

Mobility vs. Migration?

Categorizations and Mechanisms of Inequality in Integration Debates

At a very general level the dissertation addresses basic problems of how nation-states select their immigrants in a legitimate discourse and how affiliations are negotiated in public. While observing how the discourse on immigration in the German media defines good vs. bad movement, it enlarges our ability to analyze regimes of mobility, migration and citizenship. Thus, the empirical study dissects the question "What qualifies a good migrant and potential citizen today?" in the German discourse on immigration during the time of the economic crisis. Being a good migrant is located in the value of economically productive individuals, which is represented in the discourse among others by the label "the new guest workers". Here, the question whether immigrants are culturally integrated or not is subsequent to economic considerations. However, not all immigrants are considered to be new guest workers. The perception is differentiated into two groups - the low qualified poverty immigrants, which are discussed in terms of cultural integration/disintegration and the highly qualified guest workers, which represent the high creative mobile class. Thus, this study reveals how Germany as a liberal democratic state practices legitimate in-and exclusion today. The new guest worker narrative demonstrates the boundary blurring of race and ethnicity and the shifting into the new form of inclusion and exclusion, which is called "identity liberalism". By understanding this symbolic boundary we can expand our knowledge of how the ability to move across borders becomes a crucial criterion by which class is defined and class privileges upheld.