

# The As If of Integration, Participation and Empowerment When Interpreting undermines Borders and Boundaries<sup>1</sup>

---

*Şebnem Bahadır-Berzig*

## 1 An invitation to read against the grain

Within the context of migration, interpreting is often described as abolishing boundaries between people and bridging communication gaps. The interpreter who is already integrated but belongs to the same community of origin as the newly arrived migrant is expected to overcome not only linguistic, but also social, cultural, political, personal, even digital barriers. Furthermore, the opinion is widespread that she interprets not because she is being paid, but mostly out of the motivation to give the receiving country ‘something back’ – comparable to paying off a debt. This means, that the already resident but still foreign migrant in the sense of Donatella di Cesare’s “resident foreigner” (2021) and in the sense of Naika Foroutan’s “postmigrant” (2019), feels gratitude towards the host country – almost eternally. On the basis of this gratitude, she is expected to enter into a commitment to pay back her debt for having had the chance to become a resident of the host country by way of volunteering to interpret for the newly arrived strangers.

---

1 I would like to thank my colleague Sophie Staud for her invaluable help as critical and creative proofreader of this English text.

Whether in societies currently experiencing huge amounts of immigration or in the so-called postmigrant societies with a solid base and long tradition of migrant population: Interpreters, no matter whether professional or nonprofessional, help migrants with limited knowledge of the language of the host country. They assist refugees, when they are on their routes. They accompany them, when they cross borders. They provide linguistic support, when they enter refugee camps. They enable communication, facilitate understanding, explain – and they give voice to things that otherwise would remain unsaid. In the context of migratory settings interpreting is most often wrapped up in sparkly paper on which is written in bold letters: facilitating integration, enabling participation and fostering empowerment. Interpreting researchers, politicians, representatives of public institutions as well as professional associations for translators and interpreters alike propagate this view of the intercultural and interlingual mediator. Altruism, engagement, commitment and activism seem to be virtues attached to the act of interpreting. Nearly all stakeholders in migratory settings seem to search for interpreting performances capable of crossing borders to reach other cultures, closing gaps to understand the unfamiliar and overcoming boundaries between strangers and natives. This ideal act of interpreting is closely linked to an understanding of integration aimed at ‘naturalizing’ migrants by de-foreignizing and assimilating them in the sense of making them similar. The interpreter is promising to overcome barriers, abolish borders and wipe out boundaries. Yet this promise is one-sided and two-faced. There is a basic illusion, a misconception in this approach: Everybody seems to assume that all that the interpreter utters (in the name and as the voice of the migrant) and all that would have remained unsaid is what all parties involved want or need to hear. This commitment is at the same time a promise that is nearly impossible to fulfil: The migrant’s voice is expected to be rendered in such a way that it becomes compatible with the host country’s ideology of integration and participation. Plus, the fact that the interpreter stands by the side of the up until then speechless migrant is shown as an act of empowerment by giving a voice to the migrant. Whenever interpreting services are offered and used, the world seems to become a better place – above all

for the migrant, but also for the institutions, the public, the interpreting researchers and especially the politicians in the host country.

In my contribution I want to draw attention to interpreting and interpreter performances that undermine this ideology and blur the boundaries between being the speechless, i. e. being without rights and obligations, and being the one who already has a voice, i. e. between migrant and native, or rather 'nativized'. So, I try to read against the grain (in the sense Spivak 1985 uses this method) all that is supposedly 'integration-fostering' and 'de-foreignizing' interpreting. With this aim I briefly ponder on three scenarios of interpreting in the context of migration by concentrating on situations of discomfort and dispositions of uneasiness. These reflections are placed as interventions between the three sections of my paper in which I first critically reflect upon a motivation that seems to push so many already-integrated migrants to interpret for the newcomers: the 'eternal gratitude' or the idea of wishing to give something 'back' to the host country/society after having succeeded in becoming an 'integrated member' of it. This 'oblique look' (and reading) also requires casting a critical eye on some master concepts we use in this context. Thus, in the second section I try to dig a bit into the concept 'integration', touching briefly on 'participation', and 'empowerment' against the background of the concept of 'postmigrant' societies/ individuals. I conclude with a short discussion on how interpreting acts breaking the above-mentioned commitment to and promise of integration and participation might show us a path towards a more 'radical' interpreting research. A critical attitude towards the imposition of the idea of interpreting out of the motivation of an eternal gratitude in the specific context of community interpreting provides us with the chance to revisit some foundational traits assigned to all 'good' or 'ethical' interpreting: becoming a bridge for the Other to cross over, abolishing borders between us and them, connecting people and communities, being neutral and staying impartial no matter what happens, interpreting everything and interpreting always without leaving out or adding something. The aim of a 'radical interpreting studies' would then be to dig out failures, inefficiencies, misunderstandings and distortions in this credo which are most often not very clearly seen, because they are

hidden behind smooth enactments. ‘Radical interpreting studies’ would then concentrate on moments of discomfort attempting to show the potential of resistance within this unease, when it comes to illuminating the bigger economic and political entanglements and the systemic relevance of interpreting in the context of migration and postmigrant societies.

### ***Intervention 1: SprInt / The Promise***

My first critical reflection is on a capacity-building project for migrants in Germany that seems to have fulfilled the promise of ensuring integration, enabling participation and installing empowerment through interpreting since its foundation. The naming of those individuals, who after a well-founded 18-month training course start to work as interpreters, is programmatic. They are to not only mediate linguistically but to also make a contribution to the integration of the migrants for whom they interpret: „Sprach- und Integrationsmittelnde leisten einen konkreten Beitrag zur Chancengleichheit im Gemeinwesen und zur Integration von Flüchtlingen und Migrierten.“<sup>2</sup>

In their job profile, three functions or rather tasks are recorded: interpreting, informing, assisting. I was involved in the development of the training curriculum, designing the topic area *Theory and Practice of Interpreting*, the methods and materials for the interpreting training courses and the final interpreting examinations. I have worked for many years as an interpreter trainer at various project locations and chaired examination boards, thus qualifying an estimated number of 800–1000 SprInt so far. SprInt is used as abbreviation both for the project itself and the interpreters trained in this project: Sprach- und Integrationsmittler\*innen which can be translated as language and integration brokers/mediators into English. Since the beginning of my involvement in this project I have had stomach aches that never truly went away.

My uneasiness goes even further back: In the previous project SpraKum, the term Sprach- und Kulturmittlung (language and cultural

---

2 <https://www.sprinteg.de/sprach-und-integrationsmittlung/>

mediation) was used – an equally problematic approach to the practice, as the notion of culture in this usage is very strongly linked to reductionism and essentialism, even nativist notions of cultural belonging and origin. Over time, there came a shift away from this label in light of anti-racist, feminist, and postcolonial approaches in cultural, social and care studies and through the involvement of colleagues in the project who are highly sensitised in this regard. Cultural mediation was now viewed more critically as an activity that always takes place on the threshold of culturalization and cultural appropriation and systematically crosses this threshold. Replacing a reductionist understanding of culturally mediating interpreting with a demand for integration-enabling language mediation is, however, to the detriment of all. This substitution is due to political will and new turns in migration politics. Until well into the 1990s, migrants were the strangers and the foreigners (euphemistically also guests or guest workers from the 1960s to the 1980s) in German but also Austrian political agendas (concerning state policies and laws, no matter whether with regard to social, educational, medical or economic domains). In the 2000s, people bit the bullet and de facto migration countries kept changing their legal frameworks with tiny steps (and often still merely cosmetically). In this process, the labels of so-called capacity-building projects for and with migrants have also changed. Thus, *SpraKum* becomes *SprInt* – both publicly funded, but also church-supported and to a certain extent politically desired ‘empowering’ projects. The promise of *SprInt* is a political endeavour, and has been so from the very beginning<sup>3</sup>.

This promise is intertwined with an almost frantic search in projects like *SprInt*, *Sprakum*, but also *SpuK* (in Osnabrück) or the organization *INTERPRET* in Switzerland<sup>4</sup>, for a ‘different’, socially relevant, semi-professional or professionalized identity based on the cultural resources

---

3 cf. for a rather compact account of the transition phase from *SpraKum* to *SprInt*: <https://www.migazin.de/2010/01/11/professionelle-sprach-und-integrationsmittler/>

4 <https://www.spuk.info/>; <https://www.inter-pret.ch/de/home-1.html>

of the migrants. However, it also has to do with a strong need for differentiation from the ‘conventional’, that is, academic and ‘properly’ professional interpreter, who in the eyes of these projects, being little informed by translation studies, always acts only linguistically (cf. Bahadır, 2007).

Yet in translation studies and academic translator training as well, the ambivalent relationship to language as the basic unit of the interpreting activity has always been at the centre of the process of becoming a professional: sometimes language mediation is too reductionist and mechanistic, sometimes what is postulated beyond that is politically too dangerous and an overstraining demand or false ‘empowerment’ of the interpreter<sup>5</sup>. Today, however, we are faced with the situation where the division between academic interpreting as a technically and linguistically perfected, fully professional and absolutely neutral activity on the one hand and language and integration mediation as culturally sensitive interpreting that strives for understanding and comprehension, professionalized but underpinned with migrant knowledge on the other, has solidified and almost transformed into a migration policy programme: Language and integration mediators are propagated as both bridge builders between people with migration backgrounds, mostly newcomers, as well as professionals in educational, healthcare and social services. Their work is described as breaking down barriers to understanding and enabling problem-free and effective cooperation<sup>6</sup>.

---

5 To get a well-founded idea of what interpreting has been covering as activities and attitudes I would recommend Grbic’s comprehensive and critical study (2022) on the history and present of professionalization of interpreting, opening up a large landscape of highly complex, often ambivalent, even paradoxical conceptualizations of interpreting.

6 “SprInt steht für Sprach- und Integrationsmittlung. Sprach- und Integrationsmittler – SprInts – sind Brückenbauer zwischen Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund und Fachpersonal im Bildungs-, Gesundheits- und Sozialwesen. Ihre Arbeit baut Verständigungsbarrieren ab und ermöglicht eine problemlose und effektive Zusammenarbeit.” (<https://www.sprachundintegrationsmittler.org/sprach-und-integrationsmittlung/>)

This migration policy programme is imposed on the individual agents of language and integration mediation. The praxis of interpreting cannot keep this promise to overcome not only linguistic, but also social, cultural, political, even personal barriers/boundaries. The promise is doomed to fail the moment it is articulated because in order to be able to overcome boundaries, to cross borders, to build bridges via interpreting, these acts of interpreting often primarily construct borders, even simply by declaring, articulating, naming them (cf. Dizdar, 2020). And the promise is dangerously one-sided as in the job profile of the SprInt it is always the expert, the representative of the receiving country, who shall be transferred and made understandable to the migrant client. The migrant's, the minority's voice, however, is generally rendered in line with the promise of the host country's ideology of integration and participation. The migrant is made compatible and comfortable by interpreting, wrapped up in such a way that assimilation can take place and as the next step participation can be provided, like a gift or a reward for assimilation (cf. Bahadır-Berzig, 2021)<sup>7</sup>.

A few years ago my stomach ache intensified into a serious uneasiness and led to a decision that has accompanied me ever since and which is still waiting to be transferred into a Germany-wide research project: In the feedback and reflection sessions, but also in the interpreting enactments during the final interpreting examinations, I noticed more and more often that we were confronted with a large group of 'fully integrated', 'empowered', 'thankful' and professionalized interpreters who repeatedly had major problems with the demands of their job profile and their intrinsic motivation. It even seemed that the more we professionalized them, the deeper they felt this discomfort. In 2019, I started to conduct narrative biographical interviews with some language and integration mediators: The cracks and breaks in their attitudes and actions

---

7 For a systematic analysis of the conceptual and empirical complexity of translational phenomena, procedures, agents and motivations from the perspective of the interdisciplinary theory of human differentiation I would recommend Dizdar 2021.

concerning the ‘impossible mission’ to foster integration and enable empowerment were ever-present – sometimes in fully reflected accounts of their daily praxis, sometimes only recognizable as glimpses in their narratives of their experiences in the field. With some caution, I would like to venture the prognosis that many of the up to 1000 professionalized language and integration mediators enjoy a uniquely well-founded training in Germany, but are constantly exposed to conflicts in their daily work, which can be traced back to the paradoxical situation concerning their loyalty and responsibility which is very similar to the triple mandate of the social worker (cf. Staub-Bernasconi, 2016): They try to help the migrant-client, simultaneously enabling the expert (commissioned by the state) to control and ‘manage’ the migrant-client, and attempt to stay loyal to their professional ethics of impartiality. They can only continue to be active in their daily attempts to fulfill this mandate by breaking the promise. These moments of crossing boundaries, of doubt and ambivalence, the moments when the promise is broken, are now to be explored in further narrative-biographical interviews.

## **2 ‘Eternal gratitude’: Nonprofessional interpreters as instruments of (de/re)migrationisation in postmigrant societies**

Migration studies nowadays seem to be confronted with a similar identity crisis as did ethnography when entering the postcolonial world order (Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Marcus and Fischer, 1986). To use Foroutan’s argument (2019), this is because we meanwhile live in a post-migrant society, yet in which there is still a tendency in politics and society to see the root of all problems in migration, although there are obviously other struggles for structural, social, cultural and personal recognition happening behind the question of migration. According to Foroutan the postmigrant disposition in our society is based on a promise of a pluralistic democracy, namely the promise to guarantee participation for all groups and recognition for this complex social and cultural diversity on all levels but (just as in the case of the SprInt)

the promise cannot be fulfilled: The affective resistance within society against these two norms and the failure of the state to enable that the norms can be 'lived', engenders a paradoxical situation: The promise of a plural democracy seems to carry the risk of shaking the very foundations of this democracy. Foroutan highlights in her sharp analysis that the claim to equality in pluralistic systems reminds society most painfully of the betrayal or the inaccessibility of this norm (2019, pp. 42–46).

We all know the general talk of floods of migrants and trouble-making, integration-resistant asylum seekers. These days military operations and wars seem to pop up in so many regions of the world which we can witness and follow via social media at the moment of their outbreak. Meanwhile, the populations of so many Western countries are immediately reminded of these floods of migrants while watching these catastrophes— by media, by politicians and by expert analysts and researchers. Before the first migrant from any of these multiple spaces of human disaster enter the country the struggle for opinions and analyses, i.e., the propaganda starts. Di Cesare's brilliant book (2021) attempting at laying the foundations of a philosophy of migration almost painfully describes and deconstructs all the complex entanglements within the politics of rejection and repulsion on global scale when it comes to accepting the universal human right to migration and asylum. This attitude of immediate repulsion seems to be a general norm in many Western societies today. However, the composition and stratification of migrant communities has become much more diverse today. Yes, we have newcomers, but we also have the 'resident foreigner' to use di Cesare's term again which underlines the right of residence and mobility within the framework of an ethics of global justice. Di Cesare calls for resolving the paradox between the disposition of residing in a space and the disposition of migrating between spaces in order to accomplish new ways of cohabitation going beyond nation states.

Nowadays, many members of migrant communities have moved away from a simple origin-cultural orientation via ethnicised and migrantised identities towards more hybrid and (pro)active communities and actors within the host country. This stronger anchoring, presence and visibility in the host country do not necessarily minimize the 'prob-

lems', but simply make them more diverse, different and 'non-migrant-ish'. These persons with parents or grand-parents who migrated to the country of residence change and direct their attention to the country they live in, which means that they might become either troublemakers or critical minds, as well as satisfied or mainstream citizens. Yet in the public – and not only in the political handling of these integrated but somehow 'deviant' persons, but also, interestingly enough, in migration research itself – these persons remain migrants or are re-migrantised as soon as they become visible (cf. Foroutan, 2019 and the call for migration research that critically observes and opposes this re-migrantisation, e.g., in Anderson, 2019). In the current situation researchers are calling for a more (self-)reflexive attitude in examining the "integration paradox" as El Mafaalani calls this situation (2020). This is also accompanied by the demand for an open commitment to de-migrantization (cf. Dahinden, 2016): A 'migrantised' and 'migrantising' migration studies is subject to the influence of the "nation-state migration apparatus", which is supposed to regulate, contain, control, direct, organize and order migration, because this research is based on the conception of migrants as other, different, foreign – and the demand, indeed the social and political norm, that these actors are to be integrated, in the sense of normalized (Dahinden 2016, pp. 2209–2211).

Meanwhile we are confronted with a praxis of multicultural and even to some extent multilingual knowledge production, of migrant voices as an integral part of society, not only in literature or arts, but also in the economy, in technology and slowly but steadily also in politics and science. Opposed to this fact we have a lethargic political and legal system unable to recognize and articulate the contributions of these single actors. In postmigrant societies like Germany, legal and political frameworks foster hybridization, ambivalence and what is most important: the petrification of gaps of distribution (of resources and possibilities) and recognition. And this leads to a continual remigrantisation or a stable migrantisation of migrants as a seemingly homogenous group. So not only the immigrating individual becomes someone like an eternal migrant but she is also continually subsumed under an ominous

and seemingly homogenous group named 'migrants' (Foroutan, 2019, pp. 104–108).

Therefore, a critical positioning towards this essentialization of the migrant condition is not only important in migration studies but also in other relevant disciplines like translation studies. With a postmigrant perspective we have a framework of analysis for social and political transformations that occur after migration in the middle of the migrants' struggle to be recognized as legal and political stakeholders in society. Analysing nonprofessional interpreting within the process of (re)migrantisation illustrates that this language work is viewed somehow like a 'genetic' property of any postmigrant who has entered the process of becoming integrated. Everybody seems to know very well that every multilingual person 'with a migration background' can and shall interpret...

In this context voluntary work is assigned a special role. At first sight voluntary work for a good cause, for humanitarian aid projects, seems to be something untouchable and absolutely noble. In German 'Ehrenamt', which literally means honourable work, is largely associated with the two big Christian social welfare institutions Caritas and Diakonie but also with the German Red Cross. We have plenty of research dwelling on the development of voluntary work especially from the 19<sup>th</sup> century up to now. *Ehrenamt* starts out as the care of the poor, especially driven by the big Christian motive of charity, in German very interestingly the 'love of the one next to you': *Nächstenliebe*. But what is more interesting for our case of civic engagement of refugees and migrants is the more recent constellation of volunteering as a means to get access to the regulated labour market and to social and political participation as well as visibility. At the University of Erfurt Bettina Hollstein directs a very important research project concentrating on the experiences of socially disadvantaged persons in voluntary work using a citizen science approach. Hollstein is very clear when she states that the promotion of engagement does not create a solution for deficient social systems, a care crisis or unemployment. Volunteer work is about creating spaces that enable individuals to express publicly and to engage with their ideas of a 'good' life in a 'good' society (Hollstein, 2017).

But precisely this orientation towards a deficit-correction can be observed in many projects fostering volunteer work by migrants. Volunteering in many areas of social and communal work is a way to compensate for the general withdrawal of the state. This systemic problem of volunteer work in Germany dates back to the 1990s when a fundamental systemic shift happened, away from a welfare state towards a liberal market economy. So, in the current situation of a post-welfare-state, critical analyses show how the so-called engagement discourse, in which volunteers are hailed as “Alltagshelden”, everyday heroes, influences the market of paid social and communal work and how these voluntary workers are denied political and economic advocacy by trade unions or any other self-organized structures. The so-called experts and leaders in the welfare organizations speak for them and design programmes and initiatives within a politics of praising from above (van Dyk, 2021, p. 352). The state supports these initiatives with large budgets. But the problem is that this financial support is dedicated to the establishment of structures of volunteer work and the recruitment and organization of it – and seldom if ever for the adequate remuneration of volunteer work. With these initiatives the state finances its politics of withdrawal and refrainment from as well as the outsourcing of its welfare services to NGOs: „Im Kontext des wohlfahrtsstaatlichen, arbeitgesellschaftlichen, familialen und demografischen Wandels erweist sich der Staat in dreifacher Hinsicht als Treiber der Freiwilligengesellschaft: erstens in diskursiver und programmatischer Hinsicht durch die moralische Aufwertung ehrenamtlichen Engagements, zweitens durch (materielle) Förderprogramme und Policy-Instrumente, die den Ausbau ehrenamtlicher Arbeit zum Ziel haben, sowie drittens durch eine Politik des Unterlassens.“ (van Dyk, 2021, p. 345)<sup>8</sup>

---

8 “In the context of the changes related to the welfare-state, labour-society, family and demographic situation, the state is proving to push the voluntary society in three ways: firstly, in discursive and programmatic terms through the moral upgrading of voluntary work, secondly, through (material) support programmes and policy instruments aimed at expanding voluntary work, and thirdly, through a politics of omission.” (my own translation)

As for the migrants, there is an additional aspect of precarisation in this development. Volunteering becomes a double-edged instrument of migrantisation: On the one hand, the promise of integration and participation in the host society is articulated through these initiatives. Since refugees during their asylum procedure, but also other migrants (e.g., when it comes to family reunification) are not allowed to take up regular employment (or cannot, because they are overwhelmed by the bureaucratic requirements and are often too little or even misinformed), volunteering is presented as the great gateway and threshold to employment. Volunteering is stylized as a promising in-between space, a transitional space that makes it easier for refugees to enter society. But on the other hand, it is not an agreeable waiting room, it is an examination room. They have to prove themselves, show themselves, do something (which rarely has anything to do with their former occupations and qualifications which anyhow are mostly not recognized as 'useful' or 'adequate' in the host country's job market), make themselves worthy in order to be allowed to cross the threshold to regularity and normality. In today's liberal market economies, volunteering is an instrument for outsourcing state welfare tasks onto the shoulders of a (voluntarily or forcedly) committed civil society. There are so many projects for the guided involvement and empowerment of actors with migrant background – most of them decorated with prizes and awards. Volunteering undoubtedly has an important function in a democratic social order, if it really happens voluntarily and of one's own accord – and not as the only way of being visible and valued.

Hassemer (2020) clearly shows in his research on unpaid voluntary language workers in a social counselling centre run by an NGO in Vienna how ambivalent and vulnerable the situation of these volunteering refugees is: They see and accept the chance to gain 'value' in the host society by this work. But the human capital they invest in this value-gaining process has only a very weak and maybe indirect impact on future employment chances. So, they become instrumentalized by the politics of a state that praises their volunteer work and enables them to enter the social and personal spheres of society as a 'good citizen' but the precari-

ous economic situation and the exclusion from the employment market remains and is even more set-in stone.

In the case of unpaid nonprofessional interpreters, we have a very strong inclination towards elevating this discourse of volunteering as helping their 'own people' coupled with the aim of giving back the help they received from the host country. We definitely need to conduct more research concentrating on this feeling of giving something back, a phenomenon I have labelled as 'Bringschuld' earlier (cf. Bahadır, 2021). This notion is used by the media and in political discourse on migrants quite often, but it also seems to be an intrinsic motivation of the volunteering migrant language workers, no matter whether they are refugees who are waiting to be 'legalized' or the so-called resident migrants who are settled, integrated, and who have proved that they have brought 'additional value' to their receiving societies. But of course, the question to start with here would be to ask how cultural, religious, ethnic, familial and personal backgrounds, the trauma of migration, the state politics of praising volunteer, unpaid and 'thankful' work for the community in the host countries are intertwined with policies of leaving the engaged migrants as long as possible in this ambivalent condition of economic precarity and social praise against the background of a bigger picture of failures in integrating migrant workers in the regular job market.

### ***Intervention 2: Nonprofessional interpreters / Giving something back ... but what?***

In the self-image of the state in Germany and Austria, interpreting has never been part of the standard services of migrant care – not even in the area of refugee aid is this service systematically and comprehensively provided by trained or certified and, above all, paid interpreters, but rather left to the charitable willingness of formerly affected persons to act as lay interpreters. There are countless, often enthusiastic reports in various media about voluntary interpreting as a noble task. There is also no shortage of interviews with former refugees who now want to show their gratitude by volunteering as interpreters in various NGOs. In a video on the website of Pro Asyl Essen about and with volunteers, a mi-

grant woman talks about her motivation to volunteer as an interpreter and emphasises that she interprets because when she came to Germany, the Germans helped her a lot and that is why she now wants to help by acting as a language broker.<sup>9</sup>

It is interesting that she wants to help because the Germans helped her, not because she wants to help her own community. Her German is quite broken. I don't want to be misunderstood – my point here is not to condemn the deficient German skills of a non-professional volunteer interpreter in a project that undoubtedly promotes civic engagement (Join Ehrenamt)<sup>10</sup>. In this case, too, I would like to look at this interpreting setting from the perspective of the multi-layered promise of integration. I would like to point out that this promise first of all cannot be fulfilled simply because of the linguistic reduction, i.e., the German level of the interpreting. It might be true that the professionals of the majority society are interpreted as well as possible into the language of origin of the newly arrived migrants – although here, too, a high level of competence in the language and culture of origin as well as a reasonable understanding of the target language and cultural circumstances is assumed or rather presupposed. Both conditions are usually not checked. Trust in the self-disclosure and the self-assessment of those involved is what counts. I am deliberately not talking about false interpreting here. I am talking here about a field of interpreting in which charity or civic engagement seems to be more important than the legal correctness of the word. Thus, the duplicity or two-faced nature lies in the fact that this is not openly stated, i.e., it is pretended, the appearance is maintained that 'good' or the 'right' interpreting is taking place here and that the condition of the migrant being formerly speechless and thus powerless is therefore reversed and a situation of empowerment is made possible.

A newspaper report emphasises that the need for lay interpreters is enormous – in that region and all over Germany. And 13 volunteers have just been trained, we read in the article. What exactly this training involves remains unclear. But it is anyhow an imposition to be trained for

9 <https://www.proasylessen.de/mitmachen/ehrenamt/>

10 <https://join-ehrenamt.drk-hessen.de/>

a service that will always remain in the precariat of voluntary work. I have also been designing and conducting training courses, shorter and longer ones, for volunteer interpreters. Over the years, my attitude in this regard has moved in a completely different direction. Initially, I was concerned with remedying deficits, with teaching as many techniques and strategies as possible in the shortest possible time. The result was too often disillusionment and a kind of destabilization without time to recover and develop resilience for all involved, me as a trainer included. It was a struggle in vain because I tried to compensate their deficits in the German language and in the knowledge of the social, legal and medical systems in which they have to act as interpreters through competence building in interpreting techniques and strategies.

“Shortly before their final exams, they talk about their volunteer work, in which they invest a lot of time: ‘Three years ago, I felt like a refugee myself and now I want to give that back,’ says Ukrainian Vitalina Lukovkina, for example.”<sup>11</sup> For a long time, I didn’t want to see that lay interpreting is always about ‘giving back’, about paying a debt. Even and especially after short-term training. As long as the volunteering and the charitable orientation continues. In the newspaper report we read further: “The family of Ukrainian Dmitry Skyrta was taken in by a family in Bischofswiesen a few weeks ago. ‘I have an obligation to give something back,’ says Skyrta. He is looking forward to being able to communicate with others and support them when they arrive in Germany.”

So, in my trainings, the focus has shifted more and more to raising awareness for the ethical in this activity, which clearly also touches on the political. I am now concerned with taking the responsibility off these heavy-laden shoulders, and to invite them to recognize the systemic entanglements of their voluntary work. And also to recognize that it does make a difference, primarily on the level of the politics of recognition and the right for fair and equal treatment in the public services of the

---

11 [https://www.berchtesgadener-anzeiger.de/region-und-lokal/lokales-berchtesgadener-land\\_artikel,-laiendolmetscher-haenderingend-gesucht-13-freiwillige-haben-sich-ausbilden-lassen-\\_arid,698230.html](https://www.berchtesgadener-anzeiger.de/region-und-lokal/lokales-berchtesgadener-land_artikel,-laiendolmetscher-haenderingend-gesucht-13-freiwillige-haben-sich-ausbilden-lassen-_arid,698230.html). (The translations of the direct quotes from the article are my own.)

host country, if they interpret for ‘their community’ with a German language competence that is barely level B 1 – as opposed to the option that ‘their community’ might be provided with a certified and professional interpreter with very good command of both working languages.

Whether they will be happier and feel less deficient as a result, as they mostly did in my training courses packed with impossible-to-master competence enhancements, is a different question.

### 3 Integration, participation, empowerment via interpreting

I will not provide definitions of what integration, participation and empowerment do, might, or should mean for which project, initiative, politician or theoretician. It is evident that we have a multiplicity of different definitions and understandings of these three key concepts – as well as a large corpus of literature in the social, political and legal sciences on them. What I want to stress for our usage in the context of migration in general and community interpreting in particular is that there is a huge critical discussion going on about these concepts in migration studies but also in other areas of the social sciences. So, a cautious handling of these concepts, which are meanwhile presented as political but also ethical axioms for the functioning of postmigrant societies, is very important.<sup>12</sup> I want to therefore base my arguments now mainly on the ideas of Willem Schinkel, a social theorist who is very critical of the constant demand for integration, especially in the context of enabling participation, i.e., the becoming of a member of a society (2013, 2017, 2018). I take his resistance to view immigrant integration within a neo-colonial and racist order of knowledge production as my reference point for a plea for a critical reading of the master concepts of migration politics as well as policies not only in migration research but also in interpreting research on volunteer and nonprofessional interpreters – if we are ready to conduct our research by taking into

---

12 I would recommend the volume “Umkämpfte Begriffe der Migration. Inventar” (2023) to get a critical overview of these master concepts.

account the current situation of migrants in many Western countries. These interpreting acts mostly happen in states that have withdrawn from a so-called credo of the possibility of multicultural societies – and Schinkel poignantly highlights that there is a big paradox behind these rhetorics of denouncement: All of these countries denounce something that never existed: “This fiction of a multiculturalism that was once dominant across Western Europe but has now been shown to have failed is espoused both by politicians of nearly all colours and by well-known immigrant integration scholars.” (Schinkel, 2018, p.1)

Yet the so-called failure of multiculturalism is closely linked to a tradition of calling it integration, while thinking of assimilation. The major integration theorist in German sociology, Hartmut Esser, is influenced by early assimilation theories in US American sociology in the 1980s. In Germany the understanding of integration in sociology as well as in social politics is strongly connected with other forms of societal and national identification and incorporation processes (cf. Laubenthal, 2023, Becker, 2022). Structural, social and cultural integration seem to be instrumental for a sense of belonging, which in turn seems to increase the migrants’ possibilities of participating in society. We have a clear intermingling of expectations for national identification (to become/feel as/be German) and procedures of incorporation into the society (to become a member of society in Germany, to take part in society, to participate in society). Schenkel coins the word “multiculturealism” in order to describe “the self-declared ‘realism’ of supposedly having been ‘multicultural’ and hence ‘politically correct’, naively ‘left-wing’, ‘ignoring the problems’ (with immigrants, with ‘Islam’, and so on), but of now having become realistic/a realist, daring to voice the harsh truth about the troubled realities of a failing model of immigrant integration. The discourse of multiculturealism has entailed a license to problematize migrant others, i.e., to forego the relational aspects of migration and to focus solely on the position and problems of immigrants and their children, many of whom were actually born on European soil” (2018, p. 2).

In this context Schinkel criticizes the concept of integration which was used in classical sociology to describe processes in a society as a whole, in an organicist approach, and which is meanwhile taken as a

property of the individual: “‘Integration’ thus changes from a *system state* to a *state of being* of an individual. Lack of immigrant integration thus turns out to have to do with the being of immigrants, and the resulting picture of course ends up pitting ‘society’ over against individuals that are racialized in particular ways, because in order for their being to affect their integration, that being must be somehow problematic” (2018, p. 3).

Integration has become a measurable competence – the one migrant is less integrated, the other is better integrated. It is presented as a parameter that guarantees the next step, which is participation. It has been transformed into a static and unrelational concept according to Schinkel – thus within a neoliberal paradigm of migration policies in Europe integration has become the responsibility of each individual migrant (2018, p. 2). This individualization of integration is fertile ground for developing an ideology of the individual contribution to the integration of newcomers by acting as language and integration mediators. The acts of nonprofessional and volunteer language work give the migrant who has already gained access to society the opportunity to pay off their debt of having reached a state of successful integration into the host country with the help of members or institutions of this society. This intricate interconnectedness of receiving help and thus getting into the debt via this received help, then trying to pay off one’s debt with the system’s expectation of the migrants’ finding their own ways and solutions to first enter the organic unit called host society and to then try and become an active member of this entity, is a heavy load on the shoulders of every nonprofessional and volunteering interpreter. It suits migration and integration policies however to hail the good and thankful migrant who works for the new society, volunteering and without getting paid<sup>13</sup>.

The most problematic consequence that is postulated by migration policies with regard to volunteer lay interpreting is the atmosphere of

---

13 See also the very interesting study by Düsener 2010 in which she shows how migrants try to reach inclusion by civic engagement not for ‘their own people’ but for Germans.

apparent empowerment. What even is empowerment when the power resides in organic aggregates that foster structural discrimination, create ambivalent and paradoxical narratives on the dangers of excessive migration and the unwillingness of migrants to be integrated and accept an increasing racialization and culturalization of the public as well as academic debates on the limits of migration? Who empowers whom in this system? Who has the right to do that? Who is the language worker, whether nonprofessional and unpaid or professionalized and paid, to dare to adopt the task to empower? And who commissions them to empower the newly arrived migrant? To empower to do what and to become what? Empowering here has a clear instrumentalizing side. For me this is an interesting and most virulent case for illustrating the phenomenon of 'instrumental thinking' which Dizdar diagnoses as a typical feature of translation and translation studies within the market-oriented neoliberal economies of education and scholarship (Dizdar, 2014).

***Intervention 3: There is resistance and resilience – no matter whether with nonprofessional, professionalized or highly professional interpreters***

In this last reflection, I would like to outline one concrete example of deliberate resistance to the two cherished ethical ideals of interpreting, namely neutrality or impartiality as well as correctness and completeness of interpreting, without additions or omissions. I am sure that many other interpreters have had similar experiences, but they haven't been asked the right questions in research projects in order to talk openly about them – or didn't even have the time to reflect on their experiences and to become aware of what had happened in that situation. In the three narrative biographical interviews I conducted with language and integration mediators and in the feedback and self-reflection sessions after the interpreting exams in the SprInt project, there were quite a few accounts of breaches and cracks in the promise of establishing understanding and enabling communication via highest possible transparency and using all one's competences. Even in the accounts of conference interpreter colleagues we see similar situations

which I have documented in a field diary over quite a few years. I want to dwell upon only one concrete breach of the triple mandate of the interpreter, i.e., her solemn pledge to simultaneously serve the three sides involved in the scenario of interpreted events. I will just touch upon this scenario, which is based upon my personal experience. I deliberately choose to narrate it in the third-person-singular-perspective because I think it is not important that I had been the interpreter. I would like to present the situation as a framing scenario, just like the ones I use in the interpreting enactments in my performance-and body-centred pedagogy of interpreting. Framing or rough scenario means that it is an abstract and exemplary case that can be enriched with cultural, social, situational, personal features and adapted to different times and spaces (cf. e.g. Bahadır, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2017).

An academically educated, professional interpreter experiences the situation in which a prosecutor questions a woman who is accused of having beaten her five-year-old daughter in the staircase of the house in which she lives. The neighbour who filed a complaint is the only witness. The prosecutor openly shows his discontent and a discriminatory attitude towards the woman. Right at the beginning while the three involved persons are sitting around a table, he grumbles something like 'again one of these migrant women'. The interpreter asks him to whom he had spoken and whether she should interpret this. He waves her off impatiently and starts to ask questions at such a high speed that the interpreter has difficulties taking notes. The questions are tricky, partly misleading and laden with insinuations. The interpreter knows the woman and her daughter from a German course which she had taught. She had mentioned this to the prosecutor. He wasn't interested. She knows about the patience and the naiveness of the mother, a very shy person, barely educated, who married a man from the same village in their country of origin and afterwards came to Germany. She is now staying with her husband's big family, under constant pressure trying to prove herself worthy of her husband and being allowed to come to Germany. The interpreter also knows about how the mother normally pampers the child while the child often takes advantage of this by being overly dramatic about each tiny thing. The mother is terrified by this

questioning, even paralysed; she confuses details of the events in the staircase, stumbles over every question, answers either frantically or speaks with a very low voice. The interpreter tries to draw the prosecutor's attention to the mother's very apparent shock, but he harshly calls the interpreter back to her duty 'just to interpret and to interpret everything literally and not to disturb his questioning'. The interpreter, in the course of the questioning, suddenly starts to warn the mother, to give tiny directions to her, just in one or two short sentences introducing the prosecutor's misleading tricky questions. The first intervention, a very soft and short warning, something like 'be careful, this question the prosecutor asks is tricky, please reflect well before answering' happens abruptly, like a silent outburst. Then she becomes aware of this act of transgressing the border of uninvolved and distanced interpreting and of breaking the rule of intervening, without changing the words said by the prosecutor but by commenting on them, adding to them something like an explanation or a stage direction. And as her intransparent intervention has the impact of somehow shaking the migrant mother up, she deliberately chooses to intervene three more times, with hasty introductory comments like 'this is a repetition of the last question, only in other words' and 'please dare to speak about your current situation at home' and lastly 'please don't get angry, this is just a hypothetical question' – as an introductory comment to the provocative question the prosecutor is shouting at the mother as to whether she would beat her daughter if she had broken the TV screen by throwing something at it. His aim was clear to the interpreter: He wanted to push the woman into a corner and get her to yell that of course she would then beat her. But the interpreter's intervention didn't allow him to provoke the mother and to enrage her. She remained calm and said that she cannot answer this question because she doesn't know but that she loves her nasty daughter and that she hasn't ever beaten her. The interpreter didn't feel any remorse. She felt that it was right, that it was even just. She had compensated a very tiny bit for the lack of justice in the questioning – of course in her own opinion. But as the prosecutor wasn't interested in her opinion and didn't show any readiness to cooperate with her, she

decided herself what to do to correct the situation. She didn't dare to talk about this transgression to anybody for a very long time.

All types of interpreters under all sorts of conditions and in all kinds of situations have many more such experiences. The point is that we have to dig them out, we have to provide an honest and open, a respectful and appreciative atmosphere and a participatory and activating frame of research in which they are encouraged, even empowered to talk frankly but also self-reflexively and critically about such instances of transgression of borders – and of instances of setting up boundaries instead of overcoming or bridging them through interpreting.

#### 4 'Radical Interpreting Studies': The Political in the Ethical – or the Ethical in the Political?

Up until now I have attempted to demonstrate that interpreting to enable faster integration in migratory settings is part of a political programme in states where the care of migrants is outsourced to NGOs following the rationale of liberal market economies. Interpreting as a volunteer and unpaid 'integration aid' is thus imposed upon agents of interpreting in community settings in line with a specific political and social agenda of integration. As interpreting researchers, we have to be highly-aware of this ideology of integration and participation attached to interpreting as we are prone to being influenced by this ideology as well. Our position is no different from that of migration researchers. Schinkel invites these researchers (2018, pp. 7, 9) to read against the grain– to question the mainstream understanding of society as an unmovable, unchangeable, untouchable organic union into which problematic individuals are to be incorporated through a more or less successful integration process. He stresses that this organic unit called society is not critically discussed in this approach – it is always the migrant, the individual to be incorporated who is successful or not. In his book *Imagined Societies* (2017) he invites us to turn this perspective upside down. He convincingly argues that in such an approach it is only the subject in/of migration who causes trouble or is even *integra-*

*tionsunwillig* ('not willing to integrate') or who is compliant and thus *integrationswillig* ('willing to integrate'). Thus, the complete load of integration as a complex package of social and political action, i.e., for the individual to become part of this social body and at the same time for the social body to incorporate this new part, is placed on the shoulders of the individual person who immigrated. It is the other, the foreigner, the stranger as an individual who clearly has a *Bringschuld* within this perspective. We can also discern the idea of the guest, the foreigner who is accepted only thanks to the *Gutmenschum*, i.e., the benevolence of the natives, of those who are already there. Schinkel's thought-provokingly oblique look at this imbalanced distribution of duties, responsibilities and expectations during the process of integration can be connected to Zygmunt Bauman's deliberations on the stranger, as a third and most ominous category between friend and foe, who are the complete insider and the complete outsider (e.g. in Bauman, 2005). This stranger is *un-heimlich* according to Bauman, in the double sense of the German adjective: not belonging to us, to our home – and therefore terrifying. So, interpreting for this unknown or mis-known and therefore awful and mis-fit individual is in a way performed as part of a mission to make this stranger known, better known, similar to us, understandable, shapeable, assimilate-able. This mission is sometimes openly articulated by policy-makers, but might also be left unspoken by certain initiatives which seemingly care for the wellbeing of both their migrants and their interpreters– but it is always taken-for-granted. Another important source for a reshuffle in our approach to the eternal debate on integration are no doubt Di Cesare's deliberations on migration/mobility as "the original sin of the migrant" as opposed to migration/mobility as a basic and the oldest human right (Donatella di Cesare, 2021, basing her arguments on Arendt, Derrida, Simmel and others). The resident foreigners with the stigma of this 'original sin' experience the political and legal consolidation of a continuous oscillation between being accused and self-accusation (guilt) paired with (socially, politically and self-imposed) feelings of gratitude.

For the kind of 'radical interpreting studies' that I would like to start envisaging here, this impossible bulk of expectations loaded on

the shoulders of interpreters is a starting point inviting us interpreting researchers to take a closer look at many more seemingly smooth performances of interpreting. ‘Radical interpreting studies’ could concentrate on illustrating the potential of resistance inscribed in interpreting in general and on how these acts of subversive interpreting are most often hidden and overseen, deliberately or unconsciously. Radical would mean digging out the social, cultural, economic, political, and personal roots of scenarios of interpreting, diving deeper into acts of interpreting and peeking behind the curtain of interpreting performances. Radical would also be necessarily paired with critical. And critical would be aligned with unconditional.

As I am very aware of the fact that I am normative in my researcher positioning now, I would like to underline here the necessity of conducting critical research without condition and to reflect upon concepts, but also upon phenomena and agents in the field in an unconditionally critical attitude – in the sense of Derrida’s unconditional university which is yet to come and his concept of the ‘new’ humanities in which philosophical thought is openly involved in politics as well as in law (Derrida, 2002). In her seminal text delineating the framework for a deconstructive attitude as a translation studies scholar, Dizdar asks us what kind of a position a responsible translation studies can occupy if our research and academic thinking is not only to be commissioned and bought up by certain companies, basing her question on the warnings Derrida articulates for the university as an institution of education, philosophical thought and science (2013, 152). And more than this question, I find her answer important for my view of ‘radical interpreting studies’: As this question is not at all easy to answer we should ask it again and again under each and every new condition (2013, 153). What makes our research responsible and ethical is thus first of all this question we have to ask ourselves continuously – a courageous way of asking questions in research. In this context, it is the right and the duty of researchers working on nonprofessional or professional interpreting to ask uncomfortable questions and to unfold the political and economic framing of these interpreting performances. Dizdar stresses that translation studies is very often confronted by demands like “Praxistauglichkeit” (practicality) and

“Beschäftigungsfähigkeit” (employability) (2013, 149). While Dizdar ponders whether ‘perhaps’ this might be the reason for so little critical research on the social and political impact of translations and translators and especially on the entanglements between automation and translation on the one hand and the translation market on the other, I would like to underline that the position of regarding translation as an ‘instrumental’ performance, as an activity that must be ‘*nützlich*’ (useful) is exactly the quandary translation studies, and even more so interpreting research, only rarely escapes.

Yet I think that ‘radical interpreting studies’ could also bestow us with the strategy of reading against the grain, even in this debate on the ‘usefulness’ of research. Schinkel poignantly shows how the social scientist degenerates into a record keeper, measuring deviant and nonnormative behaviour, i.e., in the case of integration, analysing and keeping the record of the ways of how migrants entering a society are being integrated or not (2018, 11). He calls this a modern endeavour, which reminds me of Zygmunt Bauman’s deliberations on a postmodern critique of the modern condition (e.g. in Bauman, 1999).

In his own work Schinkel shows us how we can escape ‘toolification’ in research by asking uncomfortable questions about all phenomena, even those which we think are very clearly studied up to now or seem to be clear in their meaning to us researchers, to our scientific community, to society. For me this means that at the very end of my text, in the case of acts and agents of integration-fostering interpreting, I would like to ask, supported by Chantal Mouffe, the uncomfortable question of whether we can even talk about dialogue and understanding safeguarded by interpreters under the condition of postmigrant societies: “There is much talk today about ‘dialogue’ and ‘deliberation’ but what is the meaning of such words in the political field, if no real choice is at hand and if the participants in the discussion are not able to decide between clearly defined alternatives?” (Mouffe, 2015, 3)

I would therefore like to end my contribution with the demand to (re)read the ethical in nonprofessional interpreting as the political within a “post-political vision“ of liberal thought in contemporary democracies (Mouffe, 2015, pp. 1–2) where conflict and antagonism is

unwanted in line with an “aspiration to a world where the we/they discrimination would have been overcome”. Based on Mouffe’s disclosure of the falseness of the discourse on dialogue and understanding under conditions of discrimination and power imbalances, it is absolutely necessary to look at acts of interpreting as performances/(re)enactments and at nonprofessional interpreters as performers/(re)enactors with the potential for both consolidation and transformation of systemic constraints by enduring or refusing instrumentalization. A critical reading of ‘dialogue’ guaranteed by interpreters in postmigrant societies requires us to concentrate on the politics of interpreting and the political in interpreting and to look closer at the ethical implications of the role/function/task of the (non)professional interpreter in postmigrant societies as well as at the ambivalence in the acts and procedures of presenting the (non)professional interpreter (in the public sphere) as an example for ‘best practice’ in integration (the one who made it!).

## References

- Anderson, B. (2019). New directions in migration studies: towards methodological de-nationalism. *Comparative Migration Studies* (2019), (7)36. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0140-8>
- Bahadır, Ş. (2007). *Verknüpfungen und Verschiebungen. Dolmetscherin, Dolmetschforscherin und Dolmetschausbilderin*. Berlin: Frank und Timme.
- Bahadır, Ş. (2010). *Dolmetschinszenierungen. Kulturen, Identitäten, Akteure*. Berlin: SAXA Verlag.
- Bahadır, Ş. (2011). Interpreting Enactments: A New Path for Interpreting Pedagogy. In C. Kainz, E. Prunč, R. Schögler (Eds.), *Modelling the Field of Community Interpreting. Questions of Methodology in Research and Training* (pp. 177–210). Münster-Wien-London: LIT Verlag, 2012.
- Bahadır, Ş. (2017). The interpreter as observer, participant and agent of change: The irresistible entanglement between interpreting ethics, politics and pedagogy. In M. Biagini, M. Boyd, C. Monacelli, *The Changing Role of the Interpreter: Contextualizing Norms, Ethics and Quality Standards* (pp. 122–145). New York: Routledge.

- Bahadır-Berzig, Ş. (2021). Dolmetschen für Gleichbehandlung und Teilhabe – aber bitte möglichst umsonst! oder: Am Anfang war die Bringschuld – Dolmetschen im öffentlichen Raum in Deutschland. In S. Pöllabauer and M. Kadric (Eds.), *Entwicklungslinien des Dolmetschens im soziokulturellen Kontext. Translationskultur(en) im DACH-Raum* (pp. 161–183). Tübingen: Gunter Narr.
- Bartels, Inken et al. 2023. *Umkämpfte Begriffe der Migration. Ein Inventar*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag.
- Bauman, Z. (1999). *Unbehagen in der Postmoderne*. Translated by W. Schmalz. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition.
- Bauman, Z. (2005). *Moderne und Ambivalenz*. Translated by Martin Suhr. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition.
- Becker, C. C. (2022). Migrants' Social Integration and Its Relevance for National Identification: An Empirical Comparison Across Three Social Spheres. *Front. Sociol*, 6, 700580. doi: 10.3389/fsoc.2021.700580
- Clifford, & Marcus, George E. (Eds.) (1986). *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Dahinden, J. (2016). A plea for the 'de-migranticization' of research on migration and integration. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(13), 2207–2225. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.1124129>
- Derrida, J. (2002). The future of the profession or the university without condition (thanks to the “Humanities”, what could take place tomorrow). In T. Cohen (Ed.), *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Di Cesare, D. (2021). *Philosophie der Migration*. Translated from Italian into German by Daniel Creutz. Berlin: Matthes & Seitz.
- Dizdar, D. (2013). Dekonstruktive Rahmenüberlegungen. In B. Ahrens, S. Hansen-Schirra, M. Krein-Kühle, M. Schreiber (Eds.), *Translationswissenschaftliches Kolloquium II: Beiträge zur Übersetzungs- und Dolmetschwissenschaft (Köln/Germersheim)*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2012.
- Dizdar, D. (2014). Instrumental Thinking in Translation Studies. *Target*, 26(2), 206–223.
- Dizdar, D. (2020). Translation und Grenze. Versuch einer translationswissenschaftlichen Neufignation. In N. Engel & S. Köngeter, *Über-*

- setzung (pp. 57–76). Wiesbaden: Springer Verlag. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-20321-4\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-20321-4_4)
- Dizdar, D. (2021). Translation als Katalysator von Humandifferenzierung. Eine translationswissenschaftliche Bestandsaufnahme. In D. Dizdar, S. Hirschauer, J. Paulmann, G. Schabacher (Eds.), *Humandifferenzierung. Disziplinäre Perspektiven und empirische Sondierungen* (pp. 135–159). Weilerswist: Welbrück Wissenschaft. <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783748911364>
- Düsener, K. (2010). *Integration durch Engagement? Migrantinnen und Migranten auf der Suche nach Inklusion*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag.
- El Mafaalani, A. (2020). *Das Integrationsparadox. Warum gelungene Integration zu mehr Konflikten führt*. Aktualisierte und erweiterte Neuauflage. Köln: Kiepenheuer&Witsch.
- Foroutan, N. (2019). *Die postmigrantische Gesellschaft. Ein Versprechen der pluralen Demokratie*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag.
- Hassemer, J. (2020). The value(s) of volunteering: asylum seekers' trajectories through language work in refugee assistance, *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 17(1), 46–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2020.1682252>
- Hollstein, B. (2017). Das Ehrenamt. Empirie und Theorie des bürgerschaftlichen Engagements. In *Politik und Zeitgeschichte*. <https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/apuz/245597/das-ehrenamt-empirie-und-theorie-des-buergerschaftlichen-engagements/>
- Laubenthal, B. (2023). Introduction: Assimilation, integration or transnationalism? An overview of theories of migrant incorporation. *International Migration*, 61(1), 84–91. DOI: 10.1111/imig.13118
- Marcus, E. G. & Fischer, M. M. J. (1986). *Anthropology as cultural critique. An experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago press.
- Mouffe, C. (2005). *On the Political*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Schinkel, W. (2013). The imagination of 'society' in measurements of immigrant integration. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36(7), 1142–1161. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2013.783709>
- Schinkel, W. (2017). *Imagined Societies: A Critique of Immigrant Integration in Western Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Schinkel, W. (2018). Against 'immigrant integration': for an end to neo-colonial knowledge production. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-018-0095-1>
- Spivak, G. (1985). Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography. In *Other Worlds. Essays in Cultural Politics* (pp. 270–304). London and New York: Methuen.
- Staub-Bernasconi, S. (2016). Social Work and Human Rights—Linking Two Traditions of Human Rights in Social Work. *J. Hum. Rights Soc. Work*, 1(1), 40–49. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-016-0005-0>
- Van Dyk, S. (2021). Umsonst und freiwillig? Die Neuverhandlung des Sozialen und die Informalisierung von Arbeit. *WSI MITTEILUNGEN*, 74, 343–354.