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Wir und die Anderen?

Eine Analyse der Bildberichterstattung
deutschsprachiger Printmedien zu den Themen
Flucht, Migration und Integration

9 Abstract

Migration, displacement and integration are a current and much discussed subject on the political agenda and in the public debate.¹ Communications-related research in Germany has thus increasingly focused over the last two decades on these issues and the role that journalistic media content has played in addressing them (see Chapter 2). Until now, journalistic images have rarely been examined in this context. The present study therefore takes an in-depth look at the production of these images, assessing them within the framework of migration-related visual reportage as it appears in German newspapers and magazines. The pictorial images of the reportage are analyzed and the resulting attitudes towards »migration,« »displacement« and »integration« ascertained. The study's goal is thus to analyze the journalistic conventions and selection criteria used for portraying migration in visual reportage. The present study shows which images are chosen, how they are deployed editorially and how specific attitudes towards migration are therefore created (and others avoided). The question is also considered of whether the images and attitudes are primarily negative, derogatory and stereotypical, or whether such images and attitudes are also transcended.

The study is based on four case examples which encompass a range of events and topics. A key factor when selecting the events was ensuring that they address different aspects of migration, displacement and integration and that they represent various types of events. As a result, not only are negative and conflict-oriented issues examined, so are positive and/or neutral issues; this allows a variety of topics and events to be considered that relate to specific successes, regular political and social processes, and incidents marked by conflict (see Hafez 2002: 35). Additionally, events are included that reflect policy-related public communications strategies and that can therefore be planned journalistically; also included are events that occur unexpectedly and thus require rapid editorial decision-making and selection processes.

1 In the present study, migration refers to all forms of cross-border mobility that require people to find a new cultural home. Displacement refers to forced migration, which is generally caused by an acute crisis or armed conflict. A distinction is not made in this study between the various legal considerations determining whether migrants or refugees have a right to residency in Europe.

Integration into German society is a key topic in the current migration-related discourse. Important events impacting this discourse include the so-called Integration Summits, which reveal the federal government's basic position on migration and integration and reflect the thematic environment in which policies relating to this issue and the related regulatory questions are currently situated (see Castro Varela 2007: 23; Mecheril 2011: 51). Initiated by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the first Integration Summit took place in 2006 at the Federal Chancellery in Berlin. The 70 participants, representatives of the political and social spheres, agreed to draft a National Integration Plan. The core goals of this official German policy were creating better opportunities in the area of vocational education and training and combating unemployment among migrants (for more on this and the following discussion, see Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration 2011: 10 ff.).

In the National Integration Plan, which was presented at the second Integration Summit in 2007, Germany's federal, state and local governments agreed to do more to integrate migrants into society, above all into the educational system and job market. Key points were integration through education and language; integration in the areas of vocational training, work and research; integration of women and girls; and cultural integration through the media, sports, etc. Extending these efforts and developing them further, the National Action Plan on Integration was presented at the fifth Integration Summit in 2012. The plan included a total of 11 topics, although educational topics were still given priority.² The first case example in the present study looks at visual reportage of the Integration Summit in 2006 and the summits in 2013 and 2014, which focused on integrating migrants into the educational system and job market.

When the topic of migration is addressed, questions of culture and religion play a central role. In the debates on religion relating to migration policy, a speech made by former German President Christian Wulff is an event that continues to resonate in today's reportage. On October 3, 2010, Wulff spoke at the main national celebration in Bremen commemorating 20 years of Germany's reunification.

Titled »Vielfalt schätzen – Zusammenhalt fördern« (Appreciating Diversity – Promoting Cohesion), Wulff's speech included the following remarks:

First of all, we need to take a clear stand – an understanding that being part of Germany means not merely having a passport, a family history or a faith, but much more. Without a doubt, Christianity is part of Germany. Without a doubt, Judaism is part of Germany. That is our Christian-Jewish history. But Islam is now also part of Germany. Almost 200 years ago, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe expressed it in his *West-Eastern*

2 The key topics are: 1) early childhood education and development, 2) education, vocational training and further education, 3) work and employment, 4) migrants in the civil service, 5) health and care, 6) integration in the community, 7) language and integration courses, 8) sports, 9) civic engagement, 10) the media and 11) culture (see Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration 2011).

Divan: »Who knows himself and others well /No longer may ignore: /
Occident and Orient dwell / Separately no more« (Wulff 2010: 6).

In contrast to the rest of the speech, the (truncated) sentence »Islam is now also part of Germany« became the focus of the ensuing public discourse and media reports and was discussed at length. This statement made by Germany's then president has left a lasting mark on the discussion of Islam's role in Germany.³ The second case example examines the visual reportage of the speech itself and the subsequent debate about whether Islam is part of Germany.

Refugee movements are a further highly topical subject as addressed in the discourse on migration and communicated by the media. According to UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, there were 51.2 million displaced persons in 2013. By 2015, that figure had climbed to 59.5 million people, although only a fraction of them were making their way to Europe (see UNHCR 2014, UNHCR 2015). The refugees fleeing to Europe by sea put themselves in mortal danger. On October 3, 2013, for example, a ship with some 500 people onboard sank near the Italian island of Lampedusa; 366 of them were thought to have drowned (see IOM 2014: 11 and 15). Shortly thereafter, on October 11, 2013, another 34 people perished at the same location (ibid.:15). The two shipwrecks and the high number of casualties on the EU's Mediterranean border precipitated a public debate in 2013 about Europe's refugee policy. Despite that, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) documented over 3,000 deaths in the Mediterranean in the first 11 months of 2014 alone (ibid.: 20 f.). In April 2015, 700 people were believed to have drowned in a single shipwreck off the Libyan coast. The third case example examines the visual reportage of the deaths on the EU's external border and the migration flows across the Mediterranean to Europe.

The last example looks at the topic of displacement and migration based on a less conflict-ridden discussion, namely the »culture of welcome« for refugees in Germany. According to Heckmann, the term refers to »a basic attitude of openness towards and acceptance of migrants« (Heckmann 2012: 2). In this case, the point of departure is the arrival of refugees in Germany after Hungary allowed them to travel west on September 1, 2015, without checking their documents. The fourth example analyzes the visual reportage of the arrival in Munich's main train station of refugees who had been »stranded« in Hungary and who were then permitted to enter Germany.

3 Wolfgang Schäuble used a similar phrase at the first Islam Conference in 2006. In one of the opening speeches he said: »Islam is part of Germany and Europe.« (see <http://www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de/SharedDocs/Videos/DIK/DE/video-festakt-10-jahre-dik-schaeuble.html?nn=3330992>) 2006.