Workshop 10 - Minority Ethnic Groups and Housing: Perceptions and Perspectives

“The ’others’ don’t want” – Small scale segregation: Hegemonial public discourses and ‘racial’ boundaries in neighbourhoods

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“The ’others’ don’t want” – Small scale segregation: Hegemonial public discourses and ‘racial’ boundaries in neighbourhoods

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Abstract
In Germany segregation is one of the main topics in current discourses on urban development. Besides considering terms of class the discourse concentrates on what is called ‘cultural’ segregation, focussing cultural differences between Germans and immigrants and emphasizing the necessity that immigrants should integrate into the German society. But so called “cultural boundaries” are not necessarily related to immigration or cultural differences but often rather due to racist stereotypes. They correspond with racist images of who is perceived as ‘German’ and who not. Neighbourhoods with residents who don’t fit this image of being German are easily said to be ‘Problematic City Quarters’. Related to this are images like the unavoidable emergence of neighbourly conflicts out of different cultural habits, voluntary isolation of immigrant communities – up to the building of parallel societies and uncontrollable criminality. In the analysis of qualitative interviews with ‘white German’ residents of neighbourhoods in Berlin we found typical patterns of the described discourses focussing on cultural differences, labeling the presence of seemingly non-Germans as ‘problematic’ and ‘too much’ and interpreting small scale segregation as immigrants’ lack of will to integrate into the German society. This indicates that perceptions of the daily life in neighbourhoods are influenced by those discourses, which thus might have an impact of furthering small scale segregation and racist stereotypes. Bourdieus concept of Habitus and social space takes such processes into account and might serve as an explanation for small scale segregation in neighbourhoods.

“The ’others’ don’t want” – Small scale segregation: Hegemonial public discourses and ‘racial’ boundaries in neighbourhoods.

“The different nationalities stay among themselves and there is a high rate of crime. Therefore the senator of the interior declared the area a ‘Problematic Area’”. This headline of the “Berliner Zeitung” (2004) is typical for current discourses in German mass media about so called ‘Problematic City Quarters’. In public media ‘Problematic City Quarters’ are usually characterized as areas with - as it is called - “a high rate of foreigners” and “a high rate of people who receive social welfare”. These two criteria are also listed in the official definition of so called “City Quarters with a special need for development” given in the program ‘Social City’, a joint initiative of the federal states and the federation of Germany¹. The

¹ To declare an area a „City Quarter with special need for development“, it must meet some of the following criteria: „urbanistic, constructional and ecological deficits, infrastructural deficits, economical stagnation on a low level, change, respectively rapid decrease of economical activities, unbalanced population development, a high rate of unemployment, a high rate of dependency on governmental benefits, a high percentage of foreigners, especially among children and youngsters, high mobility (especially the moving away of families, gainfully employed persons, and households with a proper income), increasing social and cultural segregation und exclusion, increase of criminality in public space. In addition to these statistically describable features in which the areas concerned have got data above average there are indices of dilapidation and increasing willingness to use violence within public space combined with increasing feelings of insecurity among the residents.” Source: http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/wohnen/quartiersmanagement/download/einleitung.pdf (Translation by the author).
purpose of this program is to prevent further disadvantages for people because of their housing conditions or living surroundings. But the definition itself is problematic. It is based on constructions of who is perceived as a ‘foreigner’ and on characteristics that are ascribed to ‘foreigners’. And at the same time it refers to constructions of a ‘culture of poverty’. Both, people who are termed as ‘foreigners’ and receivers of social welfare (respectively people who are both), are typically associated with “a high rate of crime” and with anomia in general. There’s the talk of areas that “collapse” (Der Spiegel 48/2000), of areas that are “out of control and not to rule any more” (cp. Berliner Zeitung, 17./18.1.04), of violence, drugs, crime, dilapidation, “slums” and “ghettoisation”. The discourse is closely linked to the concept of “social mixture”. The concept suggests that a “healthy” neighbourhood should consist of a majority of ‘white German’ middle class people. Therefore the percentage of as it is called “foreigners” - people who don’t fit the image of being German - and of “receivers of social welfare” or of other public benefits should be limited (see below; cp. Bürkner, 2002)². Thus the pure existence of these two groups are seen to be problematic, what comes close to regard the people themselves as being problematic (cp. Hall 1989). Thus the concept of social mixture and the described discourses are based on constructions of the two described groups which are stigmatizing. Thereby those people who usually should be prevented to become disadvantaged become even more disadvantaged by those stigmatizing discourses.

In my opinion in these discourses boundaries against these two groups are constructed, what in turn furthers segregation in neighbourhoods. Segregation is one important topic in these discourses. It is stated that there are not enough social contacts between “immigrants” and “Germans”. Hegemonial explanations for this state a lack of will of “immigrants” to “integrate” and to mingle with the German society. Instead of this – so the critics – “immigrants” build “Parallel Societies”. Terms like “Foreigners”, “Natives” and “Immigrants” or “Germans” and “Turks” implicate that segregation mainly results from cultural differences due to the process of immigration. But if somebody is perceived as a “foreigner” or as a “German” is closely related to racist images. Images of immigrants or so called ‘foreigners’ do not just refer to any kind of non-German nationality. They rather correspond with racist characterizations like colour of skin or hair. According to Kerner the norm of being German is related to images of “white nordic bodies” (Kerner, 2004)³. People who don’t match with these images are easily ‘under suspicion’ to be ‘foreigners’ (see Kerner 2004) disregarding if somebody has been living in Germany all his or her life, as for example ‘black Germans’ or immigrants of the second or third generation. In the contrary people who recently have immigrated from another country but fit the image of “white nordic bodies” do not face these constructions of “foreignness”. Nowadays also especially the Islam and related visible features like wearing a headscarf are mostly associated with ‘foreignness’ and certain non-German respectively non-Western characteristics.

² Disregarding that there is quite some criticism on these constructions (e.g. Bürkner 2002, Caglar 2001, Hanhörster 2001) they still represent the hegemonial discourse regarding this subject.
³ Rommelspacher (1995) talks of a ‘culture of dominance’ that includes a collection of dominant positions that are constructed as being ‘normal’ whereas everyone who differs from these constructed norms is perceived as “the other”. Besides whiteness some other aspects of this image of being ‘normal’ are to be German, to be a Western German (in contrast to be Eastern German, the former DDR), to be heterosexual, not to be handicapped and belonging to the middle class.
Interactions and mutual perceptions in neighbourhoods are influenced by those images. In daily life often ascriptions related to visible features are not questioned any more but just taken for granted. There is no examination if ‘the others’ indeed are like the images that exist about them (Kalpaka & Räthzel 1994). According to Holzkamp (1994) this leads to a breaking off of real interaction between people. This seems to be the case in neighbourhoods. An interview study we conducted in three neighbourhoods in Berlin showed that ‘white’ residents’ statements overlapped to a high degree with those current discourses on ‘Problematic City Quarters’ and ‘Integration’, reproducing racist stereotypes and influencing daily life in those neighbourhoods.

Based on the interview study I want to discuss discursive patterns we found in the interviews in relation to current public discourses on such small scale segregation in neighbourhoods. Finally I will suggest Bourdieu’s concept of Habitus and social space as a way to explain racial boundaries in neighbourhoods. But first I will provide some information about the interview study.

The Interview Study

The present analysis is based on interviews we conducted in the interdisciplinary research project “linebreak” that is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. The name of the project refers to so called line-structured housing estates of the German post-war area as the research project deals with social and physical changes in those German post-war settlements. The history of these buildings is linked to the mentioned constructions of ‘race’ and ‘class’. The planning guideline of German post-war settlements is based on the idea of creating urban neighbourhoods that provide good living conditions for working class families. In hegemonial planning and politics the nineteenth century buildings that were quickly built in all major cities during the industrial era were seen as providing unhealthy and bad living conditions. They were often dark, high densed and without green spaces in between. But the design of new, healthier and liveable forms of urban housing at the beginning of the 20th century did not only follow altruistic motives. It was at the same time embedded in European politics of an orderly arranged and controllable city and related to stigmatizing constructions of working class people. Those were associated with anomie and they should be controlled in order to prevent an endangering of the ‘social stability’ (Sennett 1991, Hutta 2005). A line structure of buildings, which was mainly developed by the Bauhaus architects around Martin Gropius in Dessau, was regarded as the most promising settlement form to fulfill these goals. The basic idea of these line-structured settlements was to establish neighbourhood units of 500 to 2000 inhabitants that provide enough green space and light between each building line in order to create a garden city feeling in central urban districts. Although the Bauhaus concept found general approval of architects all over the world, most European cities were not able to realise this idea due to a lack of space. Cynically, the vast destruction of German cities in World War II finally offered the right precondition of broadly implementing this new housing form.

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4 I use the term ‘white people’ for people who are not exposed to racist discrimination (see following paragraph).
5 The term ‘social stability’ is very common in current discourses. Usually it not especially defined, rather it is associated with images of anomy, crime, dirt etc. which might appear and become strong as soon as the ‘social stability’ is in danger. The term is related to the concept of ‘social mixture’ as only a good social mixture with a solid majority of ‘white’ German middle class people is regarded to be socially stable. In case that there are ‘too many others’, people of colour or receivers of social benefits, the ‘social stability’ is regarded to be endangered.
Consequently, the reconstruction of German cities in the 1950ies and 60ies predominantly followed the Bauhaus guideline of line-structured housing estates. Today, these settlements comprise a third of the total dwellings in Germany. As they are mainly built and owned by cooperatives or social housing companies founded by local authorities, rents are still comparatively low. This leads to the fact that apart from a big proportion of first generation tenants, rather residents with low income move to post-war settlements. However, as these post-war settlements provide good living conditions, particularly in comparison to the big housing estates of the 1970ies, they are quite popular and rather inhabited by a lower middle-class or higher working-class population.

In our research project “linebreak” we conducted 50 semi-structured, problem-focused interviews in six different neighbourhoods in Berlin. For the following analysis I refer to the interviews with residents of three of these neighbourhoods that have been built within a program called “Program for families in distress without their own fault”. Within this special program housing should be provided for poor people living on social welfare and quite often for people who came to Berlin as refugees after the Second World War. These housing estates were built without great comfort but rather looked like barracks and were very soon stigmatized in the surrounding. Thus their history is closely linked to poverty, flight and migration. Since two of the settlements in question have been renovated in a quite elaborate way their image has been improved. By the time we conducted the interviews in the third settlement only a small part had already been renovated. But anyway still all three settlements suffer from the stigma. In the program “Social City” postwar housing estates in general are especially mentioned as being in danger to be or to become so called “City Quarters with a special need for development”. The three settlements in question are not declared as such but all of them would fit some of the criteria described above.

In the following text I refer to qualitative problem-focused, semi-structured interviews that we conducted with 21 ‘white’ residents and 12 interviews with residents ‘of colour’ conducted in the described three neighbourhoods.

‘Race’ and ‘culture’ – definitions
Before I will discuss our results I want to elaborate my definitions of ‘race’ and ‘culture’. In line with Kalpaka & Räthzel (1994) I define racism as a process, in which characteristics of the body, as especially colour of skin, are knotted with personal attributes and thus ‘races’ are constructed. Social characteristics then seem to be natural results deriving from heritage, that might be identified by colour of skin, physique etc. „In the case that a group constructed in this way is evaluated as inferior to the own group and that this evaluation leads to the exclusion and marginalization of this group, it’s a matter of racism” (ibid., p. 13).

6 The same type of housing was used to build military barracks for the allied military troops which in the meantime have been left by the military troops. Nowadays lots of those former military barracks are used as homes for asylum seekers. Those housing estates are mostly situated in the forest far from the next village or town with poor means of public transfer and thus isolated from ‘white’ German society and furthermore in bad condition referring state of repair, sanitary equipment etc (cp. Nsoh 2005?).

7 Due to financial problems of the housing company the renovation process stagnated. Thus there was a lot of envy within the neighbourhood concerning the much better quality of living in the renovated part of the neighbourhood.

8 According to this definition the term racism is restricted to cases in which the ascription of attributes is linked to an inequality of power meaning that the one group has got the power to achieve common acceptance of its constructions and evaluations and to exclude the other constructed ‘race’.
Nowadays given the proof that there are no ‘races’ in a biological sense and the fact that the concept of ‘race’ is closely connected to Nazism in hegemonial discourses the term ‘race’ is seldom used. But Balibar (1990) talks about “racism without races” meaning that nowadays often the term ‘culture’ is used in a similar way as in former times the term ‘race’. ‘Cultures’ are often seen to be homogeneous in themselves but clearly different from each other. They are constructed as ‘natural’ and as fixed and unchangeable as ‘races’. According to Mecheril (2001) the rigid division between „the Germans“ and „the Turks“ or between „the Germans“ and „the foreigners“ is the basis of racism because here cultures are constructed as static units, each in itself being homogeneous. Thus often argumentation based on ‘cultures’ just has replaced argumentation based on ‘race’ (cp. Balibar 1990, Terkessidis 1998).

In my opinion this is the case in current discourses about ‘Integration’ and ‘Parallel Societies’. Although our ‘white’ interviewees described boundaries in their neighbourhoods in cultural terms in refer to ‘Turks’ and ‘Arabs’ they described concepts of a certain fixed ‘cultural identity’. When they talked about “foreigners” they mainly referred to neighbours whom they perceive as ‘Turkish’ or ‘Arab’. Without making a great difference both are associated with dark hair, eyes and skin and thought to have a certain “natural”, inherent “mentality”. This corresponds with other studies showing that nowadays ‘white’ Germans associate the term „foreigners“ primarily with „Turks“ (cp. Eder, Rauer & Schmidtke, 2004).

Analysing discourses in German mass media Eder, Rauer & Schmidtke (2004) show that there are different images about „Polish“ and „Turkish“ people: ‘Cultural identity’ or ‘foreignness’ don’t play a role in public discourse about ‘Polish people’. But referring to ‘Turkish’ people cultural identity is discussed as the most central subject: ‘Turks’ are said to be culturally different from ‘Germans’ in a fundamental way (ibid, p. 62).

I don’t want to ignore or to negate the existance of a variety of cultural practices. But instead of stressing only national aspects of culture I see ‘culture’ as much more differentiated including aspects like ‘class’ and lifestyle (cp. Bourdieu 1982) and place/region of living. And I see culture not as a fixed, stable

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9 I myself define ‘culture’ as a dynamic concept, comprising practices in daily life, that “are continually transformed in interaction with other systems, institutions and logics” (Frankenberg 1993). Furthermore I would stress the aspect that the appropriation of cultural practices is an active process that depends on the persons themselves. In contrast to common definitions of culture which stress only national aspects of culture I see ‘culture’ as much more differentiated including lots of aspects like ‘class’ and lifestyle (cp. Bourdieu 1982), place/region of living, age, family situation etc.

10 Nevertheless according to Kalpaka & Räthzel (1994) it is scientifically and politically necessary to differentiate between racism – where ascribed characteristics are seen as genetically determined and therefore unchangeable – and ethnocentrism – when it’s not argued from a “genetic” point of view. Applied to discourses about “integration” this signifies: The expectation that immigrants should adapt themselves to the dominant German culture (whatever that should be) impulse, that people are perceived as being able to change – consequently Kalpaka & Räthzel would talk about ethnocentrism here. But when immigrants are called “unable to integrate”, meaning that they are unable to change because they are “imprinted” by their culture, it swifts to racism (ibid). But often racism and ethnocentrism are hardly to differentiate because ethnocentric arguments easily swift to racism.

11 Interestingly also „Spätaussiedler“ (people who had lived in areas that had been German before World War II but belonged to eastern countries like Poland or Russia after the War and who now come to Germany to live there) are constructed as cultural different and “foreign” in German mass media. This might be due to the fact that according to definition “Spätaussiedler” are Germans. In order to exclude them from the priviledged status of “being German” “Spätaussiedler” are constructed as “foreign”.

12 Also interviewees who immigrated from Poland used the term “foreigners” not for themselves but for ‘Turkish’ and ‘Arab’ people.
something but as a long life process in which people actively appropriate cultural practices to their daily living. Regarding this, borderlines in neighbourhoods should also be much more differentiated if they were only due differences in cultural practices. And regarding the fact that often boundaries exist without knowing each other disregarding their cultural practices but only because of visible features, it seems to me that the so called ‘cultural boundaries’ mostly don’t exist according to real differences in cultural practices but that racism influences and structures borderlines much more than cultural differences. Therefore I think that these boundaries are better described in terms of the category of ‘race’. Thus I use the term ‘white people’ for people who do not experience racist discrimination. And I use the term ‘people of colour’ for people who are not accepted as being German because they don’t fit the image of being German and who suffer racist discrimination. The terms don’t relate to the colour of the skin but to social positions that are related to racism (cp. Raburu-Eggers 1999; Lück und Arapi, 2005). And I use the term ‘intercultural relationships’ instead of ‘intercultural’ relationships. The terms ‘race’ and ‘racial’ I don’t use in the sense of biological differences but as an analytic category to work on the phenomenon that, although it has been proved that there are no ‘races’ in a biological sense, people still think in terms of this category and society is still structured according to this category. I also use the term ‘the others’ as a synonym for ‘people of colour’. This refers to typical western binary racist constructions of ‘we’ and ‘they’, defining groups that differ in a clear way according to ‘race’ or ‘culture’ and thus seem to be kind of natural units (Mecheril 2001, see above).

Categories like ‘race’, ‘class’, ‘gender’, sexual orientation, religion, health and others build a system of domination (cp. Rommelspacher 1995) with different positions in social space depending on a person’s particular allocation to those categories. Due to different positions in social space people have got different perspectives. „There is a direct relationship between „experience“ and „worldview“ or „standpoint“ such that any system of domination can be seen most clearly from the subject position of those oppressed by it“ (Frankenberg 1993, p. 5). Frankenberg states that frequently there is a „gulf of experience of racism between white people and people of colour“ (ibid). Accordingly we also found quite different patterns of argumentation in perspectives of ‘white residents’ and ‘residents of colour’ describing ‘intercultural’ neighbourly relationships and the existing of small scale segregation according to ‘race’. And of course it is also important to know who conducted and analysed the interviews. The interviews with ‘white’ residents were conducted by ‘white’ students. The interviews with ‘people of colour’ are interviews with residents with ‘turkish’ background conducted partly by ‘white’ students but mainly by a student who herself has got a ‘turkish’ background and mostly conducted the interviews in turkish language. I myself am ‘white’ and have lived in Germany all my life, what of course influences my perspective in conceptualizing and analysing the interviews.

Racial boundaries in neighbourhoods
Analysing the interviews we found that neighbourly relationships mostly develop according to the category of ‘race’. Some residents told us about very good ‘intercultural’ relationships, that had developed by living next door to each other, by exchanging food or because their children play together. But most of the residents told us that usually neighbourly ties develop according to - as they call it - different cultures.
There are quite some interviewees, residents ‘of colour’ as well as ‘white’ residents, who told us that they regard it as a pity that there are not more ‘interracial’ relationships in the neighbourhood or even that they are frustrated about trying to establish ‘inter racial’ relationships without success. There was a difference in the explanations interviewees ‘of colour’ gave for that and the explanations of ‘white’ interviewees. Typical explanations of interviewees ‘of colour’ were: “Germans are racists” or “Germans are cold” and “It just doesn’t happen”\textsuperscript{13}. For example one interviewee ‘of colour’ told that she doesn’t have contacts to ‘white’ people, but that she has got good relationships to other ‘people of colour’. Asked how these relationships developed she said: “It just happens in the street. One just speaks to each other”. Thus establishing relationships among ‘people of colour’ seems to be kind of natural, whereas in establishing ‘inter racial’ contacts there seem to be obstacles that make establishing contacts difficult or at least connected with more effort. The explanation that “Germans are cold” might result out of ‘white’ Germans’ racism. But it might also have got to do with cultural differences. The same might be true for the explanation “It just doesn’t happen”. I think obstacles for ‘inter racial’ relationships are a very complex subject and for sure there is not only one valid explanation. But the analysis of the interviews with ‘white’ residents indicates that at least one important obstacle for ‘inter racial’ relationships is racism and the essentialist division between “We” and “They”.

**Perspectives of ‘White Germans’**

I analysed the interviews according to Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin 1996). Thereby I conducted an analysis separately for the group of ‘white’ German residents. After the process of open coding it became clear that the categories extracted from the interview material overlapped to a high degree with the described patterns of public hegemonic discourses about “Problematic City Quarters” and about “Integration”. E.g. the majority of ‘white’ interviewees demanded to limit the percentage of ‘people of colour’ in the neighbourhood in compare to ‘white Germans’ (the interviewees use the terms “foreigners” and “Germans”). This is related to two other main patterns: 1. Many ‘white German’ interviewees brought up that: “The ‘others’ don’t want to mingle”, meaning ‘people of colour’ rather want to stay among themselves, among their own ‘cultural community’. 2. Another argumentative pattern of ‘white German’ residents could be summarized as: “The ‘others’ cause noise, dirt and waste” – All typical patterns occurring in the described hegemonic discourses. Therefore the analysis was compared with newspaper articles and with discourse analyses on articles in mass media concerning the mentioned subjects, and also with technical literature and scientific literature on urban development. In the following I will describe the main patterns of argumentation in the interviews with ‘white Germans’ in relation to the mentioned current discourses. The focus on these central patterns of argumentation should not give the impression that the interviewees’ arguments consequently followed one coherent “racist” worldview. As society is structured by racism and racism is an integral part of culture the world might not be devided in ‘racists’ and ‘non-racists’. Although people always argue from within hegemonic discourses it is also not the case, that people simply reproduce racist discourses as a whole coherent worldview. Usually there are rather different patterns of argumentation that sometimes relate to each other, but sometimes also stand beside

\textsuperscript{13} There were single other explanations: One resident ‘of colour’ said that she doesn’t speak enough German, one said that she doesn’t have time and one said that Germans are afraid of contacts.
one another and contradict each other. I want to stress that this was also the case with our interviewees. But here reducing the complexity of the interviewees’ argumentations I want to focus on central common patterns that were to be found in the majority of interviews with ‘white Germans’.

“There are too many ‘others’ – The concept of Social Mixture

“(…) the percentage of foreigners has risen during the recent years, slowly, but it will continue to rise. People say that the administrator is kind of a friend of foreigners – she seems to be quite uncritical with this – and of course this would not be so nice. I would prefer if the proportion would not get worse” (‘white’ interviewee).

Most of the ‘white’ interviewees articulate a demand to limit the percentage of ‘people of colour’ in the neighbourhood.\(^{14}\) Like the interviewee cited above who declares this demand as kind of “natural” most ‘white’ interviewees seem to regard this demand as part of the common sense and even don’t feel the need to explain it. Typically for racist discourse the pure existence, the pure number of ‘people of colour’ is defined as problematic (cp. Hall, 1989, p. 166). This corresponds with current discourses about so called ‘Problematic City Quarters’: In order to name a district a ‘problematic area’ it is sufficient to tell that there is a “high percentage of foreigners” and a “high percentage of receivers of social welfare” living in this district. As mentioned above this is based on the concept of Social Mixture, suggesting that a “healthy” neighbourhood should consist of a majority of ‘white German’ middle class people and only a limited percentage of poor people and ‘people of colour’.\(^{15}\) The concept has a long tradition in German housing policy. It has been put into practice e.g. by controlling the allocation of council flats to receivers of social welfare and to immigrants. According to Bürkner (2001) criteria for a social mixture have always been quite unclear and differed from town to town.\(^{16}\) Typically there are four groups of inhabitants who are seen to be ‘problematic’ by housing companies and therefore should be distributed: Old people, unemployed persons, single mothers and since the 1970ies also so called “foreigners” (cp. Kürsat-Ahlers

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\(^{14}\) We didn’t ask this directly but rather asked generally about the neighbourhood and we asked how the housing estate might develop in the future. In two of the three housing estates ‘white’ interviewees themselves brought up the subject of social mixture in terms of ‘race’. In the third housing estate most interviewees demanded for a limitation of receivers of social welfare in their neighbourhood – with a very similar argumentation that ‘they’ cause noise, dirt and waste (see below).

\(^{15}\) Based on the assumption of the Chigaco School that segregation according to ‘cultural differences’ is a ‘natural’ process mechanisms of control have been implemented to avoid „concentrations“. But according to Kapphan (2001) exactly these policies in combination with developments of the housing market led to segregation. For example in the 1960/70ies immigrants who came as contract workers were not allowed to move into new housing estates but mostly moved to old buildings in certain districts that in this time were cheap but in such bad condition that most Germans didn’t want to live there. As in certain years people from different countries of origin immigrated to Germany according to the current political and economical situation on the housingmarket people from different countries of origin moved to different areas of the town. Thus what seems to be a „natural“ process intended by immigrants is often due to political and economical reasons.

\(^{16}\) In Berlin between 1975 and 1990 Non-Germans were not allowed to move to districts in which the percentage of Non-Germans was more than 15%. According to Kapphan (2001) in times when the official percentage of Non-German residents in Berlin in general was 15% housing companies already complained about a “high concentration of foreigners” when there was a percentage of 10% living in their housing estates.
11 & Waldhoff, 2001). All of them have got in common that they don’t fit the image of normality in German dominant society (cp. Rommelspacher, 1995). Regarding the first three groups the classification as „problematic“ is joined with poverty as these groups are especially in danger to be poor17. In case of the fourth group of so called „foreigners“ racist images overlap with constructions of poverty: This classification is not meant for all immigrants without German citizenship, but refers to special groups that are constructed as „foreign“ according to racist criteria - like ‘Turks’ or ‘Arabs’. According to Bürkner (2001) concepts of social mixture refering to „race“ are based on the idea of a cultural homogeneous nation. Greater minority groups who don’t fit this racialized image are suspicious to cause conflicts. By distributing them, so the assumption, conflicts might be reduced (Bürkner, 2001) and by being less visible, „foreigners“ evoke less reactions by members of the dominant society18 (Häußermann, 1998, p. 147f). Housing companies mostly imply quite vague quotation rules to people whom they define as culturally different – administrators decide according to criteria like wearing a headscarf or not or like the ability to speak German (cp. Tissot, 2005). Relating these racist images with categorizations of „class“ especially „Turkish“ immigrants are automatically associated with images of „traditional, uneducated“ people (cp. Ngi Ha, 1999).

Officially the aim of declaring special districts as „problematic areas“ is to avoid that people who are poor and disadvantaged become even more disadvantaged by living in an environment that brings supplementary problems. This makes sense in that mostly housings and surroundings in these areas are in bad condition so that people have got bad living conditions and furthermore get stigmatized just by living in these areas. But Groeger (2001) questions if the aim is really to support these disadvantaged groups or rather to implement „white“ middle class norms and to support „white“ middle class people who feel disturbed by living in neighbourhoods with poor people and with „people of colour“19. The following quotation taken of a famous study of the association of German housing companies supports this impression: „The areas in question are all characterized by a high concentration of Spätaussiedler20, foreigners, unemployed and single mothers. Most native Germans experience living in their neighbourhood as incriminating. They know that they must live together with lots of people who have slipped down the job or the social ladder or who never found an entrance let alone an advancement within the working- and achievement-orientated society“ (GdW 1998, 105). Even clearer in terms of „race“ this is formulated in the following quotation from the same study: „’We are foreign in our own country.’ Thereby the outrage is about politicians because the state allocated flats to Germans where they are surrounded by Spätaussiedlern and foreigners without having been asked. This banishment into an

17 And well situated old people or single mothers are not regarded as a problem.
18 Especially the argument of visibility advert to racist categorizations. For example recent discussions about quotation for districts in Berlin explicitly refer only to non-European immigrants (tageszeitung, 4.4.1998). Furthermore districts with a high percentage of US-american, brithish or french soldiers and their families in Berlin never have been seen as a problem in terms of social mixture (cp. Caglar, 2001).
19 Caglar (2001) calls the discussions about quotation rules „a symbolic use of immigrants“. In her opinion everyone knows that quotation rules don’t work, but rather the exclusive patterns of discourse aim at a strengthening of an ethnocultural principle of citizenship.
20 People who had lived in areas that had been German before World War II but belonged to eastern countries like Poland or Russia after the War and who now come to Germany to live there (see above).
environment that is not experienced as home any more is a shock to most of them, because they are not
prepared for that neither emotionally nor intellecually” (ibid: 126).

Also in current policy programs like the program „Social City“, the concept of social mixture plays an
important role. Here the aim is to avoid that ‘white’ middle class families move away from districts that
are declared as „Problematic City Quarters“, complaining about dilapidation of public space and who are
afraid of „gangs“ of youngsters of colour and of classes with „too many“ ,people of colour‘, (Groeger
2001, p. 352). Thus regarding these current discourses it is not surprising any more that ‘white’
interviewees so openly demand for a quotation according to ‘race’ as they are in good keeping in common
sense.

Nevertheless it is interesting to ask for reasons why ‘white’ interviewees agree with these discursive
patterns although quite a lot of them report about good experiences with their neighbours of colour
because: Despite the fact that one can never stand outside of the discourse (Butler, 1991) according to
Holzkamp (1994) there are always subjective reasons why someone integrates certain discursive patterns
into his or her own wordview and others not. In analysing the interviews I found hints for two subjective
reasons furthering demands for ‘racial’ quotation: Firstly constructions of anomy concerning racially
defined ,others‘ and secondly the impression that ,the others‘ – „people of colour‘ - don‘t want to mingle
with „white‘ people. Again both of these perceptions are embedded in current discourses.

“The ‘others’ cause noise, dirt and waste” – constructions of anomy

„That one tries, that, I think too much, I don‘t want to say put foreigners into the flats, not at all,
but that everything is kept a little bit in a balance … the fact is, that the one cultural part doesn‘t
take the effort, not to throw their waste out of the window … sometimes it‘s just not enough to
talk … it‘s not possible to put a whole clan …, but to distribute it a little bit, so that everybody
may adapt a bit …” (‘white German’ interviewee).

It is conspicuous, that „white‘ interviewees very soon associated „people of colour‘ with problems. One
example: Being asked very general: „Are there any conflicts in the neighbourhood?“ one „white‘
interviewee answered: „Do you mean with foreigners?“ Here we find the typical discursive pattern to
automatically characterize an area as „problematic‘ when „people of colour‘ are living there. In line with
other studies we found that it is quite typical for „white‘ residents to explain conflicts with neighbours „of
colour‘ with their so called „mentality‘ – here with images about a special „Turkish‘ or „Arab‘ mentality.
An example: „(...) and they have got another mentality. In former times we had a bedroom here and in
summer it was horrible. They celebrated farewell scenes at midnight … and well, they just live differently
and that‘s not easy for us … Just from tradition I suppose they have got another daily routine, for example
that they are still very active at night, whereas I for example have to get up at four o‘clock” („white“
interviewee). The resident clearly ascribes different daily routines to different cultural mentalities and
tradition and not to different working hours. He doesn‘t think about the possibility that his neighbours
maybe would also go to bed earlier if they would have a job beginning at five in the morning. Similarly
another „white‘ resident: „And then at two o‘clock in the morning, that‘s pretty normal for them … they
don’t sleep like us”. Very clearly ‘white’ interviewees differentiate between “us” and “they” – ‘white’ people and ‘people of colour’ (cp. Mecheril 2001) concerning disturbing behaviour. This is true for different facettes of anomy like polluting the living environment, for causing noise and sometimes also for being dangerous: „Well, I don’t mind living with foreigners … as long as they don’t threaten my children or something like that.” And later: “Well that’s the point, that one doesn’t know how it will develop in concern to foreigners … that maybe too many foreigners … if they will gain the upper hand however …” (‘white’ interviewee, who at the same time tells that she never had bad experiences with foreigners)21.

Interestingly in one of the three neighbourhoods we found very similar patterns of argumentation adressing (‘white’) ‘receivers of social welfare’. In this case “they”, “the others” were constructed in terms of ‘class’ rather than in terms of ‘race’. However the combination of both – being poor and ‘of colour’ - is stigmatized as “especially awkward” as for example the weekly magazine ‘Der Spiegel’ wrote: „What is it that really endangers the social harmony in socially burdened districts – a high percentage of foreigners or the poverty? The W. (name of a district in Berlin, S. G.) shows that at least the mixture might be explosive“ (Der Spiegel 48/2000, p. 160). In the discourses about “Problematic City Quarters” constructions of ‘race’ and of ‘class’ are strongly intwovened with each other and sometimes quite similar. Terkessidis (1998) describes how in course of the rise of the modern state, industrialization and colonialism images of the working class and of colonized people were constructed, associated with disorder, chaos, immorality, criminality and illness. The functioning of the new industrialized working routines required new cultural values like performance of one’s duty, industriousness, or punctuality. Thus connected with missionary activities in the colonies as well as connected with welfare activities to help (‘white’) poor working class families in Europe have always been efforts to educate ‘them’, ‘the others’, in direction of these values (ibid). „Europeans that should be educated were even compared directly with Indians. E.g. at the end of the 16th century Jesuits stated that Spaniards in certain regions of Spain were more similar to Indians than to Spaniards“ (Terkessidis 1998: p. 132). Educating (‘white’) European working class people was regarded as “civilizing” the one part of the people that was regarded as “inner Africa” (ibid, p. 147). The concept of “Social mixture” is implicitly based on these constructions of ‘race’ and ‘class’. Furthermore these images turn up in direct relation to those stigmatized post-war-housing estates that were built for refugees of World War II. Interestingly although it was ‘white’ people living in these housings right from the start in the stigma associated with these settlements stereotypes of ‘race’ and ‘class’ were combined: In certain regions of Germany as in Berlin and the Ruhr area people in the surrounding named those settlements “Mau-Mau housing estates”22. The term probably refers to the so called “Mau-Mau-Rebellion”, the war of independence of Kenian people against the British colonial reign and oppression in the 1950ies23. Usually people don’t know this history and the background of the term

21 Just an example from the latest news: Local (‘white’) people organized a demonstration against an Intercultural Garden Project that starts in „their“ neighbourhood Lichtenberg (Berlin): „The angry Lichtenberger, who joined for a demonstration against the laying of the foundation-stone, perceive it as a threat: “I know, how it will look like here (…) They will leave their waste and will make noise every day till late at night. They don’t respect any rules” (tageszeitung, 2006a).

22 This regional term might have to do with the fact that in both regions there were British sectors after the second World War.

23 The rebellion took place during the 1950ies – thus in that time when these post-war-housings have been built. There are a lot of legends about cruelties committed by the Kenian fighters against ‘white’, British settlers. The
But everyone who knows the term has got an impression about what is meant by it: Actually I don’t know what it means, isn’t it a tribe in Africa? Well anyway there must be something bad in it’ (‘white’ resident). Another ‘white’ interviewee: “It was mostly families living here, who had lots of children, mostly poor people”.

Typical associations of our interviewees with the term “Mau-Mau” are: „asocial“, „lots of children“, “poor people” and „chaos“ - all terms related to stigmata that concern poor people in general as well as people of colour.

Current discourses in German mass media about ‘Problematic City Quarters’ are dominated by those constructions of anomy. Rauer (2005) who analysed these discourses found that about 71% of descriptions of neighbourhoods that were characterized as ‘Problematic Areas’ were descriptions about the Anomy of those areas. Thus mostly these areas are described as „Places of hopeless decline“ (Rauer, 2005, p. 116), clearly attributed to the residents living in these areas, being seen as ‘problematic’ themselves. „In the articles socio-structural processes usually are presented as problems of social groups. Thus almost imperceptible they cross the border between descriptive analyses, categorial ascription and symbolic power“ (Rauer 2005, p. 118).

A central discoursive pattern is the metaphor of the „Ghetto“ that according to Caglar (2001) structures discourses about immigration in Germany. According to Caglar the term „Ghetto“ is kind of a „key-symbol“ that places immigrants spatially as well as socially: It limits their visibility to „Ghettos“ or „Problematic Areas“ and thereby ignores the transnational character of biographies, group-structures and social spaces of immigrants. Thus a hierarchy is created between the revaluated transnational urban space of finance and economy and the devaluated space of immigrants“ (Caglar, 2001, p. 339).

“The ‘others’ don’t want” - Discourses about ‘Integration’ and ‘Parallel Societies’

“Well, in former times we had a better time here than now, everybody knew each other and there were parties … but that’s all over now.” „What do you think is the reason for this?“ „I suppose because there are mainly foreigners living here and they didn’t join… I don’t have anything against foreigners but I think 70% are foreigners here and slowly that gets too much“ (‘white’ interviewee).
Interviewees told that neighbourly relationships exist mostly according to cultural communities. In the interviews we found that this leads to frustrations among residents ‘of colour’ as well as among ‘white’ residents. Asked for reasons for this phenomenon most ‘white’ interviewees tell that ‘people of colour’ want to “stay among themselves” and don’t want to mingle with ‘white German’ residents. In my opinion this attitude is an obstacle for ‘interracial’ contacts. If ‘white’ people are convinced that anyway ‘people of colour’ don’t want to have contacts with them of course they are not motivated to make a great effort to establish relationships to ‘the others’. And as in the ‘white’ resident’s statement cited at the beginning of the paragraph it might also lead to demands for quotation according to ‘race’.

The interpretation that ‘the others’ don’t want again is furthered by current discourses about integration: Dominated by white Germans in politics and public media it is discussed, whether immigrants do or do not want to integrate themselves into the German society. Although in some publications it is stressed that integration is to be understood as a mutual approximation of immigrants and German society (e.g. Hanhörster, 2001), the dominant definition of integration is a one-sided process where immigrants should adapt themselves to “German culture” and society. This definition is based on Esser, who clearly states that assimilation is the only way for social integration of immigrants (Esser, 2001, p. 21/22). In his theory assimilation means that immigrants integrate only into German society but neither integrate into the society of their country of origin nor into their cultural communities in Germany. According to Esser a multiple integration into both – into German society as well as into the society of the country of origin respectively cultural communities in Germany – would be desirable, but too exhausting for immigrants, because this would mean to speak two languages at a similar level, to have kind of two identities and a mixture of social relationships (Esser 2001). However the concept of assimilation sees the activity and responsibility for integration predominantly by the immigrants themselves. Thus a lack of intercultural relationships often is interpreted as an unwillingness of immigrants to integrate into the German society. During the recent years this discussion found its extreme in discourses about ‘parallel societies’, a term created by Heitmeyer in 1996, to warn against Islamic fundamentalist groups who, in his eyes, became stronger in communities of Turkish immigrants in Germany during the recent years. He calls these groups a ‘societal explosive force, causing ‘disintegrating society’ (Heitmeyer, 1996). “According to the common definition, ‘parallel societies’ practice a form of voluntary segregation, are unwilling to integrate themselves into German society and are a danger to the liberal democratic base of the German state” (Hiscott, 2005, p. 1). Especially after the 11 September 2001 the term was established as mainstream terminology in political discourses and public media.

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27 In course of debates about integration there was also initiated a discussion about what this “German culture” is. Instead of acknowledging that there is no homogeneous German culture attempts were made to define kind of a “German leading culture”.

28 According to Esser Integration consists of four dimensions: 1. Cultural assimilation especially means the learning of the language, 2. structural assimilation refers to the labour market, 3. social assimilation means the taking over of similar forms of behaviour or living styles and 4. emotional integration Esser defines as identification with German Society (Esser 2001).

29 In fact I think that most immigrants live kind of such a multiple integration. But I wouldn’t use the term “to live two identities” because it implies that there would really be two separate identities – one referring to the country of origin and one to Germany – that seemingly are fix and don’t interact with each other. Rather I think of identity as a fluent always changing concept.
Again dominant patterns of argumentations imply that segregation between ‘white people’ and ‘people of colour’ exist due to cultural differences. Racism as a possible influence is hardly mentioned. Cultural borderlines are social constructions. The drawing of racial borderlines „includes social processes of in-and exclusion, differenciating between those who belong to „us“ and those who don’t“ (Bröskamp, 1993). ‘White Germans’ don’t accept ‘people of colour’ as „Germans“ and as „normal“, but always construct them as „foreign“, as „the others“. Thus ‘people of colour’ always have to take a stand to their ascribed cultural or racial identity and forced either to identify with or to differentiate from it. Thus those borderlines get a real meaning and make it difficult respectively impossible just to meet each other as human beings without racial differentiations. Several residents ‘of coulour’ reported us experiences of racism in the neighbourhood. This might serve as an explanation for missing effort of ‘white’ residents to initiate ‘interracial’ contacts as well as for missing initiative by residents ‘of colour’. For example one woman – she herself immigrated from Poland with her family at the age of three – describes: „I think it’s a very difficult matter. The turks are afraid to be turned down by the Germans. At school and everywhere they are outsiders, foreigners. I think it’s a kind of defense to be unfriendly to Germans just to prevent to be be rejected by them. “

The common demand, that ‘people of colour’ should mingle with ‘white German’ people is worth a closer examination. In one of the neighbourhoods there is meeting point. ‘White German’ interviewees told that this meeting point was mainly used by ‘people of colour’. One ‘turkish’ resident who is quite engaged in this meeting point tells that she tried to motivate ‘white Germans’ to join without success. One ‘white’ interviewee explains: „That’s a place where I don’t come close to, because there are lots of foreigners. I don’t mind foreigners, but I don’t feel comfortable being the only foreigner within lots of Turks”.

Similarly there is a soccer team in the same neighbourhood consisting of ‘people of colour’. A ‘white’ resident comments: „There is a soccer team. But I didn’t join yet and I won’t. I don’t fancy joining twenty people and no German among them“. It is noticeable that here, ‘white Germans’ refuse to do exactly what they usually demand from ‘people of colour’: That single ‘people of colour’ separately mingle with ‘white Germans’. According to this common demand ‘people of colour’ are supposed to integrate mostly as single person in exclusively ‘white’ structures. Thus ‘white Germans’ don’t grant ‘people of colour’ those insecurities that ‘white Germans’ themselves feel in similar situations – and this is the case although racist hierarchies clearly favour ‘white people’.

**Bourdieu’s concept of Habitus as an alternative explanation for small scale segregation in neighbourhoods**

Bourdieu’s theory and his concept of the Habitus and sense of one’s place might be a fruitful approach to integrate the findings and to explain segregation in neighbourhoods. Bourdieu defines the Habitus as a socially structured and physically embodied schema of all typical thoughts, perceptions and operations of a culture. According to Bourdieu the Habitus leads to the fact, that people establish more social ties with people of similar positions in social space, because they feel more comfortable in these relationships. People with similar positions in social space have got similar patterns of behavior, similar humour, similar ways of expressing themselves etc. Thus in his concept he relates cultural aspects with positions in social space.
Weiß (2000), applying Bourdieu’s theory to the phenomenon of racism, defines racism – maybe more precisely it should be called ‘race’ - as symbolic capital that defines a person’s position in social space. ‘Race’ increases or decreases the value of economic, cultural and social capital and also has got its own independent effect. Relating to the different forms of capital that means: Economic capital: People of colour have got the lowest income in a society. But even people of colour who are rich, don’t have the same reputation as rich white Germans. Cultural capital: Regarding institutionalized cultural capital there are several devaluations of non-Western formal education as qualifications made in non-Western countries are usually not accepted in Germany. Furthermore the discourse about integration and “German leading culture” shows clearly that only ‘Western culture’ is accepted as reputable culture. For example ‘Turkish culture’ and ‘Arabic culture’ are seen as antiquated in contrast to progressive modern western culture. Thus there are also symbolic fights regarding German citizenship, which nowadays especially for muslim people is dependend on passing a test about apparently German democratic values. But even if people of colour completely assimilate themselves to ‘German culture’ they are still discriminated: As mentioned above to be a German is associated with Whiteness. Hence also Black Germans are ascribed to have an ‘other culture’, even if they don’t have any relation to any other than German culture. Social capital: Social capital within people of minority groups is seen as less prestigious than social capital within the dominating group (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 192). Especially in discourses about “Parallel societies” social capital within ‘people of colour’ especially within people who are associated with islamic religion is devaluated. It is stigmatized by automatically associating it with fanaticism, fundamentalism and thus with dangerous antidemocratic tendencies. But even if ‘people of colour’ only have got relationships to members of the dominating group nevertheless they are alleged to be integrated into a community that – according to stereotypes – fits to their appearance. Consequently ‘race’ is one aspect that defines a person’s position in social space. According to Bourdieu contacts to people of higher positions in social space might be insulting or also embarrassing, because one’s own way to behave, to talk etc. is not accepted. For example some interviewees ‘of colour’ told us that their German is not good enough to establish contacts to ‘white Germans’. But sometimes this is not really a matter of ability to speak German but rather a matter of being devaluated because of mistakes or because of an accent. “By matching Habitus for people with dominant Habitus racist structures lead to boundaries against people without dominant Habitus, that are difficult to pass. Last-mentioned have to pretend practices by cognitive effort, that are natural for people with this dominant Habitus. Interactions between people with different Habitus are different – mostly more difficult – than interactions between people with the same Habitus, segregation continues by itself” (Weiß, 2001, p. 77).

Bröskamp (1993) applying Bourdieu’s theory to terms of immigration suggests that people have got a certain Habitus according to experiences concerning culture of origin as well as they have a certain Habitus according to class or life style. Thus there might also be culturally specific ways of initiating
contacts. This might be another explanation for the perceptions of interviewees ‘of colour’ that “Germans are cold”. Some patterns of behavior of ‘white’ Germans that for other ‘white’ Germans seem quite natural and don’t cause worries might be experienced as ‘cold’ by people used to another kind of social manners. For example one interviewee ‘of colour’ who had immigrated from Iran two years ago explained: “Yes, first of all I didn’t know how am I supposed to talk to them, yes and be in contact. For example I greet someone, if they don’t answer very much spontaneously I thought perhaps he or she doesn’t like to talk to me, yes? But afterwards I learned that perhaps in this situation he or she is occupied with something so that he or she can not say “hello” to me spontaneously. I started to get in contact with them. To talk to them and get in contact.” He tells that after some time a colleague told him that formerly he had not been so open as he seems to be now. But: “In fact I was open then as well. But I didn’t know the culture, hm, now I think I know the culture and I can be quite relaxed with them, talk with the people and be in contact. I believe in every society, every culture it takes time, one has to get used to, yes?”

Thus also differences concerning cultures of origin might make establishing ‘ interracial’ contacts difficult. But different from essentialist constructions of homogenous cultures Bourdieu works with a more differentiating model of culture: According to Bourdieu there is not only a dualistic opposite between cultural manners of natives and immigrants but a variety of different lifestyles that define each other, vary according to class and are hierarchically structured (cp. Bröskamp, 1993).

Thus to summarize the model: On the one hand racism and its ongoing constructions in current discourses influence mutual perceptions and interactions of ‘people of colour’ and ‘white people’ and it defines people’s positions in social space according to racist categorizations. On the other hand regarding immigration there might be different Habitus due to different cultures of origin but differentiated again by different lifestyles. These different cultural Habitus and different life styles are also hierarchically structured and also define people’s positions in social space. Every individuum has got a ‘practical sense’ for social and cultural similarities and is able to feel if the Habitus of the other one is a product or similar living conditions (cp. Bröskamp, 1983). If this is the case the Habitus automatically relates people to each other without talking. Thus the structuring of social space furthers the establishing of relationships between the people with similar Habitus related to culture and to similar positions in social space.

Conclusion

Daily interactions and mutual perceptions in neighbourhoods are influenced by hegemonial discourses reproducing racist stereotypes - and nowadays especially by current discourses about so called “Problematic City Quarters” and about “Integration”. Racist stereotypes are based on ascriptions of characteristics and interpretations of behavior to the own culture and to the other culture, that are often not questioned any more but lead to a breaking off of real interaction between people (Holzkamp, 1994). Thus debates and programs referring to these so called ‘Problematic City Quarters’ aiming to avoid further deprivation of their inhabitants rather further exactly this deprivation by reproducing racist stereotypes and by discriminating people in terms of ‘race’ and in terms of ‘class’. The stigmatization is based on constructions of ‘otherness’ - constructions of anomy ascribed to people who don’t fit the image of being
German and to receivers of governmental benefits 31. In my eyes, the described discourses might be seen as symbolic struggles for positions in social space (Bourdieu & Wacqant 1986) and especially for the value of social capital among members of the dominating ‘white’ and middle-class society. The social capital of ‘white middle-class people is thereby distinguished from social capital among the ‘others’, like minority communities and/or people who are dependent on public benefits, which is devaluated, respectively regarded as problematic in the current discourses.

However, our interviews also show that there are frustrations on both sides – on the side of ‘white’ residents and on the side of residents ‘of colour’. Thus, it seems to be necessary to develop special forms to support ‘interracial’ communication in neighbourhoods. A theoretical model to integrate the findings might be Bourdieu’s theory of social space and his concept of the Habitus, where he relates positions in social space with cultural aspects.

Bibliography


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31 Axes of difference mostly overlap or cross each other like in this case, where ‘race’ and ‘class’ are involved. In these discourses, on the one hand, there are lots of parallels regarding stereotypes of ‘race’ and stereotypes of ‘class’. On the other hand, each categorization has got its own meaning, e.g., ‘people of colour’ are often automatically seen as having lower education and lower income partly have got quite similar
Die Welt, 07.10.2003 Zurück bleiben die sozial Schwachen. Ausländer in Berlin: Die Problemkieze Moabit und Kreuzberg – Deutsch das A und O für die Integration – Polizei will mehr Präsenz zeigen“.


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