Communication Perspective on Rising Nationalism and the Task of Integration in Germany:
Exploring Solutions on How to Address these Issues

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Abstract

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Following the Berlin attack at a Christmas market in 2016, the threat of rising national socialism in Germany has entered public and political discourse. Media coverage framed the debate emphasizing that a young Tunisian who had been seeking asylum in Germany was behind the attack. Media framing provoked right-wing thinking amongst the German population and lay ground for the populist party AfD to find broad support. This is a critical development of international relevance as the rise of nationalism can recently be observed not only in Germany, but also in other European countries as well as in the United States of America. However, with more than 400.000 initial applications for asylum in 2015 and more than 700.000 in 2016, the task of supporting integration while combating nationalism is particularly pressing in Germany.

Therefore, this paper addresses the issue of an increasingly popular right wing and the challenges of integration with respect to implications of the European refugee crisis in Germany, from a communication point of view. What communication approaches and frames of immigration can contribute to successful integration of refugees and at the same time combat the rise of nationalist body of thought in Germany?

Seeking solutions, the paper first identifies different factors contributing to the rise of right-wing populism in Germany, considering public opinion trends, the role of information and communication technology (ICT) and the recent hegemonic shift of right-wing ideology to common sense. Explorations then move on to challenging the effectiveness of the widespread multicultural frame to immigration before developing an alternative approach for communication that can support successful integration.

Finally, this paper advocates for an approach based on two claims: First, the transformation of culture is a necessary process with ICT as its driver. Second, this must not necessarily result in the rise of right-wing populism and nationalism. Successful integration is a matter of reframing the transformation of culture that a new hegemony defines as a threat.

1 Introduction: The Issue of Rising Nationalism and the Challenges of Integration in Germany

Shortly before Christmas 2016, Berlin gathered the attention of national and international media due to a terrorist attack on a Christmas market with twelve dead and several injured people. Media coverage focused on the fact that Anis Amri, a 24-year old Tunisian who had been seeking asylum in Germany, conducted the attack. Video material gave reason to confirm that he was loyal to IS. Consequently, the domestic political debate until today still circles around how asylum policy should be changed in order to avoid attacks like these in the future. The easiest answer would be to simply not let asylum seekers in anymore and to immediately deport any suspects. But it is exactly this way of thinking that represents a critical development taking place in Germany: Emotionally charged events like the Berlin attack and the respective frames of news coverage provoke right wing thinking amongst the German population and lay further ground for populist parties in Germany to rise and find broad support. Therefore, it is little surprising that shortly afterwards, on January 18, 2017, the New York Times reported on how messages of extreme nationalism spread by the right wing populist party AfD (Alternative for Germany) are finding growing success in Germany (The New York Times, 2017). AfD representative Björn Höcke even went as far as challenging the collective national guilt over World War Two and criticizing a memorial in Berlin reminding of murdered Jews (The New York Times, 2017). Other politicians in Germany spoke up against Höcke's speech, commenting that it violated the spirit of the Constitution and that the AfD is poisoning the political culture and social debate (The New York Times, 2017). In addition to this, recent efforts to ban the other far-right party NPD have failed even though Germany's Federal Constitutional Court confirmed that the party's program is unconstitutional (Federal

Constitutional Court Germany, 2017). To conclude, recent events reveal that the threat of rising National Socialism in Germany has entered public and political discourse and is currently of high relevance.

Over the past three years, the AfD has gained popularity starting from less than five per cent in 2013 to twelve per cent in December 2016 (ZDF, 2016). The party promotes a program that aims for a German "Leitkultur" instead of multiculturalism, for more children instead of mass immigration, for an extensive protection of German borders and the party emphasizes that integration means more than simply learning German (Alternative für Deutschland, 2016) – to give only some examples of what AfD stands for. The right-wing party has very strict views when it comes to immigration, integration and asylum: For instance, it is against dual citizenship, against direct immigration into the social system in Germany and for a consequent repatriation of refugees (Alternative für Deutschland, 2016). Some voices in the public discourse argue that it particularly is economic nationalism that is on the rise in Germany. This development is reflected in the fact that AfD seeks to give competencies back to nation-states, that it does not want Germany to be liable for foreign banks and that the party is against the free trade agreements TTIP, CETA and TISA (Alternative für Deutschland, 2016). A look back in history reveals that economic nationalism has risen once before in Germany: The reparation clauses of the Treaty of Versailles after World War I led to a financial crisis and destabilization of the Weimarer Republik that gave ground to the rise of nationalism and support for Hitler and his party (Gale Group, 2000). In addition to the rise of the right-wing populist party today, the nationalist, anti-Islam, far right political movement PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West) has won thousands of supporters in their manifestations over the past two years.

In summer 2016, the refugee crisis in Germany has culminated to a peak point with almost

90.000 refugees seeking asylum in August alone (BAMF Deutschland, 2016). In 2015, Germany has received almost 442.000 applications for asylum and throughout 2016, there have been more than 700.000 initial applications (BAMF Deutschland, 2016). The main issue on the German political agenda in 2015 and 2016 has been the challenge of integration resulting from this immense number of immigrants who came to Germany and a majority of Germans thinks these are the most pressing problems (ZDF, 2016). Adding over one million immigrants to a country with a population of about 82 million, spread on a land of approximately 357.000 km^2 has massive implications for the people already living in Germany. As a comparison, the U.S. state of Montana has about 1 million people living in an area approximately as big as Germany. In July 2016, the German government introduced a new integration law to cope with the high number of refugees in the country, followed by a government-indicated integration campaign addressing both Germans and immigrants and aiming to contribute to a successful integration. The campaign stands under the slogan "Deutschland kann das" which could be translated as "Germany can do this".

While the above outlined exclusive and negative aspects of nationalism have been on the rise in Germany over the past two years, there has also been a growing national pride with a positive annotation due to the outstanding performance of the German national soccer team in the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 European Championship. In fact, ever since Germany hosted the World Cup in 2006, especially amongst my generation of digital natives, euphoria and pride for the country have been more and more publically demonstrated and found acceptance in society. Due to Germany's history, the common sense feeling in Germany used to be that one could not demonstrate any kind of patriotic emotions without raising suspicions about these being right-wing motivated and without them being interpreted as an expression of Neo-Nazism. For a very long time, Germany seemed to be "still caught up in historical guilt and, more than any other

nation in the world, has had reason to hold nationalism at bay“ (Barber, 1995, p. 179).

Therefore, I personally felt that it was a positive development for the German national identity

and the German sense of unity when people could finally be publically proud of their country

due to achievements in sport. As this form of pride was not connected to political opinions,

people did not have to fear critical reactions. Having personally experienced this rise of national

pride linked to Germany's success in soccer, I think that nationalism, in that sense, revealed its

integrative part. During major soccer championships, people showed the German flag on their

cars, in their windows and gardens to demonstrate support for the national team. This is

important to mention as before or after soccer tournaments, one would have trouble ever finding

a German flag hanging somewhere publically to see in Germany. Many news articles over the

past years observed these developments and mainly commented, that it was a good thing that

Germans could be proud of their country again. Soccer seemed to unite so many people and the

German national team itself represented successful integration of immigrants in Germany with

star players like Miroslav Klose, Mesut Özil and Sami Khedira amongst them. There,

"Germany's shift toward a mix of cultures and backgrounds was evident" (Smale & Eddy,

2015). This new German national identity seemed to prove that it can unify many cultures and

backgrounds in one nation (Barber, 1995, p. 165f.), showing that nationalism has now and has

perhaps always had two moments: "one of group identity and exclusion but another, equally

important, of integration and inclusion." (Barber, 1995, p. 165). Barber noted in 1995, that

nationalism originally permitted Europe to emerge from feudalism and facilitated the

architecture of the nation-state which consequently seemed a "perfect integer" and "set the stage

for a political theory of rights, resistance, and social contract, and thus for a political practice

that would eventually become both egalitarian and democratic" (p. 166). These observations

and reflections made me wonder if it might be necessary to remind people of the integrative

part and the positive effects of nationalism. After all, studies found that national pride results in personal well-being (Association for psychological science, 2011). The issue I see now is that due to the refugee crisis and a perceived increasing threat of Islamic terror groups, it has again become socially unacceptable to show national pride or to show flag. The integrational part of nationalism is being shut down and overshadowed by negative events again. But I think, national pride and a clear national identity are important to form unity in a country. Right now however, polls state that the German population is split: Half of it supports Angela Merkel's refugee policies while the other half is very critical towards it (ZDF, 2016), revealing the crisis of national identity Germany the country struggles with. However, nationalist tendencies of de-globalization and movements against the European Union, thinking of the example of Brexit, are only on the rise because the notion of nation is fading today. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one of the main drivers of globalization and it's developing faster and faster; this inevitable development is also an integral motor of progress all over the world, hence, also to be seen positive. Therefore, it is questionable what role national pride and national identity will play in the future at all.

Concluding, with the rising right-wing populism in Germany, issues of national identity and challenges of integration really only starting, now that so many refugees have settled in to the country, the issue of how to frame the topic and how to address Germans as well as immigrants from a communication point of view is highly relevant now and for the upcoming years.

Furthermore, this issue is not just relevant for Germany, but also for other European countries as well as the United States of America. In the U.S., right-wing populist and Republican Donald Trump recently won the election and, wanting to make America great again by bringing jobs back and stopping free trade agreements, he supports the rise of economic nationalism there. In the Netherlands, France, Hungary and Bulgaria, nationalist parties have gained even greater

popularity already than in Germany. However, as Germany is the number one country that refugees immigrate to, the issue is particularly pressing there.

In the following, I will explore important questions that arise when discussing possible solutions for the outlined issue. First of all, I will try to understand what the causes for the rising right-wing populism in Germany are. Doing so, I will in a second step analyze which entities are involved with the problem and I will elaborate on some possible solutions for how to frame the issue in order to make integration in Germany successful.

2   Body Parts: Exploration of Reasons and Solutions for Rising Nationalism and the Challenges of Integration in Germany

2.1   Factual Insights on the Public Opinion on Immigration and Integration in Germany

Explaining the rise of nationalist, right-wing feelings amongst Germans, considering their history with national socialism, is a complex matter and there are definitely several factors involved. The first time I actively thought about reasons for it was in summer 2015, when I was asked by the German Fulbright commission within my scholarship interview, how I would explain people setting fire to refugee homes, as it occurred back then, to Americans when I would go there for my graduate studies. Back then, I said that I would mainly try to explain to Americans, how overwhelmed and invaded many Germans felt by the immense number of refugees who had come to Germany more or less all at once. I think that the refugee crisis raised the natural human feeling of self-preservation in many Germans. Once the number of refugees who come to a country goes beyond a critical mass, the general mood towards letting refugees in tends to suddenly change from a welcoming one to a refusing one. In many small villages, where high numbers of refugees were brought for the first weeks after their entrance into the country, inhabitants probably felt threatened and had a sense of loss of control over the situation. For instance, in 2015 the government planned on bringing 1.000 refugees to the village of Sumte that has only 100 inhabitants. Consequently, it becomes at least understandable why support for the "Willkommenskultur", the welcoming culture in Germany, decreased over the past two years (Stiftung Mercator, 2016). However, during my Fulbright interview I felt it was also important to emphasize that while there is proof for this tendency rising on the one

side, the majority of Germans is still pro integration of refugees (Stiftung Mercator, 2016) and there are countless volunteer initiatives of Germans who passionately help refugees and support them in many ways, on the other side.

Now that I have the time to actually look at some numbers and public opinion polls, I can add to this explanation a more factual and currently valid insight. The most recent representative political barometer published once a month by ZDF, one of the major public news channels in Germany, showed that 52 per cent of Germans think that refugees lead to an increase of crime rate. But the dominant fear connected with the refugee crisis seems to lie in the economic dimension of immigration to Germany as 60 per cent of respondents think that expenses for taking in so many refugees results in financial cuts in other areas. It becomes clear that sustaining internal security and economic wealth play an important role for Germans when it comes to discussing refugee policies.

As a majority of the refugees who came to Germany over the past years are from Syria, Afghanistan and Irak (BAMF Deutschland, 2016) – countries that are mainly Islamic, don't necessarily treat women and men equal or demand women to wear veils – one could argue that another main driver of negative sentiments towards refugees is the fear of losing German culture, values and traditions. But recent numbers indicate that only a third of Germans think that refugees pose a threat to their cultural values (ZDF, 2016). Still, seeing refugees as a threat to culture makes one of the three main aspects of fear that Germans feel toward refugees, leading to an increasing support for a nationalist, right-wing political agenda.

Besides this, Germany faces several challenges of integration of over one million refugees into society. Currently, with 52 per cent only a little more than half of the population thinks that integration will be successful – a rather pessimistic perspective on integration. In December

2016, 55 per cent stated that Germany can cope with the refugee crisis (ZDF, 2016), indicating that a huge part of the population does not share this optimistic feeling. Fifty per cent of Germans don't feel like the majority of refugees even wants to integrate themselves. This opinion and attitude toward integration obviously poses a great challenge the government needs to address somehow, in order to make integration successful. After all, integration can only work when both sides are willing to take part in it.

Concrete numbers and statistics like these, published by reliable sources, helped me identify main reasons for the rise of nationalism specifically in Germany and confirmed some common sense speculations while they contradicted others. Therefore, this data served as a necessary starting point to elaborate a clear and valid argument from.

2.2   The Role of ICT in the Rise of Nationalism in Germany

Scanning the news in search for other factors contributing to this nationalist rise not only in Germany, but internationally, my attention was drawn to the role of ICT in these developments. Communication and the improving infrastructure of communication technology have a central significance in today's world. In fact, Floridi writes about digital determinism, meaning that ICT determines our reality, strongly affecting our daily lives, our identities and our self-understanding (2014, p. 58). His book helped me to think of the issue in Germany from a more international, societal and communication point of view and led me into the direction of the transformation of culture and trends of media convergence and culture industry which I will explore later in this essay.

One of the main theses Floridi makes is the one of "hyperhistory" (2014, p. 6). He argues that today, many societies, among these the German society, have entered a phase of hyperhistory

in which they become "vitally dependent" on ICTs and on "information as a fundamental resource in order to flourish" (2014, p. 6). ICTs not only record and transmit information, but also process information, increasingly autonomously (Floridi, 2014, p. 6). The author states that Germany qualifies for a hyperhistorical society because at least 70 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product "depends on intangible goods, which are information-related, rather than on material goods" (Floridi, 2014, p. 4). As an information society Germany depends on ICTs for "societal welfare, personal well-being, technological innovation, scientific discoveries, and economic growth" (Floridi, 2014, p. 167). According to Floridi, we are living in an infosphere where life happens more and more online, we are leading an "onlife" (2014). What is noteworthy is also that he describes how the world is becoming an infosphere increasingly well adapted to ICTs' limited capacities. He argues that we are adapting the environment to our smart technologies for successful interaction rather than the other way around (Floridi, 2014, p. 143). Important for the discussion of the vanishing notion of nation and the following rise of economic nationalism now, is the thought that by fostering the development of ICTs, the state ends by "undermining its own future as the only, or even the main, information agent" (Floridi, 2014, p. 172) – as it is not the primary collector, producer, and controller of information anymore. This observation reveals that the ongoing development of ICT is a main driver of transforming the state in an information society, shifting the balance against centralized government toward a distributed governance and international, global coordination (Floridi, 2014, p. 172). As these aspects of globalizations have many opponents and many people fear a loss of control over regulations in their own nation to "non-state multi-agent" (Floridi, 2014, p. 174) systems, ICT is also a driver of economic nationalism that rises as a counter movement to the transformation of the state. For instance, studies show that in Germany, middle aged men with lower education are more likely to vote for the right-wing party – they are called "Globalisierungsverlierer" (Welt24, 2016), globalization-losers. The fact that 16 per cent of the

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German population thinks their membership in the EU brings Germany rather disadvantages (ZDF, 2016) supports Floridi's claim. This demonstrates that there is an increasing resistance against transferring a state's sovereign rights to supranational European institutions (Floridi, 2014, p. 180) or supporting the European Central Bank, as the AfD program confirms. Resulting from further developing ICTs, regional borders become irrelevant as ICTs "de-territorialize human experience" (Floridi, 2014, p. 176). New regions of the infosphere are "intrinsically stateless" (Floridi, 2014, p. 176). This claim is in cohesion with what Mosco (2009) claims, using the term "spatialization" and arguing that ICT allows people to overcome constraints of space and time in social life (p. 183). A practical example for this development would be social media communication as well as internationally operating media conglomerates.

2.3   Media as an Important Actor in Framing Immigration and Integration

This leads me to the next trends contributing to the rise of nationalism, rather culturally motivated: media convergence (Jenkins, 2004) and culture industry (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1976). Jenkins (2004) argues that in today's media landscape, there is an "alarming concentration of the ownership of mainstream commercial media" (p. 33) as a small hand full of "multinational media conglomerates" (p. 33) are now dominating all sectors of the entertainment industry. An example showcasing this development is the example of AT+T recently having bought CNN. Moreover, Facebook actually owns another immensely successful social media platform, Instagram, and finally, Netflix went from a streaming service to a company producing Netflix original TV series and movies with more than 86.74 million subscribers (Statista, 2016) worldwide. Increasing media convergence results in a loss of "cultural diversity" (Jenkins, 2004, p. 42). With the "commodification" (Mosco, 2009) of

culture all mass culture today is identical (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1976). With the increasing privatization of the media industry culture is losing its inherent value of art and is exchanged by economic value, becoming marketable like an industrial product with no use value left to it at all (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1976). The dominant culture and media formats and contents that have been spread and that still keep invading all other parts of the world is the American, Western one – the world is moving towards "McWorld" (Barber, 1995). As a response to this, Barber (1995) saw a movement on the rise that he uses the term "Jihad" for and that he sees as a rising threat for democracy. Barber acknowledged that the term is originally associated with the struggle of believers against faithlessness used in the Islamic world. In that context, Jihad is a holy war fought in the name of God and its inhospitality to democracy nurtures conditions favorable to parochialism, anti-modernism and exclusiveness. Barber himself uses the term to describe a generic form of fundamentalist opposition to modernity and globalization or even Westernization that, in his opinion, can be found not only in Islam but just as well in other world religions. Still, Barber emphasizes that Jihad in this sense can not only be seen as a movement rising versus McWorld but it is also only possible via McWorld. For example, the spread of religion and culture are enabled through McWorld's technologies and communication infrastructure and markets. However, the main thesis Barber makes states that neither Jihad nor McWorld allow democracy: McWorld does not actually provide real freedom of choice as it is focused rather on consumerism and profit than on democratic values; Jihad gives no space for liberties and it does not provide a free civil society.

Reflecting on these elaborations of the role of ICT and especially the media in the rise of nationalism I conclude that both are a driver of cultural unification and thereby transformation. As the concept of Jihad illustrates, I argue that with ICT being a driver of globalization and cultural transformation, it is, at the same time and partially as a consequence to this, also a

driver of nationalism. But since I don't think it's the right approach to turn against technological progress, which is unstoppable anyhow, this means that the transformation of culture is a necessary and inevitable process. The question I ask myself at this point is however, whether the rise of nationalism has to be a necessary consequence of this. I think, the thought of transformation of culture and the state trigger many fears amongst people that could possibly be addressed and overcome with the right communicative approach.

2.4   Hegemonic Shift of Originally Right-Wing Thoughts to Common Sense

This realization brings me to another factor involved with the rise of nationalist feelings in Germany: the way immigration is being framed in the media and by political actors. I found a very interesting source looking at the same issue in the Netherlands that allows generalizations also valid for Germany. Yilmaz (2016) observed that in the Netherlands, the populist Far Right successfully articulated immigration as the main threat to the nation (p. 183) and transformed immigration into a cultural threat (p. 184). The author mainly claims that throughout Europe, there has been a process of "hegemonic displacement in which political discourse is culturalized and pushed to the right" (Yilmaz, 2016, p. 190) – a claim being testified by the rapid rise of populist right-wing parties. The new hegemony, according to Yilmaz, is characterized by a new collectivity anchored in the "perception of common core values that bring us together". These shared cultural values that unite people are actually a number of achievements that are simply being *culturalized*, for example gender equality, gay rights, non-violence or freedom of speech (Yilmaz, 2016, p. 184). The author outlines how the new populist right-wing hegemony is formed by the premises of the populist Far Right:

> "The cultural view of these achievements is based on a denial of a past that was characterized by major conflicts over these demands. The populist imagination

presents the current state of crisis as a break from the culturally homogeneous past

that was a precondition for social cohesion." (2016, p. 196)

Yilmaz argues that the above mentioned achievements form a new cultural antagonism that

originates with the populist Far Right but has become the new common sense of the social order

(2016, p. 187). Despite this, in Germany this hegemonic shift does not seem to have had as

much influence, yet. A recently published political barometer proves that 81 per cent of

Germans think that a rising right wing populism in Europe is "(very) bad for democracy" (ZDF,

2016). However, Yilmaz explains that moral panics that were created around single, particular

acts of deviance are framed as instances of Muslim culture, referring to examples like the

attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris (Yilmaz, 2016, p. 184), an instance of gang violence or gang

rape or a murder categorized as honor killing. He further elaborates that none of these acts are

specific to Islam but through cultural explanations these "welfare frauds" become the indication

of the incompatibility of Muslim ethics with "our ethics" (Yilmaz, 2016, p. 187). This is how

the mentioned new antagonism between the "alien Muslims and the nation" (Yillmaz, 2016, p.

187) is produced. The author further notes that right-wing parties use this antagonism and make

immigration and immigrants' culture the centerpiece of their politics (Yilmaz, 2016, p. 192) in

order to gain support from the masses – as immigrants in this frame pose a threat to core values

everyone but these immigrants shares. So-called culturally and religiously motivated practices

and actions of Muslims are used to rally people from different political and social groups around

some core values that unite people (Yilmaz, 2016, p. 184). These core values however, are only

defined by the nature of the "imagined threat" (Yilmaz, 2016, p. 184) and are rather

achievements than shared cultural values, the author argues. It becomes clear that this new

hegemony and social common sense is another relevant factor when trying to understand the

rise of nationalism in Germany. Yilmaz concludes by generalizing these thoughts to other

European countries and in this, I agree with him: From my personal experience of living in Germany I can say that there is in fact a hegemonic association of critical social and political issues such as democracy, national security, freedom of speech, gender equality and gay rights with the impact of Muslim immigration and Islam (Yilmaz, 2016, p. 190). As a matter of fact, at the beginning of this essay I mentioned that 52 per cent of the population think that accepting refugees leads to more crimes that threaten inner security (ZDF, 2016). I can further confirm that the "focus on social cohesion, core values, and national unity" (Yilmaz, 2016, p. 190) is dominant in public discourse in Germany, as well. For instance, the new integration law introduced this summer raises the number of hours in integration courses that focus on the transmission of values from 60 to 100 hours. The online platform that is part of the accompanying integration campaign states that integration means that refugees learn about "our" way of life (Bundesregierung Deutschland, 2016). The idea of this new hegemony in Europe indicates that one way to combat rising nationalism would be to lead the hegemonic shift into another direction, to frame immigration differently.

Thinking about who can actually influence hegemony made me remember having discussed the term in the context of another class. Hebdige (1993) argued that in the process of "naturalization" (p. 3) that leads to a hegemonic ideology in a society, certain social groups win and shape consent so that the power of these dominant groups appears both legitimate and natural to society. Important about this perspective is that an ideological perspective is not forced upon the less powerful groups in society, but instead, it seems to be beyond particular interest and is perceived as simply natural. He emphasizes that hegemonic meaning has to be won, reproduced and sustained as it is a "moving equilibrium" (Hebdige, 1993, p. 5). Firstly, this means that hegemony can move away from the negative direction it has already shifted to in Europe. However, I doubt that only one or few dominant groups are really the ones in today's

society shaping hegemonic meaning. Condit (1994) provides the ground for a model of evolutionary social change created by the interaction of multiple contesting groups, not only one single dominant, powerful group as in the preceding model of Hebdige. He argues for a "plurivocal set of interests" (Condit, 1994, p. 22), focusing on a variety of political, economic and social forces involved in the formation of hegemony: the press and the government as mediators and central agents in public debate but also interest groups and audiences. Resulting from these theoretical considerations, I argue that the media as well as the government play an important role in shaping hegemonic meaning and can therefore contribute to shifting the new hegemony Yilmaz identified into another direction that does not naturalize right-wing opinions.

2.5   The Multicultural Frame as a Possible Solution?

The way the press can influence contemporary hegemony is by framing the issue of immigration and integration in their reporting strategically. Thinking in the opposite direction of the "new hegemony" (Yilmaz, 2016), one option would be to frame immigration as an opportunity to gain more cultural diversity instead of framing immigration as a cultural threat. A study conducted recently by Bos et al. (2016) found that the frame of a story does in fact affect intercultural behavioral intentions towards immigrants, proving that framing in general matters (p. 97). Moreover, results of their research show that the "multicultural frame exerts positive" (Bos, Lecheler, Mewafi, & Vliegenthart, 2016, p. 97) effects while other frames examined in the study exerted negative effects. The multicultural frame promotes cultural diversity as an asset that enhances the quality of society (Bos, Lecheler, Mewafi, & Vliegenthart, 2016, p. 3). Concretely, the authors argue that the multicultural frame positively affects the immigration attitude and has the most impact on behavioral intentions: They could find significant proof for people being exposed to the multicultural frame being the most

inclined to look for information and join in on discussions on the topic, and actively contributing to the situation of immigrant women (Bos, Lecheler, Mewafi, & Vliegenthart, 2016, p. 105). Apart from this, another finding Bos et al. point out is relevant to the discussion of the issue of the rise of the nationalist party in Germany: The fact that frames impact attitudes towards immigrants is particularly relevant in this context as these attitudes consequently impact political behavior such as voting (Bos, Lecheler, Mewafi, & Vliegenthart, 2016, p. 106). For me personally, the results of this study contributed to a deeper understanding of the circumstances under which mass media can influence individual attitudes toward immigration. Reflecting on these results, I would assume that by applying the frame of multiculturalism in Germany more often in the future, voting behavior could be influenced in a way so that the populist right-wing party AfD would not gain further support.

Moving on, I nonetheless critically questioned multiculturalism as an effective approach to combat the rise of nationalism and foster successful integration in Germany. Is heterogeneity of society a guarantor for plurality? What about the issue of parallel societies that constantly pops up in news articles? Yimaz (2016) offers insight on this, stating that in Germany, despite its history and absence of a huge far-right party since World War II, "anxieties about 'ethnic ghettos' and 'parallel societies' are taken to be indicators of a failed experiment with multiculturalism" (Yilmaz, 2016, p. 191). He also refers to the British situation, arguing that parallel societies as evidence of the failure of multiculturalism have pushed immigration discourse into the terrain of culture where Muslim immigrants are considered to be a threat to national culture (Yilmaz, 2016, p. 191). This leads back to the point I discussed earlier and brings me to realize that a multicultural frame in Germany would probably not be very authentic with people having the feeling that multiculturalism in Germany and other societies with many immigrants has simply failed so far. Moreover, the immigration situation in Germany cannot

be compared to the United States, for example. While the founding of the U.S. is ultimately based on immigration, I think society rather resembles a salad bowl than a melting pot. The geographical conditions of the North American continent allowed people from different national and cultural backgrounds to inhabit the new territory with lots of space in between so they could peacefully coexist but never really had to integrate into a common society. Even in New York City, for instance, these parallel societies still offer Asians and Italians separate neighborhoods in which they can socialize with people of their own culture. Besides this, with today's ICT infrastructure, people immigrating to other countries can easily keep consuming their own culture while living in another one. In that matter, ICT enables people to stick to their cultures, giving them no reason to actually integrate into the new culture of the environment they find themselves in – technology does not support integration, from this perspective. For these reasons, multiculturalism is to be seen critically and I argue that it is not an effective solution to use cultural diversity as a main frame for the immigration and integration issue in Germany.

Other than in the U.S., I think that multiculturalism is also not an integral part of the German national identity, due to a very different history of founding. This leads my inquiry further on to the issue of national identity in Germany: What does it mean to be German? To what extent and in which contexts can Germans be proud of their country and publically express patriotic sentiments? The first question is obviously very difficult to adequately respond to as it will rather be based on intuition and feelings than on rational facts. However, as a German who was born and brought up in Germany, having German parents and grandparents who have passed on stories of war times to me, I would say that being German means being aware of the nation's history and the threat of racism and nationalism. But being German also means learning from these negative events in the past and moving away from them in the present and future. An

important aspect of German national identity is a sense of belonging to and pride for the national soccer team. It won the World Cup in 1954, 1974, 1990 and 2014 and this means a tremendous success that offers a safe space for the expression of love for the country. Being German means being modest and sometimes even holding back about our own abilities while actually knowing that our educational system, our economy and our social system are far ahead of the ones in many other countries – German standards of living are very high in an international comparison. But, what does my sense of German identity tell me about how to act towards immigrants? First of all, I see the issue not necessarily from a political or cultural perspective, but a humanitarian one. Remembering my country's history, I also feel empathy for refugees and want to actively contribute to changing our image in the world positively from being nationalist and anti-Semitic to being welcoming and open to foreigners. I think that being German also means to see this refugee crisis as a chance to make up for the incredibly cruel events occurred in Nazi Germany, even though this is of course not even possible. But I feel like many Germans probably feel like it is their responsibility to show the world now that we take in refugees and are willing to support and integrate them into our society. Finally, I think it is interesting to note that according to a 2015 study on the role of religion and identity in contemporary Germany, Germans consider being German something that can be learned and acquired (Smale & Eddy, 2015). This insight indicates that contemporary German identity has room for people who don't have the same ethnic heritage but who are open to learning about it – with this, German national identity seems to be a rather integrative one.

2.6   Proposing approaches for an effective communication campaign

But the second question I posed above remains open. I still think that there is some integrative and positive potential in national pride that could be used somehow in framing the German

national identity in order to contribute to successful integration. The government and the media play an important role in this. I personally advocate for taking advantage of the positive nationalism that has been developing amongst my generation due to German success in soccer over the past years. Germans should feel like they are allowed and maybe even welcomed to express national pride in a positive, integrative way so that there is a basis for facing the challenge of integration as a united people that is welcoming to refugees. The most direct form I can think of how to implement this idea would be to start soccer initiatives, to actively include young refugees in soccer teams, integrate them there on a small group level and let them participate in feeling pride for being part of this society and living in this country. I can also imagine that it would have great impact if the German national team would take a stand and use their voice in facing the challenge of integration. The team itself embodies successful integration and gives national pride and unity a positive and integrative annotation. Including initiatives like these could follow the approach of "Soccer without borders" (Soccer Without Borders, 2016), that is already widely spread in other countries, aiming to support integration of immigrant youth. With the integration campaign "Deutschland kann das", the government follows an optimistic approach that understands Germans as a unity and not as the split population they are lately, according to the numbers introduced at the beginning of this essay. As a final step of my thought process I will analyze this campaign and evaluate its communicative approach. With the inquiry I have gone through at this point, I will be able to propose campaign components that would form a possible solution to the issue I defined throughout this essay: How can communication contribute to combatting the rise of nationalism in Germany and how can it contribute to make integration successful?

The most dangerous development I see in Germany and Europe is what I presented about hegemonic displacement: Common so called cultural values – achievements that form the core basis of democracy and respecting human rights – are used to unify the mass, the people, against

Muslim immigrants that are framed as a threat to these values. Thereby it becomes common sense to have a negative opinion towards immigrants and integration without necessarily associating these sentiments with right-wing thinking; populist voices are pushed from the fringes into the "center of mainstream discourse" (Yilmaz, 2016, p. 195). The current integration campaign as it is fosters the hegemonic shift into this direction by emphasizing that Germany demands from refugees to integrate themselves and live up to "our" values and laws – one of the main claims of the campaign is "Fördern und fordern", meaning "supporting and demanding". While this is partially the right approach because it transmits that Germans not only give support but they also require refugee's commitment and adaption to the local culture, it should not be what the campaign is focused on or at least not be the only, central core message. According to the insights developed in this essay, it is equally important to consider other message aspects as components of a successful integration campaign: First of all, communication needs to somehow address the feeling of a loss of control and of being overwhelmed by the high number of refugees, as outlined at the very beginning. Apart from this, a campaign needs to *deculturalize* the political discussion and rather focus on transmitting economic stability. Learning from history and the reactions to Versailles Treaty, I argue that it is important to give Germans the feeling that first, Germany can financially and economically handle the refugee situation without suffering significantly itself, and second, that Germany is not the only European country taking responsibility for the refugee crisis as many other countries have also been accepting high or appropriate numbers of refugees.

What is missing in the German national identity so far but what would form a factor for unification is confidence. I personally think that a campaign should reveal how proud Germans can actually be about being the number one country that people want to immigrate to, as this is the highest compliment a society and economy can get. Obviously, Germany seems to be a very successful, progressive and equal country and people all over Europe and possibly even on a

global scale seem to be aware of that. But speaking from my personal perspective, I have a feeling that Germans themselves are the ones who are the least aware of it or their historical background has simply taught them not to show confidence and national pride. I argue, that if a communication campaign contributes to building confidence into the German national identity, this image will unify Germans around shared achievements, not cultural values and thereby adjust the hegemonic shift that has been slowly justifying the support of right-wing party's program. The hegemonic shift makes the populist vision the new common sense and through this, a new unity among groups from the left and the right in defense of "threatened 'shared values'" (Yilmaz, 2016, p. 196) is created. What poses a new threat now is that right-wing parties detect this missing space for pride in national identity amongst the young generation before the other parties do so and that they frame this topic linked to their anti-immigration politics. Some young Germans think that the political establishment has denied them sufficient pride in their national identity even though they have every right to be proud of living in a country that has one of Europe's best-performing economies (The New York Times, 2017). If far right parties are the ones who send messages of allowing national pride, this stands in connotation with their entire ideology and therefore, the recent government should instead occupy this subject. Recent poll numbers show that the German people need to be unified somehow in order to face integration together and successfully. Right now, half the country has a very pessimistic attitude towards it but integration can only work if both sides contribute to it. It becomes clear that the communication campaign I have in mind should target Germans and refugees more separately. Germans need to receive messages as I just described while it is a completely different story, what refugees with Islamic backgrounds need to be told in order for them to be willing to integrate themselves. After all, I have not looked into whether there are any numbers revealing to what extent they are not willing to integrate themselves. This is rather kind of a presumption many people might have.

Despite all this, it is important to take into consideration that addressing integration successfully is not only a communicative issue but also a matter of how it will be addressed politically, economically and logistically. Naturally, only what is factually true can be authentically communicated in a campaign.

A government-indicated campaign should, drawing from my explorations, focus on facts about the economic dimension of immigration and integration as one core component and include security and crime right as another in order to decrease fear connected to taking in refugees. For instance, a German news source recently published an article revealing numbers about expenses made on integration in 2016. According to this article, Germany will have spent almost 20 billion Euros on refugees by the end of 2016, which is almost 3 billion Euros more than ministries had planned at the end of last year (Welt24, 2016). While mistakes like these are still acceptable considering the fact that financial ministers had to make fast decisions under pressure throughout the year, it is now the time to correct financial calculations for the future and communicate these efforts. I think, the government should now transmit to the public that it is aware of integration going to be a task relevant over the next years and only starting now and therefore, the government will now take the time to adjust plans about financial expenses for integration on a long-term perspective in order to give Germans a feeling of stability and in order to show tax payers that the government has the competencies to handle this situation financially without having to make major cuts in other areas. Only recently, Merkel defended these additional expenses saying that they pose good investments and that the rest of the population does not suffer from this as expenses in other areas are raised as well, ensuring that those who have always lived in Germany will also profit. This could be the right communicative approach, in my opinion. Besides this, the state office of criminal investigation in Germany stated in March 2016, that no disproportionate level of crime due to immigrants could be observed. It is the spreading of facts and insights like these, that might contribute to a more

optimistic perspective on integration in Germany. One way of giving such messages more

credibility would be to include finance and security ministers as ambassadors in the campaign,

speaking directly to the German population.

3   Summary and Conclusion

To conclude, I advocate for an idea mainly based on two claims: First, the transformation of culture is a necessary process with ICT as its driver. Second, this does not necessarily have to result in the rise of right-wing nationalism and populism. Successful integration is a matter of reframing the transformation of culture that a new hegemony defines as a threat.

This idea of framing immigration and integration differently has been further elaborated. Promoting multiculturalism could be eliminated as an effective communicative approach to addressing the issue. Taking the entire inquiry of this essay into consideration, the approach of demanding and supporting at the same time, recently applied by a government-indicated integration campaign, could be evaluated as only one important aspect of an effective way of communication. Focusing entirely on this message can be expected to have negative effects as it contributes to the new hegemonic shift Yilmaz identified. Adding other core messages would build a more effective case for a campaign. For example, I argue that economic and financial stability as well as the upholding of inner security despite the refugee crisis are crucial messages that need to be transmitted in order to decrease fear and pessimistic attitudes toward immigration and integration. Building this kind of extensive frame also needs to shape the German national identity by allowing positive national pride and confidence based on economic as well as athletic success. By doing so, it offers Germans a safe space to unify for facing the challenge of integration together.

Summing up, it became clear that several people or entities are involved in the issue of a rising right-wing nationalism and the challenges of integration: the media, political actors, individuals as well as other countries in Europe and the US, Islamic terror organizations, non-governmental and community-based organizations, the private sector and more. Consequently, from a communication perspective, all these actors interact and can contribute to successfully

addressing integration in Germany. This essay proposed ways in which political actors as well as the media can do their part. Further explorations and research should focus on how individual's communication on social media also influences the public, hegemonic frame on immigration and integration. It would furthermore be interesting to investigate the role of other countries' political leaders – many people speculated over the past weeks that the rise of Donald Trump could serve as a role model for populist parties in European countries. Another aspect that I did not pay attention to in this essay is the role of private corporations in addressing the issue of rising nationalism and negative attitudes toward integration. After all, a trust barometer published annually by Edelman recently revealed that trust in corporations is rising while trust in politics is generally decreasing (Edelman, 2016). What does this mean for communication campaigns? Should companies nowadays take such responsibility and address political and social issues? Besides this, I did not consider the role of education or rather enlightenment in facing the challenge of integration. To what extent does the level of education affect people's willingness to contribute to integration? Finally, what role do policies that form the basis for any communication play? Further research could examine the new integration law in Germany and evaluate how it is contributing to a successful integration.

The issues that this essay aimed to understand and propose solutions to remain extremely complex ones that definitely can't be easily overcome. However, I explored ways in which communication does and can contribute to making immigration and integration in Germany successful while combating the rise of right-wing nationalism. With the enormous and constantly increasing relevance of the issues I finally call for further inquiries on communicative approaches towards them. With this first successful terrorist attack conducted by an asylum seeker in Germany in December 2016 and public safety not being upheld, refugees living in Germany are seen as more than just a threat now and the issue of rising nationalism in response to this is more pressing than ever.

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