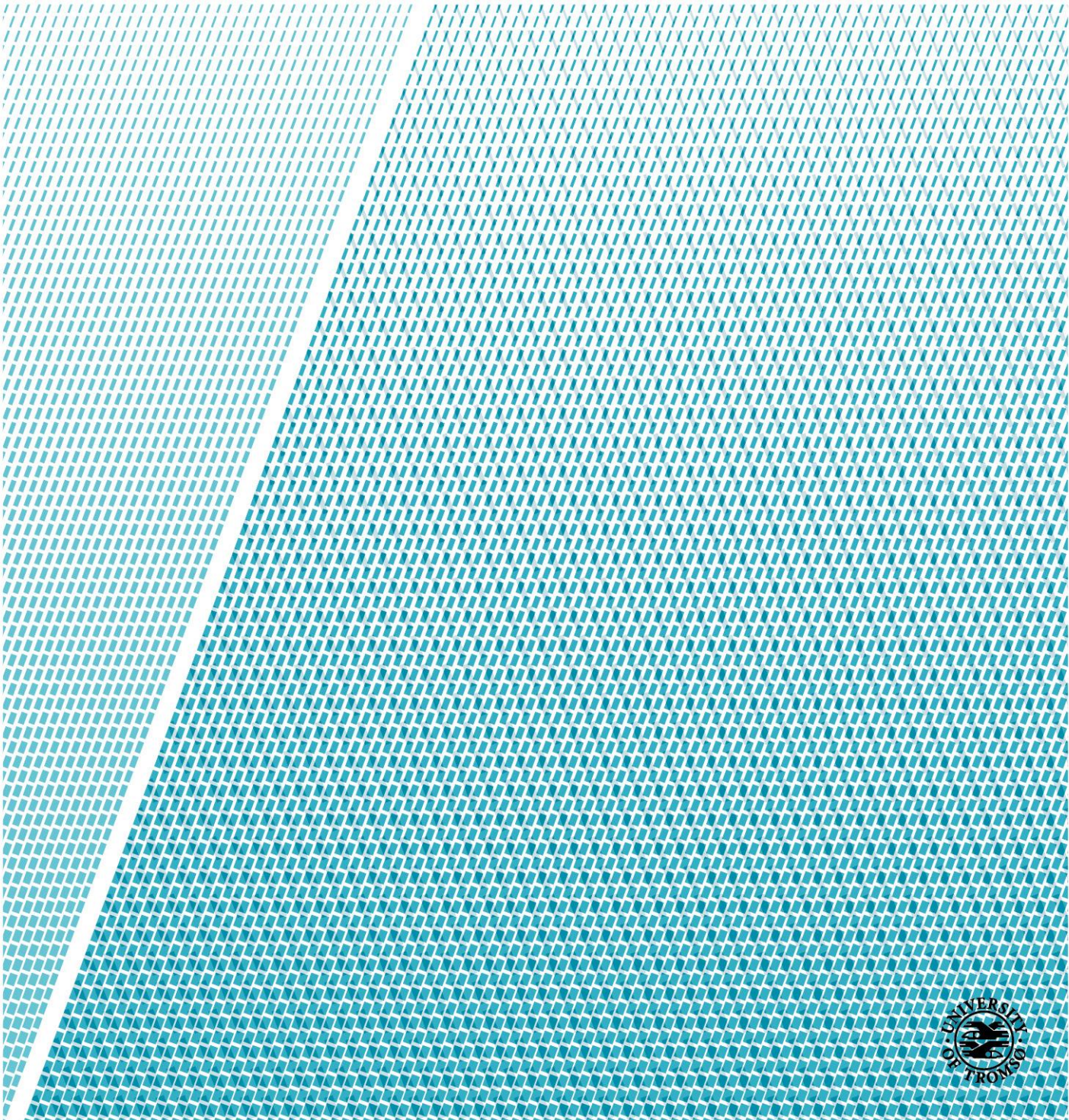UiT
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Visions of Integration

How immigrants make sense of a new landscape

—

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Abstract

People from all over the world and manifold backgrounds come to Germany to live there. When they come they need to make sense of what they are experiencing in that new landscape in order to become part of society with ideally equal rights and opportunities. Integration is one way to frame the arrival and settling of immigrants in a new society. This is in particular the case when moving across borders into a new country. In German public discourse, it is often implied that integration is mostly about language and employment. It is shown that this is indeed the case. However, it is also shown that integration goes beyond this understanding. In politics and policy-making in Germany, the notion of integration seems to be often depicted as an aim with immigrants integrating into German society and adopting German culture. Drawing from personal accounts and visions of six immigrants in Regensburg, Germany, this thesis aims at providing a deeper understanding of the processes involved from an immigrant perspective and a more differentiated approach to the notion of integration in a place where diversity is likely to be increasing in future.

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Content

Illustrations

List of Abbreviations

SVR   Sachverständigenrat Deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration
engl. The Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration

UNDESA   United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs

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1. Introduction

1.1. Why Integration?

On 30th April 2017, the German Federal Minister of the Interior Thomas de Maizière of the conservative party CDU (Christian Democratic Union) published an article on German *Leitkultur* (literally *guiding* or *leading culture*) (de Maizière 2017). The article aims at building a frame on what "holds us [the Germans] together at heart" creating implicitly requirements to immigrants in Germany. However, the ten theses presented by de Maizière paint a static image and moreover, a "culturally monist" (Entzinger and Scholten 2014: 375) one. The call for integration is not new in German history with modern immigration reaching back to the end of World War II. Today in German politics and policy-making concerning immigration, the notion of integration seems to be often depicted as an aim with immigrants integrating into German society and adopting German culture.

Recently, following the attacks of 9/11 and other subsequent terrorist attacks in Europe and the USA the perceptions of immigration have changed. Increasingly, immigration is perceived as a security threat especially in Western countries (see among others Chebel d'Appollonia and Reich 2008, 2010a, Dancygier 2010). This shift in perception has had great effect on immigration policies and on immigrants already living in another country. In favour for securitization the aspect of incorporation of immigrants seems to have been underestimated and neglected in Europe and even more in the USA (Chebel d'Appollonia and Reich 2010b). While acknowledging the measures to increase security through broadening surveillance and using new technologies at border controls, the aim for prevention of radicalization within a country should also focus on the significance of social, political, and economic incorporation (ibid.: 4). This is due to potential severe consequences as Chebel d'Appollonia and Reich (ibid.: 10) show. If their "analysis is correct, the securitization of integration issues limits opportunities and enhances alienation and insecurity while not solving the root causes of exclusion".

The processes of integration concern not only Germany but also many other countries. This stems from an increasing number of migrants moving within and across borders. Even though there have always been people moving from one place to another, the numbers have reached an unprecedented level (Eriksen and Schober 2016). The reasons have stayed much the same over time. People move for work, for better livelihoods,

because of war in the home place, or because of family ties and love (Loch 2014, Samers 1998). They move within countries, and across borders, as well as on a temporary basis or with the aim to settle down permanently (Jones 1992). Furthermore, since the reasons are as varied as the people that are moving, immigration results in a situation that can be extremely stressful for a society. This is because people move into a new society, a new community unfamiliar to them. Even within a country this can lead to problems and misunderstandings between the host community and the migrant. However, if one moves across borders into another country, into a society that is structured differently and based on different values, misunderstandings and demarcations between "us" and "them" are just too easy to be created.

1.2. Research Objectives

Much research seems to be focused on how the host society reacts to immigration. This majority viewpoint is often also the angle of perspective on integration. Integration is seen as something immigrants have to go through by adapting to and integrating into the host society. In this study, six immigrants residing in Regensburg are introduced with their various backgrounds and stories on what integration in Germany has meant to them. Thus, the point of perspective on integration is changed aiming to provide a deeper understanding of the processes from an immigrant perspective and a more differentiated approach to the notion of integration in a place where diversity is likely to be increasing in future.

Since the public discourse on integration tends to be focused on employment, this study originally aimed at understanding the importance of employment for integration. When doing research and conducting interviews, however, the focus changed to a much more general approach being What does it mean to integrate in Germany? During the interviews, it became clear that integration is a term which is used often without closer attention to the actual meaning. Specifically, the perspective on integration from an immigrant's point of view and how they understand it can create deeper insights into the complex processes of integration. The aspect of employment is still central in this study, but to a lesser extent than anticipated. In a nutshell, this thesis aims for a broader understanding of integration of migrants into society in contrast to the approach taken by immigration politics and policies in Germany which are setting the main focus of integration on language and employment. This will be done by examining the questions

of **how integration can be envisioned** and **which role employment plays in the process of integration**.

1.3.   Overview over Thesis

This thesis consists of two interlinked parts. Chapter 2 forms the first part and scrutinizes how the notion of *integration* can be delimitated to create a conceptual framework. The centre of the second part is a study which was conducted in Regensburg. Chapter 3 provides background information to immigration and integration in Germany and Regensburg specifically. Chapter 4 explores firstly the reasons why the study was conducted in Regensburg and secondly the methods and methodology underlying the research design. The results – that is the accounts and visions on integration of six immigrants – are presented and discussed in chapter 5. Finally, chapter 6 will provide concluding remarks.

2. Delimitating *Integration* – An Analytical Approach

The academic field of integration has experienced large growth over the past decades. The study on integration is settled in the wider field of migration studies, which have developed into a large interdisciplinary field drawing among others from the areas of history, demography, geography, sociology, anthropology or political sciences covering both immigration and emigration. Migration studies may seek for example to explain the various migrating routes or the so-called 'push' and 'pull' factors. Another focus can be how immigration affects urban space, the composition of a society or how policies and politics influence migration (Martiniello and Rath 2014). The processes concerning immigration are often addressed in the field of immigrant incorporation studies and can be subdivided again into aspects regarding different spheres of life, such as social, political or economic integration. The latter one often receives particular attention both in research and policy-making.

In general, according to Olwig and Pærregaard (2011: 11), integration from an anthropological point of view

> concerns not only the particular processes of adaptation that migrants experience when they adjust to life in a new society. Integration also refers to the more general processes of adaptation that all individuals must go through if they are to become part of a functioning society.

Setting the focus on the welfare of a collectivity, integration thus ensures that the members of a society live together for it to function. This does not necessarily require "cultural conformity, but rather some sort of mutual understanding concerning what sort of cultural differences can be accommodated and how" (ibid. 12).

Creating such a mutual understanding presupposes change, both of migrants and the receiving society. Migrants arrive in a new place and will affect not only the 'receiving' society, but are likely to be also affected by it. Barbara Bender's concept of *landscapes* provides an understanding of this reciprocal connection. This concept will be presented first in this chapter, followed by an analytical approach to *identity on the move*. Afterwards, the concept *integration* will be scrutinized and set in a bigger context of policies of *managing diversity.* Lastly, the link of employment and integration will be explored and related to the following study in Regensburg.

2.1. Landscapes on the Move

The concept of *landscapes* as introduced by Barbara Bender offers an approach to understanding and situating the discourses on integration. It assumes that each person is living in landscapes and is both affected and affecting them (Bender 2001: 15). Although also used in the fields of human geography and archaeology, in anthropology the concept has been broadened to give a framework on how humans create and make sense of the landscapes they live in. In the words of Bender the concept of landscapes frames "the way in which people – all people – understand and engage with the material world around them" (Bender 2001: 3).

While landscapes are changing because of people moving to or through, landscapes in turn also affect the people living in them (Bender 2001: 15). When people migrate to another place, or landscape, they try to make sense of it and find their place within – or their "place in the sun" (Martiniello and Rath 2014: 13). At the same time the landscapes are changing because of migration. This results in

> [t]he host society's individuals and institutions, for their part, [having] to figure out how to deal with all of these newcomers, how to maintain social order and social cohesion, and how to secure a smoothly running social, political and economic system in which everyone gets a piece of the pie and all feel connected in some way. (Martiniello and Rath 2014: 13)

In general, landscape is understood as something that cannot just *be* (Bender 1993a, 2001, Hirsch 1995). Landscape(s) are always subject to interpretation or "polysemic and not so much artefact as in process of construction and reconstruction" (Bender 1993a: 3). Humans live in landscapes, are part of them, and give meanings to them. Moreover, landscapes are highly influenced by history. Meanings and interpretations are determined by past events and processes which still, also through the landscapes, are affecting current lives. While this means that current landscapes exist the way they do because of the past, it also shows that they are in process and affected by the present, which, one day, will be the past, too. Furthermore, assigned meanings vary in regards to the person engaging with the landscape. At the same time persons living and interacting with the landscapes are also objects of interpretations and labelling. Being polysemic and constantly in process moreover results in landscapes not only being uneasy and untidy, but also contested and conflicted.

Being on the move across and within landscapes can be approached from a micro and a macro perspective. While the former focusses on the individual experience, a macro

perspective looks at the bigger picture of globalization and the phenomenon of global movement (Bender 2001). In current times, reality has become compressed in time and space by possibilities that on the one hand offer cheap options to some and on the other hand mean economic deprivation to others. People are on the move for various reasons like for instance travelling for leisure or for work, or looking for better ways of living and providing for the family.

The micro approach is characterised by the focus on personal experiences.

> By moving along familiar paths, winding memories and stories around places, people create a sense of self and belonging. (Bender 2001: 5)

Thus, people experience landscape(s) by being in places and moving between them. At the same time, "things unfold along the way, come in and out of focus, change shape and take on new meanings" (ibid.). People move within landscapes, are part of it, add meanings to it, and affect it. The perceptions of landscapes are not only experienced for one moment, but are part of a wider spatial and temporal field. In contrast to the assumption that landscapes require one to stay for it to create a sense of belonging, examples have shown that this is not true. In that case, the centre is not a geographical place but an ego-centred world. For Roma for instance, this centre tends to be represented by the caravan. While the temporary campsites change, the caravan stays the same, providing the centre for the feeling of belonging and rootedness (Bender 2001: 7). In this way, not only the static understanding of landscape needs to be revised, but also the understanding of landscape and the belonging or rootedness in a landscape scrutinized. In the words of Barbara Bender (ibid.)

> already the notion of small-scale, familiar, rooted landscapes needs to be questioned, and the phenomenological approach opened towards a stronger sense of movement within enlarged worlds.

Applying the theory of landscape to migration, in particular immigration to Germany, the notion of movement to, within and from landscapes is important. Since integration concerns both the person moving to or through and the people already living in a certain place, landscapes offer the possibility to have a look at how both interact through the notion of integration. Understanding and interacting with landscapes is not necessarily an individual process. Instead, landscapes can affect and be affected both by the individual and a group. Furthermore, landscapes are embedded in a context being the temporal and spatial setting in which they exist and that influences experiencing and the

shaping of them. Landscapes are constantly changing, being constructed and re-constructed in particular through the influence of migration. The concept of landscapes offers an approach towards understanding on how people make sense of their new surroundings.

2.2. Identity on the Move

Being on the move seems to imply that one is in a *non-place*[1], being part of no landscape. Barbara Bender however shows that the contrary is true. She broadens the understanding noting that one always moves through landscapes and thus creates a connection to the landscapes. Furthermore, moving does not mean dislocation of a person but rather relocation in the sense that "[p]eople are always in some relationship to the landscape they move through – they are never nowhere" (Bender 2001: 8).

Embedded into landscapes, identity plays an important part during the process of making sense of a new environment. On the one hand, identity is influenced for instance by the area one lives in, such as certain townships (Olwig 1993). On the other hand, it is the people and their ideas, experiences, and identities that influence and create the landscape. These identities can be both in an individual sense or group-related. Landscapes and identity are thus interdependent.

Keeping in mind Bender's concept of landscapes, both the individual and group experience is important to identity. However, a group – for instance a society, a majority, a minority – is diverse. Experiences, knowledge, or openness amongst others vary highly inside such groups. It can be assumed that both 'sides' – that is the newcomer and the established – have already been in (virtual) contact with each other. In a widely and closely connected world, information about the 'other' has already travelled before an actual person has arrived in a new place. Such

> [c]ontact approaches presuppose not sociocultural wholes subsequently brought
> into relationship, but rather systems already constituted relationally, entering new
> relations through historical processes of displacement. (Clifford 1997: 7)

Clifford points towards the fact that in an increasingly connected world – through television, telecommunications, and most recently internet – it is highly unlikely that a relationship between a host society and an immigrant is only established when actually meeting. Rather, the contact has virtually existed before, with information and images

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[1] cf. Marc Augé. 1992. *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*

conveyed through various sources. Moreover, this relationship suggests that the notions of identity of the host society and immigrants exist in relation to each other. Thus identity is only formed through contact.

Eriksen and Schober (2016) address the significance of contact for the formation of identity. It is not only formed by being opposed to something different but is also subject to change through external influences. Similarly to Bender's suggestion that everyone affects and is affected by the landscapes they move through, Eriksen and Schober confirm that identity is dynamic and multi-layered. It varies not only temporarily according to situation and environment, but can also change and be changed more deeply though external influences. This is to say, that we all have several identities at the same time, as for example mother, son, teacher, craftsman, student, and so on. Moreover, these identities can change in regards to outer impacts. In the case of migration, the identity – or perhaps label – "immigrant" is added to one's identities.

> So, who we are, or who we are seen to be, can matter enormously. Nor is identification just a matter of the encounters and thresholds of individual lives. Although identification always involves individuals, something else – collectivity and history – may also be at stake. (Jenkins 2008: 3)

Identity matters and the notion of identity are omnipresent in everyday life – sometimes obvious, sometimes hidden, sometimes seen as important, and sometimes insignificant. Identity – and identification – are central tools for group-building. Fredrik Barth's "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries" (1998) was perhaps the first publication to receive wide acknowledgement on this correlation. One of the central arguments is that belonging to a group is usually done in contrast to something else. A group-identity is thus not only created through opposition to something – or rather someone – other, but also through emphasizing what one is not. The aspect of group-building and belonging in context of nation, nationality, and nationalism is reflected upon by Benedict Anderson (2006). An *imagined community* in his view is foremost a political community. This community is limited because it is unlikely that all members know each other personally. Yet, all members feel connected as a nation. This aspect is important to integration, since it often seems to be assumed in public discourse that one can only be entirely 'German' when holding the German citizenship. This notion can be seen also in the ten theses on leading culture by de Maizière (2017):

> In our country, there are many people who have been living here for a long time without being citizens – they, too, belong to our country. But when I speak of 'we' I mean first and foremost the citizens of our country.

The presented approaches on identity share the understanding that generally identity and identification are processes rather than fixed traits. In terms of migration, the notion of rootedness is added to both the discourse on identity and landscape. However, as the term already indicates, rootedness is often meant as staying in one place. It seems to imply, that only when rooted in one place identity is uncontested and stable (Bender 2001: 7, Eriksen and Schober 2016). Yet, this understanding leaves out millions of people who are constantly on the move irrespective of whether this is happening temporarily, with the intention the resettle or involuntarily. Thus, the understanding fails to contribute to fathom rootedness and identity in a time of global movement. On the contrary, in the discourse on culture, identity and contact stasis is asserted (cf. Bender 1993b, Bender and Winer 2001, Clifford 1997). This stands in stark contrast to the history and presence of movement and contact between people.

The ambiguity of identity in a globalized world has been largely dealt with through the approach of *hybridity* which derives from the discourse on postcolonialism and transnationalism in cultural studies and its approach to hybrid identities of immigrants.

> Thus, to some extent the concept of hybridity as employed in postcolonial theory and in cultural studies stands in opposition to the concept of multiculturalism. Both share the effort to capture the complexities of a world marked by infinite encounters between people with different backgrounds and different worldviews. However, while "multiculturalism" often still maintains a notion of an independent existence of separate and bounded cultures prior to the encounter, "hybridity" is aimed directly at overcoming the notion of a prior existing bounded culture. (Frello 2012: 2)

Hybridity aims to show that transnational migrants cannot only be 'either-or' but rather can be both part of their home-community and their new community. In general, the approach of hybridity is an interesting and important aspect of studying how immigrants situate themselves in a new environment. In relation to the notion of integration, the concept of hybridity seems to be contradictory. In general, the debate on integration is also centred around people who are on the move. Integration can be referred to as the political discourse and measures of immigrant incorporation, but also on the individual processes immigrants may face. In this manner, integration refers to the (re-)socialisation process of an individual in a new society or community (Wieviorka

2014). However, integration is a 'chaotic' term (Samers 1998). There is not *one* definition since the processes of integration is constantly in flux and subject to interpretation. Thus, it may be impossible to find one. The following chapter will take a closer look at how the concept of integration can be understood.

2.3. *Integration* – a Chaotic Concept

The matter and notion of integration is complex. It is entangled in various layers of life, its social aspects, but also cultural and economic ones and affecting politics and policy-making. Yet first of all, the understanding of integration as it is applied here is linked to migration, or more precisely – immigration. The comprehension of integration however is diverse depending amongst others on geographical, historical and political contexts. Different countries have different understandings or use different terms for similar concepts. Mostly, this is due to different historical experiences in the countries.

In academia, the field of *immigrant incorporation studies* was introduced to circumvent misunderstandings and ambiguous terms (cf. Loch 2014, Martiniello and Rath 2014). Yet, what is called immigrant incorporation in academia is named differently in different settings. While *inclusion*, *absorption* or *adjustment* can be used, perhaps the most common terms to address immigrant incorporation are *integration* or *assimilation*. Today, the term 'integration' is predominant in Europe when talking about the process of immigrant incorporation. At the same time in the USA 'assimilation' is mostly used to address similar issues (Martiniello and Rath 2014: 14). There, the concept of integration goes back to the Civil Rights Movement opposing segregation in spheres of public life. In other words it was used to describe "the desegregation and acquisition of citizenship rights and equality" of black people (Martiniello and Rath 2014: 14-15). The process of incorporation of recent immigrants however is termed assimilation which generally can be understood as the assimilation to or adoption of the dominant or mainstream culture (ibid.). Both terms are often linked to specific ideologies. In line with the European and German traditions the term integration is used here. Below, a more detailed delineation is given on the two most common notions of immigrant incorporation underlying ideologies: integration and assimilation.

Underlying the various terms different immigration and incorporating several models can be detected. Entzinger and Scholten (2014) depict four different models and approaches: assimilationist, differentialist, multiculturalist, and universalist. As pointed out above, an assimilationist approach is open to any that is willing to adopt the

receiving society's culture. Thus the model is "culturally monist" (ibid. : 375). In contrast, a differentialist approach is built upon ethno-cultural categories and therefore exclusionary. Accepting cultural differences, a multiculturalist model aims for "separate, but equal" (ibid.). Lastly, universalist models consider culture to be not of importance to the state and rather focus on the participation in the national political community and citizenship. According to Entzinger and Scholten this is the model that describes best the situation in the USA today. This relates to the notion that certain models can be linked to specific actual national policies. The models, and therefore also national integration policies, can also be pointing towards ideologies determining the understanding of integration, and the assumptions and expectations towards immigrants (Loch 2014: 624). However, the models are rarely as clear-cut as the theory suggests and often over-simplify reality (Entzinger and Scholten 2014: 372).

Generally, UNDESA in their World Economic and Social Survey 2004 see that in the last two decades of the twentieth century, there has been a shift in understanding integration in various Western countries. They detect a change in policies first in Canada, Australia and the USA which then also became visible in several European countries. This shift towards multiculturalism is, according to UNDESA, due to seeing integration more as a process encompassing society as a whole (ibid.: 162). The starting point of this shift was the sole focus on paid work and education. Instead, UNDESA sees a broadening approach to integration that is considering more factors beyond employment and education. To what degree this analysis is valid for Germany is difficult to ascertain in particular since such shifts in policies and policy-making take time.

In an European setting, and from a sociological perspective, Loch (2014: 623-24) sees a double meaning of integration in relation to sociological concepts. On the one hand, integration refers to social cohesion and solidarity created through balancing "collectivising and differentiating forces". Such understanding stands in contrast to the notion that immigration is challenging social cohesion, for example because of "spatial concentration of immigrants" (UNDESA 2004: 193) referring to so-called *ghettoization*. Yet, as UNDESA also points out, it is unclear whether such spatial concentration is due to discrimination, both socially and spatially, or what sort of impact spatial concentration has on social integration.

On the other hand, the concept of integration describes the "integration of individuals or groups into society" Loch (2014: 623-24). Throughout history the concept has been

referred to several marginalised groups such as workers or women. Migrants are only the latest group considered to be part of this process. Yet, there are also aspects of the notion of integration that should be treated critically as for instance shown by Michel Wieviorka (2014). On the one hand the term integration should be used cautiously because of the ambiguities depicted above, both in a political/public setting and academia. On the other hand, the understanding of society to which a person or group should be integrated to is often static and out-dated. Society is seen as one entity or even as a 'system' creating a framework in which individuals are socialised, that is integrated, within. This understanding neglects the dynamics and heterogeneity of society as a whole.

Irrespective of which term is used to describe the process of immigrant incorporation, the underlying concepts, ideologies, and understandings are often unclear and fuzzy. In general, it is important to differentiate between integration as a label of political measures, and integration as the process of incorporating minority groups into a wider community/society (i.a. Loch 2014, Olwig and Pærregaard 2007, Wieviorka 2014). Various scholars have been looking closer at the different spheres that integration encompasses. Martiniello and Rath (2014: 14) for instance see three central issues that can be meant by the integration: Firstly, it relates to the "actual makeup of a society" and the position of a migrant within. Secondly, it represents the government's and society's idea on how the process should ideally end. And lastly, it is the policy mechanisms and tools for immigrant incorporation the concept refers to. In the words of Ejrnæs (2002: 7) it is often unclear whether integration is understood as a theory, a political aim, or in fact a utopian idea.

The notion of integration is used in many different contexts with various underlying understandings. It indeed is a 'chaotic' term (Samers 1998) that is hard to grasp and explain. Nevertheless, in the debate on immigration in Germany the notion is mentioned on a frequent basis. Implicit assumptions that are often concealed by the term are seldom made clear. Instead, the question remains who is addressed by the processes of integration. One can get the idea in public discourse in Germany, that it is foremost the immigrants who have to integrate into German society. Often this is done by implying to adapt to and adopt 'German culture' – as has been indicated by the Federal Minister of the Interior Thomas de Maizière (2017). Such a one-sided approach, however, neglects the processual nature of integration. Besides, taking into account the concept of

landscape, it would not be possible to separate 'the' host society and 'the' immigrants that clearly.

Integration is rather a process involving landscapes as whole which includes established inhabitants. Thus, immigration affects landscapes while landscapes affect paths of immigration and immigration policies. Incorporating immigrants into pre-existing landscapes and social structures is therefore more complex than creating integration laws and rules. These are definitely important for integration since they are providing options for instance for language courses, further education, and facilitation of employment. Exploring how immigrants envision integration processes helps to understand aspects ranging further than employment and language. It offers a deeper comprehension of what it actually means to integrate while at the same time contesting the notion of an unchanging and stable host society.

2.4. Managing Diversity

Increasing immigration means increasing diversity within societies. This in turn is affecting migration and integration policies. Changing policies again are influencing the integration process in regards to what the landscapes look like for newly arrived as well as long-established immigrants. Landscapes can change because of events, but also because of changes in policies. Still, what is happening within landscapes is often interconnected. Thus, certain events may cause a change of policy. In the case of migration, assumptions and ideas can also be changed as Vertovec (2011: 248) shows:

> [...] Events and emblems become mirrors for reflecting assumptions of 'us' and 'them,' the nation and its others, 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' cultural difference, 'good' vs. 'bad' diversity.

Such events or symbols can be for instance the attacks of 9/11, headscarf debate in France or Germany, the bombings in Brussels, or discussions on building a mosque at Ground Zero. Generally, "[m]igration represents one key mode of transformation" that may trigger "cultural anxiety" and subsequent changing social and political politics (Vertovec 2011: 244). Thus, changing political and social circumstances "are not just shapers, but also the drivers of culturalism and cultural politics" (ibid.).

The idea of managing diversity is often embedded in specific migration and integration policies (Chebel d'Appollonia and Reich 2010b). However, these policies often aim at 'the' immigrant group which would suggest a stable and clear-cut group. with the task of state institutions and policies to "act as guardians and reproducers of the nation"

(Vertovec 2011: 246). Integration policies, and the approaches to manage diversity, in Vertovec's view have often been based on culturalist assumptions placing culture in the middle of migration and integration discourses thus rendering it static and bounded.

Yet, 'the' immigrant group is inertly heterogeneous, also within groups coming from the same country of origin. The policies measures should be constantly altered and adapted to the current immigrant groups. In the case of immigration to the USA

> the source of immigrants has [...] altered, and it might be potentially naïve to assume that non-European migrants and asylees can use the same mechanisms as effectively as in prior historical waves." (Chebel d'Appollonia and Reich 2010b: 9)

In a Danish context, Olwig and Pærregaard (2007) show that societal problems are often seen as being caused by the other cultural backgrounds of immigrants instead of reflecting on the frames set by societal conditions that may make it difficult for immigrants to accommodate in Denmark. Yet, not all immigrants are viewed as the same source of 'problem-making' in society. In regards to integration policies there are therefore some underlying questions that the authors ask:

> What is it that causes that migration background and foreign ethnic origin have become such important markers of problematic otherness, that it seems necessary to create comprehensive integration measures while other social, cultural, and economic differences in the Danish society have not caused wider public debate. At the same time, one can ask why certain immigrant groups are perceived as representatives for this otherness and therefore pointed out as target group for these actions, while other immigrant groups are not incurring the same attention and therefore are seen as irrelevant in relation to integration measures. This leads to more superordinate questions concerning which social perceptions are underlying integration as political project, who the various actors in the field of integration are, what kind of social problems there are which are outlined and sought to be handled through integration, and how those involved relate to these efforts. (Olwig and Pærregaard 2007: 10-11, own translation)

The issues the authors address can also be traced in a German setting. This is particularly the case for which groups are targeted for integration measures. As Robert, an immigrant originally from the USA with roots in Serbia and Belarus, points out, there is a "bonus" when being American meaning that people would meet him with fewer prejudices and would be more open towards him in Germany compared to migrants from other countries. Such underlying sentiments of a receiving society can be hard to change, in particular if they make their way into national policies thus creating a self-sustaining circle through reciprocity (Ehrkamp 2006).

2.5.   Employment and Integration

The connection between employment and migration is in studies often linked to (structural) disadvantages of immigrants in relation to natives (cf. Engels et al. 2011, Haug et al. 2014). The role employment may play for social integration is however seldom addressed. Employment is rather an aspect of economic integration which is closely linked to the incorporation of migrants in local economies and labour markets. Yet, the fact remains, that many immigrants may struggle economically and experience social exclusion (Samers 1998). Samers (2014) lists several theories aiming to explain the outcomes of immigrants in the labour markets such as *human capital theory* and its variations which assume that one's human capital – that is education and skills – combined with aspirations determines the labour market outcome in terms of wages and salaries. It however fails to give a clearer understanding on why many immigrants struggle. This is also the case for the *dual labour market approach* which distinguishes a primary sector – highly-payed and stable jobs – and secondary sector – low-payed and unstable jobs. The *labour market segmentation approach* tries to take in a more comprehensive understanding on labour market outcomes by combining quantitative and qualitative methods giving thus insights into discriminatory behaviour. Furthermore, while the first two approaches assume stable variables, this approach takes into account the underlying processes.

Disadvantages in economic performance can result in social exclusion, as shown by Samers (1998). While social exclusion can refer to poverty or deprivation, integration (or sometimes inclusion) aims at hindering it. Yet, it stays unclear what one is actually excluded from; whether it is exclusion from the labour market, political participation, or social welfare (ibid.: 126). Moreover, relying often solely on quantitative and statistical data, a more comprehensive understanding cannot be reached. This could be achieved by using qualitative data from a local level.

Many societies, especially in the EU, are characterized by diversity. Samers (2014) shows that diversity is in fact also a factor that should be taken into account when talking about immigrant incorporation in national labour markets. It is often the case that migrants from the same origin are already in the place a new immigrant arrives in. Social networks can then assist in making sense of the new landscape, such as helping in finding an accommodation, finding work, or giving legal counsel.

These theories and approaches however only aim to explain how immigrants are incorporated in a national labour market. Some, as the *labour market segmentation approach,* also try to find patterns on why immigrants tend to struggle more in comparison to natives on the labour market for instance because of discrimination based on factors such as nationality, sex/gender, or colour of skin. Taken further, the question is also why the second generation of immigrants is also likely to struggle economically (Chebel d'Appollonia and Reich 2010b: 9).

Immigration policies and policies connected to the restrictions of entering labour market as an immigrant are often linked to a welfare state setting. This is in particularly the case for the Scandinavian countries (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011). Germany may not have a welfare system that is as strong as in the Scandinavian countries. Nevertheless, it poses also a factor that should be taken into consideration when speaking about immigration policies. The authors Brochmann and Hagelund identify four analytical approaches to the challenges of immigration into welfare systems. The first approach is concerned about the economic stability of a welfare state, since it has to make sure it is not overburdened by too many new members. The second and third position the authors depict relate to the notion of social cohesion. Thus, the second approach refers to "the popular support necessary to sustain the basic structure of a redistributive welfare state in democratic societies" (ibid.: 14). The third approach supports the idea that a welfare state system is in itself a cushion to possible negative effects of diversity and immigration. Thus, through its existence social cohesion is created. Finally in contrast to the other positions, the last approach points towards a negative correlation between welfare states and integration asserting "that easy access to equal rights […] leads to weak labour market participation, high levels of spatial segregation, and overrepresentation in criminal statistics" (ibid.: 14). Whether these four approaches can actually be differentiated that clearly is debateable. Nonetheless, the positions show that immigration and integration policies are embedded in a wider system, which in this case is a welfare state system. Vice versa, immigration may also change welfare policies. However, Brochmann and Hagelund also point out that "[d]ebates on immigration and integration tend to be deeply moral, constantly hinting at the normative appropriateness of policies and practices" (ibid.: 23). This shows again, that integration and immigration policies can be linked to ideologies and normative understandings of how a society should work.

Yet, integration cannot be broken down to employment and labour market integration alone. Rather, integration is a process overarching many aspects of life, as Butterwegge (2007) shows for the case of Germany:

> The spheres of education and employment play a key role for the social integration of migrants. The success or failure of integration in these core spheres influences the chances of integration of persons with migrant background and thus their life perspectives in general.

Although the aspect of employment is often seen as integral to integration, the link of employment and social integration is rarely scrutinized. Employment tends to be seen first of all as securing livelihood and essential to economic integration. Yet, it has been shown that immigrants tend to perform worse in comparison to natives. We will see in chapter 5 that this can be due to lacking understanding of unwritten rules and too little support one receives upon arrival. To facilitate the entry to the labour market, one needs to understand the obstacles and troubles immigrants face when arriving in Germany. Furthermore, the accounts of the immigrants presented in chapter 5 suggest that employment is also linked to social integration, thus extending the understanding that employment is only essential to economic wellbeing.

2.6. Bridge to Study

The aspect of integration concerns various spheres in everyday life. These spheres are largely defined by studies and are, on the most basic level, social integration and economic integration. The term of social integration covers a diverse range of aspects such as access to educational resources or political participation. Economic integration in turn refers among others to access to the labour market, level of income, or living standard. Besides, there are many aspects that can be ascribed to neither social nor economic integration but which link economic and social integration, such as the aspect of employment. Measuring the extent of integration is an extremely difficult task and is usually done through quantifying the various variables which are commonly then used in comparison to the performance of an average native. Thus, such studies usually enable large samples ensuring moreover a certain degree of objectivity (cf. Engels et al. 2011, Haug et al. 2014). In addition to the previously named variables, the number of naturalizations in a year in a certain region are also considered to be a valuable variable to ascertain to a certain extent the level of integration (UNDESA 2004). One could argue

that citizenship is thus a prerequisite of fully becoming a member of an *imagined community*.

The questions of How immigrants envision integration, and Which role they think does employment plays in the process of integration is addressed through accounts of immigrants collected in summer 2016. The methods and methodology of the research are addressed in the following chapter 4. In chapter 5 the findings will be presented and then discussed in relation to the theoretical and conceptual framework established in this chapter.

3. Landscapes of Immigration

Central to this study are the accounts of six immigrants who lived in Regensburg during summer 2016. This chapter aims to give an impression of the landscape the interviewees of this study were living in. Their stories are embedded into a wider context and are likely to have been influenced by it. Therefore, a short overview over the recent history of immigration in Germany and Regensburg is given in the following. Their personal and detailed accounts on how they experienced moving to Germany and the processes of integration are presented and discussed in chapter 5.

3.1. Modern Immigration and Integration in Germany

Migration has been happening since humankind exists and has many reasons. One of the many causes of modern migration in Europe was industrialization in the 19th century. The recent history of migration, and therefore also integration, in Germany reaches back at least half a century. In the wake of World War II and the following economic boom in West Germany 14 million so-called "guest workers" (Gastarbeiter) made their way to Germany between 1955 and 1973 (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2016). Even though it was not intended from the German side, about three million guest workers decided not only to stay but some brought their families to their new home as well. One could call this the first big immigration wave to Germany after World War II.

In the subsequent years, there has been steady migration to Germany. However, the number of registered entries does not mean that the persons are actually staying. It is not uncommon that migrants move back or on from Germany. The question of whether a migrant is staying only temporarily, that is 'passing through', or whether she or he intends to stay 'for good' is an important aspect when looking at national integration models (Entzinger and Scholten 2014). Based on the assumptions on whether an immigrant is staying permanently or temporarily, policies and structures are created to facilitate immigration and integration. In the 1960s for instance when guest workers came to Germany, integration was not on the agenda of policymaking. In 2005, Germany passed the so-called "immigration laws" covering among others regulations concerning immigration and integration. For instance, so-called "integration courses" were introduced in 2005 covering both language skills and knowledge on German law, culture and history (Schneider 2007).

Immigration has been common in Germany. Yet, sometimes waves of immigration have been perceived as threats or problems resulting in so-called 'migration crises' as for instance during the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s. In 2015, the term again emerged in media fuelled by the opening of the borders in September. The worsened situation in the Mediterranean Sea, when thousands of refugees drowned trying to reach Europe, triggered the opening. As a reaction, thousands of people arrived every day in late summer 2015 at various train stations in Germany. There, thousands of volunteers were waiting at the train stations and helping in various civil organisations to provide support for the newcomers. Yet, at the same time groupings, in particular on the so-called "national right" of the political scene, started to form protests against the large numbers of immigrants. The movements were fuelled for instance by New Year's Eve 2015/16 in Cologne, when numerous sexual assaults were committed, mostly by people with a Northern African or Arabic background. One reaction was an increasing number of xenophobic attacks. The mood in society seemed to shift from being foremost welcoming – as shown by large crowds welcoming refugees at train stations – to being more suspicious towards migrants (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2017). The arrival of nearly one million (registered) refugees and asylum-seekers in Germany in 2016 (Bundesministerium des Inneren 2016) may have changed the perceptions of immigration and integration of many. Concurrently, the political focus moved towards integration and how integration can be successful. Besides, the focus of immigration and integration has also shifted to be almost exclusively centred on refugees and asylum-seekers. However, in total there are nearly 6.5 million people, or 7.9% of the overall population, living in Germany that migrated to Germany and do not have German citizenship (Destatis 2016). Counting everyone with a migration background – that is migrants or children of at least one migrant, both with and without Germany citizenship – the number rises to more than 17 million persons residing in Germany. In a population of 81.5 million in total, persons with a migration background constitute 21%. It would therefore be short-sighted to set the focus of integration solely on refugees when the overall number of immigrants is so much higher.

In German politics, the Ministry for Inner Affairs is in charge of structures influencing integration. However, since integration happens locally and on a smaller scale, it is mostly municipalities that deal with the practicalities while the ministry sets the structures and frameworks. Integration policies stand therefore between the national,

and sometimes supranational level such as the EU, and local lines of action (Entzinger and Scholten 2014).

3.2. The Landscape of Immigration in Regensburg

This study is set Regensburg, a town in central-east Bavaria, a federal state (*Bundesland*) in south-eastern Germany. Because of its location by the Danube, trade has always played a large role in the history of Regensburg, in particular during medieval times (IHK Bayern 2017). The origins however reach back to Roman times (Stadt Regensburg 2017). Nearly 2000 years of history can still be seen today with parts of the old Roman town visible, and the old city – which is also the core of the city –characterized by medieval buildings as can be seen in figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1 – View over the Stone Bridge (under renovation) crossing the Danube and the old town of Regensburg on the right shore

Figure 2 – View over the old town of Regensburg and its cathedral

The architecture is highly influenced by international trade and the city's political role in medieval times. In particular the amount and style of towers within the city walls have resulted in the city also being referred to as the 'northernmost Italian city'. After the Second World War Regensburg had lost its economic importance (IHK Bayern 2017). This only changed with the opening of the university in the late 60s and the improvement of transport networks, such as waterways and motorways. Subsequently, several companies decided to either expand or found facilities in the district around Regensburg. Today, international companies such as Siemens, BMW and Continental, but also medium- and small-sized companies, have both production and development facilities in the region. Certainly, this has also affected the development of the city itself among others through immigration both from within and outside Germany. Apart from industries, tourism plays an important role for the economy of Regensburg. This is also due to the old city having been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2006.

In 2016, the population of the city Regensburg was just short of 164,000 (registered) inhabitants (Stadt Regensburg 2016b). The age structure shows that 24.4% of the population is between 18 and 30 years old, likely due to the university and colleges (ibid.). In regards to migrants in the city the numbers are based on official registries that only record citizenship. Figure 3 shows, that 14.7% (24,084) of the population do not

hold German citizenship (so-called *foreigners,* German: *Ausländer*) and 275 persons have taken German citizenship in 2016 (ibid.). The regions of origin are presented in figure 4 which shows that the vast majority of foreigners – that is 76% - of foreigners in the city come from other European countries out with 48% coming from countries within the European Union and 28% from other European countries (Stadt Regensburg 2016a).
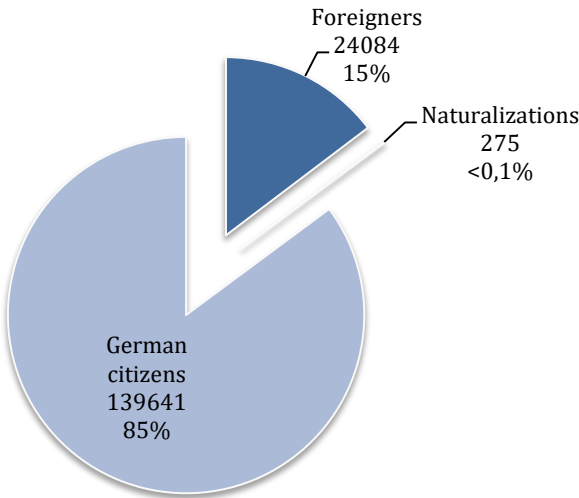

Figure 3 – Population in Regensburg, 2016 (Stadt Regensburg 2016b)
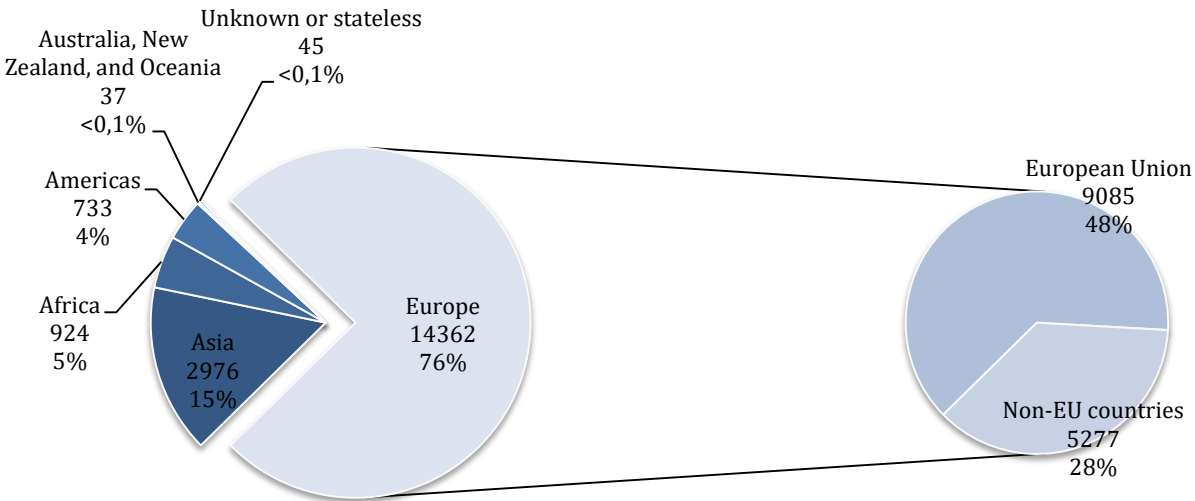
Figure 4 – Citizenship of Foreigners in Regensburg, 2014 (Stadt Regensburg 2016a)

These numbers of figure 4 however apply to the year 2014 and therefore have not taken into account the immigration wave of 2015. In 2014, the five largest groups of foreigners came from Romania (8.7%), Turkey (8.5%), Bulgaria (5.8%), Kosovo (5.5%) and Hungary (4.8%). In addition to the named groups, a significant part of immigrants consists of so-called *Aussiedler* (literally *resettlers*)*;* ethnic Germans that migrated to Germany from the former Soviet Union after the fall of the Berlin Wall (Haug et al. 2014). Because of specific regulations, *Aussiedler* can apply for German citizenship without having to wait for several years.

4. Methods and Methodology

The overview presented in chapter 3 served foremost to situate the study and the immigrants whose visions are a central part of this study. I, as the researcher, am not an outsider to these landscapes. The decision of conducting research in Regensburg was based on previous experiences. In 2013, I did an internship at the Office for Integration, which at that point was quite new in the organisational structure of the municipality. During my time there, I gained valuable insights and contacts. On the one hand is the political side. One central task that the office was working on in autumn 2013 was the development of a report on and concept for integration in Regensburg (Haug et al. 2014). On the other hand, I had the opportunity to meet people who work for and with migrants to help them settle in in Regensburg. By this, I gained both theoretical and practical experiences of integration on a local level.

4.1. Setting the study

This study asks questions regarding the understanding of integration and experiences in work life in Germany. The aim is to achieve this through personal stories of migrants. In preparation for the study I contacted the Office for Integration in spring 2016. The head of the office assured to support me both in updating me on the current situation in Regensburg and to help me getting into contact with possible interviewees. For the interviews I stayed in Regensburg from 13th to 24th of June 2016.

The main reason to use interviews as method of data collection has been to gain personal insights and visions on how immigrants experience the processes of integration. Their individual voices have been in the centre of this study. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to collect qualitative data (Bryman 2012: 471f.). They were based on an interview guideline containing seven questions (see appendix). A qualitative approach to the research questions is required because they aim first and foremost for personal stories and visions. These can only be accessed through a qualitative approach with open questions which give the interviewee the possibility to elaborate on the points she/he deems important. A semi-structured interview style assures on the one hand that there is a topical frame to the interview while giving the interviewee on the other hand the chance to elaborate on aspects important to her/him. At the same time having an interview guide allowed me during the interviews to ask for more details on specific aspects of the stories when necessary while assuring that certain points would be addressed in each conversation. In regards

to the data analysis the interview guide will help to compare answers on specific questions while not leaving aside the individual story.

The target group is based on several criteria. First, the interviewee has migrated her/himself. Second, at the time of migrating to Germany the interviewee had been of age. When being underage, one usually is still going to school where several special programmes are in place for migrants. Furthermore, the aspect of integration through employment loses its relevance. Thirdly, the interviewee has been in Germany for a considerable time and can therefore recall on various experiences. Moreover, a certain distance to arriving as a newcomer is given that allows perhaps the interviewee to reflect on the experiences. The last aspect concerns language proficiency. Since, however, the target group has been in Germany for at least a few years, this did not pose a problem.

The sampling was done with help of the Office for Integration and one of its databases. In the database, migrants can enlist as honorary interpreters. Through this list I could approach many migrants in a very short time. Because of reasons of data protection I could not directly access contact information, but the office offered to send an e-mail written by me with my contact information. In the subsequent days I received several answers by e-mail and telephone and managed to meet with six during my time in Regensburg.

The sampling is not representative for several reasons. First of all, the targeting of potential interviewees was biased. As mentioned above, the interviewees had all volunteered as interpreters. They can be called to translate between their first language and German for other migrants foremost for bureaucratic purposes. The work is unpaid and aims mostly at newly arrived migrants with little or no knowledge in German. Also public offices can reach out to the Office for Integration to ask for an interpreter. Being enlisted as such an interpreter the interviewees are already showing their willingness to help other immigrants through their own experiences. Furthermore, they show that they want to be and are involved in civil society. Secondly, this study is not representative because of the sampling size and the targeting. While a representative sampling seeks to act as a "microcosm" of the wider population (Bryman 2012: 11), the sampling of this study is not only too small to do so, but is, as shown above, biased. Nevertheless, this approach is fitting to explore integrational issues from the viewpoints of immigrants.

4.2.   Individual Stories in Research

The aspect of an individual story may seem irrelevant when talking about something like integration that concerns the society as a whole. An individual story, however, has certain advantages as shown by Abu-Lughod (1993). One central element is that it opposes homogenization and simplification of a group. In Regensburg there were 24.084 persons without German citizenship living in 2016. In 2014, there were people from 63 different countries and five different continents living in Regensburg. The group of migrants is far from homogenous and therefore should not be approached as such. When talking about immigration and integration the personal story should be taken into account to avoid generalisation and homogenisation. At the same time the individual story can still tell something about the bigger picture (Abu-Lughod 1993).

In her works, Lila Abu-Lughod (1991, 1993) discusses both the role of the researcher – in particular the anthropologist – when studying marginalised groups and the way storytelling can be used to avoid generalization and homogenization of that group. Even though Abu-Lughod discusses mainly the role of women and feminist anthropology, her thinking can be equally used for other marginalized groups, such as 'halfies'. This term she uses for "people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage" (Abu-Lughod 1991: 137) and refers thus to the approaches of transnationalism and hybridity (cf. chapter 2.2).

A central issue in Abu-Lughod's writings is the objectivity-subjectivity divide. While many academic studies aim for objectivity, in ethnographic work this seems impossible. There are several reasons for this. First, the researcher is never truly an outsider. "What we call the outside, or even the partial outside, is always a position *within* a larger political-historical complex" (Abu-Lughod 1993: 40). Therefore, an objective view on the studied group cannot be achieved. In the case of this study, I, the researcher, had been to Regensburg before to work with immigration and integration. Furthermore, I have migrated myself to study in Norway which makes me an immigrant who is subject to integration in another country. Secondly, using storytelling in research addresses the "inevitability of positionality" (ibid.: 15). This is to say that both the researcher and the researched are embedded in a bigger picture that influence the objectivity of the study. And lastly, a research situation inherently is a relationship of power between the self and the other,

> because the self is sensed as primary, self-formed, active, and complex, if not positive. At the very least, the self is always the interpreter and the other the interpreted. (ibid.: 13)

Thirdly, in particular anthropology and ethnographic work tends to generalize when writing about the 'other'. Using narratives and personal stories may on the one hand compromise objectivity and representability. On the other hand, however, the different personal stories show the various and diverse experiences of immigrants in Germany. Yet, even though the stories are different – and subjective – the issues that are involved are similar:

> Particular events always happen in time, becoming part of the history of the family, of the individuals involved, and of their relationships. In the events described in the […] stories I retell, one can even read the 'larger forces' that made them possible. (ibid.: 14-15)

Using storytelling in research does not create objectivity. Yet at the same time, it can be used to show that stories and experiences are intertwined in contrast to isolating the researched 'subject'.

4.3. Planning and conducting interviews

For this study, I collected the personal stories of six immigrants. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes to 1 hour 10 minutes. The names of the interviewees were changed for this study. The actual names were only noted when agreeing on a meeting. The name and contact information was deleted right after leaving Regensburg. The interviews were recorded with a voice recorder. In addition, I took notes during the interviews. To ensure the anonymity of the interviewees both items, the notebook and Dictaphone, were either locked up or kept on person at any point. After finishing the interviews, the audio files were transferred to my personal computer which is password protected. The consent of the interviewees was given orally before the beginning of the interview. The interviewee could at any point stop the interview in which case the recorded information would have been deleted. However, this case did not happen. The process of data collection and processing has been done in accordance with and approved by NSD (Norwegian Centre for Research Data).

The six immigrants whose voices and visions are in focus here, have all been in Germany for at least ten years. Navid has been in Germany the longest – for 32 years. Sometimes, however, it is hard to tell how long exactly immigrants have been in Germany. In the

case of Agata and Robert, they have not lived in Germany continuously. Table 1 provides an overview over some personal information of the immigrants we meet in this study. The six have come to Germany from different countries and for different reasons. The information shown in the following table is to give a clearer image of the people whose stories will be told here.

Table 1 – Overview over Interviewees

Name	Gender	Country of Origin	How long in Germany	Reasons for moving to Germany	Education	Occupation at point of interview
Navid	Male	Iran	Since 1985	Refugee (political reasons)	Higher education (taken in Germany)	Self-employed taxi driver
Maryam	Female	Iraq	Since 2000	Refugee (religious reasons)	Primary education (9 years of school)	Nurse for the elderly
Damian	Male	Poland	Since 2005	Studies	Higher education (partly taken in Germany)	Engineer
Agata	Female	Poland	Since early 2000s	Studied German in Poland. Scholarship for MA in Germany. Came to Germany again after marrying a German	Higher education (partly taken in Germany)	Clerk in local post office
Robert	Male	USA	First 1970s, again in 1980s, now since late 1990s	Father stationed in Heidelberg. Came back after marrying a German	Higher education (taken in USA)	Engineer
Stefan	Male	Romania	Since 2003	Work	Higher education (taken in Romania)	Engineer

After getting in contact either via telephone or e-mail as described above, the planning of the interviews was done in consultation with the interviewees. We then discussed whether we could meet in accordance to the respective calendar. If a meeting could be arranged within my stay in Regensburg, the location was discussed. To both be flexible and give a neutral setting for the interviews, the interviews were all conducted in public space, such as cafés in various parts of the town. Many interviewees appreciated this since some were commuters either not living in town or working in the wider region of

Regensburg. Yet, public spaces can be disadvantageous for instance because of being noisy or distracting (Bryman 2012: 473ff.). This, however, was not the case. Furthermore, it gave an air of having a conversation instead of an interview. This seemed to relax both the interviewees and me as the interviewer.

Since I took detailed notes during the interviews, a one-to-one transcription has not seemed necessary. Instead, I decided to only transcribe parts that seemed be important for the data analysis and discussion sections of this thesis, in particular in chapter 5. Issues concerning translation and legibility are discussed in the following section.

4.4. Mixed Data

In addition to the interviews, I use also secondary data in the analysis and discussion. Such sources include reports on immigration and integration in Germany as for example Haug et al. (2014) for the case of Regensburg or the second national report on integration by Engels et al. (2011). When using direct quotes from sources which were not originally written in English, these were translated by me to English staying as close as possible to the original phrasing.

In the case of the interview data, translation proved to be more difficult. This is due to different structures used when speaking in contrast to written language. Moreover, the immigrants I spoke to were not native speakers and their language proficiency ranged widely. This might have also caused slight misunderstandings due to lacking vocabulary. However, if a situation suggesting misunderstanding arose during the interviews, I checked through for instance rephrasing questions or comments to make sure that I would understand what exactly the interviewee was meaning. In this thesis, direct quotes have been adjusted in terms of structure and grammar in favour for better understanding and legibility. This has been done staying again as closely to the original structure as possible without altering the meaning.

In regards to the data analysis, the bigger context has to be kept in mind (cf. Bryman 2012: 401f.). By context I mean the events and incidents that have influenced the discourse on immigration and integration in Germany presented in chapter 2.1. One such crucial event, that has had vast effect on the discourse, was the opening of the borders in September 2015. Even though, the events from the summer and autumn of 2015 were not central, sometimes not even mentioned, in the interviews that were conducted for this thesis, they nevertheless form an essential part of the landscapes for

immigrants. This in turn affected the answers of the interviewees and the images of immigration and integration they sought to present during the interviews.

The events of 2015 may not only have influenced the interviews, but also recent publications such as reports, articles or political statements have focussed on the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers in Germany. In preparation for the study, I contacted the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in order to gain a deeper insight into the structures underlying integration processes in Germany. It became clear rather quickly that at that point the Federal Office was exclusively working with the newly arrived refugees and could not help me with recent data and developments concerning all immigration to Germany. In Regensburg, I arrived about two years after my internship. Similarly to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, the efforts and measures concerning integration had been changed with most of them now directed towards refugees. This was standing in stark contrast to what I had experienced during my internship. One may say that the landscapes of immigration and integration have profoundly changed in regards to political efforts and public discourse. The result seems to be that integration has become an issue almost exclusively directed towards refugees leaving aside 'normal' migrants that are arriving in Germany every day.

5. Integrating in a New (German) Landscape

In accordance to chapter 2, integration is understood as processes concerning all migrants. Furthermore, moving and making sense of a new place is something that is closely linked to identity. Generally speaking, this is the case for any sort of moving irrespective of whether one moves within or across borders. Migrating across borders though tends to be inherently more complicated and stressful. This is due to several factors. Central are aspects such as language and livelihood. In Germany these aspects are covered through state-supported language courses and support through job centres. Is has however also been shown that there is more to integration than employment and language-learning. To gain a better understanding of the processes and understandings of integration, in the following chapter six immigrants, who have already been briefly introduced in chapter 4.3 (cf. Table 1), will get a word edgeways in how they envision integration.

The presented stories and visions of integration are told by six immigrants – Navid, Maryam, Damian, Agata, Robert, and Stefan respectively. They all have been in Germany for at least ten years. The main aim of this chapter is to explore stories of integration as seen by Navid, Maryam, Damian, Agata, Robert, and Stefan. While taking into account several aspects and factors of integration, such as language and education, a specific focus is set on employment, though it may be difficult to draw a sharp line between the different aspects affecting integration. One example of interwoven factors is that language skills influence the kind of jobs one can obtain. In chapter 5.2., their stories will be expanded to visions of integration allowing insights into how immigrants see and understand the processes of integration.

5.1. Stories of Integration

Using individual stories does not create representability. As it has been shown by Lila Abu-Lughod, one story can be exemplary to the bigger picture or rather one story can give an insight into very complex processes. The given accounts should be seen as personal opinions and stories that can provide insights to the complex processes of integration thus extending the theoretical and conceptual framework established in chapter 2. The stories of the immigrants are embedded in very different personal backgrounds in regards to age, gender, profession, country of origin, or motivation for migration. Nonetheless, there are some common denominators and aspects concerning integration that have been part of their stories and have played a role in their

experiences. This chapter is structured according to specific areas of daily life that affect and are affected by integration (i.a. Engels et al. 2011, Haug et al. 2014). This sorting and differentiating should not be understood as fixed but rather as a way to structure and give a better overview over the accounts. In fact, the areas are often interdependent. In the following, I will have a closer look at the stories concerning employment, language, acceptance and respect, and belonging which appeared to be crucial in the immigrants' accounts.

5.1.1. Stories of Employment

The stories of employment of the immigrants that are presented here are diverse. Their accounts and experiences in Germany have been influenced by their background in terms of country of origin, reasons for moving, language skills and educational level upon arrival, to name a few variables.

Agata's story of employment in Germany starts when she decided to move to Regensburg with her German husband. While studying, she had already lived in Germany for some time since she took part in an exchange programme with a German university. When she moved from Poland, she was a fully educated German teacher who occasionally would also translate between Polish and German. During the first years in Regensburg, she continued taking translation jobs from Poland before taking a break because of her two children. Now that her children are older, she finds it difficult to find a job fitting to her level of education in Regensburg. This is mainly because her education as a teacher is not recognized in Bavaria. Instead, she started working in a post office for a couple of hours per week. For her, working in Germany is important for several reasons. First and foremost, it means fitting into society without feeling like a nuisance:

> *I do believe that work is very important. And I think that someone who already has a permanent job, and who is in Germany because of this job is one step ahead of someone like me who first has to look for one. If people know: 'Okay, you are here and you work here. That's good. That's why you came.' Then it's easier, I think.* - Agata

Thus, employment means contributing to society. Moreover, it means to not be seen as a burden to society and make people wonder why one came to Germany. In addition to the aspect of earning money, work also means to her gaining recognition and appreciation. In regards to integration, Agata highlights that work often means to socialize with natives. She puts this notion in contrast to her work as a translator – which means

staying at home – and to working in an environment with little or no contact to natives. Working with natives means getting to know "how they work in a team, how they organize, and how they think".

Like Agata, Damian took part in an exchange programme with a German university. This particular programme would allow him to reach a double degree in engineering from both a Polish and a German university. After graduating, he stayed in Germany because he had fallen in love. Therefore, he also looked for his first job there and did not go back to Poland. According to him, any difficulties he had finding a job would apply to anyone during job-seeking and were not related to discrimination. Though, he did ask for help from colleagues and friends, for example for writing his CV. Work for him is first of all a way to follow his own interests.

> *I can't imagine not having anything to do for a longer period of time – something that's productive and interesting for me. That is to say, if I don't find an occupation that doesn't fulfil me in an environment, it means that this environment is somehow not optimal for me. And if it isn't optimal then I have to go. And if I don't want to stay, then I don't have the incentive to integrate myself.* – Damian

Thus, Damian says he would only integrate in an environment where he would find something useful and interesting to do.

Robert's story of coming to Germany and working there is not straight-forward. In regards to the criteria for the sampling presented in chapter 4.1., Robert would actually have not fit. Being the son of a soldier, he came to Germany in his teens "against [his] will" when his father was a soldier stationed in Heidelberg in the early 1970s. Thus, he was not off-age when he came to Germany. However, after graduating from high school, he went back to the USA to California to study engineering and came back on a more or less regular basis to visit his then girlfriend and now wife. He finished his degree in the USA and only came back to live in Germany when he started looking for a job. Thus, he is still part of the sampling, because firstly he did not attend a German high school. This means that the school did not provide a setting for integration. Secondly, he did not take his university degree, but started working in Germany afterwards meaning that employment can still be an essential part of his integration process. When getting a job offer in Munich, he told his then fiancé: "I've got good and bad news. The good one: I got the job. The bad one: We have to marry." Since he did not have a residence permit at that time, marriage was the only chance to get the permit quickly enough to actually start working in that particular job. The job interview took place in June and the beginning of

Robert's new position was 1st of September. After staying in Germany for eight years, Robert and his wife decided to go to Maryland for some years so Robert's wife could also experience living abroad and specifically the life in the USA. However, they moved back when he got a job offer in Germany. This shows that for Robert finding work has not been too difficult in Germany. In his view, work is "very important" for integration. It is "through work that one gets social contacts", "language training" and creates "an important feeling of value" and self-esteem. Robert draws from the experience of not being able to work for a considerable amount of time because of illness.

With Maryam, we meet the only one of the six immigrants who does not have higher education. Originally from Iraq, she came to Germany in 2000 as a refugee with her family because of belonging to the Christian minority. In Iraq, she went to school for nine years. She did not work since she had to take care of her children. On her way to Germany, she passed through Greece where she stayed and worked for one year. During the first seven years in Germany, she worked as a cleaner for two hours per week. After some time, she managed to get an internship in a home for the elderly. At the point of the interview, Maryam has been working as a nurse for the elderly for six years. However, she does so without having done a formal apprenticeship, which usually results in fewer rights as an employee and lower salary. Yet, the work is giving her a sense of self-esteem and of being valued, which can be seen among others when she is proudly talking about her knowledge of medical vocabulary. Her husband is self-employed, and to Maryam personally working means supporting the family in securing livelihood. Generally, she sees working as a means to reach financial independence and autonomy, in contrast to being dependent on social security. She is however also insistent in pointing out that this means having the same duties as any other German citizen like paying taxes. Moreover, working and thus income is not only important to her and her family, but also for Germans showing that she and her family do not rely on social security but rather is contributing to it.

Stefan's story of coming to Germany starts with the wish to leave Romania and escape "boredom", as he calls it. After having studied control engineering in Romania, he felt bored there and decided to go somewhere else. He started applying in various European countries because the place, he wanted to go to, should offer a certain degree of safety. Through contacts to a large German company sited in Romania, he got the opportunity to work for that company in Germany. Even though he did not speak German and could

only present little work experience, he started working there in 2003. Generally for Stefan, work creates meaning to a person since "someone values and relies on your work". Moreover, work is central to providing one's own livelihoods. In relation to integration, Stefan says employment can be important if one is for the most part working with natives, like he does. Since one usually spends eight to nine hours per day at work, it provides "the opportunity to learn virtually without effort how life works here; like, what people expect, how people live and so on."

Navid has been in Germany longest of the six interviewees. He came in 1985 as a refugee from Iran as a twenty-year-old averting military service. After he had obtained the legal allowance to stay, he learnt German and took the German university-entrance diploma. He then started studying law in Munich but did not finish it. After failing the second – and last – attempt of the second state examination in the mid-90s, Navid re-trained to become an IT system administrator. In this occupation, he worked from 2003 until he became unemployed in 2015, according to him because of the general situation in the labour market. Therefore, he picked up taxi driving again, which he had already done during his studies. Since then, he has been self-employed. On the importance of employment for integration Navid says:

> *Well it depends on the point of view from which one looks at the situation. From the point of view of the Minister of Labour it is probably better if one has work... In the end work is a decisive factor for a majority of people – it eases off the natives because they [the immigrants] have work. Then they [the natives] say: good, he has integrated, he isn't living at my expenses or the welfare state's expenses – so he isn't causing any costs. Well, that is then a decisive point for them [the natives].* – Navid

The aspect of not being a nuisance to the welfare state is in focus, as also Agata and Maryam have indicated. Moreover, Navid says, employment creates an important sense of value like also Robert, Agata and Stefan explicitly have pointed out. Yet, whether one is successful in finding work is highly dependent on one's own initiative. This point is emphasised by Navid specifically, yet also the others imply the need to be persistent and to not rely on the support given by job centres. Being proactive while job-searching is likely to be important not only for immigrants but also natives.

Though none of the interviewees could recall issues of direct discrimination during the search for employment, often the process is conducted in a way which makes it difficult to tell whether one was rejected because of being an immigrant or because of the general situation in the labour market. Nevertheless, Agata expresses her impression

that employers would prefer someone 'Bavarian' or 'German' over hiring an immigrant because "one is foreign and different". This was also experienced by Navid, when he had the impression that a firm turned him down because of not being 'native'. Still, when being in a working place Navid tells me he has never faced any sort of discrimination.

Generally, it is difficult for immigrants to succeed in the German labour market according to Navid. This is not only because of language proficiency but also because of the employment and labour system. By this he means both the structures in which labour is embedded and the working atmosphere including how to navigate within a work-setting in Germany. This correlates with the story of Damian. When he started looking for jobs in Germany he sought help of friends and colleagues when writing a job application. These aspects refer to the difficulties of settling in a new landscape. The unwritten rules of a society shape what is seen as 'good' behaviour. Being new to a landscape most likely means often violating these rules involuntary. This aspect will be closer explored later in this chapter.

The difficulties for immigrants of joining the labour market has been depicted in chapter 2.5. However, similar to the approaches shown above, the immigrants could not pinpoint whether, and if at all to what, joining the labour market in Germany was made difficult because of their migrant background. One obvious reason for struggling to get a job is language proficiency. Maryam for example has reached level B1, which is obligatory for applying for German citizenship. Yet, her oral language skills were sufficient for day-to-day communications. The vocabulary necessary for her job as a nurse was likely acquired through 'learning-by-doing'. Nevertheless, her written German skills would probably hardly suffice in another setting.

In terms of whether the current occupation was fitting to the level of education, Maryam has done well. She has managed to become a nurse without formal education. Still, such a position is also likely to be low-payed and unstable just as her position before as a cleaner. This is also the case for Agata, who is working on a part-time basis in a post office. For her however, this position is on a lower level compared to her education. Even though Agata has a university degree and even studied German, which gives her high language proficiency, she is unable to get a job as German teacher because of lacking approval of her degree. She would have to take a university degree again at a German university to be able to teach at a public school in Bavaria. Here, the difficulties

lie with the bureaucratic system hindering trained immigrants like Agata to work in their professions.

The last one of the six immigrants who is working in an unstable position is Navid. Though educated and trained as an IT system administrator he has been unable to find a new position after becoming unemployed in 2015. He blames this on the general situation in the labour market. Moreover, his age – he is in his early fifties – is probably affecting his chances to find a new position is his trained profession. Yet, to not stay unemployed he decided to become self-employed as a taxi-driver. Looking at his life story, one could guess that he would not want to be dependent on state support. Rather, he was proactive in choosing a rather unsecure position being self-employed over relying on social benefits.

The other three – that is Robert, Damian, and Stefan – are educated engineers in different areas. Though only Damian took his degree at least partly in Germany, none of them seemed to have significant problems to find work in Germany. This may be, as Agata frames it, because "if one is specialized it is not that much of a problem" to find a job. Furthermore, she feels that if one is in Germany because of work and does not have to look for work after arriving there, it is easier to be accepted by German society.

In regards to the connection between employment and integration, there are several recurring aspects. Firstly, the aspect of securing one's livelihood is deemed quite crucial. Moreover, being able to do so is seen to be important to both immigrants and host society. To immigrants, it means securing livelihoods, gaining self-esteem, and being able to make a contribution to society as a whole. To the host society, in this case Germany, it means that there is not someone living off the state's expenses. On the one hand, the reasons for this attitude can be seen in trying not to overburden the system (cf. Brochmann and Hagelund 2011, in chap.2.5, and SVR 2010: 25). On the other hand, popular support of the redistributive system is to be maintained (ibid.). If too many would draw from social support, some might not want to continue paying for someone who is seen to not be giving anything back to the system. A few voices expressing this concern are presented in the Report on Integration for Regensburg (Haug et al. 2014: 227f.). Yet, in regards to the immigrants' accounts presented in this thesis, this concern is not justified. To the contrary, all six immigrants expressed their wish to secure their own livelihoods and be active members of the German welfare state by contributing to

the system. In connection to the recent migration wave of refugees and asylum-seekers to Germany, Navid says:

> *I am absolutely sure that most [of the migrants and refugees] didn't go through all this trouble and spend so much to come here just to live off Hartz IV [unemployment benefits] for the rest of their lives. [...] They are very ambitious, you know.*

Secondly, work can create a "sense of belonging" – a notion that has been resonating in most of the interviews. In the Integration Barometer 2016 report by The Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration[2] it is shown that participation in the German labour market is an essential factor creating a feeling of belonging. This is because

> not only in Germany, society has to be (also) understood as a labour society in which belonging and a person's social position is mostly determined through successful participation in working life. (SVR 2016: 38)

Thirdly, a work setting can facilitate social integration. Working with others on a day-to-day basis can help to ameliorate language skills and learn about habits and unwritten rules. However, such a positive setting would according to most interviewees only be created if the majority of the work environment is made up by natives. Whether it is actually necessary to work primarily with natives to facilitate is debatable, since it could also be established immigrants that exemplify a 'German way of life' to newly-arrived immigrants.

Finally, being employed is not necessarily a panacea to integration. First of all, the kind of employment one can actually obtain is dependent on one's human capital composed of language skills (Esser 2006), education, and previous experience among others (according to the *Human Capital Theory* depicted in chapter 2.5). Yet, for immigrants there seem to be other factors influencing the success in the labour market beyond human capital. Disadvantages in job-hunting because of a migration background are not uncommon though hard to prove, as among other Agata and Navid tell. Moreover, more immigrants tend to work in unstable and lower payed positions in comparison to natives. In relation, second generation immigrants are doing better than the first generation, but still worse than natives (SVR 2010: 175). In addition, women in general are more likely to work in such positions than men. This is even more pronounced for

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[2] The Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (German: Sachverständigenrat Deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration, SVR) has been publishing an integration barometer for Germany since 2010 based on representative quantitative interviews.

female immigrants, which can be seen both on a national level (SVR 2010: 176ff.) and also locally in Regensburg (Haug et al. 2014: 95).

5.1.2. Stories of Language

Language skills and proficiency are key to finding work and entering the labour market, since they affect the kind of employment that can be obtained. Language is therefore deemed important for integration both by politics and academia, as well as immigrants. Moreover, language is generally seen as an essential element of integration. This is because on an overall level language is in many ways the key to a new environment and landscape as Navid points out:

> *I think that language forms the foundation of integration and is the gateway to the local culture and people.* – Navid

Furthermore, language can be a crucial tool to ensure a power balance as Navid retells. When arriving in Germany in the 1980s, he came as an asylum seeker for political reasons. In the beginning, every time he got hands on a newspaper he started memorizing phrases he read there. When treated badly by security guards while queuing, Navid used one of these phrases even though he did not understand what exactly he was saying. The effect, however, became apparent instantaneously, as he remembers. The guard was taken aback and his behaviour changed to being more respectful towards Navid and the other asylum seekers in the queue.

There are various paths to learn a language. Generally, the German state funds language courses through the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees – so-called *integration courses* – on the levels A1 to B1 (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) for immigrants. Of the six immigrants I talked to, Maryam is the only one who participated in one, in fact only on B1 level. Up to that level, she taught German to herself. Stefan is also self-taught. Agata and Damian learnt German through university; Agata had already been studying German in Poland before coming to Germany, while Damian participated in a double-degree programme with a German university. When Robert came to Germany, he was still in high school. This is also where he learnt German, though he immediately started using his newly acquired skills in a local cycling club. When Navid came to Germany, the public structures supporting language learning had not been in place yet. He started out teaching German to himself before taking courses on a self-financed basis.

There are three essential functions of language according to Esser (2006: 8). Firstly, "language is a – more or less – valuable resource" which determines what other resource can be reached. In chapter 4.1., it has been implicated that language plays an important role in finding work, in particular what kind of work one can obtain. Language skills – or the lack thereof – can limit the possibilities one has on the labour market.

Secondly, language is a "symbol" that can transmit information about the speaker (in forms of accent) and trigger stereotypes. This can have consequences on how a person is perceived, such as an accent being seen as a clear sign of not being German. Having lived in Germany for more than 30 years, Navid is told about once a week that he "speaks German quite well". From my perspective, this notion seems ridiculous since Navid has hardly any accent. Nonetheless, such comments suggest that one can never truly belong as an immigrant. While language is mostly the first step to integration, it is often also the last visible indicator – "a sign around one's neck" (Navid) – of being an immigrant to native speakers.

Finally, language is a "medium" enabling communication and moreover is a means of comprehension and social integration. This is also illustrated by Navid:

> *I can imagine that if one has understood the language and culture, has agreed to that and has become part of society accepting the culture here and living peacefully with other but doesn't have work; then this is better than someone who has work but hasn't learnt the language or only as much as he needs for working and is living a reclusive life – a life that is not in unison with the society and culture.* – Navid

Also for Agata, employment is not per se a way to integrate, though work can create a setting favouring social integration. By knowing the language, one can interact directly with co-workers, learn about their habits, and how they handle every-day situations. Even "if one is employed but doesn't speak German", Agata considers this person "not integrated". This is because one does not experience "the manner of how people live". Yet, this implies that one is actually working with 'Germans' and gets in touch with them. These notions show that Navid and Agata assign language skills, general acceptance and respect a higher importance than work.

However, the aspect of language in relation to integration is not straight forward. Even if one learns German, the expectations of society are set extremely high. It is thus not only the key to society.

The main problem of integration is language. Only the requirements are set so highly that many people are not able to command the language so rigorously in such a way that they would pass [vocational] training according to German standards. German in itself is a difficult language. – Navid

Without or with little German language skill it is "difficult to find work" (Maryam). Yet, Navid feels that the expectations towards immigrants are unreasonable. He calls to attention that especially someone who has little or no formal education prior to reaching Germany cannot "attain really good language skills within three years" and enter the German labour market the same way native speakers do. Thus, language proficiency can be one factor explaining lower performance of immigrants in general in the labour market though there are exceptions such as Agata.

5.1.3. Stories of Acceptance and Respect

The importance of acceptance and respect for integration was central in all interviews I conducted. It is thus perhaps the most important denominator of how to frame integration and shows a great sensitivity and reflexivity on the part of the six immigrants. They referred to respect and acceptance from different angles but agreed on that immigrants should respect and accept the host society's rules. These are, but not only, legal rules set by laws. In a wider sense, these rules encompass also social rules, values, and norms; in a way the *unwritten* rules of a society and its landscapes. As Navid puts it: "You have to accept the local rules, modes of conduct and way of living".

Learning these rules during the processes of integration is difficult, as Stefan points out. In one's home country "you know intuitively how to behave", whereas one has to learn the norms and standards in a new place so one would "not be conspicuous". This can be achieved through working in an environment dominated by natives. Yet, learning about the rules and norms in a new society is not limited on work-settings. Robert recounts how joining a cycling club as a teenager has helped him to build friendships and "get accustomed to German manners" rather easily.

However, it requires a certain openness to move to a new place. If someone, such as Stefan, chose to move voluntarily to a new country and into a new landscape, one is usually prepared, he says. Such preparations can include language courses, research on the new society's customs and structures. This can be harder for someone that was forced to migrate. However, being prepared may make it easier to settle in a new landscape, according to Stefan. Yet, there are always some aspects that one cannot

prepare for. For instance, just reading about social habits does not necessarily prepare for living with these habits.

Maryam recounts that she had difficulties in the beginning with "accepting the European and German mentalities". According to her, every country has rules and norms that one has to adapt to and accept when living in that country. However, in the beginning this is extremely difficult, especially if there is no one to help and support you. Because she did not know anyone there, she did not want to come to Germany originally. Now, having settled in, she has decided to draw from her experiences and work as a voluntary interpreter, so she can help and support the people that are coming to Germany to facilitate their arrival.

When coming to Germany, the interviewees generally assert that it is foremost the immigrants' responsibility to accept and adapt to the rules of the receiving society.

> *Those who come have to understand that they [the immigrants] should adapt not vice-versa.* - Stefan

This is also expressed by Robert:

> *One ought to respect the things that are in the country one lives in if one is integrated. Sometimes one has to adapt in order to not hurt or insult anyone.*

However, it is highly debated to what degree immigrants should or have to adapt to or even adopt the host society's rules. Stefan thinks it is central to integration that no one should be forced to do something one does not want to. Yet, integration also means to "not be conspicuous" anymore in one's behaviours. According to Robert, one should keep in mind that one should not be obliged to "jettison everything" of one's former life when moving to a new place. Thus, adapting does not mean, that one has to agree to all social habits and norms or adopt them – such as speeding on a motorway. Rather:

> *One can keep one's own identity. So, integration doesn't mean throwing away one's identity and roots.* – Robert

Accordingly, Agata says that when migrating one brings previous experiences and knowledge: "You cannot forget 30 years of experiences" before migrating. Furthermore, Stefan points out that when migrating as an adult, one carries along habits and understandings which have been established over a long period. Integrating to him means, going through the processes of socialization "again at an age of 25, 27, 30 years". It is through this perspective, one tries to make sense of a new landscape. When moving,

one understands the new landscape in terms of what one is used to. Still, one should try to adapt to the new surroundings and "be open to make compromises" (Stefan).

Yet, integrating may be harder for some, and easier for others. Navid in particular refers to how "traditional" an immigrant is when she or he comes to Germany. He thinks that it is important whether the person "is still thinking and act according to traditional structures" and thus may perhaps not be open towards new ways of life. He hints indirectly at Muslim immigrants, in particular from more traditionalist groups. Also Maryam refers to the difficulties Arab Muslims may have when coming to Germany. She even implies that it may be impossible for Arab Muslim immigrants to fully integrate in Germany. This is because "Muslim countries aren't free countries" whereas "Germany is a free country".

During the conversation I had with Navid, he would now and then hint towards how integrating is more difficult for people from Arab countries, though not for Iranians who came in the 1980s because they were open-minded and "fled an oppressing regime". This could be understood as trying to distinguish himself from other immigrants from Arab countries who may struggle to settle in a German landscape. Similar attitudes can be seen in the conversation with Maryam, where the differentiating is more pronounced. She speaks a lot about how Arabs, and Muslims in particular, have a harder time integrating in Germany or even being unable to integrate because of too big differences between their home country and German. She sets herself in contrast to those immigrants, since she, as a Christian, values the freedom given in Germany to any inhabitant. It is also being Christian that seems to make her feel belonging in Germany.

Their accounts are interesting because religion, and in particular Islam, has been brought up as a factor influencing integration by Navid and Maryam. Both are originally from Muslim countries – Iran and Iraq respectively – albeit both came to Germany as refugees. The aspect of Islam and integration in Germany has increasingly received attention recently. The Integration Barometer 2016 report by The Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration specifically focused on participation on the one side, and religion on the other. It shows that the attitude in Germany towards Islam is ambivalent (SVR 2016: 40ff.); while usually being open towards having a mosque in the neighbourhood, especially persons without migrant background do not consider "Islam being part of Germany". This stands in contrast to in particular people with a Turkish migrant background, who affirm that Islam indeed is part of Germany.

5.1.4. Stories of Belonging

The notion of integration is often linked to the sense of belonging. Accepting and respecting the local customs is a step that can be taken by any immigrant. A sense of belonging is however something that can hardly be influenced.

In terms of belonging, Navid feels it is generally hard to fit in in Germany, because of the difficulties of being 'different' or 'other'. This makes it inherently more troublesome for immigrants to "feel like Germans". In regards to recent developments in Europe and Germany concerning immigration, Navid mentions that he has started thinking about not wanting to grow old in Germany. He tells me that this idea is something that only arose recently before the interview took place. The climate in Germany has been changing for the worse – making him not feeling welcome anymore after living there for over thirty years. However, he also says that xenophobia is not new in Germany, but has always existed. Still, the large numbers of immigrants in 2015 have "unsettled people and posed as the last straw to legitimate xenophobia". He now feels torn between the place that has been his home for more than three decades and not wanting to live in a xenophobic atmosphere.

When speaking about increasing (open) xenophobia in Germany, one should keep in mind that there is often the image of 'good' and 'bad' immigrants (cf. chapter 2.4). There are some groups that are deemed to be a positive addition to society, while others are rather seen as creating problems for society and the state. Robert points out that there is a "bonus" when being American. When he looked for his first apartment in Munich with his wife he was asked about his Slavic sounding family name. Yet, when the landlord heard that he is an American immigrant, it was not any problem anymore. In Germany, such positive behaviour is very likely to be seen towards immigrants from Western countries. However, it may be more difficult for persons from other countries. Since Navid is originally from Iran, he looks different and has a very light accent which both make him visibly not 'belonging'. Therefore, he probably tends to be stereotyped as being Arab and Muslim – though he pointed out not being religious. In current public discourse, these two aspects are connoted negatively. Furthermore, Arabs and Muslims may be seen as a 'problem' to German society and security – in particular in the aftermath of the events of New Year's Eve in Cologne 2015/2016. This results in the assumption that persons who seem to be immigrants from Arab countries are not integrated and do not want to do so. Moreover, it can mean a reserved, or even hostile,

attitude towards people fitting this description creating a sense of not-belonging for the people facing such behaviour towards them.

Though the main responsibility of integrating is seen on the side of immigrants, the host society also should also show a certain degree of openness, since living together requires tolerance and acceptance on both sides.

> *If one emphasizes differences, borders are automatically constructed in the minds. And if borders arise then it's automatically 'You're different than me. You have different interests. You want to harm us.' Basically, one has to avoid that such situations arise. –*
> Damian

Damian thus points towards the notion of social cohesion. Immigration – and most of all otherness – can create the feeling of threat. To him the "the idea that this society and environment is doing better, because if an environment is doing well everyone living in it benefits from it [the improvement]" is central to integration.

When speaking about whether a receiving society should change anything, Robert says:

> *If one says that one is willing to receive people on also has to accept that some things are unusual to me but don't hurt anyone. […] And the belief that the people have to jettison everything – well that requires a certain openness [to see that this is not necessary].*

The accounts of the six immigrants are in accordance to one of the core findings of the Integration Barometer 2016 is that integration is generally perceived as a task of all – that is host society, immigrants, and state (SVR 2016: 45). This and the accounts presented above show that integration is usually seen as a two-way process, though the main responsibility is seen on the part of the immigrants. The six interviewees put great emphasis on the fact that immigrants should adapt and not vice versa. To create a sense of belonging, the Integration Barometer 2016 finds employment and successful participation in the labour market the most central factor. Furthermore, there is only a small part of the population who understand belonging on basis of "exclusive-excluding" factors such as place of birth, descent, or religious affiliation (ibid.: 46). Yet, the case of Navid shows that a sense of belonging can also subside because of a changing atmosphere in society.

5.2. Visions of Integration

The term *visions of integration* was chosen for this chapter because the notion of integration is highly normative. Embedded in landscapes and a wider context, immigrants are both the focus of immigrant policies and measures, as well as actors in integration processes. These two aspects – that is policies and processes – are interdependent, since integration is often linked to specific policies and ideologies which also affect the way immigrants are experiencing the processes and perhaps more importantly how they experience and understand integration. The visions presented here can be roughly divided according to two perspectives on integration: Firstly, integration can be envisioned in terms of personal agency. These visions refer to the question what it means to integrate and what an immigrant can – or should ideally – do to integrate, like the aspects of learning, openness, or participation. Secondly, integration can be envisioned on a societal level addressing the effects integration can have on society as a whole, such as increasing diversity. Though, the visions presented here focus first and foremost on how integration can be understood from the perspective of an immigrant, they can also give insights into how policies and measures on a national and local level may need to change to facilitate integration.

5.2.1. Integrating as Learning

It has been shown above, that integration processes are intertwined in many different aspects of life. In a way, it is a process of re-socialization (Wieviorka 2014) in which an immigrant first uses previous obtained knowledge to manoeuvre in a new landscape and gradually adapts to it. This vision of integration can also be seen in some of the immigrants' answer on "What is Integration?".

For Maryam, integration means

> *to get to know other people, every day [there is] something new, [and you are] constantly learning.*

And for Agata

> *to get in touch with people [and see] how they behave, how they organize, how they think while doing so.*
> *The people are thinking differently [to what one is used to]. Thirty years of experiences [before migrating] are not to forget.*

The importance of previous experiences is also expressed by Stefan:

> *You have your own rhythm of life, you have your expectations […] – and at some time you're integrating [socializing] again at an age of 25, 27, 30 and you have to do it all over again […]. Suddenly, I have to consciously adapt here or I have to accept that someone's got another opinion. Before [migrating], it [socialization] was intuitive.*

The aspect of learning is central to these three accounts on integration. But to actually do so it takes

> *first of all, a big volition: I want to know, why you think like this. There are reasons why people do something. Every country has its history. And there are reasons [why Germans are the way they are].* – Robert

Thus, the first vision of integration presented here is learning about a new way of life. It is essential to be open to something new, learn about it, try to understand it, and subsequently either adopt or adapt to it or at least accept and respect it. Accordingly, integration can be understood as

> *a possibility to look into a new culture and to understand it – not necessarily adopt* [annehmen] *it and definitely not adapt to it. […] I often hear 'adapt'* [anpassen] *and that's when I say: Excuse me, but I don't see integration as adaption. Nevertheless, I politely stand in queue, say 'thanks' when someone holds the door open for me. Still, I do not push on someone's bumper at 160 km/h on the autobahn. That's a trait I haven't adopted.* – Robert

Reading this quote, it is interesting to see that Robert uses *adapt* and *adopt* with interchanged meanings in contrast to the other immigrants. This is likely because the German terms *anpassen* und *annehmen* are not congruent in their meaning with the respective English terms. Moreover, it shows a differentiated understanding of integration in terms of the connoted meanings attached to the used terms. In German, *annehmen* (*adopt*) can also be used in the sense of *accepting something that is given to you* whereas *anpassen* (*adapt*) can also mean *assimilate* or to *fit something to something*. In Robert's understanding, the notion adapting is more negative than adopting because it presupposes "jettisoning" something of oneself and "change artificially". However, he also says that "sometimes one has to adapt in order to not hurt or insult anyone".

5.2.2. Integration as Creating Diversity

Another aspect of Robert's understanding of integration is seeing it as a "possibility" in terms of gain – both on a personal level and in a job environment. Integration offers the possibility to learn how other people live and see things. The diversity, migration creates

in a society, and the other perspectives one sees as a migrant, enrich society. As a migrant, one has had a look 'beyond one's own nose' which creates better "possibilities to compare" (Robert) habits and attitudes on a larger scale. In a way, one becomes more critical of what is happening around oneself. In a diverse setting, such as for instance Damian experiences at work and in his circle of friends, knowing people from different places gives the opportunity to create a varied and critical image on various matters. Damian gives an example stating that if there is something happening in Turkey he would not read much in the newspapers but would rather go and ask a Turkish friend about the issues. This would create a much closer and livelier image, and most of all an image from inside.

In this sense, another vision of integration is diversity. This is understood here in a positive way, enriching society and forming a community where there is open and critical exchange of opinions and viewpoints. While integration can be seen as a possibility of an enriched society without losing social cohesion, integration is also a personal process which requires to a certain degree adapting or adopting.

5.2.3. Integration as Social Interaction and Participation

Central to (positive) diversity is the notion of participation as Damian expresses in his vision of integration:

> *Integration means to me the willingness to participate in the community I'm living in and to support it in many different ways [like honorary work].*

Moreover, this notion of integration and participation conveys the idea of interacting in the sense of

> *Living together, celebrating together – not living next to each other but jointly. –* Damian

It is possible to facilitate the creation of such a positive setting through various events and projects. Having worked voluntarily in an *integration council* Robert recounts organizing events, such as markets, or food courts where one could try food from all over the world while talking with different people from many different places. Why such events are important is shown by Damian:

> *In any case, [if] something is happening on a regular basis [it creates a frame] where people from different communities or societies can work together. This is because then people get to know each other and if there is any agitation 'They are like this and this'*

> *then I can ask someone whether this is true. Then I get many different opinions and can form my own opinion.*

Yet, Damian states that getting into contact with others is easier for academics. Such events should therefore also in particular aim for non-academics since "they have rarely access to other cultures".

The benefits of social interaction are also shown in the Integration Barometer 2016. The more there is social interaction between people with and without migrant background the better people rate the "climate of integration" (SVR 2016: 23, 27). This is for the most part because prejudices are abolished on both sides and because people tend to be more optimistic in regards to living together. Yet, if someone has had negative experiences, these tendencies can be reversed. Moreover, not every migrant – or for that matter, not every native – does necessarily want to meet new people and make new friends. This can be because there are

> *groups that both linguistically and culturally do not want to move outside of their comfort zone.* – Robert

Resonating in the vision of integration as social interaction is the notion of participation. Understanding integration as central to "social peace" The Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration states:

> For the social peace in an immigration society, an understanding is constitutive of integration as participation with preferably equal opportunities in the central areas of social life. (SVR 2010: 21)

However, participation and equal opportunities are sometimes difficult to obtain as an immigrant. In particular the stories of Navid and Agata show that even though they fulfil the requirements to enter the German labour market they have not gotten the same opportunities as natives might have received in a similar position. It remains open what role the factor of country of origin has played in this. Robert's story suggests that there is a more positive attitude towards migrants from Western countries, in particular migrants from the USA. Being different – or being seen as different – can be essential for participation and opportunities one gets.

5.3. Significance for the Discourse on Integration

The immigrants that were interviewed showed great sensitivity and reflexivity on the topic of integration. Even though the topic is entangled in a heated discussion in Germany, the interviewees demonstrated the ability to reflect on what integration actually means to them. At the same time, they were aware of the multi-layered aspects underlying the concept of integration and the various understandings expressed by different actors.

Firstly, employment is assigned an important role in integration. Its significance lies foremost in the aspect of economic integration ensuring financial and economic independence. This is a valuable insight, in particular in the light of current debates in Germany in which it is often assumed that immigrants would rely on social benefits and not contribute to the welfare system. The contrary is true for the interviewees, who expressed to various degrees and with varying stress the will to earn one's own living and not live on someone else's expenses.

Secondly, it has also been shown that entering employment as an immigrant can be difficult for several reasons. This can be on the one hand human capital, which is set together by previous experiences, knowledge, education, and language skills. On the other hand, there are several aspects which cannot be explained that easily. Agata, who has a university degree in German, is not allowed to teach in a German school, because her diploma is not precisely the same as a German diploma would be. The official recognition of foreign certificates and trainings is still a problem for many immigrants, as is also shown in the reports by The Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration for 2011 and 2016 (SVR 2011: 48, 2016: 5). Germany seems to be still struggling to facilitate the incorporation of immigrants in the labour market. However, if one does not want to retake the degree or training in Germany like Agata there is an increasing risk of working in unstable and low-payed positions which do not require formal education. Not being able to enter the labour market, or working in unstable positions can have consequences for integration in the sense that employment is a crucial factor of creating meaning and belonging in Germany.

Thirdly, language is understood as groundwork to integration by immigrants, politics, and studies. This is due to language being the medium for communicating and interacting with the host society. By the interviewees language is seen as the key to learning about the new landscape and its rules. However, sometimes there is a limit to

how far language can get you in terms of participation and opportunities. It has been shown, that for example requirements regarding language learning are sometimes disproportionate or even unreachable. Thus, an accent can result in one being seen as different or other and form an excluding factor.

Fourthly, making sense of a new landscape calls for one's own initiative. In the words of Stefan:

> *No one should expect the [host] society to change. No one is waiting for you asking: Oh, what can I do for you?*

Finding one's way about in a new landscape is central to integration. To do so, requires the volition to learn the host society's rules and seek contact points with natives or established immigrants. The notions of accepting, respecting, and adapting – or adopting – are central to the immigrants understanding of integration in order to not cause stress to the host society. Rather, the host society should keep their values and norms while at the same time being open to some changes due to increasing diversity as long as these do not harm or hurt anyone. Though integration does not mean adapting or adopting, as an immigrant one should at least accept and respect the host society's social norms and rules. This understanding of integration shows again a great sensitivity towards the society that welcomes them. However, it also points towards an assimilationist understanding of immigrant incorporation leading to the question

> how assimilation discourses that host societies produce in political debates and in the everyday lives and interactions between native-born residents and immigrants influence the construction of identities and shape social relations in immigrant-receiving societies. (Ehrkamp 2006: 1674)

On basis of the stories and visions presented in this thesis this question cannot be answered. Still, the significance of the portrayed accounts lies in the nuanced understandings of integration. The immigrants' visions provide a deeper insight and add to the debate on integration which is lead in Germany today. Furthermore, it adds to the representative studies which are mostly based on quantitative methods and therefore do not allow the room for individual explanations. This qualitative study moreover shows that even though the six interviewed immigrants come from various backgrounds, there are in fact several aspects of integration concerning all of them.

However, the immigrants' accounts should also be seen from a critical perspective. The interviews with these six immigrants were only possible because they were part of a

database of voluntary interpreters. This shows that all of them were aware of the difficulties that arise when arriving in a new landscape especially if one does not know anyone there or speak the language. Having signed up as voluntary interpreter indicates further the awareness of having to communicate and interact with the host society to actually be able to become a part of it. Thus, making sense of a new landscape – in this case in Regensburg – requires openness and the will to learn on the part of immigrants. Framing integration in a way of resocialization, the immigrants agree on the need to be willing to learn about the way of living of the host society. Moreover, settling in a new landscape means respecting and accepting the local ways of living. To a certain degree, immigrants should also adapt social rules in order to not draw attention to oneself or affront someone. The difficult part is to balance between fitting in in a new society and remembering one's roots in a setting where one usually can only be 'either-or' and not 'both-and'.

At the same time, increasing diversity means changing landscapes. Thus, the host society is also required to change in order to adapt to the changing landscapes. Such changes can entail a growing unease in a host society. In Germany, this can be seen latest since summer 2015. In this context one has to also see the discussions on dual citizenship. This is because of the notion that holding the German citizenship is the last step to be entirely integrated. Recently, the discussion on dual citizenship in Germany has been heated up again after the constitutional referendum in Turkey on 16th April 2017. A majority of Turks (63.1%) (Deutschlandfunk 2017b) living in Germany voted 'yes' to the referendum giving President Erdogan almost autocratic power which was understood by some as opposing democracy and separation of powers. Even though, only roughly 50% of all eligible Turks in Germany actually voted, the discussion on dual citizenship has moved to the forefront of the integration debate again with some arguing for repealing it (Deutschlandfunk 2017a).

Such aspects within the discussion on integration in Germany show that there is an underlying notion of 'good' and 'bad' diversity (cf. chapter 2.4). The further away from one's own ideals immigrants are seen, the more it is assumed that they cannot integrate and are rather going to cause problems to social cohesion. This is due to a static image of culture with "the tendency to construe, through a reified notion of culture, immigrants as posing a threat to the national unity of 'host' societies" (Vertovec 2011: 243). Notions like this are based on "an understanding of culture that is now commonly called an

essentialized one, also associated with conceiving culture as reified, bounded, biologized, or inherited" (ibid.). Such an understanding is based on "exclusive-excluding" factors (SVR 2016: 46) which would prevent full integration for most immigrants. Even though the report of 2016 (ibid.) finds that a majority of respondents does not see such factors as decisive for belonging to Germany, the case of Navid shows that there must be some aspects going beyond employment, language, respect and acceptance. He has spent more of life in Germany than in the country he was born in. He is married to a German and says that his children are German. Yet, for some reason his sense of belonging to Germany has been unsettled shortly before the interview took place.

6. Making Sense of a New Landscape – Concluding Remarks

The stories presented in this study aimed at giving more detailed insights into what it means to integrate, going beyond the assumption often expressed in public discourse that language and employment are the panaceas to integration. This is not to say, that these two aspects – that is language and employment – are not essential for integration. They indeed are crucial to settling in in a new landscape and creating a sense of belonging. They are however not enough to understanding the processes of making sense of a new landscape which necessitate personal agency of immigrants.

Integration and the processes involved show that the concept is chaotic and its understanding varying widely. Ambiguous meanings and underlying normative understandings make it difficult to delimitate the notion of integration in Germany, and likely also in other countries. It was shown that the discussion on integration is often led based on static culturalist assumptions. Furthermore, an assimilationist vision of integration is painted not only in public discourse but also partly from the immigrants' perspectives. However, their visions are more differentiated in regards to why and to what degree one should adapt social habits in order to not harm or hurt the host society or the integrating immigrant. Their accounts show that a list of what it means to be German as was presented by de Maizière (2017) is not necessarily needed since to them integrating inherently means learning local customs and at least accept and respect them, if not adapt to them to a certain degree.

In terms of a bigger picture their accounts can give valuable insights into changing German landscapes due to migration and increasing diversity. People from all over the world and manifold backgrounds come to Germany to live there. When they come to Germany they need to make sense of what they are experiencing in that new landscape in order to become part of society with ideally equal rights and opportunities. *Integration* is one way to frame the arrival and settling of immigrants in a new society. This is in particular the case when moving across borders into a new country. In public discourse, it is often implied that integration is mostly about language and employment. It goes without saying that these two aspects are important as has been shown. However, it has also been shown that integration goes beyond this understanding. This study has looked at integration from a micro level – as presented by Barbara Bender – looking at how integration works on a local level. However, it takes into account the 'bigger picture' such as how policies may affect the processes of integration. The visions

presented can give insights into how integration should ideally work and its implications for the host society from an immigrant perspective.

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Appendix

Interview Guide

- What is your country of origin? How long have you been living in Germany?

- What is your educational background? Did you receive further education when you came to Germany?

- Did you work before you came to Germany? If yes, what did you work?

- What is your work now? In relation to your former job (if applicable), is your work now on a higher or lower level?

- Did you participate in public integration programmes? Did you participate in programmes specifically made to facilitate entering the labour market in Germany?

- What are your experiences with finding work in Germany?

- What does integration mean for you personally? What is successful integration? How important is work for integrating into German society?