

Preface

“Media, Migration, Integration – European and North American Perspectives” This was the title of a conference held at the University of Dortmund on June 21 and 22, 2007. The presentations and discussions from the conference are documented in this volume. The conference was part of a research project entitled “Media Integration of Ethnic Minorities in Germany, the U.S., and Canada”, a project undertaken by the Universities of Dortmund and Siegen in 2002, long before German politics and media began to heatedly debate the topic of integration. That project, in turn, was one element of a research unit located at the University of Siegen and sponsored by the German Research Foundation (DFG): “Media Upheavals, Media Cultures, and Media Aesthetics at the Beginning of the 20th and in Transition to the 21st Century” (*Medienumbrüche. Medienkulturen und Medienästhetik zu Beginn des 20. und im Übergang zum 21. Jahrhundert*).

In June 2004, the first conference within the context of the project “Media Integration” took place in Siegen. The papers presented at this conference were made accessible to a broader audience through their appearance in the volume “Integration durch Massenmedien. Mass Media Integration”, published by Transcript Verlag in 2006. The insights gained during the first phase of the research project were published in 2005 in a fundamental manual now recognized as a standard reference work in the field (*Massenmedien und die Integration ethnischer Minderheiten in Deutschland. Problemaufriss – Forschungsstand – Bibliografie*). Another volume presenting findings specific to the second phase of the project will follow in 2009.

At the conference in Siegen in 2004, we were intrigued by the idea of bringing together, on the one hand, scholars concerned with the conditions and consequences of communication in the mass media and, on the other, media practitioners¹. In this way we were able to explore both the opportunities and the risks of mass media communication for integration in societies attracting large numbers of immigrants. Even at that time, in addition to a number of participants from German universities and editorial staffs, speakers from Canada, the U.S., and the Netherlands also took part.

1 Rainer Geißler/Horst Pöttker (Hg.): Integration durch Massenmedien/Mass Media Integration. Medien und Migration im internationalen Vergleich. Media and Migration: A Comparative Perspective. (Medienumbrüche, Bd. 17). Bielefeld: transcript 2006

For the second conference, which is documented in this volume, international developments were our central theme. Our focus was not on a uniform theoretical approach, but, rather, on enriching the debate by combining perspectives from various countries on both sides of the Atlantic with sizable immigrant populations.

At the same time, it was important for us to be able to maintain a certain continuity within our discussion. For this reason, we were especially pleased to have recruited three speakers, Leen d’Haenens (the Netherlands), Augie Fleras (Canada), and Kenneth Starck (U.S.A.), who were also at the conference in Siegen in 2004. Petra Herczeg (Austria), Svetlana Serebryakova (Russia), Souley Hassane (France), and Heinz Bonfadelli (Switzerland) allowed us to considerably enhance the scope of international perspectives this time. Fortunately, journalists in authoritative positions, such as Jona Teichmann (WDR) and Rainer Rosenberg (ORF), spontaneously agreed to take part in the concluding debate. It is perhaps an indication of some form of cosmopolitan progress in the social sciences and in cultural studies that not only for this publication, but also during the entire proceedings of the conference on German soil we were able to consistently make use of English as a *lingua franca*.

The editors wish to express their gratitude not only to the speakers and participants at the conference, but also to all of those without whose help this book could never have been completed: the German Research Foundation (DFG), the offices of the presidents of Dortmund and Siegen Universities, the Siegen research center “Media Upheavals, Media Cultures, and Media Aesthetics at the Beginning of the 20th and in Transition to the 21st Century” as represented by its spokesperson, Professor Peter Gendolla, the academic staff and student assistants on the research project “Media Integration of Ethnic Minorities in Germany, the U.S., and Canada”, and special thanks to the journalist Anne Weibert, who took on the responsibility of preparing this volume for publication, to Thomas La Presti, who helped us with proofreading the English texts, and to the members of our secretarial staff in Dortmund and Siegen, Angelika Schomann and Christa Still. We are immeasurably indebted to our two colleagues and friends in North America, Professor Augie Fleras (University of Waterloo, Canada) and Professor Kenneth Starck (University of Iowa, U.S.A., currently at Zayed University, FAR/UAE), whose intellectual support we have had the privilege to rely upon for many years.

Rainer Geißler, Horst Pöttker
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