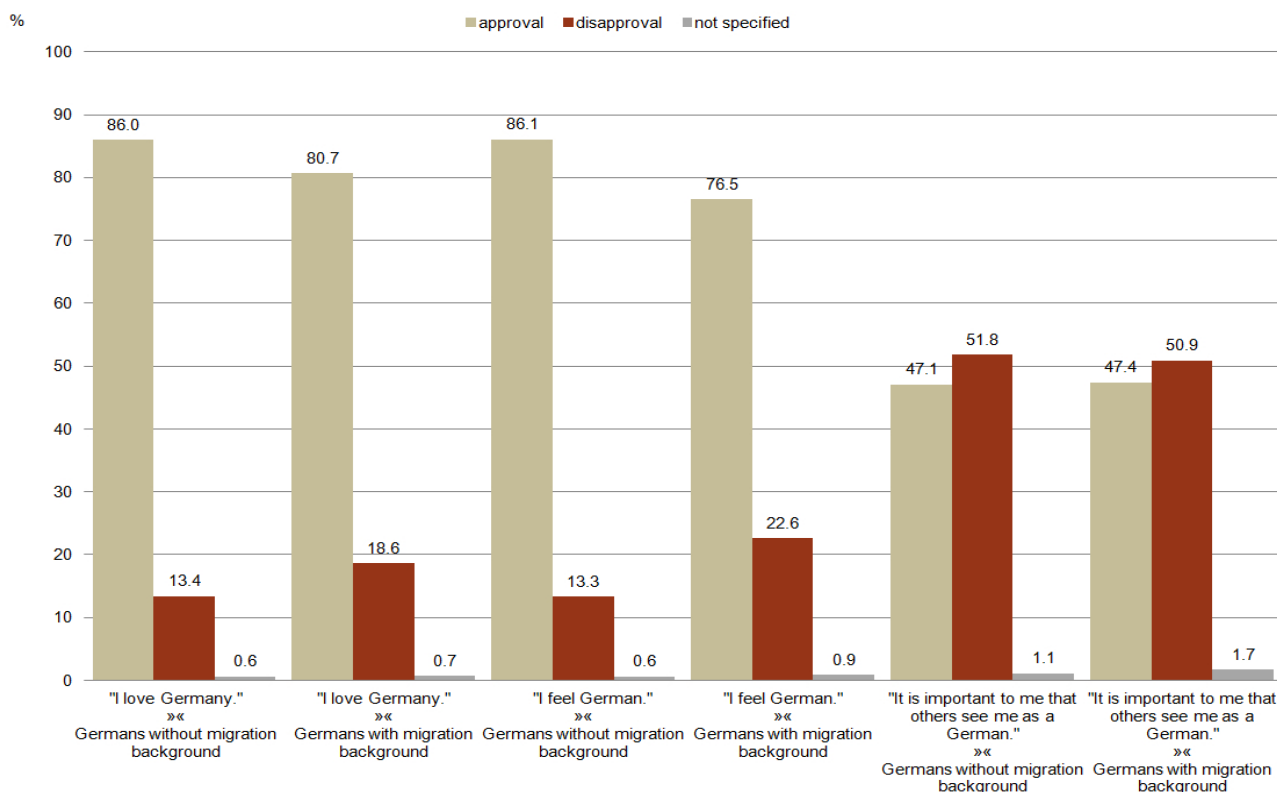
Integration as a Metanarrative

Although integration is perceived as a political term referring to recent German history and the transformation of Germany into a country of immigration, the concept of integration was already popular in the Weimar Republic thanks to the “integration doctrine” developed by Rudolf Smend in his 1928 book *Verfassung und Verfassungsrecht* (Constitution and Constitutional Law). In this case, however, it was not applied to foreigners or immigrants but to all citizens of Germany and the interplay between the state and the individual. Citizens were to enter into a relationship with the state by being included in the political process. The state was to commit itself to integrating its citizens via the Constitution. The focus here was primarily on the (nation) state as the source of a community-

Metanarrative

A metanarrative (also called grand narrative) is an overarching idea or worldview that tries to explain societal phenomena from a superordinate perspective. Metanarratives reduce complexity and serve as guides for structuring one’s own behavior and explaining that of others.

Figure 2: Approval of statements relating to Germany by Germans with and without migration background (in percent, weighted)



Source: Foroutan, Naika et al. (2014): *Deutschland postmigrantisch I. Gesellschaft, Religion, Identität. Erste Ergebnisse*. Berlin (Ed.: Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research at the Humboldt University), p. 25.

building idea. It is primarily the overarching message of Smend's integration doctrine – namely that a society needs an “object shared by all its citizens” and a vision of integration to become a community – that has led to retrospective criticism.²⁷ We now know that, over the course of history, the national community formation that Smend was calling for as an overarching concept – i.e., as a metanarrative (also called grand narrative) – increasingly grew into an ideology to which German citizens absolutely (if temporarily) subordinated themselves.

Grand narratives (metanarratives) still exist. Although in principle they should foster community-building, they also repeatedly lead to crises and conflicts. This is because many metanarratives identify strong counter-motives in other ways of life (e.g., communism, Islamism, nationalism, etc.). There are many examples that demonstrate the appeal of these “grand narratives.” The results of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation's regularly published *Mitte Studien* (“Middle-studies”), for example, show that the popularity of xenophobic, Islamophobic and homogenizing attitudes in the form of nationalism extends to mainstream society.²⁸ The young people's turn towards radical and extreme Islamist groups also illustrates the appeal of exclusivist grand narratives that provide people with structure and make sense of society for them.

This raises the question of whether highly heterogeneous societies require an overarching grand narrative that guides policy and action and that provides them with structure, orientation and meaning and thus counteracts

feelings and ideas of parallel structures, chaos, disorder and a lack of connectedness.

It also raises the question of whether grand narratives can have a meaningful and structural effect on policy *without* excluding and homogenizing repercussions – i.e., grand narratives that permit multiple perspectives and yet create meaning and build community?

Proponents of such an overarching concept, of such a grand narrative for Germany assume that constitutional patriotism alone is not sufficient to promote social cohesion. The Council on Migration thus calls for an additional action-guiding motive that politically defines how this new heterogeneous Germany narrates itself: “An immigration society is complicated. It is not self-explanatory and does not automatically include all citizens. The implicitness and corresponding identity of a post-migrant society therefore needs to be actively established. We need a republican approach, modeled after traditional immigration countries, that can serve as a beacon for all citizens.”²⁹

Such a superordinate approach should facilitate integration into a post-migrant society. Integration thus becomes the responsibility of the entire population, for which the state must provide the appropriate structures. At the same time, integration as described above is itself a metanarrative that creates meaning regarding future development options for the heterogeneous, post-migrant society and is composed of the sub-segments and objectives of participation, equality and belonging. The aim of this metanarrative is to lead the political system to struc-

tural change that overcomes discrimination and societal inequality and thereby strengthens social cohesion. The grand narrative of “Integration” states that it is possible to create belonging and identification beyond a legal and individual sense for all citizens in an increasingly heterogeneous society, including new citizens and those who cannot get used to this “diverse” Germany.

Need for a New Concept to Describe Germany’s Transformation into a Country of Immigration

Germany has yet to politically formulate which ideas of living together in a society that has become much more pluralistic through migration can be negotiated as a guiding principle of a new national narrative. Canada and the United States, on the other hand, actively promoted the establishment of a political integration narrative in the 1970s against a backdrop of declining social cohesion and actively formulated their national identities either as “unity in diversity” or as a “nation of immigrants” and made it their political integration agenda.³⁰

In political terms, public institutions are being called upon to open up interculturally and to investigate whether their structures represent the altered, heterogeneous fabric of society, i.e., are open to people with migration backgrounds. Parallel to this, “integration from below” – a kind of civil integration as civic, personal awareness of integration – can be supported by clearly linking Germany’s narrative as a heterogeneous country with the notion that adaptive efforts are also expected of those who do not have a migration background. The formation of a heterogeneous society (in the sense of a new narrative or a guiding principle of “unity in diversity,” in which integration must be socio-structurally available to every citizen) leads to a paradigm shift in the concept of integration. Policy should be judged by how it promotes the opening of structures and institutions as well as by how it anchors this narrative of a heterogeneous society in such a way that all members of society are expected to make an effort, not only migrants. In this sense it should dissolve the established dichotomy of migrants and natives in favor of a citizens’ identity aimed at social integration processes as a common goal. Integration, as founder of comparative political science Alexis de Tocqueville used the term, would thus become the core objective of a modern democracy, which must establish equal participation rights and opportunities for all its citizens.

Germany would therefore need to engage in a non-partisan discussion to establish a guiding principle. “A professional and political non-partisan committee, for example under the auspices of the Minister for Integration”³¹ in the German Bundestag or a committee comparable to the Ethics Council, should be established to carry out these discussions and to then transfer the amended guiding principle into the German Constitution. This is a point that was raised by, for example, the Council on Migration, composed of scientists from various disciplines, in early

January 2015 at a conference in the building of the Federal Press Conference in Berlin.

Acknowledging heterogeneity as German normality will be accompanied by a narrative reinterpretation of national identity – “Germanness” is changing and becoming more ambiguous. Federal President Joachim Gauck also conveyed this idea in his speech on the 65th anniversary of the German Constitution, saying, “In the future, it will be much more difficult than before to detect who is German based on their name or appearance.”³² The President is providing the country with a guiding principle in its search for a national identity. Gauck describes the national narrative, the “new German ‘we’,” as “unity in diversity”³³ and refers (consciously or not) to Adorno’s desire “to be able to be different without fear.” The established separation of the other (migrants and migrantness) and the self (the imagined core society) may be narratively overcome if the other is perceived as a natural part of the self – if the self, as in the Canadian narrative, forms a unity in diversity. A narrative expansion of German identity would mean that migrantness would become a constitutive element of the national narrative and of German identity: Germany would re-narrate itself as a “nation of immigrants” and migrantness would then be inherent to Germanness and no longer stand in contrast to it.

Notes

¹ www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/terrorreport-al-qaida-toetet-acht-mehr-muslime-als-nicht-muslime-a-660420.html (accessed: 2-17-2015).

² The full speech can be found at: <http://islam.de/26019> (accessed: 2-17-2015).

³ See Foroutan (2014).

⁴ See Klein/ Martínez (2009).

⁵ Müller-Funk (2008), p. 17.

⁶ The Berlin-based theater director Shermin Langhoff coined the term by calling her Ballhaus Naunynstraße theater “Postmigrantisches Theater” (Post-migrant Theater). She has repeatedly redefined the term subversively, thereby referring to the opening and closing processes in German society. For more on Langhoff’s concept, see Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung [Federal Agency for Civic Education] (2011).

⁷ Foroutan et al. (2014).

⁸ Bota/ Pham/ Topçu (2012).

⁹ www.neuemedienmacher.de/projekte/bundeskongress-ndo/ (accessed: 2-17-2015).

¹⁰ www.berliner-zeitung.de/politik/initiativen-schliessen-sich-zusammen-kinder-von-migranten-wollen-mehr-mitsprache,10808018,29794900.html (accessed: 2-17-2015).

¹¹ OECD (2012).

¹² Kotte (2009).

- ¹³Schönwälder/ Sinanoglu/ Volkert (2011).
- ¹⁴Migazin (2014).
- ¹⁵Georgi/ Ackermann/ Karakaş (2011), p. 6.
- ¹⁶Mediendienst Integration (2013).
- ¹⁷OECD (2012).
- ¹⁸See Kymlicka (1999).
- ¹⁹See Brubaker (2001).
- ²⁰Socio-structural barriers and marginalization processes can be found where members of a particular social group are denied access to central areas of society, e.g., education or certain professional positions. This prevents, for example, upward mobility through the achievement of better socio-economic positions. For detailed information on social exclusion mechanisms, see: www.bpb.de/apuz/130408/gesellschaftliche-ausschlussmechanismen-und-wege-zur-inklusion?p=all (accessed: 2-17-2015).
- ²¹See Böcker/ Goel/ Heft (2010).
- ²²Bade (2013).
- ²³See Simmel (1984); Dahrendorf (1958).
- ²⁴Thranhardt (2008), p. 45.
- ²⁵www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/vor-der-regierungsbildung-integration-muss-weg-vom-innenministerium/8894400.html (accessed: 2-17-2015).
- ²⁶Böcker/ Goel/ Heft (2010), pp. 309-310.
- ²⁷Walter (2012).
- ²⁸See Decker/ Brähler (2006); Decker/ Kiess/ Brähler (2008); Decker et al. (2010); Decker/ Kiess/ Brähler (2012); Decker/ Kiess/ Brähler (2014).
- ²⁹www.rat-fuer-migration.de/pdfs/PM_Pegida_Einstellungen_BPK.pdf (accessed: 2-17-2015).
- ³⁰See Gabaccia (2002).
- ³¹www.rat-fuer-migration.de/pdfs/PM_Pegida_Einstellungen_BPK.pdf (accessed: 2-17-2015).
- ³²Gauck (2014).
- ³³Ibid.
- turelle-bildung/60135/interview-mit-shermin-langhoff?p=all (accessed: 11-15-2014).
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