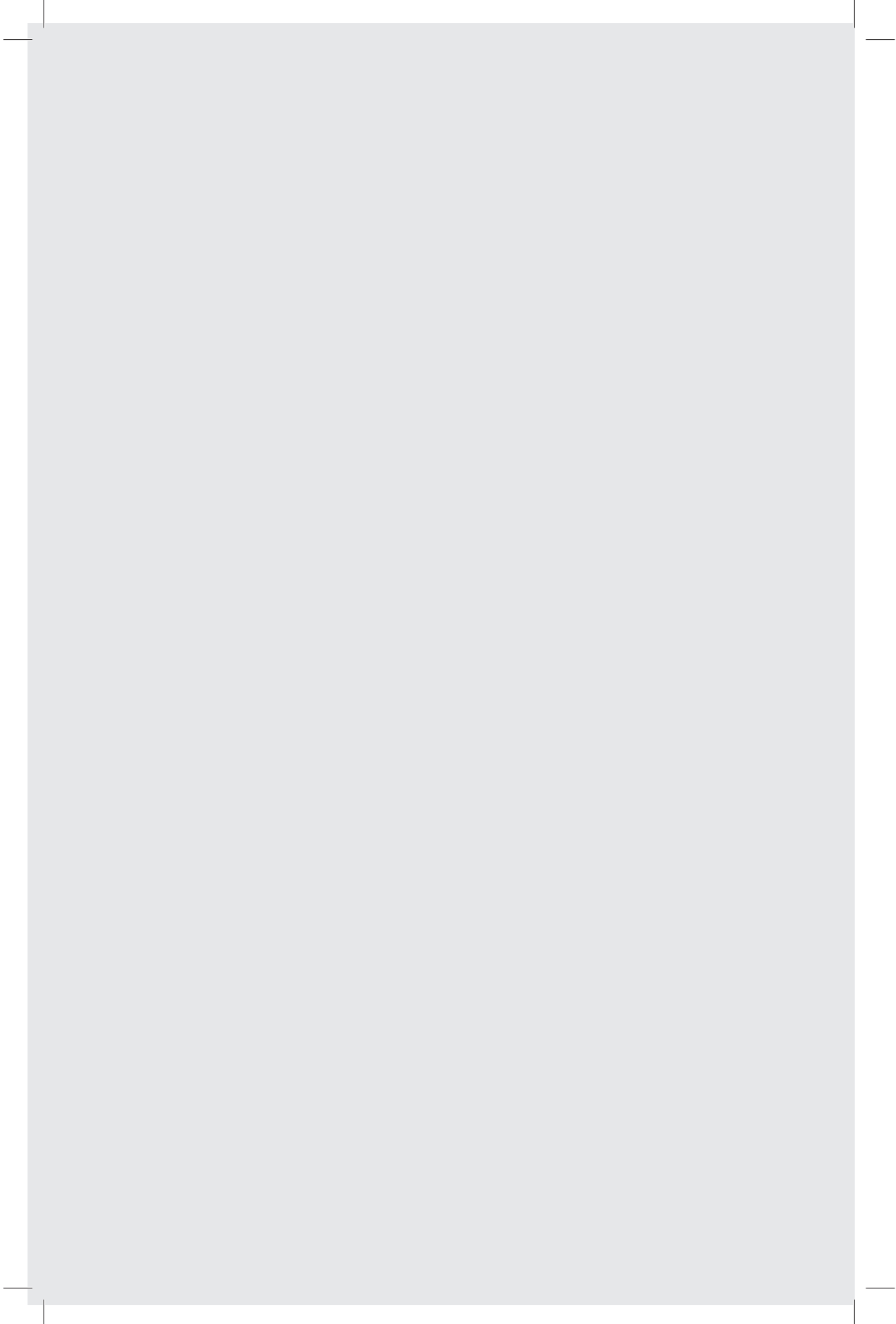# NATIONAL IDENTITY, ETHNIC HETEROGENEITY AND THE NEW CULTURALIZATION OF CITIZENSHIP

## Veronika Schmid/Mathias Bös

1 INTRODUCTION

In contemporary migration research, concepts like «national identity», «ethnicity», «assimilation» or «integration» are subjects of ongoing controversies. In the face of globalization, worldwide migration and the increasing relevance of multi-level politics, it has almost become commonplace that the territorially-bounded nation-state is losing its national sovereignty as well as its significance for the construction of collective identities. It is often argued, furthermore, that due to this assumed erosion of the nation-state, formerly shared values and identifications have become fragile. Here, debates on cultural and ethnic heterogeneity come into play. The implicit assumption underlying these discourses is that ethnic-cultural diversity is conceived as a potential threat to the unity and security of the nation-state (cf. Glick Schiller 2007: 40). Especially, conservatives claim that cultural plurality intensifies social conflicts and threatens the social cohesion of society. As a consequence, migrants are all too soon blamed for economic problems, for rising costs of the welfare state and for problems relating to crime and safety. Yet, ethnic and cultural plurality is not something new to (western) societies at all.

Why is the question of national identity so prominently discussed today? In order to answer this question, we develop the following thesis: Since belonging to the nation-state is more and more perceived as something which ought to be learned and achieved, the «ethno-national closure» of the modern nation-state (Wimmer 2004) is challenged. At the same time, however, belonging to society is discursively constructed and relies increasingly on ethnic and cultural criteria. It is exactly this (seemingly contradicting) coincidence of a rational opening and cultural closing of membership criteria which makes the question of national identity that controversial today.

As we will see, the controversies start with the very concept of identity itself (2.1). The seemingly natural equation of the nation-state with a homogeneous ethnic identity is deconstructed by referring to an ethnic boundary-making perspective (Wimmer 2008, 2009) and by taking the critique of methodological nationalism (cf. Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 2003) into account (2.2). Here, the essentialist and naturalized presuppositions associated with the reified notion of national or ethnic identity are discussed in particular. After these rather preliminary clarifications of the conceptual framework, we then describe nationality and citizenship as the two fundamental modes of inclusion and exclusion in the nation-state (3) and will briefly deal with recent theories of citizenship which are based either on a subnational or on a rather supranational level (3.1).

Next, we analyze recent transformations of citizenship (4). Since the question of national identity is inextricably linked with the question of who belongs to the nation-state and who does not, national identity will be discussed with respect to new modes of belonging. We will argue that in the face of an increasing neoliberal marketization of the social life, western European nation states are undergoing new processes of identity formation. Due to an increasing loss of significance, national governments struggle to regain their national sovereignty. Paradoxically, they do this by affirming the «language» of market, endorsing exactly those ideas that seemingly threaten the nation-state's authority, as, for instance, heterogeneity, universalism and cultural plurality. By incorporating those – on the surface – antagonistic ideals, the national project (still) keeps sticking to its historically inscribed principles of achievement and universalism. Yet, at the same time, this gives room to re-negotiate ethnic categories of belonging.

Due to these processes new forms of exclusion are set up which lead, in turn, to a *qualitative* differentiation of citizenship (chapter 4.1). Since national membership criteria are increasingly associated with the 'liberal' logic of the market, they are – by and large – no longer ethnically ascribed but are achievable. At the same time, membership criteria become culturalized (4.2). Apart from this, new boundaries are established, following the logic that a morally good citizen is, first and foremost, an economically well-doing and economically independent citizen (4.3). At the same time, this moralization of citizenship is accompanied by a neoliberal focus on individual responsibility (Schinkel 2010, Schinkel and van Houdt 2010).

Then, we will try to delineate the consequences thereof (4.2): In line with Schinkel we argue that inasmuch as (economic) integration becomes citizenship, the citizenship status of those who are formal citizens in the juridical sense but supposedly lack integration shifts from an actual to a virtual status (Schinkel 2010: 265). New social conflicts about national identity and belonging may arise in which ethnic categories, again, may play a powerful role. This can be the case even more, since the moralized notion of the «good» or «active citizen» can be achieved by migrants who are economically well-off, whereas autochthons may be – at least morally – excluded from the national community. Thus, along with universalistic, denationalizing processes, struggles about ethnic and national identity are likely to remain powerful (4.4). In this understanding it is the universalistic orientation of achievement and the market (totally ignoring aspects of ethnicity) that finally fuel the discussion on national and ethnic identity with derogatory perceptions. Finally, we will analyze how these transformations of membership configurations influence current debates on national identity (5).

## 2 PRELIMINARY REMARKS

As the following consideration will show, it is not a very promising attempt to analyze or speak of a nation's identity in a way one would analyze or speak of a person's identity. However, of course, there is still the widespread folk theory or belief that almost every person belongs to a unique national community which can be characterized by a culturally distinct mentality.

Such conceptions of nationhood strongly rely on the idea of analyzing nations as if they were (real) persons. Indeed, there has been a lot of research on the alleged 'mentalities' of nations after World War II. During this period, the study of national character was seen as «one of the most exciting frontier areas of the social sciences» (Gleason 1983: 923). Nowadays, the tradition of national character studies is somehow prolonged by typologies of nationhood as either «ethnocultural» or «civic» (Brubaker 1992).

In such a typology, an ethnocultural understanding of the nation («Kulturnation») is based on the idea of a common genealogy, on a common history and on shared cultural traditions and customs. A civic understanding, however, perceives the nation as a political community, governed by liberal and democratic principles («Staatsbürgernation»). Proponents of

such nation citizenship models (e.g., Brubaker 1992) take the immigration and naturalization policies as an indicator for the classification of different nations[1]: The legal principle of *ius sanguinis* (the principle of descent) is associated with an ethnocultural understanding of nationhood; the principle of *ius soli* (the territorial principle) and *ius domicilii* (the principle of residence), by contrast, are linked with a civic understanding of the nation.[2] Thus seen, the United States (as the «great melting pot») and France are conceptualized as examples of civic nationhood (with inclusionist immigration and naturalization policies), whereas Germany – due to its genealogical tradition of membership and its former refusal to accept dual citizenship (equaling exclusionist immigration and naturalization policies) – represents the ethnocultural understanding of nationhood.[3]

However, such typologies of national identities are too simple a view. None of the so-called paradigm cases – be it Germany, France or the United States – can be seen as a pure incarnation of either an ethnocultural or a civic model of national identity (Peters 2002:7). Has not, for instance, America had a particular system of values and beliefs (e.g., the American way of life, a peculiar emphasis on the pursuit of happiness, on individual freedom and on equal opportunity)? Is not, similarly, the collective self-understanding of France based on certain national traditions (14th of July) and supported by a shared interpretation of national symbols, history and the national achievements of the French Revolution?

Conceptualized as a collectively shared sameness (sameness concerning a common language, common habits, common values and ideas – and a common history or even origin), national identity strongly relies on the idea that there is a peculiar and authentic national self or character which ought to be preserved and cultivated. Although such an understanding is, cer-

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[1]  Some authors, e.g., Brubaker (1992) argue that such national citizenship models are – once established – quite stable and persist for a long time.

[2]  It is noteworthy, however, that *ius sanguinis* – at least in the legal sense – cannot be explained by referring to ideas or images of a kind of blood relationship of Germanic tribes. Instead of this, it is in fact derived from rules of heritage within royal houses (Bös 2000: 19). The British crown, for instance, has been allocated by *ius sanguinis* since 1351. Since then, descendants of the British royal house can become king or queen of Britain – even if they are not born within the British territory (ibid).

[3]  In 1999 a reform act of the German nationality law was passed. With this reform, Germany, too, has adopted a nationality law which combines the principle of *ius sanguinis* and *ius soli* in a way quite similar to other European countries and North America.

tainly, still quite widespread, it is too reifying a view. We argue, therefore, that it is not very informative to draw too close a parallel with conceptions of individual and national identity. First, such an understanding amounts to mixing categories of quite different analytical (micro-, macro-) levels.[4] Second, both categories – the notion of identity (even individual identity) as well as conceptions of the nation-state – are equally contested and highly ambiguous in the social sciences (see section 2.1 and 2.2).

In our understanding, the question of national identity is rather to be seen as centered on the discourse of inclusion and exclusion. National identity is inextricably linked with ideas of 'the other,' since nationalism is grounded in defining who belongs to 'us,' in defining the 'we' and 'they' (Triandafyllidou 1998: 596). According to Seyla Benhabib, the «negotiation of identity/difference (…) is the political problem facing democracies on a global scale» (Benhabib 1996: 3ff). In focusing on the transformations of membership criteria, we will try to illustrate how conceptions of membership and national identity are challenged, deconstructed and reconstructed. As a per se empty signifier (Laclau 1996), national identity is used in the diverse social struggles over a hegemonial understanding of inclusion and exclusion. Key questions to be addressed in the analysis are, for instance: What is considered required to be an entitled member of society and/or the nation-state – common descent or shared cultural habits, a common religion or rather a common language and common values such as 'democracy,' personal achievement, self-responsibility or 'human rights'?

In order to address these questions adequately, it is – first of all – necessary to envisage the various conceptual problems associated with the term 'identity' and 'nation-state.'

## 2.1 *Conceptual problems in theorizing identity*

Research on migration and ethnicity can hardly do without the term «identity» (Gleason 1983; Brubaker and Cooper 2000). But what exactly is meant by «identity?» Though the term seems to be intuitively plausible

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4    Epistemologically seen, using a concept such as 'mentality' interchangeably between the micro- (a person's mentality) and macro-level (a nation's mentality) of analysis is a reductionist understanding of social reality: Phenomena or characteristics of the macro-level are, then, simply deduced from the micro-level. In the last consequence, this would amount to the rather doubtful assumption that all Germans or all Spaniards share the same personality traits.

and well-defined, it is, however, difficult to determine the meaning. Adding, moreover, a modifier such as «national» or «ethnic» identity complicates matters even further. We have, thus, the paradoxical situation that the concept of ethnic or national identity is almost ubiquitous in scientific writing, though it is in fact used in many different and even contradicting ways.[5]

In his semantic history of the term «identity», Philipp Gleason (1983) points out that the concept is mainly marked by two conflicting understandings. According to Gleason, the first usage of the term can be traced back to Eric Erikson's developmental stage model (Erikson 1959). Erikson conceives identity as «the inner core» of a person, persisting through change. Though this inner core is – to some extent – modified by social interactions or by the social milieu of a person, identity is largely seen as something that is «located in the deep psychic structure of the individual» (in Gleason 1983: 918). However, influenced by symbolic interactionism, role theory and reference-group theory, a quite different understanding of identity has been developed by sociologists. In this understanding identity is – as Gleason illustrates – viewed as the outcome of various interactions between individuals as well as between individuals and society. Thus seen, identity is continuously created and re-created. Undoubtedly, this view challenges Erikson's idea that identity is a solid, given entity.

These two contradicting interpretations of the term identity turn up again, if one takes a closer look at the term «ethnicity» (Gleason 1983, Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Here, again, ethnicity is viewed as either a given, basic and – moreover – largely unquestioned element in a person's identity that can hardly be changed (primordialist view) or ethnicity is seen a socially negotiated element that depends on the situation (optionalist or interactionist view).

> For Eriksonians/primordialists, identity is deep, internal, and permanent; for interactionists/optionalists, identity is shallow, external, and evanescent. (Gleason 1983: 920)

The former (primordialist) view seems to be inscribed in the nationality laws of *ius sanguinis*, whereas the latter (optionalist) view seems to be

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[5]    For a detailed analysis of the conceptual problems inherent in the term «identity» see, for instance, Brubaker and Cooper (2000).

expressed in the legal construction of *ius soli*. As Gleason points out, the peculiarity of the term «identity» is due to the fact that it focuses on the linkage between the individual personality on the one hand and social and cultural settings on the other hand.

Not surprisingly, the terms identity and ethnicity are closely linked. In fact, as Gleason (1983: 912) puts it, there is a close connection between the questions «Who am I?» (identity) and «Where do I belong?» (ethnicity/belonging to the nation-state).

## 2.2 *Conceptual problems in theorizing belonging: ethnicity and the modern nation-state*

According to Wimmer, the categorical lenses through which we observe ethnicity are strongly biased. For him, migration research has too long taken the distinction between immigrant ethnic minorities and the national majority as the obvious starting point. Especially migration research, Wimmer (2009) argues, has been stuck in theoretical deficiencies which he traces back to a perspective derived from Johann Gottfried Herder. In this perspective, society is divided in different ethnic groups which can be characterized by a specific culture and a shared identity – treating ethnicity as primordial and using ethnic groups as the natural units of analysis. Wimmer, by contrast, claims that ethnicity is rather to be seen in a boundary-making perspective, focusing on agency and analyzing ethnicity as the outcome of a process of constituting groups by defining the boundaries between them (Wimmer 2008:1027). In such an understanding, ethnic groups are not seen as self-evident, fixed units of analysis; the focus is rather on the group making or «boundary work» in our everyday practice, in the way cultural markers are set, established, challenged and reinterpreted.

Nowadays, research has largely abandoned the idea of ethnicity as primordial and has replaced this idea of a «monolithically constituted ethnic absolutism» (Anthias 2001: 622) with conceptions of ethnic hybridity. The term hybridity points at a mix of different cultural patterns. Rather than view cultural differences as something stable that ought to be preserved and cultivated in their distinctness (as is, for example, the case in multiculturalism), cultural hybridity is linked with the idea of cultural syncretism. Hybridtity is also particularly linked with notions of so-called «new ethnicities» (Hall 1988) which are – as it is, for instance, the case with a German or Spanish Muslim – perceived to be more «transethnic» and more transnational in

character. It also suggests the idea that identity is neither exclusively confined to a particular ethnic group nor is it typical only for subaltern groups (Anthias 2001: 626). Pop culture (music, art, food), in particular, is rich with examples indicating how adolescents of a dominant ethnic majority (young Germans, etc). are synthesizing their own culture with elements of, for instance, black music (soul or gangster rap).

It is, however, questionable whether the notion of hybridity does not overestimate the possibility of counter-hegemonial interventions of ethnic minorities. And, of course, different cultural and ethnic elements can be merged, but do they, therefore, necessarily transform existing practices of hegemony? At least, it is not very likely that established and institutionalized practices of ethnic dominance and cultural hegemony will vanish, simply because cultural meanings and national symbols are perceived as open for reinterpretation. Furthermore, the concept of hybridity unintentionally reproduces the theoretical fallacies of the «Herderian ontology» (Wimmer 2009: 254), since the analysis of mixed cultural patterns relies on the idea that there are ethnically discrete cultural practices which can be clearly distinguished and are, then, mixed.

In the following we will, in line with Wimmer, argue that 'ethnicity' is one particular boundary-making element among others which is referred to as a resource in the struggle over national identity and belonging. This perspective allows us to focus on the way nationals and foreigners are 'made.'

Having clarified the concept of ethnicity, what are the possible theoretical pitfalls associated with conceptions of the nation-state? And how are the two terms related? It is certainly not by accident that the term ethnicity is closely linked with conceptions of the nation-sate. This is particularly due to the fact that the modern nation-state is characterized by an element of «ethno-national dominance» (Wimmer 2004: 42). Smith (1998), for instance, argues that it is not an accident that modern societies have developed within the nation-states. Rather, he claims that modernity as such relies on ethnic and nationalist principles. With the emergence of nation-states and the expansion of the principles of democracy, citizenship and popular sovereignty great parts of the population – excluded in pre-modern times (e.g., the poor, women, etc). – were gradually included in society and became true members and legitimate sovereigns of the nation. At the same time, however, new forms of exclusion based on ethnic and national criteria were established (Wimmer 2004: 42). Only those who are seen as true members of the state

are granted the privileges of equal treatment before the law and full rights of political participation; only nationals have full security of residence, etc. Although membership in the nation is inclusive and potentially open, there are true members of the nation, and there are foreigners, guest workers or refugees who do not belong to the nation. This exclusive understanding of belonging indicates the «ethno-national closure» of the modern nation-state and reveals «the shadows of modernity» (Wimmer 2002). For Wimmer, it is exactly the egalitarianism inherent in nationalist thought that is also supported by the idea of democracy. The ideological interrelatedness of nationalist and democratic principles formed our understanding of the European nation-states (ibid: 52). These states are then perceived as distinct entities of politics which confine a particular, ethnic population with an assumed homogeneous (ethno-national) culture and (national) identity. This understanding has recently been labeled and criticized as «methodological nationalism». It relies on some misconceptions.

First of all, the still widespread idea of ethnically homogeneous societies is certainly contrafactual. Due to massive migration flows after World War II, the modern European nation-states of today are clearly ethnically and culturally heterogeneous. Furthermore, in surely each and every nation-state there are, for example, specific regional cultures sustained by groups of autochthones/nationals which also might be defined as ethnic, since their members have a unique dialect and history, identify themselves with the region and share the same beliefs, habits, food preferences, folklore, customs and so on. This can even amount to secessionist struggles as is the case of the Spanish Basque country. In many nation-states there is, of course, a dominant ethnic majority, but this does not mean that the population of a nation-state is ethnically or culturally homogeneous. In fact, it is the project of nation-building of the 19th century itself which – driven by economic globalization – has finally «invented» and enforced the idea of national homogeneity (Glick Schiller 2007). By, for instance, insisting on a single national language or by setting up national institutions such as schools or the military, the originally heterogeneous population once became unified to one nation (ibid.: 45). Rather, nation-states are discursively constructed as ethnically and culturally homogeneous entities by nature; whether nation-states are in fact homogeneous is certainly a different question – and it is less a categorical question of «either-or». Nation-states are only to some degree more or less ethnically homogeneous.

Second, it is important to distinguish the terms 'nation' and 'state' analytically. Nations are not coextensive with states (Moore 2004: 680). There are, for instance, states that consist of more than one nation (e.g., Canada), and there are nations with more than one state (e.g., North and South Korea), while, again, other nations, such as the Palestinian nation, have no state at all (ibid).

Finally, the equation between the notion of society and the modern nation-state has also been criticized as an instance of methodological nationalism (e.g., Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 2003, Chernilo 2006).[6] It has been argued that to conceive the nation-state as the natural unit of modern society and as *the* organizing principle of modernity is a too-essentialist and reified understanding. It assumes a «container theory of society» (Glick Schiller 2007), an epistemological understanding that approaches «the study of social and historical processes as if they were contained within the borders of individual nation-states» (ibid.: 43). From such a perspective, national culture/identity is seen as homogeneous and the distinction of natives and foreigners is perceived as a naturally ethnic one.

3 NATIONALITY AND CITIZENSHIP AS DIFFERENT MODES OF MEMBERSHIP

Who belongs to a nation-state and who does not belong? There are two mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion of states: nationality and citizenship. Both mechanisms were originally implemented with the emergence of the modern nation-state. In the course of this development, the status of nationality and citizenship has been differentiated and further refined. Whereas, today, the mainly legal concept of nationality points at a largely homogeneous and universal status within the nation-state, citizenship rights are – just think of refugees or guest workers – still not equal for all people living on the territory of the nation-state (Bös 2001: 17).

Nationality has, first and foremost, an external function, that is, to guard the territorial borders of nationally constituted societies and to insure that the world population is separated largely congruently with the segmentary differentiation of the political world system (ibid.:18). Rights associated with nationality are, for instance, full security of residence, the right of diplomatic protection and rights of political participation.

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[6]    The term «methodological nationalism» was originally coined by the British sociologist Herminio Martins.

In contrast to this, the rather political concept of citizenship refers to different status configurations of individuals within society. It is, thus, a modern, democratic form of membership. In other words: Nationality can be understood as membership in a (nation) state; citizenship, however, can be understood as membership in a society. Though both terms are frequently used interchangeably in everyday language, it is necessary to differentiate between the two. Take the following example: Only if really all people living on the territory of the nation-state are nationals of the state and have the very same rights and duties of participation, there is in fact no difference between nationality and citizenship and the nation-state and society, respectively (ibid.: 6). This overlap of state and society had, however, merely been the case for a comparatively brief period in the 20th century.

What we witness nowadays is an increasing de-linking of nationality and citizenship, due to the massive migration flows in the postwar era. With the erosion of the state/society differentiation, citizenship no longer automatically means inclusion in society. In the citizenship literature, two distinct and seemingly contradictory trends can be figured out. Recent theories of citizenship are based either on a subnational level or on a rather supranational level.

### 3.1 *Conceptions of citizenship on a subnational level*

Facing a growing ethnic heterogeneity of the modern nation-state, a close connection of identity and nationality can no longer be taken for granted. Therefore, some authors like, for instance, Taylor (1992) criticize the universalism inherent in the modern conception of citizenship and would like to abandon the classical liberal notion of national citizenship in favor of a more particularistic understanding. For him, the universalism of modern citizenship – that is, the neutral application of rights – does not deal with all aspects of the various social groups and is, thus, inherently unjust. More precisely, Taylor argues in his influential essay, «The Politics of Recognition» (1992) that the universalistic understanding of liberalism is blind to difference and, therefore, (unintentionally) discriminates against others. Since the notion of liberal citizenship systematically downplays the particularities of ethnic or other social minority groups, he argues for extra minority protection (e.g., positive discrimination), in order to preserve the cultural identity and authenticity of minority groups.

Quite similarly, Isin and Turner (2002) claim that the universalistic orientation of modern citizenship is not yet truly realized. Besides, citizen-

ship is, in their view, implemented quite differently. Nation-states have, for instance, quite different naturalization laws; to some extent, citizenship is in different nation-states associated with different rights and duties, etc. They conclude, consequently, that the promise of inclusion associated with citizenship is only partially realized, while citizenship is – at the same time – used to exclude certain groups from a «real» membership.

In the same vein, Lister (2002), for example, has coined the notion of «sexual citizenship» in order to criticize the fact that gay people are still not endowed with equal rights. Moreover, in the discussion about an «ecological citizenship» (van Steenbergen 1994) it is discussed whether or not animals or even plants ought to be endowed with a legally codified status of membership.

Taking all this into account, it is, following Isin and Turner (2002), less necessary to view citizenship as a general legal status, but to articulate the particularistic self-interests of subordinate groups in the political struggle of recognition. In such a perspective, the demands on the recognition of particularistic group-interests and specific identities are due to the liberal deficit of universalism. The demands on particularization are deduced from the liberal idea of a universal membership status and vice versa; both are dialectically intertwined.

### 3.2 *Conceptions of citizenship on a supranational level*

According to Soysal (1997, 2000), the congruence between territorial state and national community is eroding. Due to this process, national belonging as the legitimate basis of membership in modern nation-states is replaced in the post-war era by new emerging forms of membership, such as postnational citizenship (Soysal 1997: 21). Following Soysal, four main developments point at a deterritorialized understanding of belonging (ibid.: 18f): First, world-wide migration leads to an ongoing internationalization of labor markets. Second, the increasing relevance of the discourse of human rights is the legitimate basis for more expansive claims of minority groups (immigrants, gays and lesbians), but – in a last consequence – also for plants and animals. Third, multi-level politics emerge. (The European Union is only one striking example among others). With the mounting relevance of such transnational actors, the sovereignty of the nation state is diminished. Lastly, decolonization after 1945 led to the emergence of newly independent states, but it also led to the acceptance of collective identities and of the right of one's own culture.

All these processes have an influence on the institution of citizenship and change its normative and institutional basis. Following Soysal, the boundaries of membership become, first of all, less and less territorial and more fluid. Even if one does not belong to the nation-state, it is possible to forward claims independent of the national borders. It is possible for ethnic minorities to make particularistic claims by referring to the universalism of the human rights discourse. The «nature and locus of struggles» (Soysal 2000: 7) for citizenship rights and social equality has changed. Collective claim-making does not merely refer to the particularities of an ethnic group and is no longer confined to the nation-state. One example of such an identitarian claim-making is the case of a French head of a mosque in Paris who has argued against the rule which prevents wearing a scarf in French schools. He did so not by referring to religious arguments or traditions, but rather he asserted instead that this rule is opposed to the very natural rights of a person's self-determination. Soysal quotes the head of the mosque with the following words (Soysal 2000: 8): «If a girl asks to have her hair covered, I believe it is her most basic right».

Furthermore, membership becomes multiplied. As a consequence, some migrants, e.g., legal permanent residents, are more privileged than others. Summing up, there are at least the following legal membership configurations: legal permanent residents, refugees, dual citizens, nationals (autochthones), nationals by descent, nationals by residence or nationals by the territorial principle, and, finally, undocumented foreigners with no legal status at all.

Finally, the basis of the legitimization of membership is changing. Membership criteria are less justified by criteria of nationality and national laws, but are rather legitimized with reference to the universality of human rights.

Taking all this together, it is, thus, not surprising that Soysal concludes that a new posnational form of membership is emerging. The declining relevance of national citizenship is, however paradoxically, countered by attempts to reassure «national identity».

4 Recent transformations of citizenship: The neo-liberal policies of belonging

What we face today are reconfiguration processes of citizenship that take place at different levels. A reconfiguration takes place at the macro-level between states, the relation between the state and its nationals is reconfigured at

an intermediate level, and the relation between members and non-members of a state is reconfigured at the micro-level. In order to address the question of citizenship and belonging more adequately, it is necessary to take the interconnectedness of these different levels of reconfiguration into account. But what is the driving force of these transformations at such different levels?

Scholars working in «governmentality studies» argue that the relationship between state and market is changing due to the neo-liberal critique of the welfare state. Taking Foucault's concept of governmentality[7] as a starting point, these scholars view neo-liberalism not only as an economic or political ideology, but as a mode of governing populations. From this perspective, neo-liberalism governs individuals (as well as states) by the metaphor of the market (Schinkel and van Houdt 2010:699). Scholars working in «governmentality studies» identify the insistence on the individual responsibility of each and every person as a central feature of neo-liberal governmentality (Bröckling et al. 2000). By making the individual, the private sector and the community responsible for public tasks, responsibility becomes a mode or «technology» of governing.

### 4.1 *«Active/moral» and «passive/formal» conceptions of citizenship*

The neo-liberal discourse emphasizes the need of «active citizenship» (Schinkel and van Houdt 2010:699). The idea of active citizenship goes back to ancient times, back to Aristotle for whom the morally good citizen is a citizen who actively participates in public and political affairs (Schinkel 2010: 268). This aspect of citizenship has been persistent throughout history. For the Romans, for example, citizenship is seen as a «*virtus*» (ibid). With the Declaration of Human Rights, the notion of active citizenship is further corroborated. For Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for example, citizenship is a virtue of the politically interested, actively participating «*citoyen*». Consequently, in Republican theories, loyalty to the nation and its preservation are seen as the duties of a good citizen.

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[7] Taking Foucault's understanding of governmentality as a key concept, scholars working in governmentality studies argue that neoliberalism is to be seen as one special mode of «governing» populations. The term governmentality is a comparatively broad concept and comprises – among others –the following key features: institutions, context-specific disciplines (the discipline at the workplace, the school, etc). various taxonomies related to the question of what is «normal/pathological», «good/bad», «sane/insane», etc. and other power strategies and calculations which aim at the organization of the population.

In the tradition of the liberalism of, for instance, John Stuart Mill, by contrast, citizenship is rather seen as a passive status which refers to a codified set of rights and duties between individuals and the state (Mackert 2006: 68f). It is, thus, quite common to differentiate between active and passive definitions of citizenship (ibid). Apart from this, the terms «formal» and «moral citizenship» (Schinkel 2010) are also used. By the latter, Schinkel denotes the counterfactual and rather prescriptive or normative notion of a good citizen (Schinkel 2010: 268). Both aspects of citizenship are usually viewed as two different elements inherent to the idea of national membership.

According to Schinkel (2008, 2010), the key feature of the neo-liberal agenda is the idea of active or moral citizenship. Citizenship is conceived as individual participation and as responsibility for one's own life. The juridically codified rights associated with citizenship – that is, the passive or formal components of citizenship – surely do not disappear. But what is changing at the moment (and what has changed in history before) is the different weight given to one aspect of citizenship (active versus passive) over the other. The present interest in active/moral citizenship is strongly interrelated to a set of norms and values that are seen as seemingly typical of a nation's «mentality». Taking the Netherlands as a forerunner, Schinkel and van Houdt (2010) exemplify how the idea of active citizenship is endorsed by neo-liberalism and becomes an instrument of inclusion and exclusion.

### 4.2 *The culturalization of membership*

Schinkel traces a shift in focus from formal to moral citizenship in contemporary Dutch policy-making. With regard to the Netherlands, he proclaims that a distinction is to be made between active («real») citizens on the one hand and passive («unreal») citizens on the other hand who are seen as «citizens-manqués» (Schinkel 2010: 265). This moralization of citizenship is closely linked with the discourse on integration and the neo-liberal emphasis on individual responsibility. It is exactly this linkage that turns the juridically codified (formal) citizenship status into a mere «virtual» possession.

What is crucial, even more, is that integration is currently conceived as cultural integration. This culturalist turn is perhaps best expressed in the migration policies and the naturalization laws of most western European countries. With respect to the naturalization of adults one can even speak

of an «ethnization of nationality law» (Bös 2001: 20). The key issue of belonging to the nation-state is seen in the very special relation between an individual and the state. In the famous Noteboom-Case of 1975, the judges of the international court developed the idea that nationality cannot be assigned randomly, nor sold, since they assumed that membership is based on a «genuine link» which exists between the individual and «his» or «her» state (ibid). This genuine link is the fundamental normative basis for the criteria of naturalization. It is, for instance, assumed that such a link between individual and state can only be developed if the person to be naturalized stayed for a certain period of time in the respective country. In this understanding, socialization leads to membership. Therefore, cultural criteria (language, knowledge about a history, the political system and habits, etc). play such an influential role in naturalization. According to Max Weber's definition of ethnicity, these naturalization criteria can be seen as elements of an ethnic self-description (ibid.: 21). He writes:

> We shall call 'ethnic groups' those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of custom or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists. (Weber in Sollors 1996: 56)

An ethnic self-description does not necessarily rely on an «objective blood relationship»; important is a shared way of life («similarities of custom»). In this sense, we can, today, speak of an ethnization of naturalization laws.

In addition, cultural integration is increasingly seen as a moral duty. The immigrant «has to earn permanent residence and nationality by providing his or her acceptance of the fundamental norms» of society (Schinkel 2008: 22). This implies two things: With the «virtualization of citizenship» (Schinkel 2010: 266), new modes of inclusion and exclusion in the nation-state are established. First of all, citizenship – like nationality – is no longer exclusively ascribed by particularistic or ethnic features, but becomes achievable. At first sight, this can be seen as a result of an ongoing modernization of immigration policies. This is certainly the case. But, apart from this (and quite contrary to it), the moralization of citizenship also entails some rather worrisome implications.

### 4.3 *The moralization of membership*

At the same time, paradoxically, the citizenship of those who are citizens in the formal sense but are perceived as insufficiently integrated is discursively downplayed. In the understanding of active/moral citizenship, they simply are (morally) no good citizens. Thus, becoming a citizen is increasingly seen in moral terms (Schinkel 2008, 2010; Schinkel and van Houdt 2010). Problematizing the assumed lack of integration with reference to the principle of individual responsibility makes those who are less integrated responsible for this. As a consequence, they are seen as unwilling to adapt themselves, while at the same time structural arguments (e.g., unemployment, financial needs, bad living conditions, etc). or the state's responsibility are systematically neglected. Certainly, some groups suffer from this stigmatization more than others.

It is, thus, quite obvious that especially non-western immigrants – especially Muslims or migrants of Islamic countries – and migrants of the Third World are the focus of the debate in particular. What do these groups have in common? Put simply, it is often argued that they do not fit into the western way of living. They are accused of having internalized a religion that has not yet been in touch with the Enlightenment, of being entirely unacquainted with democracy and the legendary western 'Protestant work ethos' and of coming from less modernized/industrialized societies (Wimmer 1997: 22). In a nutshell, the alleged cultural gap is perceived as almost unbridgeable. We might call this the thesis of «cultural incompatibility» (e.g., Wimmer ibid).: Discursively constructed as being either unwilling (moralization of citizenship) or simply incapable to integrate (thesis of cultural incompatibility), these groups are perceived as a potential threat to the security and coherence of society.

Here, two different lines of argumentation are mixed. The insistence on cultural assimilation is supported by the neo-liberal emphasis on active citizenship on the one hand as well as by assumptions of cultural incompatibility on the other hand. In other words, an interactionist/optionalist conception of identity as achievable that is primarily proclaimed by neo-liberal policies and a primordialist understanding of identity as ascribed are unwittingly merged. It is striking that the latter culturalist differentialism is supported by both (politically left) multiculturalists as well as by conservatives and the new right. Having analyzed the strong differentialist turn in the discourse of immigration in France in the 1970s and early 1980s, Rogers Brubaker

(2001) has impressively shown that cultural differentialism is supported by the political left as well as by the political right – though, of course, due to different reasons: Whereas multiculturalists claim a right to be different (a *droit à la différence*), the new right stresses the importance of preserving collective identities from the danger of unwanted (physical and cultural) admixture (Brubaker ibid.: 536). The latter understanding also implies that it is exactly the immigrants' cultural foreignness that causes conflicts and that it would be better to remain among one's own kind.

The renewed focus on cultural integration has recently been called «repressive liberalism» (Dean in Schinkel and van Houdt 2010: 699). The core feature of repressive liberalism is – according to Joppke (2007: 14) – that liberal goals (e.g., liberty, democracy, respect for human rights) are mainly pursued with illiberal means such as, for instance, obligatory civic integration courses or tests for newcomers. He concludes that civic integration policy has changed into «a tool of migration control, helping states to restrict especially the entry of unskilled and non-adaptable family migrants» (ibid.: 5). Among others, Joppke (2007: 2) argues that in most of the states of the European Union, civic integration is «gaining strength under contemporary globalization».

### 4.4 *The dialectical interplay of the universalization and particularization of membership*

To sum up, the following three transformations of citizenship can be delineated. First, citizenship becomes pluralized; secondly, nationality (naturalization laws) becomes more inclusive and universalized and, finally, 'real' citizenship becomes – at the same time – more particularized. Let us briefly elaborate on the first point.

As we have seen in section 3, the institutionalized modes of legitimate inclusion and exclusion typically related to the nation-state model are eroding (Sassen 2002; Soysal 2000). Citizenship is increasingly decoupled from belonging in the national collective (Soysal 2000). The membership status becomes pluralized and fuzzier: Besides unauthorized migrants with no citizenship rights at all, there are long-term non-citizen immigrants who hold at least some privileges without having the formal citizenship status. Others, again, hold a dual citizenship and thus belong to different political communities. Furthermore, nationals and immigrants as well may have a common, supranational European Union citizenship. Apart from this, in some regions

of Europe (e.g., Catalonia, Basque country) there are also modest forms of a subnational or regional citizenship. To complicate things even more, immigrants may not hold a formal citizenship status, but they can be seen as good citizens in the moralized understanding of active citizenship depicted above. Others, by contrast, may hold formal citizenship and are actually official members of the nation-state, but they may be morally excluded from a «real» belonging due to their supposed lack of personal commitment to society. Interestingly, this may be equally true for autochthones and migrants. This leads us to the next two points, namely the universalization of national membership criteria and the particularization of citizenship.

Historically seen, citizenship has lead to an increasing de-differentiation within the population of nationals. Internal differences of religion, social or regional origin, etc. have been downplayed, since every national is seen as a legitimate member of the state. Nationality laws as external bordernization processes, by contrast, frequently have had a comparatively exclusive character. This relation of an inclusive universalism of citizenship and an exclusive particularism of nationality has changed today.

As long as *national community* has been primarily defined in ethnic terms, the modes of inclusion and exclusion have been based on ascribed criteria. Ethnic origin alone was the prerequisite for citizenship rights. This «ethno-political closure» (Wimmer 2002: 70) is the basis for the understanding of the nation as an «imagined community» (Anderson 1988) of equals, a community of solidarity, of common origin, of a shared, unique history and a common destiny and, thus, as a community endowed with a specific national identity. In this sense, the state is – as Wimmer (1997: 29) puts it – seen as «owned by the people who have been united to a nation». Wimmer, consequently, conceives the nation state as a «successful compromise of interests between different social groups: an exchange of the guarantee of political loyalty for the premise of participation and security» (ibid).

Today, however, this social contract breaks up due to the neo-liberal re-structuring of the social balance of power and the emphasis given to the market. It is in this context that migrants are seen as «intruders» by downwardly mobile groups, because they prevent the state from its major task, that is, to «look after the well-being of its owners» (Wimmer 1997: 30). In such an understanding, xenophobia is not only to be seen as an attempt to reassure national identity in times of uncertain collective identities, but xenophobic, ethnocentric and racist attitudes are also to be seen as an ex-

pression of the political struggle about who owns the state and, hence, has the legitimate right to be cared for by the nation-state. This might explain the new trends of a culturalization and ethnization of membership.

Let us take Wimmer's idea of an implicit and constantly re-negotiated social contract between the state and its citizens as a starting point. To put it in a nutshell, due to the neo-liberal re-structuring of the welfare state, Wimmer's question – of who owns the nation-state – can no longer be answered by referring to the respective autochthones of the state. Though centered on the issue of belonging and national identity, not only ethnic groups are competing about who belongs to «us», the nation. The universalistic orientation of the market (together with the emphasis on personal responsibility and commitment to society) converts former strangers into members – *and* vice versa. The «dirty work of boundary maintenance» (Crowley 1999) relies no longer on ascribed (ethnic) criteria exclusively. Irrespective of one's ethnic origin or any other ascribed criteria, a new, qualitative differentiation of active (moral) versus passive (immoral) citizenship takes place. The (moral) citizenship status is no longer automatically granted or ascribed by birth but has to be earned by personal achievements.

However, this understanding of citizenship is demanding. It is, for instance, likely to assume that a person's economic achievements as well as his or her capability and willingness to contribute to social life is dominated by one's own social origin and – speaking with Bourdieu (1986) – one's own economic and cultural capital. Thus, the economically and socially disadvantaged groups are – at least potentially – excluded from real membership – independent of their ethnic origin. That is, boundary-making relies increasingly on the universalistic criteria of the market.

As we see, the formal membership criteria become more fluid. Especially, naturalization policies become more inclusive and universalistic, since they no longer rely on an understanding of ethnicity that is exclusively ascribed. At the same time, however, paradoxically, 'true' citizenship is based on a culturalized and ethnicized and, thus, particularistic understanding. Though the citizenship status is no longer something that is inherited, it is still something that is expecting much, for it has to be, first and foremost, learned and earned to be a full member of society. Only those newcomers can be regarded as fellow members of society who can prove that they have been socialized by society and have really internalized the values and habits of the society. Thus seen, the mounting inclusiveness of the naturalization

laws does not imply that national migration policies are liberalized. Whereas modes of formal belonging become more universalistic and inclusive, the more subtle «politics of belonging»[8] become more rigid, making it in some cases even an instance of repressive liberalism. Nationality and citizenship are increasingly decoupled; membership in the nation-state is not congruent with the membership in a (nationally constituted) society. If these trends of a re-ethnization and culturalization of citizenship hold on, citizenship loses its originally egalitarian power.

Robert Robertson (1992: 130) has coined the idiomatic formula of the «universalization of the particular» and the «particularization of the universal» to characterize the contradicting effects of globalization. For him, the renewed relevance of groupism and the local as well as the increasing insistence on particularistic identities is a result of the universalizing effects of (economic) globalization. As we have seen, contemporary modes of national belonging are also linked with these dialectics of particularization and universalization: The growing universalistic inclusiveness of nationality is countered by the particularism of citizenship.

This is crucial even more, since – at a first glance – the boundaries differentiating between the 'we' and the 'they' established by notions of active citizenship are far more difficult to be recognized as boundaries at all as one might expect. First of all, they rely on 'soft' criteria which can hardly be empirically tested. What is the so-called acid test for being an active citizen? Is, for instance, neighborly help sufficient? Or is it, at least, necessary to be involved in a public campaign to be perceived as a full fellow citizen?[9] Or is it rather simply enough to be economically well-off? Here, it becomes quite evident that membership in society is primarily discursively constructed and is non-codified (Schinkel 2010: 267).

Neo-liberal projects of belonging are almost always based on the identificatory and emotional level (Yuval-Davis 2006: 211). In Germany, for

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[8] The term «politics of belonging» has been used by Yuval-Davis (2006: 197) to depict special political projects aimed at constructing belonging to collectivities in particular ways.

[9] Another variant to test whether or not a person can be trusted to be a fellow citizen is the «cricket test», which has been proposed by Norman Tebbit, a Conservative minister of the Thatcher administration. Tebbit proclaimed that whenever people with a migration background watch a cricket match between Britain and a team of their homeland and support the latter, they are not yet to be seen as true British citizens (Yuval-Davis 2006: 210). Again, as this example shows, emotional commitment and identification are seen as the basis of belonging.

instance, naturalization is facilitated if a person has been involved as a voluntary worker (§ 10 III 2 Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz). It is, first of all, a person's personal commitment that is decisive for true citizenship. But, as soft and discursively constructed as these criteria are, one still does not have the entitled right to be a full member.

Paradoxically, newcomers, that is to say non-members of society, are at first required to participate in society for the very benefit of it, in order to then gain full membership status. This concept is somehow odd. Should it not be the other way around? As a matter of fact, it is only possible to participate in and to identify with society if one perceives oneself as a full member of it. As seen, membership is the prerequisite for identification.

5 How to analyze national identity

Taking these different membership configurations into account, let us now consider the role of national identity in this context in more detail. No doubt, there is no such thing as 'the' national identity as such. As Triandafyllidou (1998) argues, national identity only becomes meaningful with respect to «significant others». Therefore, instead of perceiving national identity as a substantial thing or a comparatively homogeneous (collective) mentality, we have rather focused on the more or less discursive struggles to define who is a legitimate member of the state – and of society.

Following Triandafyllidou, national identity can be conceived as a «double-edged relationship» (ibid.: 599). The question of national identity is both inclusive and exclusive, and it revolves around defining 'the other.' Viewed from this perspective, national identity is influenced and even dependent on significant others. Or, to put it in more social-psychological words, a nation's identity can only be detected with reference to some outgroup against which the nation's peculiarity is assured. These outgroups or significant others can be other nations or ethnic minority groups within the nation-state which are, in turn, discursively constructed in such a way that they seem to threaten the nation's unity and, thus, the distinctiveness of a nation's identity. In fact, as Triandafyllidou claims, the final characteristic that makes some outgroup a significant other is that it is conceived as threatening the way the nation as it is (ibid.: 600).

Ethnic minorities, for example, may become internal significant others for the dominant majority, the nation, simply because they may preserve their right to be culturally different with respect to their own language,

religion or habits. Thus, they may challenge the homogeneity and purity of the nation. But, however, as our analysis of the different membership configurations has shown, the answer to the question of who is perceived as a significant outgroup has – to some extent – changed. Starting from the assumption that a significant other is discursively constructed and, furthermore, that s/he is perceived to threaten the cultural unity, homogeneity and integrity of the nation of «active citizens» from within, one has to take into account that 'the other' may not necessarily be an ethnic foreigner, but may also come from 'within,' that is, that s/he is a natural born fellow.

Certainly, those members of the nation who are members of the nation qua *ius sanguinis* or birth can afford themselves to be less assimilated to conceptions of national identity, the dominant cultural and normative standards, and to be less emotionally attached to the nation in order to be perceived as a full supporting member. Affirming, for instance, a popular (German) punk slogan such as «Germany die!» does not change an autochthon's entitlement of belonging. But as the example of obligatory civic integration courses or tests for Muslim newcomers show, a person's identification and emotional attachment are preconditions of belonging. Identification with the state is a *sine qua non* only for those who are not already a member by descent.

However, the moralization associated with active citizenship – as problematic as it may be – may also provide the potential to even change existing ethnic boundaries. Taking the boundary-making approach proposed by Wimmer as a starting point, ethnicity is not seen as a matter of pre-defined and fixed groups, but is rather to be seen as «a process of constituting and re-configuring groups by defining the boundaries between them» (Wimmer 2008: 1027). The distinction – which is quite typical of methodological nationalism – between immigrants and nationals is blurred inasmuch as the membership criteria are based on the idea of a moralized active citizenship. This 'making' of ethnic boundaries is closely linked with the 'making' of national identity. Suddenly, a natural-born citizen may become an internal significant other who threatens the integrity and the dominant understanding of the nation as a community of those who stick to the principles of personal achievement, self-responsibility, flexibility, mobility and economic well-being. In fact, as recent data have shown for Germany, hatred against those who are unemployed and on social service for a longer period of time

is constantly growing (Heitmeyer 2011). At least to some extent, they are no longer seen as legitimate, full members of society.

It would be a misconception to view the ethnic closure of nation-states as something given. Rather, as Wimmer (2004: 55) impressively shows, there have been historic phases of a closure along ethnic lines in the modes of relating ethnicity and statehood which have, in turn, been accompanied by phases of a reopening. In the current phase, the national closure seems to rely on issues of social and mainly cultural rather than ethnic inequalities.

In this paper we have argued that national identity is not to be seen as a substantial collective mentality, but is discursively constructed. Since national identity is centered on the question of inclusion and exclusion, we have proposed analyzing national identity by focusing on recent transformations of membership. As we have seen, contemporary modes of (national) belonging are inextricably linked with the dialectics of particularization (moralization, culturalization of citizenship) and universalization (marketization, liberalization of naturalization laws). Since national identity is per se an «empty signifier» (Laclau 1996), the question of national identity is almost always the subject of ongoing controversies. The double-edged nature of national identity – to define the criteria of inclusion and exclusion – turns the question of national identity into a battlefield of social groups, fighting for (cultural) dominance. It is likely that these struggles over hegemony will even intensify to the extent to which the neo-liberal agenda will succeed in enforcing its criteria of the market. This might be an explanation for why the question of national identity is so prominently discussed today.

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