



This paper is taken from

*Human Rights and Citizenship Education  
Proceedings of the eleventh Conference of the  
Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe  
Academic Network*

London: CiCe 2009

edited by Peter Cunningham, published in London by CiCe, ISBN 978-0-9562789-6-8

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*Wagner, B. (2009) Globalisation, Self-Confidence and Projections of national Identity, in Ross, A. (ed) Human Rights and Citizenship Education. London: CiCe, pp 125 - 132*

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Lifelong Learning Programme

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

#### Acknowledgements:

This is taken from the book that is a collection of papers given at the annual CiCe Conference indicated. The CiCe Steering Group and the editor would like to thank

- All those who contributed to the Conference
- The CiCe administrative team at London Metropolitan University
- London Metropolitan University, for financial and other support for the programme, conference and publication
- The Lifelong Learning Programme and the personnel of the Education and Culture DG of the European Commission for their support and encouragement.

# Globalisation, Self-Confidence and Projections of national Identity

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## Abstract

*In times of globalisation and the process of the European unification the importance of single nations is more and more in doubt. Beck speaks about world-citizens and world-parties; Huntington faces not only states but also civilizations or cultural centres as the most likely enemies of the future. We are especially interested in the reception of processes of globalisation by young people and its relevance in their readiness to move in the globalised world. In this context we will present results of quantitative and qualitative works that have been developed at the FU, Berlin in the context of the "Xenos- project" that has been encouraged by the German government. Besides a project of the VW foundation about emotional sensations of young people with and without migration background in Berlin will be illustrating our thoughts.*

In the age of globalisation and the process of the European unification the importance of single nations is more and more in doubt. Beck speaks about world-citizens and world-parties, Huntington faces not only states but civilisations or cultural centres as the most likely enemies of the future. We are especially interested in the reception of processes of globalisation by young people and its relevance in their readiness to move in the globalised world. In this context we will present results of statistic works that have been developed at the FU in the context of the "Xenos- project" that has been encouraged by the German government. Besides a project of the VW foundation about emotional sensations of young people with and without migration background in Berlin will be illustrating our thoughts.

The researches focus on social opinions that are combined with self- awareness and the perception of others and have also an impact on citizenship awareness. In this context, cultural differences are discussed within processes of inclusion and exclusion. As J. Gundara has pointed out in: "The Political Context of Intercultural Policy "While a dominant group might support assimilation, those from racial minority communities typically favour the cause of diversity. This perspective on the part of the latter allows for the affirmation of values which are other than Euro-conformist or Euro-centric."<sup>1</sup> National identity is discussed within a wide range of literature which relates more or less to political and normative discussions not adding much to our knowledge in the perspectives mentioned above. The view on strangers as "Faszinosum and Tremendum" that is shown also in the readiness to move of young people, underlines that neofeudalistic borders still exist and that the expectations on globalisation processes are differently perceived.

Moreover, our hypothesis marks that persons who are more involved in globalisation processes because of their lifestyles which hit more young, academic and modern-working persons have a more communicative view on "nation" while young people who belong to a more traditional work and live context show usually a more closed and rigid concept of "nation". In the opinion of the authors this refers to a mechanism of exclusion that can also be reviewed in theoretical essays on national identity.

**Topics of the empirical study in Berlin** (344 probands in 2003/04, age 16 to 24, 30 % female):

1. Willingness to move around in the globalised world
2. Importance of „German“- attributes for citizenship identity
3. Idea of cultural diversity
4. Key qualifications in intercultural competence

### 1. Willingness to move around in the globalised world

- The willingness to move around inside the European Union decreases from West to East.
- The United States and Australia are as commonly accepted as Western Europe.

Although national states have lost their importance in the context of globalisation and European unification, attributions to nations still remain important criteria for evaluation in the course of personal decision-making.

- As our research shows, young people seem to associate norms, values and lifestyles to certain nations.
- They establish a mental list of criteria by the help of which they search for a lifestyle similar to their own.

As it seems, the test persons in our Berlin sample base their decisions on implicit judgement rather than considering themselves “world citizens” (Beck in 1993). This hierarchy reminds us of the “*neofeudale Abgrenzung*” by Hoffmann-Nowotny (2000) which describes a process of distinction and exclusion of immigrants in Germany. The research focuses on self-awareness and the perception of others which do have consequences on the awareness of national identity. In this context, cultural differences are discussed with regard to processes of inclusion and exclusion.

National identity is discussed by a wide range of authors who mostly consider the political and normative discussion but do not add much to our knowledge about the perspectives mentioned above.

## **2. Importance of “German”-attributes for citizenship identity**

Neither German nor European but coming from a western hemisphere country was a main distinction in our sample. Young people of our sample tend to combine status and lifestyle connected to certain hemispheres. The attitude towards strangers as “*Faszinosum and Tremendum*”, which is also part of young people’s willingness to move around, emphasises the continuous existence of neo-feudalistic borders and a multiple view on globalisation processes.<sup>ii</sup>

## **3. Idea of cultural Diversity**

- The adolescents of our sample put emphasis on diversity which is reflected in religious practice and belief, values of raising a child and every day communication.
- Moreover, our hypothesis points out that individuals being involved in globalisation processes because of their lifestyle – mostly young, academic and working people – have a more communicative view on the concept of “nation”. In contrast to this, young people coming from a more traditional background usually adopt a more closed and rigid attitude towards the concept of “nation”. In the authors’ opinion, this can be linked to the mechanism of exclusion which can be reviewed in theoretical essays on national identity.<sup>iii</sup>

## **4. Key qualifications in intercultural competence**

- Young people in Berlin show a responsible view on diversity.
- They emphasise the necessity to learn how to deal with intercultural encounter.
- Moreover they assume that homogeneity is not important in intercultural discourse.

Maybe these briefly described results are mainly due to a more general view on integration processes which is promoted by the German government in actual politics. I will describe the governmental orientation programme for new-coming citizens as an example.

Imagine a situation of cultural representation: for example, a visit of friends from another part of the world who would like to get to know your specific culture. For the visitors your explanations could be the first contact to *your* culture. Quickly it will become apparent that culture is not a homogeneous and rigid concept. It is much more a subjective construction made up of diverse and contradictory components. As ethnologists<sup>iv</sup> have pointed out, concepts of *culture* are often a product of dialogue, invention and fusion between different cultural streams and fashions. Nevertheless, within the area of culture a certain group does seem to become apparent in self-construction and distinction.

With regard to this question of cultural representation and intercultural dialogue I will take a closer look at the area of adult education. What would you do if you had to teach specific aspects of your culture to a legal immigrant in a very short period of time? German authorities have ended up with precisely this problem; they have had to compile a curriculum for 8-day-courses in German culture and citizenship education for newly-arrived immigrants. In theory these courses ought to be held in the respective mother tongue before a 600-hour-course in German language begins. Therefore these integration courses are the first critical point of contact between German state *officials* and new citizens. Should it be the aim of these courses to enable immigrants to

assimilate to the predominant German culture? Or can these courses serve other purposes such as providing general orientation and contact to other individuals who are in a similar situation?

Any way our first step should be to take a closer look at the target group and their needs. As borders are heightened at the bounds of the EU, legal immigration is a rather specific and restricted case. In general immigrants can enter Germany legally mainly by marriage. So participants in the courses are mostly newly-wed and a high percentage of them is female. Usually they arrive in autumn after the summer holidays in which marriages are held. Moreover, their arrival is marked by 50 years of *wild*, mostly economically-motivated immigration, historically grown problems and discriminating views on immigrants. I want to discuss this specific situation in Germany first and will then arrive at suggestions for the target group and the orientation-courses.

## A) The situation in Germany

To mark the present discussion on immigration in Germany I would like to point out the following two aspects:

- Since in 2000 the Governmental Commission of Rita Stüßmuth presented its results, we have observed a hesitant recognition of the fact that Germany might be an immigration country. This refers to the public debate in the mass media as well as to government publications.
- As a result, reliable instruments for the control and anticipation of the economical and social effects of immigration have begun to be developed in scientific discourse (new law on immigration).

German policy nowadays feels the need to react to the fact that Germany has been an immigration country for at least the past 50 years. But there are still many restrictions for citizenship education which would be the basic subject in the planned courses. Due to historic reasons Germany became a nation-state very late and there are difficulties arising from the German – foreigner relationship. In the past decades several boundaries have been created by politics and law against reasonable integration of foreigners in Germany.

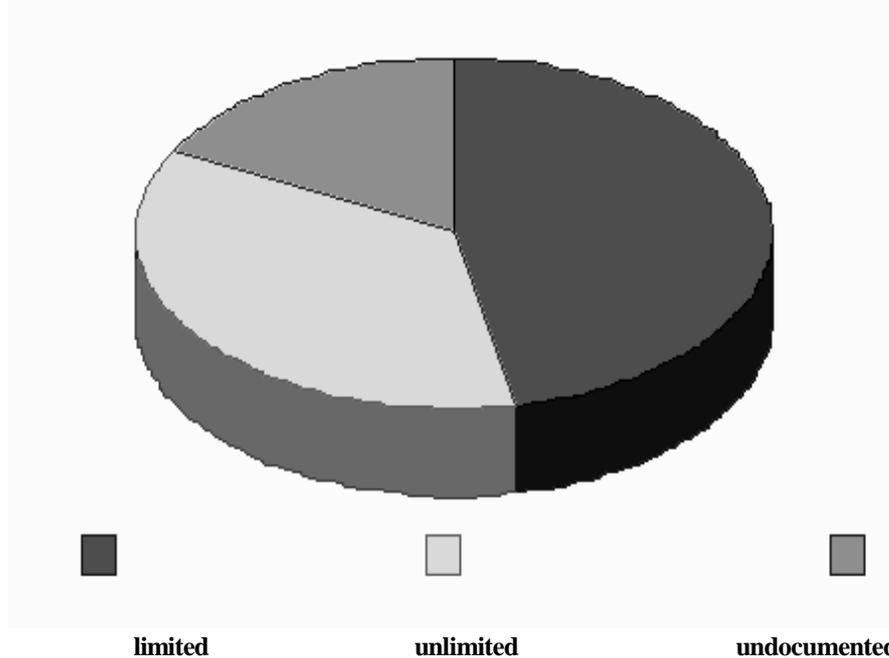
In Germany the right to citizenship still exists as *jus sanguinis*, which means that nationality is given by decent. Although citizenship in Germany has always been strongly connected to the status of *Germanness*, a term that is difficult to define, the idea of a common language, heritage, and culture resulted largely from the concept of a nation- state that developed in the 18th and 19th century. From 1913 onwards, the German citizenship-laws were based on the *jus sanguinis*, which meant that German citizenship resulted from being born into a German family. Foreigners could be naturalized, though only by fulfilling very strict regulations. The idea of *belonging* in the *jus sanguinis* led to the idea that practically no one could be accepted as German whose family had not been in Germany for centuries, a perception that could, and can easily be misused by nationalists and right- wing parties and groups. Thus, being a Black German seemed to be a contradiction in itself, though there have been Black Germans since the Middle Ages!

This leads to the contradictory situation that on the one hand immigrants are institutionally excluded as Western European societies can not even offer a convincing concept for assimilation. On the other hand, policy is still demanding assimilation to cope with the problems of *parallel* societies and segregation. Moreover Western European societies are cultural hybrids (Stuart Hall, 1994).<sup>v</sup> In the course of the past centuries they have, more or less successfully, become *melting pots* and *salad- bowls* of cultural influences and interpretations. As a result, legal immigrants are lost in a *double- bind* situation without acceptable offers to attain a status with all citizen rights. Nevertheless, immigrants are generally enthusiastic and show a strong motivation to get to know *real* Germans at the first stage of their *settlement*. So what we have to do is to find concepts that do not disappoint this motivation from the beginning.

Immigration in nearly all modern Western states has a historically grown dimension of risk-minimisation (citizen oaths, dept guarantees, special police registrations). This is why inclusion and exclusion processes in Europe<sup>vi</sup> have a relatively long history and are exemplified in the foundation of national states as exclusive acts. In the context of globalisation and growing markets the concept of the nation state has been weakened, but there is still no reasonable strategy for the integration of immigrants into Western societies. Managing diversity can be seen as a concept restricted to the few immigrants already working under good conditions in big companies.

In addition there exists a specific, counterproductive tradition in Germany that treats foreigners from the point of view of special needs pedagogy which means disqualifying them and discriminating against them. In the mass media there exists the prejudice of foreigners as dangerous, marginalised and delinquent. Both are results of their difficult legal situation and residence status.

This can be seen in the following diagram on the nature of residence permits of foreigners in Germany:



The diagram shows the evident predominance of limited and undocumented residence permits. Foreigners receive work permits in an even more difficult and restricted procedure. Therefore a large number of immigrants live in Germany without access to basic civil rights and can therefore be easily exploited because of their precarious status. Foreigners are not only discriminated against in terms of residence permits but citizenship is in general also hard to obtain while double citizenship is not possible.

With regard to these structural problems integration courses can be helpful in preparing immigrants for the difficulties awaiting them. According to the new law on immigration so-called integration courses which combine 30 hours of orientation and 600 hours of German lessons should give basic orientation in the following areas:

- Basic information on German culture and language
- Knowledge of the administrative system (work, taxes, laws)
- Contact to further information centres (and German families)

So let us now once again focus on the participants in these orientation courses.

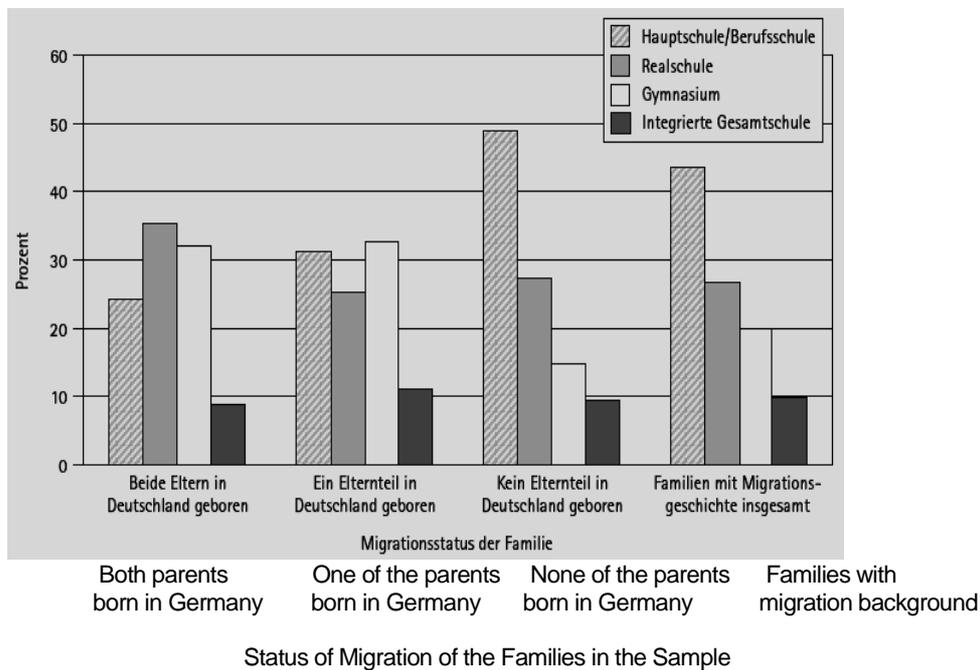
### **B) Newly-arrived immigrants in the stage of early settlement**

If you imagine how confusing it can be to be confronted with life in a totally different foreign culture the information given in these courses is without doubt necessary. But it should not be the only content of the first guidance given by German authorities. In our point of view it is also necessary that the focus in the integration courses is put on the participants and their view on Germany. As Georg Simmel, an excellent sociologist from the beginning of the 20th century, has pointed out, the potential of foreigners who have gathered experiences in two societies can be visualized and used to develop coping strategies for the tasks brought about in the migration process. Therefore we recommend initiating exhibitions and other public events to display some of the immigrant ideas on Germany. Because of the lack of communication between foreigners and Germans these courses should offer contact to German host families in spite of this being a difficult task to realize. This aspect is vital as immigrants later participate in 600 hours of language teaching and should be enabled to practice their German on an everyday basis.

Besides offering information services the courses could help immigrants to cope with racism and discrimination in daily life in Germany as well. In our so-called orientation courses for example we use a common Turkish talisman against the evil eye to speak about institutional and neighbourhood- discrimination. Another important aspect is the regular contact and connection to German families and individuals who are native speakers of German. This is the procedure that is also used by many so-called primitive societies to integrate a stranger who is not able to cope with the local customs. As many ethnologists, for example Meyer- Fortress, Pitt- Rivers and Levi- Strauss have emphasized, integration of foreigners is in many societies based on a promise of shelter and a connection to a local family mostly by a kind of mystic adoption.

Because of the lack of integration measures problems caused by ethnic segregation and ethnic interpretations of social conflicts have manifested themselves in Germany, which can be seen in the following diagram:

15-year-olds by Migration Background of the Family and Schooling



Colours:  
 White: comprehensive secondary school (with A- level degree)  
 Dark blue: secondary school (with B- Level degree)  
 Light blue: comprehensive school  
 Hatched blue: vocational school

Source: OECD Pisa 2006

**The highest proportion of students with low success at school are children whose parents were both not born in Germany.**

This statistic shows the problems that segregation and exclusion have brought about over the course of 50 years of migration to Germany:

**- Significant low success of pupils with migration background in the German school system**

The German school system has little regard for heterogeneity and cultivates monolingual habits. Therefore it is not able to cope with the education of pupils with migration backgrounds appropriately.

**- Ethnic segregation in the big cities creates ghettos**

Schools without pupils who speak German as a mother- tongue suffer a low level of success in all basic skills like reading, writing and all related areas.

***- Withdrawal to the culture of provenience which is mainly artificial and invented by the 3rd and 4th generation***

The Islamic fundamentalism of the so-called guest workers began with the economic problems of the 70s and is a severe problem also for new immigrants. They find themselves confronted with an unexpected, surprisingly old-fashioned society they have not experienced in their home countries. So they often have to cope with integration into two different systems.

It is often argued that integration cannot be promoted as long as structural and political integration is denied to migrants. While multiculturalists have always carefully differentiated between integration and assimilation, politicians often use the keyword integration as a synonym for assimilation. As an example the discussion on the headscarf and about the leading culture (*Leitkultur*) can be mentioned. Citizenship faces new questions and tasks in a Germany that is characterized by ethnic diversity and multiculturalism. Important tasks have to be taken into consideration, such as finding a cohesive state model and the establishment of a new *we* that includes migrants instead of differentiating between *them* and *us*. To help citizens cope with diversity and pluralism it is without doubt necessary to deal with a multiple identity concept and to integrate it into citizenship education. So diversity and identity in modern societies would definitely have to be concepts on the schedule of integration courses. The target group for citizenship education should also be extended to the local population because a new study of Heitmeyer and other pedagogues has shown growing racism and anti-pluralist opinions throughout all strata of German society. This is a very alarming fact if we keep German history and totalitarianism in mind.

**C) Orientation courses as the first formal contact between the German state and the legal immigrant**

But let us go back to the question of the beginning: *What are the basic characteristics that define Germanness?* I think they can not be defined easily. Therefore the first contact to new citizens should in our point of view not be dominated by cultural representations of the German state and culture.

A method focussing on the participants, one that assists them during the process of arriving and accepting the new situation in life, is more adequate. Especially at the very beginning immigrants should not be forced to fit into an integration context which is defined by German authorities. The integration courses should be embedded in a program that encourages immigrants to gain the status of a regular citizen with all responsibilities and rights. So how can this process of status-changing (foreigner to citizen) be initiated in the immigration courses?

***- Rituals should create a transitional phase of changing status***

As van Gennep and later Victor Turner have pointed out, hospitality and reception rituals should be performed to find a transitional stage. If this stage is passed the initiated person is no longer a stranger and can adapt to the new situation of life in Germany more easily. So first of all *welcoming* rituals should be performed. In this context research results on rituals as performative connections in societies can be used and extended to the field of intercultural education.

***- One-sided cultural representations<sup>vii</sup> and assimilation-pressure are not useful with regard to an intercultural perspective***

Politicians should not misuse immigration problems. Integration is not so much a question of loyalty as one of equal rights. Also a double citizenship should be permitted to develop integration as an additive act that is not forcing the immigrants to give up their culture of provenience.

***- Discussion of immigrants' views on German society should be held***

We should give more evidence to the potential of immigrants. This potential is grounded on experiences gathered in different societies and on the experience of being unsettled. This creative aspects of migration processes should be used to reflect experiences with the receiving state. Therefore exhibitions with materials that present migration experience to Germany should be a regular forum for immigrants. As studies point out, migrants are generally badly-represented in journals, television and other mass media. Thus Migrants should be encouraged to participate more in media representation in German society.



**Young People in Berlin-Kreuzberg**

### **Conclusions:**

Our experience in the practical organisation of (model) courses has shown that these courses should give neither too much information and explanations nor cultural representations. Basic old customs of hospitality which have been described by ethnologists should be converted into an adequate welcoming performance that helps the new citizens to cope with the complications of having to adapt to several different *parallel* societies. This process, as Villem Flusser argues, could be performed as a creative act. The participants in the orientation courses should be enabled to express their views on Germany and be enabled to also prepare for a longer stay here on an emotional level.

We need inclusion- strategies to reform the treatment of migrants and to achieve collaboration in partnership. Creating fear in local communities and excluding potential citizens from basic rights have proven to be ineffective measures.

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<sup>i</sup> cf. Gundara, J.(ed.); "Intercultural Europe", Ashgate 2000, p. 57

<sup>ii</sup> "Segregation is discussed in the German societal discourse as a choice made by migrants. The reasons for migrants to live in ethnically rather homogeneous quarters are complex and should be discussed in citizenship education. It also has to be clarified whether such quarters are a denial of interest in participation.", (Luchtenberg 2004, S. 258)

<sup>iii</sup> As Gundara pointed out: "While multiculturalists have always carefully differentiated between integration and assimilation, politicians often use the keyword integration as a synonym for assimilation.", (Gundara 2000, S. 57)

<sup>iv</sup> Breidenbach and Zukriegl are pointing out that cultural identity in a globalised world has to be seen as a complex and pluralistic process.

<sup>v</sup> Hall elaborates that cultural identity is a complex process of self-definition which is subject to constant change.

<sup>vi</sup> As Gundara shows, exclusion is a historically generated general pattern that is evident in the treatment of foreigners in Europe.

<sup>vii</sup> Greenblatt marks that the access to representation symbols is limited even in modern societies.