

## **The Ambivalent Dealing with Diversity: An Ethnographic Study of Diversity and Its Different Faces of Managing in a Mixed Neighborhood in Germany**

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**Abstract :** Migration and the ensuing diversity are integral parts of urban societies. However, engaging with the urban society and its diversification is rarely perceived as something trivial but rather as a difficult task and a major challenge. A central aspect of the discourse is the current migration of refugees from countries of the southern hemisphere to Europe and the resulting challenges for cities, their municipalities and the civil society as a whole. Based on exploratory field research in a German inner-city neighborhood, it is aimed to show that the discourses about migration and diversity are completely contrary to the everyday life actions of the urban society. Processes of migration that include leaving one's hometown and moving to other places, searching for 'safe' environments or better opportunities are, historically speaking, not a new phenomenon. The urban dwellers have a large repertoire of strategies in managing processes of difference in everyday life situations, guided them well for centuries and also in these contemporary processes with an increased mobility and diversity. So there is obviously a considerable discrepancy between what is practically lived in everyday life, and how it is talked about. The results of the study demonstrate that the current discourse about the challenges of migration seems to legitimize interventions beyond humanist approaches where migrants serve as collective scapegoats for social problems and affected by different discrimination and criminalization processes. On the one hand, everyone takes advantage of the super-mobility and super-diversity in their daily lives and on the other hand, powerful stakeholders and designated authorities operate a sort of retro-nationalism and identity collectivism. Political players, the municipalities and other stakeholders then follow an urban public policy that takes actions (increasing police presence, concepts and activities for special groups, exclusion from active social life, preventing participation etc.) towards different 'groups' of residents, produced along 'ethnic' lines. The results also show that, despite the obstacles and adversities placed in their way, the excluded residents perpetually relocate and re-position themselves and attempt to empower themselves by redefining their identities in their neighborhood.

**Keywords :** coexistence, everyday life, migration and diversity regimes, urban policy

**Conference Title :** ICSMI 2017 : International Conference on Sociology, Migration and Integration

**Conference Location :** San Francisco, United States

**Conference Dates :** June 07-08, 2017