June 28, 2017

Justus-Liebig-University Giessen

Department of English

Seminar: Migration / Law / Gender

Lecturer: Prof. Dr. Greta Olson

Winter semester 2016/17

Migration / Law / Gender

Reading Journal

Yvonne Zeiss

Table of Content

1. Introduction

As a child, I used to sit beside my mother when she was watching the news in the evening. Every time the news anchor talked about people with foreign roots living in Germany, my mother reacted with an angry snort and with head-shaking, usually followed by a statement which implied that *they* only came to Germany to profit from the financial benefits given from the state.

In middle school I befriended two German-Russian girls from my class, and to this day I remember being worried about my mother's reaction to them and their parents. I thought, she would be insulting and accusing them of *stealing* money from the state, since that was her usually reaction when she was watching the news. I was excited when I saw them interacting in a friendly manner and polite, and hoped that my mother would reconsider her generalizations. Unfortunately, she did not. A couple of years later, I talked to her about music and told her that Mozart's *Türkischer Marsch* currently was my favorite composition to listen to while studying or reading. Her instant reaction: "Türkisch? Türken kann ich nicht leiden!"

Besides Mozart I was a huge fan of the US rapper Nelly – when I was about fourteen years old. I just acquired a new poster of the artist where he was shown with his naked upper body and I remember pondering about whether I should show my father this huge poster of a half-naked man. Since I was so proud of this awesome, larger-than-life picture of my favorite artist at that time, I decided to show my father anyway; his reaction was one single statement: "Das ist ja ein Neger!" It never even occurred to me that my father would react to the color of Nelly's skin rather than commenting on the presented nudity.

When my father talks about the caregiver of his friend's elderly mother, he only refers to the carer as "die Polin" or "die aus Polen".[1]

Needless to say, I grew up in a German household with prejudices, xenophobic language and the distinction between Germans and *foreigners*. Even though my father actually is not hostile to foreigners but highly aware about global politics and especially the political situation in countries of Europe as well as the Middle East,[2] his language sometimes reflects the contrary and thus shaped my understanding of foreign-born people. When it comes to my mother, her preference for victimhood probably plays a

---

[1] Thinking back to these incidents I still am as confused and flabbergasted as I was then: why is the original nationality or the ethnicity of a human being much more important than the person themselves, their personality, or their profession? How can the nationality take away and completely overlay the essence of a human being and their story? Why would anybody reduce a person to their ethnicity and home country?

[2] He is aware of the general wellbeing in Germany and thinks that we, as a country and as people, not only can but should help immigrants to have a peaceful life away from war and persecution.

huge role in her xenophobic tendencies; however, the lack of empathy and reflection presumably is the core problem of her attitude and her mindset about immigrants and foreign-born people.

Within the scope of this paper I want to focus on and examine how my parents – and so many other Germans – adapted the distinction of "them" and "us", of differentiating one's own culture, nationality and religion from "theirs" and simultaneously devaluate other ways of life. Both of my parents are being highly influenced by German mass media, and their view on migrants, refugees and various ethnicities are almost exclusively based on media representation, which is why I want to explore how German media represent migrants or people with a migration background; I hope to understand how and why such one-dimensional views on "Ausländer" are being produced. For this purpose, I will analyze four texts which provide explanations and further insight into German media strategies and into the audience's reception of the given representation. Primarily, Andres Geddes' and Peter Scholten's "Germany: A Country of Immigration after All" will give a historical perspective and detailed facts on migration in Germany, and thus provide a vital part of German history, that tends to be ignored, but needs to become part of the German migration discourse. Secondly, Gabriele Dietze's "Das Ereignis Köln" will give a case example of the promotion of racist and xenophobic ideologies; the term *ethnosexism* and the mindset of Western exceptionalism will be the main part of the following discussion of Dietze's text. Thirdly, the analysis of "Lingerie, Bikinis and the Headscarf, Visual depictions of Muslim female migrants in German news media" by Esra Özcan will illustrate how visual images of refugees and migrants in German media constructs social and cultural distance between the depicted people and the German audience. In the subsequent discussion, I will focus on the problem of one-dimensional, stereotypical representation of ethnicities and religions, as well as the possibilities to provide authentic and more positive images. Fourthly, the discussion about Margreth Lünenborg's and Elfriede Fürsich's paper on "Media and the Intersectional Other: The Complex Negotiation of Migration, Gender, and Class on German Television" will further examine how Otherness and stereotypes are being created and reproduced in mainstream media. Furthermore, our possibilities of actively going against Othering will be provided.

2. Geddes and Scholten: Germany: A Country of Immigration after All

In their treatise about German immigration and immigration policies, Andrew Geddes and Peter Scholten analyze various migrational events of guest workers, refugees and asylum seekers in Germany. They further illustrate the development in Germany's identity as a country of immigration.

2.1 Central Themes

Due to pre-unification West Germany's history as a provisional state and incomplete nation, Germany adapted the idea of not being a country of immigration in 1977 even though there were already 4 million foreign-born residents (Geddes et al. 2016: 75). Geddes (2016: 77) distinguishes four sources of post-Second World War migration to Germany: First, between 1945 and 1955, around 12 million ethnic Germans have been fleeing from persecution in Soviet countries, migrated to West Germany and were granted automatic German citizenship (2016: 77). These *Aussiedler* (2016: 77) were seen as a part of the German community and, by 1950, they accounted for 16 per cent of West Germany's population (2016: 77). Second, from 1955 to 1966, there was a demand of guest worker labor immigrants by the industry and by agriculture, with the result of the recruitment of 1.3 million guest workers from Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Portugal, Tunisia and Morocco (2016: 77). After the economic recession in 1966/67 and its recovery in 1973, the ethnic composition of the guest worker population changed – there were fewer Italians and Yugoslavs and more Turks, who made 13 per cent of the foreign population in Germany, which rose to 33 per cent by 1980 (2016: 77). The third source of post-World War II migration to Germany consists of the guest worker's family members, who were allowed to migrate as well (2016: 77). Fourth and last, since the 1990s, asylum seekers migrated to Germany; however the right to actually entering German state territory was reduced in order to limit the migration of *Aussiedler* and *Spätaussiedler* because the presence of ethnic Germans did become a controversial topic as their numbers increased and the costs of special measures became more important (2016: 79). The Green Card Initiative by the SPD/Green in 2000 was launched to attract high skilled migration (2016: 81), which caused the CDU/CSU's to formulate criticism and the demand of focusing on the education and training of German children rather than the recruitment of foreign workers (2016: 81f). After the Süssmuth Commission's statement, that Germany needed immigrants and their successful integration in order to stay economically competitive (2016: 82), the CDU/CSU became more concerned about the impact of immigration on Germany's

Leitkultur (2016: 83), which reflected a broader trend of growing public discontent with immigration and multiculturalism (2016: 83). The so-called refugee crisis started in the 2010s and established Merkel's welcome policy, which motivated the journeys for hundreds of thousands of men, women and children (2016: 85). In 2015, in order to be able to cope with the numbers of refugees, there was a re-introduction of controls at Austrian and Czech borders, which lead to the retreatment of Germany's initial welcome policy (2016: 85). Nevertheless, Gedde (2016: 99) emphasizes that, by 2015, Germany operated as one of the most liberal migration regimes in Europe due to its combination of routes for labor migrants and a relatively open approach to asylum-seeking migration.

Concerning the immigration policy, Gedde (2016: 86) points out two key elements which shaped the debates and discourses: first, the movement in the 1990s from an ethno-cultural to "a more civic understanding of nationality and citizenship in Germany" (2016: 86), and, second, the German labor market and welfare state, which mainly led to concerns about the "persistently poor integration outcomes" (2016: 86). There were both inclusive and exclusive effects of the German immigration policy (2016: 86) even though the policies themselves "reveal continuity rather than radical change" (2016: 92). There is still ambivalence about Germany's status as an immigration country; however Gedde (2016: 99) emphasizes how this notion *considers* the German identity as country of immigration.

2.2 Discussion: Germany's History of Immigration

Geddes' historical overview with its detailed facts on migration in Germany is extremely important to me, because it clearly shows that migration and foreign-born people are an undeniable part of our post-World War II history. For reasons I do not understand, these facts are hardly part of German discourse and even the historical German narrative, even though they would help painting a picture of a more colorful, multicultural Germany.

Even though Geddes mentions right-wing, populist and extremist activities and groups like PEGIDA (2016: 93f), he fails to make clear how anti-migration ideologies influence the public's opinion on refugees and, to this day, play a huge part in the notion of not being a country of immigration. He further claims that populist parties have not had the same prominence in Germany compared to other European countries (2016: 92). He also formulates the optimistic statement, that Germany leads one of the most liberal migration regimes in Europe (2016: 99). These aspects downplay and belittle the

genuine ambivalences of the German immigration discourse: there is both a *Willkommenskultur*, which embraces and welcomes refugees and migrants, as well as the opposing resentment and refusal to accept foreigners. The term *Ausländerpolitik* only emphasizes Germany's ambivalence with immigrants who are being referred to as *Ausländer* or foreigner.

The listed facts about Germany's immigration history are important for a reflective debate and should always be a part of the migration discourse and of the German migration narrative. If people are aware of these phases, they would open their mind to the notion of Germany as a country of immigration, which could lead to a more open, understanding and even welcoming attitude of current and future immigration – and ideally of refugees.

3. Dietze: Das 'Ereignis Köln'

Gabriele Dietze analyzes the reception of the night of New Year's Eve 2015/16 in Cologne and identifies culturally accepted *ethnecized sexism*:

> Dabei werde in einer Verschränkung von Frauen- und Einwanderungs-diskurs die Vorstellung produziert, Sexismus sei ein Effekt muslimischer Erziehung. Sexismuskritik an muslimischen Geschlechterordnungen wird dabei kaum als Rassismus wahrgenommen, weil sie sich mit einer positiv besetzten Norm der westlich konnotierten sexuellen Freiheit verbindet. (Dietze: 2016: 95).

3.1 Central Themes

Gabriele Dietze defines the night of New Year's Eve 2015/16 in Cologne with its various cases of pickpocketing and sexual offenses ascribed to mostly Muslim refugees, as a relationship of incompossible elements (Dietze 2016: 93). The fact that sexual harassment in public spaces is not considered to be criminal offence is one characteristic of Colognes 'incident'[3] which only reinforces the verdict of foreign men, especially immigrants being a great danger to German women (2016: 93). Dietze enforces the idea of ethnecized sexism or ethnosexism which describe the open and culturally accepted practice of racism under the pretext of sexism critique (2016: 95). Especially but not exclusively in this context, the Western emancipation, its sexual freedom and liberty functions as a model for every other culture and is believed to be the one and only, the

---

[3] Dietze tries to avoid this term because, again, she thinks of it as various incompatible elements.

exceptional liberty and feminism which needs to be universally adapted and practiced (2016: 95). By criticizing the alleged sexual oppression within or coming from a specific ethnicity or culture, one avoids racist connotations and implications (2016: 95). The night of New Year's Eve enforced the narrative of a "(young) foreign criminal and violent perpetrator" (2016: 95) who is a danger to the "native girl" (2016: 95), to white, young, German women, and therefore this night in Cologne became a political instrument against Muslim foreigners and refugees in general (2016: 95): refugees were linked to sexism and sexual offences which reinforced racist and xenophobic ideologies that remained hidden behind the sexism debate (2016: 95f). Dietze speaks of ethnosexism as a racist construction which disguises itself as criticism about sexism (2016: 96); she further outlines the omnipresent and normalized sexism in German media and in everyday life – our very own, native sexism with countless naked, female bodies which is often perceived as sexual liberation (2016: 97). The paradox and ambivalence lies within the perception of the various sexist incidents: German sexism stays invisible and unseen even though it is hypervisible; the foreign, ethnic sexism on the other hand is seen, perceived and highly criticized (2016: 97). Instead of opening the debate about sexism in general, this perception leads to the concept of protecting the vulnerable and threatened, white woman against subjugation by freeing the nation of the foreign, criminal and violent perpetrator (2016: 98f).

3.2 Discussion: Ethnosexism and Western Exceptionalism

Dietze frames very clearly what motivated media's and people's reactions after New Year's Eve in Cologne. This night has been omnipresent in media for weeks and even though sexual offenses triggered these intense media responses, they hardly resulted in an open debate about sexism in general. I absolutely agree that sexism was instrumentalized in order to promote racist ideologies: in Germany sexism itself is still widely accepted, ignored or even frowned upon – Dietze (2016: 97) fittingly speaks of *hypervisible* sexism – which makes mass media's view on Cologne insincere and hypocritical. According to Rossbauer (2009), sexual abuses are part of the annual Oktoberfest in Munich: "Rund 10 Vergewaltigungen pro Oktoberfest gehen in die Statistik ein – die Dunkelziffer wird auf 200 geschätzt, und sexuelle Belästigung […] ist auf der Wiesn Alltag." (2009). If German media indeed despises sexism in general, how come there is no equally loud outcry against sexual offenses each time the Oktoberfest takes place? The realization that Cologne's New Year's Eve made it into every newspaper and magazine due to racism and xenophobia is sad and upsetting: the debate

not only diverts from its initial topic but also antagonizes an entire ethnicity for something that is still present in *every* culture. I sincerely hope that the term *ethnosexism* finds its way into news, into media and into our everyday life in order to make people aware of and open up the debate about racism, sexism and also the concomitant manipulation and instrumentalization.

The western sexual exceptionalism is another of Dietze's aspects that needs to become part of an open discourse about feminism and about normativity in general: the idea that there is only one acceptable system, which should be universally adapted, automatically blocks different notions and conceptions, which potentially could influence, transform and extent the whole system. Western sexual liberty should be seen as the one and only form of liberation, but should learn from other cultures and other forms of feminism. Our world has become multicultural and we should embrace different views, different opinions and different ways. Exceptionalism does not just exclude other opinions but has the power to divide people *within* one culture or country, for example the fact that various, African-American women in the USA refuse to define themselves as *feminists*, but use labels like *girl power* in order to avoid the current categories about gender, race and sexuality (Butler 2016). If white feminism was more inclusive, we would have the chance to overcome discrepancies and differences so that we could ultimately stand together as a unit against misanthropy and sexism.

Dietze's (2016: 100) thesis about the *Sexualitätsdispositiv* and its imperative of granting, of freedom and liberty, raises some questions: The *Sexualitätsdispositiv* according to Foucault aims for the denial of sexual repression (2016: 99); how did this dispositive become an instrument against Muslims and refugees? Dietze (2016: 99) suggests that the predominant sentiment of a completion of sexual liberty in Western discourses led to a *Phantasma der Gewährung* (2016: 99) which focuses on said groups of Muslims and refugees. To my understanding, this late modern dispositive is a different one than Foucault's dispositive of sexuality, because it focuses on granting liberty (2016: 100) rather than denying sexual repression. I assume that Dietze says, the *Sexualitätsdispositiv* only reacts to the late modern, dominant discourse of migration since the topic of sexual repression is believed to be obsolete.

4. Özcan: Lingerie, Bikinis and the Headscarf. Visual depictions of Muslim female migrants in German news media

Esra Özcan (2013: 437f) states how visual images of people of migrant origin are being reduced and stereotypicalized which constructs a social and cultural distance between migrants and German society.

4.1 Central Themes

Özcan (2013: 427) formulates how visuals and media representation automatically shape people's opinions and feelings and therefore our understanding of different ethnicities, religions and cultures. Media coverage functions as a source of indirect experience for its audience (2013: 428) however mostly uses repetitive (visual) stereotypes (2013: 428) which subtly convey discriminatory messages (2013: 429). When it comes to Muslim representation in German media, there is a pattern of circumscribed displays which focus on religion as the determining factor in Muslim lives (2013: 429) with isolated topics like women's oppression, Islamic terrorism or the female headscarf (2013: 429) and thereby ignoring other cultural or social characteristics of their group. This oversimplification and reduction of Muslims constructs and influences public opinions (2013: 430) and simultaneously creates a sense of cultural difference (2013: 433). Özcan points out that people of migrant origin are mostly portrayed from a distance which enforces the idea of alienation and lack of interaction (2013: 434). Other ways of representing migrants also focus on contrasting life styles, on differences in general and ultimately shaping the impression of strangeness, segregation and parallel societies (2013: 434f). This construction of social and cultural distance between migrants and German society (2013: 437) is the result of reduced and stereotypical images which are being used in media footage. However, there are images which include both tradition and modernity, for example an inline skating women with a head scarf, which suggest integration and a sense of sameness (2013: 437).

4.2 Discussion: Media Portrayals and Visuals of Muslims

In the introduction of this paper I gave examples of my parents' racist and xenophobic statements. Both my mother and my father hardly ever came in contact with other cultures or people, who were not born and raised in Germany; they hardly travel or leave Germany at all, so their view on migrants is almost exclusively based on media

representation. Özcan's text and her media analysis helped me understand how my parents adapted a sense of strangeness and difference when it comes to other cultures.

There is no doubt about visuals shaping people's opinions which is why it is hardly surprising that so many Germans have a very specific, limited vision of Muslims and migrants in general. Not only are Muslim women being framed and reduced to their headscarf, their motivation for wearing a Hijab or similar is being reduced as well (2013: 430) so that people like my parents automatically believe such headdresses to be a mere tool used by the barbaric, male Muslim in order to oppress women. If media covered more actual stories about Muslim individuals, the public's opinion would have the opportunity to become broadened and enhanced. We need more authentic and real representations of cultures in media, rather than repeating the same stereotypes over and over again. People like my parents, whose opinions are not based on personal but on indirect media experience, should not be bombarded with the same one-dimensional images of cultures or religions. To stay with the example of the headscarf, so many people of Western society do not know that there actually are various reasons to wear one: Özcan (2013: 430) lists motivators like expression of personal identity, political protest, religious convictions and access to employment. Yet, these other perspectives and motives do not find their way into our public space due to lack of reports and representations in our media.

In April 2017, the tweet[4] of a Muslim teenager about a conversation with her father has gained huge attention in social media (Estatie 2017) and shows a new and unusual perspective – far from the stereotypical depiction – on male Muslims, who are often associated with terrorism, violence and barbarity (Özcan 2013: 430): after receiving a message from a twitter user, implying she would never be able to take her scarf off without her dad physically hurting her, the 17 year old Lamyaa texted her father "I was thinking. I want to take my hijab off" (Estatie 2017). She received a very caring, respectful and supportive answer from her father, saying that this is not his decision to make and that he will "support [her] no matter what" (2017). According to the BBC News (2017), various people messaged Lamyaa to support her and her tweet, which has been retweeted almost 150.000 times, and some even stated that her post changed their views on the hijab. This is an example of representation far from stereotypes; it includes real and authentic interaction that is based on love, respect and support – terms which are usually not used in German media to portray Muslims. A simple screenshot of a short, written conversation functions as the visibility and

---

[4] https://twitter.com/lxmyaa/status/853047555764232192

representation of Muslims' emotions and family union. If similar images and portrayals were being used and repeated by mainstream media, people would get a better impression and perspective – and maybe they would understand, that we are all just humans, no matter our ethnicity, culture or religion.

5. Lünenborg and Fürsich: Media and the Intersectional Other: The Complex Negotiation of Migration, Gender, and Class on German Television

In their article Margreth Lünenborg and Elfriede Fürsich present their findings on representation of migrant women in German media:

> The German media system lacks adequate representation of migrants in the workforce. Several studies have documented the problem that German newsrooms are non-migrant, middle-class and male (albeit with slowly changing gender constellations) […]. Despite some notable exceptions, it is still fairly unusual to experience a migrant as television or radio personality or in a newspaper byline. (2014: 968f).

5.1. Central Themes

In their article Margreth Lünenborg and Elfriede Fürsich present their findings of an intersectional study on migrant women on German television (Lünenborg et al. 2014: 959). They primarily examine the role of media as a tool for the construction of national identity and of cultural boundaries (2014: 959). In 2014, before the peak of immigration in 2015, about 8.5 percent of Germany's population were migrants and about 19.3 percent were being considered people "with a migration background" (*Migrationshintergrund*) (2014: 960). Lünenborg and Fürsich investigate the representation of female migrants in fiction and non-fiction programs with the focus on gender, race/ethnicity and class (2014: 959).[5]

The quantitative content analysis shows that female migrants were "definitely visible on German television" (2014: 963), however the closer analysis of the characters showed them in positions of low relevance to the plot or in position as passive

---

[5] The media discourse is often based on dichotomizing categories that represent migration as a problem or a crisis in the receiving country (2014: 961); the media also tend to question the possibility of integration or check on the degree of assimilation (2014: 961).

bystanders (2014: 963).[6] In Lonenborg's and Fürsich's sample, female migrants were not mainly shown in negative contexts but were mostly connected to the categories of art, media and culture (2014: 963). Nevertheless, previous research has found the tendency for female migrants to occupy negative and stigmatized roles, which actively created *Otherness* by, for example, explicitly naming the home country and the migrant background (2014: 963). When it comes to women wearing headscarves, there is a "one-sided visual" (2014: 964) that focuses on problem-oriented and conflictual contexts (2014: 963): female migrants become a reduction of their bodies and their clothing which function as a symbol of a supposed clash of civilization, female oppression, or defiance to Western values (2014: 961). These symbols create alienation and lack of integration, as well as an imaginary distance between migrants and the German majority (2014: 961). "Migration coverage is saturated with moments of Othering. Often an unquestioned "us" is constructed as a default through dichotomizing discourses about "them"." (2014: 961) Even though reality TV engages ethnically-diverse female protagonists more significantly than other genres and formats, shows like *Germany's Next Topmodel* strategically use representations of gendered Otherness "to feed the dramatic design of clashes between stereotypical and polarized characters" (2014: 965).

Lünenborg and Fürsich further examine the level of audience engagement and the reactions of migrant and non-migrant audiences (2014: 966): the female migrant participants mostly took the position of the negotiating reader, who is entertained by the program but simultaneously criticizes the reproduced stereotypes (2014: 966).[7] The visual representation was evaluated as exaggerated, superficial and unauthentic (2014: 967). This leads to distancing strategies like accepting the business strategy of commercial culture and its use of gendered exotic Others (2014: 968). "The discussants didn't see German television as a public forum that refers to *their* lives at all. […] The symbolic inclusion in popular culture as a dimension of cultural citizenship was neither verbalized nor expected." (2014: 968) According to Lünenborg (2014: 973) these distancing strategies challenge the effectiveness of typical demands of media critique, the call for a fairer representation and access to traditional media.

The authors offer suggestions and solutions in order to establish a more adequate representation of Others: a more diverse media workforce and a change within the

---

[6] They found varied roles of migrant women on German television (2014: 960) however the quantitative analysis shows and confirms the scarcity of migrants in news and entertainment programs (2014: 961).

[7] The participants interpreted the scarcity of migrant characters in television as an underrepresentation but did not communicate a call for greater visibility of migrants (2014: 967).

German media system could influence the discourse and offer unique perspectives when covering migration topics (2014: 968f). Even though in-depth interviews with seven female media workers in 2011 revealed doubts that hiring more migrant media workers would necessarily lead to modified reporting, diversity and social change remain a significant step to create more diverse, participatory media discourses (2014: 969):

> [J]ournalism and mainstream television has not managed to represent multifaceted migrant cultures in an adequate way. Thus, media institutions – even public service broadcasters – miss important opportunities for identity building as a foundation for cultural citizenship. As first- and second-generation migrants, people "with a migration background" deserve more complex representations: ethnicity and gender tie into other personal circumstances and experiences – all pieces of the complex puzzle of identity construction. (2014: 973)

5.2. Discussion: Otherness and Stereotypes in Media

Lünenborg and Fürsich provide an important perspective on the visibility and representation of female migrants and the concept or rather practice of *Othering* on German television. What struck me the most is the lack of demand for more authentic representation of migrants and people with a migration background, since, according to Lünenborg (2014: 971), young migrant audiences accept the current television structure as a given, mainly driven by commercial interest. The profit oriented approach of television channels and producers is to be kept in mind at all times, but should not be simply accepted – especially when the results are repeated stereotypes and one-dimensional, unauthentic representations of human beings, which actively creates Otherness and distance between the audience and the represented culture. It is now, in times of mass migration due to war and inhuman conditions in various countries, more important than ever to disabuse (part of) German society from their narrow-minded and unreflective perception of *Ausländer* and get everybody to understand, that we are all just people – some of us in need of help and some of us in a position of being able to provide needed aid and resources. This elucidation should happen with the help of mass media, who is in great part responsible for repetitive stereotypes which only reflect negative attributes; we should not and cannot longer accept their approach at the expense of ethnicities, refugees and migrants. The distancing strategies we are using might work for us, but they offer no solution in actually changing the way (German) media is handling other cultures and religions. If there is no outcry on the unfair, unauthentic and one-sided representation of ethnicities, migrants and people with a

migration background, there will not be any reaction on the side of the media. Only if we criticize formats that actively create Otherness, we have the chance to attracting attention which might cause a change in reporting and representing people in the long run. Additionally, in times like Twitter and Facebook, everybody has the chance to find, share and circulate positive and authentic representations in order to simply provide more perspectives than television and other broadcasters tend to do.

6. Conclusion

The goal of this paper was to understand why people like my parents distinguish between Germans and foreigners, and how this differentiation of "my" and "their" culture, nationality or religion and the simultaneous devaluation of "others" was formed and developed. The analysis of Özcan's text revealed how visuals in mass media shape people's opinions on the depicted cultures and ethnicities. The use of reduced and stereotypicalized images constructs a social and cultural distance between the cultures, between migrants or refugees and German society, respectively. Since my parents both hardly ever came in direct contact with other cultures, their view on them is almost exclusively based on mass media representation; therefore it is safe to say that German media, for the most part, shaped my mother's xenophobia by only showing and repeating the same, negative stereotypes. Instead of reducing a culture, religion or ethnicity to buzzwords like *terrorism* or *barbaric*, and in order to provide a more authentic, multidimensional and fair representation of groups, media should use and repeat other perspectives and positive imagery as well. Additionally, social media platforms like Twitter can and should be used to share and spread images and general messages, which contradict the predominant clichés, reductions and stereotypes for the purpose of offering new perspectives and ultimately to overcome the sense of strangeness and difference between cultures. This could furthermore be a possibility to counterpose to the practice of *Othering* in German television, which was discussed during the analysis of Lünenborg and Fürsich's article on media and the intersectional other. The use of specific symbols which create alienation and a sense of lack of integration of refugees, migrants or people with a migration background should not be accepted but actively and highly criticized. In times of mass migration due to war and inhuman conditions in various countries, it is now more important than ever to arbitrate between cultures and ethnicities, instead of producing distance and a sense of difference.

Gabriele Ditze's analysis of the mass media reception on New Year's Eve in Cologne demonstrates how the instrumentalization of sexism is used to promote racist and xenophobic ideologies. The fact that sexism is hypervisible in German culture and everyday life, and the fact that the annual *Oktoberfest* on average possesses ten reported cases of rape (Rossbauer 2009) clearly shows the active practice of ethnosexism when it comes to the event in Cologne. The diversion and manipulation of the initial topic in order to antagonize entire ethnicities has to become a known concept and needs to be

included in our debates about immigrants for the purpose of raising awareness in the recipients and of giving another perspective for a reflective understanding of narrative structures.

Gedde and Sholten provide an important historical perspective on migration to Germany which should become an integral part of our migration discourse in order to spread the narrative of Germany as a country of immigration. The knowledge about various immigrants, *Aussiedler* or guest workers, who have been a part of our country and culture since the 1970s, could influence people's perception of and opinion on multiculturalism, which ideally strengthens our *Willkommenskultur* for refugees.

Conclusively, I want to underline the importance of more representative representation of ethnicities, cultures and religions far from stereotypes as well as the active participation in changing what is long overdue. If we want to change people's one-dimensional view on refugees, migrants and people with migration background, we have to work against *Othering* strategies and provide a more truthful portrayal. The repetitive use of stereotypical images in mass media should always be criticized, not only to raise awareness, but to receive a reaction and to initiate change; simultaneously everybody can spread and share various new and positive perspectives in their sphere of influence by simply talking about specific subjects like unilateral media representation or the stages of migration in Germany of the last decades, or by using social media to share the things which are being left out by mass media. Every form of activism, even in a small realm and range, is necessary to induce change – especially when we cannot trust mass media to do so on their own. We have to become active, we have to become part of the solution – we must not confine our knowledge and insight but have to extravert findings like *ethnosexism* or *Othering* in order to give as many people as possible the chance for more reflective dealings with cultures. The time to be passive is over.

Works Cited

Butler, Jess (2016): For White Girls Only? Postfeminism and the Politics of Inclusion, in: Greta Olson: *Feminist Media Studies*, *The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media*, Handout Class 4, Giessen: Department of English, Justus-Liebig-University.

Dietze, Gabriele (2016): "Das Ereignis Köln". *Feminina Politica* 1: 93-102.

Estatie, Lamia (2017): Muslim teen reveals father's response to removing hijab. BBC, [online] http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-39628929 [June 3, 2017].

Geddes, Andres, and Peter Scholten (2016): "Germany: A Country of Immigration After All." *The Politics of Migration & Immigration in Europe*. Los Angeles: Sage. 74-99. Print.

Lünenborg, Margreth, and Elfriede Fürsich (2014). "Media and the Intersectional Other: The Complex Negotiation of Migration, Gender, and Class on German Television." *Feminist Media Studies* 14.6: 959-975. Print.

Özcan, Esra (2013): "Lingerie, Bikinis and the Headscarf. Visual depictions of Muslim female migrants in German news media. *Feminist Media Studies* 13.3: 427-442.

Rossbauer, Maria (2009): O'grapscht is. Sexuelle Übergriffe auf dem Oktoberfest. *taz*, [online] http://www.taz.de/!5156348/ [May 05, 2017].