

Bertelsmann Stiftung (Hrsg.)

Brücken bauen – Perspektiven aus dem Einwanderungsland Deutschland

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Abstract

Ethnic and religious diversity in Germany is today a reality – but is it a lived normality acknowledged as such? Individuals with an immigration background, hyphenated Germans, “new” Germans – there are several terms used in Germany to describe those who consider themselves to be both German and Turkish, Vietnamese or Italian, in short, those who inhabit more than one cultural identity. These individuals have multiple national and cultural roots, and feel at home in diverse contexts. Each of the aforementioned terms point to an existing emotional gap that stands in the way of understanding the fact that these individuals are German citizens and representatives of a modern German immigration society.

The authors of this book are participants of the Bridge-builder Forum, a network that emerged from the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s »Leadership Program for Young Professionals from Migrant Organizations« which was launched 2007 for immigrant leaders who are active in politics and civil society. Through their lived experience and activities, these bridge builders represent the bridges built between the past and the future, that is, between a past image of what being German means and a modern immigration society characterized by diversity. The perspectives brought to the table by these individuals must be heard if we want to understand the social reality that is emerging around us. Each author embodies a lived experience of diversity in German society that is neither uniform nor homogenous. Indeed, they are living examples of what it means to inhabit multiple cultural identities at once. In their contributions, they demonstrate that the

societal change underway in Germany represents a synthesis of – not a contradiction to – past developments.

The contributions in this volume cover a broad spectrum of issues. These include abstract issues such as the new “Germanness” (Deutschsein), the instrumentalization of gender or identity discourse, as well as concrete matters such as forms of exclusion and the roles played by institutions, religion, and language and education in an immigration society. This volume sheds light on the diversity of lived realities in Germany and the people who experience them. It shows that today’s Germany features a new normalcy that must be understood as such. This book is an open call to all to build the bridges of today into the future.