

# Bashing the Migrant Climbers: Interethnic Classification Struggles in German City Neighborhoods

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## Abstract

*This article examines the symbolic order of the relationships between various social groups in disadvantaged neighborhoods and shows that ethnicity is the main reference point of derogatory designations or 'negative classifications'. Using two districts in German cities as examples, the semantic patterns of mutual negative classifications among autochthonous individuals and their Turkish neighbors are reconstructed. Upwardly mobile individuals of Turkish origin are the most frequent targets of stigmatization. This fact is explained by the existence of a deep symbolic dimension of social inequality that conceives of ethnicity in terms of kinship relations. The socially inclusive or exclusive effects of negative interethnic classifications and the related classification struggles depend on three factors: the internal, i.e. gradual or categorical logic of the classification patterns; the form and process of conflict resolution; and the social contexts in which negative classifications are used. While the disintegrating effects of negative classifications are curbed by institutionalized norms in local politics and economic life, there only exist informal performative norms of interaction in the life-world, and here these classifications can more easily lead to social exclusion and ethnic separation.*

The social structure of modern societies represents an order of objective inequalities among social classes, professions, ethnic groups and the sexes. Differences in social structure always give rise to interpretations and evaluations that not only shape the social exchanges among various groups, even in their most minor everyday life interactions, but that also determine the 'daily class struggle' (Bourdieu, 1990 [1987]: 134). Social structure can thus be said to form a symbolic order that is based on mutual classifications among different social groups — that is, on categorizing labels and evaluations. Symbolic orders that are produced in the daily interaction among different social groups grant recognition and show disrespect in various ways. The corresponding classifications influence the groups' opportunities to acquire material and cultural assets and have a direct impact not only on the objective structure of social inequalities, but also on the respective groups' potential to integrate. 'Negative' (meaning pejorative or discriminatory) classifications are especially relevant to integration, since classifications can exclude certain social groups from participating in society.

In an ethnographic research project conducted in two disadvantaged urban neighborhoods between 2002 and 2005,<sup>1</sup> we studied the exclusionary and, at times, integrative effects of negative classifications. However, before we present the main goals

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<sup>1</sup> The project was entitled 'Negative Klassifikationen: Ideologien der Ungleichwertigkeit in den symbolischen Ordnungen gegenwärtiger Sozialgruppen' [Negative Classifications: Ideologies of

and central results of this research project, we would like to systematically examine the concepts of social classification and of classification struggles.

## Social classifications

Social classifications and their positive or negative evaluations are universal human phenomena. As scholars from different disciplines have shown, they structure the social environment and provide a foundation for guiding the actions of people and groups. Furthermore, classifications are orientation systems that allow individuals and groups to define their place in society (see, in particular, Douglas, 1973; Tajfel, 1981; Bowker and Star, 2002). In sociology, the concept of classification is inextricably linked to the name Durkheim and his thesis of a 'social constitution of the categories' (Durkheim and Mauss, 1963 [1903]; Durkheim, 1976 [1912]). Taking 'primitive classification' in totemic societies as an example, Durkheim endeavored to show that such fundamental concepts as space and time, force and causality, as well as the rules of logical association reflect the inner structure and operation of their respective societies and are even causally determined by them. Durkheim derives entire cosmologies from social order — that is, from the morphological and organizational properties of the societies he studied. According to Durkheim, the complex division of these societies into tribes, phratries and clans on the one hand, and marriage classes on the other, determines the categories to which natural phenomena are assigned as well as their relations to one another (as is well known, the key mechanism linking nature and society is the system of totems, which assigns particular trees, animals and celestial bodies to the tribes, phratries, clans and marriage classes).

Durkheim's great accomplishment was to identify classification as an important aspect of culture and to incorporate it as a theoretical concept into sociological analysis. Durkheim also emphasized the collective nature of the categories that form the basis of social and cosmic orders and that control the perceptions of social groups. In doing so, Durkheim demonstrated that social categorizations are 'collective representations' (Durkheim, 1976 [1912]: 435) — ideas that do not emerge from the mental states of the individual but which lie deep within social structures and precede individual thought. This implies that classification systems are as variegated as all historical forms of society and that they vary according to historical, social and cultural contexts. In this sense, each and every society is 'an individuality itself, which has its own personal physiognomy and its idiosyncrasies' (*ibid.*: 444).

That being said, the specific formulation and derivation of these fundamental insights in Durkheim's work have been criticized by many. In addition to raising serious empirical, logical and methodological objections to the notion of a direct parallelism between social structures and classification systems, scholars have rejected Durkheim's basic evolutionary assumption that all later classification systems have their original form in totemic society. Further, the causal interpretation of the connection between the organization of society and the ideas prevalent in it has proved untenable (Lukes, 1985: 435). Nonetheless, it can be a very productive undertaking to study the connection Durkheim postulated between symbolic classification and social structure (*cf.* Needham, 1969: xxxvi; Allen, 1994: 62). With an eye toward the classifications that predominate in current symbolic orders of social inequality, one must emphasize that Durkheim's theory is tailored primarily to structural aspects: to the inner structure of classification and knowledge systems and to their relationship with the properties of social structures.

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## Classification struggles

The strengths of Durkheim's structural theory result in grave flaws from the perspective of a theory of action. Durkheim lacks a set of conceptual instruments to accommodate a basic feature of social classifications, namely, the fact that they are generated and perpetuated by concrete practices of social action. Worsley (1956) rightly criticizes the mechanical view of societies and collective knowledge structures in Durkheim's late work on the sociology of religion (1976 [1912]), in which, as Worsley points out, social action plays a negligible role. This criticism, which excludes Durkheim's description of collective rituals (Joas, 1987: 282), is particularly applicable to the essay on classification that Durkheim co-authored with Mauss (Durkheim and Mauss, 1963 [1903]). Naturally, classification patterns are not generated anew with each single action but already form its basis. They guide it as long as they do not become problematic themselves. But this does not change the fact that classification systems are crystallizations of past classification *acts*.

In response to Durkheim's extensive blindness to action theory, one must first object that classifications, rather than being mere static phenomena, are an objectification of a process known as 'classifying' (*cf.* Ellen, 1979: 27). Further, it must be pointed out that within individual societies there exists a variety of classification systems that may come into conflict with each other. One reason Durkheim overlooked this point is that his studies focused principally on the social makeup of the categories used by societies to grasp their *natural* environment. Here one encounters a one-sided classification process: plants, animals and stars are not able to protest against their assignment to the order of things or engage in the act of categorizing themselves. By contrast, classifications of the *social* environment are embedded in a two-way process (Starr, 1992: 157). They touch upon the identities of individuals and groups, who can in turn confront the classifiers with their self-image and challenge the legitimacy of the 'foreign' image being imposed on them. As Starr (*ibid.*) emphasizes, this is particularly true of modern democratic societies.

By focusing on a structural homology between society and categorical world disclosure (*Welterschließung*), Durkheim also loses sight of the content of the social classifications that he uses as models for cosmologies and basic categories of human thought. When separated from content, however, the 'social' aspect of classification systems is 'a label on an empty jar' (Worsley, 1956: 53). The cognitive identification of groups, to which positive or negative evaluations subsequently become attached, is itself a classification that is often fought over. But Durkheim attaches as little importance to this as to the diverse meanings that individual classifications can take on in social use. Their use not only performs a denotative descriptive function, but is also characterized by manifold connotations and by various links to different semantic fields. For instance, the person who calls welfare recipients 'social parasites' not only places them in the category of individuals who make illegitimate demands on the welfare state. He also triggers associations with the disagreeable parasites from the animal kingdom and methods of dealing with them. These different levels of meaning typically manifest themselves in symbolic struggles between different social groups.

It was above all Bourdieu (1984 [1979]; 1990 [1987]) who shed light on the evaluative, relational and conflictual properties of social classifications. These properties are extremely important in modern societies since they do not, at least in principle, grant social recognition or show contempt according to the asymmetrical patterns of inherited group privilege. In such societies, hierarchies of economic and cultural capital that are based on the availability of both material resources and utilizable knowledge are not entirely self-perpetuating. Rather, the value of status positions must be constantly renegotiated. This is the source of evaluative social struggles in which the symbolic capital of social recognition is the prize. The resulting 'hierarchy of values granted to individuals and groups' (Bourdieu, 1990 [1987]: 135) creates the symbolic order of a

society which is organized along the lines of 'the logic of difference, of a differential variation' (*ibid.*: 133; see also Neckel, 1991: 231).

Against this backdrop, Bourdieu regards classification conflicts as 'symbolic struggles for the power to produce and to impose a vision of the legitimate world' (1990 [1987]: 134; *cf.* Bourdieu, 1984 [1979]: 479). What distinguishes symbolic power from the other forms of power that are based on physical, economic and social capital is the fact that the enforcement of a world-view depends on recognition by others (Bourdieu, 1998 [1994]: 47). Bourdieu largely views recognition of a world-view and the corresponding social demarcations as tacit approval of the conditions of an established order — an order that seeks to camouflage its arbitrary foundations in the aura of the natural. However, Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power only assumes a specific meaning when he sufficiently emphasizes the dependence of symbolic power on recognition by others and thereby gives reasons for the relative autonomy of symbolic capital in relation to other forms (*cf.* Schwingel, 1993: 103).

In consequence, the symbolic sphere is never secure and particularly prone to struggles among social groups. According to Bourdieu, the 'classificatory systems' that groups struggle to enforce or overturn on a daily basis are 'overtly or covertly aimed at satisfying the interests of a group' (1984 [1979]: 477). Even if opposing formulations can be found in Bourdieu's work, this theory would suggest that the criteria of utility can be understood as being ultimately definitive for 'collective representations'. In symbolic struggles, however, normative reasons for action can also be relevant because they articulate the moral concepts, lifestyles and collective identities of social groups. The question of whether empirical classification struggles represent an instrumental and rational pursuit of group interests or whether they are norm-oriented recognition struggles cannot be settled in advance with a selection of this or that action theory. This is why Bourdieu's set of analytic tools needs to be expanded if one wants to understand classification struggles that follow a 'moral grammar' (Honneth, 1996 [1992]). Such struggles emerge from experiences of disrespect and, from the viewpoint of the individuals involved, justify a legitimate claim to social recognition (*ibid.*: 160). On the other hand, this does not mean that social struggles which emerge from the experience of disrespect always promote emancipatory processes or are positive *per se*. They can, after all, take on a violent form of problem resolution (Sutterlüty, 2002).

Independent of this issue, though, we must identify where social classifications are primarily generated in modern societies and in what arenas classification struggles are fought. Institutions, in particular, are constantly — though often invisibly — involved in classifying the phenomena in their fields of activity. Douglas (1986) has impressively shown the performative effects of the institutional 'work of classifying'. With the rise of institutions in the early nineteenth century, 'new kinds of people spontaneously came forward in hordes to accept the labels and to live accordingly' (*ibid.*: 100). Classifications created by institutions also play an important role in life-world (*Lebenswelt*) exchanges between different social groups. Classifications are not only reinterpreted here, but become part of struggles over social recognition. They are also used in political distribution conflicts. Distinctions between work and non-work (Conrad *et al.*, 2000), between handicapped and non-handicapped persons (Powell, 2003), and between the needy or non-needy citizens of the welfare state (Neckel, 1996) are paradigmatic examples of the ways the historical evolution of institutionally created categorizations is transferred to life-world discourse.

Yet institutions are just one social arena where one witnesses the production of classifications that then spread to the whole of society and contribute to creating social inequalities. The 'power of classification' (Neckel, 2003) also manifests itself in media constructs of reality and in political interpretations, producing symbols of public recognition or stigmatization. A prime example of this in Germany is the regularly recurring debate on the so-called 'social welfare cushion', the 'do-nothings' and the 'lazy unemployed' (Uske, 1995; Oschmiansky, 2003), in which political strategies and the media practice of scandalizing victims join in a dubious alliance.

Below the institutional, media and political levels, recognition and disrespect are primarily negotiated in the local interaction among social groups. Here the use of graphic labels gives concrete form to the symbolic order of social space. Examples of this include the characterizations of opposing groups as 'vermin', 'losers', 'bankruptcy artists' and 'corporate crooks'. The range of interpretations offered by both the media and the world of politics perpetuates such classifications without entirely explaining their emergence, form or receptiveness. Official descriptions, media messages and institutional classifications are constantly interpreted in very specific ways in the immediate interaction among social players. They become a resource for local classification struggles that in part follow a semantics and conflictual logic all their own. We would now like to turn our attention to these classification processes in neighboring social space.

In what follows, we will present the key results of our research project 'Negative classifications'. We will proceed in three steps. First, we will briefly explain the goals and empirical basis of our study, which we carried out in two socially disadvantaged city neighborhoods.<sup>2</sup> In the second and most extensive section, we will examine the predominant semantic patterns of negative classification, particularly those drawing on ethnic attributes. Based on these classifications we will analyze the idea of ethnic 'kinship' as one of their major but widely hidden sources. Finally, in the third section, we will discuss the integrative consequences of negative classifications and the related classification struggles.

## The 'negative classifications' research project

The research project focused on the semantics and social uses of derogatory designations or 'negative classifications' by different social groups who encounter one another as neighbors in socially disadvantaged urban neighborhoods. It pursued three objectives.

First of all, we aimed to reconstruct the *structural patterns of negative classifications*. For this purpose, we studied the material content of currently dominant forms of derogatory labels. The goal was to understand the stigmatizing semantics that shape the interaction among neighboring groups. 'Who classifies whom and in what manner?' This was our central question. We wanted to find out whether current negative classifications are based on attributes of vertical inequality (occupation, income, education) or attributes of horizontal inequality (especially ethnicity). In other words, we identified the negative classifications that determine the symbolic order of social inequality in disadvantaged city neighborhoods. One of our focuses was the inner logic that individual classification patterns follow. Are they 'only' disparaging, or do they also serve to symbolically exclude the classified persons from full-fledged membership in local society?

- 2 The term 'disadvantaged' refers to the fact that the populations of the two city neighborhoods do not have access to the average opportunities of other city residents. As we will show later, these neighborhoods have higher unemployment rates and a larger number of welfare recipients than other districts in the two cities; in Germany, neighborhoods of this type tend to be inhabited by migrants. The study was conducted in disadvantaged neighborhoods because social integration, which was its focus, is a much more pressing issue here than in other areas. We are not suggesting that rich and ethnically homogeneous districts are necessarily more integrated. Rather, 'integration' is frequently seen as a problem in disadvantaged areas by both the residents and by political decision makers. Indeed, privileged and highly mobile people are not dependent on social contacts and integration at the neighborhood level. For socially disadvantaged population groups, however, the neighborhood is the most important arena of integration and acquisition of social capital (Keupp, 1987: 39). This was the most important reason we examined socially disadvantaged neighborhoods. The two concrete areas were chosen because they differ largely in terms of the size of the migrant population and because they exhibit opposing modes of interethnic conflict regulation.

The second level of analysis dealt with the *manner in which classification struggles are fought* — that is, negative classification as a process. We studied how pejorative designations become part of the interaction among various population groups and examined which contextual conditions are responsible for the different types of classification struggles. Of special interest was whether these struggles unfold openly or are hidden from view.

The third level of our study was devoted to the *consequences for integration* — that is, the impact that negative classifications and their attendant classification struggles have on the opportunities for integration among the affected individuals and social groups.

## Empirical basis

The study has an ethnographic orientation, and its methodological approach is based on *grounded theory* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). We examined two urban neighborhoods and, as it turned out, we observed similar classification *patterns*, yet entirely different types of classification *struggles* in both.

The first neighborhood is located in Barren,<sup>3</sup> a city in Germany's Ruhr region. *Barren-Ost*, the specific area under study, is a traditional working-class neighborhood with roughly 13,000 inhabitants, and it faces structural problems typical of the Ruhr region since the decline in coal mining. In May 2004, it had an unemployment rate of 16.9%, with 9.9% of the resident population on welfare. At this time, non-German nationals made up 10.6% of the population, which was only slightly above the average for the entire city. Barren-Ost is perceived as a neighborhood where Turkish migrants have an exceptionally strong influence. The main reason for this perception, which cannot be inferred directly from the statistical data, is that there are a larger number of mosques than in other city districts and Turks own businesses at prominent locations.

The second area under study, *Iderstadt*, is situated in the large city of Raisfurth in the south of Germany and is also a former working-class neighborhood. Its 19,000 inhabitants include a high percentage of socially disadvantaged groups. In June 2004, the jobless rate in Iderstadt was 13.8%, which was high for the region, and in the month before there were also a large number of welfare recipients, coming in at 11.8%. The district has a very heterogeneous ethnic makeup: in May 2004, non-German nationals represented 42.7% of the population. In terms of the objective figures, this substantially higher percentage of migrants is Iderstadt's largest difference from Barren-Ost. Iderstadt is the subject of two overlapping descriptions: on the one hand, both residents and non-residents often portray it as a colorful 'multicultural' neighborhood or, with a touch of social romanticism, as the 'Raisfurth Bronx'. At the same time, it is generally believed to be a hotbed of social problems, an area whose social equilibrium is jeopardized by the high percentage of socially disadvantaged groups and the ethnically heterogeneous population (Table 1).

In terms of ethnic affiliation, we primarily concentrated on the autochthonous and Turkish populations.<sup>4</sup> It was not only pragmatic research reasons that motivated us to

3 We have changed the names of places and proper nouns used in this article to preserve anonymity.

4 The terms 'autochthonous' and 'Turkish' are self-assessments by the persons under study. 'Autochthonous' individuals are those who define themselves as Germans. They sometimes include people with non-German ancestry – in Barren-Ost, for instance, the large group of locals known by the Polish names of their forefathers who came to the coal mines of the Ruhr region one century ago. 'Turkish' also relates to a person's self-definition, which is not always identical with nationality. German nationals of Turkish descent usually define themselves as Turks and as members of a Turkish community. This is also true of the second and third generation of Turkish migrants. It is to a large extent the outcome of the persistent ethnic classification practices among the autochthonous population.

**Table 1** Population structures of Barren-Ost and Iderstadt

	Barren-Ost	(City of Barren)	Iderstadt	(City of Raisfurth)
Inhabitants	13,474	(124,815)	19,375	(325,202)
Unemployed (%)	16.9	(12.4)	13.8	(8.3)
Welfare recipients (%)	9.9	(5.6)	11.8	(6.1)
Non-German nationals (%)	10.6	(9.8)	42.7	(20.2)

**Source:** Statistical Offices of the cities of Barren and Raisfurth. All data refer to May 2004; only the unemployment rates of Iderstadt and the city of Raisfurth are taken from June 2004.

focus on the group of Turkish migrants: in both areas, Turkish migrants were very frequently stigmatized, and in both they constitute by far the largest group with a non-German nationality. As of May 2004, 47% of all non-Germans in Barren-Ost were Turkish nationals, and in Iderstadt the figure was 44%.

The data pool was acquired by ‘theoretical sampling’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and can be described as follows: as in traditional field research, from September 2002 to May 2004 we continually observed ‘natural’ situations in which members of various social groups communicated directly with one another or spoke collectively about others — such as meetings held by a district initiative in Iderstadt and blood drives in Barren-Ost organized by a mosque association. In addition, during the period from October 2002 to August 2004 we conducted 45 individual interviews and six group discussions, the latter involving unemployed persons, church congregation members, and sports and migrants’ associations. We had two criteria for selecting interviewees: first, we chose individuals who had taken part in the situations directly observed by us, that is, individuals who were involved in classification processes and were able to provide additional information and perspectives. Second, since it was important for us to achieve variance across the levels of vertical and horizontal inequality, we talked to individuals from different social classes (from middle-class businesspeople to welfare recipients) and of different ethnic affiliations, ages and sex. Finally, we supplemented these data by collecting and analyzing written documents such as articles and ‘letters to the editor’ in local newspapers. All these materials have been analyzed using the interpretive procedures of *grounded theory* and its three-phase coding paradigm (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

## The semantics of negative classifications

The predominant patterns of negative classifications in both areas can be divided into two types. This distinction — namely, between gradual and categorical classifications (Neckel and Sutterlüty, 2005; see also Berger, 1989) — is essential for understanding the integrative consequences of the observed classificatory patterns.

*Gradual classifications* evaluate persons and groups in terms of quantitative differences. Perceived characteristics are judged on the basis of comparative standards and positioned along a continuous scale. The traits and particular characteristics of people are compared using a common measure of more or less, higher or lower, better or worse. Classifications of the gradual type are primarily associated with acquired attributes such as income, education and professional status, and these attributes are most often seen not only as changeable but also as negotiable in terms of social value. What is crucial in this process is that the classifier and the classified are assumed to share the evaluated characteristic.

*Categorical classifications*, on the other hand, are qualitative judgments of otherness. Such evaluations of perceived attributes do not result in a ranking on a continuum but

rather in a juxtaposition of mutually exclusive categories. Particular characteristics are seen as equal or unequal, similar or different, and as qualifying individuals as insiders or outsiders. Classifications of this type are primarily rooted in ascribed attributes such as ethnicity, religion or sex. They are for the most part viewed as unchangeable and non-negotiable in terms of social value. Categorical classifications appear as pairs of opposites: black or white, man or woman. No common ground is required between the classifier and the classified, and for this reason they lend themselves particularly well to processes in which social communities interpret the inequality and differences of other groups as a sign of their inferiority.

## The central role of ethnicity

A finding of overwhelming evidence was that negative classifications based on ethnicity predominate in the two neighborhoods. In both Barren-Ost and Iderstadt, ethnic affiliation constitutes what Hughes (1971) calls an individual's 'master status'. Mutual perceptions are determined by whether an individual is German or non-German (including Turkish). Other characteristics appear to be secondary or subordinate.

An individual's ethnicity acts as a kind of filter for other classifications: how certain characteristics are evaluated depends on ethnic affiliation. Nonetheless, many aspects of vertical inequality play an important role in ethnic classifications. In other words, attributes of vertical inequality are evaluated negatively only when they are linked to particular ethnic groups. This can occur, for example, when economically successful Turkish migrants are the victims of stigmatization, or when criticism is leveled at the allegedly 'demanding' attitudes of unemployed Turks and Turkish welfare recipients, who are seen as exploiting every last benefit of the welfare state.

It is worth noting here that in both neighborhoods one also encounters negative classifications based solely on vertical inequalities. For instance, the residents of Barren-Ost are familiar with the figure of a *Sesselpupser*, or 'armchair fart'. This stereotypical description of an office worker hails from the neighborhood's mining days, when hard physical labor was a source of social respectability and white-collar professions did not enjoy the best reputation. Negative classifications also address welfare recipients and the unemployed, which was entirely expected.

Nonetheless, although ethnic classifications always target specific groups in the neighborhood, classifications involving socially disadvantaged groups mostly remain abstract and vague. For example, citing reports in the media, German residents repeatedly stated their belief that some welfare recipients received benefits illegally, but corresponding classifications were very rarely linked to concrete persons or groups from neighboring social space — migrants being the only exception. Generally, there was widespread recognition in both areas that precarious social situations today are primarily the result of economic developments.

## Interethnic classifications of the gradual type

### 'A Turkish-style Protestant work ethic'

In Barren-Ost and Iderstadt, autochthonous individuals repeatedly spoke of the hard-working and self-sacrificing lifestyle of the Turkish population, in which family discipline and frugality were key values. In other words, Germans ascribed to this group a 'Turkish-style Protestant work ethic' — to use, and slightly modify, a phrase by Wohlrab-Sahr (1998).

The autochthonous groups view this work ethic as a traditional yet disappearing part of their own history, one that is still present in the Turkish business community, giving it an undeserved competitive edge. According to this logic, successful Turkish business

proprietors and building owners are backward yet dangerous competitors. Attributes such as work ethic, discipline, frugality and a willingness to defer one's own needs are not generally judged negatively. These classifications are not categorical evaluations since they can apply to German individuals and businesspeople too. They involve gradations of shared traits, and any negative assessment arises from the fact that the Turkish people are seen as having 'an excess' of the described work ethic.

Among the Turkish population, one finds a counterpart to classifications that assign them a 'Protestant work ethic'. On a cognitive level, the Turkish businesspeople view themselves in the same way that they are described by their German neighbors, but they regard their work ethic in a positive light. Furthermore, they use this standard to disparage the lifestyle and mentality of their German neighbors (see the 'dissocial German' classification discussed below).

### **'An expansionist desire to take over'**

In both areas under study, there are widespread negative classifications that depict Turkish migrants — especially businesspeople and active mosque associations — as making 'expansionist claims to power': 'They want to take over everywhere' is one way this was expressed by autochthonous individuals.

With such classifications, the German residents not only criticize the 'takeover' of what they view as their traditional terrain. They also accuse successful Turkish businesspeople and migrant associations of being driven by a desire to expand and seize space. They frequently project the actions of individual Turkish migrants onto the entire Turkish population *pars pro toto*. Although the Turks' 'desire to take over' is evaluated negatively, the Germans do in fact admire their business acumen and entrepreneurial risk-taking. Once again, criticism is leveled at an excess — here we have gradations of a non-exclusive attribute. Even so, the semantics of the 'expansionist desire to takeover' can shift from the gradual to the categorical, which happens, for instance, when these semantics lead to a clear-cut delineation as friend or enemy.

### **Sheer 'mass' or 'number'**

A third gradual classification pattern criticizes the number of migrants in the neighborhood, particularly the number of 'Turks'. 'There are too many Turks' can often be heard from autochthonous individuals in both areas studied. Classifications like this have evidently little to do with the objective size of the Turkish population. This pattern is an example of a gradual classification, one that focuses on more or less, on a gradual numerical relationship.

At times, this classification pattern cropped up without additional semantic definition; other times, explanations were added: autochthonous individuals said that they felt 'like foreigners in their own neighborhood' or that the high percentage of migrants was harming the neighborhood's reputation. They also claimed that the migrants' presence was causing real-estate prices to fall. In this classification pattern, which portrays the Turkish population as 'too large', quantity can change to quality and also assume a categorical character — namely, at that point when the Turkish residents are judged to be an undesirable element whose numbers should be reduced by political measures.

## **Interethnic classifications of the categorical type**

### **'The dissocial German'**

Among residents of Turkish origin in both Barren-Ost and Iderstadt, there exists a cluster of negative classifications that portray parts of the German population as 'dissocial' in various ways, or that criticize 'German mentality' generally as 'dissocial'. Such

classifications are based on a categorically different lifestyle and ascribe an inferior or even debased mentality to the 'Germans'. Three versions of this classification pattern can be identified.

The first is primarily used by upwardly mobile Turks and Turkish businesspeople who explain the precarious economic situation of many German residents as resulting from their constant visits to bars, their consumer-oriented lifestyle, as well as their sexual mores, which tear families apart and ultimately lead to financial ruin. The German lower classes are portrayed as dull, uneducated, unkempt and prone to alcoholism. They are thus placed in direct proximity to the 'asocial'. Here, the dissocial traits assigned to them are linked to the idea of *slovenliness* and a *lack of discipline*.

A second version of dissocial classification focuses on the German population's poor work ethic, laziness and unwillingness to do without luxury. This is the counterpart to the 'Turkish-style Protestant work ethic' mentioned above. The dissociality that is ascribed to the German population centers on the belief that Germans are *soft* and *spoiled*.

The third version portrays the German population as cold and accuses it of having a possessive, individualist mentality. This classification is primarily focused on the family: for example, it is claimed that German parents are egotistic and assume no responsibility for their children, that they prefer to sit their kids down 'in front of the TV' and leave them to their own devices. Adolescents in German families, say the Turks, make no scruple of asking their parents for large allowances, and Germans do not take care of older family members but abandon them to the Social Services Department. In this case, dissociality is related to *inconsiderateness in the family*.

### 'Rational parasitism'

The next classification pattern brings us back to the ways the autochthonous residents describe particular groups in the Turkish population. It comprises classifications that converge in what Zilian and Moser (1989) describe as 'rational parasitism'. When people are classified as 'parasites', they are symbolically excluded from respectable society. The parasite is the antithesis to the upright individual who only lays claim to what he is entitled to. Hence, this is a categorical classification, of which there are two patterns.

The first, briefly mentioned above, was encountered in both areas under study and is based on the Turkish residents' interaction with what autochthonous individuals several times referred to as the 'German' or 'our' welfare system, which — so runs the argument — the Turkish residents are particularly clever at taking advantage of.

The second pattern of parasite semantics was only found in Barren-Ost. It involves politically active migrant groups, particularly the local mosque associations and the Barren Foreigners' Advisory Board, which, among other things, wanted to have a say in awarding funds from Soziale Stadt Nordrhein-Westfalen, a district revitalization program that includes the area of Barren-Ost. The suggestions from the Foreigners' Advisory Board and the mosque associations, once they were made public, became the target of harsh criticism. Opponents argued that the Turkish population had previously shown no interest in the district, and only now, when there was 'something to be had', did the Turks dare to make 'impudent demands'. During these conflicts, explicit mention was made of 'parasites' on several occasions. This pattern of 'rational parasite' classification is lacking in Iderstadt because there are no comparable efforts by Turkish groups to participate in local processes (see the related section below).

### 'Shady dealings'

A third classification pattern of the categorical type targets businesspeople and property owners of Turkish origin whom the German residents accuse of making money by illegal means. Since it is based on a categorical distinction between legitimate and illegitimate

competitors, the 'shady dealings' classification aims to symbolically exclude these individuals from economic competition.

In Iderstadt, for example, there were widespread efforts to criminalize Turkish businesses by a local initiative and its supporters, who sometimes suggestively and sometimes quite openly linked noise, dirt and crime to migrants, particularly to the Turkish population. Activists in this initiative called Turkish businesses 'meeting places for thieves and fences' and accused Turkish family-run businesses of illegally pocketing funds from public business development programs that the activists regarded as being closed to German businesspeople. Aside from this initiative, one repeatedly hears talk of dubious Turkish businesses or 'money laundering'. Similar categorizations can be observed among the autochthonous population in Barren-Ost, where, in contrast to Iderstadt, local groups portrayed not only Turkish businesses but Turkish property owners and landlords as criminals.

### The 'unclean'

Classifications that distinguish between the 'clean' and the 'unclean' play an important role in both city neighborhoods. These classifications symbolically ostracize anyone perceived as 'unclean' from the arena of possible social contact, since they evoke the idea that the 'clean' will be sullied by any such contact. This is therefore a categorical classification pattern.

This pattern appears in two entirely different forms in the autochthonous and Turkish populations. German residents stigmatize Turkish individuals as being 'dirty' in a literal sense, claiming they lack sufficient hygiene. This reveals a perception of Turkish inferiority originating in the idea of a less advanced culture. A particularly dehumanizing ideology of inferiority was revealed by the owner of an Iderstadt photo shop, who described a nearby Turkish bakery as disorderly and dirty — as a place where the 'four-legged rats' that can be seen on the neighborhood streets at night nest and breed. This man let on that there was such a thing as 'two-legged' rats for him too.

Turkish individuals — or to be more precise, the Turks influenced by Islam — characterize the German population as 'impure' in a moral or sexual sense because of their alleged promiscuity. This sexual licentiousness, viewed as 'unnatural' from a strict Moslem viewpoint, arouses feelings of disgust and is seen as supporting the idea that the sexual morality defined by Islam is superior to that of the Moslems' German neighbors. This goes hand in hand with the idea of a morally inferior German population.

### 'Kinship' as a deep symbolic dimension of social inequality

It is striking that, of the classification patterns discussed so far, a large number target upwardly mobile Turks, successful Turkish businesspeople and, in Barren-Ost, migrant organizations that are active in local politics (Sutterlüty and Walter, 2005). They are thus directed at a social type that Hüttermann (2000) describes as 'foreigners on the advance'. This applies to the following four classification patterns: 'Turkish-style Protestant work ethic', 'expansionist desire to take over', 'shady dealings', and 'rational parasitism' in the sense of a strategic participation in district processes, oriented toward personal gain or the gain of one's own group.

In these cases, the individuals who are stigmatized find themselves at a specific interface between vertical and horizontal inequalities. They combine economic success or political influence with the attribute of their Turkish origin. Members of an ethnic group that was once associated with the idea of a subaltern guest worker are now occupying higher-level positions. This reshuffles old status hierarchies: the autochthonous population does not want to be overtaken by its Turkish neighbors, nor does it want to accept that its lead is diminishing. The partial shift in the old constellation

of 'outsider' and 'established group' (Elias and Scotson, 1965) fuels the tendency to deprecate upwardly mobile Turks.

To a certain degree, the frequent negative classifications targeting upwardly mobile Turks can be explained using figuration sociology: the established group wants to safeguard its position from former outsiders. However, a question remains that cannot be answered with figuration sociology alone: why is it the upward mobility of *Turkish* migrants in particular that is viewed as such a virulent problem? After all, Turkish businesspeople have important attributes other than their 'newcomer' status. This fact is not accommodated by the figuration sociologists Elias and Scotson, who argue that the established group wants to defend its privileges from and insist on its superiority over the outsiders — a group that, it is important to keep in mind, does *not* differ from the outsiders in ethnic terms.

In Barren-Ost and Iderstadt, the idea of ethnic affiliation as a form of kinship plays a crucial role in the stigmatization of the economically successful and politically active groups in the Turkish population. To be more precise, autochthonous individuals are driven by the essentialist idea that they are 'related' to their own ethnic group and 'not related' to the Turkish population. We call this a *deep symbolic dimension of social inequality*. It is 'deep' insofar as the groups are not aware that they perceive interethnic inequality relations through the lens of kinship. It occurs behind their backs, as it were, and is not knowledge they have conscious access to.

We were made aware of this dimension of social inequality by two blood drives initiated by the congregation of a Turkish mosque in Barren-Ost and conducted by the German Red Cross. The drives ended in an affront to the mosque congregation: a Red Cross doctor informed the mosque that the blood from the first drive was 'poured down the drain'. As can be imagined, this brought an abrupt end to the drives. An analysis of this complicated incident revealed a number of reasons for the rejection of 'Turkish blood', as it was referred to several times (for full details see Sutterlüty, 2006). We would like to discuss these briefly here.

The rejection of the blood was based on fears that members of the mosque congregation wanted to enter into a symbolic 'kinship' with the autochthonous population, acquiring full membership in the local society through an exchange of blood. On the one hand, these fears were rooted in the idea of a biological blood relationship among the members of the autochthonous group, and on the other, in the idea that an acceptance of 'Turkish blood' would encourage reciprocal exchange relations between both groups. The blood transfer would have strengthened the idea that Turks and Germans are responsible for each other regardless of ethnic affiliation. The exchange between equals was foiled so that the solidarity shown quasi-relatives would be reserved for the autochthonous group.

This quasi-family system of morality, based on the idea of reciprocity between relatives, is the driving force behind negative classifications of the upwardly mobile parts of the Turkish population. This was made apparent, for example, by a statement we heard at a meeting in Barren-Ost that addressed the demands of the Foreigners' Advisory Board and the mosque associations in connection with the above-mentioned district revitalization program. A German woman living in Barren-Ost said: 'They want our German money!'. Her statement conveys the implicit conviction that the money must remain in *our* family; *we* are not responsible for *theirs*.

The extremely effective 'kinship' model of ethnicity, grounded in a 'belief in blood relationship' (Weber, 1978 [1922]: 393), provokes individuals to fight any ethnically neutral distribution of material goods. According to the logic of this model, solidarity must first be reserved for a person's own ethnic group, which is conceived as an alliance of relatives and associated with 'primordial sentiments' of affiliation (Geertz, 1963). Equal participation by migrants does not fit into this particularistic picture. Because of such ideas, the upwardly mobile section of the Turkish population raises the specific problem of interethnic exchange, which guides the search for behavioral features worthy of criticism and produces the negative classifications of upwardly mobile Turks

described above. The deep symbolic structure of the kinship model is one of the most important *generative principles* of these classifications.

## Integrative and disintegrative consequences of negative classifications

To evaluate the exclusionary impact of negative classifications, one must first distinguish between symbolic and social exclusion. Whereas classifications are by definition situated on the symbolic level, that is, on the level of interpretation and evaluation, social exclusion takes place on the level of action and consequence. Three factors determine whether negative classifications can have an exclusionary effect on the social level: their formal structure, that is, their categorical or gradual nature; the ways in which classification struggles are fought; and the functionally differentiated sub-area of society on which they are mainly based.

### Social exclusion and the formal structure of negative classifications

It stands to reason that categorical classifications are especially well suited to excluding the targeted persons and groups from social participation since they inherently follow an exclusionary logic. Our study largely confirmed this.

Gradual classifications tend not to exclude. For example, the attribution of a ‘Turkish-style Protestant ethic’ does not prevent Turkish migrants from buying buildings or running businesses. Categorical classifications, however, clearly tend to have socially exclusionary effects. An example of the ‘dissocial German’ classification was provided by the Turkish owner of an electronics wholesale business in Iderstadt, who in principle refuses to hire German employees since he believes that they lack the necessary work ethic: according to him, they are only concerned with vacations and want immediate payment for overtime. Incidents described by a Turkish landlord in Barren-Ost show that the ‘shady dealings’ classification also has an exclusionary impact. In his experience, German apartment seekers do not want to have a ‘criminal’ or ‘underhanded’ Turk as a landlord. Because of these ascribed traits, Turkish property owners in Barren-Ost have a difficult time attracting tenants from the German majority. These incriminating classifications clearly preclude interethnic integration and foster tendencies of separation.

### The effects of different types of classification struggles

Barren-Ost and Iderstadt present us with two contrasting examples of interethnic classification struggles. In both city districts the population engages in classification struggles in very different ways.

In Barren-Ost there is a *high degree of responsiveness* between the autochthonous and the Turkish populations. The Turkish migrants promote their interests quite vehemently, fighting for political and material participation in local society. The actions of the Foreigners’ Advisory Board and the Turkish Islamic associations are in many ways characteristic of struggles that have the normative claim to a positive recognition of cultural and religious differences. These groups fight for social recognition of their lifestyle — even its Islamic orientation — in response to related experiences of disrespect. On the other hand, the autochthonous population and its decision-makers in the neighborhood are prompted to define their own positions on the Turkish population’s concerns and demands. For this reason, it is not surprising that in Barren-Ost the Turkish and autochthonous populations engage in classification struggles in a relatively open manner. They are quite direct when making their negative classifications of opposing groups. In this case, ‘public transcripts’ (Scott 1990) predominate.

A *conflict-mediated mode of integration* would seem predestined for this constellation. According to Simmel, conflict is itself a 'form of sociation' (*Vergesellschaftung*) because it produces 'interaction' between the parties to a conflict (Simmel, 1971 [1908]: 70; see also Dubiel, 1995). According to this view, conflicts can promote permanent exchange relations between these parties. The various conflicts in Barren-Ost that unfolded publicly between the mosque associations and the Foreigners' Advisory Board on the one hand, and the autochthonous population and its decision-makers on the other, reveal the integrative force of classification struggles. Above all, these examples show three things.

First, the opponents remain relevant to each other. They cannot afford to be indifferent as long as they are involved in a conflict. Second, such conflicts offer the opportunity of at least a partial correction of negative classifications. And third, the mediating influence of universalistic norms can only come into play and mitigate the consequences of interethnic classifications if there is a conflict between ethnic groups. Only then does the less powerful group, in particular, have the opportunity to make effective use of inclusive norms that stand above ethnic boundaries, including norms associated with equal opportunity.

The constellation in Iderstadt is more complex, but one certainly observes a *low degree of responsiveness* in the relationship between the autochthonous and Turkish populations. In this neighborhood there were no migrant groups or migrant representatives to respond to concrete examples of stigmatization. As a consequence, there was no noticeable reaction among migrants to the above-mentioned attacks by the Iderstadt initiative. Such behavior would have been inconceivable in Barren-Ost. Even the large group of Turkish migrants in Iderstadt does not seek to promote its interests with district authorities, and it hardly participates in local political processes at all. The mosque congregations have withdrawn from the public arena and are not fighting for recognition of their lifestyle. In this district, classification struggles are being fought at a distance, and conflict-avoidance strategies shape the process. 'Hidden transcripts' (Scott, 1990) predominate in Iderstadt — negative classifications between the ethnic groups are mostly communicated internally within each group.

At a cursory glance, one might be tempted to see Iderstadt as an example of a very modern mode of integration, one that Häußermann and Siebel (2004: 11) describe as the 'integrative mode of urban indifference'. In this mode, integration is solely performed by individuals whose interaction is confined to specific roles: these groups encounter one another as customers and sales clerks in shops, as parents in school, and so on. A requirement for this mode of integration is a respect for foreignness; there is less of an emphasis on the recognition of concrete difference, that is, on the recognition of particular cultural orientations and lifestyles. This respect for foreignness does indeed exist in individual cases in Iderstadt. It is reflected in the area's image as a colorful, tolerant, multicultural neighborhood. But there are a large number of negative classifications of both the Turkish and German populations in Iderstadt that are not at all compatible with any such respect for foreignness. Since reciprocal classifications remain 'hidden transcripts' in Iderstadt, there is no conflict-mediated correction of negative classifications. As a result of the derogatory images, any social interaction beyond what is absolutely necessary is limited to a person's own ethnic group. The negative classifications undermine the tolerance and respect for foreignness essential for the 'integrative mode of urban indifference'.

The contrasts between Barren-Ost and Iderstadt are primarily related to quantitative relations between different ethnic groups. Because of the number of non-German residents in Iderstadt — persons with foreign nationalities make up nearly half the population — there is hardly any necessity for migrants to become involved with the autochthonous population in any meaningful way. This is especially true of the Turkish population, which represents about a quarter of all neighborhood residents. It is also able to rely on an ethnic infrastructure with traits of 'institutional completeness' (Breton, 1964). The situation is entirely different in Barren-Ost, where non-Germans represent

only about 10% of the resident population, and Turkish nationals about 5%. Here Turkish migrants are dependent on the cooperation of the autochthonous population if they want to have their needs met and concerns heard.

### Integration and exclusion in different sub-areas of society

As Häußermann and Siebel (2004) argue, integration processes are embedded in specific sub-areas of functionally differentiated modern societies. As a consequence, 'integration takes place only partially in the form of economic, political, cultural, or social integration and there is not necessarily a link between the different dimensions' (*ibid.*: 12). In this last section, we would like to apply this idea to three specific sub-areas of society: economic life, local politics and life-worlds.

In *economic life*, the exclusionary impact of negative classifications — even those of the categorical type — is limited because markets are open systems possessing their own laws. In this area, mechanisms such as supply and demand generally carry more weight than an individual's ethnicity. If a Turkish baker sells cheaper rolls, the autochthonous population will tend to purchase them despite their prejudices. A number of statements in the collected data prove this. Even the owner of an Iderstadt butcher's shop who expressed regret at the growing number of buildings owned by Turks in the district nonetheless conceded in an interview that he too would sell his building to a Turk if the Turk made him a better offer than a German. In economic life, the institutionalized rules of economic rationality impose specific limits on the effects of symbolic exclusion, and they counter processes of social 'closure' (Weber, 1978 [1922]: 43, 339; Parkin, 1974).

In the *political sphere*, there also exist institutionalized rules that limit the exclusionary effects of negative classifications. They include the norms of fairness, equality and justice. Institutionalized democratic values prevent the marginalization of migrants who become active in local politics within the bounds of their legal rights. The district revitalization program in Baren-Ost that we have mentioned several times is just one example of this. Although the opinion prevailed among the autochthonous population and its leaders that the Foreigners' Advisory Board represented 'rational parasites' who 'did not deserve' to participate, the chairman of the Advisory Board was nonetheless made a consulting member of the program's steering committee (though without voting rights). That meant non-German residents did participate, if in a restricted way. Skeptical statements by autochthonous decision-makers mainly show one thing: an institutionalized committee such as the Foreigners' Advisory Board, together with the population groups it represents, cannot be fully excluded without violating democratic norms.

In *life-worlds*, on the other hand, the exclusionary logic of categorical classifications can assert itself quite strongly since this area knows almost no functional constraints, and there are no normative obligations to interethnic exchange. Behavior in life-worlds is at best guided by the performative rules of direct interaction, which are of an informal nature. For this reason, violation of these rules causes hardly any sanctions that can be anticipated. If, for example, one person perceives another as 'unclean', he creates obstacles to social contact that are difficult to overcome and whose effects run unchecked in the sphere of daily life. It is only in private life that negative classifications are directly expressed in separation and exclusion. Autochthonous individuals know all too well that it is illegitimate and mostly inopportune to prevent migrants and their descendants from exercising political rights and from participating in economic wealth. But this awareness does not necessarily lead to an acceptance of migrants and their lifestyles in the private sphere. A Turkish social education worker and artist living in Iderstadt expresses this point quite nicely when he says: 'That's the way it is with people — I mean with Germans — who have contact with migrants, who have positions of power and sit behind a desk somewhere: when their working day is done, it's done, and now they're in "Germany". When they start working again, they're

back in the real world. They have to deal with a lot of migrants at work, but in their private lives they're German'.

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## Résumé

*En examinant l'ordre symbolique des rapports entre divers groupes sociaux de quartiers défavorisés, cet article montre que l'ethnicité constitue la principale référence en matière d'appellations désobligeantes ou de 'classifications négatives'. Prenant comme cas deux quartiers urbains allemands, on a reconstitué les patrons sémantiques des classifications négatives établies réciproquement chez les autochtones et leurs voisins turcs. Les individus d'origine turque en mobilité ascendante sont les cibles les plus fréquentes de cette stigmatisation. Cette réalité s'explique par la persistance d'une dimension symbolique de l'inégalité sociale qui associe l'ethnicité aux liens de parenté. Les effets d'inclusion ou d'exclusion sociale liés aux classifications interethniques négatives, et aux luttes qui en découlent, dépendent de trois facteurs: la logique interne, progressive ou catégorielle, des schémas de classification; la forme et le processus de résolution des conflits; les contextes sociaux dans lesquels ces classifications sont employées. Si la part de désintégration née de classifications négatives est réfrénée par des normes institutionnalisées propres à la vie économique ou à la politique locale, il n'existe, dans le monde vécu, que des normes d'interaction performatives informelles. Or, c'est là que ces classifications peuvent plus aisément conduire à l'exclusion sociale et à la séparation ethnique.*