THE BANAL NATIONALISM OF CIVIC INTEGRATION:

A CASE STUDY OF AN ORIENTATION COURSE IN LEIPZIG

By

Réka Koritár

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Supervisor: Mária M. Kovács

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Abstract

Contrary to the extensive academic literature on civic integration, the programs have been until now mostly overlooked as an object of nationalism research. In order to address this problem, I undertook a case study research of a specific, especially understudied segment of civic integration programs, orientation classes in Germany. Through the qualitative methods of participants observation and document analysis, I identified the underlying mechanisms of external comparison, humanization and moralization to be the main tools of how the positively connotated, homogenized picture of Germany is constructed in the first module of the class. I also found that in sharp contrast to the homogenization of the first module, in the second module on history, the German nation is constructed as divided. Based on the above, I noted the resilience of nationalism and its ability to change its shape and form according to the context. Asking the question of how, along which categories difference, belonging and non-belonging to Germany are constructed, I found that belonging to the German nation is constructed as a permeable legal category, falling in line with the characterizations of civic nationalism as liberal, voluntarist and inclusive. The value attached to national belonging, however, was extensively contested by some participants. Finally, I found elements of the integration discourse to be of special significance in the process of constructing Muslims as different, and non-belonging to Germany.

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1. Introduction

"social scientists moved beyond the rhetorical generalities about the decline of the nation-state and began to examine the ways in which nation-states are currently being reconfigured rather than demolished."

(Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002:301)

Civic integration programs until now have been mostly overlooked as an object of research on nationalism. This is the case, despite the extensive scholarly literature on the concept of civic integration – a novel practice of immigrant accommodation implemented in almost all West-European countries. The current thesis investigates nationalism in a specific segment of civic integration: orientation classes in Germany. By engaging with this case, I do not only hope to address the banal nationalism of civic integration programs, but also to contribute to the field of nationalism studies by scrutinizing the underlying mechanisms through which the nation is constructed.

Applying Gellner's (1997) definition on nationalism and describing it as a political proposition asserting cultural similarity as a necessity for shared national membership, I argue that the nationalist driving force behind civic integration criteria has been mostly overlooked due to a long tradition of methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002). Germany is a country which received significant scholarly attention in the literature on civic integration (e.g. Mouritsen 2013; Goodman 2014; Oers 2014; Meer et. al. 2015; Innerarity 2016; Mouritsen et al. 2019) and orientation classes are an integral part of the German civic integration program, devoted to familiarizing newcomers with the host country's language, culture, history and legal system. Therefore, these orientation classes become a worthy case of investigation as its they offer a great opportunity to go beyond these frames.

Although Hartkopf (2010) established orientation classes to be a new research field, there are only a limited number of scholars who engaged with exploring its specificities (i.e./e.g. Kammhuber & Thomas 2004; Nghi Ha & Schmitz 2006; Rambøll Management 2006; Hentges 2008; Kaden 2012; Lochner, Büttner & Schuller, 2013; Zabel 2016; Frömmig, 2017). All except four do not focus on questions about the nature of nations and nationalism, as well as the interconnected concepts of immigration and integration (i.e. Nghi Ha & Schmitz 2006; Hartkopf 2010; Kaden 2012; Zabel 2016). Inspired by Brubaker's (1996) suggestions to investigate 'how is the nation' and the limited literature on orientation classes, the current thesis aims to answer the following questions:

1. How, along which categories difference - that is belonging and non-belonging to Germany - is constructed (Nghi Ha & Schmitz, 2006)?
2. How, along which categories difference - that is belonging and non-belonging to Germany - is constructed (Kaden, 2012)?

Seeing the nation as a discursive construct (See Fox & Miller-Idriss, 2008), these questions are to be addressed through the case study of an orientation course, relying primarily on the qualitative methods of document analysis and participants observation. Following this introduction, the second chapter of the thesis is to begin with the detailed description of the theoretical background of the above outlined problem, familiarizing the reader with the specificities of orientation courses in Germany. The third chapter is devoted to describing the methodology of the thesis and addresses the research paradigm, methods and design of the study. After outlining the specificities of the data collection, describing the context of the research and introducing its participants, the means of data processing and analysis are elaborated upon. The method of thematic analysis and the structure of how the analysis and results are presented is introduced, in two main chapters; addressing both the research questions

respectively. The fourth chapter elaborates on how and through which underlying mechanisms is the nation constructed in the first two modules of the course that cover the themes of politics and history. The fifth chapter discusses how, along which categories is difference, belonging, and non-belonging to the nation are constructed. The thesis ends with a conclusion chapter, entailing the summary of findings and some concluding remarks.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. The Banal Nationalism of Civic Integration

„Complex habits of thought naturalize, and thereby overlook, 'our' nationalism, whilst projecting nationalism, as an irrational whole, on to others. At the core of this intellectual amnesia lies a restricted concept of 'nationalism', which confines 'nationalism' to particular social movements rather than to nation-states."

(Billig, 1995:38)

Civic integration, that is, language and country knowledge-based courses and tests required for entry, settlement and citizenship, is a widespread, novel form of immigrant accommodation, which was first introduced in the Netherlands by the Newcomer Integration Act of 1998 (Kostakopolou, 2010a:933). The introduction of the new criteria was accompanied and rhetorically justified by declaring the failure of multiculturalism, pointing out prevailing social, political and economic inequalities between 'native' and 'immigrant' populations (Goodman, 2010). Accordingly, the promise of civic integration is to create autonomous and equal citizens, whose structural incorporation to the social, economic and political systems of the society is to be achieved through familiarizing them with the host country's language, culture, history and legal regulations (ibid.).

Joppke (2017), summarizing the scholarly debate on civic integration, suggests that it can be grouped into three main debates. The first one addresses the question whether there is a European level policy convergence in civic integration criteria, or the specificities of national models prevail. The second, whether these policies in fact mark a retreat form multiculturalism as it is rhetorically declared, or the new policies are layered on the old, multiculturalist ones. The third and final debate is on whether the policies are liberal or illiberal, that is, whether the

introduction of civic integration criteria signifies the return of assimilation. Although this third debate does consider the role of nation states and their homogenizing attempts, civic integration as an object of research on nationalism, has so far been mostly overlooked.

One of the first scholars of nationalism, Ernest Gellner defined nationalism as "political principle which maintains that similarity of culture is the basic social bond" (1997:3). Furthermore, he adds "in its extreme version, similarity of culture becomes both the necessary and sufficient condition of legitimate membership: only members of the appropriate culture may join the union" (Gellner, 1997:4). As civic integration programs are devoted to familiarizing newcomers with the host country's language, culture, history and legal system, they necessitate the similarity of culture not only as a perquisite for membership, but also for merely entering the country or residing there. Moreover, even though Gellner (ibid.) assesses these aspirations to be an 'extreme version of nationalism', civic integration criteria are implemented across almost all West-European countries, suggesting them to be a widely accepted, banal form of 'our' nationalism, which we systematically tend to overlook as such.

This problem emerges from a long tradition of methodological nationalism, "understood as the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world" (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002:301). The three forms of methodological nationalism the authors distinguish between are ignorance, referring to the systematic blindness to the national framing of modernity, the naturalization of the nation-state, of which one form is to ignore the role of nationalism in modern state building by separating the concepts of nationalism, state and democracy, and finally, territorial limitation (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002a). Although the last form, territorial limitation only in part applies to the civic integration literature, as it produced numerous studies focusing on cross-country comparisons (Joppke 2007; 2017; Goodman 2010; 2014; Oers 2014), they mostly naturalize

nation-states and homogenize them instead of searching for internal variation. Based on the work of Wimmer and Glick Schiller, who established "that nation-state building processes have fundamentally shaped the ways in which immigration has been perceived and received" as well as the "discourse on immigration and integration" (2002:301), I therefore argue that civic integration programs are best be understood as manifestations of banal nationalism. This issue constitutes the core problem this current thesis intends to address and investigate.

In the social constructivist tradition of nationalism studies, the nation is to be understood as an "imagined political community" (Anderson, 1983:6). However, with regards to the suggestions of Brubaker (1996), this thesis aims to move beyond the question of what the nation is. As he proposes: "We should not ask "what is a nation" but rather: how is nationhood as a political and cultural form institutionalized within and among states? How does nation work as a practical category, as a classificatory scheme, as a cognitive frame?" (1996:17). Therefore, the current thesis puts forward to answer the question of how, through which underlying mechanisms is the imagined community of the nation constructed. Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008), however, propose another supplementary question instead of 'what is the nation'. Suggesting that the construct of the nation is created through everyday discourse – making the nation a discursive construct -, the authors propose the question of 'when is the nation'. That is, in which situations and under what circumstances does the national become significant and talked about. As demonstrated above, immigrant accommodation and civic integration programs prove to be such occasions, designated to bridge signified national and cultural differences.

The above proposed question to investigate how 'our', banal nationalism is constructed in the context of immigrant accommodation programs is to be examined in the context of Germany, which country attracted significant scholarly attention in the civic integration

literature (Mouritsen 2013; Goodman 2014; Oers 2014; Meer et. al. 2015; Innerarity 2016; Mouritsen et al. 2019). This attention is in part due to the considerable changes in the country's citizenship regulations, shifting in the new millennia from an 'ethnic', *jus sanguinis* based citizenship regime to territory-based, jus *soli-based* self-conception, which, then was complimented with civic integration criteria over time (Oers, 2014:67). As the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees declares, successful integration goes beyond mere language acquisition (BAMF, 2017:6). Consequently, the proposed investigation is to be pursued by narrowing down the focus to orientation classes, which are though the inseparable part of German civic integration programs, refer to a smaller unit within, focusing specifically on conveying country-knowledge instead of language only (ibid.). Based on the above, orientation classes – being situated at the intersection of the interconnected concepts of nations, nationalism, immigration and integration – provide an outstanding opportunity to study questions on the nature of nations, nationalism.

2.2. Orientation Classes

Even though Dorothea Hartkopf (2010) established orientation classes to be a new research field ten years ago, there are only a limited number of scholars who engaged with exploring its specificities (Kammhuber & Thomas 2004; Nghi Ha & Schmitz 2006; Rambøll Management 2006; Hentges 2008; Kaden 2012; Lochner, Büttner & Schuller, 2013; Zabel 2016; Frömmig, 2017). Therefore, orientation classes as a field on its own remain, until now, largely understudied. Among the numerous *Anknüpfungspunkte*, or contact points the author establishes, referring to issues which could or should be studied within the context of orientation classes, the first one is 'The Conditions of Migration and Integration in Germany',

including a subchapter on nations and national identity (Hartkopf, 2010:39). This point - although appears to validate the research propositions broadly outlined in the previous chapter -, have only been utilized by four authors. That is, there is only a total of four authors within this limited field who approached orientation classes aiming to investigate, or at least include nations and nationalism in their analyses. Their work, along with the broader literature on orientation classes and the historical and legal background of the courses, is to be introduced in the following.

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, until the 2000s Germany was characterized by having an exclusive, 'ethnic' citizenship regime, which until today is mostly based on the German Imperial- and Nationality Act of 1913 (Brubaker 1992; Barbieri 1998; Nathans 2004). Consequently, Germany was extensively criticized for denying citizenship and thus equal rights for generations of guest workers, living in the country since the 1950's and '60s (Walzer, 1983). Therefore, the General Administrative Regulation on Nationality Law of the year 2000, shifting from a *jus sanguinis* to a *jus soli*-based citizenship regime, was widely celebrated as an act of liberalization (Howard 2009; Michalowski 2010). However, as Oers (2014) points out, this was in fact a shift from restrictive to liberal, which then took another restrictive turn with the introduction of language and country-knowledge criteria for naturalization. The initial testing of such knowledge, however, was not yet centralized or adapted by all federal countries and was often used for the disadvantage of Muslim applicants (ibid.). This is the issue which the *Zuwanderungsgesetz* or Immigration Law of 2004 - coming to force on January 1st, 2005 - aimed to address by centralizing naturalization tests, making it the duty of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) to oversee those. The BAMF also established the initial structure of the integration course, consisting of 600 teaching

units of language learning and an additional 30 teaching units of orientation classes, in which one teaching unit is equivalent of 45 minutes (Josue, n.d.:7).

This was also the time, when the first articles on orientation classes were published, such as the one by Kammhuber and Thomas (2004), who approached orientation classes and cultural orientation from a psychological perspective, the Rambøll Management study (2006), or the article of Nghi Ha and Schmitz (2006), who first theorized the 'national-pedagogical driving force' behind the courses. The authors, who define the integration course as "a place where belonging and non-belonging are simultaneously constructed", also theorized that they are built on a Manichean difference construction (2006:251). That is, migrants are being homogenized and their existence is being reduced to incompatibility, which is constructed in binary opposition to the Western, civilized, national "us" (2006:243). The theorization of the authors, though insightful, remain limited for unintentionally homogenizing the participants themselves and for lacking empirical evidence. The 2004 law was actualized with the Act on Implementation of the Directives of the European Union with regard to residence and asylum law in 2007. Furthermore, the number of teaching units assigned to the orientation class was increased a year later from 30 to 45 as a result of the findings of the Rambøll Management study (Zabel, 2016). Although traces of the definitions Kammhuber and Thomas provides on the different forms of orientation can be found in the curriculum of the courses, the work of Nghi Ha and Schmitz did not resonate with the political decision-making.

In 2010, Dorothae Hartkopf published the first comprehensive work on orientation classes approaching them from an educational perspective and problematizing an inherent contradiction the teachers of the course ought to resolve. That is, while the teachers are supposed to encourage discussions, they also have to meet the predefined goals of the state, therefore, having to take a clear position in certain issues. This, combined with frontal

education and the lack of preparation language teachers receive to teach the civics in the orientation class, leads to forms of indoctrination as she concludes. Two years later, her work was followed by the book of Marco Kaden (2012), who was the first to analyze the 250 standardized orientation test questions at the time. Kaden, who also theorizes a nation(al identity) building process behind the courses and finds the divide between the national "us" and foreign "them" prevailing, establishes that a homogenized, positively connotated picture of Germany and the Germans is being constructed, which is especially apparent in the emphasis on Christianity. His work, although focusing on the test questions only, shows how the courses could serve as an entry point to investigate how the nation is reimagined in that particular social field. In 2013, the teaching units assigned to the orientation classes yet again increased, from 45 to 60, as well as the number of test questions to 330. What was previously known as the *Einbürgerungstest* or naturalization test, was renamed to *Leben in Deutschland* (LiD) or 'life in Germany' test, which, in case of successful completion reduces the waiting time for possible naturalization from eight to seven years (Pohl, 2013). This shift is also indicative of the changing meaning of integration conceptualized by Oers (2014:257), naturalization coming to be increasingly seen as the end-goal of integration instead of the tool of it.

The work of Rebecca Zabel published in 2016 remains one of the most significant books on orientation classes, being both the most recent and the most comprehensive account in the field. Although similarly to Hartkopf (2010) she approaches the question from a rather educational perspective, finding indoctrination to be prevalent in the class, she also addresses the issue of nationalism through the works of Nghi Ha and Schmitz (2006) and Kaden (2012), which she initially criticizes for lacking empirical evidence. Testing their ideas, however, she finds evidence for the prevailing significance of nations and difference construction in the classroom, but guided by the ideas of Kaden, her observations mostly remain limited to the role

of Christianity in this process. Contrary to the previous authors working on the issue, however, she draws attention to the heterogeneous reactions of participants in the classroom, some resisting against the information they are presented with by drawing on their own experiences and knowledge on the world. Her work, however comprehensive and insightful, is devalued by the fact that some of the most significant legislative changes took place a year after her publication. That is, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees published a modified and centralized curriculum in the year 2017, adjusting all textbooks to the present form and content of the courses, consisting of 100 teaching units since then (BAMF, 2017:6).

Therefore, according to § 43 of the Residence Act, German (civic) integration programs in their current shape and form consist of 600 teaching units of language learning and 100 teaching units of orientation classes. The courses end with the 'life in Germany test', for which the participants have to answer 30 country-specific and 3 federal country-specific questions, from the total of 300 country specific and an additional 30 federal country specific questions. It is, however, these hundred hours of the orientation class, which constitute the focus of this present study. The themes of the orientation class are divided into three main modules, the first one on politics, the second on history, the third and final one on people and society (BAMF, 2017:12). Through this, 'patterns of identification' are to be created, and the main goals of the course are to be achieved, which are summarized as follows:

- Awakening an understanding of the German state
- Developing a positive assessment of the German state
- Developing knowledge of the rights and duties as a resident and citizen
- Developing the ability to orient oneself further (methodological competence)
- Enabling participation in social life (action competence)
- Acquiring intercultural competence (BAMF, 2017:7)

These aims are to be met while complying with three basic didactic principles. These are the principles of the *Überwältigungsverbot*, the prohibition of overpowering the participant and preventing them from reaching an independent judgement, the *Aufzeigen von Optionen*, ensuring that the participant is able to analyze and reach independent judgement in a political situation, and finally, the *Kontroversitätsgebot.* The *Kontroversitätsgebot*, or 'controversy requirement' demands that "what is controversial in science and politics must also appear as controversial in class" (BAMF, 2017:14).

2.3. Summary and Research Questions

In the first subchapter of this section elaborating on the theoretical background of this thesis, I argued that civic integration programs are driven by the nationalist ideology of maintaining that shared culture is an essential social bond not only for shared membership in a country, but also for residence there (Gellner, 1997). Furthermore, I argued that this problem has been mostly overlooked due to a long tradition of methodological nationalism in social sciences (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002), resulting in an analytical blindness to 'our', banal nationalism (Billig, 1995). As an attempt to address this issue, I propose a research that scrutinizes a specific segment of civic integration programs, orientation classes in Germany, as 'talking about and with the nation' is of particular significance in this context (Fox & Miller-Idriss, 2008). The consecutive subchapter of this section reviwed the limited academic literature on orientation classes along the historical and legal background of the courses.

Orientation classes, which were initially implemented only in some federal countries, then were formalized and centralized by the Immigration Law coming into force on the 1st of January 2005, went through significant changes over time. In their current form, according to

the latest modifications that happened in 2017, they consist of 100 teaching units of classes, divided into three distinct modules on politics, history and society. From the limited literature on orientation classes, the most important works for this thesis are the ones that approach the courses from the perspective of nations and nationalism. The work of Kaden (2012) based on the 'life in Germany' test questions shows, that a positively connotated, homogenized picture is created of Germany and the Germans. This finding, however, rather answers the question of 'what is the nation' – an idealized and homogenized entity –, rather than the question of 'how is the nation', identifying the underlying mechanisms of how this picture is achieved. Although Nghi Ha and Schmitz (2006), Kaden (2012) and Zabel (2016) all suggest that there is a form of difference construction in orientation classes, the categories along which these happen remain unclear. Nghi Ha and Schmitz suggest that it is a difference construction between the Western, civilized and national, while Kaden and Zabel rather focus on the national and religious dimensions of this process, differentiating between Christians and Muslims most of all. The preliminary research questions of this thesis are therefore the following.

1. How, through which underlying mechanisms, is the positively connotated, homogenized picture of Germany created in orientation classes (Kaden, 2012)?
3. How, along which categories difference - that is belonging and non-belonging to Germany - is constructed (Nghi Ha & Schmitz, 2006)?

These questions, supposing that the nation is a discursive construct (Fox & Miler-Idriss, 2008) are to be answered through a research which mainly builds on observing orientation courses, focusing on the discussions and negotiations taking place there (Zabel, 2016). The exact methodology and the specificities of the data collection are to be elaborated on in the following chapter.

3. Methodology

As already suggested, the current chapter of the thesis is devoted to elaborating on the methodology of the research that was undertaken to answer the above proposed questions. Although this chapter is mainly to introduce the most important components of a research, such as the methods, design, the specificities of the data collection and the analysis, these are to be presented in a way that remains open about the complexity of the process. That is, the methodology section is also to include the initial research plan, the reasons why it had to be altered to the present form of a case study design, and which elements of the collected data had to be excluded from the analysis. In the first subchapter, the research paradigm, methods and design are to be addressed, followed by a section on the specificities of the data collection. The third, lengthier subchapter introduces the reader to the social field of the orientation class within which the research was conducted, as well as the participants of the research. The fourth and final subchapter of this section is to introduce the specificities of the data analysis, introducing the method of thematic analysis and elaborating on how the analysis and the findings will be presented in the consecutive chapters.

3.1. Research Paradigm, Methods and Design

As the proposed research questions indicate, the current thesis follows the constructivist paradigm of social sciences, which argues that cultural differences and memberships are socially constructed and emerge through discourses and interactions, negotiated by the concerned actors (Kim, 2001). In order to be able to understand these processes, this study adapts qualitative methods, as they enable the focus on, and in-depth understanding of the lived

experiences of participants, while examining them in their natural settings. As opposed to quantitative methods, qualitative ones provide access to intimate, situated knowledge, while remaining open to new information (Feischmidt, 2019a). Although I entered the field with a predefined interest in nationalism, qualitative methods endowed me with flexibility and openness to new information as opposed to a quantitative investigation in which the different variables are set in advance (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The undertaken research is ethnographic in nature, focusing on the detailed description of events and providing insights to their meaning and observed in their natural setting while trying to understand the symbolic world of the studied group. The main research instruments which ethnography relies on are participant observation, interviews and document analysis which are to be addressed in the following.

The central tool of the research is participant observation, which refers to a data collection technique in which the researcher becomes the part of the observed group, usually for a more extensive period of time, attempting to identify the social rules and meanings that govern action in the studied group (Bernardt, 2006a). Besides enabling results higher in validity, participant observation also has the advantage of reducing the reactivity of the participants (Feischmidt, 2019b). That is, it reduces the opportunity for participants to change their behavior as a reaction to being aware of participating in a study and being observed. Furthermore, it could also enhance a more perceptive understanding of the observations' meanings, while helping to formulate more substantial questions to the additional interviews which were conducted. Therefore, participant observation is the most suitable data collection method for the purposes of this research, which was supplemented by additional interviews and document analysis. The method of semi-structured interviews with the involved actors is preferred, as they further the reliability of the information acquired. In addition, a focus group interview was also conducted, which has the advantage of providing the participants with the

opportunity to engage with the questions of interest in a more dynamic group setting. The context of the research also necessitates the supplementary method of document analysis, referring to the reviewing and evaluating of relevant documents in a systematic way (Bowen, 2009:27). In this case, the relevant documents are the centralized curriculum of the courses defining their content and purpose (BAMF, 2017), and the textbook (Butler et. al., 2017), enhancing the in-course processing of the central themes of the curriculum.

Initially, an in-depth pilot study was conducted in August and September 2019, consisting of the observation of an entire orientation class for one month, five individual and one focus group interview. This pilot phase was approached from an inductive stance, aiming to explore some of the specificities of the social field, which could significantly contribute to better understanding of the phenomenon of interest. In order to enhance the reliability and generalizability of the study, the conduction of additional class observations and interviews were scheduled for April 2020. As a consequence of the unforeseen outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, travel and social distancing regulations were implemented across Europe in March, which are still maintained as of now. Although I was able to travel to Germany, the additional observations could not be conducted, as schools are being closed and therefore, I could not get in touch with potential interview participants either. Consequently, the present thesis can only utilize the data gathered during the pilot stage of the research, resulting in the current case study design. Although the case study design is the result of the above-described external circumstances, it is apt for the in-depth investigation of social phenomena, as the purposes of the research demand (Harrison et. al., 2017). Even though these developments do mean a significant constrain, the validity of the research remains considerable in view of the exhaustive investment in the pilot phase. The details of how, what, why and by whom was the data gathered are to be described in the following subchapter.

3.2. Data Collection

Although this current section is devoted to elaborating on the specificities of the data collection, first, a short mention has to be made of the research ethics. The implementation of the research completely fell in line with the Central European University's Code of Ethics, prioritizing not only the integrity of the research, but most of all, the principle of not inflicting harm on participants. Consequently, informed consent, voluntary participation and the protection of anonymity are the most basic propositions which are met.

While looking for a standard orientation course, selecting the one which was then observed was mainly a question of availability in terms of time, place and connections. Accordingly, a course was selected, which took place in Leipzig during the summer months of 2019. As suggested by ethnographers, entering the field was preluded with certain preparatory measures, such as gaining permission of the institution and other actors (Schensul 1999; Bernard 2006b). I acquired the permission of the deputy department head of the language school as well as the teachers who lead the course, prior the first day of the research. Although both consented for their courses to be observed, only one of them agreed to also be recorded. As ethically required, the participants were provided with information on the research on the first day of the course and gave their written, informed consent to participate and to be recorded. Two participants, however, although consented to be recorded, did not wish to participate in the study. Therefore, all data concerning them were excluded from the analysis. The entirety of the orientation course was observed, five hours a day, five times a week for four weeks, except for three days when I fell ill. I took notes on the interactions and conversations every day, which I immediately transcribed after the class finished every day (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw 1995). The participants observation and the interview recordings were only later

transcribed, for which the specificities of the data collection are to be shortly addressed as follows.

The selection of the interviewees – similarly to how the case of the observed orientation class was decided for – was done by convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method often used in pilot studies, which mainly considers the availability of the participants (Robinson, 2014). A variety of course participants were interviewed, homogenous in terms of their gender, age, country of origin, legal status and frequency of active course participation, in order to be able to record their diverse experiences. Utilizing the trust that was established during the observation, the interviews were conducted during the last week of the course, which time frame was also decided for so the participants could better formulate their opinions and experiences with the course. Adjusting to their comfort, the conversations took place at a location preferred by the interviewee, in either English or German, according to their preferences. Regardless of this flexibility, however, language barriers proved to be substantial obstacles in some cases. Although this issue implies certain disadvantages, it can also be conceived as somewhat of an asset, as struggling to express oneself and seeking understanding is an important part of reality for many course participants. In the following subchapter, the ways of the data processing and analysis are to be described.

3.3. The Field and the Participants

Before the specificities of the data processing and analysis are presented, the current short chapter is devoted to describing the field and introducing the participants. This section, although descriptive in nature, serves the important purpose of familiarizing the reader with both the participants and their demographic specificities as well as the physical characteristics

of the social field within which the observed interactions took place. Thus, enhancing a better understanding of the participants and the context of the research. The first part of this chapter is to elaborate on the school and the classroom itself, while the second part is to introduce the course participants. The third and final section is devoted to describing the teachers of the course.

3.3.1. The Field

The language school, where the observation took place is located only a few hundred meters away from the city center in a building where offices are alao located. The school recently had to move from its previous location about 800 meters away, which – according to my informant – was necessary as it was previously in a building where people lived and frequently complained about the participants and classes being too loud. The classrooms themselves are uniformly white, decorated with language-learning related posters. The rooms are equipped with a computer, located in the corner, and a white board. The chairs and tables are arranged in a U-shape, which is a preferred arrangement when trying to enhance active participation, discussions and asking questions (Kaya & Burgess, 2007:860).

3.3.2. The Course Participants

The background information on the fourteen participants – which is summarized in the table below - is based on how they introduced themselves in the classroom, small talks or ethnographic interviews in-between classes, as well as the individual and focus group interview materials. Therefore, with the exception of the assigned name code and the eligibility column in the aforementioned table, this data is indicative of both the information the participants found

important to share about themselves and along which lines they are required to introduce themselves. The significance of the included categories – name code, countries of origin, gender, age, time spent in Germany and eligibility – are to be elaborated on in the following and are to be compared to the country-wide statistics on integration course participants in 2019.

Name Code	**Country of Origin / Citizenship**	**Gender**	**Age**	**Time spent in Germany**	**Eligibility**
MV.	Venezuela	male	38	1 year	refugee status, mandated
SL.	Syria	female	31	2 years	refugee status, mandated
DR.	Dominican Republic, Spain	female	25	4 years	mandated as ALG II recipient
MK.	Kosovo	female	n.d.	6 months	n.d.
DV.	Peru	male	36	1 year	n.d.
KA.	Spain, Luxemburg	male	28	5 months	eligibility as EU citizen
EM.	Kosovo, Italy	female	20	10 months	eligibility as EU citizen
OL.	Moldova	female	46	4 years	n.d.
AH.	Syria (Kurd)	male	27	10 months	refugee status, mandated
DE.	Syria	female	25	10 months	refugee status, mandated
LU.	Ecuador	female	29	9 months	n.d.
DI.	Brazil	female	33	1 year	n.d.
SZO.	Syria	female	30	3 years	refugee status, mandated
SZ.	Syria	female	33	2 years	refugee status, mandated

The assigned name codes serve the purposes of both ensuring anonymity and facilitating clarity when segments of the classroom discussions are presented in later chapters. The countries, which the participants identify as their home countries or countries of origin are indicated, which, in all cases in this sample corresponds with the citizenship(s) the participants possess. In the case of one participant, AH, the ethnicity is also indicated, as he openly and repeatedly identified as Kurdish. In terms of gender and age, the sample is less diverse, only 20% of the participants being male and with the exception of one person, all of them being in their 20s or 30s. The statistics of the BAMF show that although there were on average more

female participants (58,1%) than male (41,9%) in the year 2019, the ratio is more balanced than in the present sample (BAMF, 2020:6). Similarly, although a total of 70,6% of all course participants that year were under the age of 40, therefore showing that the overwhelming majority of course participants belong to that age group, there is only one person in the sample, OL, who is somewhat older than 40 (BAMF, 2020:16).

The last category, eligibility, is important to note as it indicates whether a person is mandated to participate in the course or does so on a voluntary basis. This final category is inherently connected to both the time spent in Germany and the countries of origin. All participants in this sample are considered to be "new immigrants", as they acquired a residence permit after January 1st, 2005. The countries of origin are in some cases indicative of the legal status one possesses. In this sample, all participants from Syria reside in Germany with a refugee status, which status and country mandates course participation. In contrast, according to § 4 I 1 Nr. 3, EU citizens - although entitled to participate -, do so on a voluntary basis which is incentivized by the state. The participation of EU citizens is only mandated if they are the recipients of welfare benefits, as ordered in § 44a, paragraph 1, no. 2 of the Residence Act, which only holds for one person (DR) in the sample.

3.3.3. The Teachers

Although the teachers of the course are as much the participants of the research as course attendants are, contributing to the discursive reconstruction of the nation, their special role as mediators in the discussions and authority in conveying a certain knowledge of Germany must be noted. The controversial role of the teachers in the classroom was elaborated on by Hartkopf (2010:314), who problematizes that besides the fact that discussions are

encouraged, the courses can take a form of indoctrination due to the frontal education in the classroom. Furthermore, she also draws attention to the problem, that most teachers who are endowed with the task of instructing orientation classes are in fact language teachers, as ordered by § Article 15(1) of the Integration Act. An additional qualification to teach orientation classes, referring to a 30-hour training, however, is available since 2009 (BAMF, 2017:20). Both of the teachers in the observed course acquired this additional certificate.

The first teacher, T1, who was responsible for holding the classes on Mondays and Tuesdays, is an energetic woman at the end of her 40s. She is from Belarus, living in Germany and working as a German language teacher for 20 years. The second teacher, T2, who was responsible for the course from Wednesdays to Fridays, is a young man in his 30s. He was born in West-Germany before the reunification and acquired a degree in sociology at a well-distinguished university. He is teaching German as a second language since 2014. The background of the teachers is rather important to note as, it will be evident from the analysis, it frequently influenced the discussions that took place in the course.

3.4. Data Processing and Analysis

As noted in the subchapter on the data collection, while the fieldnotes made during the classroom observation were transcribed every day immediately after the end of the course, the recordings of the classes and the interviews were transcribed later on. The collected data then was analyzed through thematic analysis, a method often used in qualitative studies (Guest, MacQueen & Namey 2012:11). This method was decided for, as it is the most suitable to identify the underlying patterns and mechanisms in the data. Following the suggestions of Braun and Clark (2019), the processing of the data was done in six distinct steps. After the

transcription, in the first phase of the data processing, all materials were read and initial comments were made on their content of the transcript, which served as the foundation for the codes which were later further developed and clarified in the second phase. In the third step, the different categories were combined, which helped to identify some of the underlying patterns and mechanisms in the course, signifying the fourth stage of the process.

Throughout the processing and analyzation of the data, the extensive data set acquired through a month of observation and recording had to be limited and narrowed down, allowing a focus on the themes which are connected to the proposed research questions. Through this process, I decided to exclude the interview materials from the analysis, acknowledging their limited capacity for answering the research questions. The problem of having to exclude the interview materials from the analysis resulted from the obstacles to the data collection described at the beginning of the methodology chapter. That is, although the interviews conducted in the pilot phase of the study provided important insights, which could have been utilized at a later stage of the research to identify more meaningful interview questions, as a result of the limited theoretical background at the time, these questions were not identified yet. The interview materials, therefore, were excluded from the systematic analysis of the data and are only scarcely used to compliment the observation data.

The fifth and sixth steps of the data analysis identified by Braun and Clark (ibid.) consist of the summarizing and reporting of the findings, which will be elaborated on in the following chapters. As a result of the combination of constructivist approach - investigating the nation as a discursive construct - and the method of participants observation - enabling to investigate the construction of the nation in the class interactions -, the analysis and the findings are to be elaborated on through excerpts from the class discussions and textbook examples. Accordingly, these can be extensive at times. Nonetheless, preserving and quoting these discussions this way

is essential to truthfully represent both the contexts in which they occurred and the various opinions and contributions by the heterogeneous group of participants.

The analysis and findings are organized in two main chapters, respective of the two research questions. Within this structure, the data is organized and analyzed around the emic categories of politics, history and society, pulled from the courses own structure, which categories are compared against the suggestions of the centralized curriculum. The first research question - how is the positively connotated, homogenized picture of Germany is created in the classes – fits well to the first and second modules of the course, covering the topics of politics and history. Themes reflecting on the second research question - how, along which categories difference (that is belonging and non-belonging to Germany) is constructed - however, turned out to be a more pervasive and were present throughout all modules. Accordingly, in the chapter addressing the second group of research questions, excerpts are pulled from all the three modules on politics, history and society.

4. ‘How is the Nation?’

As elaborated on in the chapter on the theoretical background, following the suggestions of Brubaker (1996) the current thesis puts forward to engage with the questions of ‘how is the nation’. After Kaden (2012), who approaches orientation classes as an object of nationalism research found through scrutinizing the ‘life in Germany’ test questions that a positively connotated, homogenized picture is created of Germany and the Germans. Based on the above, the first research question – which the current chapter of the thesis attempts to answer – is, how, through which underlying mechanisms is this picture created in the classes. This question, as proposed in the methodology, is to be answered by the thematic analysis of the textbook material and the data acquired through the participant observation of the courses, focusing on the discussions and interactions that compose the discursive construct of the nation.

The first subchapter of this section is devoted to the themes of politics and democracy, the emic category representing the first module of the course. The analysis of the data revealed two underlying mechanisms, through which the idealized, homogenous picture of Germany is constructed, as suggested by Kaden (2012). The first one is what I call external comparison, referring to the tendency of ensuring both a homogenized and positively connotated picture of Germany by a constant reference to ‘other’ countries. As opposed to the theorizations of Nghi Ha & Schmitz (2006), therefore, instead of the homogenization and deindividualization of the migrant ‘Other’, is it in fact the participant’s home countries, which become homogenized and negatively connotated. Contrary to the underlying assumptions of the first research question, it is not only the country of Germany, which is discursively constructed throughout the course, but other countries as well. This observation, in fact was also reported by Zabel (2016:395). The second mechanism identified throughout the analysis in this module is the moralization

and humanization of the German state, which especially serves the purpose of ensuring an idealized picture of Germany. Both of these underlying mechanisms which were identified through the thematic analysis of the data, actually fall in line with the instructions of the centralized curriculum, which defines the "development of a positive assessment of the German state" as one of its central goals, suggesting the discussions to make references to everyday life and the world (BAMF, 2017:24). The form these discussions take, however, do not seem to follow the curriculum's didactic suggestions of the *Überwältigungsverbot*, the *Aufzeigen von Optionen*, and the *Kontroversitätsgebot*. Although the divide between 'civic' and 'ethnic' nationalism has been extensively discussed in the field of nationalism studies, including the work of Brubaker (2004) who elaborates on the analytical and normative ambiguities of this distinction, the concept of 'civic nationalism' proves to be a useful notion understanding the banal nationalism of civic integration in the module on politics. Scrutinizing the data on the second module, however, revealed that the nation is constructed rather differently than in the first one, both in terms of content and underlying mechanisms.

The second subchapter devoted to the themes of history and responsibility, reflecting on the emic category pulled from the second module of the course, elaborates on three main themes. First, that contrary to the work of Anderson (1983) establishing that the political unit of the nation is constructed as growing out of an 'immemorable past', the history of the German nation is confined only to the last hundred years. Second, that within this short history confined to such a limited time period, there is a much more intricate interplay between homogenizing and diversifying efforts compared to the homogenizing efforts of the first module. That is, the historic German nation is overwhelmingly constructed as heterogeneous and differentiated. Although Smith (1999) emphasizes the significance of history for contemporary nationalism and concludes that the construction of a new, common identity is rather difficult for those

nations with a negatively connotated and divided past, this second module shows extensive efforts to construct the German nation as divided in its past, but united in its European present and future. The third and final connected theme is, that in the module on history contemporary issues are also very much discussed according to the *Kontroversitätsgebot,* often drawing on opinions representative of the political right. The concern in this theme is not, that contemporary debates are represented as controversial. As prescribed by the didactic principle of the *Kontroversitätsgebot,* they are supposed to be represented as such according to the suggestions of the centralized curriculum. The question is rather, why it is these themes, which are discussed according to this principle, and not the issues which are part of the previous module. The analysis and findings of the themes of the second module, therefore, become especially meaningful when compared to the themes and underlying mechanisms of how the nation is constructed in the first module. The analysis through which the above findings were identified and the evidence the excerpts from the orientation class textbook and discussions provide, are to be introduced in the following.

4.1. Module 1 - Politics in the Democracy

As the first module of the orientation class is titled 'Politics in the Democracy', the significance of these two concepts to the course is undeniable. Although according to the curriculum this topic should be discussed in 35 teaching units out the total one hundred, the observed course spent over half of the lectures discussing the themes of this module. These themes include fundamental rights and law, constitutional principles, state symbols, the tasks of the state and the duties of the citizens, constitutional bodies, parties, and finally, social participation and political education (Butler et. al., 2017:4). In this section "impulses for

support and identification with the state and society in Germany are created" through "concrete references to everyday life and the living world" (BAMF, 2017:24). The concepts of politics and democracy, however, are also central to the notion of nationalism.

Although Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002:306) identify the segregation of the concepts of the state and democracy from the one of nationalism as a form of methodological nationalism, this issue, as they also acknowledge, is less prevalent in the field of nationalism studies. Addressing the role of the state, politics and democracy, there is a long tradition in the field of differentiating between 'civic' and 'ethnic' nationalisms. This distinction itself was extensively elaborated on and problematized by many in the literature on nationalism, including Brubaker (2004) who addresses both the analytical and normative implications it entails. As opposed to 'ethnic' nationalism, 'civic' or 'Western' nationalism is characterized as primarily political, liberal, rights-based and inclusive (Brubaker, 2004:140). Not only do these labels reflect on the themes of the first module of the orientation class, but this normative distinction lies at the very core of the problem of banal nationalism as well. Although the course itself does not apply the 'civic' and 'ethnic' terminology to distinguish between states, as the following subchapter is to show, it is the characterization of a 'civic' state as opposed to others, which helps to establish the idealized and homogenized picture of Germany in this module.

4.1.1. Reimagining the Nation(s) – External Comparison

"More common is the use of the civic-ethnic opposition to make distinctions between states"

(Brubaker, 2004:134)

Although the underlying assumption of the proposed research question is that only the nation of Germany is being discursively reconstructed in the courses, the data shows that in the module of Politics in the Democracy, various nations are constructed simultaneously. This observation is supported by the work of Zabel (2016:395), who also notes the prevalence of these comparisons. In this process, the homogenized picture of Germany, which is based on positively connotated assumptions is in part constructed by the constant referencing of other countries, mostly the home countries of the participants. Therefore, contrary to the theorizations of Nghi Ha & Schmitz (2006:304), who propose that it is the participants, who are being homogenized and de-individualized in binary opposition to the values of the German society, this process actually takes place on the macro instead of the micro level. That is, instead of the participants, their home countries are being homogenized and negatively connotated in binary opposition to the state of Germany, which is also homogenized, but is positively connotated based on the civic values it represents. This, on the other hand seems to suggest a contribution to the creation and stabilization of a transnational hierarchy, which the authors justly point out. This process which I call external comparison, is though mediated by the teachers, is constructed through the participants contributions, as the following excerpts are to show.

As an introduction to the first module on Politics in the Democracy, T1 asked the participants whether or not they are interested in politics. As she got mixed responses, she made an attempt to clarify how important politics are to everyday life, impacting everything from the right to education of the school age population – which she addressed to the parents of the group – to the fact that people are sitting there in the course. This introductory question lead to another one: she asked the participants to talk about the political problems in their respective countries.

Excerpt 1.

T1: (to DI): What do you think, what is wrong in Brazil?

DI: Corruption.

T1: Aha, so corruption is on the first place.

DI: No, not on the first place, but it is a problem.

SL: Ah, that is a problem in Syria too!

KA: Okay, but that is a problem in Germany too!

DI: But here it is different.

T1: No! In this I really have to defend Germany! We really cannot denote corruption as a normal problem in Germany.

KA: But if we talk about corruption, there is corruption everywhere!

T1: Okay, but if we compare corruption in Germany and Brazil, there is a big difference! Let's go on. What are the big problems in Syria?

DE: (sighs)… Many problems. Everything is problem!

T1: Syria only problems…

DE: For 9 years.

T1: Is there going to be more? I thought that there is no more. What do you mean by more problems?

DE: Food. Very expensive, no import.

T1: Why now? The war is since a long time.

LU: That is an effect of the war.

SL: Yes, but now life in Syria is really bad. People die because they have nothing to eat. There is no electricity, but not in the whole of Syria. And another big problem is no freedom. If you say something about politics, you are done.

T1: Aha, so the politics and democracy are something else there... Let's move on, what are the problems in Moldavia?

This exercise from which the above excerpt is quoted was a rather time consuming one, taking up almost 30 minutes of the class, as every single participant was asked one by one to name some of the political problems in their countries. Although T1 specifically asked the participants about the problems in their respective countries, she concluded the discussion by

noting that "unfortunately, in 99% of the cases people who attend the course come from countries with many political problems". The above excerpt is indicative of two underlying tendencies that characterize this mechanism of external comparison.

First, participants are asked to talk specifically about the problems in their home countries, through which the negative characteristics or "problems" are generalized. Therefore, homogenizing the home countries to a sum of problems: "Syria only problems". In these exercises, when the participants talk about their countries, there is another underlying process, which implies that Germany is not like those countries and cannot even be placed in the same category: the corruption in Germany is different and cannot be compared to corruption in Brazil. The second tendency is, that even though some participants 'resist' this homogenization, to use the terminology of Zabel (2016), their observations and comments are denounced or dismissed at the end. That is, the homogenized and idealized picture of Germany cannot be diversified or heterogenized. Another example for this theme can be seen in the following interaction as well.

In the second chapter of the first module, which engages with the fundamental rights in the basic law, statements are listed of which the participants have to decide if they are true or false. DV is asked to read out the first statement aloud.

Excerpt 2.
DV: For Politicians different laws apply than to other people. False.
T1: Why?
DV: Because they are people too.
T1: Correct! Everyone is the same. No matter if a politician or a cleaner.
DV: But it happens… Here as well. It should not, but it happens. The public officials or…
T1: (interrupts) No! The law is the same for everyone! No matter if it is a politician, or a rich politician. The law is for everyone!

DV: Okay, here maybe not that much, but in my country, if you are a criminal politician and you have money…
T1: (interrupts again and ends the discussion) It is all clear, we already talked about your country yesterday.

As already indicated, the above excerpts show not only that there is a homogenized, positively connotated picture created of Germany, but also that one of the ways how this picture is achieved in the first module is through this external comparison to other countries. Although the content of the observation itself falls in line with the aims of the module described in the curriculum, creating references to everyday life and the word, the form of the discussion does not seem to follow the prescribed didactic principles (BAMF, 2017:14). The above described theme of homogenization, however, has been disrupted on time in the first moduel, by the chapter titled 'Fundamental Rights: Aspirations and Reality' (Butler et. al., 2017:16). This section includes different forms of discrimination, such as discrimination based on religion, disability same sex partnership, the gender pay-gap and body shaming.

Excerpt 3.
OL: The problem is (with the gender pay-gap), that men and women belong to different tax categories.
T2: Yes, those who earn more have more advantages. Good observation!
LU: I think it is still better than other countries… like, 20% is a lot, but it`s still much better than Latin-America.
T2: We have to pay attention not to take these things as an argument! Just because something is better here, than somewhere else, it does not mean that we can just lay back and do nothing anymore. For a civilized, industrial country, it is a shame!
AH: What? In Germany?
T2: Sure, maybe it is better, than in some Arabic countries, but it is again this comparison. Compared to Nordic countries, the situation is still catastrophic here!

The above excerpt shows, that although the second teacher points out that the previously described theme of external comparison is problematic, his explanation follows a similar logic. While the comparison to those countries which have 'more' or 'different' political problems in contrast to Germany is rejected, another external comparison is immediately made. Although in this latter comparison the idealization of Germany seems to be broken away from, as it does worse than some Nordic countries, the reason why Germany should do better is because it is a "civilized, industrial country". The last excerpt which is quoted from a discussion on Germany as a social, welfare state is to show how prevailing this tendency of external comparisons is, persisting through the contradictions it creates.

Excerpt 4.

T1: People, we still have a couple of minutes left so I would like to ask you: how is it by you, in your countries? Is there a *Muttershutzgesetz* (maternity leave act), is there *Kindergeld* (child support) …

(all participants start laughing and say no in groups, nothing like that exists)

T1: I only ask, because I do not know!

DI: In my country, only 5 months of maternity leave, but no child support. But the money also when the woman works. But only 6 months of that. No child-support. But in my country, you do not have pay for kindergarten.

T1: Kindergarten is free of charge?

DI: Only the private ones (you have to pay). In my country, also the insurance. No one has private insurance.

T1: So, state insurance.

DV: Also, people can eat for only 25 cents in a restaurant, when they do not have that much money.

T1: But only one time a day. Do people have to prove it somehow?

DV: No, only asking.

MV: We have kindergarten, free of charge. Hospital, free of charge. Gasoline, free of charge,

T1: Gasoline is free of charge??

MV: Yes. Insurance, free of charge! University, free of charge! Education, free of charge!
T1: Okay, so everything is free of charge. But! The people do not have jobs. Nothing to eat. But gasoline they can have!

As the above and final excerpt in this section shows, the initial reaction of the participants was to laugh about the impossibility of the assumption that their countries provide the same, or similar assistance as the social, welfare state of Germany, which reaction seems to fall in line with the logic of previous discussions. When going into details, however, it turned out that the respective countries of some participants provide even more extensive social assistance than Germany. With this excerpt in mind, the role of homogenizing efforts appears to gain more meaning. The information, which reveals that some things might work better in other countries than in Germany, simultaneously heterogenize the picture of both the "other" countries and of Germany. Therefore, disrupting the idealized image which is pursued. In order to navigate this contradiction, T1 is quick to mediate the conversation, pointing out that these positively connotated features assigned to the home countries can never counterbalance the negatively connotated features, which are absent from the homogenized image of Germany. The *Sozialstaatlichkeit*, or 'social stateness', referring to the welfare state, is also indicative of the theme which the consecutive chapter is to elaborate on, the moralization and humanization of the German state.

4.1.2. A Moral Human: The German State

The second theme, or underlying mechanism which appears to ensure not only the homogenized, but especially the idealized image of Germany in the first module is the continuous humanization and moralization of the state. That is, the German state is endowed

with human characteristics, such as caring, helping, or the feeling of solidarity, which are in turn also positively connotated moral features. This combination of humanity and morality is especially emphasized in connection to the participants presence in the country.

The first example for this tendency can be seen in excerpt 5, quoting a short interaction which emerged from a statement in the fourth chapter of the first module, engaging with the features of a welfare state. Defining solidarity, a statement in the textbook reads: "Everybody has to help and work together when it goes bad for other people or they have no money. An example of solidarity is when a state gives asylum to refugees" (Butler et. al., 2017:28).

Excerpt 5.
T1: So, this is now solidarity, right? The social state assists also the people, who are seeking asylum. That is a social state. Many refugees come to Germany, because Germany is a social state. There is protection, care and help here for people who need asylum.
MV: For example, Germany with me solidarity!
T1: Yes, solidarity for us all! For some because of political reasons, for others because of economic reasons, or because… all… absolutely different reasons. For studying. All are shown solidarity!

The above excerpt also shows how certain aims of the course, defined in the centralized curriculum are met, such as the creation of impulses for identification, such as MV expressed: "Germany with me solidarity!". However, granting asylum for those in need is only one example for solidarity, as T1 goes on to clarify: "All are shown solidarity", mentioning migrants only, regardless of their motivations for deciding for Germany. In the following, we can not only see the persisting presence of the external comparison pointed out in the previous subchapter, but also how the definition of the social state is changing.

Excerpt 6.

T1: So, social state means a state, where there are a lot of insurances. What is a social state? The social state always helps the people in the state. So, the social state is not only that we want to get richer and stronger, but that the people are important. What is a social state? Is Syria a social state?

SL: Yes. (laughs)

DE: Not anymore.

T1: And before? Was Syria a social state before?

SL: No insurance.

T1: So? Syria was never a social state.

The social state on the one hand means, that everyone is insured. This statement, however, was highly debated in the classroom, one participant declaring that he has no insurance, others asking about homelessness, leading to an elaborate discussion on the specificities of different insurances in Germany. On the other hand, being a social state and having a system of different insurances is coming from the selflessness of the state valuing people over money and power: "social state is not only that we want to get richer and stronger, but that the people are important".

The last excerpt of this section demonstrates the same underlying idea, to which in the preluding discussion participants elaborated on some of the negative encounters they experienced residing in Germany. The elaboration on these experiences included the participants themselves or their acquaintances being physically or verbally attacked on the grounds of coming from a different country or speaking another language than German in a public space. Excerpt 7 shows a short interaction following this discussion.

Excerpt 7.

T1: Such things exist, clear. Nationalism, yes, obviously. But if we now consider Germany as a country… We all would not be here. Germany really likes to take foreigners. We would not

be here! So, Germany as a country is really-really helpful and really helps. But single individuals like that exist, clear.
LU: But Germany does need foreigners! Overall!
T1: Yes, but that is not the only reason! People, it is an open country here and it is very helpful. Otherwise it could have done it like Canada! Canada also needs people, but it only takes the – what do I know – the doctors, the engineers, Germany takes everyone! Because that is the human thing to do.

This last excerpt, therefore, shows that the motivations of Germany for allowing migrants – such as the course participants – to enter and reside in the country not only, because it is beneficial for the country itself, but "because that is the human thing to do". This point is then again proven by the external referencing of another country, Canada, which does not have such moral considerations when letting refugees and migrants in the country as Germany does.

4.2. Module 2 – History and Responsibility

The second module of the orientation class, devoted to the themes of history and responsibility, appears to be less significant than the first and last modules based on the suggested number of teaching units. That is, while the first module is assigned 35 teaching units and the last one 38, the centralized curriculum only suggests 20 hours to spend with the topic of history (BAMF, 2017:12). The observed course spent exactly 20 teaching units with the module on history, which included the screening of a documentary movie and was complemented by an excursion to the *Zeitgeschichtliches Forum*, the Forum of Contemporary History in Leipzig. This trip to the museum also falls in line with the suggestions of the curriculum, which allows up to ten teaching units to be spent with excursions (ibid.).

The three main topics which the module engages with are National Socialism and its consequences, German history from division to unification and lastly, European integration. The in-course processing of these topics, according to the curriculum, should not only consist of the presentation of historical facts, but knowledge of the history should be conveyed "so the current European present can be better understood" (BAMF, 2017:38). Similarly to the first module, this should also be done by referencing everyday life and the world to demonstrate what impact the historical framework of the world has on the life of people (ibid.). However, as already proposed, the nation is constructed very differently in the module on history than in the one on politics. Instead of a the previously demonstrated homogenizing efforts, the German nation is constructed as heterogeneous and divided in its history. The three main observations of the module, the limited time frame of history, the divided nation and the controversial representation of issues are to be elaborated on in the following.

4.2.1. The Short History of the German Nation

> *"If nation-states are widely conceded to be 'new' and 'historical', the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide into a limitless future."*
>
> (Anderson, 1983:11)

The textbook introduces the participants to the German history through the fictive characters of Samir, Cem and Paul. Samir is a young man from Aleppo who works at a car repair shop with Cem, the offspring of a Turkish guest worker who came to Germany in the 1960s. Cem and his nephew, Paul explain Samir the history of Germany through telling the stories of their family over time (Butler et. al., 2017:65). This framework emphasizes the point

made in the curriculum on the significance of the German history for the lives of people contemporarily. Although T2 made a remark that he enjoys the structuring of the textbook in this module, it is worth noting that this structure does not follow a chronological order. The first chapters of the module introduce the divided Germany, then turn to the National Socialist past, after which the chapters on the European present immediately start. This structure appears to emerge from the limited timeframe the German history is assigned to and the clear demarcation of the beginning of the German history at the end of the Second World War. Under the fourth subchapter of this second module, titled 'New Borders', the textbook reads:

> Everything *began* in the year 1945. On the 8. of May 1945 the Second World War ended. This day is therefore also called the "Zero Hour". Germany *lost* the war, people were dead, many cities were completely destroyed, and everything had to be rebuilt from zero. (Butler et. al., 2017:68)

Considering the work of Anderson - quoted at the beginning of this chapter – pointing out the significance of emphasizing the 'immemorable past' of the nation, it is important to ask why a nation would confine its history to such a limited period of time and why would the Zero Hour be marked as its 'beginning'. Although the textbook provides a different explanation for the significance of the Zero Hour, according to Chin & Fehrenbach (2009) the emphasis on this day is used as means of dissociation from the Nazi past. The National socialist past, though addressed in the course, is the furthest point in the national history of Germany the textbook accounts for. Therefore, instead of an 'immemorable past', the history of Germany is confined to the last 100 years in the course.

In Myths and Memories of the Nation, Smith concludes that the ebbs and flows of modern nationalism depend on "the ability of modern nationalisms to draw sustenance from the pre-existing memories, myths, symbols, and traditions" (1999:19). He also adds that in case these memories of the nation are non-existent or negatively connotated and divisive – such as

in the case of the history of Germany -, it is increasingly difficult to create new communities of identification. This, nonetheless, appears to be the attempt that is made in the courses, signified the most by the closing statement of the module by Samir:

> Now I understand you. Your family is a bit like Germany and Europe. You were divided and found each other again. You live separately in different countries, but you visit each other and don't argue. You don't forget your past, but you are open for the future. I think that's great. I also want to become a German in Europe. (Butler et. al., 2017:89)

Although the divided national past is introduced and discussed, the focus is on the common, European present and the path towards a 'limitless', European future, which this history leads up to. The following subchapter is to demonstrate the underlying processes of how the historic nation is constructed as a divided entity in an interplay between homogenization and differentiation, as opposed to the clear homogenizing efforts of the previous module.

4.2.2. A Historically Divided Nation

As already proposed, in sharp contrast to the idealized and homogenized image of Germany created in the first module on politics, the second module engaging with the topics of history and responsibility provides a picture of a divided and differentiated nation. That is, instead of an internal homogenization through external comparison, the main underlying mechanism in constructing the nation in this module is the one of internal differentiation. As demonstrated in the previous subchapter, the assigned beginning of the German history starts with the division of the nation. First, to four occupation zones, then to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) on the West and to the German Democratic Republic (GDR) on the East. The textbook provides a number of exercises, in which the distinction in political and economic

terms between the two German states is made clear. In this distinction, the GDR becomes negatively connotated. An example for such an exercise can be found on page 71 of the textbook, from which the statements will be presented in the following table under the respective state which they were identified with.

Federal Republic of Germany	German Democratic Republic
Who gets the most votes in the election should decide in the state!	We have no real democracy because there's only one party.
In our country the state also takes care of the poor!	We're a workers' state!
You can buy anything here if you have money!	In our country, you cannot buy bananas or mangoes at all!
	Here you can only buy potatoes!

Although the textbook repeatedly provides rather simplistic characterizations of the two German states, T2 made consistent efforts both to create a more differentiated picture and to connect the historical events to current political debates. In connection to the above exercise, he elaborated on the following:

Excerpt 8.

T2: Today when we talk about refugees, everyone thinks of Syrians, but actually it was not such a long time ago that it was East-Germans. More people survive crossing the Mediterranean Sea, than did trying to escape from the GDR. Yes, the GDR was an unrightful regime, but we cannot say that it was bad for everyone. I was born in the West and find it bad that things are depicted black and white. Contemporary problems also arise from this Western arrogance. They did not look at what was good here and did not build something new together. A lot of people still feel invisible and misunderstood on the East because of this. Of course, there were different freedoms in the West, but some things might have worked better on the East.

Such an interplay between homogenization and differentiation, however, do not only characterize the discussion on the two German states, but on the National Socialist past as well. This can also be seen in the structuring of the textbook. There are three subchapters devoted to the topic of National Socialism are 'Adolf Hitler's Dictatorship', 'The Crimes of the Germans' and the finally, 'The Germans – A Nation Without Resistance?' (Butler et al., 2017:78-83). That is, the so-called collective guilt of the Germans is acknowledged first, which implies a homogeneity. This negatively connotated homogeneity, however, must be resolved by introducing an internal differentiation, talking about those who resisted against the Nazi regime. This process, together with the demarcation of the beginning of history with the Zero Hour, thus allows a dissociation from the National Socialist past exactly through an internal differentiation in which not all Germans are the same. In the following excerpt we do not only see another example for this internal differentiation, but also how the tone of comparison changes. This incident of the past – Hitler and the NSDAP – could have happened anywhere and people did not really have a choice contributing to it or not.

Excerpt 9.
T1: If you take it globally… The Germans. They are the ones, who started the war. 'Eeeeevil'. If we now compare nation to nation… They were not the ones, where Hitler was, yes. The Germans are as much of a nation, like the Arabs, the Spanish or the Italians. That is a nation! The people also could not do something else at the time… Some… Some did it willingly, because they liked the ideas of Hitler. Yes. So, this here… We always have to look at this from both sides!

The call to 'look at these issues from both sides' thus predominantly characterizes the discussions in this module as opposed to the previous one, in which attempts to do so were interrupted or dismissed. This is especially true for the following subchapter, in which some of the contemporary discussions which emerge from the national history are addressed.

4.2.3. *Kontroversitätsgebot*

As introduced in the theoretical background chapter of this thesis, the *Kontroversitätsgebot* is one of the main didactic principles the centralized curriculum prescribes, requiring that the issues which are controversial in politics or science to be discussed as such in the course. The extent to which contemporary controversial issues in connection to the national history are represented through controversial statements, particularly stood out in contrast to the absence of this principle in the previous module. This theme of controversy is especially prevalent in sensitive issues, such as memory politics and the contested presence of people with a migration background in the country. Under the subchapter 'Remembrance and Commemoration', the following statements are to be discussed, referring to Holocaust memorials.

Excerpt 10.
a. Such monuments are useless. No one understands them.
b. Remembering is important so that something like this does not happen again.
c. The monuments are a disgrace to the German people. We should rather commemorate successes. What will tourists think of Germany?
d. Only monuments with names are good, because one should think of the individual people.
e. The monuments are often dirtied and painted on. That does not look good and must be cleaned again and again.

As the above excerpt shows, various potential opinions are included on the question of commemoration and memorials. Although there is only one statement, b, clearly in favor of them, the exercise is to discuss and contest these opinions. Similarly, at the beginning of the history module there is a chapter devoted to describing how and why, which guest workers came to Germany in the 1950s and '60s. This descriptive section ends with the sentence "some

Germans still see the grandchildren of the first guest workers as foreigners and not as Germans" (Butler et. al., 2017:64). This sentence, which also shows an internal differentiation as only 'some Germans' think this way, then leads to another exercise, in which the contested presence of people with a migration background is to be discussed through the following statements.

Excerpt 11.
1. No country should accept guest workers!
2. After 10 years, guest workers must go back home!
3. Guest workers may stay here and also take their families to Germany!
4. Guest workers must learn German fast!

The participants who engaged with this discussion agreed that a country can take guest workers, who should not necessarily have to go home after working there, they should be able to bring their families to Germany and that they must learn German fast. In connection to this last statement, T2 notes, that we must consider the historical circumstances of the time, when we think about this issue. That is, at the time, no one thought that guest workers would stay, therefore, no one expected them to learn the language. Furthermore, he also added, that people 'must' not learn the language, but it might enhance their well-being if they do so. The final excerpt of this section to demonstrate the controversial statements of the module is from the last chapter of the book, devoted to discussing the contemporary challenges in the EU.

Excerpt 12.
Zsófia from Budapest: "It's good that we built a fence. That way no more refugees come to Europe. We don't want a mixture of people and languages in our country."
John from Manchester: "My country gets along better on its own - the EU wants to decide alone with whom we do business. After the Brexit, we are finally free again. Then we can make our own contracts with countries. We must leave the EU quickly."

Piotr from Warsaw: "The EU has done too much. We want to decide for ourselves which rules apply here in Poland. Whoever wants to go to Europe must be a Christian."
Pierre from Nice: "There are too many Muslims in France - I'm afraid of Islamic terror. We must leave the EU and stop immigration."
Sandy from Edinburgh: "I'm for Europe and against Brexit - as 48% of all British people are."
Mustafa from Istanbul: "Europe does bad business. The States have no more money. They spend too much on administration and talk too long in parliaments. We can make quick decisions, and we are the strongest alone."

The presence of these statements or opinions, which could rather be associated with the political right, leaves a number of questions unanswered. Whose opinions are these statements ought to represent? Why is it these issues – memory politics especially of the Holocaust and the presence of migrants – the ones that are contested? Is it only to facilitate discussions? Is it to facilitate disagreement with these statements? Why is this controversy absent from the first module and is so prevalent here? This last question is probably the most significant one. As already noted, what I challenge here is not the mere fact, that the above issues are represented as controversial through controversial statements. Rather the prevalence of the controversy in the module on politics and its absence in the module of politics.

The above except in fact facilitated an extensive discussion on the problematized issue of migration. The details of that discussion, however, will be elaborated on in the following chapter, attempting to answer the second research question that engages with how belonging and non-belonging to the nation is constructed and negotiated in the course as well as the connected ideal of integration.

5. Belonging and Non-Belonging

The current chapter is to address the themes of belonging and non-belonging. As established in the chapter on the theoretical background, Nghi Ha & Schmitz (2006) theorized orientation courses to be a place, where belonging and non-belonging are simultaneously constructed, along the categories of the national, civilized, Western 'us' and the foreign, backward 'them'. Kaden (2012) and Zabel (2016), however, while finding evidence for the prevalence of different construction in the test questions and the course, rather emphasized the distinction that is created along the religious categories of the Christian 'us' and the Muslim 'them'. Accordingly, the second research question that this thesis aims to address is how, along which categories difference - that is belonging and non-belonging to Germany - is constructed.

I had originally intended to answer this question by analyzing the material in the third module titled 'People and Society', which, based on the suggested number of teaching units is the most important one (BAMF, 2017:12). The main themes include family and family forms of living together, understanding the roles and equal rights of men and women, education, tolerance and living together and finally, religious diversity (BAMF, 2017:39). The main goals of the module include the building of a "personal concept for future life in Germany" based on "a personal idea of a successful integration process" and the addressing of the question of "how different ideas about integration affect identity, participation opportunities and social cohesion in Germany" (BAMF, 2017:38). The observed course, however, only spent about 20 teaching units with this final module instead of the proposed 38, therefore, not providing sufficient data to address the second research question based on the material of the third module only. Consequently, the analysis and findings of the current chapter are to rely on the material of all modules, the entire course.

The first subchapter of this section is to elaborate on the themes of national belonging, non-belonging and indifference. As this subchapter is to show, belonging to the German nation is presented as a permeable legal category, the one of citizenship. That is, while the difference between Germans and non-Germans, belonging and non-belonging to this category is emphasized, these distinctions are made on a legal basis. This stance, thus, falls in line with the characterization of civic nationalism as "liberal, voluntarist, universalist and inclusive" (Brubaker, 2004:133). The discussions which were generated by questions on national belonging and non-belonging, presupposing a necessary emotional attachment to one's home country, however, revealed the extent to which the significance of this category was contested, which is best be understood through the framework of national indifference (Zahra, 2010). This also emphasizes both the point made by Oers (2014) on the changing meaning of integration and the approach of Goodman and Wright (2015), who instead of the categorization of the debate provided by Joppke (2017), suggest that civic integration approached from the perspective of citizenship or integration are two distinct issues. Although belonging and non-belonging to the German nation is constructed along the legal category of citizenship, there seems to be another theme speaking to the issue of difference construction, belonging and non-belonging to Germany, along the ideal of integration.

The second subchapter, therefore, accounts of two connected themes, or underlying mechanisms, which contribute to the construction of migrant participants as 'Others', or non-belonging to Germany. Following Duemmler (2015), who reported on how elements of the integration discourse are incorporated into the boundary-making processes of the Swiss youth, the first theme of the second subchapter is to elaborate on the centrality of language. That is, the experiences of participants as a result of not speaking German well enough or speaking another language in public, which experience they interpreted in various ways. While anyone

could potentially encounter this issue, who does not yet speak a sufficient level of German, other themes of the integration discourse appear to particularly target Arabic or Muslim people, as suggested by Kaden (2012) and Zabel (2016). Contrary to their suggestions, however, this difference although breaks down to the religious categories of Christians and Muslims, is not constructed along religious lines. Rather, using the language of the integration discourse, people described as 'being unwilling to integrate' are characterized by features which are used to describe Arabic and Muslim populations, such as lack of respect for gender equality, same sex partnerships or the wearing of a headscarf. This finding, although is not of any novelty, is important to reconsider in connection to the history of the courses.

5.1. National Belonging, Non-Belonging or Indifference?

Considering the question of how belonging and non-belonging to the nation is constructed, both the textbook examples and the teachers' statements suggest that belonging to the German nation is a permeable, legal category, the one of citizenship. That is, although the difference between the citizens and the non-citizen 'Others' is emphasized, this distinction is made on a legal basis, and the opportunity to change to the legal category of the citizens is asserted. As T1 also noted, "if you take the citizenship test, then you become a German!". This tendency falls in line with the characterizations of civic nationalism, being "liberal, voluntarist, universalist and inclusive" (Brubaker, 2004:133). However, this also means, that citizens and course participants, belonging to various legal categories, have different rights and are consequently exposed to different sanctions.

An example for this can be found in the following excerpt, for which the discussion emerged from the following statement of the book: “All Germans have the right to freely choose their profession, workplace and training location” (Butler et. a., 2017: 12).

Excerpt 13.
T1: Do you understand this sentence? So, for example, if I would not like to live in Leipzig anymore, but would like to move to Berlin instead… Am I allowed to do that?
(Participants say yes in choir)
MV: Noooooo. Jobcenter. With refugees, Jobcenter has problems… lot of control.
T1: Yes, okay, but at some point, you will leave the Jobcenter. Each of you want to have and earn your own money.
MV: Yes, but I have only right to have a job in Leipzig.

This excerpt and the following discussion are especially interesting considering, that the next statement of the book reads: “Politically persecuted people enjoy asylum” (Butler et. a., 2017: 12). The contrast between these two statements – Germans have the right to choose, the politically persecuted have a right for asylum -, therefore, clearly points out the difference in rights, which result from the various legal categories the participants are assigned to. These differences, however, as already noted, are presented along with the possibility to overcome them. The following excerpt does not only provide another example for this, but also outlines another issue, the question of whether or not one desires to belong to the German nation along the legal category of citizenship.

Excerpt 14.

T1: One more question! Can the foreigners – so us now – can we also get civil rights? To get civil rights, just like the Germans, one must first obtain citizenship. Civil rights do not apply for foreigners. They must become German citizens first.

DI: Do you have that?

T1: No, I do not have German citizenship. Although I am here for 20 years.

DI: Why not?

T1: Because I don't want to. I am Belarusian, I do not want to become German! I am not German! I could become a citizen, if I wanted to. I could have become a citizen two years ago already, but I do not want to.

Do participants actually want to belong to Germany in the legal sense? Do they wish to become part of the citizenry? As we can see, T1 is very open and vocal about the fact that she does not wish to do so. Indeed, there is only one participant, ME, who expressed a potential desire for future naturalization. This theme points at one of the core problems with the literature on civic integration. As already noted in the chapter on the theoretical background of this thesis, Oers (2014) pointed out the changing meaning of integration in connection to citizenship acquisition, while Goodman and Wright (2015) also suggest that approaching the programs from the perspective of integration or naturalization are two distinct perspectives. Therefore, suggesting a different categorization of the literature than Joppke (2017). Furthermore, as the following excerpt is to show, the significance of the category of national belonging is extensively contested.

The following discussion took place in connection to a subchapter in the module of politics in the democracy, devoted to introducing the participants to the symbols of the German state. After listening to the German national anthem, reading its text and discussing other state symbols such as flags, arms and national holidays, the following discussion took place.

Excerpt 15.

T1: Each of you are probably a little bit proud of your nationality! Right?

KA: No. I did not choose my country.

T1: But this is your country, you grew up there! That is the country of your grandfather!

KA: Yes, but it is a bit complicated... I was born Luxemburg, but my parents are from Spain, I have two nationalities. For me it is not important. There are both good and bad things everywhere. Yes, one third of my life I spent in Great Britain. Two thirds in Luxembourg. And then I spent almost all my holidays in Spain. Well, that's not easy.

T1: Okay, but where are your roots?

KA: Luxembourg, but not the country! Maybe my parents, my friends from my childhood, but not the food, not the culture.

T1: Then you are a really poor man!

KA: No! I am more than that! I am more than my country!

(…)

ME: I do not feel either Albanian or Italian. I cannot say that I am proud of being Albanian. I am not! But, also not Italian, because I am not Italian either.

T1: Hmm. okay... But when you think about it, it has to be somewhere to start. It has to be something where you say, I might be Italian, but I feel Albanian, because this and that is mine!

ME: I don't feel that! I lived in Italy, but still...

T1: So. Is there anyone here who says I'm proud? Because that's what I am!

KA: What does pride mean?

T1: Hmm... That I feel good about going to this country and I'm glad my parents were in this country. I never wanted any other country! This is hard, I know!

KA: But it is nationalism!

T1: No, you got it wrong now!

(…)

MV: I am proud of my home country! Venezuela has a difficult political situation now, but we have our culture, music, for me it's great. But unfortunately, we have this political system.

T1: Of course! System has broken a lot of things, has made a lot of bad impressions, but still. Something else comes and country remains country!

(…)

SL: With Syria now, I cannot even say that I am proud of the people... Because now the mentality... the lives... it is...
T1: (interrupts) Yes, but you are proud of your family for example!
SL: Yes, I am proud of my family, of course! But I am not proud of them, because they are Syrians!

As the above excerpt shows, belonging and non-belonging to the nation is negotiated through contesting the significance of national belonging in itself. This phenomenon can be characterized by the term of national indifference, coined by historian Tara Zahra (2010). Although Zahra (ibid.) describes national indifference in a historical setting, the concept aptly applies to the participants reactions, rejecting the value attached to national belonging. As she points out, this attitude is generally perceived by nationalists as an abject state that requires fixing or reeducating. This is the perspective T1 takes when she responds to KA elaborating on why he does not really identify with any nation-states, calling him a "really poor man" for not having those attachments, which she values. At the beginning of this lengthy discussion, the most active were those who already possessed dual citizenships and spent many years of their lives living different countries. These people could be called 'cosmopolitans', another term, as Zahra (2010:98) points out, having negative connotations from a nationalist perspective, as it implies a lack of rootedness to one place, one nation. Especially noteworthy is the persistence of some participants to explicitly challenge and resist the stance T1 represents in the discussion. They challenge the stance that everyone must be proud of the country where they are from, everyone must have their roots somewhere and everyone must have an emotional connection to that country. This can be seen in KA's reaction declaring that 'he is more than his country' or in the interaction between SL and T1, SL persisting that the fact that she is proud of her family is independent of the fact that they are of Syrian nationality. In these interactions, the participants display a theme of national indifference, in which they are aware of their

nationality – as opposed to the group the study of Zahra (ibid.) focuses on -, but explicitly and consequently challenge the value and meaning attached to it.

Nonetheless, there were also some participants, who expressed how their national belonging is meaningful for them, including T1, MV, or OL. The common denominator between these people is age, as all three were close to or above 40 years of age. Therefore, it seems that age is the most suggestive feature of a sense of positive national belonging in this case. Excerpt number 15 also invites to try to understand the position of T1 on the question of national belonging. Why does someone in her position repeatedly expresses the lack of desire to acquire German citizenship, emphasizing the emotional significance of her nationality by birth? Is it to make participants understand that they do not have to give up this part of themselves, 'their roots' even if they decided to live in another country? As T1 could not find the time to give an individual interview, this issue remains to be one of speculation.

Altogether, the analysis of this subchapter shows that the ideal of belonging to the German nation is constructed through the permeable legal category of citizenship. While this does reflect on the core ideas of civic integration and especially of civic nationalism, the participants seem to have remained rather indifferent to belonging to the nation in this understanding. This is signified on the one hand by the fact that only one participant expressed a potential desire for future naturalization, and the extensive contestation of the significance of national belonging in general, and especially concerning the countries where they lived before, or possess the citizenships of. Although the significance of national belonging is contested, as I will demonstrate in the following subchapter, belonging constructed along the ideals of integration proves to remain a significant factor in difference construction.

5.2. The Difference Construction of the Integration Discourse

As demonstrated in the previous subchapter, belonging to the German nation is constructed as a permeable legal category, the significance of which many participants contested. Difference, that is belonging and non-belonging to Germany, however, is also constructed along different categories than the one of the legal understanding of the national. This subchapter identified two main themes or underlying mechanisms contributing to the construction of migrant participants as 'Others', or non-belonging to Germany, the first of which, as already suggested in the introductory paragraphs of this chapter, connected to the centrality of language.

In a study on the exclusionary side effects of the civic integration paradigm, Duemmler (ibid) found elements of the civic integration discourse to be present in how the Swiss youth is describing their relationship with their 'foreign' peers, thus justifying the construction of boundaries between them. In this study, he identified four categories along which the boundary-making happens, from which the first one, the focus on language appears to be of special significance for the experiences of course participants. That is, whether they acquired a sufficient level of German language knowledge, or whether they speak another language than German in public. Accordingly, the first two excerpts of this section do not only demonstrate the centrality of the German language as experienced by the participants, also exhibiting the different ways in which they interpret their encounters.

Excerpt number 16 is quoted from the very first discussion, introduced in the chapter on politics in the democracy. This quote came about as part of that lengthy exercise, in which each participant had to address the political problems in their respective countries. As an attempt to break the positively connotated idealized picture that was created of Germany in that section, AH proposed a question.

Excerpt 16.
AH: I have a question. If you go for example to the Jobcenter, they know, you are foreigner. You speak a bit English, your mother tongue, he say: ‚*Bitte Deutsch*!' (please, in German!). You know, that I come new to Germany, why say '*bitte Deutsch, bitte Deutsch"*?

Although T1 explained this by a referencing the German history. That is, she explained that this problem must be an East German specificity, as due to the divided past of the nation less people speak English at this part of the country. This issue, however, has a much more bureaucratic explanation, German being the *Amtsprache*, or official language of the country and the Jobcenter being an office, where the official language must be spoken. Although it is possible bring an interpreter to the appointments, or even ask the Jobcenter to provide one, many are unaware of this service, which is not the duty of the case workers to inform struggling applicants about (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2019). The following excerpt is to provide another example for someone's experience with the centrality of language.

Excerpt 17.
LU: Young people are afraid of foreigners (in Europe).
T1: But right-wing parties exist in every country! I ask this now only from the group, not that you talk about this outside of the class. (whispers) Are you afraid living in Germany?
(most participants echo no, but some say yes and explain)
DR: My experience… It is very private; I cannot say it.
KA: A neo-Nazi group has beaten a friend of mine.
DI: But that is nationalism! If you are German, and in your country always foreigners coming. It happened to me on the train, an old lady - when I spoke Portuguese with my friend – the old lady did so: psst! Quiet! Not speaking my language! I think theoretically, here, everything is good. But practically, a bit difficult also for the Germans. Always foreigners coming. Difficult, that you for example speak on the street, here, in Leipzig, very-very good, always try helping. In Jobcenter. But for example, I live for a year in Zilt. A catastrophe! Always German, German, German!

The elaboration of DI on her experience with the centrality of language is especially interesting for being that different from the one of AH. That is, in contrast to AH, she finds people in general rather helpful when it comes to language, especially in the Jobcenter. The question is, whether her experience is different because she is treated differently, or, because she has a different interpretation of the events. Although both options are possible, she also displays evidence for having a specific interpretation on her experiences concerning language. While she addresses KA's comment on one of his friends being physically attacked as a manifestation of nationalism, thus exceptionalising the occasion and limiting nationalism to violent attacks, she expresses empathy rather towards the Germans. Nonetheless, the experiences of DI as a white woman married to a German man, could be very different from the experience of other participants, such as the following is to show.

Although DR did not elaborate on the reasons why she is afraid to live in Germany in the above excerpt, she shared in another class that she was raped by two German men on the streets of Frankfurt. This experience she also talked about in detail during the individual interview, which assault fundamentally shaped her experience residing in Germany. At another occasion, DR shared her experience being verbally attacked by an old man on the tram. As she recalled, although the tram was completely empty, the man demanded sit at the exact seat which DR set on, saying that the said seat is reserved for the elderly. Although she immediately complied to avoid confrontation, the old man ended this interaction by calling her a 'black chimpanzee'. As T2 also noted in one of the classes in connection to the rising popularity of the AfD, foreigners, and especially people with a darker skin complex, such as DR, are more exposed to xenophobic attacks. Therefore, while any migrant 'Other' participant could potentially encounter atrocities in connection to language, others, such as people with a darker skin tone or people categorized as 'Arabic' or 'Muslim' are exposed to different experiences.

Furthermore, as already suggested, the (non-)belonging of 'Arabs' or 'Muslims' is constructed in a very specific way through the integration discourse.

This prevailing difference construction between Muslims and Christians is established by both Kaden (2012) and Zabel (2016). However, as the following excerpt is to show, this difference is not constructed through the theme of religious difference, but rather through the language of (non-)integration. This consists of general statements on the implications of migration and on what constitutes a 'good migrant'. The following excerpt is to provide an example for the above difference construction, which discussion unfolded in connection to a conversation on the European Union and the approach of certain member states to migration.

Excerpt 18.
T1: Great Britain – why did they leave the EU? Was it good for them to leave?
OL: Migrants. Did not want them. Did not accept the EU's points, migration is part of it.
T1: If we already talk about migration… What about Poland? It is not only, that Poland does not want migrants… They do not want any Arabic migrants!
MV: Migrants are bad for the economy.
T1: What do you mean? That all migrants from Syria, Venezuela, or – what do I know -, bring economic problems?
MV: Normally, migrants, economic problem. But I am not an economic migrant!
(…)
T1: The burka is also a discussion in Germany, that it should be banned. Can you imagine that it would be okay for example in the Jobcenter?
ME: I do not have a clear opinion on this… It is just a cultural shit, excuse me.
T1: But if you came to Europe, you want to integrate to Europe, because you came here already. If you want to live according to European norms, then you should not wear this at least in public spaces… In the offices, hospitals, schools, kindergartens. My opinion is, that if you work with people, they should be able to see your face. But this has nothing to do with anything, it is just my opinion.
OL: But this is about the religion!

T1: It is not, it is not in the Koran.
OL: Maybe not, but it is in the heads of people!
T1: My opinion is, that these people do not really want to integrate to Europe…
OL: Those people who wear this thing… they look funny to me.
T1: For normally thinking people, you can do whatever you want, but do it at home!

The above excerpt, therefore, provides an important example for how certain arguments of the discourse on migration and integration unfold in the course. It is also important to note, that this discussion took place at a time when none of the Syrians were present, who, with the exception of SL who T1 knew about that is Christian, were all perceived as 'Muslims'. In the first part of the excerpt, we can see an example for how the distinction between economic migrants and refugees were introduced to the debate, in connection to which MV proudly noted that 'he is not an economic migrant'. T1's 'opinion' on people who wear burkas being unwilling to integrate, did not only come up on this one occasion. When talking about different course types, the school also offering woman only courses, this opinion also resonated among other participants.

Excerpt 19.
ME: Why does a woman only course even exist?
T1: For some its important, because they are mothers and can only come at a certain time… For others, the husband tells them that they should go to a woman only course.
ME: But how is it even possible in Germany? It should not be like this.
KA: It takes time, until it gets to people's head and a lot of reading to understand that "oh, I´m free now".
ME: That is true, but the people came here already!
KA: But they do not come here to think.
T1: Yes, but somehow, everyone who comes here, no matter for what reason… Why are they here? They all want to integrate at the end.
KA: Or not!

T1: They integrate or not.
KA: But they do not want to.
T1: Yes.
KA: Or they cannot.
T1: But they also do not want to! That is even worse!

These discussions on the 'unwillingness to integrate' reflect on two issues. First, the shift in the understanding of integration as described by Kostakopoulou (2010:937), making it the individual's responsibility, or failure to integrate. Second, the characterization of those 'not willing to integrate' as people wearing burkas – Muslims – and those, to use the words of Nghi Ha and Schmitz (2006:243), who did nor, or insufficiently internalized the principle of equality. Although the difference, or non-belonging of Muslims is not constructed along the category of religion, but through the discourse of integration, Kaden (2012) and Zabel (2016) did identify the prevailing construction of this group as 'Others'. Nghi Ha and Schmitz (2006) address these themes as the justification for the courses, Brubaker (2017) as civilizationism, Murray (2014) as homonationalism and Farris (2018) as femonationalism. This finding not being new, nonetheless, does not mean that it would not have important implications.

Shachar and others (2017:8) propose the question of what we can learn about the emancipatory potential of the courses, when investigating their exclusionary past. As Oers (2014:267) notes, naturalization tests in the federal country of Baden-Württemberg were reported of as 'Muslim-tests' in the press addressing their discriminatory intent. Although the centralizing reform of 2005 was issued exactly in order to address this problem, considering the fact that civic integration criteria gained momentum in Europe as an effort to counter 'the spread of Islamic terror' on the continent and in the aftermath of 9/11 (Peters & Besley, 2014). Therefore, as Nghi Ha and Schmitz also propose, the above difference construction is inherent to the integration (dis)course.

Conclusion

As declared in the introduction, the aim of this thesis was to contribute to the scholarly efforts investigating how the nation-state and nationalism contemporary reconfigure. After demonstrating that the aspirations of civic integration fall in line with Gellner's (1997) definition of nationalism, I argued that civic integration has been so far mostly overlooked as the object of nationalism research as a result of a long tradition of methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). In order to be able to address this issue, I proposed to scrutinize orientation classes in Germany, as they – being specifically devoted to familiarizing newcomers with the host country's culture –, provide an outstanding opportunity to study questions on the nature of nationalism. Recognizing the nation as a discursive construct – after the work of Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008) –, the proposed research questions were to be answered through a case study of an orientation course, including a month long observation of the course and the analysis of related documents, such as the curriculum or the textbook.

Trying to answer the first research question of how, through which underlying mechanisms is the positively connotated, homogenized picture of Germany created in orientation classes, I found two underlying mechanisms – external comparison and the moralization and humanization of the state – to ensure this image in the first module of 'Politics in the Democracy'. In contrast to the presumptions of the research question, the findings on the first module and the findings of Kaden (2012), however, I found that in the second module of 'History and Responsibility', the nation is constructed as divided and heterogeneous. Moreover, the realization of the didactic principle of the *Kontroversitätsgebot* was much more prevalent in the second, than in the first module. I believe, these findings alone could signify a valuable contribution, revealing the resilience of nationalism and its ability to adjust and

change shape as the context and circumstances demand. A question for further investigation is, whether the above described patterns are unique to the German case as a consequence of the national socialist past, signifying the gravity of the national context, or whether the historic nation is constructed as divided in the case of other countries as well. Does this sharp contrast between the political and historical construction of the nation exist elsewhere? If so, what other factors could possible explain it than the country-specific narration of national history?

Addressing the second research question of how, along which categories difference - that is belonging and non-belonging to Germany - is constructed, I found that on the one hand, belonging to the German nation is constructed as a permeable legal category, falling in line with the stated aims of civic integration and the characterization of civic nationalism as liberal, voluntarist and inclusive. The significance of national belonging, however, was met with a form of national indifference, in which some of the participants extensively contested the values and meanings attached to this category. On the other hand, as I argued, difference and non-belonging to Germany are not only constructed along the legal category of citizenship, but rather through the ideal of integration. While the centrality of language could potentially impact any newcomer, who did not perfect their German language knowledge yet, other elements of the integration discourse implicitly, but specifically targets Muslims as different and non-belonging to the society. While this issue was elaborated on by many, it urges the revisiting and addressing of the question of the inclusionary potential of the civic integration paradigm, difference construction being the inherent part of it.

Although Michael Billig (1995) called to study ‘our’, banal nationalism over twenty years ago, as Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) discuss, social sciences mostly remain blind to the issue of nationalism, especially concerning migration related questions. As the above work hoped to exhibit, civic integration and orientation courses prove to be a context in which

this task can and should be undertaken. The prominence of Billig's (ibid.) intervention is especially its ability of pointing out, how inconspicuous nationalism, which we often tend overlook as such, feeds into greater nationalist movements and outbursts. Therefore, we should 'remember banal nationalism', the resilience of which thesis work hoped to demonstrate, and continue to investigate the ways in which it contemporarily reconfigures.

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