

# tja?!

Issue 2 - Summer Term 2022

# AND DIVERSITY

# CULTURAL IDENTITY



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# Editor's note

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Dear readers!

A year has passed since the student magazine project "tja?!" was launched. Since the first issue was well received, we were motivated to start work on the new issue on the topic of "Cultural Identity and Diversity" last autumn. Finally, this time around, with the change that this edition is also available in English on the BfG website!

With the start of the new year, the overcome exam period and the start of the new semester, there is always the hopeful feeling of a bit of a fresh start. The corona measures are loosening up - maybe we've made it through the worst. At the same time, however, other events in the world overshadow this feeling of optimism: the Winter Olympics in China are accompanied by the fiction of the IOC's "political neutrality". The war in Ukraine evokes memories of the Cold War and brings war and suffering back into the reality of Europe.

Why sport is always political and how it is instrumentalised by politics can be read in Paula's article "Black-Red-Gold" on page 24. Naomi and Lara dealt with the question of how the German past still has a great influence on the formation of identity for many people today and what constitutes East German identity.

How experiences of racism affect and shape one's own identity is illustrated by Rabia in her commentary starting on page 7. Rabia also took a critical look at representation and diversity in the publishing industry and offers a look behind the scenes. You can find this article starting on page 28.

Well, we hope you enjoy reading these and many other articles.

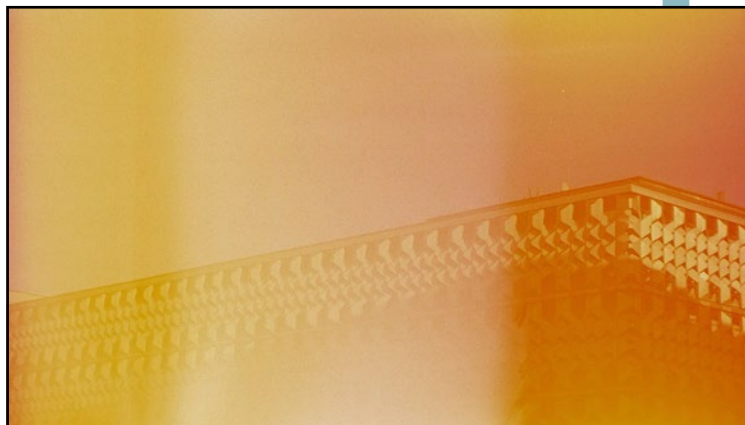
See you next time :)

Hanna for the tja?! Editorial team



**REDAKTION TJA?!**  
**2021/22**

# CULTURAL IDENTITY



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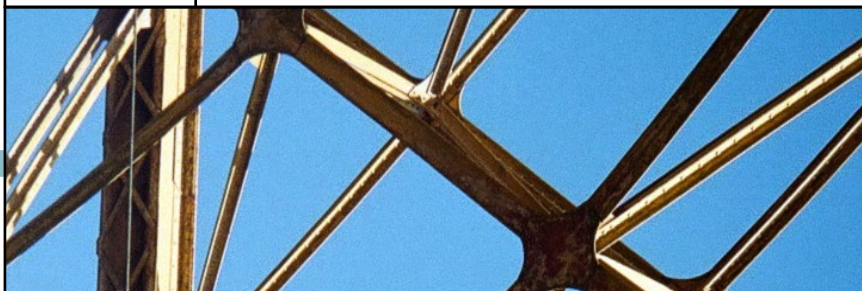


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# UNI AND MAGDEBURG



# How Does Racism Shape Identities?

That is a question I have often asked myself. At nine, when teachers forbade me to speak my mother tongue in the schoolyard. At ten, when they tried to convince my parents to send me to a school that was known for teaching migrant students and denying them any cou-

rage or ability. At twelve, when my class teacher was the only one who trusted me to go to the Gymnasium and sent me there herself, even though my grades were no different from the others. At fourteen, when classmates said that I was not like "the others".





## How does racism shape identities?

I asked myself this question not only when I was attacked on a personal level, but also when the attacks were on a systematic scale. For example, when Thilo Sarrazin slipped into the bestseller list. Or when emergency exits were locked in shisha bars to allegedly make it easier to carry out raids in comparison to the techno clubs of Berlin, where drugs almost belong on the menu. When the whistle was blown on 20 members of the Frankfurt SEK who conversed in right-wing chats and 13 of them were on duty the night of the right-wing terrorist attack in Hanau. And that was and will not be the first nor the last case in the police. When politicians insist on a lack of integration and seem to forget the history of German guest workers.

But how exactly does racism shape the identity? Racism makes one cautious, makes one fearful, makes one obsessed with success. Fear of condemnation and deportation. Cautious because one does not want to attract attention. Obsessed with success because migrants and refugees always have to be twice as good, fast, efficient to get the same as their white counterparts.

Racism is like a shadow that follows every move, every decision, every success and every defeat. If I do this, will I be the ungrateful "foreigner" again? If I have successes, will others label it as migrant bonus or pity? How much will failure be rubbed in my face?

Racism does not allow one to develop one's identity without worry. This is because it shapes childhood, adolescence and adulthood. The older you get, the more you see the positive racism behind the probably well-intentioned compliments – "You speak German without an accent." You see the everyday racism – "But where are you really from?" One sees that one stands alone with racism, because "it wasn't meant that

"Racism does not allow one to develop one's identity without worry."

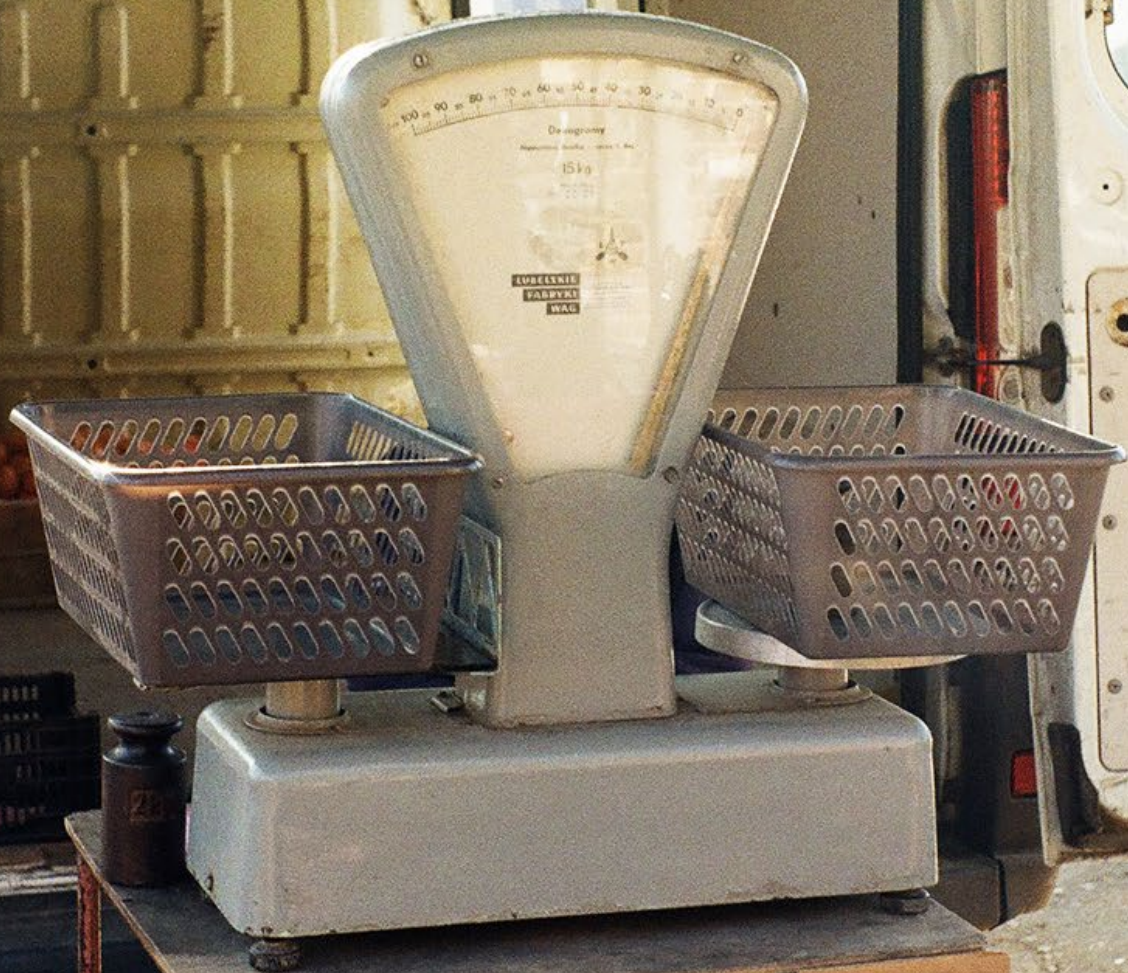
way" and "what happened before that and "that wasn't right-wing motivated, he was mentally ill" is often the answer to our concerns. Racism is a taboo topic and "doesn't exist like that in Germany anymore", while it haunts non-white Germans, migrants and refugees on a daily basis.

So how exactly does racism shape identity? I think racism doesn't shape identity; it *defines* it.

Commentary by Rabia Er



# POLITICS & SOCIETY



Marktplatz//Plac Targowy „Świebodzki”, Wrocław



# East German Identity - Reality or Myth?

More than three decades have already passed since the end of the GDR and its accession to the FRG were certified on paper. But has the end of the division of Germany also brought down the wall in people's minds? Apparently not completely, because many Germans from the East still identify themselves as "East German".

"East German" - more a category than a geographical location. A word that divides and splits. Yet we encounter it in all contexts: whether in academia, the news, as a self-designation or ascription by others. For some people, being "East German" evokes prejudices and negative associations, but for many former inhabitants of the GDR it is a defining characteristic of their identity.

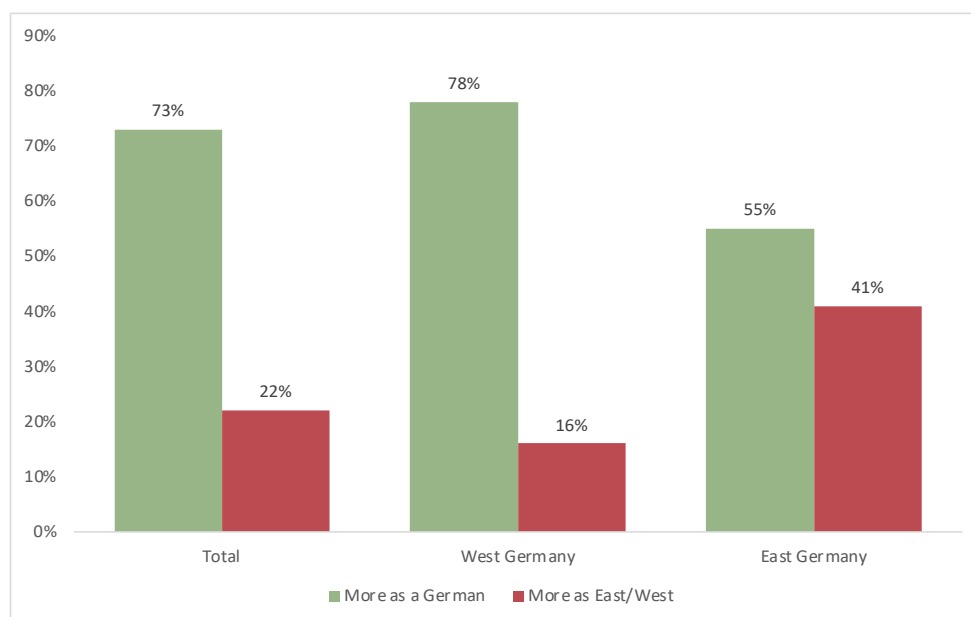
## Collective identity formation

Even 30 years after reunification, according to a Statista survey, just 55 percent of respondents from East Germany answered the question of whether they felt more East German or German with "more German". By comparison, in West Germany a full 78 percent said they felt "more German". Yet East

German identity does not seem to be a relic of the GDR at all; rather, it is a feeling that seems to have emerged in the face of West German dominance after the fall of communism.

Having lived in a socialist dictatorship for over four decades was not an individual fate, but a collective experience that shaped many lives and inscribed itself in family histories across generations. A bit as if everyone had read the same book. Those who do not know the content of the book can only judge the cover, but not the diverse stories on the pages in between. Residents of the FRG knew this very cover of a failed story, but at first they found it difficult to access the content. Fertile ground for the emergence of stereotypes, prejudices and division.

30 years after the fall of the Wall, do you feel more like an East German/West German or a German?



Source: ARD

More Informationen: Germany; Infratest dimap; 1001 respondents



Source: IMAGO / imagebroker

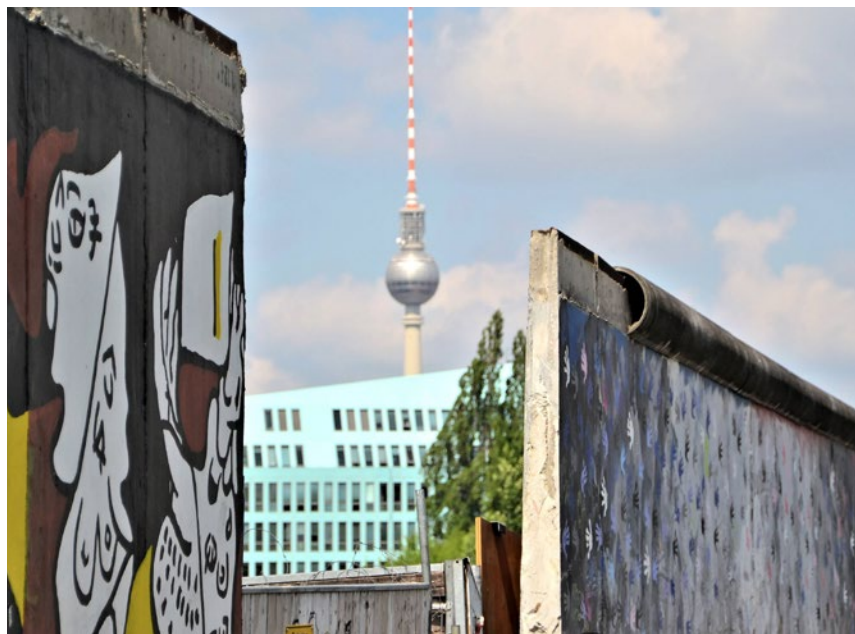
## Failed reunification?

According to Thomas Krüger, President of the Federal Agency for Civic Education, the emergence of an East German identity, which seems to be present to this day, is particularly due to negative experiences. He told the *Berliner Zeitung*: "There was no East German identity until after the GDR. The common experiences of disadvantage and lack of appreciation created it. Not for everyone, - but when 80 percent of the professionally active lose their jobs, when they have to go back to school because their professions are no longer recognised, that has consequences for every society."

"We had to think anew and some skills we had in the GDR were no longer so important in reunified Germany. Some old things were overwritten by the new life\*," Angela Merkel tells *Spiegel* in an interview. Basically, according to the former Chancellor, there is one thing about the GDR that many West Germans find difficult to understand: that there can be a successful life even in a

dictatorship. It seems that individual achievements have not found an appropriate place in reunified Germany. Behind terms like "Ostalgie", a glorification of the dictatorship is assumed and it is forgotten that even in a dictatorship, perhaps especially in a dictatorship, friendships were made, plans for the future were forged and interpersonal relationships developed. After all, difficulties and experiences overcome together weld us together. Experiences and memories that in no way contradict a critical reflection on the GDR system or suggest an anti-democratic attitude.

Source: IMAGO / Zoonar



## Is East and West still a thing today?

The feeling of not being recognised for what they had achieved and of having to adapt instead of being allowed to help shape things led to a retreat into an East German identity that is still being perpetuated today, even in following generations. Perhaps not so surprising, because even in 2022 there are still differences between East and West. Particularly with regard to appointments to management positions, salaries and the cost of living, an imbalance persists despite the convergence of economic power in recent years. The fact that Angela Merkel, as the "top decision-maker" of the last 16 years, comes from East Germany could not change this. The feeling of experiencing injustice also affects the next generation, which was already born and raised in a reunified Germany.

"East Germans are right-wing, there is nothing in the East, they don't know more than the Baltic Sea." – Prejudices that spontaneously came to Kai Neumann's mind when we asked him about them. Kai is 21 and studies social work in Magdeburg; he was born in Saxony-Anhalt. Although Kai was born years after the fall of the Wall, he still feels a certain rivalry between East and West Germany in some situations. During his studies, he got to know people who did not grow up in the East: "I have the feeling I notice it when someone comes from West Germany. I somehow get along better with people from the East. They are more relaxed in conversation and the manner is simply different. It comes across as if I have to distinguish myself with 'West Germans'." Apparently, East German identity really does exist for some people. Many cannot even imagine moving away, including Kai: "I would rather live abroad than in the West."

## Chances East-West? Can a united Germany emerge?

No matter whether East or West, how we grow up, in which system we live, experiences we make have an undeniable influence on our identity formation. Therefore, mitigating differences and making them equal cannot be the solution. Instead, we should enter into dialogue and seize opportunities. Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier also expressed this in his speech on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of reunification: "We are all the people. Bavarians, coastal dwellers, East Germans all have their own self-confidence. Country dwellers tick differently than city dwellers. Christians, Muslims, Jews and atheists are part of our country. East Germans and West Germans still exist, but this distinction has long since ceased to be the decisive one for many." According to Steinmeier, the growing together of East and West, immigration and integration have made our country more diverse and more different over the last thirty years.

It is to be hoped that East and West will continue to converge in the years to come. The remains of the Wall should only continue to exist as a place where history becomes tangible, but should not determine people's identity.

by Naomi Stieglmaier  
and Lara Kauffmann

# The cake is a lie.

Who are you among all the others?

When do you grow into the world?

How are you part of a youth whose time  
is lost in the oceans?

What is that one thing that makes up your personality, sets you apart from everyone else; your get-to-know-fun-fact, your special feature, your purpose, maybe even your meaning in life? What do you want to build your future on?

That one thing. With which you distinguish yourself from and belong to other people.

**Make up your mind. You have to decide at some point. Sooner rather than later.**

You see a future, but it is not your future. Everything works and runs and lives without problems, even without you. You try to fit in there, like a puzzle piece in a crossword puzzle; it doesn't fit. Whether it's art, craft or science, there's nothing for you, no place to start, no hole to fill, no gap to close.

What happens to those who find nothing? Or for whom there is nothing? Where do you end up when your interests and abilities are as far apart as understanding and trust, when your future is as uncertain as the afterlife.

You are afraid of failure. Afraid of not being enough, afraid of not achieving. That you will stand there alone and remain standing where you left yourself at some point to take time for yourself, to get your bearings, to seek and find something. There, where you still are now.

You want to wait until you can make a decision, until you have finally seen and discovered all the possibilities to make the perfect choice.

You feel useless because you don't know what to do. You know the world, but you don't know how to help it, how it can

help yourself and how to shape your life without missing or neglecting something that is so dear to you, even if you don't know what it is yet.

It is difficult to say, "This is me!" in a world where otherness and strangeness are shunned. It's not easy to find something in the sheer mass of activities, trying something out until it can be categorised as either fun or joyless, and then start again from scratch with the next activity.

You can't choose society, but you can choose yourself and what you stand for.

It's okay to not commit. It's okay to be in between and not know what the right thing is. It's okay to feel alone.

But you are not alone.

No one is alone. No person, no matter how hard they try to distinguish themselves from others, is unique. No person, no character, no personality exists only once.

All our experiences have already been lived, everything we see has already been admired, and every breath has been taken. We are just a part of a life form on a huge planet in a tiny galaxy that is swirling uncontrollably through the universe, just like us. None of it has any effect on the whole, neither a single person, nor a whole solar system. We look up from down here to the stars twinkling in the dark blue void of the night-sky. In between there is nothing, or something close to nothing.

But we exist, so the probability of that cannot be infinitesimal, cannot be impossible, otherwise we could not even marvel at the fact that we exist - because we would not exist. And that is reassuring. And somewhat complicated.

In our self-seeking and self-centred youth, we forget the insignificance of things and repress our cosmological banality.

We worry about what will happen in five years. Who, where and what we will be, even though only a blink of an eye will pass before then.

No matter what happens, the world keeps turning and we are a part of it. No one knows what the universe has in store for us and we must learn again to perceive its beauty and accept ourselves as part of the cosmos instead of trying to answer impossible questions. Because as insignificant as our experiences may be, we still perceive them, we still exist.

Explore the world, look for what fulfils you and if you don't find it, the path was your destination.

Whether as an artist, scientist or nurse.

No matter what role you choose. You remain you.

by Yannik Heine



# Globalisation?

## - One Big Cultural Mash-Up?

The borders of our world seem to be dissolving due to globalisation. Does this also apply to our cultures? What effects does globalisation have on cultural diversity? How will our societies differ from each other in the future? Will the diverse cultures of our world soon melt into one homogenous, global world culture? Although many critics of globalisation claim this, there are also signs that we do not have to worry too much about cultural diversity in the globalised

age. The interconnectedness of the world could even be an advantage for diverse identities, some cultural scientists claim. Especially since cultures have benefited from the exchange of nations and societies in the past and have diversified as a result. But globalisation has increased all processes of exchange many times over and poses dangers especially for small cultures, which is why it is worth taking a look at its effects.

### One Big Culture...

Globalisation has opened the borders for the market, resulting in a liberal economy where people use the same things, drive the same cars and watch the same TV programmes. This is how critics of globalisation of our planet see it. They claim that through the immense contact of cultures, a universal culture will emerge. Specifically, a Western Euro-American model of social organisation and lifestyle that will eliminate small cultures. But is this so? Should we be afraid of a big, Western culture, all over the world? Sometimes it seems so, because Americanisation is (still) happening. The pop culture of America, for example, including film, television and music, has spread rapidly since the end of the Second World War. There is talk of an American media monopoly, since, for example, 85% of the websites used today, originate in the USA.



**Globalisation** is a term that emerged at the end of the last century to describe the interconnectedness of the world. It is multidimensional and affects virtually all areas of human existence, such as economics, politics and culture.





## Individuality and Distinction

Things like pop culture and consumer goods are becoming more homogeneous. Superficial features of a culture, such as cuisine, entertainment and fashion, are exchanged cross-culturally. What arguably remains anchored, however, are subliminal assumptions, values and beliefs that remain in their context.

Something that also speaks against a universal culture is the fact that cultural exchange has taken place since the beginning of civilisation, cultures have always shaped other cultures, even if not nearly as rapidly as in times of the current globalisation. Cultures are not set in stone, but are fluid and can be influenced.

The urge to separate oneself also speaks against a large cultural mass. It is precisely the connectedness caused by globalisation that strengthens the urge for uniqueness and individuality. People and nations want to separate themselves from each other. This is because a large part of identity and sense of self is built up through one's own culture and perceived connectedness. It is argued that globalisation even increases the awareness of one's own cultural identity.

## Celebrating Differences and Similarities

The world stands in disagreement on the impact of current globalisation on our cultural diversity. The fact is that the extinction of cultures is a threat. Minorities run the risk of being lost in the majority culture and losing their own culture through adaptation. Nevertheless, an overly pessimistic view is not useful, because cultures and what constitutes them are more resistant to globalisation than critics claim. After all, people are not objects, as the market suggests, but subjective beings capable of making their own choices. Let us celebrate cultural diversity and be surprised by possible new facets that may emerge.



Scholars have been arguing about a clear definition of 'culture' for decades, this article sees culture as a mixture of shared values, ideas, traditions, beliefs, art that distinguishes one group of people from another.

Commentary by Hannah Mewes

# INTERNATIONAL



# GROWING UP BETWEEN TWO *Cultures*

“For what reason do you have to speak several languages? Is one’s mother tongue not enough?” ask at least those students, who are not interested in grammar and linguistics. But when travelling around the world quickly you realise how useful it is to speak other languages to get to know a new culture easier. Language is the basis of communication and without language, there is no communication.

“If you know many languages - you have many keys to a lock,” says Voltaire. But often it is difficult to acquire the knowledge of a new language. This can have various causes such as lack of time, lacking interest or simply a lack of access to learning materials. Numerous apps, evening classes or other methods can be researched to make learning easier. But the older you are and the older your brain gets, the more difficult it becomes to absorb and store knowledge. Compared to adults, children’s brains are much more flexible which many scientists called the critical phase. Still, the question is open as to how long it lasts. In that case, it is optimal to learn two languages at the same time from an early age preferably through one’s own family and school where both languages are constantly used in everyday life.

However, growing up bilingually is not only growing up with two languages but also with and between two cultures that are ideally very similar. In many cases, however, this similarity does not exist. So, what is it like to grow up with bilingualism? What are the advantages and disadvantages? Are there any disadvantages at all?

Samantha Kell (20) is a teacher trainee in Trier with the subject combination biology and Russian, and it is precisely this combination that has a certain background. She grew up with the Russian language and culture in Germany because her family comes from Kazakhstan. Accordingly, Samantha can be described as bilingual.



Source: Private



Source: Thinkstock/Getty Images/IStockphoto/Qvasimodo

**In terms of growing up in two cultures, Samantha, where are your roots?**

I was born in Germany and have grown up here ever since. Even though some question this, Germany is my home with family and friends.

**Growing up between two cultures can have different reasons and histories? What is your family's background? What motivated your relatives to find a new home in Germany?**

I think mostly emigration from Kazakhstan had personal or economic reasons especially in 1997 and 1998. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the situation for people had not been good. Many didn't get a salary, certain foods were rare and simply exotic, like a banana. For my family that certainly played a role but another was the fact that they were actually from Germany and had been expelled to Kazakhstan. So, they wanted to return. You must think of it for them like a holiday that last 40 years and then you come back home.

**What does home mean to you and where do you feel at home today?**

I think you're a bit lost somewhere when it comes to the question about home. Of course, I grew up in Salzwedel and was born there but somehow that's just not it. My home is a mix of two cultures with Russian and German friends, traditions, and values. Those are two different worlds, and you must come to terms with that. As a child, you are thrown in at the deep end and no one asks how you are doing. That's why I think that exclusion and racism are still widespread among children in primary schools and sometimes the teachers are also overwhelmed with the situation.

**What would you say shaped your childhood enormously and especially which culture influenced you more?**

The Russian side left its mark on me especially when I was younger because I was the first child in the family to be born after returning from Kazakhstan. It wasn't until kindergarten that I came in contact with more and more German aspects which was also the time when I actively started learning German. This intensified in primary school and then in a secondary school as well. Especially in the fifth and sixth grades, I had to struggle a lot with bullying. I always had a feeling that I was culturally caught between two fronts, but now I think, it has become a good and harmonious mix of Russian and German. It's reflected very nicely on my social media feed and also on Spotify, although English was added at some point.

**"Both are part of my identity and I am proud of that."**

**How do you feel about identity? Has your identity ever changed?**

I would say that every Russian German has had an identity crisis and has come to terms with it. Everyone must know for themselves what is the right way to deal with it. For me it's living out both cultures, both are part of my identity and I'm proud of that, but not everyone is. Everyone has to decide for themselves.

**How do you feel when people from Germany ask you the question "Where are you actually from"? How do you deal with it?**

This question is the wrong approach. I mean it's not always wrong or bad, but it depends on the undertone of the person asking. Often you get a certain feeling of condemnation by people and that naturally makes this question negative. You must be open to the subject and therefore formulate it more openly.

**Do you think that growing up in two cultures has enriched you? Where do you see the advantages and disadvantages?**

I have to answer this question clearly with yes and no. For me growing up with bilingualism is a curse and a blessing at the same time, because it is not always easy. You have to come to terms with both and sometimes it's a choice between one and the other. I often wished to be only German and on other days I wanted to be only Russian, but it's hard to find someone who understands this thought. That's why it's nice to find like-minded people who are on the same page as you. Both cultures have influenced my life in different ways, which can be a hindrance, but it doesn't have to be. Speaking two languages is great especially when you go on holiday. I once heard that people who grew up bilingually have more grey matter in their brains when they get older and therefore develop dementia less often or later. Especially in the past it often bothered me when I had word-finding problems, but now I don't see that as a disadvantage anymore. Nevertheless, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and that should be emphasised. For me as a German Russian perhaps the only disadvantage is that I drink too much on New Year's Eve because I have to toast three times. (Laughs)

**Have you ever had to deal with prejudice? If so, in what form?**

What comes to my mind are questions like: "Why don't you drink? You have to drink like a hole," or "Can you say this or that word" because I do roll the R. What I've also noticed recently now is that my gold necklace with the cross is associated with Russian culture or the claim that I always dress nicely. So, there are always preju-

Source: Thinkstock



dice like that.

**Is there something like a mantra, a belief or a particular attitude that guides you through life and our society?**

This is my grandma's Russian saying which means something like, "Everything that is not done is done for the best." Sometimes you just have to wait and still it will be the right thing and the chance you are waiting for will come. It's such a positive thought that always stays with me.

**"Everything that isn't done, is done for the best."**

**Would you say that our society has changed for the better or the worse in terms of people who have grown up between or with several cultures?**

I think it depends on who you ask and where you look. Of course, there are places where exclusion and racism are still on the agenda, but there are also places that are more open about bilingualism. In the end, it also depends on the people you meet with their values and beliefs and how they deal with it.

One thing is certain multiculturalism and thus bilingualism is becoming more widespread due to globalisation and should therefore never be seen as bad or detrimental. Instead, it should become the norm. Nevertheless, children who grew up with and between two cultures do not only have advantages but also disadvantages precisely because of their tug-of-war. Society should not reinforce this feeling with racism and prejudice because, in the end, they have the following advantages to grow up with: "Every new language is like an open window that opens a new view on the world and broadens the view on life." (Frank Harris).

Interview by  
Patricia Penzel

# The Power of Passports!



➡ Passport are accepted in most countries without visa

➡ Worldwide there are several agreements where entry without a visa is possible, e.g. Schengen - area (26 European countries)

## Henley Passport Index:

(data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA))

- analyzes how freely or unimpeded, considering visa requirements and entry restrictions, citizens of the particular country can move around the rest of the world through their passport.
- does not take into account temporary restrictions
- compares visa-free access to 227 destinations with 199 different passports

## How does the score distribution work?

**Score = 1** for each destination if a visa is not required for passport holders of a country or territory and if passport holders can obtain a visa on arrival, visitor's permit, or electronic travel authorization (ETA) when entering the destination.

**Score = 0**, a visa is required or the passport holder must apply for a government-approved electronic visa (e-visa) prior to departure. Also assigned if passport holders require government approval for a visa on arrival prior to departure, a scenario not considered "visa-free."

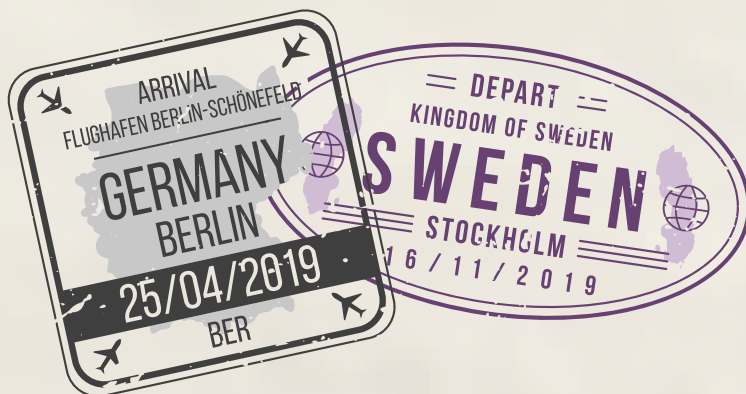
## The index assumes the following:

- Passport is valid, it is a "regular" passport and not a diplomatic, emergency, or temporary passport
- Passport holder is an adult citizen of the issuing country and is traveling alone and not in a tourist group, meets all basic entry requirements
- Passport holder does not meet complex entry requirements (e.g., possession of a government-issued letter)
- Passport holder travels to and from the same airport, seeks a short stay and not a transit stay in the destination country or area
- The duration of the short stay is between three days and several months.
- Entry to the destination country is for tourism or business purposes.

## Criteria Restricting the Visa:

- Citizens from poorer countries
- Citizens from politically unstable and undemocratic countries
- Citizens of another country who are considered criminals or even terrorists
- Citizens from autocratic regimes that perceive foreign influence as a threat to their rule

1. Japan/ Singapore (192)
2. Germany, South Korea (190)
3. Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain (189)
4. Austria, Denmark, France, Netherlands, Sweden (188)



(31) Pakistan **108.**

(28) Syria **109.**

(28) Iraq **110.**

(23) Afghanistan **111.**

## Findings of recent years:

- Citizens from high- and middle-income countries could enter most countries visa-free → global north
- Citizens from low-income countries with high economic and political insecurity have less freedom to travel → global south
- Citizens of democratic states are allowed visa-free travel to more countries on average, but at the same time democracies as well as authoritarian regimes benefit to a similar extent from an increasing
- → Trend toward "authoritarian style of government" does not negatively affect international mobility.

\*Points awarded (In brackets):

For a person's entry requirements to any foreign country in the world, either a value of 1 or 0 can be awarded. For the country ranking, these points are added up. The countries with the highest number of points have the smallest hurdles to international travel and therefore the most powerful passport. (For more on the distribution of points, see p. 22)

-further index: Passport Index by Arton Capital

by Rosa Wasiak

# BLACK-RED-GOLD:

## How Sport is politically instrumentalised

Sport and war have many things in common. Both centre victory and defeat. In both national flags are waved and national anthems sung. Finally, both are about one thing above all: establishing superiority. All reasons why sport can have a very negative impact on diplomatic relations between countries. However, at the same time sport can provide hostile nations with a neutral ground on which to meet without violence, or for individuals the opportunity to protest peacefully.

### Nationalism and Football

Football is probably the undisputed national sport in Germany. At times of the European Championships and the World Cup, dusty German flags are fetched from the attic, German scarves are tied around necks, shimmering black, red and gold make-up is applied and German mirror covers are slipped on. Even groceries dress in black, red and gold at World Cup time. During the 2006 World Cup in Germany, the strong presence of German flags in public was strongly criticised and discussed in the media, but perceived rather positively abroad. A Portuguese newspaper called it "group therapy for the Germans", the New York Times spoke of an "expression of exuberance". So something had changed in 2006, because at the time of the last World Cup in Germany in 1974, there were far fewer flags in the stands. Perhaps the shadow of the Second World War was even more noticeable in 1974, or perhaps the feared confrontation between two German states reduced the "exuberance". Neither the GDR nor the FRG looked forward to their group match on 22 June and it is still often described as a "class struggle" that neither state wanted to lose. National pride and the strength of their respective political systems seemed to depend on the outcome of a single match. The GDR was even on the verge of with-

drawing its team because it so feared embarrassment against the FRG.

However, the GDR's victory at least did not trigger a war - not impossible in the context of the Cold War - as a 1969 World Cup qualifier between Honduras and El Salvador did. This so-called "football war" lasted only 100 hours due to diplomatic efforts, but still caused 6,000 deaths and 15,000 injuries as well as a collapse of El Salvador's social policy, which was followed by an eleven-year civil war in 1980. Of course, the game was not the root cause of the war, but football allowed emotions to boil so high that the outcome of a single game was ultimately the spark that lit the fire.





## Boycotts against Racism

Because sport can be so tangled with nationalism, international competitions are also an important means of boycotting that very nationalism, as was the case in South Africa during apartheid. It was in sport (especially rugby) that Afrikaans nationalism (South Africa's white population) was strong and thus became an important means of boycott. For example, South Africa was not allowed to participate in the Olympic Games between 1964 and 1988. However, apartheid was long regarded as an internal South African decision and was not further sanctioned on the grounds that politics and sport were to be separated. In the 1950s and 1960s, however, many former colonies gained independence (including India, Ghana and Nigeria) and exerted more pressure on white-organised competitions. The exclusion of the South African rugby team from the first two Rugby World Cups (1987 and 1991) was expressive because the team had very close ties with the country's Nationalist Party. Therefore, the fact that Nelson Mandela shook hands with South African rugby player Francois Pienaar after winning the 1995 Rugby World Cup was in a way a gesture of forgiveness towards the part of the population that had imprisoned him for 27 years. At the same time, it was a peace offering that ultimately secured him the acceptance and respect of the white population and raised his international profile. This moment was so significant that this Rugby World Cup was even filmed in the movie "Invictus".



Similar symbolism can be found in the kneeling protests ("taking the knee") by American football players, started by Colin Kaepernick in 2016 and later taken up by other sports, notably British football teams in the 21/22 season. Again, this is an antiracist statement, and again, sport provides an opportunity to critique white nationalism through a symbolic act ("kneeling"), during the national anthem. Through sport, a very diverse population can be reached, and athletes in particular have the opportunity to have a lot of influence through their gestures.

In a way, sport is a double-edged sword. It can fuel nationalism and thus trigger conflicts, but at the same time it also offers the opportunity to make political and individual statements through massive media presence. In any case, it is clear that nothing about sport is apolitical, simply because it always mobilises such a large national character. Both in the negative and the positive.

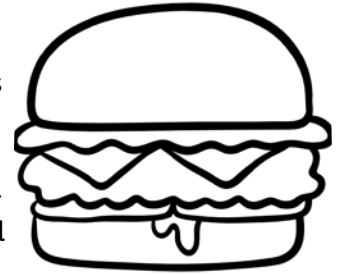
by Paula Meißner

# Companies with global success

## - How can that work?

Big players like P&G, Unilever or Nestle shape the economy worldwide. Among them, companies such as the H&M Group, the McDonald's Cooperation or The Coca-Cola Company operate successfully.

They succeed in selling their products across national and cultural borders, thus driving globalization. This raises the question of how these companies succeed globally despite enormous cultural differences and interests?



### Is globalization the answer?

This question can be answered in several ways. On the one hand, there is the globalization already mentioned. Here, one could speak of a cycle that is mutually dependent. Globalization helps some large companies to achieve great success and increasingly displaces medium-sized and smaller companies. However, these large companies are also driving globalization. With the increasingly connected world and the incredibly fast spread of trends around the globe, our interests are becoming more similar and big companies are finding it easier and easier to sell their products to an ever-growing group of interests. This includes keyword-targeted marketing via social media, using Google Ads, for example, to target specific groups of people.

In the global North, which has dominated the economy for centuries, we largely live with the positive effects of globalization: everything you want is always available to the privileged part of the population, while the majority of the population can only consume many trends with a time delay, new trends come onto the market quickly, and we can communicate with whomever we want at any time.

### Or are we humans simply similar in some ways - regardless of where we live or our cultural background?

A second answer to the question of how companies can operate so broadly may be that there are things that work everywhere. Best sellers, advertising that only needs to be partially adapted, or advertising with emotional associations. Take McDonald's Corporation as an example. Founded in 1955 in San Bernardino, California, the fast-food chain has achieved success and fame all over the world after 67 years. Its concept is both simple and complex: fast food within reach, at

a relatively low price. But the offer is not the same all over the world. Everyone knows bestsellers like the typical cheeseburger or the BigMac, but the fast food giant also caters to cultural differences. In India in particular, the burger giant has to bow to people's preferences: for example, it is the only country in the world where there is no beef because 10% of the population belongs to the Muslim faith and thus sanctifies the cow. In addition, since 2011, there are also some vegetarian restaurants with patty alternatives made of potatoes and beans for the country's approximately 80% Hindu population, most of whom are vegetarians.

But not only do the offerings differ from culture to culture, some of the fast-food chain's advertising also varies, depending on the country's values. The message is the same in all commercials and often plays on buzzwords like friendship, love and family - which is important to people everywhere. However, the look of the actors, the settings and the expressions often differ enormously. So McDonald's reaches a wide variety of people in a wide variety of cultures with comparatively little effort.

### Conjecture - is McDonald's perhaps even creating its own "cultural identity"?

McDonald's has managed to become known all over the world. In its own way, it has even become a cult. Hence the conjecture: has McDonald's perhaps even created its own "cultural identity"? They reach millions of people with their promotions, such as a glass with every menu, the Happy Meal for kids, or the legendary McDonald's Monopoly. All these examples connect people, create their own associations and are always a big success. And quite honestly, who among us doesn't have at least one McDonald's jar in their cupboard at home?

by Paula Kiesewetter



# CULTURE

# CREATIVITY & DIVERSITY

## in Publishing – when representation becomes a disadvantage in the literary world

For many writers, one thing is clear: gaining a foothold in the publishing world is never easy. Expectations are high, not clearly defined, and subjective. One literary agent may prefer one thing, while the next has entirely different preferences. However, at this point, without representation through an agent in the publishing world, it is no longer possible to get one's manuscript to trade publishers – a literary agent is essential to one's success.

### The Path to the Publishing World

Trends are constantly changing, and it can happen that the vampire novel that writers have shelved gets buried under the Twilight franchise. An example of the fast-moving nature of trends and their dependence on the current zeitgeist is the dystopian genre. Dystopian literature has accompanied the youth of many and was booming for a long time until the market seemed saturated five to six years ago and demand from publishers came to a halt. A look in bookstores proves that this can change very quickly: The dystopia that had been thought forgotten is slowly but surely crawling back onto the displays. Trend reversals like this seem surprising to outsiders, but not to decision-makers within the industry, whose selections largely determine what will be read tomorrow and the day after. By the time writers learn of this and try to serve the current literary trend with a manuscript, it could already be too late. Especially in view of the fact that it is not unusual for up to two years to pass between the purchase of a manuscript and its sale in stores. Two years in which a lot can change. Trends are curated and what is discussed and agreed upon in closed meetings often reaches the outside world with a time lag.



### How Are Trends Created in the First Place?

No matter where we look – whether in the fashion world or in publishing – when it comes to trends, the wheel is rarely reinvented. Rather, a lot of things are recycled. What was a sales hit 15 years ago often comes back in a slightly modified form. What is not recycled is based on what is important and interesting for consumers at the moment. That's understandable – books also have to make a profit in order to pay for editing, the agency and the author.

In a socially conscious world, readers are no longer satisfied with simple topics and examine both books and their authors microscopically. The book as such is no longer enough to convince them; the author must fit into the social construct of the consumer. Today, art and artists are difficult to separate. Accordingly, there is a growing demand, especially by young readers, for more deviation from the perceived norm – more LGBTQIA+ representation, more marginalized characters, more characters with disabilities.

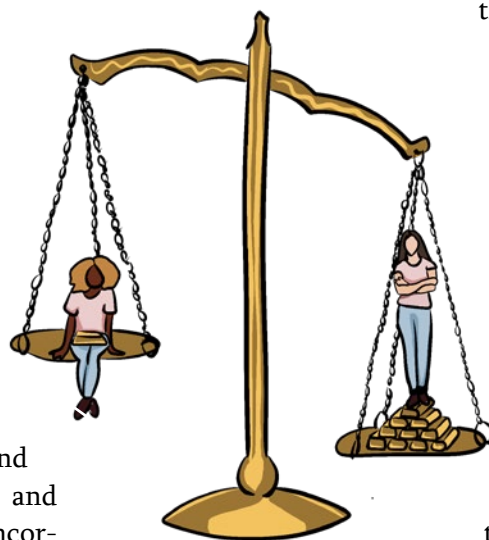


## Where Does Freedom of Expression end?

So, it's very surprising that, at the same time, right-wing publishers are being given a voice at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2021. Publishers such as Jungeuropa, which receives support from the right-wing extremist minor party "Der dritte Weg," opened their stand in Hall 3.1 and were allowed to market their books and ideologies there. Marginalized authors and readers reacted and canceled their coming out of self-protection. One of them was the Black author, Jasmin Kuhnke. She canceled her appearance, whereupon Juergen Boos, book fair director, commented on her non-appearance, arguing that freedom of expression is a cornerstone of the Frankfurt Book Fair. He said that the Book Fair has the task of representing a whole spectrum of opinion, no matter what opinions are held, as long as they do not violate any laws. He also said he deeply regrets that the author is not participating in this discourse. A Black author should be part of the discourse with Jungeuropa. A publishing house that prints extreme right-wing books and probably doesn't want to be in a discourse, as Martin Bialecki explains, "This is simply a demonstration, this is an opportunity to present yourself there, to present your own, really ultra-right-wing ideas to a public that otherwise probably didn't know that much about it, which is very good."

## Diversity as a Selling Point

Meanwhile, the diversity issue is advancing to become a real selling point. More and more BIPOC characters, more and more LGBTQIA+ representation, because publishers want to appeal to everyone – through white, heteronormative authors, editors, agents. At the same time, marginalized authors are bowing to the trend of mainstream society behind closed doors and are writing about white and heterosexual characters in order to get a chance with an agency and eventually a trade publisher. The market is tough, and since the pandemic, it's getting harder and harder to be represented. When they incorporate their own perspective as a minority, they are accused of a certain inaccessibility to



the characters and the story. Yet white authors use marginalized characters, strip them of just enough of their culture, background, language, and norms so that they become enjoyable for the white majority. And set themselves off on the bestseller list. The majority, again, profits from the aspects of the minority that they deem justifiable or marketable, and at the same time, they account for 95% of the book market in the USA.



\*Translation: "Nazis welcome - in the name of freedom of speech"



When marginalized authors do make it, they are often alone – as the case of Jasmin Kuhnke shows – and poorer than white authors. While white authors went to the Frankfurt Book Fair because they felt no direct danger, since they were not targeted by right-wing publishers, BIPOC authors had to cancel their appearance. At the same time, the sizes of advances from non-white authors are significantly smaller than those of their white counterparts, according to Richard Jean So and Gus Wezerek for the New York Times. This was also clearly demonstrated with the #PublishingPaidMe hashtag that went viral on Twitter back in summer of 2020 and shined light on the advance disparities between Black and white authors.

The problem lies not only with authors, however, but also with editors, who are just as involved in the creation of a novel. A book that has been edited and corrected multiple times passes through at least three hands and has had at least five edits – it gets read. Yet, racism trivializing language and biases are still present in texts.

From simplistic portrayals of the diaspora to trivialization of the N-word. This is largely because the editing world is as diverse as the authors they represent – not in the slightest. The New York Times reports that 85% of editors are white.

In a publishing world where there is little understanding of the marginalized, outside of the profitable, this is currently the norm. In this case, it is important that white people working in the industry advocate for change. More marginalized characters from marginalized hands – real, with all facets that may not be directly apparent to the majority. More solidarity by all regarding ignorance in their own ranks – cancelling appearances at book fairs that allow right-wing publishers to set up their booths. More insight into missteps, misrepresentations and the superficial gain. More *right* representation – without disadvantages.

by Rabia Er



# (MIS-)REPRESENTATION

## The Representation of Minorities in the Media

Films and series are often a way of escaping from everyday life and immersing ourselves in other worlds, while newspapers, radio or other media are seen as a neutral representation of reality. But media cannot be considered completely detached from our everyday life, because media is influenced by the perspective and experiences of the producers. And the interpretation and perception of the media by consumers is also individually influenced by their personal experiences. But consumers are of course also influenced by their consumption of the media. In German and international media, especially the portrayal of minorities can contribute significantly to their perception in society.

In Vogue, the chairperson of the Association of New German Media Makers, Sheila Mysorekar, wrote that the perspectives of white people dominate the German media scene and that this is often accompanied by “stereotypical reporting on migrants, refugees, Muslims or black Germans” (translated from German: “stereotypisierenden Berichterstattung über Migrant\*innen, Geflüchtete, Muslim\*innen oder Schwarze Deutsche”). Thus, among other things, the narrative of the “foreign” man who threatens white women, the equation of Islam with terrorism or the narrative of Muslim women as dangerous or oppressed is often repeated and thus ensures the prevalence and establishment of these and other prejudices.

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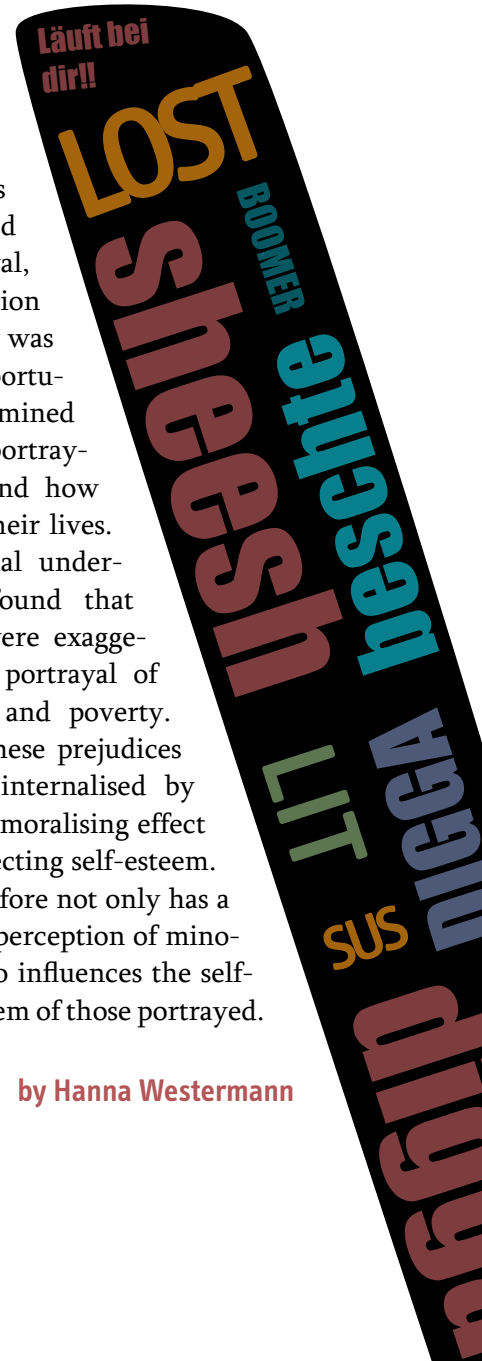
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A study by the DFG Bielefeld in 2005 showed that only 1.2% of newspaper journalists with an immigration background work in Germany, which is quite low compared to the 9% share of the population with an immigration background (2005, in 2021 the share was about 26%). This raises the question of how editorial teams can succeed in addressing and presenting the topics, discussions and perspectives of German society without prejudice, if the editorial teams or even production teams in television or film do not reflect society.

A study from 2011 shows that not only those parts of society that have little or no contact with the groups portrayed are influenced by the media portrayal, but also the self-perception of the groups. The study was conducted by The Opportunity Agenda, which examined how Black men are portrayed in the US media and how this has an impact on their lives. Apart from proportional underrepresentation, they found that negative associations were exaggerated, particularly the portrayal of crime, unemployment and poverty. They also found that these prejudices and stereotypes were internalised by Black men and had a demoralising effect on them, negatively affecting self-esteem. Misrepresentation therefore not only has a negative impact on the perception of minorities in society, but also influences the self-perception and self-esteem of those portrayed.

by Hanna Westermann





# CHANGING YOUTH LANGUAGE

Language is changing. It has always been that way. It changes – especially in colloquial language – in grammar, semantics, but also in the words that are used. The dative is the death of the genitive, strange did not always mean odd, and cringe would have been unclassifiable ten years ago in Germany, while today it is already out again.

That language is changing is an obvious fact, which many look upon with joy, some with indifference, but also with anger. Some talk about the so-called "language decay". No matter how you label the condition, language does not stagnate – especially youth language. Youth language is dynamic and changing, especially in the age of social media, influencing the ways many communicate. The English language dominates in these digital spaces and sets itself apart in the German language through anglicisms among young people. Four of the top ten youth words in Germany from 2021 alone are English, and so is the one that won.

Nowadays, however, not only English has an influence on youth language, but also Turkish and Arabic, for example. Nearly three million people of Turkish origin live in Germany, and they speak this language at the dinner table, with friends, or on the phone with family members who live three thousand kilometers away. It is a language that is part of many people's identity.

That this is accompanied by an influence on the German language is not surprising. Words such as "yallah," "vallah," "lan" or "abow" are taken from the language and

Germanized with their meanings such as "I swear," "Dude" and "Let's go."

For people of Turkish origin, these "youth words" are part of the general language usage and their usage, generally speaking other non-Western languages, often leads to experiences of discrimination in Germany. When these people, who are not read as German at first glance, use these words or speak the language, it is often perceived differently and has negative connotations.

This is often not the case with Germans; while youth language can be discarded, people for whom these words are part of their native language cannot do the same. They are not accessories to their language use, but rather are an important part of their identity. It is not a trend that can be jumped off of.

These words have often been used by non-German speakers within codeswitching and have helped build familiarity with others who have experienced similar things. The language of the diaspora is often a mix of the native language and national language. Because its use has become so widespread, this is dwindling and codeswitching is losing its impact and usefulness for marginalized groups.

Language should be diverse, change is even desired, because cultural diversity can trigger understanding and affection and connect different cultures. But it should not be forgotten that these words are not only youth language, for many this language is their identity, their connection to home. So, language connects, nevertheless it is problematic to adopt parts of a language, even though some are discriminated against exactly because of the usage of this language. Instead of incorporating culture into the dynamic change of our society, we adopt only parts that we like and thereby let many people down.

Even though language mixing will definitely happen and this process is also good and desired, the origin of words and language must not be forgotten. Because they are not a trend that loses its charm after a few years, but are part of the cultural identity for many.

Commentary by Rabia Er



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*"With great power  
comes great  
responsibility."*

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- "Spider-Man" 2002

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