

THE STANDING SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

EVIDENCE

OTTAWA, Monday, November 27, 2023

Dear Senators and honorable members of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights. On Monday, Nov 27th I was invited as a witness to inform you on the topic of Forced Global Displacement.

As Professor for Integration Studies and Social Policy at Humboldt-University in Berlin (<https://www.bim.hu-berlin.de/en/pp/chaire/foroutan-naika>) and as director of the German Center on Migration and Integration (DeZIM) <https://www.dezim-institut.de/en/institute/about-dezim/heads-of-institute/> I am happy and proud to be consulted by your standing committee on issues our institute is deeply involved with.

Our research is mainly based on empirical findings, population surveys and monitorings. We are regular consultants for the German government and public.

In the very dense discussion with the honorable Senators and my two colleagues Jessie Thomson and Prof. Melissa Siegel two questions remained open that I would love to answer by writing.

1. The first question that remained unanswered was by Senator Arnot:

Senator Arnot: Dr. Foroutan, regarding radicalization, racism and Islamism, this committee has explored the existence and impact of Islamophobia in Canada and recently created a report upon it. Considering your interest in Islam and minority policies, how do you perceive the interplay between radicalization, racism and Islamism in the context of immigration and integration? What policy responses do you recommend?

Thank you Senator Arnot for asking about the interplay of these three social behaviours. Please allow me to start with the part concerning racism: A series of racist murders has brought the issue of racism into the political consciousness of German society and prompted the German government to acknowledge officially in 2020 that radicalization, right-wing extremism and racism have become a serious and urgent threat to democracy.

The murder of the Christian Democrat politician Walter Lübcke on the terrace of his home in Kassel in the west German state of Hesse in June 2019, followed by an anti-Semitic and racist attack on a Synagogue in the east German city of Halle on Yom Kippur in October 2019, when two people were murdered, plus the murder of nine immigrants by a white supremacist bank employee in west German Hanau in February 2020, were paired with a growing realization that [far-right racist networks can be found](#) in the security agencies, the German armed forces, and the police

For the German public to understand more about racism in their own country the Bundestag finally commissioned the German Center for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM) - that I head as director - to develop a long-term [National Discrimination and Racism Monitor \(NaDiRa\)](#). The aim was to survey, record, and understand the extent, causes, and consequences of racism in Germany and also to learn about its similarities and differences compared to other countries of immigration. Thus, the German discourse of racism is increasingly intertwined with the German negotiation of its status as a country of immigration. Initial data from the recently published empirical study, "[Racist Realities: How Does Germany Deal with Racism?](#)" on the German population's perception of racism has shown that there may be analytical, empirical, and phenomenological differences between Germany and Canada when it comes to understanding racism. While the United States and Canada have a vivid debate on race, racism, and race relations reaching into the past century, informing political debates, policy making, and antagonist polarization, it is only quite recently that dealing with racism has entered public debates and awareness in Germany. Germany has mainly "imported" theories on racism and is adjusting them to the German case in order to collect quantitative representative data and broaden its knowledge on how racism is perceived in the public eye.

On the contrary when it comes to Islamophobia and Islamism Germany is quite ahead in collecting data and writing reports. Nearly [5,5 million Muslims live in Germany](#) – making up some 7 percent of its population. The majority of the Muslims living in Germany are first generation immigrants with a high number of refugees. A [recent report on islamophobia in Germany](#) reveals that a hostile attitude toward Muslims is widespread in large sections of German society.

I myself have studied the transformation of collective and national identities in discursive negotiations with the immigrant "other" vastly - with a particular [focus on Islam and Muslims](#). I could prove, based on empirical data that the belonging of Muslims remains a contested factor – no matter how long the immigration history dates back. Even the third generation is confronted with exclusion out of the collective narrative of Germanness. I have also published on [Muslim identities and anti-Muslim attitudes in Germany testing for effects on anti-Muslim racism](#). I could prove that high "plurality-resistance" correlates strongly with anti-muslim attitudes

Together with my colleagues David Meiering and Aziz Dziri we researched and published on [Islamism and radicalization](#). We were able to show how radicalization and Islamism spread in social media and how their main actors use common narratives of fraternal radicalization and copy strategies of left-wing and right-wing extremism. In a current project at Humboldt University, together with my colleague Dr. Özgür Özvatan, we are investigating the possibility of developing a "German Islam" to construct counter-narratives against the increasing Islamist phishing strategies towards immigrant Muslim youth on TikTok and other social media.

I will be happy to provide you with more detailed information together with my colleagues at a future hearing if you wish.

2. The second question that remained unanswered was by Senator Omidvar:

Senator Omidvar: I will pose the question and hope to get answers from you in writing because there is no time. This study will make recommendations to the Government of Canada and to the people of Canada. Ministers will read it. We hope the Prime Minister will read it. From your European point of view, what should be in this report that Canada can take, with humility, to the global stage?

Thank you very much, Senator Omidvar, for your question on this comparison with the European empirical situation with regard to migration and integration. I recently published an article in the Journal for Ethnic and Migration Studies together with my colleague Frank Kalter from the University of Mannheim.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1369183X.2023.2263830>

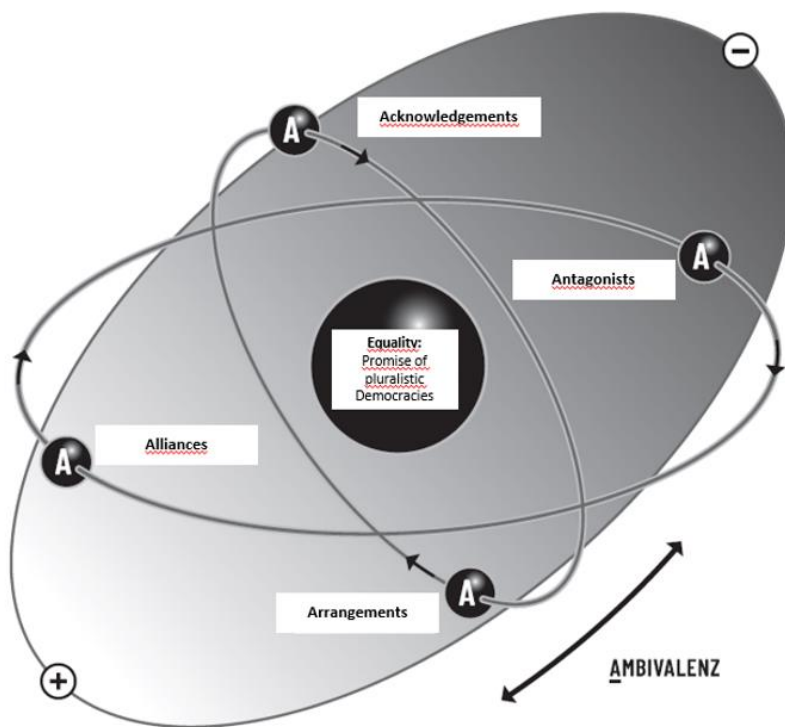
We could highlight a very counter-hypothetical evidence: It is mainly the rise of immigrants into key positions that makes the majority society nervous and turns debates on integration more and more toxic. We could prove through large scale data that **while the descendants of immigrants have become increasingly successful in Western European education systems and labor markets, acceptance and recognition on the part of the mainstream has not kept pace.** We have suggested outgroup mobility threat (OMT), the fear of being overtaken by intergenerational mobility, as one possible explanation. In this paper, we differentiate between occupations and groups. Our results show that there is a fear towards successful immigrants – especially when they are Muslims and move up into value-based occupations that are assumed to normatively shape society. This fear partially translates into islamophobic attitudes and anti-muslim discrimination.

There are many factors and arguments to explain anti-immigrant attitudes and some exogenous trends could be natural confounders to the recognition of the structural successes of the minorities. Explanations refer, for example, to economic crises (Billiet, Meuleman, and Witte Citation2014; Kuntz, Davidov, and Semyonov Citation2017; Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet Citation2018) or growing polarisation due to the dynamics of social or traditional media (Štětka, Mihelj, and Tóth Citation2021). An interesting line of argumentation regards the trends as something that might partly be endogenous to the processes of structural integration. Some scholars argue that expectations on both the migrant and non-migrant side increase as adaptation progresses (Dixon et al. Citation2010; Tolsma, Lubbers, and Gijsberts Citation2012; Foroutan Citation2012; Ten Teije, Coenders, and Verkuyten Citation2013; Canan and Foroutan Citation2016; El-Mafaalani Citation2018). The migrants and their descendants perceive lack of recognition more strongly when they are better integrated and react more sensitively to devaluations and a lack of equality which can lead to a kind of ‘integration paradox’ when they withdraw into ethnic enclaves (Verkuyten Citation2016; De Vroome, Martinovic, and Verkuyten Citation2014; Schaeffer Citation2014; El-Mafaalani Citation2018) or use strategies of identity politics (Attia Citation2014; Dotson Citation2018). But there might also be another understanding of ‘integration paradox’ redirecting it towards the non-immigrant majority society that reacts with aversion and fear of status when immigrants integrate and ascend into power (Sutterlüty Citation2010; Foroutan Citation2019,

145f; El El-Mafaalani Citation2018). In other words, some members of the majority population may develop negative attitudes toward immigrant and minority groups, not because they are unable or unwilling to integrate, but precisely because they succeed in doing so.

In relation to the report, we recommend moving away from established linear integration paradigms in which immigrants' achievements are seen as ticking boxes that would automatically lead to mutual engagement, respect and belonging on both sides of society. Rather, we recommend building on the idea that a changing multicultural mainstream with a high increase in mobility on the part of immigrants could lead to reactions of fear and aversion on the part of the former mainstream - leading to reactive votes for right-wing populist parties with the aim of restoring the former mainstream with its former privileges.

We are thinking of a system of mutual benefit within the post-migrant constellation that combines access and mobility for immigrants (first generation) with corresponding programs for members of the majority community (white and non-white Canadians). Thus, the success of new Canadians cannot compete with the decline of established Canadians. Post-migrant society must be seen as a very dynamic model in which new agreements and recognitions must be made simultaneously and alliances are forged not on the basis of identities but according to changing political goals. The awareness of antagonistic resistance to previous achievements must be considered in order to change formulations, strategies and goals at short notice and to be able to react more flexibly to the accelerating dynamics. I would be happy to inform you about the model below in a further hearing.



Postmigrant Societies

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+ Plurality-Acceptance
 - Plurality-Denial