A Need to Activate Parents?

Practices of Migrant Integration

in Pedagogical Institutions in Berlin

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Declaration

Except as otherwise indicated,
this thesis is the result of original work
carried out by the author.

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Abstract

In this thesis, I look at various state-funded projects directed at the integration of people of migrant and refugee backgrounds into pedagogical institutions in Berlin’s borough of Neukölln. I explore how concepts of integration have been discussed in public discourse, and how in recent years, demands for integration have become more and more directed at people identified as Muslim. I discuss how the discourse about integration in relation to pedagogical institutions has become marked by slogans of “activating” parents, with the implication that people of migrant background, or often, Muslim parents, are by nature inactive in supporting the schooling of their children.

I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in various settings: a parent involvement project at a primary school; a welfare centre for parents and children; and the Borough Mothers integration project (Stadtteilmütter). Drawing on the anthropology of policy and on Aihwa Ong’s cultural citizenship approach, I analyse how ideas of migrant integration have been implemented by state agents on the ground, and how these practices have been affecting the life realities of people who identify as Muslim. I mainly focus on people with an Arabic-speaking background, many of whom had arrived in Berlin from 1975 on as a consequence of the Lebanese civil war. I show that this group of people have been affected by highly difficult policy conditions in Germany, which have hindered their participation in educational institutions. Against this historical background, I ask to what extent the social work projects influence people’s sense of belonging to and opportunities of participation in society.

The district government of Neukölln is known for its rather rigid approach towards issues of integration as compared with other Berlin districts. I show how some of Neukölln’s Mayor Heinz Buschkowski’s approaches towards migrant integration have influenced women who participate in the Borough Mothers project, strengthening a perceived gap between “migrant” and “German” families, not conceived in terms of citizenship, but in terms of ethnic or linguistic background. However, my material also
suggests that Buschkowsky's ideas were not shared by the local project coordinators, or by Neukölln's overall population. Everyday interactions between people of different ethnic backgrounds or otherwise seemed to be more unproblematic than Buschkowsky and other hardliners suggested.

In the parent-child centre, current progressive conceptions of migrant integration, like the one of "opening up for interculturality" (Interkulturelle Öffnung), which is focused on enhancing the representation of migrants in public institutions, were not well reflected on. The concept of integration was understood mainly as one where migrant and refugee parents needed to be activated, in order to be good role models for their children. This approach was not well received by some of the attendees, who felt that they were being treated more like guests than like participants or citizens. Ong’s cultural citizenship approach mainly focuses on such disciplining and controlling aspects of interactions between state agents and migrants and refugees. I supplement it by paying attention to the heterogeneity of state agents’ perspectives, and to the diversity of social relationships in each setting.
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1. Introduction

In this thesis, I look at various state-sponsored projects directed at the integration of people of migrant or refugee background into pedagogical institutions in Berlin's borough of Neukölln, and how these projects affect the life realities mainly of people who identify as Muslim, with a focus on those of Arabic-speaking background who had arrived in Berlin after 1975 as a consequence of the Lebanese Civil War. I ask how these people have been affected by German policies and certain strands of local public discourse; how the concept of integration has been implemented by local actors in social work projects; and how these projects are influencing people's sense of belonging and opportunities of participation in society.

In this thesis introduction, I first clarify some issues regarding my – sometimes conflated – use of the terms migrant and refugee in this thesis (1.1). Then I sketch the historical background that led to my interest in this research area (1.2). The next section concerns my use of the term “integration” (1.3). I then present the concepts of belonging and cultural citizenship (1.4), and sketch some issues in the field of the anthropology of policy, another important theoretical background of my work (1.5). The following section treats some issues regarding the use of ethno-national-cultural categories in this thesis (1.6). I also provide some information about the borough of Neukölln, where my fieldwork was located (1.7), and describe the fieldwork situation and research methods (1.8). The introduction concludes with a thesis chapter overview (1.9).

In chapter section 3.1.1 I describe the historical circumstances due to which it was almost only people identifying as Muslim who fled to Germany in the course of the Lebanese Civil War, and hardly any Christians.
1.1 On the Use of the Terms Migrant and Refugee In This Thesis

Generally, a migrant is someone who has immigrated legally to a country (e.g. with a work visa or other visa, like a visa for marriage), and in Germany this group is to a great extent made up of people who have arrived under the guest worker programme from the end of the 1950s on. A refugee is someone who has left their country on the basis of persecution or other hardship and applied for asylum; or from a national perspective, someone who has already been granted the right to asylum. In this thesis I often mention migrants and refugees in one phrase, though these two groups’ experiences of course often differ strongly.

I conflate these two terms mainly when, first, writing about the self-descriptions and assumed purposes of state sponsored projects that are directed at people of both migrant or refugee backgrounds: in these projects, the terms are often not distinguished. I also conflate them when writing about hegemonic discourse about migrants’ and refugees’ integration: in public discourse the term migrant is often used applying to both migrants and refugees more strictly speaking.

Another group which in public discourse is often subsumed under the category of migrant, but which is really not made up of migrants at all, is people born in Germany whose parents have migrated or fled from somewhere else. The projects I am looking at are also targeted at this group of people, and thus in my project descriptions, I also use the term migrant in such a way. However, the case studies I use describe people’s life circumstances in more detail, and what kind of migration or refugee background they have, and how their past and their visa conditions etc. have shaped their experiences in Berlin.

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2 An example can be found on p. 5 where I treat the public discourse assumption that an enhanced state influence on migrants’ child rearing practices can enhance children’s school performance.

3 Until 2000, this group of people basically had no means to acquire German citizenship – unless they were able to prove German ancestry. Since the reform of the citizenship law in 2000, people born in Germany of foreign parents automatically acquire German citizenship if at least one parent has lived in Germany for at least eight years and has an unlimited residence permit.
Social and Historical Context of this Study

This project started in 2010, a year in which the topic of immigration was hotly debated in Germany. Chancellor Angela Merkel publicly stated that multiculturalism had failed, though no German government had before used the term “multiculturalism” in order to describe their own policy approaches. Merkel herself did not mention the terms "Islam" or "Muslims" in her speech; however, it was followed by other politicians’ statements like Horst Seehofer’s (CSU) who said that it was “obviously immigrants from different cultures like Turkey and Arab countries who find it harder to integrate” (BBC 2010).

These statements can be related to a pattern in various Western European countries whereby migrants of Muslim backgrounds especially have been accused of segregating or not wanting to integrate. Pnina Werbner describes how in Britain, since 2006, politicians and journalists claimed that multiculturalism had failed, and often accused British Muslim organisations of being responsible for this failure (Werbner 2009:19). The Islamic studies scholar Shirin Amir-Moazami describes how in Germany, after the murder of the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh in 2004, public discourse shifted into the direction of more aggressive demands for the integration of Germany’s Muslim population (Amir-Moazami 2005:22).

It has also been argued that in Western European societies, the term “Muslim” has gained prevalence as a major term for the imagination of a majority-minority power relation. Before, cultural or, more often, national categories, had been used

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4 Regarding the status of multiculturalism in Germany, Peter Kraus and Karen Schönwalder, specialists on integration politics in Germany, write that the concept has been “mostly a slogan rather than a precise policy” (Kraus & Schönwalder 2006:203). There has never been one consistent political programme which has been labelled multiculturalism. However, based on a definition and categorisation of multicultural policies by Will Kymlicka and Keith Banting, Kraus and Schönwalder argue that some of these policies do in fact exist in Germany (205). As an example they refer to the fact that some regional states grant special rights to minorities like the Danes and Sorbes, which are fixed in their constitutions (206). Also, policies that can be labelled “multi-cultural” are present in a number of school curricula (207).

5 She also argues that this “backlash” is symptomatic of a general feeling of “discomfort” in German society due to the fact that Islam has undoubtedly become part of it (Amir-Moazami 2005:22).
Diehm 2009:60). The events of 9/11 are usually regarded as a key event in this process and undoubtedly intensified it; however, some scholars underline that the discursive shift had started earlier, as more public actors claimed recognition as Muslims, and the presence of Islam in the public spheres of various countries became more apparent (Brubaker 2013:3). Populations that had previously been labelled "immigrants", "migrants", "guestworkers", or in national terms, have become more and more often labelled as "Muslims" in quite different arenas: politics, administration, media, scholarship, and everyday interaction (2).

In Germany, 2010 also saw the publication of a book that gained a great amount of public attention, called “Germany Abolishes Itself” (Deutschland schafft sich ab), written by the SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany) politician Thilo Sarrazin. Sarrazin claimed that Germany’s population was on average becoming less intelligent due to immigration from Muslim countries, and used statistics (comparing different migrant groups’ school graduation certificates) that, he alleged, showed that it was especially children of Turkish families who were failing in school, with migrants of the second and third generation still not showing satisfactory schooling performances. He argued that this “fact” showed that these problems were “inherited, as it were” (Sarrazin 2010:284).

6 The Islamic studies scholar Riem Spielhaus writes about Muslims in the German context as a “neo-ethnicity” (after Roy 2004:125), and describes how Muslims, through statistics and other means, have been created as an ethnic group that had not existed before (Spielhaus 2010:15). Spielhaus points to various studies that show that an increasing focus on Muslims in general terms was already there before 9/11. She argues that for the case of Germany, the changes in immigration law that took place in 1999/2000 were a crucial turning point: at that time many people who had previously been denied citizenship rights, like former “guest workers”, were finally granted citizenship, and thus many foreigners disappeared from the statistics. According to Spielhaus this was a reason for the religious term “Muslim” becoming more prevalent as a marker for a population group (Spielhaus 2010:23).

7 However, his claims have been disputed by many social scientists. Naika Foroutan points to the fact that while the second and the third generation of, e.g., people who originated from Turkey do worse if one compares their educational certificates to the German origin population, there has been a sharp rise in the number of people with a higher educational degree if one compares these generations to the first generation of Turkish migrants. Thus, while 7% of all people who had come to Germany from Turkey between 1961 and 1973 had a higher secondary school educational certificate (comparable to A-levels), among their descendants between the age of 20-24 it was 24% in 2010 and 25.8% in 2011 (Foroutan 2012:36, after Destatis 2010 and Destatis 2011).
As I describe in more detail in chapter 2, in Germany, the debate about integration has often turned around issues of schooling, and schooling is often used as a measure of an alleged failure or success of integration (Andresen & Hunner-Kreisel 2009:11). In that debate, the issue of child rearing has frequently been broached in relation to the one of schooling, and it has been assumed that an enhanced state influence on migrants' child-rearing practices can positively influence children's school performance. In chapter 2 I describe how that discourse has been marked by slogans of "activating" parents, with the implication that migrant, or often, Muslim parents, are by their nature inactive in relation to their children's schooling.

Some scholars have argued that the fact that debates about minority integration so often turn around the issue of schooling can be related to the crucial function of public schooling for the modern nation-state in general. Werner Schiffauer reminds us how crucial public schooling was for the existence of the north-west European nation-states, as Eugen Weber showed for the case of France in his study Peasants into Frenchmen (Weber 1976, cited by Schiffauer 2002:2).

The public discourse about the integration of Muslims, schooling, and education has in one of its most extreme versions turned on the question whether there is an essential conflict between Muslim parents and German schools, and whether the conflict is located in an alleged nature of Muslim culture or in Islam (e.g. Kelek 2006, see chapter 2). My study considers how parents who identify as Muslim position themselves towards those discourses, and how the idea that there has been such a conflict has played out in social work institutions on the ground.

I present case studies of three different social work institutions that officially follow the aim of parent activation (Elternaktivierung), of enhancing children's school performance by means of reaching the parents. At least some of the policies show strong resemblance to policies which sociologists have classified as active citizenship approaches. Nikolas Rose (1996a) and Menno Hurenkamp (2011) have described the spread in various nation-states since the 1990s of political approaches and discourses
that focus on individuals’ responsibilities to devote more time and effort for state polices themselves, and thereby underline the responsibility they have for “self-help”.

Rose, writing about how the government uses community allegiances to foster this sense of responsibility in citizens, has coined the phrase “government through community” (1996a:332). He argues that this “language of community” has also figured in debates about multiculturalism and about how to handle certain social groups the government sees as problematic, and some of the projects I describe resemble this idea of government through community.

1.3 “Integration”

My thesis title contains the term “integration” because it is currently the one used in German public discourse in order to discuss issues of migrant inclusion. The questions raised in this thesis relate to how this concept is implemented by actors on the ground, and how certain institutions officially directed at integration influence people’s overall feelings of belonging to, and participation in those institutions and to society more generally. In this and the following section I clarify how the concept of integration is related to other concepts in my thesis, especially the one of belonging. The history of the use of the term “integration” in German public discourse will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

Jutta Aumüller, a specialist on migration and integration in Germany, states that integration currently has connotations of controllability of migration processes and can be regarded as an umbrella term for political, legal, and social measures taken by the state in order to control processes of migration (Aumüller 2009:45). Similarly, Adrian Favell, a sociologist and specialist on integration policies and discourses in European countries, states that

At different stages in this long [post-war] migration-settlement process, each country has been faced with implementing a series of provisions,
policies, and social interventions that together might constitute an integration policy (Favell 2001:351).

Favell names fourteen rather different measures, including “basic legal and social protection”, “formal naturalisation and citizenship (or residence-based) rights”, “positive action towards equal opportunities”, “policy on public housing”, “cultural funding for ethnic associations and religious organizations”, as examples of policies designated by the umbrella term “integration” (Favell 2001:351). The integration projects I look at in this thesis are officially aimed at ensuring the inclusion of people of migrant or refugee background into pedagogical institutions (chapters 5 and 6, 7) and the labour market (chapter 7). According to Favell’s categorisation, they are best described as “positive action towards equal opportunities”. I look at whether this is how they are being perceived by their participants, and how the project staff, who are mainly social workers, frame the purpose of these projects.

Sabine Mannitz, an anthropologist who conducted research with youth of migrant background in Berlin Neukölln in the 1990s, states that though the term “integration” figures in the title of her book that resulted from this research, “Integration Misrecognised. A Long Term Study Among Adolescents of Immigrant Families” (Die verkannte Integration. Eine Langzeitstudie unter Heranwachsenden aus Immigrantenfamilien, 2006), she prefers not to use it as an analytical concept. The reason, she writes, is that the concept of integration is usually associated with certain expectations the majority society holds towards migrants, and thus mainly has normative connotations (Mannitz 2006:28). The concept has also been criticised as implying an integration into something fixed, and some argue that it does not capture the fact that society is a process anyway, and that changes take place within the population all the time (Aumüller 2009:45).

However, as I show in chapter 2, where I sketch the history of the term “integration” in German political discourse, the current meaning of integration, which stands for the majority society’s expectations and tends to focus on integration as a duty of newcomers to society, instead of a right, is a relatively recent one. Before
becoming an imposition upon people of migrant or refugee backgrounds, it had been a positive term with aspirational overtones, used by migrant associations themselves, and associated with minority rights to equal treatment and political action against discrimination.\textsuperscript{8}

At a conference about current migration and integration politics (\textit{Migrations- und Integrationspolitik heute}) organised by the Migration Council (\textit{Rat für Migration}) and the Department of Migration and Diversity of the Jewish Museum Berlin in November 2013, Karin Weiβ, the head of the Department of Migration and Integration of the regional state of Rhineland-Palatinate, reminded the audience that integration used to be a positive concept, and that one should be cautious about letting the current restrictive meaning gain prevalence. Her point was that it is still important to think about good integration policies, especially in the case of refugees, in order to offer them support for handling the new country’s institutions, and ensure a smooth transition into the new society.

For these reasons, a certain defence of the concept of integration seems well taken to me and in this thesis, I do not intend to criticise the mere use of this term in public discourse, as other writers have recently often done (cf. Jäger 2010:6).\textsuperscript{9} However, I do not use it as an analytical concept either, because the concepts of belonging and cultural citizenship are much more widely used in anthropology, and serve the purpose of my inquiries well. Also, by using these terms, I can signal some distance towards certain issues currently debated in public discourse on integration, i.e. whether minorities of certain backgrounds show a willingness to integrate; whether groups of certain national backgrounds integrate less well than others, etc. I look at integration as a political concept; at specific institutions directed at the integration of migrants and refugees; and at the social processes going on in these institutions.

\textsuperscript{8} Favell describes a similar process for the US. During the civil rights movement in the 1960s, the term had been used “as the opposite of the official black-and-white segregation practised before the civil rights movement in many parts of the United States” (Favell 2001:360). It was widely used in sociological literature that supported desegregation.

\textsuperscript{9} Jäger presents the voices of Manuela Bodjadjizjev and Serhat Karakayali in an interview.
Annika Marlen Hinze, who recently published a book about integration policy in Berlin, *Turkish Berlin: Integration Policy and Urban Space* (2013), for which she conducted interviews with women of Turkish background in the boroughs of Kreuzberg and Neukölln, states that her approach is guided by two main questions: How are migrants framed politically by policy makers? How do migrants perceive themselves and practise their daily lives? (Hinze 2013:xxi) She states that the perspectives of migrants regarding issues of integration in Germany have remained relatively understudied in the social sciences (145-146). My thesis is another attempt to fill this gap; focusing on people with an Arabic-speaking background in Berlin.

**1.4 Belonging and Cultural Citizenship**

In anthropology and other social sciences, the concept of belonging, when applied to the relationship between migrants and their host societies, is usually taken to designate issues of membership and acceptance that transcend the legal issues of citizenship and residential rights. Adrian Favell and Andrew Geddes write,

... even when their formal status and rights are guaranteed, migrants and minorities face many informal and symbolic barriers to their being recognised as true and full members of the societies in which they have settled. Talking about these questions in terms of belonging, therefore, may enable observers to grasp both sides of the inclusion/exclusion dynamic (Favell & Geddes 1999:11).

Similarly, Ghassan Hage writes,

the main practical issue surrounding belonging is not whether migrants have access to citizenship or not. ... Where the problems of inequality and discrimination emerge is not around questions of assessing rights as much as it is in the mode of assessing such rights. ... There are ways you can access them which make you feel demeaned as a human being. Here, then, belonging is not about citizenship as rights but about citizenship as ‘holding your head high’ (2002:2).

The concept of cultural citizenship, especially in the way Aihwa Ong has used it, has a similar meaning: it does not mainly refer to legal citizenship, but to the everyday lived experience of being a citizen of a country and thus to the more subjective side, which can also be independent of legal citizenship. The following quote summarises the
Cultural citizenship approach well: “Cultural citizenship examines the colloquial meanings of alienation and belonging as they apply to marginalized groups with respect to the national community” (Del Castillo 2005). How do people talk about alienation and belonging in relation to a national community? What are the issues in their contact with the wider society that impede or foster a sense of belonging?

The idea of cultural citizenship had been introduced by Renato Rosaldo in the 1980s regarding the US Latino population. Rosaldo looks at how people claim a space for themselves in society and how they fight for “rights to be full members of society” (Rosaldo 2013). He stresses the agency of marginalised groups and their fights for being able to retain their cultural difference while still being considered full citizens of a nation. Ong, in contrast, argues that Rosaldo neglects to consider that people of migrant or refugee background are not free to choose the conditions of their possibilities of belonging; they cannot construct their cultural citizenship by themselves. She looks at how the conditions for migrants’ possibilities of belonging are set by the state and its legal apparatus, as well as by the wider society. Thus for her, cultural citizenship is a two-sided process: it refers to practices and beliefs that result from migrants’ negotiations with the state, and with the wider society (Ong 1999:264).

In my thesis I explore how the people of migrant or refugee background who make use of certain social work services position themselves with respect to official integration discourses and policies, and how the studied institutions influence participants’ sense of belonging. Ong’s approach, explicitly aimed at capturing migrants’ encounter with the state, is thus more useful for my purpose than Rosaldo’s. According to Ong, cultural citizenship is “dialectically formed by the state and its subjects” (Ong 1999: 264; see also 2003:5-6). Her approach is of interest for my project because she theorises the encounter of refugees with state actors like social workers;

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10 Subsequently it was taken up by many scholars, most famously by Aihwa Ong in her ethnography Buddha is Hiding on Cambodian refugees in California (Ong 2003). In Rosaldo’s approach, the idea of cultural citizenship is mainly applied in relation to the Latino population in the US, but also to relations between hinterland people and the state in Southeast Asia (Rosaldo 2003).
studies the “everyday processes whereby people, especially immigrants, are made into subjects of a particular nation-state” (Ong 1999:263); analyses practices of bureaucrats (2003:9); and asks for the effects of “everyday techniques of government” (2003:6).

In order to theorise the state and its power, Ong mainly leans on Foucault’s concept of governmentality, and underlines the disciplinary and morally regulating aspects of state power:

I consider citizenship a cultural process of ‘subject-ification’, in the Foucauldian sense of self-making and being-made by power relations that produce consent through schemes of surveillance, discipline, control, and administration (Foucault 1989, 1991). (Ong 1999:263)

The practices of state agents like social workers are mainly interpreted as expressions of the state’s aim to dominate the population. In reference to the history of racial relations and social work institutions in the US, Ong writes:

Biopolitical decisions about welfare clients, low-skilled workers, good parents, and ethnic models are influenced by historically branded black images of weakness, indolence, and primitivity. As part of the political unconscious, such thinking influences the conduct of social experts and social workers who seek to regulate behaviour of minoritized populations considered less civilised than society at large (Ong 2003:13).

However, Ong does not study the perspectives of state agents like social workers in any detail, and generally, her approach homogenises state practices regarding issues of migrant integration. It also tends to simplify the views of migrants and refugees who make use of social workers’ services, and thus oversimplifies the nature of conflictual relations between Western societies and migrants/refugees. In chapters 2 and 5 of this thesis I will elaborate on this critique or amendment of Ong’s approach.

1.5 Anthropology of Policy and Organisations

The point made by Ong that migrants’ experiences with state actors crucially influence their feelings of belonging to society has been made in the sociology of organisations very generally: people’s subjective feelings about society and their
experiences with it are in modern societies in large part made up of their contact with institutions and organisations (Preisendörfer 2008:155). Institutions are taken to be a meso-level, or even link, between the meta-level of “society”, and the micro-level of individuals (153). As implicated in Aihwa Ong’s theory, social inequality is thought to be produced and reproduced in organisations (Preisendörfer 2008:155). Regarding migrants and refugees, it has often been argued that their contact with institutions like schools is especially important, as such institutions are often people’s first or main contact with the wider society (cf. Schiffauer 2002:1).

The fields of the anthropology of policy and anthropology of organisations are related to Ong’s cultural citizenship approach: they also focus on the practices of bureaucrats and state agents. The anthropology of policy is concerned with the relationship between policy discourses, the resulting practices and the effects on the people who are their targets. How do the various agents implicated draw on policy discourses? How are certain policies being implemented? How do project coordinators think about a project (which might contrast with official policy)? What effect does this have on the people who are thought to be the targets of the policies/organisations? How do these “target subjects” engage with a project? The latter area of questions, the effects of policies on people, has typically been the most important topic area in anthropology.

In part II of this thesis, I analyse three projects in the area of migrant integration and child rearing. The research questions I follow up are: How is the concept of integration implemented by the local staff? How do they see their role, the services that they supply, and of course the project participants? What are the participants’ views of these practices? I look at how an official discourse was translated into the local projects by the actors on the ground, and follow a policy chain to see how the rhetoric of integration is reproduced and interpreted in the context of local social work institutions.
Anthropologists have long pointed to divergences between official discourse and actual behaviour as typical of cultural practices per se. These divergences are also characteristic of the implementation of policies and projects. In this regard, Bierschenk and de Sardan suggest to use the concept of the “implementation gap” (Bierschenk & de Sardan 2014:37), which has been widely used in political science (e.g. Lane 2009:48).

To what extent do local actors refer to the official integration discourse and where do they diverge from it?

In his discussion of approaches to policies and bureaucracies, Josiah Heyman distinguishes “broad-brush” and “particularistic” approaches:

Broad-brush approaches characterize all bureaucracies – or very major groups of them, such as states – as having similar tendencies, modes of thought, and patterns of action. Particularistic approaches emphasize qualities that will differ from organization to organization, and setting to setting (Heyman 2004:490).

As an example of broad-brush approaches, Heyman names that of James Scott, who “attributes the same simplifying and clarifying impulse to all state bureaucracies, though in varying coercive ways” (Heyman 2004:490). As might have become obvious from my summary of Aihwa Ong’s cultural citizenship approach above, I see her approach as falling under this broad-brush category.

Thomas Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan have also criticised monolithic concepts of the state, which do not leave room for the heterogeneity of actors’ views and state practices.

What we are interested in are the apparatuses of states, the practices of public bureaucrats and their emic perceptions, and the implementation of public policies. We are not interested in finding out ‘how the state sees’ (à la Scott 1998), but how public bureaucrats see their world, how they are perceived by the citizens to which they deliver services ..., and how they deal on a routine basis with their hierarchy, with colleagues, other non-state institutions, and the users of public services (Bierschenk & de Sardan 2014:55).

Bierschenk and de Sardan suggest to focus on the various agents of the state apparatus (service providers and bureaucrats), their daily practices, stances, how they implement programmes, on their contact with the people who make use of their
services, and to take account of actors’ diverse and multi-layered motives (Bierschenk & de Sardan 2014:50).

Heyman offers another critique of broad-brush approaches to bureaucracy, stating that “if bureaucracy is seen as completely depoliticizing, as completely negative, then there is little place for counteranalysis and struggle, including engagement with progressive elements within bureaucracies” (Heyman 2004:491). Thus, if state-funded practices regarding migrant integration are regarded as completely negative, then there is little space for constructive critique and improvement (cf. Heyman 2004:491).

1.6 On “Ethno-National” Categories

In White Nation, Ghassan Hage examines hegemonic discourse concerning migrant integration in Australia. He states that he uses certain categories like “third-world-looking-people” because they figure in the thinking of the people he analyses, without necessarily finding them appropriate himself (Hage 1998:18). Similarly, in my work, it would be difficult to analyse discourse on migrant integration and the interactions of people of migrant and refugee background with public institutions like schools and employment creation measures without using ethnic categories like “German”, “Turkish”, or “Arab”, which are widely used by people in the local setting, and also figure in the conceptualisation of some of the projects’ target groups.

In anthropological theory, ethno-national categories are usually analysed as being “constructed” in a certain historical and cultural context, that is, it is stressed how the meaning of these categories and what reference groups they include have come into being through certain historical circumstances that could always have been different, leading to different outcomes in who is designated in what way.11 The anthropologist and sociologist Richard Jenkins speaks of a “basic anthropological

11 Thus, ethno-national categories can be inclusive (or exclusive) to different degrees. In typical immigration countries like the US, people born in the country of immigrant parents are more likely to be included as “Americans” than in countries like Germany that traditionally had a citizenship right based on family descent.
model of ethnicity” in that respect, based on Frederik Barth’s insight that ethnic identifications are negotiable and the boundaries of ethnic groups imprecise (Jenkins 2008a:3).

According to this model, it is assumed that “ethnic categorisation”, which means identification by others, in addition to group- or self-identification, plays a big role in how ethnic categories come into existence and in how they develop (3). Ethnic identity always depends on ascription by members of the group and by outsiders (19). Ethnic groups do not exist because of measurable differences in behaviour or the like, but because ins and outs perceive them to be different groups (11). The focus of anthropological work on ethnicity has often been to study how ethnic boundaries are maintained (19).

My work does not engage with any such theoretical issues regarding ethnicity, but ethnic categories of course figure in policy discourses, in project descriptions, and in interview data. I ask how certain ethno-national categories are used in official discourse (chapter 2); how they are used by social workers on the ground, whether they differentiate between groups defined in ethnic-cultural terms and their perceived need for integration, as is often done in public discourse (chapters 5-7); and what the categories are by which those people of migrant or refugee background who in public discourse have mainly been labelled “Arab” identify themselves (chapter 3).

When writing about my research participants, I often use the phrase “with Arabic-speaking background”.12 All people with Arabic-speaking background I met in Neukölln used the label Arab to describe themselves, among other labels. However, because the term Arab can be problematic13, I have tried not to use it in order to describe the people I have done research with. I only use it when it figures in people’s self-descriptions, or in order to describe the way public discourse frames people.

12 I use it also to include people who were born in Germany and who speak German better than Arabic, because all of the people among this generation I met understood or spoke at least some Arabic.
13 For instance, Greg Noble has brought to my attention that there are some people in Lebanon who speak Arabic, but would not use the label Arab to describe themselves – they would rather say they are Phoenician, and would say Arabs are those from the Arabian peninsula.
As my research focuses on the interface between policies and certain groups of the population regarded as problematic in public discourse, I have also talked to other people I met in the settings of the projects, besides those of Arabic-speaking background. Generally, among the target groups of the projects, I have mainly worked with people who identify as Muslim, because they have been in focus in public discourse. I do not intend to say that the categories “Muslim” and “Arab” or “Arabic-speaking” are interchangeable, and of course not everyone who identifies as Arab is Muslim.

In the historical chapters and in the case studies, I have focused on people with a refugee background from Lebanon. However, it would be wrong to describe the focus group as Lebanese Muslims, because many people from Lebanon would not identify as Lebanese, but as Kurdish or Palestinian, for instance. I have used the term “Lebanese” only when people used it in their self-descriptions. In order to describe people’s origin, I use the phrase “from Lebanon”, and thus include people who identify as Kurdish or Palestinian.

1.7 Setting of the Study: Berlin Neukölln

Outside the borough, Neukölln is mainly known for its high unemployment rates and for the fact that it is one of the most ethnically diverse boroughs in Germany. Its “diversity”, or “colourful” character, is also used by the district government to represent the borough to the outside (e.g. Buschkowsky 2014). The website of the district of Neukölln says that the biggest migrant groups residing in the borough (with 322,153 inhabitants) are people originating from Turkey (36,803), followed by people originating from “Arab countries” (around 28,000), from Poland (14,516), the former Yugoslavia (13,000), and the former Soviet Union (5,571) (Bezirksamt Neukölln von Berlin 2014a). These statistics are not based on citizenship but on asking people where they, or their parents, have come from. As the figures show, Neukölln hosts a large
proportion of people “from Arab countries”. Among those, the majority are people who had arrived in Berlin as refugees from Lebanon, and their descendants (see chapters 2 and 3).

While in the 1960s, it had been the boroughs of Kreuzberg and Wedding that had been the areas with the highest concentration of labour migrants, in the 1980s more and more new labour migrants and refugees have also moved to the northern parts of Neukölln (Häußermann et al. 2008:45).\textsuperscript{14} After the fall of the Wall many long-term resident families left these areas and moved to housing estates at the fringes of the district, and subsequently labour migrants and refugees settled in inner Neukölln (Häußermann et al. 2008:46).

Since the mid-2000s, Neukölln has been regarded as a symbol of alleged problems that migrants are having in integrating and of “scenarios of urban catastrophe” (Lanz 2009:113). For instance, in 2006, an incident at the Rüti School in Neukölln received nation-wide attention and was made into a scandal by the media. Cohen and Muhamad-Brandner argue that Rüti became “a cause célèbre in denoting the perceived failure of current German integration policies” (2011:26). Teachers had written a letter to the Berlin government stating that they could not bear the working conditions at their school any more. The media reported that the teachers had claimed that this was due to the high number of children of immigrant families in their classes, and to violence among pupils. However, the letter itself had made no such statements. The teachers had made no connection of their case with general integration politics towards migrants or refugees, or with an alleged refusal of migrants to integrate (Cohen & Muhamad-Brandner 2011:25-26).

While Neukölln has often been depicted as a “socially highly stigmatised neighbourhood with very little cultural capital” (Färber & Gdaniec 2006:118), since around the mid-2000s, the northern parts adjacent to Kreuzberg, which at the same

\textsuperscript{14} See appendix, map 1 for Berlin’s governing districts including Neukölln, and map 2 for the borough of Neukölln within the district Neukölln. Berlin’s governance structure and the role of districts, boroughs, etc. will be sketched in chapter 2.
time have become symbols of urban problems in public discourse, have become gentrified (Färber & Gdaniec 2006). In 2008, the airport Tempelhof, adjacent to northern Neukölln, closed down, and has since 2010 been used as a park. This contributed to rising rents and processes of gentrification in the borough. The developments in Neukölln have been compared to those in Prenzlauer Berg, a borough of the former East Berlin, which became a hip and well-off borough after reunification (Heinen 2013:14). Similar to Kreuzberg, the northern areas of Neukölln especially have become a trendy neighbourhood and centre of music sub-cultures (15), and more and more students have been moving into the area. Christina Heinen\textsuperscript{15} refers to an article in the \textit{Guardian} “Let’s move to Kreuzkölln,\textsuperscript{16} Berlin. It’s the epicentre of cool” (Dyckhoff 2011, quoted by Heinen 2013:15).

Neukölln proved an appropriate setting for my research because of the borough’s great number of residents who identify as Muslim. Further, as a typical immigration borough, there are many social service institutions and projects for migrants run by the state, such as are the subject of my study. For instance, Neukölln hosts eleven of the thirty-four Quarter Management agencies in Berlin (Quartiersmanagement Berlin 2014c), a policy which I describe in more detail in chapter 2. These agencies provided some of the funds for the social work institutions I analyse in chapters 5 to 7.

1.8 Fieldwork Methods

The aim of this section is to give the reader an understanding of how I collected information and what kinds of relationships I entered into with the research participants and the institutions where I conducted research.\textsuperscript{17} I explain how I chose

\textsuperscript{15}Heinen is an anthropologist who conducted research with musicians who moved to Neukölln after 2004 (Heinen 2013).

\textsuperscript{16}Kreuzkölln is a neologism for the northern parts of Neukölln adjacent to Kreuzberg.

\textsuperscript{17}Throughout the thesis, I use pseudonyms for research participants.
choosing participants (1.8.1), how I entered the field (1.8.2), and how I collected information (1.8.3).

1.8.1 Choosing Participants

During my fieldwork, I looked at the lives of those people who were touched by current activating approaches to migrant integration politics, and who, as welfare recipients, or for other reasons, were especially dependent on the state. I also gave consideration to the perspectives of state agents on the ground. I mainly worked with mothers who made use of social work institutions, and social workers and others employed in these settings, trying to capture webs of meaning and themes in the contacts of social work institutions with their clients. Additionally, I worked with women whom I had met in other contexts. One aim was to include women who, in public discourse, would have been depicted as especially in need for integration and were thus among the group targeted by pedagogical institutions and projects aimed at integration: those with low incomes, often welfare recipients.

Among the mothers, I mainly tried to recruit women with a refugee or migration background from Lebanon for my research. On the one hand, they formed the biggest group in the institutions I visited anyway, and on the other hand social workers and child care workers often counted them as the group most in need of help due to the policy conditions they have been affected by (chapter 3). While there is an abundance of research about labour migrants of Turkish-speaking background in Germany, the literature on former refugees from Lebanon is rather sparse, a fact which provides another rationale for this focus.

Though German was not the first language of all research participants, I conducted informal talks and interviews in German. This was mainly for pragmatic reasons: the women who did not speak German as a first language had different languages or different dialects of Arabic (e.g. Algerian and Palestinian) as their mother
tongue. German is the main lingua franca for the women in these institutions, and they use it in their interactions with teachers, child care workers, social workers, and some also at home with children and family. Many women spoke positively about the fact that I conducted interviews and talks in German, and saw it as a good means for themselves to practise their German.18 Before my fieldwork, I had gained some basic knowledge of Turkish, and also started to learn some Arabic after I had met many people of Arabic-speaking background in my field site. Of course, I could not learn enough to conduct interviews in Arabic, but my efforts proved helpful for my rapport with the research participants, some of whom invited me to their homes for the purpose of teaching me Arabic.

1.8.2 Entering the Field

I started my fieldwork in a state-financed leisure time centre for parents and children (an institution which will be the subject of chapter 6). The centre was run by social workers and child care workers. At the beginning I worked as an unpaid intern. As such, I did not have too many obligations, and could move around freely in order to spend my time with the visitors. After the internship was finished, the social workers let me use the centre in order to follow my research interest and without being officially employed as an intern.

In the children’s centre I met Shahirah, who had worked for the Borough Mothers Project (which will be the subject of chapter 7), and sometimes visited the centre in her free time in order to chat with the mothers. She invited me to a parents’ meeting group at a primary school, where I conducted participant observation (chapter 5). At that time I also met Anisah, who was employed at a women’s association near my apartment through an employment creation measure (chapter 4 concerns Anisah and

18 Throughout the text, I provide the German interview transcripts in footnotes. I sometimes made minor edits to the transcription and corrected grammar or other mistakes of non-German native speakers.
her family). At her weekly women’s meeting groups I met other women who lived in the neighbourhood.

I got to know the Borough Mothers Project, a local state-financed integration project focused on issues of child rearing, in the various contexts in which I had been moving: it was mainly in the parents’ café and at Anisah’s meeting that I met more women who worked as Borough Mothers. I conducted research in the weekly supervision meetings with their coordinator, and interviewed a regional coordinator and the main coordinator.

Another research context was an umbrella association of Arab migrant associations. I went there for Arabic classes, took part in common cooking events, and sometimes helped when there was a celebration, for instance looking out for children at their official Ramadan celebration event, or selling food at other celebrations. At this association’s women’s meeting I met Fatima (chapters 3 and 4). She took me to another parents’ café at the kindergarten of her son and we met for interviews in cafés.

Thus not all the women I met and worked with knew each other, but there were overlaps with acquaintances over the different contexts. Anisah, for instance, accompanied me to the parents’ café because she wanted to advertise the association she worked at there, and went to the parent-child centre with me to help me with some translations. Shahirah, who ran the parents’ café, also knew many of the visitors of the parent-child centre, because she lived close to the centre and had visited it in connection with her work as a Borough Mother.

The way I constructed my field in the context of a big city can be classified as multi-sited ethnography. I conducted my research in various institutions instead of one single “community”, and these institutions were not completely cut off from each other, but linked by acquaintances and contacts, as well as through a certain dependence on the services of the state. My field constitutes an “interrelation of practice” (cf. Breidenstein et al. 2013:49), manifesting itself in different localities, interrelations which are crucially influenced by the state’s powers and policies.
1.8.3 Data Collection

The means I used to gather information were analysis of documents, participant observation, informal talks, and interviews. In order to answer the question of the role the concept of integration plays for the actors in local institutions, an analysis of this concept, as it has been discussed in politics, is necessary. Especially concerning policies and political discourses, analysing documents is a helpful supplement to talks, interviews, and participant observation (cf. Feldman 2011:23-33).

For my purpose, documents of the different levels of government were a good source of material. In order to study how the concept of integration has been discussed in Berlin and Neukölln politics (chapter 2), I analysed documents of the Berlin Senate and of the Neukölln district government. I analysed the documents qualitatively with respect to various questions, namely: How is integration defined? Which other political slogans are brought into connection with the one of integration? How are cultural practices of migrants evaluated? Are there certain groups that are being depicted as especially in need of integration? What is suggested as a solution to problems of integration? Who is depicted as responsible for integration?

In order to study how the concept of integration was implemented in the projects on the ground, and in order to grasp the participants’ views of these projects, and the roles they have in these projects, I conducted participant observation combined with informal talks, and later also more formal interviews. Observations mainly focused on the work routines in the institutions and the interactions of mothers with the actors in the institutions. At the primary school with its parents’ café (chapter 5), common activities were the preparation and consumption of breakfast; listening to talks; collective cooking in the school’s kitchen; tidying up and cleaning the parents’ café room. Sometimes I accompanied mothers to children’s sports festivals, or other such events. In the parents’ café I observed the mothers’ interactions with its staff, and with the teachers who sometimes joined the meetings. I made notes on what kinds of
talks the staff of the café organised for the mothers and how the mothers reacted to the talks, and observed the discussions that took place.

As mentioned, I had officially started my fieldwork in a parent-child centre (chapter 6) as an intern. This meant that I took on various tasks that were also carried out by the staff, for instance standing at the counter in order to lend out toys and board games, selling coffee and tea, helping out in the kitchen, making coffee, organising activities with children, like cooking or baking, playing board games, or games that took place outside, like ball games. Through these activities, I got to know something of the social workers, their daily practices and work routines, and their attitudes regarding child rearing. I observed their interactions with the children and parents who frequented the centre.

After a while, I began to spend much time just sitting together with the mothers. We chatted and shared home-made food, bought coffee for each other, or the women helped me with my Arabic exercises. During the course of these activities, I tried to gain an insight into the women's life situation, their family and economic situation, their migration history, the role Islam played in their lives, and above all, to grasp their views about the institution in which they spent their afternoons. When sitting together with the women, I observed when and for what reasons the social workers interfered with the parents' child-rearing activities, and how the women took this.

For my analysis of the Borough Mothers Project (chapter 7), I relied mainly on talks and interviews, and the method of participant observation played a smaller role than it did in my study of the other projects (chapters 5 and 6). I met the Borough Mothers whose voices I analyse mainly in the contexts of children's centre and parents' café. Later, I also visited some of the women at their homes, but only conducted systematic participant observation in weekly supervision meetings of a regional team of Borough Mothers with their supervisor. Another place where I conducted participant observation was Anisah's women's meeting. There I met Rabia and Badra,
two Borough Mothers who frequented this meeting in order to promote the project, and we went on excursions together or visited a theatre play.

In the course of my research, I more and more supplemented these methods with more formal interviews, both with the social workers and child care workers, as with the mothers who attended the institutions. The kinds of interviews I conducted can be described as open or semi-structured.¹⁹ Open interviews mainly related to the mothers’ biographies; semi-structured interviews I conducted both with mothers and with social workers and child care workers. Judith Schlehe mentions “narrative-biographic” and “topic-centred” interviews as the most important forms of interview for anthropologists (Schlehe 2008:125). The interviews I conducted contained these two aspects roughly in equal measure for the interviews with mothers, while for the ones with social workers, the “topic-centred” elements dominated, because I engaged with social workers only in their work context and thus they did not have that much time for personal talks. Further, there were many social workers I talked with but did not meet outside of the interview context, as I describe in the next paragraph.

In order to grasp a wider range of social workers’ voices, towards the end of my fieldwork I conducted more formal interviews with seventeen social workers or child care workers at nine different primary schools in Neukölln. These interviews are different from the other ones in that besides the interviews I hardly had any interaction with the participants. The interviews were topic-centred and mainly related to the social workers’ views on their work with the parents with whom they interacted, and will be analysed in chapter 5.

¹⁹ At the beginning I did not record interviews because I was afraid that the recording device would intimidate the participants. Instead I made notes on the talk during the interview on my computer, or in a notebook, and after the interview supplemented these notes with further ones while my memory was still fresh. Later, with the participants’ permission, I also recorded interviews, and no participant seemed to be bothered by the recording device.
1.9 Chapter Overview

This thesis is divided into two parts. Part I looks at policy discourses regarding integration, and at how a specific minority, the one labelled Arab, of whom the majority had been refugees from Lebanon, and their descendants, has been portrayed in local political discourse in Berlin Neukölln. Then I consider aspects of some of these people's life conditions, what policies they have been affected by, cultural identifications, and families’ situation concerning schooling and employment. Part 2 then looks at three different institutions aimed at migrant integration and child rearing in which the slogan of activating parents plays a role, and analyses what these approaches have meant for the people who have been their participants.

Chapter 2 starts by presenting discourses about migrant integration in Germany, Berlin, and in the district of Neukölln, the location of my fieldwork. I look at how at the national level, integration has been increasingly framed as migrants’ duty, instead of a right, as used to be the case some decades earlier. At the level of the Berlin government, integration has been conducted increasingly under the rubric of activation, with the aim of fostering self-help, approaches which sociologists have called active citizenship (e.g. Rose 1996a). I look at the specific approach to integration the district government of Neukölln has taken, which is known for their rather restrictive stance towards migrant integration policies, and how the minority labelled Arab has figured in the discourse there. Finally I compare approaches to integration in Berlin Neukölln and the neighbouring district of Kreuzberg, where rather different concepts have been paramount. I thus show how approaches to integration can differ fundamentally even within one city, a point I link to my amendment of Aihwa Ong's approach towards such state practices laid out in this introduction.

In chapter 3, I look at the life conditions of some of the people labelled Arab in public discourse. The majority of this group in Berlin were refugees from Lebanon, so I sketch the conditions these people had escaped from, describe the policies they were
affected by once in Germany and what these policies have meant for the people. In the second part of the chapter I look at current issues of self-identification, consider the meanings the label Arab holds for some people, and the role of Islam in people's lives.

In chapter 4, which concludes part I, I present further material on some of the families introduced in the previous chapter. I analyse their situation regarding issues of schooling, employment, and child rearing; the reader can juxtapose this material to the discourses about an alleged unwillingness to integrate of especially people of Arab background, presented in chapter 2. How do parents experience their children's situation regarding issues of schooling and employment in Neukölln? How do they try to support their children at school, and how do young people come to understand themselves and their social place in German society? What perspectives do they develop? What are some of the obstacles and constraints they encounter?

Part II starts with a chapter (5) that ties up with the issue of schooling raised in chapter 4, in that it looks more closely at the context of primary schools and at a parent involvement project there. What forms did parents' engagement with the school take and how were these received by school staff? How did parents in this project perceive their contact with the school? How did parents cope with ascriptions of being uninterested in their children's education and with certain assumptions about Islam that have been spread in educational institutions? I look at interactions between school staff and parents, at how the discourse about especially Muslim parents' lack of involvement at schools has played out on the ground, and consider the perspectives of school social workers, who are in regular contact with parents, on this issue.

In the next chapter (6), I analyse an institution directed at supporting parents and children outside of school, a centre run by the youth office. I look at how the paradigm of integration has been interpreted there, how the head of centre has recently been trying to introduce an activating approach to social work, and how the paradigm of interculturality, an approach I introduce in that chapter, has been implemented. I also look at what stance the centre had been taking towards the
practice of Islam. The majority of this institution’s attendees are Palestinian refugees from Lebanon, and I analyse how they have responded to the social workers’ practices and how their participation in this centre has influenced issues of belonging and cultural citizenship for them.

The last chapter (7) is about Neukölln’s biggest and best-known migrant integration project, which also focuses on issues of child rearing, called the Borough Mothers (Stadtteilmütter) project. In my analysis of this project, I focus on how its target group has been conceptualised by various actors at different levels: by the district government of Neukölln; by the project’s main coordinator; and the local coordinators who closely work together with the Borough Mothers. I then look at the voices of the Borough Mothers themselves, and how they see the institution’s conceptualisation of its target group and their work within it. I relate my analysis to some of the stances towards integration that are held by the Neukölln district government which I presented in chapter 2, and show how these stances had some concrete effects on people.

The concluding chapter (8) will connect the themes raised in the two parts of this thesis. I draw out some implications of my findings regarding the issue of a perceived conflict between Muslim parents and pedagogical institutions, and suggest amendments to Ong’s theorisation of state practices. One part of the chapter is aimed at evaluating practices of parent activation in the single social work projects. The thesis concludes with an outlook on issues of cultural citizenship and belonging among Berlin’s Arabic-speaking background population.
Part I. Political Contexts and Life Conditions
2. Integration: Policy-Discourses in Germany, Berlin, and Neukölln

This chapter discusses the concept of integration in German public discourse, and in the political discourses of the government of the city of Berlin and of its district Neukölln. It provides the political context for the case studies of single projects later in the thesis, where I look at how the concept of integration was implemented in social work projects on the ground (chapters 5-7). I first briefly describe the different levels of German government and locate the governments of the city state of Berlin and its district Neukölln in relation to these different levels (2.1). Then I sketch the debate about integration at the level of the German federal government (2.2). When did this debate arise? What are its features? How has it changed? How have the topics of child rearing and schooling, upon which the projects I examine are focused, been broached in relation to integration?

Then I analyse how the concept of integration has been discussed at the levels of the Berlin city government (2.3) and the government of its district Neukölln (2.4). For this purpose I analyse documents of the Berlin Senate\textsuperscript{20} and of Neukölln's district government. Regarding the city of Berlin (2.3), I illustrate how since the 2000s, the concept of activation has more and more figured in integration policies, resembling what sociologists have called active citizenship approaches, which the title of my thesis refers to, and which figures in the self-descriptions of all three projects I discuss in chapters 5-7. In section 2.4, which treats the district of Neukölln’s approach, I first introduce a categorisation of approaches to integration that has been suggested by the urban geographer Stephan Lanz. Subsequently I use this categorisation to analyse integration politics at the level of Neukölln's district government. To conclude, I compare some features of integration politics in Neukölln with some of the neighbouring district Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg (2.5). I argue that political approaches towards integration and related matters can differ fundamentally even within one city.

\textsuperscript{20}This is the local name of the Berlin government.
and relate this to my critique of Aihwa Ong’s cultural citizenship approach that I discussed in the thesis introduction.

2.1 Levels of Government: Germany, Berlin, Neukölln

In this section I briefly introduce the governmental system of Germany, as a background for the different levels of discourse I describe later. In the federal system of Germany there are three levels of government: federation (Bund), federal states (Bundesländer), and municipalities (Kommunen/Gemeinden). The federal government consists of various ministries and other departments. The federal states are organised in the same way as the federation: they have their own constitutions and parliaments. The head of government at the level of the regional states is called president (Ministerpräsident), while the one at the level of the federation is the chancellor (Kanzler). Just as in the federal government, at the level of the regional states there are ministries (Ministerien) and ministers/secretaries (Minister). The third level of government is the municipalities (OSI 2010:47).

Berlin, along with Hamburg and Bremen, is an exception: it is a “city state” (Stadtstaat). This means it is municipality, city, and regional state at the same time (since German reunification in October 1990). In this case the city mayor has the function of the regional state’s president. The central government in Berlin is called the Berlin Senate (Senat). It is headed by the mayor. He appoints eight senators (equivalent to the ministers/secretaries at the level of the regional states) for the different senate administrations (ministries). In addition to the Senate there is the Berlin City Parliament (Berliner Abgeordnetenhaus), which enacts laws, elects the mayor, and monitors the government (Senat) (OSI 2010: 47-48).

The city of Berlin in turn is divided into the central city government and twelve districts, which came into being in an administrative reform in 2000/2001; Neukölln is one of these districts (Appendix, map 1 shows Neukölln as one of the Berlin districts).
The single districts are not independent municipalities, but part of the Senate administration. They have less power than a small town within a regional state that has the status of a municipality (OSI 2010:47).

At the level of the district governments there is the "district deputies’ assembly" (Bezirksverordnetenversammlung, BVV), the members of which are elected by the district’s residents who hold EU-citizenship. This body then elects the district administration (Bezirksamt) which is headed by the district’s mayor (Bezirkshauptmann). The district deputies’ assembly votes, for instance, on how the district’s budget is to be allocated; however, the Berlin Senate has to agree to this. Thus the administrations of the single districts are strongly dependent on the central government (OSI 2010:48).

Single districts in turn usually comprise various boroughs, but these have no political function. The district of Neukölln for instance comprises the boroughs Buckow, Britz, Rudow, Gropiusstadt and Neukölln (see appendix, map 2). The projects that I analyse in this thesis were located in the borough of Neukölln, situated in the northern part of the district of Neukölln (appendix, map 2). The borough of Neukölln to the north borders on the borough of Kreuzberg (in the district Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg), to the east on the borough of Prenzlauer Berg (district Prenzlauer Berg-Köpenick), to the south on the borough Britz (district Neukölln), and to the west on the borough Tempelhof (district Tempelhof-Schöneberg) and the park Tempelhofer Feld which used to be an airfield until 2008 (Flughafen Tempelhof). With this brief overview of Berlin’s administrative structure, I now discuss how the concept of integration has figured in the political discourses of the different governmental levels: the national level of Germany (2.2), Berlin (2.3), and Neukölln (2.4).
2.2 From Right to Duty: the Concept of Integration in German Political Discourse

Since the end of the 1990s, the political debate about integration (Integration) in Germany has increased. In this debate, the concept of integration is often not closely defined, and the vagueness of the term might be one of the reasons why the discussion around it is so controversial (Hierl 2012:72). In almost all European countries, the term "integration" has come to be used as an umbrella term for different areas of politics that are connected to the incorporation of migrants. Jutta Aumüller, a specialist in migration politics, remarks that currently, the use of the concept of integration instead of inclusion, participation, or others, currently often connotes the idea of the controllability of processes of migration and settlement (Aumüller 2009:45).

The sociologist Adrian Favell, a specialist in migration and integration politics in Europe, locates the establishment of a debate about integration politics in Western European countries at the end of the 1980s, after it had been clear that the former labour migrants who had arrived over the period 1950-70s would not return to their countries of origin but had settled more-or-less permanently (Favell 2001:352).

In Great Britain, according to Favell, the concept of integration has been used since the 1960s, most famously in a speech by the then Home Office minister Roy Jenkins in 1966. In this speech, Jenkins explicitly stated that integration was not to mean

the loss, by immigrants, of their own national characteristics and culture ...
I define integration, therefore, not as a flattening process of uniformity, but cultural diversity, coupled with equality of opportunity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance (quoted by Favell 1998:104).

Favell regards it as a "progressive" concept at the time (104). The concept indicated a move away from the idea that if minorities did not assimilate, ethnic conflict would be the necessary consequence (Aumüller 2009:44-45). However, starting from the 1970s, explicitly anti-racist voices started to distance themselves from the concept (Favell 2001:352). In what follows I sketch the history of the concept in German politics.
2.2.1 Integration in German Political Discourse

For the context of the German state, the history of the term “integration” (Integration) goes back at least 40 years, write the European ethnologists Sabine Hess and Johannes Moser (Hess & Moser 2009:12). In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, the term had mainly been used by migrant organisations themselves regarding their demands for equal political rights, for instance, for non-German citizens to be included into the social security system and to be able to receive child benefits from the state. Another example was the demand for political participation, and in the 1980s there had been a campaign for foreigners’ voting rights at the level of municipalities under the banner of “integration”. In answer to these demands, at the beginning of the 1970s some bigger cities started to formulate political programmes directed at integration. Hess and Moser adduce the example of Munich, a city whose government already in the 1970s officially accepted the fact that Germany was a country of immigration (Hess & Moser 2009:14-15).

At the federal level, the first Foreigners’ Commissioner (Ausländerbeauftragte), Heinz Kühn (Social Democratic Party, SPD), similarly suggested the federal government to take certain measures regarding integration. He authored a memorandum (Kühn 1979) in which he demanded that immigration should be officially recognised, that foreigners who had lived in Germany for an extended period should be allowed to vote at the level of the municipalities, and that one should facilitate the integration of youth, in that youth born in Germany should be eligible for citizenship, among many other points. The proposed programme, however, was rejected by the federal government, a coalition of SPD and FDP (Free Democratic Party) (Hess & Moser 2009:15-16).

To sum up, in the 1970s, the concept was part of progressive political agendas relative to the general political climate, one that was mainly advocated by social democrats, or used by migrant organisations themselves (16). At that time, integration was often understood as equal opportunities and participation, and thus referred to
minorities’ rights (12), similar to the context of the US, where the term had at the beginning of the 1960s been widely used by people supporting racial desegregation (Favell 2001:360).

Around 2005, when Hess and Moser locate a boom in the use of the term “integration” in German politics (the national government organised “integration summits”, “integration road maps” were being compiled, and there were numerous reports about integration in the media), this had changed fundamentally compared with the situation in the 1970s. By 2005, the concept did often not refer to *opportunities* and *rights* any more, but was being used connoting a certain *demand* towards migrants, or a pressure to change. Linguistic and cultural deficits of migrants were underlined as the cause of integration problems. Hess and Moser call this approach an “approach focused on deficits” (*Defizitansatz*); integration had become a duty instead of a right. In Germany, this kind of integration politics has often been referred to by means of the slogan "support and challenge" (*Fordern und Fördern*). As an example, Hess and Moser refer to the immigration law (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*) in its two versions 2005 and 2007, where one explicitly demands integration from migrants, and focuses on their lack of linguistic and cultural competencies (Hess & Moser 2009:12).

Thus, according to Hess and Moser, there are two broad levels of meaning to be distinguished in the history of the term “integration” in German political discourse: first, integration as equal rights/opportunities, where above all the state’s task to take care of the necessary political conditions is underlined, and second, as a demand mainly directed at the immigrant population to change their behaviour. Since the 1990s the second level of meaning has gained currency (Hess & Moser 2009:12-13). As I will show below, the district government of Berlin Neukölln, where the projects that I analyse are located, and its Mayor Heinz Buschkowsky are known for their demanding and rather restrictive integration politics, while the government of the neighbouring district Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, for instance, distances itself from such a demanding
appeal towards migrants and envisages another kind of integration politics (section 3.4).

2.2.2 The “Islamisation” of the Integration Debate

As in other Western countries, the debate about migrant integration in Germany has since the end of the 1990s been more and more directed especially at those people of Muslim background. In these debates, a fundamental cultural difference of Muslims is postulated which allegedly makes their integration more difficult. One often mentions “Turkish and Arab migrants”, mostly in one phrase. It is claimed that integration of migrants of Muslim backgrounds in particular has failed. The political scientist Katharina Hierl has called this phenomenon the “Islamisation of the integration debate” (Hierl 2012:12).

The Islamic studies scholar Schirin Amir-Moazami writes that it was since the murder of the Dutch film maker Theo van Gogh in 2004 that there have been more aggressive demands for the integration of Muslim migrants in German public discourse (Amir-Moazami 2005:22). As I describe below, it was also after 2004 that Neukölln's Mayor Heinz Buschkowsky started to frequently appear in talk shows etc. and became known in Germany for his statements about the failure of integration in Neukölln (section 2.4). In the years that followed, his views on integration have been much discussed in public discourse.

Around the same time, the integration of Muslim migrants also came to be problematised in the public discourses of other European countries: in the UK, politicians made statements about an alleged failure of multiculturalism, which were mainly directed at migrants of Muslim background (Werbner 2009:19). Perhaps in Germany, the climax of the discourse about failed multiculturalism occurred when Angela Merkel publicly stated this failure, as I mentioned in the thesis introduction.
The German studies scholar Yasemin Yildiz has analysed newspaper articles and argues that while in the 1990s it was the group of “Turks” who were considered to have the biggest “problems of integration”, by around 2000 it was mainly “Muslims” who were mentioned in such a way. Newspapers now contained articles about “Muslim women” instead of “Turkish women”, and the phrase “Muslim minority” was often used (Yildiz 2009:471-4).

**2.2.3 Child Rearing and Schooling: the PISA-Study**

The local projects I analyse in chapters 5-7 are in their self-descriptions mainly directed at supporting people of migrant or refugee backgrounds with issues of child rearing and at increasing children's opportunities for educational success. How have the topics of child rearing and schooling been discussed in public discourse regarding integration? Generally, as stated in the introduction, in public discourse, formal education is often regarded as an indicator of successful integration, and the debate about integration often turns around matters of schooling (Andresen & Hunner-Kreisel 2009:11). Lanz notes that it was especially in the years after 2000, when the integration debate had increased, that it was postulated that education could solve integration deficits “in an almost magical manner” (Lanz 2009:114).

Since the 2000s, around the time that the focus of the debate about integration had shifted towards one of individual duties of migrants and towards an explicit demand for integration, those political strategies that aim at improving individual educational qualifications of migrants have been more prominent, while issues of structural discrimination in educational institutions and discrimination in the job market have been neglected (Lanz 2009:115).
In Germany, the debate about schooling and integration reached a climax after the publication of the results of the first PISA study\(^{21}\) in 2001. The media discussed the effects of the study in terms of a “PISA-shock”. In all of the three areas investigated reading ability, mathematics, and science Germany fell below OECD-average. Before, it had been assumed that German schools were better and more just than US American ones, for instance. Kerstan writes that the reaction to these results was “hysterical” (Kerstan 2011). However, the former Integration Commissioner of the Berlin Senate, Günter Piening, also remarks that the results were not that surprising for those who had been following the OECD educational surveys of the years before. In these surveys, Germany had also figured among the worst ratings (Piening 2004:3).

One important result of the first PISA study that had some effects on the integration debate was that children from migrant families scored much worse than children from German-speaking families; they also scored worse than comparable population groups in other countries (Kreutziger 2003). The study also found that in Germany, the difference between the best and the worst students was greater than elsewhere, and that school achievement was more strongly influenced by the educational status of the family of origin than in other countries; the German educational system was rated as more socially unjust than the US American one (Kerstan 2011).

After the PISA debate, the meaning of early childhood education (\textit{frühkindliche Bildung}) i.e. education in kindergarten, before children enter school was stressed in the general debate about children’s school achievement and especially regarding immigrant children’s school performance. In the public debate reference was often made to studies that showed that children who had attended a kindergarten got better school grades. Support programmes for children from educationally disadvantaged families were developed (Konsortium Bildungsberichterstattung 2006:33). The Borough Mothers project (chapter 7), which at the beginning was mainly directed at

\(^{21}\) Programme for International Student Assessment, conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
convincing immigrant parents to send their children to a kindergarten in order to improve children's school performance, was developed in the years after the first PISA study.

2.2.4 The “Islamisation” of the Debate about Schooling: Kelek and Sarrazin

Since the 2000s, problems of integration that involve questions of child rearing and schooling, like the more general problems of integration, have often been claimed to be particularly prevalent among migrants of Muslim background. Since the 2000s the government first commissioned studies that were meant to provide figures on Muslims in Germany (e.g. Haug et al. 2009). In 2006, the results of the first study on Muslim children in schools that had been commissioned by the government (Federal Agency of Migration and Refugees, Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge) was published (Kelek 2006).

In this report, the causes of alleged “integration failures” (as an example of such “failures”, Kelek names above-average unemployment and school failure among migrants “of Turkish and Arab origin”) are mainly located on the side of the migrants. Kelek speaks about Muslim children as an “especially problematic group” regarding their integration into German schools (Kelek 2006:5). She writes: “Studies about the family backgrounds, the life patterns, social and religious values of migrants are urgently needed if one wants to counter failing processes of integration in a goal-oriented way.”

Kelek raises the question whether it is apt to describe the situation as an “educational refusal among a whole population group” (Bildungsverweigerung einer ganzen Bevölkerungsgruppe) (2006:65). Elsewhere, writing about “educational conflicts with the Muslims”, she compares “migrants from Turkey, Morocco, or Albania”

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22 “Untersuchungen über die familiären Hintergründe, über Lebensmuster, soziale und religiöse Orientierungen von Migranten sind deshalb zwingend erforderlich, will man misslingenden Integrationsprozessen möglichst zielgenau entgegentreten.” (Kelek 2006:4)
with migrants from “Portugal, Italy, Greece, or South America”, and states that the latter groups do not have any special difficulties with schooling (66). She argues that Islam must therefore be the cause of these problems, claiming that the conflict is due to “the specific and different idea of man and worldview of Islam and of the traditions and ways of life of Muslims, which are based on the religion” (66). Kelek’s position can thus be located within a culturalist discourse on integration which reduces Muslims to their religion and postulates the necessity of homogeneous values for the functioning of pedagogical institutions.

The SPD (social democrats) politician Thilo Sarrazin, with his book Germany Abolishes Itself (2010), can probably be adduced as the most prominent example of such a culturalist discourse on this issue. He claimed that Germany's population was on average becoming less intelligent due to immigration of people from Muslim countries. He used statistics that showed that it was mainly children from Turkish or Arabic-speaking families who had difficulties in school. Sarrazin claimed that these problems in Muslim families were “inherited” (Sarrazin 2010:284). Like Kelek he states that children from “Turkish and Arab families” are less successful in school and that there must be cultural reasons located in people's attitudes. The following extract from an interview illustrates his position:

**DIE ZEIT:** So what is the reason why Turkish pupils do not participate well in school classes?

**Sarrazin:** It is obviously a cultural problem.

**DIE ZEIT:** But then it must be possible to change it.

**Sarrazin:** The cultural problem is grounded in the group of Muslim migrants and can hardly be changed against their will. Swimming classes and headscarves, and generally the role of women and girls, are symbols of this. The circumstance that Turks and Arabs are hardly making any effort to learn German is another expression of this lack of interest in the majority culture and of the lack of readiness for education (Ulrich and Topçu 2010).23

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23 "ZEIT: Woran liegt das denn, dass die türkischen Schüler nicht gut mitmachen?
Sarrazin: Das ist offenbar ein kulturelles Problem.
ZEIT: Dann ist es ja änderbar.
Sarrazin: Das kulturelle Problem ist in der Gruppe der muslimischen Migranten
In chapter 5, where I analyse parents’ meetings at primary schools, I will return to this postulated “educational conflict with the Muslims”, and analyse voices of parents and social workers regarding this issue.

2.3 Approaches to Integration in Berlin: the Concept of Activation

This section is about developments regarding integration politics at the level of the city state of Berlin. How was the concept of integration adopted in the context of Berlin and how has it been implemented? How has it developed? I illustrate how the concept of activation has more and more figured in the Berlin Senate’s integration approach. In terms of “parents’ activation” (*Elternaktivierung*), this concept plays a role in all the projects I discuss in chapters 5-7.

Sociologists and political scientists have described how in Western European countries, since around the 1990s, the ideal of active citizenship has been widely disseminated, as Hurenkamp et al. discuss for the case of the Netherlands (Hurenkamp et al. 2011:209; Marinetto 2003, Mayer 2003). These authors refer to a kind of politics whereby citizens are expected to cooperate with the government, and are seen as more responsible for themselves than at earlier historical stages. Marinetto traces this development for the UK and also mentions a discourse of “community involvement” in that respect (Marinetto 2003).

Rose writes about this issue in relation to the decline of the welfare state across a number of Western nation-states, and describes how in the course of this process, there has been a focus on individuals’ responsibility to take care of themselves (Rose 1996a:327). Governments now stress that people should be active in their own government (330); and try to use their networks of relationships for the purpose of
governing. Rose coined the phrase “governing through community” (Rose 1996a:332) for a political development by which people’s community allegiances have been used as a government strategy:

... new modes of neighbourhood participation, local empowerment and engagement of residents in decisions over their own lives will, it is thought, reactivate self motivation, self-responsibility and self-reliance in the form of active citizenship within a self-governing community (Rose 1996a:335).

This focus on using people’s community allegiances can also be observed in some of the approaches that I sketch below, and above all in my case study of the Borough Mothers integration project which I discuss in chapter 7, where I return to these issues.

While the concept of active citizenship itself is not widely used in Berlin political discourse, there has been a development that can be described in these terms, with a stress on the concepts of activation, responsibility, and self-help, as I will show in the following sections. The concept of activation (like the one of empowerment) is often regarded as an indicator of a “neo-liberal” kind of politics. It is a kind of politics said to consist of the creation of governmental mechanisms that work by themselves. In these mechanisms, individuals are attributed the main responsibility or risk (“responsibilisation”). Individuals are “empowered” to help themselves (Ferguson & Gupta 2002:989).

2.3.1 History of Integration Politics in Berlin

There has been a similar development regarding integration politics in the city state of Berlin like at the federal level (2.1). While integration used to be interpreted as a securing of equal rights, currently it is more a demand towards migrants that is being underlined in political slogans like “support and challenge”. During German partition, West Berlin’s integration politics had been rather avant-garde by comparison with the rest of West Germany (Gesemann 2009:327). The city state of Berlin was the first regional state that established the office of Foreigners’ Commissioner (1981). Under its
first Foreigners’ Commissioner Barbara John (1981-2003), Berlin was known for its progressive integration politics. Barbara John’s politics supported migrant self-organisations, the political participation of migrants (Gesemann 2009:312), and a comprehensive advisory service for migrants regarding rights and social issues, multifaceted publicity work, the creation and maintenance of intensive contacts with migrant self-organisations and the financial support of projects and self-help initiatives for supporting the integration of immigrants (316).²⁴

Gesemann locates the beginning of a new period of integration politics around 2003, when Barbara John was followed by Günter Piening. Gesemann writes that one of the characteristics of this new period has been a discussion about overarching concepts (e.g. in 2005, in Berlin the first general Integration Concept was passed), and that integration politics has since consisted of developing strategies of activating migrants. The political buzzword of “activation” (Aktivierung) plays a role in many of the new approaches (Gesemann 2009:316), and the ideas behind these approaches resemble those which sociologists have categorised as active citizenship approaches (e.g. Rose 1996a, Marinetto 2003). Lanz writes that there has been a “neo-liberal turn” in Berlin integration politics. Individuals’ responsibility for their material welfare has more and more been underlined, as well as their duty to have a job, and enforcing measures have been set up. Moral pressure towards migrants to take self-initiative has increased; the discourses are generally of a “demanding” tone (Lanz 2009:112-113).

2.3.2 Quarter Management and Integration Concept

As an example of one of the newer policies in which the concept of activation plays a role, I will describe the Quarter Management (Quartiersmanagement) policy. Quarter Management is a policy for “especially disadvantaged urban areas”, which has

²⁴ “eine umfangreiche Rechts- und Sozialberatung für Zuwanderer, eine vielfältige Informations- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit, die Herstellung und Pflege intensiver Kontakte zu den Migrantenselbstorganisationen und die finanzielle Förderung von Projekten und Selbsthilfeinitiativen zur Unterstützung der Integration von Zuwanderern.”
been devised by the Senate in cooperation with the federal government’s policy “Social City” (Soziale Stadt) (Gesemann 2009:325). The projects of my case studies in chapters 5-7 were partly supported by Quarter Management; Quarter Management also supports, e.g., women’s groups (for excursions, sports, breakfast etc.), sports events, borough celebrations, and measures of adornment/cleansing of the borough.

A Quarter Management consists of an office which is headed by a Quarter Manager who is appointed by the district government. In Berlin, there are thirty-four Quarter Management agencies, eleven of which are in Neukölln (Quartiersmanagement Berlin 2014c). A committee consisting of the Quarter Management’s employees and some of the quarter's citizens decides how funds for projects are allocated.25 Citizens of the respective quarters can apply for the funds allocated to the quarters in order to support citizens’ self-devised projects. Thus, it is characteristic of the Quarter Management policy that the government’s employees in the Quarter Offices do not devise or execute projects themselves, but are only employed for the administration of the funds and for activating citizens to "help themselves".

As the official description of the project aims shows, the buzzwords that in sociological literature are considered as indicators of an active citizenship approach like "self-help", “community”, and “responsibility” figure as major aims of the project:

- Support and activation of citizens
- Fostering of and guidance towards self-help
- Fostering of individual responsibility
- Strengthening of contacts in the neighbourhood
- Benefit for the community/neighborhood
- Stimulation of borough culture (Quartiersmanagement Berlin 2014b)26

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25 The money for the administration of Quarter Management and for the funds themselves is provided by the federal government, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and the state of Berlin (Quartiersmanagement Berlin 2014a).
26 "– Förderung und Aktivierung der BewohnerInnen und Bewohner
Förderung und Anleitung zur Selbsthilfe
Förderung der Eigenverantwortung
Stärkung nachbarschaftlicher Kontakte
Nutzen für die Gemeinschaft/Nachbarschaft
Belebung der Stadtteilkultur"
The concept of activation of the quarter's citizens is mentioned as a major aim. The main mechanism of Quarter Management can be described as follows: Citizens of the respective areas are to be convinced to actively contribute to the development of the quarter by means of devising projects (Gesemann 2009:326). The similarities with Ferguson and Gupta's description of a "neo-liberal" kind of politics are obvious: "fostering individual responsibility" is named as a major aim of the policy, and the government tries to set up mechanisms which require as few staff as possible, mechanisms that "work by themselves".

The Berlin Integration Concept (2005/2007), which can be regarded as a result of the discussion about comprehensive concepts in Berlin integration politics mentioned above, also features many points about how citizens are to be activated. It is the first comprehensive integration concept of the Senate, which at the time of its devising was led by a coalition of SPD (Social Democrats) and the Left Party. The preface, in fact, mentions as one of the main aims of the policy the creation of "the basis for a process of activation of the debate about Berlin integration politics", and it is then mentioned that especially migrants themselves are to be activated for this debate (Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin 2005:3).

In the second version of the Integration Concept (2007), activation is mentioned as one of the eight basic strategies for action (Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin 2007:6). Furthermore, activation is again underlined as one of the main aims of the programme Social City with its Quarter Managements (51). Also, there is an explicit demand for an increase in parents' activation (\textit{Elternaktivierung}) measures, and the Borough Mothers project is mentioned in this context (36). What role does the concept of activation play in projects on the ground? How has it been implemented? These are questions I follow up in my case studies, especially in the one about the parent-child centre in chapter 6, where I look at how this concept has been interpreted by the head of the centre who for a while had been trying to implement an activating approach to social work, and how the visitors of the centre have reacted to this approach.
2.4 Integration Politics in Neukölln: a Differential Approach

In this section I introduce a categorisation regarding approaches to integration based on the work of the urban geographer Stephan Lanz (2.4.1). I then discuss various aspects of integration politics at the level of the Neukölln district government (2.4.2 ff.) using this categorisation. I first introduce the district of Neukölln’s Mayor Heinz Buschkowsky (2.4.2); some of his major positions towards migrants to the borough of Neukölln (2.4.3); and how he conceptualises the meaning of child rearing and schooling in relation to integration (2.4.4). Then I discuss some perspectives on Islam that are typical of Neukölln’s district government (2.4.5). Finally I portray some of this government's stances towards the Arabic-speaking population there (2.4.6). In my depiction of Buschkowsy's positions I mainly use his book “Neukölln is Everywhere” (Neukölln ist überall, Buschkowsky 2012) and his online pamphlet "Integration Politics in Neukölln" (Integrationspolitik in Neukölln, Buschkowsky 2009).

I illustrate how the government of Neukölln with its mayor clearly stands for a “differential” approach to integration (cf. Lanz 2009:113). One of the concrete consequences of this approach on the social work projects I discuss will be analysed in chapter 7, where I describe how Buschkowsky insists on a definition of the Borough Mothers project's target group that can be described as differential, but which does not agree with the local coordinators' ideas about how to define the target group for the project.

2.4.1 Differential and Diversity Approaches to Integration

In order to classify approaches to integration politics, Lanz distinguishes a "differential" and a "diversity" approach to integration. He describes these approaches as follows:

While a differential integration discourse constructs a principal difference between immigrants and natives, and thus follows the traditional German
model, a *diversity integration discourse* is based on the assumption of a fundamental diversity of urban society (Lanz 2009:106).27

According to Lanz, a differential discourse underlines the idea of a “German nation” which is determined by biological origin and by a common culture – an idea which has historically been dominant in Germany (Lanz 2009:106-107).

A diversity discourse breaks with this concept of “German nation as community of origin and culture” and does not make any such distinctions between “self” and “other”. Lanz defines a diversity discourse in Berlin as mainly focusing on the economic potential of migrants, an “economic interpretation of diversity”, where people of migrant backgrounds are divided into more or less useful groups in a utilitarian manner (Lanz 2009:109-110).

Lanz argues that in Berlin, contrasting with the federal level, where the differential discourse has been dominant, both types of discourse are present to a more or less equal degree. As an example of the differential discourse in Berlin, Lanz argues that since 2001, the integration discourse has also been focused on the necessity of common values and that these values are often the centre of the debates. The debate also centred on those migrants of Muslim background, and has been marked by a “Western-Islamic conflict scenario” (Lanz 2009:109). A German “majority society” is depicted as secular, democratic, free, and marked by gender equality, while migrants are associated with tradition and with the oppression of women (108-109).

According to Lanz, the Berlin Integration Concept, mentioned above, is typical of a diversity discourse. It is an example of an approach to integration that does not focus on migrants as social problems, but on their economic potential. At that time, the differential discourse was widespread in Berlin, and the Integration Concept provided an alternative (Lanz 2009:110). In the next section I introduce some aspects of the

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27 "Während ein differentieller Integrationsdiskurs einen prinzipiellen Unterschied zwischen Einheimischen und Einwanderern konstruiert und so dem traditionellen deutschen Modell folgt, basiert ein diversitärer Integrationsdiskurs konträr dazu auf der Annahme einer grundlegenden Diversität der städtischen Gesellschaft.”
district of Neukölln's approach to integration and argue that a differential discourse has clearly been dominant there.

2.4.2 Neukölln's District Mayor Heinz Buschkowsky

Neukölln's district Mayor Heinz Buschkowsky, who was in office from 2001 until March 31, 2015, and was thus among the longest-serving mayors in Germany, has become known throughout Germany for his positions on migration and integration. He is a member of the SPD (Social Democratic Party), but because of some of his political positions has been considered an outsider in this party (Schomaker 2008). His public appearances have consolidated Neukölln's image as a district that epitomizes alleged failures in integration. After the murder of the Dutch film maker Theo van Gogh in 2004, he used every opportunity to publicly proclaim a failed multiculturalism in Neukölln. He claimed that he drew this conclusion from his everyday experience in Neukölln (van Bebber 2004).

Buschkowsky stresses that he is in favour of immigration and that migrants are important for the economy, but that immigration must be accompanied by a "demanding integration politics" (fordernde Integrationspolitik) (Buschkowsky 2012:45). He often gives one of his political best friends, the Mayor of Rotterdam Ahmed Aboutaleb, as an example of such an approach (e.g. 2012:58). He distances himself from the politics of Berlin’s former Foreigners’ Commissioner Barbara John (section 2.2) whom he views as standing for a kind of politics in which “every foreigner is per se a good person” (2012:131). The following quote by Stephan Lanz illustrates Buschkowsky’s approach well:

The town hall of Neukölln and its Social Democrat mayor, who has achieved national publicity because of his positions, symbolise a scenario of urban catastrophe, where ethno-cultural groups are considered as social
explosives, and immigrants are subjected to paternalistic care (Lanz 2009:113).\textsuperscript{28} 

Generally, Buschkowsky's approach is strongly focused on cultural values, and he often underlines how important they are for the cohesion of a society. For instance, he relates Neukölln's problems, e.g. a high unemployment rate, and many young people leaving school without a certificate, to a lack of cultural adaptation among migrants. He claims that young people in Neukölln are "less and less interested in the values of the majority society" and that they (and their parents) only value "pride in their homeland" (Heimatstolz) and "cultural heritage". Buschkowsky has become known throughout Germany as a hardliner against what he calls "blue-eyed multi-cultural romanticism" and wants "clear statements towards foreigners who resist integration" (Fahrun 2008). He claims that many migrants are not making much effort and says that this "is not enough for a process in which both sides have to move" (van Bebber 2004).

\textbf{2.4.3 Social Problems Caused by Migrants' Attitudes?}

Buschkowsky claims that many of the problems in Neukölln stem from migrants' alleged refusal of "central European values" and unwillingness to learn German, though he also concedes that German classes in Neukölln are always fully booked and that there is not enough space for all people who want to participate (van Bebber 2004). In my view it is unlikely that unemployment in Neukölln is caused by people's unwillingness to learn German. As I describe in the next chapter, one issue that contributed to unemployment in Neukölln was that Neukölln hosts many people who had formerly arrived as refugees and were subject to work bans which subsequently made it harder for them to become integrated into the labour market.

Another crucial development was that after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the German reunification, Berlin's economy no longer received special funds from the

\textsuperscript{28} "Das Neuköllner Rathaus und sein dafür bundesweit bekannter sozialdemokratischer Bürgermeister stehen für ein urbanes Katastrophenszenario, das ethnokulturelle Gruppen als sozialen Sprengstoff konstruiert und Einwanderer einer paternalistischen Obhut unterwirft"
government as West Berlin had during the times of partition. This led to a sharp rise in unemployment in Berlin. Another factor that compounded this problem was the sudden availability of cheap labour from East Germany. After 1989, especially those people who had arrived as labour migrants from Turkey in the 1960s and 70s, because they had been the ones working in the (subsidised) industries, often as unskilled labourers, lost their jobs. Thus, bit by bit many people became welfare recipients (Yurdakul & Bodemann 2006:50). Neukölln, as a typical working-class neighbourhood, was especially affected by these processes. As a borough where many people resided who had worked in the subsidised industries, unemployment rose more strongly there than in some other boroughs. Because of these processes after reunification, Berlin turned into a rather poor city in German terms, with higher unemployment rates than most other cities. It was particularly the former migrants and refugees who suffered from these processes (Gesemann 2009:319).

Buschkowsky does argue for a similar special economic support for Neukölln as for West Berlin during times of partition (Zonenrandförderung) (Bruns & van Bebber 2006). Most of the time, however, he relates Neukölln’s problems to the cultural values and attitudes of people of migrant or refugee backgrounds. As a means to changing these attitudes, he often emphasises the importance of child rearing and schooling (e.g. Buschkowsky 2012:36); I depict his views on these matters in the next section.

2.4.4 Integration, Child Rearing, and Schooling: Buschkowsky’s Positions

According to Buschkowsky, it is crucial for the cohesion of Neukölln society that migrants accept “central European values” (typical of a differential integration discourse), and he considers the areas of child rearing and schooling important in order to reach this aim:

Today, by means of our politics we decide whether Neukölln will be located in Central Europe only according to the atlas, or if this will also be the case for the heads and hearts of the people who live there. Therefore it
matters whether parents educate their children, how they raise their children, and what values they pass on to them (Buschkowsky 2012:63).

In his pamphlet "Integration Politics in Neukölln" (Buschkowsky 2009), where he lays out his strategies for guiding integration processes, he often mentions children as the actual target of integration politics. First, he defines integration as "the incorporation and inclusion of all immigrants into the social core areas of the host society, but also inclusion into cultural life and political participation" (2009:3). Then he writes,

Regarding integration, we especially pay attention to the children. For they are the future of our district and at the same time the weakest members of our society. The degree of humanity of a society shows in how it treats its children (2009:3).

Later in the document, however, Buschkowsky states that he is not only concerned about children being generally the weakest members of a society, but about immigrant parents' "deficits" regarding child rearing. He argues that because many parents have certain "deficits", one has to protect children from them: "Thus parents often become the greatest danger for their children, who are likely to fail because of their parental homes' deficits" (2009:10). He claims that parents in Neukölln often do not manage to pass on to children the most basic social values regarding schooling, job training, and employment. He stresses that these "deficits" are especially strong among "traditionally oriented immigrant families", and writes that a "submission of children" is typical of child rearing in those families (10):

In manifold traditionally oriented immigrant families, the prior principle of education is the submission of the child, if necessary, by means of violence. In such an atmosphere, a person cannot learn the social competence they

29 "Wir entscheiden heute mit unserer Politik, ob Neukölln dann nur noch auf dem Atlas in Mitteleuropa liegt oder auch in den Köpfen und Herzen der Menschen, die dort leben. Deshalb ist es eben nicht egal, ob die Eltern ihre Kinder erziehen, wie sie sie erziehen, und welche Werte sie ihnen vermitteln."
30 "Bei der Integration richten wir unser besonderes Augenmerk auf die Kinder. Denn sie sind die Zukunft unseres Bezirks und zugleich die Schwächsten der Gesellschaft. Wie human eine Gesellschaft ist, misst sich daran, wie sie mit den Schwächsten umgeht."
31 "So werden Eltern leider oft zur größten Gefahr für die Zukunft ihrer Kinder, die an den Defiziten des Elternhauses zu scheitern drohen."
need in order to be part of a democratic, liberal society and in order to be successful (Buschkowsky 2009:10).32

He defines the child-rearing methods in immigrant families as “inhumane”, and creates a dichotomy between a familial environment that is allegedly marked by inhumane values, and a German society which stands for free development of children and democracy.

In this context, Buschkowsky mentions “Muslims” and depicts the attitudes of Muslim families as backward and as hindering integration. About the upbringing of young Muslims, he writes: “The liberal and free society that they are surrounded by does not fit to the pre-democratic structures that are present at home” (Buschkowsky 2012:111). Such associations of an imagined German culture with “freedom” and an imagined Muslim culture with attributes like “undemocratic” were also made by actors in pedagogical institutions, and perceived as a problem by some of the parents I describe in my case studies.

For Buschkowsky, institutions like schools and day care centres and integration projects like the Borough Mothers one are important in order to “balance” the mentioned deficits. According to him, society has to “intervene” by means of schools and day-care centres, which for that reason should be of an especially high quality (Buschkowsky 2009:10). This is why he finds school social work so important. As another step towards the solution of Neukölln’s problems, he suggests making day-care centres compulsory for children from the age of three on (however, this would require federal government legislation), and turning all primary schools in northern Neukölln into full-time schools (Ganztagesschulen).33 The fact that he strongly supports those migrant integration projects directed at child rearing in particular, like the Borough

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32 “Im etlichen traditionell geprägten Einwandererfamilien ist zudem der oberste Erziehungsgrundsatz die Unterwerfung des Kindes, notfalls mit Gewalt. In einer solchen Atmosphäre kann ein Mensch nur schwer die soziale Kompetenz erlernen, die er braucht, um sich in der demokratischen, freiheitlichen Gemeinschaft einzubringen und erfolgreich zu sein.”

33 At the time of my fieldwork, most of the primary schools there had already been turned into full-time schools.
Mothers one (chapter 7), is related to his positions regarding certain values that are allegedly lacking in migrant families.

2.4.5 Neukölln’s District Government: Perspectives on Muslims and Islam

In this section I give some examples of perspectives on Islam among the Neukölln district government. In Neukölln, the lack of a “readiness for integration” (Integrationsbereitschaft) is often especially attributed to people of Muslim background. In his book, Buschkowsky writes that while late resettlers (Spätaussiedler) make efforts to integrate, “the main minorities, Arabs and Turks, don’t do so.” (van Bebber 2004). He claims that “Turks, Arabs, and Somalis ... do not make an effort to actively grasp the German value system” (Buschkowsky 2012:62; 65).

The role of Islam and mosque associations in the life of the borough is often conceptualised in negative terms, as I will illustrate with a quote from an interview with Neukölln’s former integration commissioner Karin Korte. The quote is taken from an interview Korte gave to the Arab Culture Institute (Arabisches Kulturinstitut, AKI). The interviewer asked her what kind of contribution to urban life she would like to see from the side of mosque associations:

AKI: Mosques are houses of prayer for Muslim citizens. Do you have any idea about a possible contribution of these institutions for living together peacefully?

Ms. Korte: It is important that mosque associations open up and that their work and what they offer in mosques becomes more transparent. Not only since September 11, 2001 has Islam created fear. Many people are suspicious of Islam because they do not know what is going on in the mosque associations at all. I find it a pity that we have arrived at this situation, but sadly it is like that. I think that mosque associations could contribute much to diminishing this distrust by making their work more transparent and also by showing the work they do regarding youth and women. They could offer public events where they clarify issues regarding Islam. Making contacts with the neighbouring church communities and associations could also be beneficial for a peaceful coexistence and for remaining on good terms with your neighbours. In Neukölln, for many years the Protestant Church has traditionally been doing
charity work with foreigners (*Ausländerarbeit*). The *Diakonie* (Protestant charity association) or the Intercultural Working Group of the Protestant Church might be important interlocutors in that respect (*Arabisches Kulturinstitut e.V. 2003:3*).  

Korte’s answer thus starts with an attribution of responsibility to mosque associations. She says they need to “open up” and “make their work and what they offer more transparent”. The main issue, she says, is that the mosques and mosque associations have to help reduce the distrust that citizens have had towards Islam since September 11, 2001. Korte underlines above all their responsibility to make citizens who are distrustful towards mosque associations feel more secure. Thus, she mainly replies in negative terms and puts the responsibility of having to defend themselves on the mosque associations. She does not answer in terms of a possible positive contribution the mosques might make to urban life.

An example of a restrictive politics towards Islam at the level of the district government is the stance towards the headscarf. Women working in the district’s town hall are not allowed to wear headscarves. In Berlin, there is a ban on wearing visible religious symbols or symbols related to worldview for the areas of police, court, and for “teaching staff and other employees with pedagogical mission in public schools” (the so-called “law of neutrality”, *Neutralitätsgesetz*, see *Wowereit 2005*). Other areas

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34 “AKI: Moscheen sind Gebetshäuser für muslimische Mitbürger. Haben Sie eine Vorstellung über einen möglichen Beitrag dieser Institutionen für ein friedliches Zusammenleben?


35 This law has colloquially been called a headscarf ban (*Kopftuchverbot*), as it mainly affects women wearing a headscarf.
of public administration, like the town hall, do not fall under this law (see text of the law in Wowereit 2005), and these issues are thus to be decided by the single districts.

Fatima, whom I will introduce in more detail in the next chapter, was of Palestinian background and had come to Berlin from Lebanon as a child. She told me how she and some other women who were taking part in a project about “Muslim women and discrimination” conducted by an Arab migrant association had gone to the Neukölln town hall to visit the district’s Migration Commissioner Arnold Mengelkoch, and the Equal Opportunity Commissioner (Women’s Commissioner) Ms. Edler, in order to ask them questions that mainly related to the headscarf, i.e. why women wearing a headscarf were not allowed to work at many places, including the Neukölln town hall.

Fatima said,

We wanted to know why we women who wear a headscarf aren’t allowed to work. Then we asked him [Mr. Mengelkoch], if I as an Arabic language and literature student wanted to do an internship in Mrs. Edler’s office, she’s Neukölln’s equal opportunity commissioner, the women’s commissioner. And then Ms. Edler said, “You would have to sign a contract that you won’t wear a headscarf”. And that’s discrimination. In Neukölln. But in Steglitz [another Berlin borough] it actually works out. I have a friend with a headscarf, she’s working at the regulatory agency in Steglitz, she did her job training there. Here, [in Neukölln] they have a certain antipathy.36

Fatima’s quote is an illustration of how the district of Neukölln practises a rather strict stance towards Islam. Further, contrasting with some other districts, in Neukölln, there have been no attempts to foster communication with explicitly Muslim associations, as I will describe in section 2.5.2.

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2.4.6 Buschkowsky on Neukölln’s Arabic-Speaking Community

As stated, Neukölln’s Mayor Heinz Buschkowsky depicts “Turks”, “Muslims”, and “Arabs” as problematic groups. Among them, he often names “Arabs” as the most negative example of a group that allegedly does not show any inclination to integrate. For instance, there are several places in his book where he bemoans the settlement of especially “Arab migrants” in the borough, a situation which he even describes with the term “sad”:

In Sonnenallee, you can often only buy things if you are bilingual, German-Arabic, or rather, Arabic-German. Of course this is an exaggeration which is humorous just as it is sad. But indeed, Arabic letters dominate. If you want to eat a normal curry sausage or Bulette [a kind of hamburger], there isn't really any rich selection there (Buschkowsky 2012:40).

In another context, where he speaks about the danger of “parallel societies”, he draws on the example of an “Arab boutique” in Neukölln:

A wonderful example of this [parallel societies] is the opening of an Arab boutique in Neukölln's inner city. At the outer wall, you could find a surah in German in which it said that women’s chastity and servility were demanded. Only after strong public protest, which included the media, was the sign taken away (Buschkowsky 2012:56).

Further, he compares Arabs with the Turkish group, among whom he especially appreciates those of Alevi belief (Buschkowsky 2012:103). He contrasts a Turkish and an Arab family he knows, and states that the former worked hard to make a living: they had worked in a factory during the day, delivered newspapers before that, and in addition done a housekeeper’s job (59). Among the latter, who had come to Berlin from Lebanon as refugees in 1990 and been subject to work bans, “During their time in Germany, no one among that family had contributed to their own livelihood”, and "over

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37 “In der Sonnenallee können Sie häufig nur dann die Dinge des Lebens erwerben, wenn Sie zwei-sprachig Deutsch-Arabisch, oder besser, Arabisch-Deutsch beschlagen sind. Das ist natürlich eine ebenso spaßhafte wie traurige Übertreibung. Aber es ist schon so, dass die arabischen Schriftzeichen dominieren. Und wer seinen Hunger mit einer ganz normalen Currywurst oder Bulette stillen will, kann auch hier nicht gerade auf ein überbordendes Angebot zugreifen.”

two decades, ... got used to the fact that Germany is a country where you get money without doing something in return" (60). At another place in the book he compares Turkish and Arab parents in Neukölln with a similar outcome (108): a Turkish father had told him that he did not want to live in Neukölln anymore because he and his wife worked long hours, and Neukölln had become too loud for them. An Arab couple he met, in contrast, did not make any effort to send their child to day care, and their three year-old could not speak any German yet (108). These are examples of how the “Arab” group functions as a negative example regarding integration in Buschkowsky’s book.

Fatima, whose visit to the town hall Neukölln I mentioned in the last section, reported about her visit how she felt that the administrators had a certain “antipathy” towards headscarves and Islam. This is what she said about her meeting with the district’s migration commissioner Arnold Mengelkoch:

Buschkowsky says that all young people here are criminals and don’t educate themselves. And and and and. Actually just stupid stuff, in my opinion. I don’t have any quotes in my mind now. But recently I visited Mr. Mengelkoch [the local migration commissioner], who’s just the same. He’s got such an incredibly strong antipathy towards Arabs – well, he was just sitting there, and said: “You [the Arab community] don’t make any effort here at all. The whole Arab community here doesn’t make an effort. But as soon as there’s an imam preaching in the mosque, everyone will run outside on the street and then there’ll be a huge riot”. And so on. But that’s not true, Mr. Mengelkoch. Well, you see how deprecatingly he talks. But I mean, that’s not my opinion.39

Fatima told me that she had replied to him, “How should we take care if we’re not allowed to work, if we’re not allowed to do anything” (referring to policy conditions most people of Arabic-speaking background in Neukölln have been affected by, chapter 3). Fatima said,

Well, the problem is the conditions under which we arrived; we Arabs, we all had a status of tolerated residence. We weren’t allowed to work, and we weren’t allowed to vote. I also told him [Mr. Mengelkoch], “My parents

were unavailable the whole time, busy with their existential needs. But now it's our turn. Now we will do something,” And then he was shocked. He was really shocked.40

The last sections were about approaches to integration politics at Neukölln district level. Based on Lanz, it is apt to describe the overall approach of the Neukölln government as a differential one. The approaches of the neighbouring district Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, however, are rather different in many respects, as I will show in the next section.

2.5 Neukölln vs. Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg

In the introduction to this thesis, I argued that Aihwa Ong's cultural citizenship approach, which is based on her work on Cambodian refugees’ contact with state institutions in California, homogenises the side of state actors and of an assumed majority society. By juxtaposing integration politics in Neukölln with those of the neighbouring district Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, I show how state agents’ approaches to integration can differ fundamentally, even within one city, as is the case for Berlin.

2.5.1 The Borough of Kreuzberg and the District Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg

The borough of Kreuzberg, which is situated to the north of the borough of Neukölln (see map 1), is, like Neukölln, known for its diversity and multicultural lifestyle and above all for its big Turkish-speaking community (“Little Istanbul”) (Gitmez & Wilpert 1987:86). The government district of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg was created in an administrative reform 2001 by joining the former district of Kreuzberg

40 “Na das Problem ist halt, die Voraussetzungen, die wir mitgebracht haben, wir Araber, wir haben alle Duldung gehabt. Wir durften nicht arbeiten, wir durften auch nicht wählen. Wenn man nicht arbeiten und wählen darf. Ich hab ihm (Mengelkoch) ja auch gesagt, „Meine Eltern waren die ganze Zeit beschäftigt, verhindert, mit existentiellen Bedürfnissen. Aber jetzt sind wir an der Reihe. Jetzt machen wir was.” Und da war er erstmal geschockt. Er war wirklich geschockt.”
(part of the former West Berlin) with that of Friedrichshain (part of the former East Berlin).

For a long time, Kreuzberg had the image of a problem area (*Problemviertel*), just as Neukölln does today. Before reunification, it had been a typical working class borough and one of the most run-down areas of the former West Berlin (Mandel 2008:144). By now, it has partly overcome its former negative image (however, the quality of schooling there still figures in public debates, similar to the one in Neukölln), and gentrification is so strong that rent prices are among the highest in Berlin (Haritaworn 2012:18). What distinguishes Kreuzberg from Neukölln is that it has also long been known for its alternative political culture, artists, and variety of subcultures. Long before 1990, it had been "symbolically upgraded" (Lang 1998).

About the public image of the two boroughs, Lanz writes,

> While Neukölln embodies the social no-place [*Unort*], where urban problems abound, Kreuzberg is perceived as somewhere between 'social combustion point' [*sozialer Brennpunkt*] and model laboratory of a successful immigration city (Lanz 2009:110).

In order to answer the question of how much the changes in Kreuzberg have been influenced by the district government's approaches to integration politics, a separate study would be necessary. In what follows I merely give some examples of how this approach differs from the one in Neukölln.

### 2.5.2 Different Approaches to Integration

First I will juxtapose the voice of Neukölln's Mayor Buschkowsky with that of the district Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg's former Mayor Franz Schulz, who was in office until August 2013. Then I sketch some approaches to integration of the district of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg that differ from those in Neukölln. As a side note, the district of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg is a kind of special case in Germany. In elections of the

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41 "Während Neukölln den gesellschaftlichen Unort verkörpert, an dem sich großstädtische Probleme verdichten, rangiert Kreuzberg zwischen 'sozialem Brennpunkt' und modellhaftem Labor einer erfolgreichen Einwanderungsstadt."
federal parliament, it is part of the only electoral district (“Berlin-Friedrichshain – Kreuzberg – Prenzlauer Berg Ost”) where the Green Party gains the majority of votes, and thus their district candidate’s seat in parliament is usually secured. The district’s approach to integration has also been described as a rare one within Germany (OSI 2010:83). Lanz writes that the town hall of Kreuzberg supports a “critically-pluralistic” concept of integration and that it is the only government in Berlin that explicitly refuses to speak out for a “challenging” or “activating” integration politics (Lanz 2009:113).

In his book, Buschkowsky names Kreuzberg’s Mayor Franz Schulz alongside the former Integration Commissioner of the city of Berlin, Barbara John, as an example of an approach to integration which differs fundamentally from his (Buschkowsky 2012:59). As described above, Buschkowsky relates Neukölln’s problems like school failures of youth and high unemployment rates to migrants’ alleged lack of acceptance of “central European values” (e.g. Buschkowsky 2012:63). In this context, he often uses the term “parallel societies” (Parallelgesellschaften), which he regards as a cause of unemployment and a lack of migrants’ interest in school education (Buschkowsky 2012:55-56).

Franz Schulz, on the contrary, thinks the term “parallel societies” is a discursive weapon/fighting word (Kampfbegriff) and criticises Buschkowsky’s polemics (Hornig 2012). Schulz emphasises the existence of social networks grounded in migrants’ own languages and cultures as beneficial for migrants in that they provide mutual help and support. He argues that one should accept the existence of these networks, as one also accepted the fact that there are different rules and values in different social subcultures like sports associations for instance (cf. Buschkowsky 2012:59).

Regarding a debate about the quality of schooling in Kreuzberg, which, similar to Neukölln, has been a matter of public discourse (cf. Eksner 2006:24), Franz Schulz does not locate the cause of bad schooling results in migrants’ alleged lack of acceptance of certain values, but rather underlines the responsibility of school boards
and teachers. He argues that the quality of schooling is determined by the quality of its teaching staff and not by the ethnic composition of the pupils. Thus, he criticises a widespread discourse (also among parents) which relates the quality of schooling to the number of pupils with “non-German background” (OSI 2010:74; 174).

An example of a concrete political measure that differs for Neukölln and Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg is that in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, Muslim organisations are strongly present within political councils, while this is not the case in Neukölln. The district of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg financially supports Muslim organisations, and there are local projects in which the district government cooperates with Muslim organisations (OSI 2010:19).

Another example is the composition of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg’s Advisory Migration Board (Migrationsbeirat). In Berlin, all districts, as well as the city government, have such Advisory Migration Boards, which consist of the district or city’s Integration Commissioner, representatives of local agencies, and migrant associations. In Kreuzberg, for instance, such a board has existed since 1971, in Friedrichshain since 1992 (Baran 2011), and in Neukölln since 2003 (Knack 2014). A Migration Advisory Board has to represent the interests of people with migration history, and advise the local government on questions of migration and integration. A position on this board, in contrast to others, does not require the incumbent to have German or EU-citizenship.

Migration Advisory Boards differ in the degree of political influence that is accorded them and in their composition. While Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg's migration board comprises representatives of explicitly Islamic associations, e.g. of DITIB (Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği, the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs), or of the Islamic Cultural Centre of Bosnians (Bezirksamt Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg w.y.), this is not the case for Neukölln. Neukölln’s Migration Board only comprises representatives of explicitly non-religious organisations, for instance DAZ (German
Arab Centre), which is an umbrella association of secular Arab associations (Bezirksamt Neukölln von Berlin 2014b).

The district government of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg explicitly supports the participation of Muslim associations. For instance, in cooperation with INSSAN, an “association of young Muslims from various mosque communities”, whose aim it is to “promote German language Islam” (INSSAN w.y.), the district government organised conferences with panel discussions in order to work out concrete suggestions for a participation of Muslim associations in the district. At one of these conferences it was decided to create a youth advisory board that would comprise representatives of Muslim associations next to the representatives of local agencies (INSSAN 2011). Such efforts to include representatives of Muslim organisations in local politics do not exist at the level of the Neukölln district government.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have described some aspects of my study’s political context within Berlin and Germany more broadly. I showed how the debate about integration at the federal level has been increasingly marked by an approach that focuses on linguistic or cultural deficits of migrants/refugees, so that integration has become conceptualised as a pressure on those people to change. In some strands of public discourse, perceived problems in integrating have mainly been attributed to people of Muslim background, and the areas of child rearing and schooling in particular have been raised in that respect.

Such a development can also be traced for the government of the city state of Berlin, where there has also been some focus on the necessity of common cultural values, and the discourse has partly been marked by a “Western-Islamic conflict scenario”. While approaches to migrant integration in the former West Berlin had been rather progressive compared with other West German cities, in that it was based on
extending social services for migrants, and fostering contacts with migrant organisations, since around 2000 the government has increasingly set up programmes under the banner of “activation”, resembling what sociologists have called “active citizenship” approaches.

I also analysed discourses about integration at the level of the Neukölln district government, and argued that this government is marked by an especially restrictive approach to integration politics, where a fundamental cultural difference between so-called “Central European values” and the values of those migrants of Muslim background is postulated. Finally I juxtaposed some features of Neukölln's integration politics with those of the neighbouring district Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, which strongly differs in many respects. By means of this comparison, I exemplified the heterogeneity of state practices of integration, and I connected this point to the critique of Aihwa Ong's cultural citizenship approach that I laid out in the introduction.

This chapter provides essential background for chapters 5-7, where I analyse how the concept of integration has been implemented by social workers and others in projects on the ground in Neukölln. There I will explore whether these actors relate to the political discourses I described here, and what effects these projects have on the people who are considered their target group.
3. Refugees from Lebanon: Policy Conditions and Cultural Identifications

In the last chapter I described how the topics of child rearing and schooling have been discussed in relation to migrant integration in public discourse, and how in Neukölln, this discourse has been especially directed at people of Arabic-speaking background. This chapter goes on to discuss some of the life conditions of these people since their arrival in Berlin.

In section 3.1 I describe aspects of the historical background of flight and migration from Lebanon to Berlin, because this is where the majority of people identified as Arabs came from. I then go on to discuss some of the policies people were affected by once in Germany (3.2). Lastly, I discuss some processes of cultural identification among people who had arrived in Berlin from Lebanon, and their descendants, and who are mainly labelled Arab, or Muslim, in public discourse (3.3).

In relation to a public discourse about Arab migrants and education (chapter 2), and teachers’ discourse that sometimes framed Arab parents or children as a problematic group, René Abul-Ella, who was born in Haifa in 1945, moved to Lebanon with her family subsequently, and then did her primary school and high school in Baghdad. She studied journalism in Cairo and came to Berlin in the 1970s, said to me during an interview,

If they talk to the teachers, they almost only hear reproaches – Everybody has forgotten how these people have come to Germany and what kind of policies they have been affected by. And then someone like Sarrazin comes and says something about today without ever mentioning yesterday.

The following sections 3.1 and 3.2 have the aim to exemplify this "yesterday".

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42 Abul-Ella is a Palestinian Christian who was born in Haifa in 1945, moved to Lebanon with her family subsequently, and then did her primary school and high school in Baghdad. She studied journalism in Cairo and came to Berlin in the 1970s.

43 This is a reconstruction of what Abul-Ella said to me during an interview, of which I did not take any recording.
3.1 Historical Background

The history and situation of the Turkish-speaking background minority in Berlin and Germany is well known, and has also been subject to anthropological study (e.g. Bozkurt 2009, Ewing 2008, Kaya 2001, Mandel 2008, Sökefeld 2004). By contrast, little has been written about the history of flight and migration from Lebanon to Berlin. The major source in that respect is a published PhD thesis by Ralph Ghadban, a political scientist and specialist on flight from Lebanon, Refugees from Lebanon in Berlin (Ghadban 1999).

Among people in Berlin with Arabic-speaking backgrounds, besides those who had arrived from Lebanon after 1975 (who identify as Lebanese, Palestinian, and [Arabic-speaking] Kurdish), there were smaller groups of refugees from Iraq (mainly Shia Muslims and Kurds before the fall of Saddam Hussein, and Sunni Muslims afterwards), minor groups of refugees from other countries like Syria and Egypt, some students, and a smaller number of former migrant workers from Morocco and Tunisia and their descendants (Abul-Ella mentioned about 5000-6000 for Berlin), who arrived under a labour migrant scheme known as “guest worker programme”. However, people who had formerly arrived in Berlin from Lebanon today are the biggest group.44

While among people from Turkey, there were in the beginning mainly labour migrants, and from the 1980s on also more and more refugees (especially Kurds), Berlin’s Arabic-speaking background population is to a great extent made up of former refugees. Ghadban states that more than 90% of people from Lebanon who reside in Germany had gone there looking for asylum, and thus their conditions of life have been rather different from those people who had arrived under the “guest worker programme” and their descendants (Ghadban 2008:2).

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44 There are no exact statistics on these numbers. This is due to the fact that Palestinians and Kurds from Lebanon were registered as stateless. Kleff & Seidel estimate that Berlin hosts 70,000 people “of Arab origin” (most of whom have by now acquired citizenship), among them 30,000 Palestinians (mostly from Lebanon) and 20,000 Lebanese (Kleff & Seidel 2008:85).
In this section I describe how people who went from Lebanon to Germany were often from groups that had been living in bad conditions there, had suffered from various degrees of discrimination, and experienced massacres and comparable trauma in the civil war before fleeing (section 3.1.1). In Germany, they encountered a political climate in which there had started to be restrictions on asylum seekers, which made life difficult for them (3.1.2). The nature of these restrictions and the policies people were affected by once in Germany will be described in more detail in section 3.2.

3.1.1 Flight from Lebanon

In this section I explain why Berlin hosts a big number of people from Lebanon compared with other German cities and provide some further details about the backgrounds they have come from in Lebanon. While Lebanon had for long been a country marked by transnational emigration (Gesemann 1995:8; Ghadban 1999:48), and a number of Palestinian refugees had already gone to Germany before 1975 (Ghadban 1999:68), major flight and migration to Germany only started after that, due to the consequences of the civil war which erupted at that time.

Why do more of the former refugees from Lebanon live in Berlin than elsewhere in Germany? In the 1970s and 1980s, most of the people went to West Berlin via East Berlin, because they could travel to the German Democratic Republic (GDR) on a tourist visa, and then crossed the border. The Western powers France, Britain, and the US did not acknowledge the partition of the city with East Berlin as the capital of the GDR, and thus did not place any border controls on people entering West Berlin from the East. Ghadban writes that three quarters of all refugees from Arab countries came to Berlin in that manner⁴⁵ (Ghadban 2008:2-3; 1999:75, see also Kleff & Seidel 2008:86).

⁴⁵ After the end of the civil war in Lebanon (1990), military conflicts in South Lebanon continued due to the Israeli occupation. Many people also migrated or fled to Germany from these areas after the end of the civil war (Ghadban 1999:85).
Among the groups who went from Lebanon to Germany, there were many who had already suffered discrimination in Lebanon. At first, mainly Palestinians and Kurds went to Germany, and then also more and more people with a Lebanese passport. Palestinians had fled to Lebanon during the 1948 Palestine war, and due to later conflicts, and in Lebanon mainly lived in refugee camps, did not get any Lebanese citizenship, were subject to work bans, and restricted in owning property, to name just a few issues (Ghadban 1999:99).

Ahmed, a Palestinian student from Lebanon who had come to Berlin in order to study engineering and resided with his uncle, said he liked to help me with my work because he was used to discussing issues regarding the “Arab minority” with his fellow students in Berlin. People would often ask him, for example, “Why don’t the Arabs work here”, or “Why don’t they go to university”. He said he would then explain to his interlocutors that Palestinians who came to Berlin from Lebanon had already been at the bottom of society and lived in poverty there, and had been subject to restrictive measures like prohibitions on work or tertiary study, only to find that they were subject to similar restrictive measures in Germany (see section 3.2).

Ghadban writes that Kurds had the worst living conditions in Lebanon: they did not get any citizenship rights, were subject to work bans like Palestinians, and got no help from the state. Nor was there an organisation for them comparable to UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) which took care of Palestinians. This was the general situation that many Kurds fled after the destruction of their settlements in Beirut during the civil war (Ghadban 2008:7; Ghadban 1999:91).

Among refugees from Lebanon to Germany, unlike those who went to the US or France, there were many with little formal education, and many who had lived in poverty in Lebanon already. According to Ghadban, in Lebanon in the 1970s and 1980s it was mainly those people who did not have any contacts abroad and who could not get a visa for France, UK, or the US, who went to Germany (among people identifying as
Lebanese at first there were mainly Shia Muslim, whose living areas in Beirut were generally poorer and less well preserved than Sunni Muslim areas). Many people had contacts abroad already at that time (e.g. Maronite Christians to France and other Christians to the UK and the US); the wealthiest people mostly went to the US. Ghadban writes that wealthy Lebanese and businessmen mainly went to England, France, and Southern Europe (Ghadban 1999:71-72).

The historical circumstances described in the last paragraph also explain why most of the people who went to Germany from Lebanon were Muslims, and hardly any were Christians (Ghadban 1999:85). During my fieldwork in Neukölln, besides René Abul-Ella, who runs the charity association Al-Dar, I did not encounter any Christian Lebanese or Palestinians. Christians from Lebanon had migrated elsewhere.

Among the people who went to Germany, there were many who were traumatised by the Lebanese civil war. There were four major events in the war that led to the departure of many people to Germany: the Tel al Zaatar massacre in 1976, the 1978 and 1982 Israeli invasions, and the Sabra and Shatila massacre in 1982 (Kleff & Seidel 2008:86). In 1981, within a short period of time, several thousand refugees from Lebanon arrived in Berlin. Among them were many survivors of the Tel al Zaatar massacre in 1976, who had had to take long escape routes. Abul-Ella said that most survivors of the Tel al Zaatar massacre currently reside in Berlin. This is consistent with Ghadban’s claim that almost the whole remaining population of the camp went to Berlin (Ghadban 2008:4).

Charda, who was employed as a social worker for a charity association for Arabic-speaking families, and who had herself come to Berlin from Tel al Zaatar with her family, said,

46 Many people who had resided in the Tel al Zaatar camp in turn had come from a village called Al-Huleh in North Palestine, and currently the Al-Huleh Association located in Neukölln is one of the biggest Arab migrant associations in Berlin – Ghadban writes that it is the biggest one (Ghadban 2008:5). In an interview I conducted with Ms. Al-Ali, a social worker employed by the Al-Huleh Association, she said that there are still annual commemoration events for the Tel al Zaatar massacre in Berlin, organised by a committee consisting of representatives of various Arab associations.
I’m from a refugee camp, Tel al Zaatar, well, my parents are. And there was a huge massacre committed by the Israelis; well they supported it, together with the Christian Phalangists. That was in 1976, and then we – my father had already left Lebanon before – six months later, after we had clarified things regarding the documents – we came here. ... Many, many people from Tel al Zaatar came here. By now people from Tel al Zaatar are in the third, fourth generation. It’s the biggest group of people from Lebanon here in Berlin. ... These people are traumatised, and trauma is transmitted – consciously or unconsciously – that’s been proven by academic research. One doesn’t talk about it, because it’s just like that, and many in fact don’t even know that they’re traumatised. Because that’s a collective experience, “We all went through the same”, one considers it normal. And here, one forgot to work with these people pedagogically, psychologically.

Abul-Ella also stressed that many among the refugees from Lebanon in Berlin had been traumatised, and that because of the lack of adequate counselling, many had not managed to get over this trauma, and that it might be passed on to the children.

“Their experiences from Lebanon are stuck in them”, she said.

These were some of the experiences that people brought with them when they came to Germany, and what they encountered there was that few of their applications for asylum were granted, and the rights of asylum applicants were restricted in many respects. Abul-Ella stressed that because they were psychologically fragile, many people experienced these restrictions as directed against them personally. In the next section I sketch the general political climate people encountered in Germany, and in section 3.2 go on to describe the specific policies people encountered there.

47 “Ich stamme aus einem Flüchtlingslager, Tel al Zaatar, meine Eltern. Und da ist ja ein riesen Massaker verübt worden von den Israelis damals, die das mit unterstützt haben zusammen mit den christlichen Phalangisten. Das war 76, und wir sind dann – mein Vater war ja schon vom Libanon weg – sechs Monate später, bis wir das mit den Papieren erledigt hatten, sind wir hierher gekommen. ... Ganz viele Leute sind aus Tel al Zaatar hierhergekommen. Inzwischen sind hier die Leute aus Tel al Zaatar in der dritten, vierten Generation. Es ist die größte Gruppe von Leuten aus dem Libanon hier in Berlin. ... Die Leute sind traumatisiert, und Traumatisierung überträgt sich – bewusst oder unbewusst – das ist wissenschaftlich bewiesen, man spricht nichts drüber, das ist so, und vielen ist es auch nicht bewusst, dass sie traumatisiert sind. Weil das ist ein kollektives Erleben, wir haben alle das gemeinsame erlebt, man denkt das ist normal. Und hier wurde es verpasst, mit diesen traumatisierten Leuten pädagogisch, psychologisch zu arbeiten.”
3.1.2 Political Climate and International Restrictions of Asylum Law

The last section showed that among the refugees from Lebanon to Berlin, there were many who had gone through major hardships there. There is no reason to assume that the majority of these people had already lived in acceptable circumstances and were just escaping in order to reach a higher living standard, that they were “mere economic refugees in search of a better life only”, a way in which asylum seekers have often been depicted in public discourse in Western countries over the last decades (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2002:26).

Nevertheless, after their arrival in Germany, they were quickly branded as “asylum tourists” (Ghadban 2008:9). Refugees from Lebanon were the first large group of civil war refugees ever to arrive in Germany. The term “refugee” had previously referred to people at odds with the state from the Eastern bloc (Soviet Bloc), who since 1965 had been granted a residence permit after application without having to apply for asylum. In contrast, almost all asylum applications from Lebanon refugees were denied, because the German constitution (Art. 16) holds that only people who are individually persecuted by the state count as refugees (Ghadban 2008:9). German authorities argued that under circumstances of civil war, “flight within the country” (Binnenflucht) was possible. As civil war refugees, people did not count as politically persecuted – however, they could not be sent back anywhere either, due to the fragile situation in Lebanon or because they were counted as “stateless” in the case of Palestinians and Kurds (Ghadban 2008:9). As a consequence, the residence category of “tolerated residence” (Duldung) was created, which meant that they hardly got any residence rights (section 3.2.2).

In 1977, two years after the first civil war refugees from Lebanon had arrived in Germany, measures of deterrence (abschreckende Maßnahmen) and laws allowing quicker denials of asylum applications were introduced (however, sometimes the consideration of the application still took many years). The state applied measures to
heavily restrict the rights of asylum seekers – with the expressed aim of making Germany an unattractive destination for people (Ghadban 2008:9).48

The 1980s were a time when anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiment in Europe rose, along with government attempts to curb immigration, as Stolcke describes for the case of Britain (Stolcke 1995:3-4). Since around the 1980s, Western countries in general have put in place more and more strategies to avert asylum seekers’ arrival, which relates to fears spread in the wealthier countries about these people being “mere economic refugees” (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2001:26). This transnational development is described by Stephen Castles et al.:

The refugee regime of Western countries has been fundamentally transformed over the last 30 years. It has changed from a system designed to welcome Cold War refugees from the East and to resettle them as permanent exiles in new homes, to an exclusionary regime, designed to keep out asylum seekers from the South (Castles et al. 2013:227).

In the next section, I describe the major policies that affected the refugees from Lebanon in Germany in more detail.

3.2 Policies and Rights Situation

German integration and citizenship policies have often been described as “highly exclusive and restrictive” (e.g. Cohen & Muhamad-Brandner 2011:16), especially regarding the Turkish minority. Little has been written about the policies that have affected refugees with Arabic-speaking background in Berlin. Ghadban has described the policies that have affected this group as a “disaster” (sozial- und bildungspolitisches Desaster) (Ghadban 1999). He stresses that since the beginning of the civil war in 1975, many people from Lebanon had gone to other countries than Germany, and in these countries, they more quickly gained the status of citizens or at

48 The time when civil war refugees from Lebanon started to arrive in Berlin was a time when asylum law was still a national issue and not one of the European Union yet as it is today. In Germany, the right to asylum is entrenched in the Basic Constitutional Law (Art. 16a GG). However, there have been several heavy restrictions on this right, which strongly affected the people who arrived from Lebanon.
least similar rights to citizens (Ghadban 1999:80). In the next section I discuss work bans and policies regarding general living conditions (3.2.1), the residence status of tolerated residence (Duldung) that most people were accorded (3.2.2), policies regarding schooling, vocational training, and university attendance (3.2.3), and subsequent changes in residential rights issues for this group (3.2.4).

3.2.1 Work Bans and Living Conditions

In section 3.1.2 I stated that from 1977 on, the German state started to introduce restrictive measures with the expressed aim of making Germany an unattractive destination for people. One of these measures was that after 1980, asylum applicants were not allowed to work during the first year of their stay in Germany. In 1982, this work ban was increased to two years, and in 1987 to five years. This work ban has heavily affected the situation of refugees from Lebanon in Berlin. While in June 1980, 70% of all asylum applicants had either been working or had been working within the last few years, so that they were eligible for unemployment compensation, this law forced all asylum applicants to live off welfare money (Ghadban 2008:10).

In an interview given for the weekly newspaper DIE ZEIT, Abul-Ella stated that in her experience of working with families from Lebanon, it was especially the law restricting work that had led to a deterioration of these families’ situation. She said that those asylum applicants who arrived between 1975 and 1980, who were still allowed to work, “do not live in Kreuzberg or Neukölln anymore, and their children have all completed vocational training”. However, those families who arrived after 1980 suffered strongly from this ban (Wahba 2007).

After the introduction of the first work ban in 1980, in 1982, a year which saw a radical change in asylum law called Asylverfahrensgesetz (July 16, 1982), there were further restrictive measures. Besides the increase of the work ban to two years that I

49 This work started in 1978, when she offered the first German course for women of Arab refugee background at an adult education centre (Volkshochschule) in Berlin.
mentioned above, refugees and asylum applicants were made to live in residential establishments. Abul-Ella reports that she knew some families who had to leave their flat at that time in order to move to special lodgings for refugees (Wahba 2007).

The 1982 law also meant that instead of getting welfare money in cash, asylum seekers would receive vouchers for food. Abul-Ella stressed that it might have been possible for people to bear this if the process had taken some months, or one year, but the reality was that it often took many years, and that always having to pay with vouchers in the supermarket, where everyone could see one was an asylum seeker, rather worsened their self-confidence.

3.2.2 Status of Tolerated Residence

After a major influx of refugees at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, a new category (or non-category) of residence rights was introduced: it can be translated as “exceptional leave to remain” or “status of tolerated residence” (Duldung), which was created for people who could not be made to go back, but who were not granted asylum either – and this category applied to many of the people who had come to Germany as refugees from Lebanon. Since 1983, asylum seekers from Lebanon had been recognized as de facto refugees, but yet were not granted asylum: they were “tolerated for humanitarian reasons” (Gesemann 1995:28).

People under the status of tolerated residence have been granted similar or even fewer rights than asylum applicants; there have been many people who had to live under this policy for more than a decade or even for several decades, especially people from Lebanon, due to the long duration of the civil war (Ghadban 1999:165). Thus, the work ban described in the last section, as well as the other restrictions for asylum applicants, applied to the people who lived under tolerated residence for longer periods, which in the worst cases was several decades.
People with tolerated residence were generally not allowed to work, but could be issued a work permit in certain cases. The legal details before 2005 were very complicated and resulted in a de facto work ban for most people. From 2005 until 2013, it was possible for a person to receive a work permit after they had stayed in Germany for one year (since 2013, this period was shortened to nine months), but both the Aliens Department, and the Employment Agency had to agree. However, for the duration of four years, those people could then only get employment if there was no German citizen for a position. Clearly, these conditions made it very difficult for people to find employment in a city like Berlin with high unemployment rates.

Fatima, whose encounter with Neukölln’s migration commissioner I described in the last chapter, told me how her family had suffered under these policies. Fatima identified as Palestinian and was born in Lebanon in 1984. Her parents had gone to Berlin in 1990, and subsequently she was raised by her grandparents. In 1995, her grandfather, who had been “politically active”, was called by Arafat to work in Ramallah. Thus, Fatima could not stay with her grandparents anymore, and also went to Germany. Her parents and brothers and sisters had tolerated residence and lived in a residential establishment then. Only in 1995 were they were allowed to rent a flat, moved to Neukölln, and stayed in a 1 ½ room flat with seven people. Fatima’s parents were still not allowed to work. She said,

The conditions for the Arab community here were very bad. Because in fact they all started with tolerated residence. Well, my parents had to wait eleven years until they got a work permit. We couldn’t just rent a flat, nothing. If you’re “tolerated”, you can be deported any minute. But there was an agreement between Germany and Lebanon, that they wouldn’t allow the Palestinians back in. Well, many in fact got stuck at the airport in Beirut, and then they were sent back to Germany. ... Well, my parents just sat there, and couldn’t do anything, nothing. They lived off welfare, and for a while they also lived off vouchers.50

50 “Die Voraussetzungen für die arabische Community hier waren sehr schlecht. Weil sie erstmal alle mit Duldung angefangen haben. Also meine Eltern haben elf Jahre lang gewartet bis sie eine Arbeitserlaubnis bekommen haben. Wir durften nicht einfach so eine Wohnung anmieten, nichts. Wenn man geduldet ist, heißt das, dass man jede Minute abgeschoben werden kann. Aber es gab ein Abkommen zwischen Lebanon und Deutschland, dass sie die Palästinenser nicht mehr zurücknehmen. Also viele blieben am Flughafen in Beirut hängen, und dann wurden sie zurückgeschickt. ... Also elf Jahre lang saßen meine Eltern da und konnten nichts, gar nichts.
Shams, a Palestinian who had come to Berlin from South Lebanon in 1995, had lived under status of tolerated residence for five years, while her husband had already lived with this status for five more years before that, since 1990. She expressed her feelings about living under this policy by saying “You’re only allowed to eat, drink, and sleep, and that’s it”. Abul-Ella stressed that children were born with this title, and grew up with it:

After people’s asylum applications were denied, the situation in Lebanon was still very bad. That’s why they weren’t deported. They were “tolerated”. Children were born “tolerated” [mit Duldung], and grew up this way. They were not allowed to do vocational training. They were born here, grew up, and weren’t allowed to do anything.

The next section describes the restrictions regarding schooling and vocational training that people were affected by.

### 3.2.3 Obligatory Schooling, Vocational Training, University

The 1982 law which led to various restrictions for asylum seekers also meant that their residence status was altered: from 1982 on, Germany did not count as “main residence” (gewöhnlicher Aufenthaltsort) any more. This meant that, for both asylum applicants and people with tolerated residence, obligatory schooling was abolished. From her experience of working with these families after 1982, Abul-Ella told me that those parents who wanted to send their children to school often had trouble to get a space because the children who were under obligatory schooling had the priority, or that those families who wanted to take children, especially girls, out of school could do so without problems from the authorities. Charda, a social worker I introduced above, stressed that teachers often did not make the same effort for children who attended school voluntarily.

_Also, die haben auch von Sozialgeld gelebt, und es gab eine Zeit, da haben sie von solchen Scheinen, von Gutscheinen gelebt.“_
At this historical background, Abul-Ella critically mentioned that there was a discourse among teachers in Neukölln, some of whom said that “Arab parents” did not make enough of an effort for their children’s education. She said,

The teachers only talk about today. No one ever looks back a little. The teachers don’t know that before there was no obligatory schooling for children. They react with reproaches, and don’t further look at the situation. While in my view, it was the legal situation that led to psychological barriers for those people.

Abul-Ella and Charda stressed that this was an issue that affected the generation who are today’s school children’s parents. Ghadban writes that thus, “a whole generation of nearly-illiterates was produced” (Ghadban 2008:10).

Another major consequence of the 1982 law and its change of main residence for asylum seekers was that vocational training and studying at university was forbidden (Ghadban 2008:10). This law was still in effect after obligatory schooling was re-introduced, and thus, while children and youth were obliged to attend school, they were forbidden to start vocational training or university afterwards.

Charda, who had arrived in Berlin in 1977 when she was seven, and who, after primary school, attended higher secondary school, said that her family had only got a residence permit one year before she finished higher secondary school. During the first years of upper school, she was still not sure whether she could pass her school exams, or whether her family would be deported. Her father had already been deported once in 1982, and returned to Berlin later. For some time, they had to go to the Aliens Department on a biweekly basis in order to renew their tolerated residence status. However, in the end, they were lucky. When Charda finished her school exams, they had a residence permit, which meant that she could also study at university then.

When Fatima was still at school she did not know whether, after finishing grade ten, her family would still be “tolerated”, and she would have to stay at home, not being allowed to start vocational training.

We were allowed to attend public schools only. Being “tolerated”, you weren’t allowed to do any kind of vocational training. You pass your MSA [medium secondary school exam, after grade 10], and then you’re at home, unemployed. Just imagine that! This was the case for many people. ...
parents were so happy when they got the residence permit in the end. My sister and I could then start vocational training.\textsuperscript{51}

In the next section I describe subsequent legal changes that led to legal improvements for this group of people. There were several laws whereby certain people who had resided in Germany for a longer time – as asylum applicants, or with status of tolerated residence – could apply for a residence permit first and then for citizenship.

3.2.4 Subsequent Changes

In 1984, there was a law which meant that a specific group of people among the refugees from Lebanon, who had resided in Berlin for a certain time, could apply for permanent residency first and then for citizenship.\textsuperscript{52} A second, more comprehensive rule called "Berlin rule for rejected asylum applicants" was issued in 1987 (Ghadban 1999:9-10), and a third one in 1989. Regarding the 1989 rule, Ghadban writes that 2000 refugees got a residence permit through that policy (Ghadban 1999:166). Abul-Ella stressed that it was the most generous "rule for old cases" of all times. It happened after the Berlin Wall had come down and there was a general atmosphere of enthusiasm. "We couldn't believe our eyes", she said. "The Wall had come down and there was a very open atmosphere, everybody was happy. For a while, we felt welcome."\textsuperscript{53}


\textsuperscript{52}This law was called "rule for old cases" (\textit{Altfallregelung}), and had been introduced mainly due to the pressure of church groups, welfare associations, and the \textit{Alternative Liste} – a party which was the precursor of the Green Party in Berlin. Such pressures had got stronger after the massacres in Sabra and Shatila, and the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon (Ghadban 1999:9).

\textsuperscript{53}Abul-Ella portrays the fall of the wall, due to the subsequent generous "rule for old cases" pertaining to Lebanon-refugees, as a positive one for the Arab minority in Berlin. In contrast, it has usually been considered a rather traumatic event for and by people of Turkish migrant background because the latter had been excluded from citizenship rights for such a long time, and now millions of former GDR residents were almost immediately granted full citizenship rights, and even a certain sum of money to welcome them into the West German national
Abul-Ella stressed that of the groups that had been subject to the 1984, 1987, and 1989 laws, almost everyone has now attained citizenship, though the process often has been long and cumbersome. Anisah, who had come to Berlin from Beirut in 1977 with her parents and her nine younger brothers and sisters when she was fourteen, explained how strenuous the whole process was. For a while, her family had to go to the foreigner’s office every week in order to renew their status of tolerated residence which involved waiting for many hours and uncertainty about the future. She applied for citizenship in 1987 and was granted it in 1993.

In 1990, the German Aliens’ Law (Ausländergesetz) was reformed, and the principles of the 1987 Berlin rule were introduced into the federal Aliens’ Law. Ghadban writes, “Not only did the Lebanon-refugees shape the legal development, but also the terms of the public political discussion” (Ghadban 1999:10). In 1990, the first “rule for old cases” was introduced at the federal level (Gesemann 1995:28). People who had resided in Germany for a certain time, no matter how the asylum procedure had been decided, were eligible for a limited permit to stay first (Aufenthaltsbefugnis), and after eight years for a permanent residence permit (Ghadban 1999:10). In the subsequent years, there were several other “rules for old cases”, the legal details of which are very complicated.

In 1999, there was a major reform in citizenship law, which meant that non-German nationals who had legally stayed in Germany for at least eight years (and fulfilled other criteria, like having employment) had a right to apply for citizenship. This was the law Fatima and her family benefited from:

In 1998 the SPD [Social Democratic party] came to power. Then there were new laws, like, foreigners could give away their passports and get a residence permit in return. But the condition was that they worked and were able to sustain themselves. They got a work permit then. My father then worked for twelve months. He doesn’t have vocational training, he didn’t speak German, and he’s almost illiterate. He then rented a restaurant in order to be able to cover for ten people. Well, he couldn’t completely, but we got the residence permit anyway. According to paragraph 23. ... We made a calculation: the residence permit cost my family 40,000 Euro in the community.
... I then got citizenship in 2009. I had applied for it in 2006, but you have to have had a residence permit for eight years before you can get it. If the SPD hadn’t come to power, we’d probably still live under tolerated residence.\textsuperscript{54}

The last federal “rule for old cases” was issued in 2007. Theoretically, it encompassed all of those remaining 180,000 people living under status of tolerated residence in Germany who, by July 2007, had been residing in the country for more than six years (with children) or eight years (without children). They could apply for permanent residency first, and later for citizenship.

However, there is a major impediment for people to benefit from this law: in order to apply for permanent residence, people had to prove that they were able to make a living independently (prove employment by which they earn at least as much as welfare money rates) and this law was to apply to people who had not been able to work for legal reasons for up to decades. In an interview given for DIE ZEIT, Abul-Ella stressed that thus, this law might not be of benefit for many and that among the people she worked with, she only knew one family who might benefit from it (Wahba 2007).

\subsection*{3.3 Identifications}

While the last sections discussed some of the policies the people who have been labelled Arab were subject to in Berlin, this section starts to describe the lives of some of them in more detail, with a focus on self-identification. In the last chapter I described how the category of Arab, which in the context of Berlin Neukölln to a large extent refers to former refugees from Lebanon and their descendants, is used by some

politicians as a main scapegoat category regarding alleged failures of integration. In this section, I discuss some aspects of self-identification among former refugees from Lebanon and their descendants. How do people identify with the category Arab? What other cultural identifications are important?

While original work on identity construction stressed that youth was the main phase where people’s identity was developed, and that afterwards, identity became rather fixed, currently it is more being stressed that while youth might still be the time where people feel the greatest need to define themselves against society, identities are never fixed and are constantly in the making (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2002:92).

In writing about issues of group identities, the anthropologist and social identity theorist Richard Jenkins distinguishes between categorisation and group- or self-identification, which together form the process of identification: identities, individual and collective, are constructed through a dialectics of "(internal) self-definition and the (external) definitions of oneself offered by others" (Jenkins 2008b:40).

In the context of Neukölln, Buschkowsky's or the Migration Commissioner Arnold Mengelkoch's use of the category Arab are examples of categorisation or other-identification, while someone's use of the category in order to refer to themselves is a case of group-identification. Jenkins’ point is that the ways people identify with a category like Arab, and the meanings they associate with it are influenced by how they are seen by others (just as others’ use of the category is influenced by the way people themselves use it).

3.3.1 Anisah: Arab and Kurdish at the Same Time

As described above, among the people who came to Berlin from Lebanon during the civil war, there were many Kurds (many of whom in turn had lived in Beirut
and arrived in Lebanon from areas in Southern Turkey). In Berlin, some of them came to take on being Arab as a major feature of their self-identification, as Anisah did. She had come to Berlin from Beirut with her parents and her nine younger brothers and sisters in 1977 when she was fourteen. She was a mother of eight when I met her in 2012, and more often referred to herself as Arab than as Kurdish.

Anisah’s parents had been Arabic-speaking Sunni Muslim Kurds, living in Eastern Beirut. Anisah stressed that her Arab identity meant much to her (even more than being Kurdish) and said that “Arabic language and culture mean everything to me”. When I asked her why, she said she did not really know, but a week later told me she had realised it was because of Islam and the beauty of the language of the Qur’an. She thought it was no coincidence that the Qur’an had been sent down to earth in the Arabic language. She had been reading the Qur’an for thirty years and taught her children how to read it on the weekends. Anisah had not regularly attended a reading group or the like; she mainly taught herself, by watching Saudi Arabian Islamic programmes on TV and reading.

Thus, though Arab and Kurdish might in other contexts be mutually exclusive categories of self-identification, and one might imagine that in Beirut, being Kurdish had been the more critical marker of identity for Anisah and her family, because this category was related to a major restriction of citizenship rights, in Germany, Anisah took on Arab as a major marker of her identity. It is possible that in Anisah’s case, during her youth in Berlin, having migrated there from Lebanon, and being an Arabic-speaker, she might have been labelled or perceived as Arab e.g. by fellow students or school teachers. Later, her children’s school teachers would often ask her to help translating documents for other people of Arabic-speaking background at school and might have used the label Arab to refer to her. It is not possible to reconstruct the major influences here in hindsight. However, research on identity construction of immigrant children and youth has shown that a process of “social mirroring” is important in that respect: children construct their identities also in response to how
they are perceived by the majority culture (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2002:7). Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco stress that children and youth are very sensitive to these processes (100).

Cultural identifications like Arab are not merely passed on from parents to children. In Anisah’s case, it seems that her parents had not used this label as a major form of self-identification, and it was not important for any of her brothers and sisters either, as she stressed. She contrasted herself to her nine brothers and sisters, who all resided in Berlin, by saying that for her, Arabic language and culture had a big meaning, while all of her brothers and sisters in her view were “completely assimilated/Germanised” (*eingedeutscht*). This was the case for some of them who were married to Germans, but also for those whose marriage partners also had Arabic-speaking parents. She said, “They have found a new country here, Germany”. But for herself, this was not the case; she wanted to be buried in Lebanon, in the village her husband was from.

The fact that her brothers and sisters had found it so easy to assimilate to German society led her to believe that Kurds (and Palestinians, she said) from Lebanon were generally more assimilated to German society in Berlin than people who identified as Lebanese, because the former had been foreigners in Lebanon already, had not had many rights there, and had not felt any identification with a nation-state before. She thought that for that reason, the Lebanese “held on much more to their identity” in Germany, as she felt was the case for her husband, and through him also for herself.

Being among the group of refugees from Lebanon, Anisah and her brothers and sisters, though actually of Kurdish origins, were among the group categorised as Arab by German mainstream public discourse. However, while for Anisah this category came to be important in her self-perception, this was not necessarily the case, and her brothers and sisters did not take it on as an important marker of their identity.
3.3.2 Yasira: from Ethnic Flight to Bicultural Identity

The point that cultural identities are negotiated, and not merely passed on from parents to children, can be further illustrated with Anisah’s daughter’s development. Anisah said that Yasira had always been the one among her children who had “had the biggest aversion towards the Arabic language”, and the one with the poorest knowledge of Arabic. Yasira had always stressed that she wanted a partner who speaks German, Anisah reported, and had asked, “What do I need the Arabic language for”? “She only wanted German, German, German”, Anisah said.

However, when I met Yasira in 2013, when she had just passed her higher secondary school exams, she had changed her mind, and decided to study Arabic language and literature at university. When I asked Yasira why she wanted to do so, she said: “Because I’m an Arab, I’m Lebanese”. Yasira said that she was very much looking forward to go to Lebanon for an internship. She could imagine working at an embassy and thought that “as an Arab” she might have a good chance of such employment. At the end of her youth she had arrived at the conclusion that “being Arab”, whatever that meant, was an important aspect of her identity.


Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco stress that it is rather rare for individuals to use one of these two styles of identity construction exclusively; what most people do is to create “bicultural/transcultural identities”, identities that take account both of their parents’ origin and of their own birth country (2002:112-113). In Suárez-Orozco and
Suárez-Orozco’s terms, Yasira had thus gone through a period of “ethnic flight” during her youth, and had then proceeded towards developing a more bicultural identity.

Her mother was of course happy about Yasira showing so much interest in the Arabic language, because she herself was so fond of it. Nevertheless, she was also worried, because it seemed to her that this field of study might not be a wise choice regarding job prospects, and as a welfare recipient, she was worried about Yasira finding a job in the end. However, they then heard that the police were looking to employ people with a degree in Arabic. Yasira’s cousin worked for the police and was employed for the minister of the interior of the Berlin Senate (Senatsverwaltung für Inneres und Sport), and they had heard it from him.

Anisah said his job was to “spy on people”, probably in urban areas where there were problems with drug dealing etc. Anisah said, “I never wanted my children to do such work”, i.e. spying against Arabic-speaking background people for the German government. Partly, she felt that doing such a job amounted to a kind of “ethnic betrayal” (cf. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2002:107). Anisah would stress that she thought Germany, in common with other Western European states, was not a real democracy, and that there was no freedom of the press in Germany. As a teenager, after she arrived in Berlin, she had started to learn German by herself, because she wanted to understand German news, but now, she only read news from Arabic websites. Her husband was a Shia Muslim from Lebanon, and they mainly got their news from Hisbollah’s online newspaper Al Manar. Anisah said that she did not read any German news anymore because she only got enraged about it, especially in relation to the topic of Israel. She said that she “did not feel integrated”, and one reason she gave was that “the German state had made too many mistakes”.

Thus, she said, she should really have reservations about her daughter working for the police “in order to spy on Arab people” but in the end, she did not try to stop her from doing so. This feeling was a weaker motivation than the sense that this might be a

55 Her husband had lost his work position around ten years before, and since then the family had been completely dependent on welfare.
good prospect of job security for her daughter. Anisah's concerns about her own (and her children's) ethnic identity were negotiated in light of economic concerns, and in this case, were not a motivating factor compared with economic concerns in the end.

3.3.3 “It Matters What You Really Are...”

Gerd Baumann describes a tension for anthropologists who write about issues of culture, ethnicity and community: while, in order to describe how agents see their social reality, it is an established practice to use the terms they themselves use, this might not be unproblematic, because informants' use of these terms is often rather different from social science perspectives (Baumann 1999:298).

People might not agree with suggestions about deconstructing the notions of being a “migrant” or having a “migration background”, which some current paradigms of social science research on migration are based on. An example for such a stance is the position suggested by the migration studies scholar Regina Römhild. At a talk given during the workshop “Labor Migration” at Humboldt University Berlin, she argued for “de-migrantizing” (entmigrantisieren) migrant research, and criticised the common understanding that it is research about migrants, who are distinguished from an alleged majority society. She suggested that one should not speak about migrants at all, and instead study urban formations and social institutions, a position she summarises under the label of post-migrant (post-migrantisch) research.

After the talk in which Römhild presented this proposed framework, some people in the audience expressed doubts about it and asked how one could capture the specific experiences that migrants go through, like discrimination. A similar position was expressed by Fatih, a law student of 28, to me during my fieldwork. Fatih had been born in Kreuzberg of parents who had migrated there from Turkey in their youth. He insisted that, though he had German citizenship, being of migration background was an

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56 The workshop took place on November 28, 2011.
important marker of identity for him. I asked him whether he did not get annoyed by this label sometimes, having been born in Berlin and being a German citizen. He said, "No it’s not that important how you’re labelled. What matters is what you really are".

When I asked him why he thought so, he said that as someone with a migration background he had had rather different experiences from those of merely German background, and thus he found this category important for his identity. "Your life is just different if your parents came to Germany from a totally different culture than if they had been born here", he said. In his view "People with migration background are just different from others." He thought everyone needed a cultural identity, and to know "who one is and where one came from". For him, "German with migration background" worked well, because he considered himself "neither really German nor really Turkish".

While anthropological theory has long stressed that culture and ethnic identity are not a "kind of baggage to be carried around", but "a dynamic and potentially oppositional force which stands in a complex relationship with the material conditions of society" (Brah 1987:44), a theme I illustrated in the last section, this might not comply with how people themselves view their cultural heritage. In the context of my fieldwork, people sometimes made distinctions between their citizenship which might be German and "what they really are, inside", by which they referred to other cultural identities.

Rahma (38), whose parents were Palestinian and had come to Germany from Tel Al Zaatar, had grown up in West Germany and moved to Berlin for marriage. She was a mother of four children and I met her when she attended a parents’ meeting at a primary school (see chapter 5). One day she invited me to join a celebration of a local soccer youth club to which her daughter belonged. She and some other mothers were selling food and drinks there and we stood talking. We talked about the Borough Mothers project, a local migrant integration project that counted as an employment creation measure for women of migrant background (chapter 7). She told me about her
work in that project, and how she struggled to arrange the thirty weekly hours of work with her duties in the household and for the children.

Then we started to talk about the project more generally, and I asked her whether it was true that one was only allowed to work for the project if one had a migration background. She said this was true. I asked her how it was decided whether someone counted as having a migration background, if citizenship was a criterion, and if one might not be able to work for the project if one had German citizenship. She looked at me in a very surprised way, or rather amusedly, and said, "What? No! How can the mere passport play a role in that respect? It matters what you really are!"

Arwa (18) put matters similarly, in that she said that though she was also German, Arab was "what she really was". Her parents were Sunni-Muslim Lebanese, and had come to Berlin from a village in South Lebanon. Arwa and her three brothers and sisters were born in Berlin, and the whole family had German citizenship. Arwa attended higher secondary school, and she told me that her close friends mainly had an Arabic-speaking background like herself. She said that though they all perceived themselves as German, Arab was "what they really were".

Some people expressed their ideas about culture or ethnic identity in essentialist terms, and they stressed that certain markers like "with migration background", which are deconstructed in social science discourse and might be perceived as discriminatory by others as well are necessary in order to capture the specificity of their life condition, and for that reason they would rather keep that label. As a researcher, one might decide to respect these feelings; however, psychological research has shown that people's feelings about their ethnic or cultural identifications are influenced by how they are being perceived by others, and these issues play out differently in different societies (cf. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2002:7). People's relations to certain identifications are being constituted in their experiences of living in a minority situation (cf. Poynting et al. 2004:96).

57 If directed at specific goals, like the fight for certain rights, such self-identifications have been called "strategic essentialism" (Spivak 1990).
3.3.4 “I’m Afraid to Talk to Other Arab People Now”

For the generation born in Lebanon, other cultural identifications than Arab, like Lebanese, Palestinian, or Kurdish, of course also played a role, and some people pointed out to me how these identifications had regained significance for them since the political turbulences in Lebanon since 2005, and the war in Syria.

On a nice sunny day in summer in 2012, Anisah and I had put table and chairs outside on the pavement next to the rooms of the women’s association she was working at, and we sat down there right next to the street. A woman with a perambulator passed by, and started to talk to Anisah in Arabic. They had not known each other before, but started to talk on the assumption that each of them had an Arabic-speaking background. They chatted a little and then the woman went on.

Afterwards, Anisah told me that the woman was Palestinian, and that she had already assumed so when she saw her. Her assumption was confirmed when they started to talk and she heard the woman had a Palestinian accent. Anisah told me that the woman had asked her for her name, and Anisah thought that this was because she was afraid to talk to someone who identified as Lebanese or Kurdish, given the numerous conflicts that had been occurring in Lebanon.

Anisah said that she had felt that for a while, there had been more and more distrust between people from Lebanon in Berlin. When I asked why that might be and for how long it had been the case, she said that it was probably since 2005, when the former president Rafiq Al-Hariri had been murdered. Since then, society in Lebanon had been more and more fragmented, and she also felt this had an effect in Berlin. Now she did not dare to talk about politics to people who were not from the circle of her family any more. She interpreted the woman’s instantly asking her name as an indicator of that kind of caution.

Fariyah, who identified as Sunni Muslim Lebanese, and had lived in Berlin since 1992, said that it was especially the Syrian war that had led to distrust among Arab
people in Berlin for her. Farihah said, “Since the Syrian conflict, there have been more and more problems between Arab people in the whole world”. She continued,

Really, it wasn’t like this before. Ten years ago, whenever I saw another Arab woman, I was happy. I ran after her and said, ”Ah, you’re also Arab”, and talked to her in Arabic. But now, whenever I see someone Arab, I go far away from them. For now there are just so many problems.58

Farihah mainly named the religious identifications of Shia and Sunni Muslim as a matter in these personal conflicts and explained that she had got into trouble with some of her friends in Berlin who were Shia Muslims from Lebanon. Most of her friends, in fact, were either Shia Muslim, or Palestinian (who were mainly Sunni Muslim), and she was in contact with only two Sunni Muslim Lebanese families59 like herself. She said she had observed that changes in friendship patterns had occurred especially between Shia and Sunni Muslims, and that she had not got any problems with her Palestinian friends, who were Sunni Muslims.

I have a friend here, she’s also from Lebanon. I’m Sunni Muslim, she’s Shia. I’ve known her for twenty-two years, since 1992. I met her when I had been in Germany for just one week. We got along well. She’s very nice. She’s got children, too, like mine, around the same age. We never talked about religion, about what it means to be Shia, or Sunni, and the like. But now, since the war in Syria – alright, we’re still in contact, we’re like sisters – but the problem is, we always talk about this issue. And everyone says they’re right.60

Her friend supported Hisbollah and Bashar (al-Assad) and said the other groups fighting in the Syria war were “terrorists”, while Farihah’s family and everyone from her parents’ village, where all residents were Sunni Muslims, were opposing Assad. Her contact with two other Shia Muslim families, whom she had known since


59 This might be related to the fact that, as I describe in section 3.1.1, among people who identify as Lebanese, it had been more Shia than Sunni Muslims who migrated or escaped to Berlin.

1992, and had been in regular contact with, had broken off completely for the same reasons. “Twenty years of friendship are now gone, and that’s a pity”, Farihah said.

Before the Syrian war, during her life in Berlin it had not mattered much whether someone was Shia or Sunni Muslim, and Farihah said that her son, who was around ten, had until recently not even known which he was. One day he came home from school and asked her whether he was Shia or Sunni Muslim, and she told him and tried to explain him a little about the differences in religious practice.

Anisah herself was Sunni Muslim, like Farihah, but her husband was Shia Muslim and in Lebanon she was mainly in contact with his relatives (all of her own family, including her brothers and sisters, her father, and all of his brothers and sisters resided in Germany), who were of the opinion that the groups fighting against Assad in Syria were terrorists and complained that they were supported by Saudi-Arabia (thinking that Saudi-Arabia had an interest in strengthening Israel’s position in the region).

Anisah said she was afraid that, if these terrorists won against Assad, the state of Israel might extend its power in the region. In the first one or two years of the Syrian war, she got enraged about how the groups fighting against Assad were mostly described as “rebels” in the Western media, and that “the West” supported them. Nowadays, whenever she went to visit her father, she would always argue with him about this topic, because he had another opinion on this issue, which was that Assad should be replaced by another government.61

In the last paragraphs I have described how people’s relations with each other and the identifications that gain significance for them are influenced by events in their home region. Members of the younger generation, who had been born in Germany, or gone through most of their schooling there, sometimes stressed that the distinctions

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61 My interlocutors also stressed that it was of course not the case that all Shia Muslim people in Lebanon were in favour of Bashar al-Assad, and all people of Sunni Muslim identification opposed him, but in the cases that were reported to me this was a kind of pattern (Anisah, who is Sunni Muslim, said that the fact that she favoured Assad was because she herself was married to a Shia Muslim, who was from a region that had been freed from the Israeli occupation by Hisbollah).
that played a role for their parents were not that important for them. It seemed to me that the categories of Arab and Turkish played more of a role for them in their social surroundings in Neukölln.

Nour in fact got a little offended when I asked her whether current developments in Lebanon or the Middle East had an effect on her and her circle of friends and acquaintances in Berlin. Her parents had lived in a Palestinian camp in Lebanon, had come to Berlin in the 1970s, and she had been born in Berlin at the end of the 1970s. Nour was a divorced mother of two children. She worked for an Arab migrant association and took care of an advisory service they offered. She replied,

\[\text{I think you're really asking me the wrong questions here. You should only ask those questions to people who have grown up there, who were born in Lebanon. I was born here and rather live a German way of life. Maybe you're speaking about people who regularly go there, who were born there, and who attended the schools there. But, believe me, that's not the case for people who were born here. I can't say anything about the political situation in Syria or Lebanon. I have some idea of what's going on there, but not of the details. What I'm interested in is advising the people, that they're doing well, that I try to offer my support and help. That's all I'm interested in. ... I was born here, and have just gone there three, four times on holiday. It's the same like going to Spain or Turkey for a holiday.}\]

Yet Nour often spoke about herself as Arab and mentioned being Arab as an important aspect of her identity.

Fatima said that while she was at higher secondary school she had had more Turkish than Arab friends, because there had not been many Arab girls who attended higher secondary school at the time. I asked her if it mattered for her whether her friends, or their parents, identified as Lebanese or Palestinian. She said, "No. These things might play a role for my parents. I sometimes hear them say mean things about the Lebanese. But for my generation that doesn't matter. We're much more open to the..."

\[\text{62 "Ich glaube, Sie stellen mir da total die falschen Fragen. Weil solche Fragen kann man nur Leuten stellen, die wirklich auch da aufgewachsen, im Libanon geboren sind. Ich bin hier geboren und lebe eher die deutsche Gesellschaft aus. Es kann sein, dass das Menschen sind, die immer rüber gehen, und selbst auch dort geboren sind, die Schulen dort besucht haben. Aber Menschen die hier geboren sind, glauben Sie mir, da ist das nicht so. Ich kann zu der politischen Situation in Syrien oder im Libanon gar nichts sagen. Ich weiß schon ungefähr, was da abläuft, aber so ins Detail geh ich da nicht. Was mich interessiert, ist einfach die Beratung der Menschen, dass es ihnen gut geht, dass ich versuche, meine Unterstützung und Hilfe zu geben, mehr interessiert mich nicht. ... Ich bin hier geboren und bin nur drei, vier mal im Urlaub dort gewesen. Das ist wie wenn ich jetzt nach Spanien oder in die Türkei in Urlaub gehe."} \]
world.” When describing her social surroundings in Neukölln, Fatima would more often make distinctions in terms of Arab and Turkish, as I will describe in the next section.

3.3.5 “We Envy the Turks for What They Have Achieved Here”

I met Fatima and her sister Aida at a women’s meeting at an Arab migrant association where they were trying to sell Tupperware to the women present. They were not very successful in selling their (expensive) Tupperware to the women (many of whom had only arrived recently as refugees and were from various countries like Iraq, Syria, or Lebanon), and Fatima explained to me that they had recently been at a similar event at a Turkish organisation, where it had been much easier to sell the Tupperware:

Tupperware is much more popular with Turkish than with Arab women. The Turkish women have really established themselves [sind angekommen] here in Germany and are rather successful. They often work, and they even often have their own car.

When I asked Fatima why she thought that was the case, she said, “Because Arab women haven’t been here for that long. That’s just history.” As mentioned above, when Fatima described her experiences at school in Neukölln, the distinction between Turkish and Arab children also figured as part of the story: there had mainly been Turkish, and no Arab children, and in her experience it had often not been easy “to enter the Turkish children’s circles”, and she had often felt excluded.

When I talked to people of Arabic-speaking background in Neukölln, a theme that sometimes came up concerned a kind of envy towards the Turkish minority, as Anisah framed it. I had told her that at a school in Kreuzberg, due to the efforts of some parents of Palestinian background and a social worker there had been a project aimed at introducing history classes with a special focus on the Middle East and the Palestinian struggle. She was surprised and said, “That’s great! I usually just hear such things from the Turks. They’re always well equipped (gerüstet), and always have someone to support them. They have powerful associations, and the like.”
When I mentioned that a teacher had told me that some primary schools had practised bilingual alphabetisation in relation to Turkish, with children learning to read and write in German and Turkish at the same time, she said: “What? This sounds like a dream. We [Arab people] wouldn't even dare to dream of such a thing”. Anisah said, “The Turks have achieved so much here. We envy them for what they have achieved in Germany”. She thought this could partly be explained by the fact that “The Turks are more united, and not as fragmented as the Arabs in Berlin”. For instance, she said that there were hardly any contacts between Lebanese and Palestinian associations in Berlin. Her husband, a Lebanese, was from a village called Al-Huleh in Lebanon. I had asked her if she or her husband knew the people of the Al-Huleh Association. She answered, “No. He would not! They are Palestinians. There are hardly any contacts”. 63

Ahmed, the young man who had come from Lebanon to Berlin for university studies, pointed out to me that in addition to German policies, another feature distinguishing the situation of the Turkish from the Arabic-speaking minority was that the former has received considerable support from the Turkish state in Germany. For instance, the Turkish state organised Turkish classes at German schools, and the Turkish state’s religious department DITIB (Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği, the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs) has built most of the mosques in Germany, while there is no state that has built many mosques for Arabic-speaking background migrants in Berlin. People of Arabic-speaking background rarely have the opportunity to learn Arabic at school; it is mainly at mosques that children can get Arabic lessons. In Neukölln, these mosques are often run by people with little formal education, and most Arab mosque associations there have no significant financial means.

One of the first things that was said to me by the head of the leisure centre for parents and children (chapter 6) in which I conducted fieldwork was: if I planned to write something related to people of Muslim background in Berlin Neukölln, I should consider the fact that there are also a large number of people of Arab origin. When I

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63 There are several villages called Al-Huleh, and the one Anisah's husband was from was not the one the association’s name referred to.
asked her to specify she said, she referred to Palestinian and Lebanese refugees. She had often heard people among these groups say that they felt “even more disadvantaged and excluded” than people of Turkish background in Berlin. She then mentioned how their lives had been restricted because of the status of tolerated residence, which I explained above.

Charda, a social worker who said that she was the first girl among the Palestinian community in Berlin to have done her Abitur (higher secondary school degree), and who had gained much experience in working with families from Lebanon, even stated that she thought that

The Turkish children arrived into a culture of welcome. “Ah, that’s the guest workers who help to rebuild our country, welcome, and do work, and then leave. But the children themselves, they were welcome.” For they were the guest workers’ children. Whereas the Arab children were refugee children, and refugee children weren’t welcome.64

This comment about how Turkish children, in contrast to Arab refugee children, were welcomed in Germany, is rather surprising, given the fact that people of Turkish background have long been known as the most discriminated group there.

3.3.6 “Our Children Say We Didn’t Teach Them Enough About Islam”

In section 3.1.1 I described the historical circumstances which explain why most of the people who went from Lebanon to Berlin were Muslims, whereas Christian Lebanese tended to migrate to countries other than Germany. During my fieldwork in Neukölln, being Muslim was (at least) an important aspect of self-identification of most people I met. However, as was reported to me by people who had worked with refugee families from Lebanon during the 1980s and 1990s, this had not been the case back then. René Abul- Ella said that religion had not played a role in her interactions with

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64 “Die türkischen Kinder sind gekommen in eine Willkommenskultur. Ah, das sind die Gastarbeiter, die unser Land aufbauen, willkommen, und doch arbeiten mal, und geht mal wieder. Aber die Kinder an und für sich, die wurden ja willkommen. Weil das sind ja die Gastarbeiterkinder. Während die arabischen Kinder sind die Flüchtlingskinder. Flüchtlingskinder waren nicht willkommen.”
the families she worked with at all during those two decades. Currently she often found it to be an issue of conflict in families’ contact with schools. For example, parents worried about food during school excursions, and teachers worried about children not being allowed to take part in swimming classes, or about them fasting at a rather young age, or the like.

Similarly, Shahirah, who had migrated to Berlin from Algeria in 1990, had done much voluntary work at schools since then, and as an Arabic speaker had worked a lot with Palestinian refugee families from Lebanon, stressed that during her first time in Berlin, Islam had not been an issue between parents and schools. She said, "Nowadays, as soon as we talk about school excursions, Islam is an issue. Back in the 1990s, this wasn't the case. People rarely mentioned it, and weren't that concerned with food regulations, for example."

Regarding people’s increasing identification with Islam, the effects of the worldwide Islamic Revival, which is usually said to have begun during the 1970s, might have played a role. Another possible factor relates to processes that affect people who live in a minority situation. It has been described how religion often gains more significance for them, because they might feel they have to defend themselves, and look for arguments, and thus engage more closely with the religion (cf. Klinkhammer 2000:74).

Some other women made similar points when they compared themselves to their relatives in Lebanon. They said that when they went back to their villages, they had the impression that their relatives were not strict enough in their practice of Islam, and that they were more "easy-going". Anisah said that while she would never let her unmarried daughters go out alone with a man, because it was written in the Qur’an that "the devil was always present" when men and women were alone together, in her husband’s village in Lebanon, boys and girls were allowed to go out together.

Badra and Rabia, who were Sunni Muslim, and had come to Berlin from different villages in South Lebanon in 1995 and 1990 respectively, both also stressed
this point. Badra described herself as rather strict in her practice of Islam, and said she perceived her brothers and sisters in Lebanon to be very “easy-going”. For instance, she did not shake hands with men, while her relatives in Lebanon did not care about the issue. For her parents, religion had not been important at all, and they only read the Qur’an very rarely, while Badra tried to read it every day. She said she thought she always had to be “firm” in her knowledge about Islam, which she explicitly related to the fact of being part of a religious minority.

Badra thought that music was *haram*, and was worried about her son, who had started to play the keyboard. She was a bit conflicted in that matter, because on the one hand she thought playing the piano was better for him than hanging out on the street, but on the other hand she was convinced this kind of music was forbidden in Islam. The point of music being *haram*, the difficulty of complying with this regulation, and the related feelings of guilt and ambivalence, were stressed by many people I talked to during my fieldwork. When I asked Rabia whether she thought people in Lebanon would also say music was *haram*, she said that no, there, young women wore makeup and danced to all kinds of music.

Young people I talked to of the generation of Anisah, Rabia, and Badra’s children in turn stressed that their parents were not taking Islam seriously enough or that they were not practising it “properly”. Fatima did not put the matter in these terms but told me that when she first started to wear a headscarf, her parents, who had been very “open people”, had said to her: “Why are you doing this?” They thought she might impede her own chances of education, and were rather opposed to her wearing a headscarf.

Farihah’s daughter Arwa (18) was quite firm in saying that her mother did not care enough about Islam and was not following it properly. When I asked her why her mother might then have put up so many pictures with Qur’an surah in Arabic calligraphy in their living room, where we were sitting, she said,
Well, I didn’t mean to say that my mom doesn’t follow Islam at all. Well, she’s Muslim, and I think she’s also proud of it. But she doesn’t follow it properly. Like drivers, who own a car and have a driving license, but don’t follow the rules. Well, they just drive however they like. And my mom is such a person. She takes what she likes and leaves what she doesn’t like behind. My father’s like that, too. Both of them say: “You’re too young for that. It’s not time yet, take care of your school.” But I always think, you never know when death comes or when you’ll be really brought to justice. And then you can’t say, “I was going to start tomorrow”. One should always start on the present day.65

Arwa criticised her mother because she attended mixed-gender wedding celebrations and danced during them. Arwa would only go to gender-separated celebrations, and she thought the kind of Arab pop music that was played at such celebrations was haram. Her mother had always wanted her to wear hot pants and short skirts, but Arwa did not want that. She also criticised her mom and her friends for reading tea leaves (Kaffeesatz lesen) when they were together. Arwa thought this was superstition and strictly forbidden in Islam. Furthermore, Farihah read horoscopes on her mobile phone. She said she liked to read these horoscopes and though she knew that strictly speaking this was not appropriate religious practice, she did not care that much about it. She in turn was afraid that Arwa would become “too deeply get engaged with Islam”, and told her she should concentrate on school.

Anisah had had similar experiences with her children. They often demanded more explicit knowledge about Islam from her than she was ready to give, and, according to her, thought that “Islam was like a text, with a beginning and an end”, while she herself thought that “It is more like an ocean. You can never stop to ask questions about it.” Anisah said, “They think I should have given everything to them

65 “Meine Mutter steht ja schon zum Islam. Also sie ist ja Muslimin, und ich glaube auch stolze Muslimin. Aber sie folgt dem Islam nicht wirklich. Es gibt zum Beispiel auch Autofahrer, die ein Auto haben, und die den Führerschein haben, aber die nicht den Gesetzen nachgehen. Also die fahren so wie sie wollen. Und meine Mutter ist auch so ein Mensch. Sie nimmt sich das raus, was ihr gefällt, und lässt das andere, was sie nicht wahrhaben will, zur Seite. Mein Vater ist auch so ein Mensch. Beide sagen immer: ‚Du bist zu jung dafür. Es ist noch nicht Zeit, kümmer Dich um Deine Schule.’ Aber ich bin so ein Mensch, ich denke mir, man weiß nie wann der Tod kommt oder wann man wirklich zur Rechenschaft gezogen wird. Und dann kann man nicht sagen, ‚Ich wollte morgen anfangen’. Man sollte immer an dem Tag anfangen, an dem man gerade lebt.”
right at their birth like filling them up with a funnel. But you can't tell everything at once. I tell them something whenever the time comes”.

One day her daughter Yasira had gone to the Şehitlik mosque, the biggest Turkish-language mosque in Berlin, which offers lectures on Islam in German language for young people. When she came home she said she was quite disappointed. The lecture had only been about the meaning of the surah Al-Fatiha, and Yasira said she had already known everything that was presented there. Anisah told her, “See! I teach you by showing you”. She added, “Our children reproach us every day that we didn’t tell them enough about Islam.”

Mainstream public discourse in Germany, and other Western countries, often depicts young people who practise Islam, and the way they practise it, as reproducing a “non-modern” or “traditionalist” religious culture of their parents’ origin countries (Nökel 2002:13). In general, public discourse often portrays cultural practices of minority youth as being mainly influenced by their parents, and thus “reduces [them] to their ethnic-familiar background” (Bukow 1996:122). The role of experiences in local institutions and interactions with people other than their parents, like teachers, or friends, is neglected. In the examples described, it was not the case that the young had merely been passed on knowledge of Islam from their parents; instead they stressed that the meaning Islam had for them was not directly related to their parents, and often led to conflict with them.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I described the historical circumstances due to which people from Lebanon, who currently represent a large proportion of the people labelled Arab in Neukölln, migrated or escaped to Germany. Among them were many from economically disadvantaged and discriminated groups who had been subject to traumatic experiences during the Lebanese civil war.
In Germany, most of those people were not granted asylum, but could not be deported either, and were thus “tolerated”. This residence status created a very difficult legal situation for them, in which they were forbidden to work or receive vocational training. It was not unusual for people to live with this status for more than a decade. Several laws were subsequently enacted that made it possible for refugees to apply for a residence permit, and many have by now received a residence permit or citizenship. Others, however, have found it difficult to fulfil the criteria set out in these laws (criteria such as having to prove employment, after having been subject to work bans).

I also discussed some issues of self-identification among this group. Public discourse often frames culture as a thing or a package that is passed on from parents to children. However, the meanings of cultural identifications are negotiated in the minority situation, and are due to transnational influences: the generation who was born in Lebanon stressed that identifications like Palestinian, Lebanese, or Kurdish, and differences in religious identification, such as the difference between Shia and Sunni Islam, played a certain role for them. I illustrated how the meaning of these identifications, however, is not fixed, but negotiated, and influenced by political developments in the Middle East. The generation born or schooled in Germany often stressed that the identifications that played a role for their parents were not important for them, and that Arab was the more important marker of identity for them, besides German, than Palestinian, Lebanese, or Kurdish.

Public discourse often depicts Islam as the most important marker of identity for Arabs in Berlin, and also attributes this group’s alleged failures to integrate to Islam or to an alleged “Arab mentality” (Kleff & Seidel 2008:87-88). I illustrated how Islam had not been of major importance for the generation who had arrived from Lebanon in the 1980s. Some people described to me how they got stricter in their practice of Islam the longer they lived in Germany. Young people in turn stressed that their parents did not take Islam seriously enough. If there is a growing influence of Islam on the younger
generation, this is rather due to current transnational and local developments than to its having been passed on to them by their parents.

This chapter started to introduce the life conditions of the group categorised as Arab in public discourse. I described where some of those people came from, what legal situation in Germany they encountered, and how people identify themselves. The next chapter goes on to portray the situation of the families introduced in this chapter in more detail, and specifically regarding the issues of child rearing, schooling, and employment.
4. Raising Children, Schooling, and Employment

This chapter continues to portray some aspects of the life conditions of those families who are a typical target of the discourses regarding integration described in chapter 2. I will analyse the families’ situation regarding issues of child rearing and schooling, mainly through the voices of the mothers. Most of them had themselves been born in Lebanon, had come to Berlin in their youth, married and had children there, and were welfare recipients. The chapter is also about how the generation born in Berlin forges life prospects and identities.

The framework for this chapter is drawn from the area of migrants and education/socialisation studies. While earlier studies in this area focused on groups of migrants and looked for “grand theories” (Gibson & Koyama 2011:5) about migrant groups’ adaptation to host societies’ schools (e.g. the work of John Ogbu, who tried to explain why some groups do better in school than others), recent approaches have turned away from defining groups of migrants and explaining their behaviour.

Instead, newer approaches focus on processes of identity construction and on the “multifaceted schooling experiences” of people of migrant background (Gibson & Koyama 2011:5). Such a framework stresses “divergent pathways of adaptation and identity formation” (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2002:6), and a main question is, how do children differently experience society and construct their identities? (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2002:12)

I also apply this framework to the parents’ perspectives regarding the raising of their children and their education. What are parents’ attitudes towards education and the schooling of their children? (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2002:124) How do parents differently experience their children’s situation regarding matters of schooling?

66 All people I describe in this chapter are Muslim (except for Petra, section 4.3.1). In chapter 3, I described the historical conditions under which it was mainly people of Muslim background who migrated to Berlin from Lebanon, and why Christians migrated elsewhere. During my fieldwork in Neukölln, besides René Abul-Ella, who identifies as Palestinian Christian, I did not meet any Palestinian (or Lebanese) Christians.

A further area of inquiry relates to obstacles and constraints. What are the social obstacles and opportunities that parents and their children face in developing life prospects and identities? (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2002:13) As stated, people’s experience of society is varied, but there might be typical constraints that people encounter.

I will first give some background information on primary and secondary education in Berlin and Neukölln (4.1), and then go on to describe some aspects of the current generation of mothers’ schooling experiences in Berlin (4.2). In section 4.3 I analyse mothers’ perspectives on child rearing and education, life prospects of their children, and obstacles and constraints in these areas.

4.1 Background: Education in Berlin, and Schooling in Neukölln

In this section I sketch the basics of primary and secondary education in Germany and in Berlin. The German education system is based on tracking into different kinds of secondary schools after primary school (Grundschule). This is how the sociologist Richard Alba and the political scientist Jennifer Holdaway, who are specialists on migrants and education in the US, describe the German education system:

In the more formalised tracking systems – as already mentioned, Germany is the most extreme example – students may be separated at an early age into different schools and taught different curricula, preparing them for distinct educational endpoints and labor-market destinations. The desires of students and their parents may play only a minor role in these track assignments, despite the fatefulness of them. The bottom track typically corresponds with a vocational education that prepares students to take

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67 Alba has also done research on these matters in Germany.
less-skilled blue-collar jobs at the end of secondary school, while the top track is intended for students who will eventually attend universities and enter the professions. It can be difficult to change tracks, and especially to move from a lower to a higher one (Alba & Holdaway 2013:25).

In Berlin and a few other regional states, this tracking happens after grade six, and thus, students attend primary school for six years. In the rest of Germany, tracking happens after four years and primary school comprises four grades.68

In Berlin, following a school structure reform that was implemented from school year 2010/2011 on,69 there are only two kinds of secondary schools: Sekundarschule and Gymnasium. Other federal states (besides Hamburg, a city state that implemented similar reforms like Berlin) have three kinds of secondary schools: Hauptschule (lower secondary school which finishes after grade nine), Realschule (medium secondary school, which goes up to grade ten), and Gymnasium (higher secondary school, ending either after grade twelve or thirteen, depending on the regional state or sometimes also on the school). Further, there are Gesamtschulen (comprehensive schools), where it is possible to do all three school certificates, and students are divided into different classes with different curricula.

Generally, a certificate from lower secondary school formally entitles students to start various kinds of apprenticeships, while the medium secondary school exams entitle students for higher qualified education at a professional school. The higher secondary school certificate is called Abitur, which is necessary for university entrance (OSI 2010:65). Though a certificate from lower secondary school formally entitles one to start vocational training, it can be difficult to find a place and companies often prefer to accept people with the medium school certificate. This is one reason why the lower secondary school was abolished in Berlin, or merged with the medium one (and the comprehensive schools) into Integrierte Sekundarschule (OSI 2010:65). Thus, there are

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68 In Germany, many matters that concern schooling are under the legislation of regional states (see chapter 2, where I sketch Germany's administrative structure).

69 This reform was officially aimed at improving the situation of children and youth from immigrant families (Gesemann 2009:322, Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend und Wissenschaft 2014a).
now two school forms: *Integrierte Sekundarschule*, where it is possible to do the three kinds of school exams, and *Gymnasium*.

4.1.1 Schooling in Neukölln

In public discourse, both Kreuzberg and Neukölln but since the 2000s much more so Neukölln have been depicted as places where schooling is not very successful. Issues that have been discussed are unusually high rates of school absenteeism, and the fact that many students in Neukölln leave school without a certificate. There is a perception that pupils from Neukölln schools cannot write standard German well, which means that employers often have reservations about the quality of schooling in these boroughs and prefer to employ people with certificates from other boroughs. Parents who strive for educational achievement for their children often send them to schools in other districts.

In the boroughs of Kreuzberg and Neukölln there are proportionally fewer *Gymnasien* (plural) than in boroughs with wealthier populations. When the three-tier school system still existed, there was an above average proportion of students at lower secondary school in these districts (OSI 2010:67). In the district of Neukölln, the numbers of children enrolled in *Gymnasium* is still well below the average. Among state-funded schools in Neukölln, during the school year of 2013/2014, there were 4408 pupils attending *Gymnasium*, and 8251 in *Integrierte Sekundarschule*. For the whole of the city state of Berlin, these figures are 68,807 at *Gymnasium* and 71,279 at *Integrierte Sekundarschule* (Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend, und Wissenschaft 2014b:3).

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70 In the neighbouring borough of Kreuzberg, for a while it was even the case that high school diplomas acquired at schools there were not accepted by employers in Berlin, and people who graduated in Kreuzberg had to go through extra literacy tests when they applied for a job (Eksner 2006:24-25).

71 However, these statistics do not directly indicate the number of people who pass the higher secondary school certificate (*Abitur*), which is also possible at *Integrierte Sekundarschulen*. 
4.2 Mothers’ Schooling Experiences

In this section, I focus on the schooling experiences of some of those women who had come to Berlin as migrants or refugees from Lebanon in their youth or childhood, had attended school in Berlin, and are the current generation of parents.

4.2.1 “No One Supported My Education”

It is a recurrent theme in the anthropology of migrant education that how children and youth fare in schools and what course their identity development takes is strongly influenced by the kinds of relationships they are able to build up:

> Who immigrant youth become or are becoming, as well as what they do or do not accomplish or are in the process of accomplishing, is often predicated on the relationships they build and come to draw upon across various school settings (Gibson & Koyama 2011:8).

Anisah stressed that she had not had anyone who had supported her education, and she regretted that she had not received much formal education in her youth (she only received her first school certificate when she was already in her forties). Formal education now had a very high value for her, even more so as she and her family were welfare recipients and she was worried about her children’s future prospects.

As stated in chapter 3, Anisah had come to Berlin from Beirut with her parents and her nine younger brothers and sisters in 1977 when she was fourteen. When I met her in 2012, Anisah was married with eight children. Her husband, Damir, had worked as a gardener at a cemetery, but he lost that job many years ago (in fact, shortly after 9/11, so that the family assumed this was the reason he lost it); since then, the family has been fully dependent on welfare money.

Anisah's parents had not supported her in receiving formal education beyond primary school, and she had not had any other person to support her either. When I asked Anisah what idea of education her parents had transmitted to her, she said “None. No one supported my education”. Anisah said she had always loved school, and
loved to go to primary school in Beirut. When she was eleven, her parents took her out of school and registered her for an apprenticeship as a tailor. She always hated tailoring and asked her father why she could not continue to go to school. “Because we are Kurds”, he said, “We don’t have any citizenship rights. When you finish school you cannot be employed anyway. And you won’t get a job. So why go to school”. And after that, it was over with school, she said. In the street where they lived, there were Armenian families whom she admired; “They were very skilled. They were carpenters and always very smart. They took very good care of their children’s education”.

When Anisah came to Berlin at fourteen, she had to go to school due to compulsory schooling and her father could not prevent it. She went to school in Berlin from the second half of grade seven until the end of grade eight and then her father took her out of school without her having received any school leaving certificate. I asked her what it was like to attend school in Berlin: she said it was very hard because she did not speak a word of German in the beginning, and she did not talk much or participate in class much.

You don’t understand anything – nothing at all. Whenever I’d hear a word several times, I looked up what it meant ... You just feel – not only far away from home [in der Fremde], but you cannot make yourself understood. Even if I understood, I couldn’t speak. And that’s hard.

Though Anisah describes her time in school as very tough, she was still very eager to learn. She noted down new words every day and then tried to look them up in the dictionary every afternoon. She bought true-romance novels because she wanted to improve her German for school and was eager to read German news. However, the time she spent at a German school was too short for her to catch up with the other pupils because of her lack of knowledge of German, and she left school without a certificate.

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72 This was before the introduction of the policy that exempted the children of asylum seekers and of people with the status of tolerated residence from obligatory schooling (see chapter 3).
One of her brothers, who was a year younger, attended the same class. He was allowed to continue school after the end of grade eight.

As she was the oldest daughter, Anisah then had to stay at home and help with the housework and the care of her younger brothers and sisters. She did not like that arrangement and so she looked for a job. While her father had not allowed her to continue school, he allowed her to find a job, because she would then bring home some money (of which she was only allowed to keep a little), which she found "really paradoxical". When her mother died in 1980, "everything got worse". Anisah had to leave her work and look after the younger brothers and sisters. In 1983 she married Damir, and her younger sister then took over looking out for the younger ones and helping with the housework.

Anisah was the only one among her brothers and sisters who did not get a school certificate at that time. Her two younger sisters did not like school much, but both of them got their school certificates. One sister did her medium secondary school certificate and became a hairdresser; another one became a shop assistant. Her brothers all found apprenticeships and, as Anisah said, "have achieved something in life". By now all of their children attended higher secondary school. Anisah said she really envied her brothers and sisters because they were allowed to go to school and get school certificates. While Anisah had not had anyone to support her at school or for vocational training when she was young, and she and her husband became welfare recipients with poor chances of finding a job at their age without having completed vocational training, others were more lucky, as I describe in the next section.

### 4.2.2 “I Was Really Lucky... Someone Took Me by the Hand”

Other people among the former refugees from Lebanon had more success with their education, which some attributed to having been lucky and having had very committed teachers who had really supported them. Charda for instance, as I described
in the last chapter, was the first girl among the group of refugees from Lebanon in Berlin to receive her higher secondary school certificate (Abitur) at the end of the 1980s. She subsequently studied social work at university and when I met her she had been a social worker for a charity association for families of Arabic-speaking background aimed at supporting them in matters of education and child rearing for many years.

Like Anisah, Charda can be classified as belonging to the “1½ generation” of migrants (although Charda arrived when she was only seven and therefore had more schooling in Berlin than Anisah did). Charda’s parents had not had much formal education, but all of her brothers and sisters either went to university or finished a master craftsman’s diploma. She attributes her educational success mainly to having been lucky because she had found someone who had “taken her by the hand”.

Charda identified as Palestinian-German and had come to Berlin with her mother in 1977 – which happens to be same year that Anisah and her family arrived. Her father had already been in Berlin some years before as an asylum applicant. Her family had lived in the Palestinian camp of Tel al Zaatar in Beirut, and Charda and her mother came to Berlin around half a year after the massacre took place there in August 1976.

The first school she attended in Berlin was “catastrophic”, and things only got better after they moved to another district. In order to illustrate how little the teachers at the first school cared, Charda told the following story:

They put all the foreigners in one class. Back then there still were “foreigners’ classes” [Ausländerklassen]. And for them I was a Turk, but I’m not a Turk. I ended up learning the Turkish language as the German one, because I thought the language that the other children were speaking was German – ”I’m in Germany, thus this must be the German language.” Six months later I was proud to speak some German – my parents couldn’t know that this wasn’t the German language – and then my parents’ friend said, “Say, what’s that language you’re speaking?” And I proudly spoke Turkish and counted in Turkish, and so on, and he said, ”That’s not German at all”.74

74 “Die haben dort, Ausländer ist gleich Ausländer, alle in eine Klasse gestopft. Damals gab’s die Ausländerklassen. Und für sie war ich eine Türkin, und ich bin keine Türkin. Ich habe als
For Charda, this episode indicates how little the teachers at this school cared about the children, as they did not even notice that she was speaking Turkish instead of German. If she had stayed at that school for longer, her life might have turned out differently.

However, when she was in the second half of fourth grade, her family moved to another district. The school staff there suggested that she repeat the fourth grade, because from fifth grade on, children would start to learn English, and the teachers thought that might be too many new languages for her. When she repeated fourth grade, she had a very committed teacher who made sure she spent a few hours every afternoon with German children in order to learn the language.

When I moved house with my parents to another district, I had committed teachers, a committed school altogether, where I received support, and in the afternoon I was able to build up contact with many children of my class and their parents. I went to one child’s house to learn German, studied maths at another’s place, and went for walks with the mother of another child in the afternoons... I was welcomed, so to say. I myself had had no idea what to expect. I didn't know what I had to do. Everything was strange. My parents felt the same way. Everything was strange, and we had no idea about what was right or wrong, no idea about the customs and traditions. I was lucky that there was someone who stood by my side, who took me by the hand, and went through everything with me in detail.\(^\text{75}\)

After two years she finished fifth grade and then the transition to secondary school was waiting. The school staff advised her to attend a comprehensive school, because they thought Gymnasium would be too tough for her. She did so but in the end completed her Abitur exams, though she was still living under the fear of being

\(^{75}\)Als ich dann umgezogen bin mit meinen Eltern in einen anderen Bezirk hatte ich engagierte Lehrer, eine engagierte Schule, wo ich dann unterstützt wurde, und ich habe nachmittags überall Kontakt zu der Klasse aufbauen können. Bei dem einen hab ich nachmittags Deutsch gelernt, bei der anderen nachmittags Mathe, bei der anderen bin ich dann mit der Mutter spazieren gegangen... Ich wurde willkommen geheißen, sozusagen. Ich hatte ja keine Ahnung was mich hier erwartet. Ich wusste ja nicht, was ich zu tun habe. Es ist ja alles fremd. Ich und auch meine Eltern. Alles fremd, keine Ahnung was richtig und was falsch ist, keine Ahnung was die Sitten und Gebräuche sind. Ich hatte das Glück dass mich jemand aufgefangen hat, an der Hand genommen hat, und alles mit mir durchgegangen ist."
deported before finishing school (see the last chapter, about residential issues that affected the group of refugees from Lebanon).

The fact that Charda had had a good start and “been so lucky” also increased her own motivation to become a social worker for people “of her origin” and “take them by the hand”, as she said. This is an example of a process that Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco describe, when they write that migrant youths’ processes of identity construction mostly end up in the creation of “bicultural identities”: people “creatively fuse aspects of both cultures … [and] achieve bicultural and bilingual competencies that become an integral part of their sense of self”, and build bridges or create links between their parents’ culture and the society they grow up in (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2002:113).

Like Charda, Fatima, whom I introduced in chapters 2 and 3, attributed her success to the teachers she had had in primary school. Fatima had arrived in Berlin from Lebanon in 1995 at the age of ten, when her parents had already been there for some years, and had then gone to primary school in Neukölln.

Then I was here and had to learn German. I hated it. I was ten, and would ordinarily have been in fourth grade. And here I didn’t have anything, no friends, nothing. I was sent to Hermann-Sander primary school. There were these classes, nowadays they’re called “Welcome classes” [Willkommensklassen], Back then they were called V-classes [Vorbereitungsklassen, preparation classes]. I already knew English because in Lebanon we start to learn English at a rather early age, from first grade on, and thus I already knew the letters for writing German. Thus they sent me to third grade. Afterwards I had to repeat third grade. I really suffered in the beginning, I was sitting in class, I didn’t understand any German. I could just participate a little in class in maths lessons, nothing else. But then again and again I was lucky that there were teachers who gave me books to take home. My parents didn’t know those things; they didn’t speak German. At home we only used Arabic, Arabic TV, Arabic books. My mom also read books, but only in Arabic, no German. And then I was really lucky that our teachers supported us and said, “Just do it, you can make it”, until the last grade of primary school. And then my sister, Sahar, received a recommendation to go to Gymnasium, and went to Gymnasium. And then my mother said, “Why should she go to another school then? You go with her”. My German wasn’t very good though.77

76 She is referring to special classes for pupils who either do not speak German yet or who are slow learners for other reasons.
77 “Dann war ich hier, und musste erst mal Deutsch lernen. Ich hab's gehassen. Ich war schon zehn, und war eigentlich schon in der vierten Klasse, und dann war gar nichts, weder in der
However, Fatima also reports that later, when she went to higher secondary school, most of the teachers were not confident that she was capable of keeping up with the teaching material.

And then my mother sent me to Gymnasium. I was always the oldest one in the class and I always had to fight. There, no one really trusted in my abilities. I left school after the general certificate of secondary education [Realschulabschluss, taken after tenth grade] and then did vocational training as foreign language clerk.78

What Fatima says here can be related to “Barriers emanating from low expectations” regarding school achievement. A study conducted by the Open Society Institute,79 for which they interviewed people of Muslim migrant background who had gone to school in Kreuzberg, also found that people often reported how low expectations on the side of teachers had influenced them negatively (OSI 2010:65).

Fatima said she felt she had always had to fight and had always felt she had to “prove herself”. Nevertheless she had benefited much from the help provided by teachers at primary school. After tenth grade she stopped school and trained as a foreign language secretary (Fremdsprachensekretärin). As she could not find a job afterwards, she then finished her Abitur exams, and then took up study at university. In contrast to Anisah, Charda and Fatima both counted themselves as lucky in having had teachers who motivated and encouraged them, which they still perceived as a major


79 A non-profit organisation which is now called Open Society Foundations, aimed at making policy recommendations.
factor that influenced their lives. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, in their study of children among low-income migrant groups in the US, describe other cases where having had a mentor “made an immense difference in the careers of ... students”, stressing that one should “never underestimate the powerful influence a teacher can have in a child’s life” (2002:153).

4.3 Raising Children

In this section I describe some aspects of what it means to raise children in Berlin, having come there as a refugee, and being a welfare recipient. How do parents try to support their children at school? What are parents’ difficulties and obstacles in that respect? What value does school have for the parents? How does all this intertwine with economic considerations and their situation as welfare recipients? What are some of the conflicts parents experience?

4.3.1 “It’s a Lot of Work to Take Care of Your Children’s Education”

Henderson et al. refer to literature that analyses how in the US, expectations for parenting have increased over the second half of the 20th century, and argue that currently there are “standards of perfection beyond one’s reach” (Henderson et al. 2010:231), which are mostly spread by the media. They refer to the term “intensive parenting” that was coined by the sociologist Sharon Hays (1996). This term refers to a trend whereby parents have become intensively focused on their children (also called “child-centred parenting”), often spend much time reading booklets on raising children, and are concerned to organise a large number of activities for them (Henderson et al. 2010:231-233).

Petra, a mother of two children who was a regular visitor to the children’s centre I discuss in chapter 6, told me about her own struggles in that respect:
Petra: You have to do stuff with the child, because “Children need to be supported” [gefährdet]. I read it in every parents magazine, in every women magazine. “Children need to be supported”. “Children need to be supported in their issues from early on”.

Interviewer: And regarding what issues?

Petra: Well, everything. Language, everything. There are special kinds of massages said to calm the child. One is overburdened by the amount of offers. It’s difficult to find out what the child needs. Nowadays the need to support [Förderbedarf] is much greater than it used to be. Maybe that’s because of the media. You work long hours and then they try to give you a bad conscience. You have to be perfect in everything. That’s impossible. Household, forty hours of work, and special classes for your children. When I had Jonas I joined a baby club. And then I received so much mail with offers for children. Sign language classes for children, swimming classes for babies. There are bi- or trilingual kindergarten in order to make sure the child learns many languages. You don’t know, what’s necessary and what isn’t? And to an extent, you have to keep up with those developments because if you don’t, your children will be disadvantaged compared with the others. 80

Petra makes clear, one reason she felt so nervous about how to support her children, and why she had the feeling that this was such a big job, was that she was afraid that the children might be disadvantaged compared with others their age. It seemed to have become a social norm that children be regarded as having a "great need to be supported", and she thought most parents would try to act according to that norm.


Interviewer: In welchen Sachen denn?

Petra: Na, in allem. Sprache, alles. Es gibt besondere Arten von Massagen, die das Kind beruhigen sollen. Die Masse an Angeboten überfordert einen. Es ist schwierig, rauszufinden, was ist gut für das Kind, was braucht das eigene Kind? Der Förderbedarf heute ist intensiver, vielleicht kommt das durch die Medien. Man geht lange arbeiten und dann wird einem ein schlechtes Gewissen gemacht. Man soll in allem perfekt sein, das geht ja nicht. Haushalt, 40 Stunden arbeiten, und Förderunterricht für das Kind. Mit Jonas bin ich damals in einen Babyclub eingestiegen, da kamen Angebote ins Haus geflattert. Zeichensprache für Kinder, Babyschwimmen. Zwei-dreisprachige Kindergärten, um das Kind sprachlich zu fördern. Man weiß nicht, was muss sein, was muss nicht sein? Man muss dann schon auch mitziehen, weil das Kind sonst anderen gegenüber einen Nachteil hat.”
For Anisah and her husband Damir, who had eight children, supporting their children of course required a much greater degree of organisation than for families with fewer children; they could not send them to as many different extra classes or organise as many other activities for them. “It’s a lot of work to take care of your children’s education”, Anisah said, which might have been an understatement for the task of raising eight children. “Right now our children’s situation is the major concern for us”. She often used the word fördern (to support), which is a very important term in current discourses about child rearing, and thought much about how to “support” her children adequately.

For instance, Anisah’s youngest child, Alia (7), was quite smart (the teachers had said so), and she had not wanted to send her to the primary school in their immediate neighbourhood where all their other children had gone. She had reservations about the quality of education her children had received there, and cited her daughters Samira (14) and Nour (12), who had both been the best in their classes in that primary school, but were having difficulties in secondary school. A child care worker had also insisted that Alia should go to another school.

In order to provide better education for Alia, Anisah did research on the internet and then managed to secure a place for her at a school in another district. Alia had to go on a long train ride every day, and Anisah, or another family member, took her there every morning. Anisah also thought about how to support Alia adequately in addition to her school education. Alia loved reading and got many children’s books from the library. She did not like sports or dancing. She went to Arabic classes every week, but Anisah was not sure if this constituted supporting her enough.

I don’t know how to support [fördern] her. If I register her with an association, we don’t know who will take her there and pick her up again. We have to organise well in order to always find someone who takes her to school and picks her up again.82

81 This term also figures in discourses about migrant integration (e.g. fördern und fordern, “to support and challenge”), as described in chapter 2.
82 “Ich weiß nicht, wie ich sie fördern soll. Wenn ich sie jetzt in einem Verein anmelde, bleibt die Frage, wer sie hinbringt und wer sie abholt. Wie haben jetzt schon einen Plan, wer sie zur
Thus, taking Alia to school and picking her up again every day meant that it was
difficult for the family to organise other kinds of activities for her, given all the other
duties related to their big family size. It might be manageable for a mother with two
children to take their children to two sports classes every week and pick them up
again, for instance, but of course this is not always possible for families with large
numbers of children.

Financial considerations also played a role for Anisah and Damir, who not only
had many children but were also welfare recipients. When Samira and Nour started to
have difficulties at higher secondary school, Anisah also thought about how to support
them properly. They were not making very good progress, and would have needed
some special tutoring in the afternoon. However, Anisah could not afford tutoring for
both of them.

The social trend that Petra describes that currently, there is so much discourse
about how much “support” children need, and many parents organise extra classes and
special kinds of activities for children in the afternoon is of course much harder to keep
up with for families with greater numbers of children.

4.3.2 “We’re Always Present, Always Active”

School staff often asked mothers for help with organising activities, watching
out for children, or in order to work as translators, and many mothers were very busy
engaging in various school activities for their children. For instance, in the case of the
primary school that Anisah’s children had attended, many children had an Arabic-
speaking background, and most of the parents had been living in Berlin for a shorter
period of time than Anisah. Thus the teachers had often asked her to translate
documents for them.
Farihah (38), a mother of four whom I introduced in the last chapter and who was a regular visitor of the parents’ café at the primary school I describe in the next chapter, reported to me that she and other mothers had undertaken many projects for the children, including regular group activities like cooking classes. Farihah identified as Sunni-Muslim Lebanese (and German) and had come to Berlin from a village in South East Lebanon when she was sixteen. She married her husband, who was from her village, in the same year. Farihah had been living in Neukölln since 1994 and before that had lived in various residential establishments in different parts of Berlin. When I met her, her husband only occasionally got some work as a driver, and the family also needed welfare money to cope. They had four children.

Farihah told me:

We have done a lot with the teachers, actively. Carnival celebration, and we often cooked together. Christmas and Easter celebrations. Cooking and sports classes for children. We have done a lot for the school. We organised an Eid-Al-Adha celebration. We met together with the school's after-school day-care [Hort] and went on excursions with the children. We plan a lot of things. Around eight of us are always there and always active.83

Farihah did not mention any financial concerns regarding her voluntary work at school, and stressed that she was doing all this for her son, because he was always happy when she was present at school: "My son always says, please mommy, come. When I’m present at school, he’s happy. He comes to me and says, hooray, mommy is here". However, some women also felt that what they did was not valued adequately financially. Farihah told me about Amat, a mother who had done much voluntary work at school and had often been present as a translator. When she asked to get paid for it, it was rejected because of her wearing a headscarf.

At an event organised by an Arab migrant association on the topic of “Muslim women and discrimination” just before the elections for the federal parliament in September 2013, where the five major parties’ candidates for the elective district of

Neukölln were invited for a panel discussion, some women raised the issue of being asked to contribute at schools, but not being granted any pay for it, as a major one.

Asifa, who had vocational training as a child care worker, said:

“I’m a parents’ representative at school. In that case it’s always possible to work at school. I’m always welcome. I also go to school regularly to read with the children; I’m welcome. But when I applied at a social work agency at this school as child care worker, they rejected me because of my headscarf. How can it be that women are asked to work for free – or in employment creation measures – in that case it’s no problem at all that we wear a headscarf. But as soon as it’s about qualified work, in a long term position – the same work, I mean – it’s often that we feel that suddenly we’re not good enough anymore. That’s the problem: we already do work at school and thus also in public service. But as soon as it’s about money – about officially recognising this work – we’re not good enough anymore for this society. And this makes me really sad.84

The women present told the politicians about many cases of mothers who were often asked to help out at school, and were already doing much voluntary work at school, but when they asked for paid work, were rejected because of their headscarves. This was perceived as unjust, as they were already doing this work anyway.

4.3.3 Diligent Girls, Difficult Boys?

Gender differences in school performance are a recurrent theme in the anthropology of migrant education. For the US, an overall pattern has been documented whereby among many migrant groups girls perform on average much better than boys (Carter 2004:516). Anisah’s and Farihah’s families showed the same patterns, and both mothers pointed out that while their daughters were doing satisfactorily, their sons were a constant source of worry for them.

Anisah stressed that among their two sons and six daughters, the boys were doing worse than the daughters. “With the sons, it’s difficult. This isn’t only the case for my family, but for others as well. Girls usually make much better progress.” She had also observed this pattern in other families, among her relatives, for instance.

Their oldest son Muhammad (28) had done appropriate training and got work at a petrol station. But the job was too tough for him; people came at night and left without paying and he was not able to cope with it. Now he did not work. Their next son, Amir (25), had done his Abitur (higher secondary school exam) and had studied law at university for a year. He quit and since then he had been “sitting at home” and making ends meet by doing various jobs. Anisah was usually worried about her sons. Regarding Amir’s situation, she said, “Yesterday we talked about it again; we talk about it every day”.

Kadija, the oldest daughter (26) had had some vocational training as an office clerk but she had only worked for a few months before the company went bankrupt. Since then she had been looking for a job and as she was mentally handicapped, this was very tough for her. Anisah said that this had been emotionally hard on Kadija. The next daughter, Yasira (19) had in 2013 just finished her higher secondary school exams (Abitur). In the summer of 2013 she was thinking about what to study, and decided on Arabic language and literature (Arabisch). Aida (18), was training to become a nurse. Samira (14) and Nour (12) both attended higher secondary school (Gymnasium). Alia (7) was the youngest one and attending primary school. Thus, except for Kadija, who suffered an intellectual handicap, the girls were not a source of worry for Anisah as the boys were.

Among Farihah’s four children (21, 18, 8, and 5 years old), her daughter Arwa (18) was attending a comprehensive school’s grade twelve on the track towards Abitur, and was doing well in school. However, Farihah was worried about her son Yassin (21) who had not received any school certificate and could not find any position for vocational training. She said,
My son [Yassin] is always willing to help me and supports me in the household when my husband isn't here. But the problem for him is vocational training. He said to me, "Mom, I live in Neukölln, how can I get an apprenticeship position here? The schools are shit. When the children don't turn up at school, the teachers don't call the parents." I had a lot of problems with my older son at school. When he was fourteen, he said to me, "The teachers don't respect us. How can we respect them? They tell us, "You're foreigners, Muslims", and so on. And that all Arabs are terrorists"... My son always had problems with teachers, while with other people he did alright. He was always naughty towards the teachers. He did an internship in the school's day-care centre, and he did alright there. People were satisfied with him. But at school it was always bad. He said to me, "Mom, the teachers don't leave me alone." He said, "My teachers bully me."

Afterwards, he wanted to leave school. That was in grade eight. And you know what? Now my son doesn't have any school certificate. He had started an apprenticeship as mechanic and then stopped because of backaches. Now he wants to marry. I told him, first you have to do something about your job. He's doing an employment creation measure now, but I tell him that that's not enough. He can't let the girl do everything.85

Both Anisah and Farihah worried more about their sons' future than their daughters'. In order to explain gender differences in school performance among the offspring of former refugees from Lebanon, which seems to be a relevant pattern in Berlin, some long-term and systematic research would be necessary. One might consider interactions of boys and girls with teachers in school, and look at how boys and girls are brought up at home and interact with parents.

Farihah's son Yassin's story suggests that one possible explanation might be that boys of Arab or Muslim background encounter more discrimination than girls, or more of the sort that will impede their school progress. Nancy Lopez (2003) has documented on the basis of a study of sixty-six young adults from low-income-families

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of Dominican, West Indian, and Haitian origin, who grew up in New York City during the 1970s–1990s, that boys encountered more severe discrimination than girls, being perceived as thieves, etc., and that at school, boys receive more aggressive treatment from both security staff and teachers in their urban high schools. Only the most skilled and socially aware teachers seemed to know how to interact effectively with their male students in the urban high school studied by Lopez. Overall, these collective race-gender experiences, she suggests, influence males’ views toward education, leading them to question if they can really avoid negative controlling images. Moreover, she continues, these negative experiences impede their full participation in school (Carter 2004:517).

Other explanations that have been put forward for the context of various migrant groups in the US might be applicable to the former refugees from Lebanon in Berlin as well: these approaches stress that girls often have more responsibilities at home, and thus learn behaviours that are also of use in schools. Teachers are more likely to interpret this behaviour as indicating their interest in education, and might thus treat the boys less favourably because they do not show such behaviour (Lopez 2003, e.g. Gibson & Koyama 2011:7).

4.3.4 “I Can't Imagine Living Without My Children”

Some young people felt that they were held back in their careers by their family’s demands. When I first met Fatima (section 4.2.2) and her sister Aida at an event organised by an Arab migrant association, where they were trying to sell Tupperware to the women present, and we started to talk, one of the first things Aida said to me, was

We’re also Germans, but with a migration background. And in many respects we’re different. Family is strong and binds us and has too strong an influence on us. This will still have to change in order for us to be successful. For you [plural], it’s different, for you, family doesn’t mean such a strong commitment.86

86 This is not a transcription of a recording but a reconstruction of what Aida had told me during the event. I noted it down right after the event.
What Aida considered self-evident might altogether be debatable; however, it was much rarer for young people whose parents had been refugees from Lebanon to take up studies far away from their parents in another city than for other young people in Germany.

When I asked Farihah’s daughter Arwa, who was going to do her Abitur the following year, if she would like to study outside of Berlin, and if her parents would allow her to, she said that no, they would never allow her to. Her father encouraged her to go to university first and only get married afterwards, but he would never allow her to study outside of Berlin. She herself did not want to anyway: she thought her family depended on her, and did not get along well with each other, while she got along with everyone, and was a kind of mediator. Her father told her about his worries because he could not talk easily with her mother, and did not want to lose Arwa. So she wanted to stay with her family and support them.

Though Anisah did much to support her children, she told me that "by no means" did she want any of her children to move away from Berlin (except, perhaps, for marriage). After her daughter Yasira had finished her Abitur in 2013, Anisah encouraged her to take up studies and helped her do research on the internet. "My mother sits down every day with me and says, 'Let's do some research on the internet about what you can do'", Yasira said, "My mom is always so positive and encourages me, and says 'You'll make it.'" She thought about becoming a teacher at primary school.

Anisah encouraged her to pursue this field of study, even though one could not teach with a headscarf at public schools in Berlin. Yasira’s cousin was studying to become a teacher and had told her that during the teachers’ traineeship, one was still allowed to wear a headscarf, but would have to remove it later. Anisah told Yasira that this might change some years ahead, as Berlin had many Muslim residents, and they had a higher birth rate. If not, she might still become a teacher at a private school. Anisah said,
I told her, she can also teach at private schools. You can't know what's going to happen here. So much can change, and Berlin is a big city. So maybe the number of migrants will really surpass that of Germans, and the situation will be different soon.

However, Yasira’s Abitur grade was not good enough for her to be accepted for this field of study at a university in or near Berlin, and she would have had to apply elsewhere. Anisah said that she would never allow her to do so. “By no means” did she want Yasira or any of her other children to leave Berlin, not even if it was close enough so that they could stay in a students’ hall of residence and come home on the weekends. She wanted to have all her children with her: “They have to be here the whole time”.

When I asked her “Would you let Yasira move somewhere else?” Anisah said:

Alone, no. Only, Berlin, Potsdam, and around there. So she can commute every day, two hours one way, at most, or one and a half on the train. This is doable. And she doesn’t always have to go to uni. Her brother did that as well, for one year. He always went to Potsdam, but he didn’t have to go to uni every day. ... They still need support – emotionally, I mean. Not that I protect her like a baby. But she always comes to me and says, “What do you think? I’m not that sure”.

Anisah underlined that “in their culture” children should never leave their parents, and that, for instance, one was not allowed to place one’s parents or parents-in-law in an old people’s home. I asked her what she meant by “their culture”, and if she meant Lebanese, or Kurdish or Arab culture. She replied, “You didn’t mention Islam”, and said that it was written in the Qur’an that children should not leave their parents behind. Anisah also thought that she herself was “tied like a dog until the end of her life” because of her children, and that her children would always need her help. She

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87 Anisah describes what Alba & Holdaway refer to as “an historic transition [that] will take place toward much more diverse societies than could have been anticipated half a century ago”, based on “low fertility and aging of native populations in the wealthy countries” (Alba & Holdaway 2013:7).
88 “Ich habe ihr gesagt, sie kann auch an Privatschulen unterrichten. Man kann nicht wissen was hier noch passiert. Es kann sich noch alles ändern, und Berlin ist eine große Stadt, so dass wirklich die Migrantenzahlen vielleicht die Deutschen überragen, so dass es bald anders aussieht.”
herself could not imagine celebrating any holiday, Ramadan or others, without her children.\textsuperscript{90}

The more popular fields of study such as medicine, law, and psychology, can in Berlin only be entered by people with high grades. Berlin, as the capital and as a city with a strong fascination for young people, is among the more popular cities for studying, and thus it is difficult to get accepted there. If one still wants to study one of those subjects, one would have to move elsewhere. Among the children of the former refugees from Lebanon, who complete higher secondary school education and aim at pursuing studies at university, their choice of career was sometimes restricted because of their parents’ demands to still live with them while studying.

4.3.5 “Life Isn’t What It Used to Be”

As described above, Anisah and Farihah were worried about the future of their children, especially about that of their sons. Anisah stressed that in the past, she had not had that many worries, and that it had not been like this, and that especially before the German re-unification, everything had been easier. About their children’s education and future opportunities, she said,

Anisah: Funny, yes, for me, or for all of us, that’s really the first priority now. It wasn’t like this before. It wasn’t this bad. It wasn’t so difficult. You could choose any apprenticeship; you could probably get into any field of studies back then. Before re-unification.

Interviewer: So, everything was better before re-unification?

Anisah: Indeed! We were really doing well. We didn’t have all those problems. I don’t know if that’s because the children are grown up now, if that’s the reason, but I don’t think so. It was different back then.

Interviewer: But to what extent has the re-unification –

\textsuperscript{90} As I describe in section 4.3.6, another reason why she did not want any of her children to move out was that, once one or two of them moved out, the welfare agency would not pay their rent any longer and would make them move house to a smaller flat.
Anisah: I don’t know. I don’t know why that is. If it’s the re-unification, or the current economic situation – of course, definitely the economic situation. I could go to work with my husband, with all my children, in order to just make ends meet.  

What Anisah says about the times before re-unification is reminiscent of what the anthropologist Sabine Mannitz summarises as a main finding of her long-term research with youth of migrant background in Neukölln in the 1990s: she describes how the research participants stressed that before reunification, there had been more jobs, that they had felt more accepted, and that there had been a higher quality of life in their borough altogether. Mannitz concludes that her research participants “glorified” life conditions in the former West Berlin (Mannitz 2006:291).

Regarding the economic situation that might have led to such a feeling of deterioration, Mannitz reminds us that before re-unification, West Berlin had received much financial support from the federal government. After the Wall fell, the economic situation in Berlin deteriorated remarkably (see chapter 2, section 2.4.3, where I describe some of these developments) (Mannitz 2006: 291). As another example of how the economic situation in boroughs like Neukölln worsened, Mannitz describes how after re-unification, funds that the Senate had already allotted for the districts of Kreuzberg and Neukölln were partly taken away from these districts and re-allotted to boroughs of the former East Berlin (Mannitz 2006:292).

Anisah did not uncritically “glorify” the situation in the former West-Berlin. When I asked her to spell out to what extent it had been the re-unification specifically that had led to their situation being difficult, she said that she did not know, and that it


Interviewer: Vor der Einheit war also alles besser?
Anisah: Ja klar! Uns ging’s wirklich gut. Wir hatten nicht all diese Probleme. Ich weiß nicht, ob es ist, weil die Kinder jetzt erwachsen sind, deswegen, aber das glaube ich nicht. Früher war es anders.

Interviewer: Aber in wie weit hat die Einheit –
Anisah: Ich weiß nicht. Ich weiß nicht, woran das liegt. Ob es die Einheit ist, oder ist es jetzt die wirtschaftliche Lage – natürlich, die wirtschaftliche Lage auf jeden Fall. Ich könnte mit meinem Mann arbeiten gehen, mit allen Kindern, damit wir über die Runden kommen können.”
might also be the worsening economic situation more generally that had created that impression in her.

Anisah’s statement also indicates that she thinks that formal education assumes more significance because things have become tougher since reunification. This relates to a general development that has been described by scholars of migration to the US like Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco. They refer to economic changes in the post-industrial US as a major influence on the life conditions of migrants: while it used to be possible for migrants who did not have much vocational training to have a decent living standard, this is not possible any more, and currently people in such jobs often do not earn enough to provide for their families (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2002:61).

Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco mention a “divergence between ‘low skill’ and ‘high skill’ economic spheres [that] is part of a larger pattern of fragmentation characteristic of postindustrial postmodern societies” (62).

Farihah had not known Berlin during the times of partition and had only lived there since 1990. However, she shared Anisah’s feeling that the general quality of life was in decline. She said, “Really, back then, it was different. The buildings here as well. I feel the whole world is changing. People’s attitude towards life used to be different”. She felt that the effort she had put into establishing her life in Berlin might not have been worth it, now that she saw that her son had become disillusioned regarding his prospects of finding a job in Berlin.

It was difficult for me at the beginning. I lived in a residential establishment. I had stomach aches for three years. Afterwards I got used to life here. At first I always thought about Lebanon, my family, and so on. Then I told myself, no, my life is in Germany now, it’s my city here, my country. ... I came here; then I learned German. I learned a lot. In the contact with schools, with doctors. I learned a lot. To live independently. My husband also helped me a lot. But, I already told you, I had to fight a lot.
Because of the children, because of my documents. Back then I always thought about Lebanon and then I told myself, no, I live here, my children stay here. Now I go to Lebanon like a German, on holiday.92

Because Farihah had been so homesick in the beginning, and had had doubts about remaining in Germany, and had then stayed for the sake of her children, it was even more difficult for her to accept her son’s current situation.

People don’t feel like doing things any more. Me neither. Five years ago I was a lot more active. Really, I was happier. I’m not any longer. Because my daughter is handicapped, there’s always much to be done. I learnt much regarding administrative issues. I always had problems, and now my children have grown up. My son doesn’t have vocational training. The problem is, life isn’t what it used to be.93

Katherine Ewing describes young men of Turkish background in Berlin who were anxious because the current economic situation was very difficult and they felt they did not have many future opportunities. She remarks that along with the aftermath of the Al-Qaeda attacks, another general condition that has had a major effect on Muslim youth in Germany in the years before her research was Germany’s worsening economy at the beginning of the 2000s, which meant that there were fewer opportunities for employment altogether, and that youth of migrant background were especially affected by these processes (Ewing 2008:116-117).

4.3.6 Welfare Pressures

Anisah felt that her family’s situation had worsened since the SPD (Social Democratic Party) had introduced changes in welfare policy (mainly the Hartz IV

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reforms of 2005). This change meant that welfare and employment offices were merged, and the pressure on welfare recipients to engage in job creation programmes increased. These measures obliged women who had been receiving welfare money for a specified period, and who did not have children younger than three years of age, to engage in one of the jobs created by various kinds of associations or agencies, for which the worker received a little money in addition to their welfare money.  

I had met Anisah when she was running a weekly women’s breakfast meeting (Frauenfrühstück) and worked at a women’s association in Neukölln as part of such a job creation programme. However, such employment creation measures are always temporary, and thus Anisah could not continue to work at this association, a job she rather liked. After this measure terminated, she was unemployed for some months, and then had to start another measure in an office. However, because she was already almost fifty, the chances of her finding a permanent job were rather low. Thus this circle of not working in any job for a few months and then taking part in job creation measures again was likely to continue, perhaps even until she reached the age of retirement anyway.

"When the Job Centre did not exist yet, and you still received welfare money [Sozialhilfe], they did not force you to work", she said. As a mother of eight children, the youngest of whom was just six years old, she would have liked to stay at home and would then have had more time to support her children. But after her youngest daughter had reached the age of three, she was required to conform to the Job Centre's measures aimed at finding her a job (Maßnahmen). Farihah, in contrast, was still excluded from these measures because her youngest daughter, who was six, had a handicap. The Job Centre recognised this as a reason why she needed more care and thus Farihah was allowed to "stay at home".

Chapter 7 of this thesis discusses an employment creation measure for women in Neukölln, aimed especially at women of non-German-speaking backgrounds.

"Stay at home" is how women often expressed the circumstance of not engaging in a formal job; however, it is not really an accurate expression, because, as I described in the last sections, taking care of their children also required quite much work outside of the home in contacts with
With the help of funds from the welfare office, Anisah and her family had made time for her to resume her education, so that in the end she managed to pass her MSA (medium tier secondary school certificate). However, after passing the exams, she realised that there had not been enough time left for her children and that they had not made good progress at school. Thus, she did not start a vocational training afterwards, or pass her Abitur exams, which she would have really liked to do.

Anisah told me that despite her regret at not obtaining a school certificate and not having had the chance to continue her education, she had been so busy with her children after her marriage that she never thought that she could really go to school again. But, one day, her husband came home with a brochure about funding for welfare recipients who desire to finish school. Damir knew that she felt this was a gap in her life. He said “Here, there’s this new thing – you can still finish your [lower secondary] school certificate [Hauptschulabschluss]. Next time you go to the Job Centre you can ask them about how to do it”.

Anisah was very happy about this prospect and went to the agency to make inquiries. The staff were rather surprised, and asked her how she had got the idea to do a school certificate. By then she was forty-six and their youngest of eight children had just turned three. When Anisah started to go to school again, she had to attend school for eight hours each day, travel two hours each day, and after school she had to study. Her husband did almost all the work in the household, but could not support the children for school very well.

After some months of school, the teachers decided that she had enough knowledge to try passing the middle secondary school exams (MSA), instead of the lower one (Hauptschulabschluss). After she passed her exams, she had to attend the Job Centre again. As they wanted her to find a job, they sent her for further training as an “intercultural assistant for children, youth and family work”, which went on for another six months. She said that this training was even “more intensive”. Many aspects of schools, kindergarten, etc.
educational theory and its history of reformative pedagogy (*Reformpädagogik*) were part of the course. “For me, everything was new. It was like a new world. It was always interesting”.

Anisah was already forty-seven by the time and again, she had to attend school for eight hours a day, plus the travelling. Her youngest daughter was now four. Though her husband was doing almost all the housework and looked after the children, this was a very difficult time. She also felt that her absence was having an adverse effect on the children, owing to the fact that her husband did not have any school degree and no vocational training either, and thus had less of a relation to school education than she did.

I wanted to continue and did some research about where I could at least do distant education for the *Abitur*. But at that time I realised that my children weren’t making such good progress in school. Even if I can’t help them much, emotionally I have to be there for them. I was in school for eight hours every day. And then an hour commute each way, that makes ten hours. And then I would come home and have to study. I wasn't there for them at all during that period.96

Damir still often tried to convince her to do her *Abitur*.

My husband always says, yesterday a ninety-year-old did his *Abitur* in France. Ninety or ninety-two. He has said this around a thousand times in the last two days. “See Yasira, I’m sure your mother can do this as well. But right now she doesn't feel like it; she doesn't have the strength.”97

If Anisah had not had so many children, she would have loved to do her *Abitur*, but now the education of her children was more important for her, and thus she could not do so nor take vocational training in order to be able to find a job.

Anisah felt that welfare regulations were making life difficult for them and also impeded the development of their children. For instance, if the children took on marginal employment (up to 450 €/month) while still being registered as residing with

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97 “Mein Mann sagt immer, gestern hat ein Neunzigjähriger in Frankreich das Abitur gemacht. Neunzig oder zweiundneunzig. Das hat er jetzt tausend mal gesagt, die letzten zwei Tage. Ja Yasira, Deine Mutter kann das auch. Aber sie hat jetzt keine Lust; sie hat nicht die Kraft.”
their family, the Job Centre would take away the biggest part of it. They would only be allowed to keep around 100 € a month. Thus, Anisah advised her daughters to study for school instead of taking on an extra job, because she thought this would enhance their opportunities for the future, and that working for that little money was a waste of time.

As I described above, Anisah was more worried about her sons’ than her daughters’ situation, but she was also concerned about her daughter Yasira’s choice of career. Yasira, who had just finished her Abitur, wanted to study Arabic language and literature at university, and Anisah was initially worried because she knew she and Damir were not able to support her financially if she could not find a job: Anisah said for her, as a welfare recipient, job security was the most important thing. But in the end, she agreed to Yasira’s choice of field of study.

The next daughter, Aida (18), who was training as a nurse, earned 700 € a month after taxes, but because she was still living at home, the job centre took away 350. She tried to save money for a marriage and was communicating over the internet with a relative of theirs who lived in South Germany regarding a possible marriage. However, not much was left for saving after her regular expenses. Anisah said, “This Hartz IV [welfare] binds everything for us and makes life difficult for us. We cannot do what we want to do. And, of course, we have to report every cent we earn”.98

Another issue was that the amount of money the Job Centre was willing to pay for their flat depended on the number of persons who were registered there. Thus Anisah was rather concerned that her children would stay with them as long as possible, because once too many of them moved out, they would have to move house to another, cheaper, flat. The case of Anisah’s family shows how regulations regarding welfare money increased the likelihood of children being bound to their parents for financial reasons.

98 "Dieses Hartz IV bindet uns einfach alles, und macht uns das Leben zu schaffen. Wir können einfach nicht das machen was wir wollen. Und, ist doch klar, jeden Cent, den wir verdienen, müssen wir angeben, natürlich."
4.3.7 Muslim Identity and Educational Achievement – a Conflict?

A study conducted by the Open Society Institute based on interviews with Muslim parents in Kreuzberg concluded that parents “reported feeling disempowered and forced to compromise on their moral values in order to secure a good education for their children” (OSI 2010:78). Similarly, Anisah said that she had often had the feeling that she had had to make her children “pretend” (heucheln) in order to secure success for them at school, but that now with her youngest daughter Alia, she wanted to change this. Anisah said she always got angry when it came to the topic of Israel in history classes at school, as when, for example, her daughter had to write that a city called Jerusalem was the capital of the state of Israel while for Arabs the city was called Al-Quds, and many opposed Israel’s appropriation of it as a capital. Anisah said that so far she had encouraged all children to write what teachers thought correct in order for them to have good marks, but that she did not want to do that anymore.

Parents also spelled out what they felt was a conflict when choosing an appropriate school for their children: while many considered the quality of schooling in Neukölln bad, they appreciated the fact that at many of its schools, the majority of children had a Muslim background, so that they would not have to worry about their children feeling excluded or losing their Islamic identity.

Esma was a practicing Muslim, whose parents had come to South Germany from Macedonia when she was a toddler. She herself had moved to Berlin some years before for marriage. She said she was afraid to send her son, who would soon enter primary school, to one in Neukölln:

If I see those foreign children at the playgrounds... they’re just more striking [than German children]; their behaviour is more problematic. I don’t want to send my son to a school with so many foreign children.99

She also said that she did not want to send her son to a school "with such a high proportion of migrants".

99 This is a reconstruction of what Esma told me, which I did not record.
Anisah, when telling me about how she and her husband had decided not to send their daughter Alia to the primary school their other children had attended (section 4.3.1), also mentioned this as an issue. She said the school had “80% Arab children”, mainly Palestinian, which she assumed might be related to the low quality of schooling there.\textsuperscript{100}

However, as stated, parents also said they were afraid that their children might be bullied at schools outside of Neukölln, or be influenced so that they might lose their Islamic identity. Esma was afraid that the school would pull her son away from Islam. In the end, she decided to send her son to a primary school in Neukölln, because it would have been too complicated to take him to a school elsewhere.

Maryam, whose father was Lebanese and mother East German, who was herself mother of six children and a practising Muslim and stressed the importance of Islam in the raising of her children, explained the conflicts she experienced in thinking about her daughter’s education:

I would really like my daughter to go to a school with many German children. Because I know she would learn better then and have greater success in her life. On the other hand, her way of life is so different from that of German children. They’re allowed so much more and there are so many things that she isn’t allowed to do. So I think it would be hard for her if she was at a school where there were not many Muslim children – even though I know it would be better for her education.\textsuperscript{101}

Similarly, the OSI study quotes some parents as having said, “You have to choose between a good quality education (meaning a school outside of Kreuzberg) and an Islamic surrounding, or a situation where the religious difference poses no problems” (OSI 2010:79).

\textsuperscript{100} Fatima, who had herself attended school in Neukölln, and who in many respects spoke out against the way politicians like Buschkowsky represented the borough to the outside (see chapter 2) said, “You know, Neukölln’s schools are really impossible. I wouldn’t like to send my children to the schools here.” When I asked her why she thought the schools in Neukölln were “impossible”, she said, “Well, because of the many foreign children. I wouldn’t send my children to schools with such a high proportion of children from migrant families”. When I asked her if there might be other reasons for the schools being labelled bad – e.g. the teachers, because sometimes it was said that mainly teachers who had not had a very good exam and could not choose their school to work at came to teach in Neukölln – she was quite firm in saying that the teachers were not the reason. She said, “German children aren’t as naughty [krass] as foreign children”.

\textsuperscript{101} This is an English reconstruction of what Maryam had told me in German, of which I did not take any recording, but noted down to the best of my knowledge right after the meeting.
Further, in public discourse, Islam is often depicted as a hindrance to children’s full participation in schools. Some parents, in contrast, defined the practices of Islam as being especially helpful in children’s education and in their participation and success in German schools. Esma bemoaned the fact that while children of migrant parents necessarily had more problems at school due to language issues and the like, teachers often thought Islam was the reason. She, however, held that the practices of learning the Qur’an and the Sunnah by heart were not harmful, but helpful for learning at school because they helped to develop certain cognitive capacities needed at schools.

As illustrated in this section, and as described by the OSI, there is a widespread discourse, also among parents, which relates the quality of schooling to the number of pupils with “non-German background” (and especially to those of Muslim background) (OSI 2010:74; 174). This section has provided some illustration of the conflicts parents experienced because of such assumptions.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter asked how the people who have been major targets of the discourses regarding migrant integration and education described in chapter 2, and who have been subject to policies like the ones discussed in the last chapter, perceive themselves and practise their daily lives regarding issues of schooling and employment. I discussed some aspects of what it means to raise children for welfare recipients in Neukölln among the group of the former refugees from Lebanon, and analysed data on families who were engaged in improving their families’ situation regarding education.

I have described some of the difficulties and obstacles that families encounter in supporting their children. There was often a sense that full belonging – in this case, taken to refer to participation in educational institutions and the labour market – was difficult. For instance, there were many mothers who regularly participated in their
children’s school activities, but still they somehow felt “disengaged from national life” (Noble and Poynting 2010:496) and did not experience a “grounded sense of cultural citizenship” (497). For instance, women wearing headscarves, while often asked to contribute voluntarily, were rejected paid work, which left the impression that all in all they were “not good enough for this society”.

Further, there had been a social trend that parents needed to do more and more to adequately support their children at school and for their future. Besides schools demanding much engagement from mothers, demands on mothers who were welfare recipients were especially high: Once the youngest child had reached the age of three, they had to take part in employment creation measures. However, in a setting like Neukölln, most of them were not very likely to find any permanent position in the end.

The material shows that the families valued formal education and were aware that their children’s prospects for finding employment and not becoming welfare recipients in a borough of Berlin with high unemployment rates were strongly dependent on their school achievement (cf. Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2002:124). Families’ difficulties were related to the general deterioration of Berlin’s economic situation, under which migrants in particular have suffered (chapter 2), but also due to policy changes for welfare recipients, and I found there was a climate of worry regarding the issues of schooling and employment.

Even though girls often did well at school, families were worried about their children’s life prospects, especially about those of the boys, and there were hints that boys encountered more discrimination and obstacles at school than girls. Mainstream public discourse often includes claims about the integration of whole population groups. What this material shows is that forms and degrees of participation in educational institutions and the labour market differed within families. For instance, women often had much contact with schools and other institutions their children
participated in, while men, when welfare recipients, had less contact with public institutions.

In the public debate about integration, it is sometimes claimed that Islam is a hindrance to young people's full participation in educational institutions. However, many of the people I worked with considered Islam beneficial to their children's education in that for instance, practices of memorising the Qur'an helped to shape the cognitive capacities needed in school. People also explained the importance education had for them with Islam, saying that education was important for them as it had a high standing from an Islamic perspective. My material suggests that families’ difficulties did not relate to their own cultural practices like Islam, and that it was not their cultural differences that kept them from being integrated into the national community (cf. Hinze 2013:15).

Participation in educational institutions seemed to be an issue accompanied by some ambivalence and perceived conflict. However, this was not an issue of being “torn between cultures”, as has been claimed in mainstream public discourse and social science research. In mainstream public discourse, and locally at educational institutions in Neukölln, it counted as common sense that schools with high proportions of children of migrant background had a low quality. Some parents agreed with this view, and were thus torn between the wish of providing a good education for their children, and sending them to a school where there were many children of their own cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Annika Marlen Hinze, who conducted research with women of Turkish background in Kreuzberg and Neukölln about their views of the integration debate, argues that the daily practices of migrants do not fit the images and ideas of policy discourses and that they are “opposite” (Hinze 2013:xxvi; 27). The sociologist Emre Arslan has criticised this approach and states that “When the policymakers and other important social actors systematically burden and misunderstand the migrants, it does

102 See Poynting et al. 2004:80 ff. for a description of public discourse on this issue in the context of Australia.
imply a connection, rather than a disconnection.” (Arslan 2014:2). The case of parents agreeing with certain assumptions about the quality of schooling is an example of such a connection. Arslan's suggestion that there is no "dichotomy", or "opposite" relation, between lived social reality and political discourse, as Hinze claims (Hinze 2013:27), seems appropriate.¹⁰³

This and the previous chapter discussed how the people targeted by certain policies perceive themselves and practise their daily lives. The next three chapters are about local social work institutions and their approaches to migrant integration, and how these institutions influence people's overall sense of belonging to and participation in society.

¹⁰³ Arslan refers to the work of Norbert Elias and John Scotson in that respect. In their study of a town in England and the relationships between people who had been living there for generations, and those who had only moved there recently, they analysed some of the mechanisms by which an established community was able to convince the newcomers of their lower "group charisma" in relation to certain issues (Elias & Scotson 1993 [1990]:7ff.).
Part II. Institutions
5. The Context of Schools: Parent Involvement and Its Contradictions

In chapter 2, I described how mainstream public discourse about an alleged unwillingness to integrate especially by Muslim families, has been more and more directed at matters of schooling and education (section 2.2). In the previous chapter, I analysed the situation of some families who are a typical target of the discourses about integration, and discussed matters of child rearing and schooling among families where the parents had come to Berlin from Lebanon as refugees. This chapter turns to the setting of the school more concretely and looks at interactions between school staff and parents, and at institutions aimed at advancing integration of parents and children in the context of the school: school social work and parents’ cafés.

The anthropologists Janise Hurtig and Andrea Dyrness, who wrote about parent involvement policies in the US and studied minority parents’ contact with schools, stress that research on this issue is most often conducted from a normative perspective, measuring the impact of particular parent involvement practices on the schools’ self-defined aims: “it presumes the purpose of parent involvement is to contribute to the schools’ academic objectives, focusing analysis on whether or not particular programs are effective in making such a contribution” (Hurtig & Dyrness 2011:3).

An ethnographic approach, in contrast, they stress, offers accounts of the social and symbolic practices that constitute parent involvement policies (2), explores forms of parents’ engagement with these policies as socio-cultural process, and looks at what roles, relationships, and inequalities are produced in the process. The aim is to research “the multiple interpretations to which parents' activities are subjected, and examine(s) the effects of such interpretations on relations of power and social inequality” (3).

My framework for this chapter is based on such an approach, combined with the anthropology of policy, which is concerned with the relationship between policy
discourses, the resulting practices, and the effects on the people who are thought to be the targets. I ask: how are certain policies being implemented and what effects does this have on the people who are thought to be the targets of the policies? How do agents such as social workers see their work and their contact with their clients? How do parents from marginalised communities participate in and think about their children’s schooling? (Hurtig & Dyrness 2011:2)

Throughout section 5.1, I discuss various issues in the interaction between school staff and parents, especially those of Arabic-speaking background who identify as Muslim. How was parents’ participation perceived by school staff? What issues made participation in schooling processes difficult for parents? Section 5.2 then discusses material from a specific parent involvement project at a primary school that I participated in. How was this project received by the school staff? How did mothers view their engagement in the project?

5.1 School Staff and Parents: a Lack of Parent Involvement?

Regarding public discourse about Muslims and education which I sketched in section 2.2, the Open Society Institute writes,

... especially Muslims [are] being talked about as if they were the core problem of the society. In relation to schools for example, parents are accused of not caring about the education of their children and, more generally, for rejecting German values. This problem-focused discourse, which is reflected and reinforced in the media, also influences the views and opinions of teachers, employees of the school administration, parents of non-Muslim children, and others within the school system (OSI 2010:82).

How does this issue play out on the ground? How did social workers and parents perceive it?
5.1.1 “Accusations Are a Big Problem”

Social workers of Arabic-speaking background and people working for Arab migrant associations were acutely aware of public discourse that attributes failures in education to people of Muslim background, and in Neukölln often mainly to those of Arabic-speaking background. Such accusations or attributions of blame (Schuldzuweisungen) were also perceived as a big problem by other subjects, like Fatima, whose encounter with the district’s migration commissioner, and how he blamed the Arab community in Neukölln for not caring about anything, I described in chapter 2. Fatima mentioned such reproaches as a major problem for people of Arabic-speaking background in Neukölln. René Abul-Ella, head of the charity association Al Dar, spoke of a “vicious circle between Arab families and schools”.

Mr. Al-Hadary, a primary school social worker, who was of Egyptian background and in his own words was employed to work with “Muslim families, Turkish and Arab families”, also referred to blaming practices (Schuldzuweisungen) as a major problem in the interaction between teachers and parents. Similarly, when I phoned Mr. Mounir, a school social worker of Palestinian background whose name I had found on the internet, and told him that I was doing research on the topic “Arab families and education and child rearing”, there was a strange silence and then I asked him what he thought of this topic, and if he had a problem with it. Mr. Mounir said,

No, no, it’s very important, because of the reproaches German society constantly makes – that they [Arabs] don’t have any interest in education. But I think it’s undeniable that education has a very high standing among Arab families. They just don’t express it.

Mr. Mounir immediately took a defensive stance and had probably assumed that my intention was to find out the reasons for why Arab families did not show much interest in the education of their children. He went on to say that parents had high

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104 At the Neukölln primary schools I visited, to the best of my knowledge, the only teachers of Muslim background were those teaching Islam classes.
105 This is a reconstruction of the phone talk, which I did not record.
expectations of schools, and especially of the teachers but that they just did not express it. His response shows that the mentioned reproaches were not uncommon.

5.1.2 “It’s Harder to Get in Touch with Arab Families”

In chapter section 2.4.6 I described how the mayor of Neukölln depicts especially migrants and refugees of Arabic-speaking background as a problematic group that hampers integration. But how did social workers at schools, who were in regular contact with parents, frame this issue? Were they ready to make statements in such terms? In addition to my participant-observation at the child welfare centre (next chapter), and at parents’ meetings at a primary school (this chapter section 5.2), I interviewed seventeen social workers and child care workers at nine primary schools’ social work units in Neukölln. Most of the staff members were of ethnic German background; two of them were of Turkish and one of Arabic-speaking background (from Egypt).

During these interviews, some social workers said that it was especially Arab children who were prone to behavioural difficulties. At one primary school, Mr. Pohl, a child care worker, said that though more children of Turkish background attended the school, when he first started to work there, he had had the impression that Arabic-speaking children were the majority, just because he had to counsel them and work with them more often:

Well, in the first two years, I didn't have any statistics, and I would have said that the Arab community is much stronger than the Turkish one. Statistically it’s exactly the opposite, though. In my experience, with the Arab children we have to struggle much more with behavioural problems [Verhaltensauffälligkeiten], to work more, to talk more ... It’s mostly Arab children, Arab families who turn up at our social work unit; we're in contact with them and work with them.106

At another social work unit, Ms. Gruber said, "If there are problems, and one has to conduct parent-teacher talks, then they [the teachers] often have to invite Arab parents".107 Ms. Kraus said,

If you ask yourself, who are the children with whom we're having difficulties at the moment, or partly also with their parents, then I would indeed say that it's often the Arab children, and their parents.108

Some social workers also said they found building up good working relationships with Arab families difficult.

However, my interview data shows that there was a big variation in how social workers and child care workers made use of ethnic category terms. While some were ready to make statements about the integration of a group defined in ethnic terms, others refrained from making such statements. Some social workers said that this kind of discourse was one they mainly encountered in teachers, and that they did not want to generalise in such terms at all. Ms. Karali, a child care worker, when I asked her if she thought it was more difficult to build up working relationships with Arab parents than with others, said that she did not want to generalise about the matter and that other parents were hard to make contact with as well.

Ms. Albrecht, a social worker, criticised how the term “Arab” was used by other pedagogical staff. She said that she had heard teachers say that they considered Arab children and parents the most difficult group, but that she herself was critical towards how this phrase was used.109 She said,

Well, they say “Arab”. And I mean, what does “Arab” mean at all? ... There are so many countries and regions connected to it. And some who are Muslim have nothing to do with it. Well maybe you can’t say “nothing”, but in fact we also have many children from Cameroon and Senegal, or Persian children, who have this belief [Islam], but don’t speak Arabic, and don’t have much to do with the [Arab] culture. But I think, by saying “Arab”, they describe everything – and then nobody really knows where the people are.

Kontakt, mit denen arbeiten wir.”

107 "Wenn's Probleme gab und man muss die Elterngespräche machen, dann müssen sie ja oft arabischen Eltern einladen."
108 "Wenn Du mal überlegst, mit welchen Kindern wir gerade Schwierigkeiten haben, oder teilweise auch mit den Eltern, weißt Du, da würde ich schon sagen, das sind oft die arabischen Kinder, und deren Eltern."
109 For a discussion of some ways in which the category “Arab” was used by people of Arabic-speaking background themselves, see chapter section 3.3.
in fact from. Are they from Lebanon, are they Palestinians, are they Syrian, or Egyptian, and – the question is, whether that’s always important at all. But I do think that “Turkey”, as a country, is much clearer. It’s much more tangible. And I think there’s a much more intimate contact. That’s my feeling, also for the child care workers here at the school. They say “Arab”, but don’t really know what it means. And don’t know where the families are from, and maybe never even ask.\textsuperscript{110}

When asked to explain why they thought the behaviour of children of Arabic-speaking background was more problematic, social work unit staff more often referred to people’s residence status than to their culture. All social work staff I talked to were aware that families among this group often had problems regarding residence status and had had to live with status of tolerated residence, sometimes even for decades. Many related children’s behavioural difficulties to this issue, and to the fact that they had been refugees, and how they had or had not been welcomed in Germany (see chapter 3).

Ms. Gruber, who had said that Arab children were the ones most prone to behavioural difficulties, when I asked her what might be done in order to improve the situation, said that war refugees should be welcomed differently and that one should take care of them better and give them the opportunity to process their traumatic experiences. When I asked her to say more about the cases in which she had found making contact with Arab families especially difficult, she said,

I think it’s difficult when parents come here because there’s war in their country, but in fact they would rather like to be back there. This is really difficult for the children then, because they aren’t really permitted to arrive here, and are torn. The parents are torn as well, but the children might not know why they are that torn, and this is really difficult then.\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{110} “Es wird eben Arabisch gesagt. Und, ich mein, was ist denn ’Arabisch’? ... Es gibt so viele Länder und Gegenden die damit verbunden sind. Und manche die muslimisch sind die damit gar nichts zu tun haben. Man kann nicht sagen gar nichts, aber wir haben ja viele auch von Kamerun oder Senegal, Kinder, oder persische Kinder, die einfach, die diesen Glauben haben, aber nichts mit Arabisch sprechen, mit der Kultur zu tun haben. Aber ich finde auch, mit ’Arabisch’, da wird so alles bezeichnet, und dann weiß aber keiner, wo kommen die eigentlich her. Sind die jetzt aus dem Libanon, sind die jetzt Palästinenser, sind die syrisch, sind die ägyptisch – die Frage ist, ist das immer wichtig. Aber ich finde schon, die Türkei als Land, ist viel klarer. Ist viel greifbarer. Und ich finde, da gibt es dann auch viel vertrauteren Umgang damit. Hab ich das Gefühl, auch bei Erzieherinnen hier: Die sagen dann auch ’arabisch’ für irgendwas und wissen gar nicht, was das bedeutet. Und wissen gar nicht, wo die Familien herkommen, und fragen aber vielleicht auch nie.”

\textsuperscript{111} “Ich find’s schwierig wenn Eltern halt hierherkommen weil in irgendeinem Land Krieg ist, aber eigentlich sich so zurückwünschen. Und das ist dann mit den Kindern sehr schwierig. Weil
At another primary school, Ms. Korkmaz and Ms. Meier, a social worker and a child care worker, who had said that they had heard teachers say that Arab families were less well integrated than families of Turkish background, said that they themselves thought that a reason for this perception was people’s residence permit status. Ms. Meier said,

Maybe this is also connected to the residence permit status. I could imagine that because Turkish families have been living in Germany for much longer and their residence is secured, that this also means a consolidation and a feeling of self-confidence, than always only having limited residency permits. We’re in contact with the families and we just know how the status of tolerated residence is shattering the existence of these families again and again.112

Ms. Vogt, a child care worker at another primary school, said that one of their main tasks was to act as a broker between schools and families with the status of tolerated residence, because teachers were not always aware what this meant for the families, and often did not know that the families had very basic problems to be concerned about. If parents suffered from war trauma, it was only natural that the school did not have the first priority for them. Ms. Vogt said that it was children from families with tolerated residence in whom youth welfare invested the largest amounts of money, because it was mostly those children who were problematic in their behaviour and who tended to develop absenteeism (*Schuldistanz*).

To sum up, among the social workers I interviewed, there were several who stated that in their experience, Arab children had more behavioural difficulties than others, or that it might be harder to build up working relationships with Arab parents than others. However, there was variation in how this issue was framed, and some refrained from making generalisations in ethnic terms. None of the social workers I

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112 “Hängt vielleicht auch mit dem Aufenthaltsstatus zusammen. Könnte ich mir vielleicht auch vorstellen, also dass türkische Familien schon wesentlich länger in Deutschland leben und der Aufenthalt hier gesichert ist, dass das natürlich auch ne Stärkung und auch ein Selbstwertgefühl darstellt, als wenn man immer auf befristeten Aufenthaltsbestimmungen sitzt. ... Wir haben Kontakt mit den Familien und wissen einfach auch, wie die Duldung die Existenz immer wieder erschüttert.”
talked to related the children's behaviour to the families' culture in essentialist terms; they instead attributed the problems to experiences of war and trauma, and mainly to the status of tolerated residence and the difficult legal situation altogether under which families had to live.

5.1.3 “Schools Expect too Much Involvement from Parents”

Home-school relations have for long been an established topic in the sociology of education (see e.g. Mehan 1992:4-5). In this scholarship, school students from minority and working-class backgrounds have often been said to be hindered in their education because of Western schools' demands for parental involvement. Parents might think that their education is not adequate in order to talk to teachers at school; they might not dare to criticise them; or, due to their cultural background they might have the perception that school and teachers are responsible for the upbringing of children at school, and that it is not appropriate to interfere (Mehan 1992:4). Parents might not “view the task of educating children as divided between teachers and parents” (4; see also Lareau 2003).

This issue was also stressed by some social workers regarding their contact with Arab families in Berlin. They said that it was especially families from the Arab region who were of the opinion that they were only responsible for the upbringing of their children at home, and thought that school staff had to take care of all issues related to school while in Germany, school staff usually expected parents to collaborate if there were problems. Mr. Pohl said,

It's often the case that Arab families pass the mandate for the children's upbringing on to us [Erziehungsauftrag - in this context meaning, inside of school]. Parents just have a different understanding of cooperation, and say, but it’s your task to take care of the children here. … And then we just have to say clearly that, well, now we have a problem, and now we have to think about how we can reach an aim together. We have to tell them
clearly, it’s also your responsibility, if children have problems in their daily life at school.113

Ms. Kraus, at another primary school, also said it was especially Arab, and partly also Turkish parents, who were of the opinion that they were responsible for upbringing at home, while the school was responsible for all issues within the school.

And in fact we also have parents who say, “Your teacher is like your mother. It’s your second mother.” And that’s why they often avoid getting involved, because they think it’s the right thing to stay out. And then they expect the teachers to implement what is demanded at school. And I think that these different demands and expectations of school and parents are really completely contrary. And this is making it difficult then.114

Some parents told their children that the teacher was like a mother or father at school, and did not want to interfere with school issues because they thought this was the right way. They expected everything that was demanded by the school to be implemented through the teachers. As an example of this attitude, Ms. Kraus told the story of a father whom they had told that the children had to bring sports clothes to school.

I’m thinking of that father whom we had told that the children should take their sports clothes to school, I mean clothes for changing for sports classes, and he asked us to write this down for him, and we did so. In the break he went to see his kids and talked to them, and then they said, they don’t want to take their sports clothes to school. Then he came to us here in order to tell us this and was holding his children by his hands and asked us, so to say, that we tell it to the children. And I think he didn’t at all have the feeling that this is also his responsibility.115

113 “Es ist oft bei arabischen Familien so, dass sie uns den Erziehungsauftrag geben – gesagt wird von den Eltern, auch direkt, in Elterngesprächen, einfach ein anderes Verständnis von Zusammenwirken da zu finden ist, dass die Eltern sagen, es ist doch aber Ihr Auftrag, die Kinder hier zu erziehen ... Wo wir auch einfach mal sagen müssen, jetzt haben wir hier ein Problem, jetzt müssen wir schauen, wie wir gemeinsam, sozusagen, zu dem Ziel kommen. Also, ihnen einfach auch klar machen, sie sind auch hier in der Verantwortung, wenn die Kinder Probleme im Schulalltag haben.”

114 “Und wir haben tatsächlich auch Eltern, die sagen, deine Lehrerin ist wie deine Mama. Das ist Deine zweite Mutter. Deswegen halten die sich oft auch raus, weil sie glauben, dass das richtig ist, sich rauszuhalten. Und dann auch einfach erwarten, dass das, was in der Schule gefordert wird, durch die Lehrer umgesetzt wird. Und ich glaube, da sind halt diese unterschiedlichen Ansprüche und Erwartungen von Schule und dann dem Elternhaus, sind wirklich total konträr. Und das macht es glaube ich auch schwierig.”

115 “Mir fällt der eine Vater ein, dem wir gesagt haben, dass die Kinder Sportsachen mitbringen sollen, also Wechselklamotten für den Sportunterricht, und er bat, dass wir ihm das aufschreiben, und das haben wir dann auch gemacht, und dann ging er in die Pause zu seinen Kindern und hat mit ihnen gesprochen, und dann haben die gesagt, sie wollen das nicht mitnehmen. Darauf kam er dann zu uns hierhin und sagte, sie wollen das nicht mitnehmen, und hat uns sozusagen darum gebeten, dass wir das den Kindern sagen. Und er hat glaub ich
Ms. Charda Al-Hassan, the social worker of Palestinian origin mentioned in the last two chapters, repudiated accusations that parents were uninterested or inactive, and said that parents often did not dare to speak out to teachers because they considered them of a higher social status.

In Arab society, the school is responsible for the child. It’s a teaching and training institution [lehrend und erziehend]. This means that if I as a parent send my child to school, it’s the school’s responsibility to make my child do whatever is expected, and not try to involve the parents, because the parents have given their permission. “Then you can do everything with my child in school.” In quotation marks. Punish, or whatever. “Because it’s an authority, an institution, and we parents don’t have anything to do with it, it’s a matter of the school.” It’s actually meant positively. “You can punish my child, you are a person of authority, I don’t have anything to do with it. At home my children have been nice and good. If you have a problem with them, you should tell them.” ... Arab parents take it as a given that the school takes care of that. As parents, you’re in fact lower than the school, than the teachers – they’re elevated. And I as an uneducated parent cannot say anything to a teacher. “Well, she’ll know how she’s doing this or that.” And this attitude, towards a teacher, “I after all don’t dare to say anything to her, to the teacher.” Well. That’s where the misunderstandings stem from. The teacher thinks that the parents aren’t interested, that they’re educationally deprived, they don’t want. This is not exactly true. The parents want the best for their children.116

Mr. Al-Hadary and Mr. Mounir both said that a reason for this was that in most Arab countries, the terms Bildung (upbringing/education) and Erziehung (education), a rather important distinction in the context of German schools, were always combined in public discourse; as an example Mr. Al-Hadary named the ministry for “upbringing and education” in Egypt (وزارة التربية والتعليم). To conclude, some social workers stated

überhaupt nicht das Gefühl gehabt, dass das auch seine Verantwortung ist.”


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that parents from rural areas in Turkey and Lebanon had very high expectations of schools and teachers, and that this was an issue that led to conflicts, because the German model of schooling expected a sizeable contribution of time and effort from the parents, and expected them to talk these issues through with teachers and to be present at schools for events like parent-teacher conferences.

However, not at all schools was it the case that teachers demanded more presence at schools from parents and wished to communicate more with them: in section 5.2 I present a case study of a parents’ meeting at a primary school, where parents engaged and made efforts to contribute, but most teachers did not take the opportunity to participate in these meetings. They said they were “only responsible for the children, and why bother with the parents”. The next section also discusses some cases where it was not that clear that what schools wanted from parents was more engagement and presence at schools.

5.1.4 Contradictory Demands?

Starting from the 1960s, the sociologist Michael Lipsky developed a theory of the interface between government and citizens and coined the concept of street-level bureaucrats for agents like social workers or teachers, who are in direct contact with a large number of people (in contrast with higher level bureaucrats, who often do not have much contact with the population) (Lipsky 1969, 1980). In Lipsky’s words, teachers and other such bureaucrats have to “deal with clients on a mass basis” (1980:xii) and often lack time and other resources. Teachers’ tasks are typically focused around impersonal interactions, and they often simply do not have the time to visit parents at home and make personal contact with them.117

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117 Lipsky stresses that at the same time, teachers are subject to high public expectations. In order to cope, they develop certain routines, like the “segmenting of the population”. If a group is perceived culturally backward, the responsibility for failing to produce the necessary results will not only be put on the teacher (Lipsky 1969:21).
In many respects, schools also tried to impede parents’ contacts with schools, because they were lacking resources, or for other reasons. That was why demands that parents should be more present at schools, for instance at parent-teacher conferences, or in order to contribute to various projects, sometimes appeared rather contradictory, as Mr. Pohl, a child care worker at a primary school reported. I had asked him if whether he thought the parents at this school were uninterested or hard to reach.

I experience school – I myself, as a pupil, also experienced it like this – as a closed cosmos, and now as a professional pedagogical employee, I again experience it as a closed cosmos. I also think school doesn’t really want to make itself so permeable, so that parents can regularly spend time here. It’s a mutual effect – the school only rings up parents when there are problems – and parents are annoyed to constantly receive calls from the school only when there are problems.118

Mr. Pohl said that though in public discourse there were often reproaches that especially Muslim parents were not interested enough in their children’s education, in his experience, it was the schools that were not really interested in a close contact with the parents.

Some school staff assumed that protecting their children too much and thus wanting to take them to the classroom door was a feature of Turkish and Arab families’ ways of raising their children, and this was thought to impede children’s positive development towards self-confidence and autonomy (Selbständigkeit), a term which I often heard stressed by social workers and parents as an important aim of children’s development. At many primary schools, there were signs at the schools’ entry doors written in German, Turkish, and Arabic, saying, "Parents, do not accompany your children beyond this point". Some parents perceived this as contradictory, as on the other hand they were always asked to contribute to their children’s education, to take part in school activities, to turn up at the teacher’s office when their child had problems, to be willing to communicate with the schools on various issues etc. It did

118 "Ich erleb Schule – hab ja selber als Schüler Schule als auch geschlossenen Kosmos erlebt und erlebe es jetzt, als professionelle pädagogische Fachkraft, nochmal als geschlossenen Kosmos. Ich glaub auch, die Schule möchte nicht unbedingt die Schule so durchlässig machen, dass Eltern regelmäßig hier sind. Also es ist ne Wechselwirkung, klar, ruft Schule oft Eltern nur dann an, wenn’s Probleme gibt, und die Eltern sind genervt, ständig nen Anruf von der Schule zu bekommen, weil’s Probleme gibt."
not make sense why there was such a stress on not being present inside the school building.

As the quote from Mr. Pohl suggests, another issue parents complained about was that schools only reacted when there were problems. Once the phone rang and the teacher was speaking, they knew there must be trouble. They were not allowed to visit their children's teachers at home, nor did teachers ever come to visit them. They were not even allowed to take their children to the classroom door, where they might have had a look at the teacher or have a brief chat with them. Ms. Dietrich, a social worker at another primary school, said,

Mostly, social work with parents only takes place once there are problems. Well, there's another track, for example, by means of school celebrations, I mean by means of doing something together. But usually there's only contact with parents when there's a need to talk. That's a rather special encounter then. They know, now we have to show up here, now they want something from us. And at the school social work unit here we follow the strategy that when we're talking to parents for the first time, we only try to make contact.119

Social work unit staff thus tried to explain problems in their or teachers' interactions with parents by referring to the fact that interactions between school staff and parents were mostly problem-centred interactions: parents were only asked to turn up at school once there was a problem. This section described how at primary schools in Neukölln, it was not clear that what schools wanted of parents was for them to be more in touch, and that parents refused to, as the situation has often been portrayed in public discourse. In section 5.2 I discuss how this issue played out regarding a special parent involvement programme at a primary school.

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**5.1.5 Islam as Opposed to Freedom and Democracy?**

Based on a study that compares the political socialisation of migrants in schools in the UK, France, the Netherlands, and Germany, the anthropologist Werner Schiffauer states that in Germany, Islam is often considered the opposite of democracy, and Muslim pupils are assigned a defensive position on these terms (Schiffauer 2002:15). In chapter 2, I described such associations in mainstream public discourse, for instance in Neukölln’s Mayor Buschkowsky’s statements, between an imagined German culture with freedom and democracy, and Muslim culture with being undemocratic, unfree, etc. (section 2.4.4).

Muslim parents criticised these kinds of associations: they were fed up with hearing that what children learned at school related to issues of democracy, freedom, and social learning, while what they learned at home was characterised as repressive, or the like. Mr. Al-Hadary told me about this issue in relation to parents’ critique of the Social Learning programme (*Soziales Lernen*). This programme was conducted by social workers at primary schools and consisted of social workers running classes for children that in the words of Mr. Al-Hadary were directed at teaching children social competence: issues relating to good behaviour, communication, the handling of conflicts, how to express one’s emotions adequately, etc.

Mr. Al-Hadary said that some parents were specifically critical of this programme. This is how he put it:

Especially the Arab Muslim families feel that the school is too soft. That the school calls for freedom, and says: "We are democracy. We don't beat children. And we're not allowed to touch the children. And what do they [parents] do with their children, it's completely wrong! Oh my God, what are they doing to their children at home?" Ok. And if the child talks to the teacher about freedom and discusses with him, then the teacher says, "How can you talk to me? What are you telling me?" Then the school reacts and says, "Oh my God, what have you done. You are such a naughty child. You really shouldn't do this. Now you're going to be punished." Then the family says, "I don't understand. You're talking about freedom and democracy the whole time, and if my child voices his opinion, you’re punishing him? What's this about?" And this is very, very important – because they – Arab families, Turkish families – say: "I don't understand this. Really, they talk about freedom and democracy, and then they force the children to do this
or that?” It is about particular topics like headscarf, fasting, Ramadan, pork. Alright. “But this is your view. And what is with our view? We raise our children, and they call the youth office, and say, ‘You beat your children. Your child has bruises’, and, and, and. This is the biggest area to be worked on [Baubstelle] between school and parents – how to really understand this freedom. What does this Western society want from Arab, from Turkish families? They confuse the families. Freedom, Social Learning, democracy, great concepts – so that the child will in the end tell their opinion – “You’re brave, you’re confident, you’re strong, shout at your parents, tell your opinion, you’re a big boy, you’re a great girl, and we will strengthen you” And then the parents say, “Hold on”, while the parents also want tolerance, respect, justice – these things do exist in every family – they really do exist – mothers, fathers, talk to their child and say, “Be nice, be good, don’t screw up, don’t make waves”. That is, one talks to the child. It would be nice if the school said, “This is our problem” – concisely and clearly – “Here – your five things that annoy us” – and the parents would say – “Alright, and what annoys us, these five issues: you are talking about freedom and democracy, and, and, and. And once we make a mistake with our children, they immediately attack us”.

As Mr. Al-Hadary portrayed the situation, parents ridiculed the Social Learning programme’s focus on teaching children to express their emotions, because they had the feeling that nobody at the school was interested in listening to their children’s opinion anyway. If they did express their opinion, the teachers would only punish

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them. Many people thus did not consider the project Social Learning as supportive of their children's situation.

Mr. Al-Hadary perceived the Social Learning programme as one that was only officially aimed at the education of a certain group of people and the improvement of their social chances but in effect led to making them passive, because of this feeling of double-bind situation. He reported that some people found programmes like Social Learning confusing: their children were told that if they wanted to achieve in society, they needed to express their ideas and emotions, while the parents’ overall feeling was that if their children expressed their ideas, nobody was interested in listening to them anyway.

According to Mr. Al-Hadary, the biggest problem that the parents he worked with had with the school was that school staff seemed to presume that they were the only ones who valued freedom and democracy, and that these themes were alien to Muslim families. The parents complained about what they perceived as a kind of bigotry: in parents’ opinion, the teachers were talking about freedom and democracy, while not living up to it.

Perhaps one might say that parents recognised what social theorists like Nikolas Rose identified as a basic tension in Western democracies: Western ideas of freedom while aspiring to be universal are “an artefact of (a specific kind of) civilisation” (Rose 1996b:50). In Rose’s words, in modern societies, subjects are ruled “by means of persuasion, education, and seduction rather than coercion” (50), which is also true of current teaching methods at schools. Some parents held that these forms of educating students were not necessarily more democratic, and that such teaching and governing techniques were partly concealing unequal power relations.

Further, parents did not see why Islam should not also be considered a means for Social Learning: Mr. Al-Hadary stressed that Qur’an classes in mosques were also about Social Learning; however, schools often strongly denied any cooperation with
mosque associations in relation to Social Learning or other school social work programmes. Mr. Al-Hadary said,

The main thing would be to have success, no matter how or with whom. In the Arab mosque, you also do social learning, just as they are doing here at school. With this, halal, haram, that's forbidden, that's not allowed, reasoning, and explaining. But the city doesn't want to proceed by means of this direction, Islam. They want to proceed by means of different concepts. But you can reach success in all kinds of ways.

Mr. Al-Hadary spoke in favour of cooperation between the city government or schools and Muslim associations. He went on, saying that

Learning the Qur'an – this is also Social Learning. This is also Social Learning. If the school cooperated and worked together well with the [Arab] associations, then in the end there'd be good resources available. But the problem is those prejudices, right from the start. No mosque. No associations. And then there's only occupational therapy [Ergotherapie], psychotherapy, and [laughs] medical checkups, and doctor. Where's the freedom, the free space? ... And the question is, where are the people who are sitting up there? They should say: "Ok, for Neukölln let's have fifty different Arab Muslim associations. Let's have properly state-approved associations."

In that respect, his opinion agrees with one of the policy recommendations by the Open Society Institute based on its Muslims in Berlin study: that there be “Closer contact between the city administration for education and Muslim representatives” (OSI 2010:146). Elsewhere they write of the need to

establish partnerships between local schools and civil society organisations and Muslim community groups ... Such partnerships, led by the Senate of Berlin, should be effective in creating a better mutual understanding between families with immigration history and education staff, and should explicitly consider the involvement of religious Muslim organisations. The Berlin Senate should follow the examples set by some of

121 In chapter 2, I described how such a denial is especially strong in the district of Neukölln. See also OSI 2010:142.
122 "Die Hauptsache ist, ich hab Erfolg, egal wie das funktioniert und mit wem. In der arabischen Moschee, da macht man auch soziales Lernen, was die auch machen hier in der Schule. Mit diesem halal und haram, das ist verboten, das ist nicht erlaubt, und begründen, erklären. Aber die Stadt will nicht über diese Richtung Islam. Sie will über andere Konzepte. Obwohl man auf allen Wegen auch viele Erfolge erzielen kann."
its districts, which have included religious Muslim organisations in consultation structures (OSI 2010:152).

In chapter 2, I described how such partnerships exist in the district of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, but not in Neukölln yet (2.5).

\[5.2\textbf{Case Study of a Parent Involvement Project: a Parents’ Café}\]

In this section, I discuss a parent involvement project at a primary school: a parents’ café. Parents’ cafés are meeting spaces in schools that are organised by social workers and other staff, with the aim of enhancing informal contact between migrant parents and school staff, especially teachers. They are meant to reduce parents’ assumed “threshold fears” (Schwellenängste) and anxieties about schools and teachers by offering an informal space to socialise while having breakfast (Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung 2010: 22). They were set up in many schools in Neukölln in the mid to late 2000s, around the same time that school social work units were set up.

In this section I discuss a specific parents’ café at a primary school. How did the parents’ café work and what was the role of the staff within it? Was it the case that teachers demanded more contact with and engagement from parents? Did they welcome parents’ engagement and presence in schools? How did mothers perceive their participation in these meetings and their contact with schools more generally?

\[5.2.1\textbf{The Staff: Cultural Brokers}\]

In this section, I discuss the role of the staff in the primary school parents’ café that I visited regularly during the first half of 2012, and again in 2014. It was funded by means of Quarter Management\(^{124}\) and run by Aysel, a social worker, and Shahirah, who

\(^{124}\) See chapter 2 section 2.3.2, where I introduce this policy.
had used to work as a Borough Mother and who had engaged in much voluntary work in schools and at child care centres before, but did not have any formal job training.

The school was situated in an area of Neukölln with many Arabic-speaking background residents, and the majority of mothers who attended were of this group, either identifying as Palestinian or Lebanese. Others were from Turkey, Afghanistan, or Montenegro. All mothers who frequented the meeting were Muslim, and issues related to Islam or Muslim culture were frequent topics of conversation. The school had seen a shift in the composition of its pupils in the recent years: in 2014, 90% pupils were of Arabic-speaking background, while ten years earlier, those of Turkish-speaking background had been the majority. Shahirah said that when the parents’ café started in 2008, there were still many more Turkish parents who attended.

The meeting took place in a special room, which Shahirah, who had started the project, and others had painted and furnished with Quarter Management funding. The café’s name contained the words “Active Parents”, and the name had been suggested by Mr. Fischer, a very engaged teacher who was popular with the mothers and who attended the meeting regularly. He did not think that migrant parents were by their nature inactive and had to be “activated”, but had come up with the name as a response to such public discourse that often framed migrant parents as uninterested in their children's education. The meeting took place twice on two mornings per week and there were around ten mothers who regularly took part, and others who sometimes showed up. Very rarely would a father sit down and have a little chat, and teachers or other school staff would from time to time come and join the meeting; Mr. Fischer was the only one who attended the meetings more regularly.

125 I discuss this project in the next chapter.
126 Mr. Fischer, a teacher, confirmed, and said he did not know whether the majority of Turkish parents had moved away or whether they only sent their children to other schools. He had heard about one family who had moved to Rudow, a middle class borough in the south of the district of Neukölln.
Aysel, the social worker who together with Shahirah ran the meetings, had studied social work in Frankfurt (Main) and had grown up in a village close to Frankfurt; she had moved to Berlin to marry. Her parents were Kurds and had come to Germany from Turkey as migrant workers. She attributed her success at school to the fact that, though her mother could not read or write, she had always made sure that Aysel and her brothers and sisters did their homework, and sitting beside them in the afternoon and doing something different, like knitting.

Aysel was Alevi and considered herself Muslim. She did not wear a headscarf and bemoaned that the current younger generation (her son was twenty) “gave up so many things that she [and her generation] had fought for”. She said that she had resisted her parents’ expectation that she wear a headscarf and fought to be allowed to wear nail polish. Now her son always told her that her clothes were too tight and too open. She complained that when they had a family meeting, her son would not even drink one glass of champagne and she was afraid that he would become radicalised.

Shahirah had come to Berlin from Algeria for marriage around 1990, had been involved in the Borough Mothers project from the start, and subsequently built up this parents’ cafe. She told me that at first, the school’s director had had many reservations about the project. In the end, he gave in, saying to her: “But please don’t make an Islamic group out of it”. She was worried about the café being accepted by the school and about getting some recognition for her work. She was proud to recount that a year after its beginning, the project was clearly a success, and the Mayor Buschkowsky came to visit it. Then the school’s director also paid her compliments.

Aysel thought that “Many teachers did not accept the parents”, and saw it as their task to “build a bridge between the school and parents”. When Shahirah heard that some teachers said they did not see a purpose in these parents’ meetings (see section 5.2.2), she defended the work they were doing, stressing that both Aysel’s and her own children were studying at university. All three of Shahirah’s children were either at university or attending higher secondary school, and Aysel’s son was also a
university student. Thus, they said, there was evidence that they knew how to support their children in that respect. "I don't understand why they're against our work", Shahirah said:

We had the same problems at the beginning; we also put ourselves on our own feet. We're from the same community. We were always present at school; we always took care of our children's education. There's evidence — our sons are university students now.\footnote{This is a reconstruction of what she said during a meeting, of which I did not take any recording.}

Shahirah and Aysel saw themselves as cultural brokers, as Mr. Al-Hadary introduced above did. They stressed that by speaking Arabic and Turkish, they covered the linguistic backgrounds of the big majority of parents who came to the café, and that it was much easier for parents to come to school to discuss issues if they knew there was someone who could translate for them or just discuss things in their own language. As will be illustrated in 5.2.3, many mothers appreciated the café and they were generally content with Shahirah’s and Aysel’s work.

Shahirah also underlined that while teachers often complained about parents, some parents were also quick to make generalisations about child care workers and teachers and disinclined to believe that not every teacher was against their children. As an example, she mentioned how she sometimes had to explain to parents that if teachers were concerned about children fasting, this did not necessarily mean that they were against their religion, but that they did not want them to faint in class etc., as some children at this school were already fasting at a very young age. Shahirah regarded it as a major task of hers to mediate between teachers and parents on such issues.

Shahirah was very engaged in her job and sometimes critical about women who did not show up at the meetings, or who said that they had to leave early. She told the story of how she had once called at the home of a woman who had not turned up to a meeting, and had excused herself with a claim that she had an appointment at the Job
Centre. “I went to her house and rang her door bell, and when she opened, I said to her: ‘Oh, I see, you’re at the Job Centre, right?’”.

As mentioned in chapter 3, Shahirah often reminisced nostalgically about the 1990s, because it had been easier to work with the families at educational institutions in Neukölln then. She thought that currently, many families were too concerned with religion, in a way that was only focused on rules and regulations, e.g. always asking themselves whether a certain food was *haram* or not. These women were not truly engaging with religion, Shahirah said, which must involve reading and interpreting the Qur’an. Back in the 1990s, families only rarely became concerned about the kind of food their children would be served at the birthday party of a non-Muslim child, or prohibited a child from taking part in school trips. Shahirah thought this started after September 11, 2001.

Aysel and Shahirah both contrasted themselves with the current generation of migrant parents by saying that the latter “did not make much of an effort to integrate”. Shahirah described herself and Aysel as part of a generation of people of migrant or refugee background that still made efforts to do so, while in her view, the current generation, “especially the Arab ones”, tended to withdraw.128 “We always tried to take the first step”, she said. Aysel said that for her and her parents, the main issue had been to be accepted by Germans, “and show them that we are also nice people”. She said,

I don’t have any understanding for parents who don’t show up at parent-teacher conferences. It’s no excuse if you have many children, you just have to organise well. In Turkey there are also evenings where parents just have to be present at school. I don’t have any understanding for people who say they want their children to be successful but don’t do anything for it.129

As Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco write, in the US it is also typical that migrants who have been in the country for longer periods position themselves as the

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128 I asked her whether that impression might be connected to the fact that the earlier generation had more often come to Germany as migrant workers, while the later one, and especially people of Palestinian and Lebanese background, had more often come as refugees. She disagreed and pointed out that there had also been many Kurds who had arrived as refugees – for instance, her sister had been in prison in Turkey for one year before she emigrated to Germany.

129 This is a reconstruction of what Aysel told me during a meeting, which I did not record.
ones who worked really hard and who fought for acceptance, and say that the current generation is not doing the same (2002:50-51). Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco point out something which is also true of Germany in this respect, but often forgotten: that immigration and integration policies have become more restrictive in recent years, and that there are much higher expectations of the current generation of migrants than of earlier ones. In order to obtain German citizenship, for instance, one now has to prove German language competencies of B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and go through a citizenship test, which was not the case before 2008.

It seemed to me that the role of cultural mediator led to some perceived conflicts in their sense of belonging or cultural citizenship. Shahirah and Aysel felt themselves to be part of a Muslim community, but also wanted to distinguish themselves from it. Especially when there was a teacher or other school staff member around, Shahirah would often stress that she was a different kind of Muslim than the usual parents at school. Both of them stressed that they were modern, or civilised, Muslims, and Shahirah would distinguish herself from “illiterate” Muslims who “just know about Islam from their memory”.

Regarding issues of belonging in modern nation-state societies, Hage stresses that there are usually certain features that are perceived as negative by the subjects, or as impeding a full belonging to society. He describes the case of a Christian Lebanese woman in Australia who felt she had to distinguish herself from Muslim Lebanese, and even attacked a woman with a headscarf, because she considered that her Lebanese ness “operates as a kind of negative capital in the field”, and tried to “valorise her Christianity” (Hage 1998:61). In Shahirah’s interactions with teachers or other school staff, in some ways she seemed to consider Islam such a hindrance to acceptance, as she often worked to distinguish herself from other Muslims.
5.2.2 A Bridge Between Schools and Parents?

Parents’ cafés figure in the Open Society Institute’s study *Muslims in Berlin* (2010) as a policy recommendation for the setting of the school, an example of a policy that “intensifies personal contact with, and builds mutual trust between, teachers and minority and Muslim parents by creating opportunities for informal contact” (OSI 2010:152). As stated above, parents’ cafés are meant to work as a bridge between schools and parents, because one assumes that parents have certain fears in their contact with schools, and that the German education system cannot function well without a certain amount of parent involvement.

At the parents’ café I attended, most of the teachers only rarely joined the meeting, and there were few who regularly did so. One reason might have been that these meetings took place in the mornings, when teachers have to give classes. However, Mr. Fischer managed to attend the meetings in the breaks, and had arranged his timetable to allow it. There was hardly any other teacher who came by and sat down with the mothers. What was remarkable was that when teachers joined the meeting, they regularly initiated talks about Islam, mostly under a normative perspective: what kind of clothes were acceptable, etc. This is reminiscent of what Shahirah had reported about the head of school, who had warned her not to make an Islamic group out of the meeting. It seemed that some of the teachers had the same concerns.

Besides the few teachers who passed by at this meeting, the majority of teachers had been ignoring this café. Mr. Fischer said that many teachers had doubted the purpose of the café: when they passed by the room, they saw the mothers drinking coffee, eating, and laughing, and thought they could not be doing any work. However, they still ignored it. As the funding for the café had not been provided by the school itself, but by Quarter Management, the teachers had not cared much about it.
In 2013, the Quarter Management funding ran out and from then on, the parents' café was funded by a programme for schools in boroughs perceived as socially problematic. This was a deal the Mayor Buschkowsky had arranged with the Berlin Senate: schools in areas that were recognised as socially problematic received 100,000 € extra per year, and it was to be decided by the school how this money was to be spent. Many teachers then started to question whether any of the annual extra funds should be spent on the café, saying it was wasted money, and that they would rather spend the money on the children instead of the parents, in order to run activities like theatre groups. Mr. Fischer said,

Teachers often say that parents aren’t interested in school, but then they don’t want to join the mothers and talk with them. They say, “We’re responsible for the children, and not for the parents. They’re educationally deprived, so why should we bother with them. Their cultural background is very different, so it’s difficult. We don’t know the parents and their situation anyway, so what’s the use.” Many teachers are really against this café.\(^{130}\)

Mr. Fischer also used the word “reproaches/accusations” (Vorwürfe) in that he said that teachers often reproached parents for being uninterested, etc. When this issue came up, Shahirah said that she was hurt because the teachers did not accept the parents’ café. She had built it up from the beginning and had put much engagement and work in it; she had encouraged mothers to join by going to their houses and ringing their doorbells.

Mr. Al-Hadary reported a similar issue for the parents’ café at his school. It was well visited by mothers; he said that there were around twenty mothers who regularly joined the meetings. At this school, it was also the case that teachers often did not see the purpose of these meetings. In the beginning there had been two to three teachers who sometimes showed up, but this had stopped. There were no costs for the meeting, because the mothers organised it by themselves, by collecting money and providing all the food themselves, and the school social workers did not attend all the meetings, but only when there was a special event. Mr. Al-Hadary said,

\(^{130}\) This is a reconstruction of what Mr. Fischer told me during a parents’ café session.
The parents think, "Ok, that's good; that reduces a lot of stress." The children are at school, and they sit together. But there's still a lot to be clarified about who will build that bridge between teachers and parents. The question remains, how, when, and where. ... The parents are there. But what do the teachers expect? Do they expect the parents to paint the whole building green? What do the teachers expect, what do they want? That's the question. Do they want to cooperate with the parents? Or do the teachers complain about the parents, and the parents about the teachers? What exactly is the parents' task? What exactly are they supposed to do? What do teachers actually want from us?131

When I asked him how this bridge might be built, Mr. Al-Hadary mentioned house visits as a possible improvement. He said that so far, teachers had been only conducting house visits if there were serious problems (wenn es brennt). In his view, the school should take further steps in that direction. At another primary school, the social work unit staff had also made good experiences by visiting families at their home. Mr. Pohl bemoaned the fact that teachers mostly did not visit families at their homes, but said that sometimes they as social work staff managed to convince them to do so. He also thought it should be part of a teacher’s job to conduct house visits and thus to actually enter into contact with the parents:

We personally think house visits are a really good thing. It means turning away from this exchange by means of letters – which you can't avoid completely, but it's not a good form of communication, especially with Arab families. They just like to interact personally. ... Sometimes we just pass by there, and ask if we can come in. It hardly ever happens that we're rejected at the door. Even if we approach them with difficult topics, I have to say, one is really always welcome. What's more difficult is to make the parents come here.132

As described in section 5.1.4, Mr. Pohl was also critical of the fact that most of the communication between schools and parents was problem-centred: in his view,

131 “Die Eltern denken, ‘Ok, das ist gut, das baut viel Stress ab.’ Das Kind ist in der Schule, und sie sitzen zusammen. Aber es bleibt immer noch, wer baut diese Brücke zwischen Lehrern und Eltern. Da bleibt immer noch die Frage, wie, und wann, und wo. ... Die Eltern sind bereit. Aber was erwarten die Lehrer? Erwarten sie, dass die Lehrer die ganze Schule grün streichen? Was erwarten die Lehrer, was wollen die Lehrer? Das ist die Frage. Wollen sie gemeinsam mit den Eltern zusammen arbeiten? Oder meckern die Lehrer über die Eltern, Eltern meckern über die Lehrer. Aber, was ist genau die Aufgabe? Was sollen die Eltern genau tun? Was wollen die Lehrer eigentlich von uns?"

132 “Wir persönlich halten das für ein gutes Mittel. Also das ist halt weg von diesem Briefaustausch, den man halt auch manchmal hat, aber das ist keine Form der Kommunikation mit gerade arabischen Familien. Die mögen’s gerne persönlich einfach auch. ... Manchmal gehen wir einfach vorbei, genau, und fragen ob wir reingehen können. Aber es passiert eigentlich nie, dass wir abgewiesen werden an der Tür, also selbst bei schwierigen Themen, das muss man sagen, da ist man wirklich immer willkommen, eigentlich. Es ist schon eher schwieriger, die Eltern einfach auch hierher zu lotsen.”
parents were often annoyed, because they only received calls from the school when there were problems, and that this was a mutual reaction (Wechselwirkung) that the social work unit staff wanted to avoid.

To conclude, the parents’ café where I conducted fieldwork had a good number of mothers who attended regularly, but there were only very few teachers who showed up regularly. I do not know what exactly was the reason and the point has not been to blame all teachers for it. However, this example was meant to counter certain strands of mainstream public discourse where it has been held that migrant parents cannot be made to show up at school for events like parent teacher conferences at all, because they are uninterested or because of certain anxieties of such an institution. During the hours of these meetings, teachers would actually have had the opportunity to discuss issues with parents, but did not make use of it. The next section portrays some of the mothers’ voices.

5.2.3 The Mothers: “We Come Here Because of Our Children”

The mothers used this café as a space to socialise, to share food and jokes, share stories about their experiences as migrants, escape their households in order to socialise and make contacts with other women, and complain and joke about their husbands and children. But they stressed that above all, they attended the café for the benefit of their children. Farihah, a mother of four whom I introduced in chapter 3, stressed that her son always asked her whether she would come to school and that he was happy when he saw her there. When I asked her why she found the parents’ café important, she said,

Because of the children. When I’m there, my son knows, “My mom is there for me. She has contact with the teachers and is prepared for me.” I also see the women outside of the school. I don’t go there to drink coffee. I go there because of my son, not because of the women. I’m content with Aysel and Shahirah. But I go there because of my son.133

133 “Wegen den Kindern. Wenn ich da bin, weiß mein Sohn, ,Mama ist dabei. Sie hat Kontakt mit
Farihah reacted a little defensively to my question, because this was at the time when it turned out that some teachers thought the women were only chatting and drinking coffee during these meetings and not doing any serious work, as described in the last section. Farihah stressed how much the mothers had contributed to the school and how many activities they had organised for the children. She said,

We have done a lot of activities together with the teachers. We cooked together and organised celebrations. At the parents’ café, if a mother has a question about a certain disease, for instance, we invite someone to give a talk about it. We had talks about child rearing, and topics like drugs, and sexual abuse. We had talks about stress. We invite the Borough Mothers to give talks. We went on excursions with the children. Eight women are always there and are always active. We're always there for the school, we're always prepared.

Farihah said that before the question of the café’s funding had come up, she had not had the impression that the teachers had been that dissatisfied with what the mothers were doing. She thought this issue had only come up since it was about money, when they did not get funds from an external source any more.

Not only Shahirah and Aysel, as described in section 5.2.1, but also the mothers who regularly attended the café, like Shahirah, Rahma, or Dalia, said they acted as mediators between the school and the other mothers. Rahma, a mother of four children, of Palestinian background, who had come to West Germany from Lebanon with her family as a child, and moved to Berlin for marriage, said,

We're always active. For the children, and also for other women. If one woman has a problem, we offer help. If there’s a woman who doesn’t speak German well, she calls one of the women in the parents’ café, and we translate. Some mothers, if something happened at school, come to talk to
us first, instead of to the class or to the teachers, and we try to help. They also talk to Shahirah and Aysel then and we try to find a solution.  

Shahirah also mentioned the meeting’s effect on children’s sense of belonging as an important one: Children would come to her and say they were worried because their mother did not speak any German, but then she could tell them that it did not matter because the women in the café could translate for them.  

Dalia, a mother of five children, who also identified as Palestinian, had lived in Lebanon as a baby, grown up in Egypt, and moved to Berlin for marriage, said,  

We talk a lot about the school and about the children. When we’re speaking in Arabic, we’re mostly talking about the children and about our families. What happened, what we can do. The children say, this or that happened, and then we discuss it.  

One issue discussed by the mothers was that they did not want male child care workers to change the clothes of little girls, or to wash them after they had gone to the toilet. Farihah said,  

One year ago, we had a parents’ talk. The women wished that male child care workers would only change the boys’ clothes. Usually, day care centres employ more women than men, but at ours, there are many men. We Arab women don’t like it if the men change the clothes of the little girls. We don’t like it. We talked to the staff and they said, “Ok, agreed. We have enough staff.” All mothers said, “We want that.” But now many of the staff are sick or have moved away or the like, and we still have the problem.  

The things that mattered for the mothers and that were discussed in the café were not only ones regarding children’s enhancement of performance at schools, but also related to child rearing more broadly, and sometimes regarded as culturally specific to the women’s identity as Arab or Muslim.

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138 "Wir reden viel über die Schule und über die Kinder. Wenn wir Arabisch sprechen, reden wir meistens über die Kinder und über unsere Familien. Was passiert ist, was wir machen können. Die Kinder sagen, das ist passiert, und dann diskutieren wir.”  

At the background of her own schooling experience in Lebanon in her childhood and youth, Farihah found that some teachers in Berlin were not proper role models for their children:

The English teacher was very nice, but the maths teacher was rude. He also looked funny. Once I was at school, and sorry, but I have to say that now, he looked like a bum. In Lebanon, the teacher looks like a bank employee. Chic, a role model, clean and well-groomed. We say, the teacher is like a prophet. If you pray for the teacher, you have to pray for him like for a prophet. Because he’s responsible for the children’s upbringing [Erziehung]. The school, the teacher, has such a great influence on things.¹⁴⁰

Farihah also thought teachers in Berlin were often not strict enough.

In Lebanon, the teachers are stricter than here. You know, my father used to be head of the school in our village. He worked for the school for thirty, thirty-five years. When he walked along the street, everybody respected him. They said, "You’re as important for us as the doctor. You raise our children.” In Lebanon, children have much homework and have to do much more. When the teacher enters the door, everybody is quiet. They have to respect him. Well, that also changed in the recent years, because of mobile phones and the like. But when I was a child, I was afraid when I hadn’t done my homework, or when I had bad grades. I was afraid. I wasn’t allowed to watch TV, or to go out. When I got a bad school report, I hid myself for two days. .. The teachers should be stricter. The children nowadays lack respect. My son was also like that [at school].¹⁴¹

In that respect, some parents stressed that there was a cultural mismatch between their own expectations of teachers, and teaching practices in Berlin, just as Mr. Al-Hadary’s quote in section 5.1.5 illustrates, where he describes the parents he worked with as raising similar issues: parents thought teachers were not authoritative enough and that they did not manage to assert themselves towards the pupils in class.


However, in some mainstream public discourse, as described in the Open Society Institute’s quote at the beginning of section 5.1, the main issue raised about “Muslim” parents has been that they do not show any interest in their children’s education, and that they might have “threshold fears” of entering the school in order to talk with teachers, or take part in events like parent-teacher conferences. Contrary to how these things have been framed in public discourse, the mothers complained that teachers often did not contact them when there were problems with their children. Farihah said of her older son, who had left school without having passed any school leaving certificate:

My husband was always present at school and asked if there were problems with our son. Does he attend school regularly and do his homework? They said, “There aren’t any problems and we’re content.” But when we got the school report we saw he’d been missing class a lot. Why? My husband just passed by there almost every month. Why didn’t they tell us this? I always asked my son, “Where’s your homework? Don’t you study?” He said, “We don’t have to do anything.” And in the end, he had bad marks. Why?

Dalia stressed that the mothers were very content with Mr. Fischer, who regularly attended the parents’ café:

We’re content with Mr. Fischer. Why? Because every time something happens, he’ll contact us. Ms. Wagner also said, “You can always pass by at my office.” Mr. Fischer also says, “If someone [among the parents] wants to take part in a class, they’re welcome.”

Aysel also stressed that the other teachers should take Mr. Fischer as an example, because he conducted house visits and reached out for the parents (auf die Eltern zugehen), practices which were also highly appreciated by the mothers whose voices I presented here. For this group of women, it was not the case that their

\[142\] I discussed his situation regarding schooling in chapter 4, section 4.3.3.
\[144\] “Mit Herr Fischer sind wir zufrieden, warum? Weil, immer wenn etwas passiert, meldet er sich bei uns. Frau Wagner hat auch immer gesagt, „Ihr könnt immer bei mir vorbeikommen.” Herr Fischer sagt auch, „Wenn jemand in die Klasse reinkommen will, kann er kommen.”
\[145\] Gibson & Koyama write that the anthropology of education has neglected the question of what successful educational programs look like, and that especially parent meetings and house
“threshold fears” impeded them from fulfilling the school’s demands of parent involvement. Instead, they were of the opinion that teachers often did not contact them enough and appreciated it if they did so.

5.3 Conclusion

The alleged “educational conflict between Muslim parents and schools” that is postulated in some public discourse and in some studies commissioned by the government (e.g. Kelek 2006) is not one that can simply be explained by a contrast between Islam and “Central European” values. In the local setting, what contributed to the spread of the perception of a conflict was the nature of interactions between teachers and parents, which mostly consisted of problem-focused interactions. This relates to general points about the contact between street-level bureaucrats like teachers and their clients made by the sociologist Michael Lipsky (Lipsky 1969, 1980), who argued that these interactions are necessarily problem-centred. Bureaucrats often lack time and other resources in order to be able to visit parents at home, for instance.

Further, Greg Noble and Scott Poynting describe how in Australia, over the two decades before 2010, the primary “axes of othering” had moved from ethnicity towards religion – namely, Islam (Noble & Poynting 2010:491). This is true of Germany as well, and the effects were experienced by parents in the context of schools: there was a general feeling that there was an unjustified attribution of blame towards parents regarding issues of education. Assumptions about Islamic practices as the ideological opposite of educational institutions, the former being associated with repression, and the latter with freedom or democracy, were an issue that enhanced the perception of conflict.

In this chapter I discussed schools’ expectations of parents and forms of parent engagement. It has often been assumed that an issue between Western schools and visits of teachers have helped to “bridge the distance between home and school” (Gibson & Koyama 2011:7).
minority parents, especially those of working-class background, as are many of the people who identify as Muslim in Neukölln, is that schools demand a certain engagement from parents and contact with schools, and that this might be difficult for parents to fulfil. A common explanation is then that parents either have certain “threshold fears” of schools because they feel that they are not educated enough to be in contact, or that their different cultural perspective on schooling means that they find it inappropriate to be in contact with teachers and discuss with them their children's behaviour, etc.

The material presented in this chapter shows that this pattern was not always confirmed at schools in Neukölln. First, as the case of the parents’ café shows, teachers also had certain anxieties of interacting with parents whom they perceived rather different in terms of cultural and educational background. When teachers offered parents contact that went beyond a problem-centred interaction, like visiting them at home, or interacting with them in parents’ cafés, parents were often happy about this and greeted the teachers’ engagement.

"Cultural mismatch" approaches regarding schools and education of minority children (cf. Nozaki 2000:357) stress that parents have culturally different ideas about schooling and education, and that this cultural mismatch per se leads to difficulties. Though in the cases described here, the parents stressed some such aspects, like their expectations of teachers to assert more authority, the general issue about parents’ contact with schools was one where a cultural mismatch theory was not appropriate: For the parents it was not a cultural standard that teachers visited them at home, or that they interacted with them informally, as in parents’ cafés. Nevertheless there were many parents who welcomed such engagement. What made participation in schools difficult for parents was not a cultural mismatch per se, but a certain vagueness

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146 See Mehan 1992 for an overview of research on this issue in the sociology of education.
147 As Hurtig & Dyrness write, cultural mismatch approaches were welcome corrections to “stories of minority parents’ under-involvement” (Hurtig & Dyrness 2011:4), but in focusing on a cultural mismatch there is the risk of essentialising parents who are assumed to be from the same cultural group.
about what was expected from them, against the background of a public discourse where it was often held that especially working class people from Muslim countries did not engage in their children's education.
6. A State-Funded Child Welfare Centre

In the previous chapter I looked at interactions between parents and school staff in the context of primary schools. In this chapter, I analyse a state-funded children’s centre, aimed at supporting parents and children outside of school. One theme I develop is how social workers and child care workers as agents on the ground see their work and if and how they relate to the political discourses about integration laid out in chapter 2. Another theme relates to the relationships between the social workers and the centre’s attendees, the biggest group of whom are former Palestinian refugees from Lebanon.

The framework for this chapter I draw from the anthropology of policy and cultural citizenship theory (Aihwa Ong). How is the centre’s approach being perceived by the attendees? How does it influence their overall feelings of belonging to society? How do actors draw on certain policy discourses? How are policies being implemented? What effect does this have on the people who are thought to be the targets of the policies/organisations?

I first introduce the centre, some of the staff, and some of the attendees (6.1.1), in order to then describe its stated pedagogical aims (6.1.2). In section 6.1.3 I sketch the paradigm of interculturality and analyse if and how it was implemented in the centre. Section 6.1.4 discusses what stance the head of the centre took towards the integration paradigm and the related political discourses in Neukölln. Section 6.2 then takes a closer look at the contact between staff and attendees, and analyses some points of conflict (6.2.1). I then go on to discuss what stance towards Islamic practices the centre took and how this approach was being received (6.2.2). Lastly, I describe how the head of the centre has recently been trying to endorse an activating approach to social work, and how the parents have reacted to it (6.2.1). This is one example of the way an active citizenship approach, introduced in the introduction and chapter 2, has played out in social work institutions on the ground.
6.1 The Centre

In this section, I introduce the setting of the parent-child centre, the people who work there, and the people who frequent it. How do the staff conceptualise their work and their role? Who are the people who frequent the centre and for what reasons do they do so? What are the stated pedagogical aims of the centre? How do the staff relate to broader migrant integration discourses?

6.1.1 The Setting, Staff, and Attendees

The centre was located in a low-income area in the borough of Neukölln, which has high rates of unemployment and many residents with a refugee or work migration background. Among the parents who frequented the centre (mainly mothers, but some fathers also attended), most had a Palestinian or Turkish background, or were from the former Yugoslavia. A few people of German-speaking background also frequented the centre, especially on one day a week, when a group of women who were converts to Islam attended the centre with their children.

The centre occupied a rather large piece of land like a small park with a soccer ground and various playgrounds for children outside. In the summer it offered a pleasant environment in which to socialise in this densely populated urban area. Inside the building, there was space for children to play different sorts of games, and a space with sofas for the use of the parents. Coffee and small snacks were also offered for sale. The centre was open every afternoon on weekdays (on one day a week there was children’s day, and parents were not allowed into the centre), and there were various activities offered to children, like basteln (handicraft work), cooking, drumming, theatre groups, computer classes, hip hop dance, juggling and the like.

The centre was financed by the district of Neukölln's youth office (Jugendamt) which in turn was part of the district government's department of health and youth
(Abteilung Jugend und Gesundheit). It was run by a social worker. The other staff who held permanent positions were child care workers;\textsuperscript{140} university students or other non-trained staff were employed in part-time jobs in order to conduct specific programmes with the children (i.e. theatre play or cooking).

Monika, the social worker who was the head of centre, had only worked there since 2010. Before that she had been employed for the Neukölln youth welfare services and visited families at their homes (sozialpädagogischer Dienst). Monika strongly underlined her role as a state agent, and would be concerned for what was going on in the centre to be in line with youth and children's welfare law (Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz). As the head, she was responsible for developing the guidelines for the centre, employing staff, and writing reports to the youth office.

Monika was around fifty and had lived in West Berlin her whole life. She said that she had become a social worker because, having had six younger brothers and sisters, she had always had to look out for the younger ones “just as was the case in Arab families”, by which she mainly referred to the Palestinian families in the centre. Regarding her contact with the centre’s attendees, she said she thought she had a “fundamentally different gender conception” than the attendees. She stressed that though she had also had to look out for her brothers and sisters, her brothers had to help her mother in the household, too, while in the centre, she observed that “boys have much freedom, and girls have to function”. I asked her whether she saw her work as connected to the issue of women’s rights, a question to which she responded thus:

It'd be great if the women saw it that way [laughs]. Well, I have a different gender conception [Genderbild] than our attendees here. ... Let me put it this way, my gender conception is fundamentally different from the one I perceive here. This is of course also influenced by my subjective perspective – well, especially those from the Arab region – they’re often Palestinians, who eventually fled here, or Lebanese, who also eventually fled the war, well, or the Turkish community, who tend to be from Eastern Anatolia ... From early on, the girls serve the boys. You can observe it here among the girls and their brothers. ... The seven year-old girl serves the

\textsuperscript{140} Social work (Soziale Arbeit/Sozialpädagogik) requires a university degree; child care work requires vocational training. In order to improve the readability of this chapter, I will use “the social workers” generically for the staff of the centre – the social worker who ran the centre and the child care workers.
eight year-old or the six year-old boy. Well, with serving I mean, all of them ate muesli, and then it’s about putting the muesli bowls away. And it’s clear then, the only girl in this group of three will clear up the table. No matter if she’s older or not. She clears up, because she’s the girl.

Monika said that the fact that she was not married herself made it sometimes difficult for her to interact with the mothers, and she thought that she would feel more accepted by them if she was married.

She perceived the people who attended the centre, who were mainly Muslim, as very religious, and she was afraid they would not accept other views:

Freedom of religion also means that you’re allowed to say, “There is no God”. And you’re not allowed to say that here. That’s my view. I never heard someone say, “There is no God”, or, “For me, there’s no God”. Because I think here in the centre, or maybe in the urban area here, the Arab or Muslim population is so big, and they all practise their belief quite intensely. They would rather accept that you believe in God and are a member of another religion, than if you say, “There is no God”. In their view, those are the worst people. And I think, we would only lose such religious discussions here. I mean, as pedagogues, because we’re here for acting and the like and not for matters of belief.

Another staff person was Frank, who was a child care worker who had also been born and raised in West Berlin (almost all people employed by the centre had).

Frank said he entered the social welfare sector because when he was young, he had attended youth centres himself and was thus familiar with such settings, and liked to interact with many people. Frank was responsible for the counter service inside,
handing out board games etc., and for taking care of the playgrounds outside. In winter, he conducted a camp fire for the children outside every week where they baked bread on a stick. This was a very popular event, mainly among the boys, and many families came in order for their boys to take part. In the summer, Frank managed an adventure playground outside where children built wooden houses.

Frank never spoke of any personal issues, and I did not collect any information about his personal background. He was sometimes a little sarcastic about social workers seeing their clientele as “needy” and “wanting to do something good” for them. He saw himself as doing low-level work and ordering and managing stuff in a more practical way. He said he did not have much time for thinking about the conceptual side of the centre's work, but he was also critical of the centre as a whole for not making enough effort on that score (s. section 6.1.3). When I asked him about the pedagogical aims of activities like the campfire, he answered,

Well, I would like to enhance children's self-confidence, promote motor skills, trust in themselves, mechanical skills by means of building houses, introducing things they maybe don't really know yet, and also just arouse interest, show them what a reasonable cooperation looks like, social behaviour, handling rules, and the fact that the strongest can't always win, promoting the weaker ones a little, those kinds of things.\footnote{“Also, ich möchte den Kindern hier ein Selbstbewusstsein geben, motorische Fähigkeiten, Vertrauen zu sich selber, mit dem Häuser bauen auch ein bisschen handwerkliches Geschick fördern, an Sachen heranführen, die sie vielleicht nicht so kennen, Interessen wecken einfach auch, ein vernünftiges Miteinander, Sozialverhalten, Umgang mit Regeln, dass nicht der Stärkste siegen kann, Schwächere ein bisschen fördern, so in diese Richtung.”}

Frank got along well with most parents and was quite popular among the mothers. The friendship group of mothers of Palestinian background who were the most regular attendees of the centre would often joke with him and mention him in a positive way. In contrast to Monika, however, Frank was not responsible for social work with the parents (see next section). Other child care workers in the centre were Marliese, Andrea, and Peter; Hilde was responsible for overseeing the computer room and had no training as child care worker.

Among the people who attended the centre, the most regular ones were a group of around ten mothers of Palestinian background, who had come to Berlin from

\footnote{“Also, ich möchte den Kindern hier ein Selbstbewusstsein geben, motorische Fähigkeiten, Vertrauen zu sich selber, mit dem Häuser bauen auch ein bisschen handwerkliches Geschick fördern, an Sachen heranführen, die sie vielleicht nicht so kennen, Interessen wecken einfach auch, ein vernünftiges Miteinander, Sozialverhalten, Umgang mit Regeln, dass nicht der Stärkste siegen kann, Schwächere ein bisschen fördern, so in diese Richtung.”}
Lebanon for marriage, or as refugees; one of them had been born in Berlin. Shams, for instance, was in her mid-thirties, married with five children, who in 2012 ranged between five and seventeen years of age. Her husband worked in the kitchen of a big restaurant and she had recently started to work as an early-morning cleaner at a local drugstore.

Shams had come to Berlin from the Sidon area in Lebanon in 1995 to marry her husband, who was her cousin, and had already been there since 1990. They lived under status of tolerated residence (see section 3.2.2) for five years, then, in 2000, they received a residence permit, and Shams got German citizenship in 2012. Shams cited the legal discrimination against Palestinians in Lebanon as her reason to migrate to Germany. She said,

In Lebanon, Palestinians aren't allowed to study at universities, to buy a flat, or to drive a taxi. My parents don't have any rights there, but even I who was born in Lebanon don't have any rights. Now, with German citizenship, when I go back to Lebanon I can do whatever I want. Also, here in Germany my children are now born with full citizenship rights.\footnote{\textsuperscript{152} This is a reconstruction of what Shams told me, which I did not record.}

Shams stressed how grateful she was for the rights she got in Germany. In August 2013, she came to the children's centre with a letter with her election voting card for the German federal elections. She said how proud and happy she was because she had never in her life been allowed to vote.

Abidah was a mother of five children and a housewife, and had lived in Lebanon before she came to Germany almost twenty years ago. She told me that her father had been taken from Palestine to Lebanon by his parents in 1948 as a small child. Abidah had not been able to go to Lebanon for a long time and had not seen her parents again before they died, about which she was very sad, and sometimes even seemed desperate when she talked about it.

Another woman among this group of friends, Hafa, had been born in Berlin in 1975; her mother had come to Berlin from Lebanon as a refugee in 1974, before the start of the civil war. Hafa visited the medium tier secondary school and afterwards
completed vocational training as child care worker (staatlich geprüfte Erzieherin). When I first met Hafa she was not working in a job, but when I re-visited my field site in 2013, she had started to work as a child care worker at a kindergarten in Neukölln. Hafa stressed that her family did not have to take any money from the welfare agency, for her husband’s income, combined with children’s money etc., was enough to allow the family to get by (in contrast to most other families who visited the centre). Hafa had two young sons of around three and five years old and did not want any more children. When I asked her what she wished for the future of her two sons, she said she wished that they would have a job and not be dependent on the welfare agency. When she first visited the centre around two to three years earlier, she had first met Shams, Abidah, and the others, who had already attended it for much longer (up to fifteen years), and then they had found out that their parents had lived in the same village in Lebanon (Nabatieh Governorate); some of the women were her cousins.

As to their reasons for visiting the centre, this group of women stressed that they had big families and that they wanted to spend time together each afternoon. Their flats were too small to visit each other with the children. And, moreover, the neighbours would sometimes complain about the noise children made running around. The mothers said they appreciated the centre because it was fenced and they could let their children run around freely without being too worried about them. They saw the centre as a space where they could socialise and relax in the afternoon, and escape their households and meet other women in order to chat or talk about problems, and at the same time their children could meet friends. In the next section I describe the official aims of the centre, the endorsement of which sometimes led to certain conflicts with the mothers, as I will then discuss in section 6.2.
6.1.2 The Centre’s Official Aims

As stated, the centre was financed by the youth office. When I asked the head of the centre, Monika, about the purpose of various activities offered by the centre, she would usually refer to the fact that the institution was part of the youth office. She stressed that it was part of the offices’ youth development programme (Jugendförderung) and was directed at the “development of children and youth who are in their school age”.

It was only in 2004 that parents had been officially allowed into the centre, and the centre had been aimed at both parents and children since then. Before, it had been for children only. Monika stressed that the institution, in that respect, was exceptional compared with others that were also under the Neukölln youth office. “We’re the only institution in Neukölln that is so open for parents”, she said. “In the other institutions, only children and youth come together”. When I asked her why, she said, “Because this isn’t our mission. We’re a youth development institution.”

Children from five until fifteen years would be taken care of by the staff when they visited the centre, while younger children had to be watched by their parents.153 Officially, the institution’s aim was the “advancement of learning outside of school” (außerschulische Förderung, außerschulisches Lernen). The centre’s guidelines, which Monika had reworked in 2012, justified this by saying that “children have a right to be supported in their development”. It was stressed that, though parents were also allowed to visit the institution, children had to be given the priority in the everyday activities of the centre. Regarding what the centre offered to children, Monika said,

We make an offer to the children to pass their time here and to experience things that they can’t experience elsewhere. There are rules, but there’s a free atmosphere. A child can choose freely which of the offered activities they want to participate in. At school, there’s a “must”, which isn’t the case

153 “Die Begleitpersonen führen die Aufsicht und sind verantwortlich für die Beschäftigung mit den Kleinkindern”.

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here. There are classes, and one has to sit down. Here, one can choose. One can pick those things one feels like doing at the moment.\textsuperscript{154}

The guidelines also said that it was a centre for “recreational activities of children and parents” and a “place of encounter for parents of different cultural identities”. Regarding activities for parents, it offered a parents’ cafe (\textit{Elterncafé}) on four afternoons a week, where the child care workers or part-time staff were meant to do social work with parents (\textit{Elternarbeit}) (see section 6.2.3). At the beginning of my fieldwork, the conceptual basis for that work, as Marliese and Frank admitted, was still lacking.\textsuperscript{155} When I asked Monika about the aims of parents’ work (\textit{Elternarbeit}), and whether the youth office gave them any guidelines in that respect, she explained to me in detail the three provisions the centre was based on:

\begin{quote}
We all work on the basis of the “children and youth support law” [\textit{Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz}]. This law contains three paragraphs that are of interest for us here. That is, § 11, the “general advancement of children and youth” and their families; support of children outside of class from school age on. Children are already supported in class, at school; there are many capabilities that are promoted there, and what takes place here, is a support outside of the school. For instance, more social learning, more exercise, more opportunities for play, and more creative work that isn’t done in arts classes at school. We offer things that are being missed out a little at school. That’s the “general advancement” provision. The second provision is for youth social work. This is § 13. It is more directed at very disadvantaged youth, where the development hasn’t been in accordance with the way that we would like to see it in our society, or with what’s compatible. That they, well, don’t get along in social life very well. And one aspect of that is street work, which in principle, we’re also supposed to do here. But we don’t yet. To take care of the many children who gather outside on the playgrounds and in the courtyards. To seek them out, and also, to make them offers. On the spot, offers at playgrounds, so that they don’t only learn the rules of the street. That they learn a bit better how to handle conflicts, or the like. This is the second provision. And the third provision is § 16. That is, advice and education for parents, in order for them to be able to improve their ways of being a parent. That is, offering stimuli to parents to reflect on their parenthood and perhaps in order to change something, or also, to get a confirmation of what one is already doing anyways. Or, family recovery. That is, opportunities for families and recovery. To strengthen the relationship between parents and children.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{154} “Wir machen allen Kindern hier ein Angebot, sich hier aufzuhalten, hier Erfahrungen zu sammeln, die man wo anders nicht sammeln kann. Es ist zwar mit Regeln behaftet, aber in einer freien Atmosphäre. Das Kind kann sich den Angeboten frei zuordnen. Mann muss nicht. In der Schule muss man, hier aber nicht. Da gibt’s Unterricht, da hat man drin zu sitzen. Bei uns kann man wählen. Man kann für sich das heraussehen was einem im Moment am nächsten ist.”

\textsuperscript{155} As soon as I started to volunteer in this centre, my engagement with some of the mothers was interpreted as doing parents’ work – even though I do not have any training in social work or the like.
This is § 16. And actually, this is what here, we always summarise by the term “parents’ work” [Elternarbeit]. Actually, one is supposed to enable parents to live their parenthood in a nice way. For the benefit of the children. We’re not actually interested in the parents as individuals, but in their role as mothers or fathers.156

Monika underlined that “These paragraphs are the legal basis according to which the centre is funded.” She stressed that a state’s actions always had to be based on certain laws. When, as in their case, one decided to allow parents in, one had to see whether there was a relevant provision in that respect. She underlined that this legislation was the basis on which the Berlin Senate allocated funding, and on which the district’s funding was regulated:

If you don’t have such a law, Buschkowsky will say, “These are voluntary social services, we can’t afford that, and that’s why we don’t need it.” But if there’s a certain legal provision [Rechtsvorschrift], you can say, “Alright, we serve that or that, and the state is obliged to offer that.” Then you can say, “Alright, now you’re working according to § 11 and § 16 here. Please make educational offers to parents.” This is a demand my supervisors have towards me. One expects that in the end, we will provide educational offers for parents according to § 16.157


157 "Wenn man so ein Gesetz nicht hat, wird Buschkowsky sagen, „Das sind hier freiwillige soziale Leistungen, die können wir uns nicht leisten, und deswegen brauchen wir das nicht“. Aber wenn’s dann ne Rechtsvorschrift gibt, kann man sagen, „Ok, wir bedienen das und das, und
Thus, the expressed aims of the centre were the advancement of children’s capabilities. Parents were only allowed in as a means to improve the advancement of certain capabilities of children. Monika stressed that as the centre was state sponsored, or more specifically, under the youth office, one always had to be able to refer to certain legal provisions in children’s and youth law in order to justify allocations of money and to make sure that funding was continued.

6.1.3 An “Intercultural” Centre?

In this section, I discuss what role the concept of interculturality played in the centre, as the term “intercultural” had figured in the centre’s official description since 2004. In German policy discourse, the terms “interculturality” or “opening up to interculturality” (Interkulturelle Öffnung) generally refer to the idea that state and other institutions have to open up to the fact that society has become more culturally diverse, and that it is also public institutions’ responsibility to develop means to handle the situation instead of only demanding from migrants that it is they who have to adapt and integrate. The spread of this paradigm is connected to the public recognition that Germany has become a country of immigration (Einwanderungsland), after the state had long identified itself as comprising a basically monocultural nation.

Stephan Lanz writes that in Berlin’s integration discourse, the concept of interculturality had gained a central importance around the time the first Integration Concept was endorsed158 (2005) (Lanz 2009:116). In this policy, it is stated that an “opening up to interculturality” (Interkulturelle Öffnung) should be the general principle of integration policies in Berlin (Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin 2005:14).

158 For further information on the 2005 Berlin Integration Concept, which was the first comprehensive policy on migrant integration in Berlin, see section 2.3.2.
The paradigm of interculturality usually comprises aspects that can be described as rather progressive for the German context, like enhancing employment of people with migration background in public institutions, improving migrants' access to public services by employing translators, for instance, and increasing public institutions' cooperation with migrant associations. However, the concept is sometimes criticised as being too vague, and staff in agencies and administrations say they lack practical help in its implementation (Lima Curvello 2009:248-249).

The term “intercultural” had been added to the centre’s approach in 2004, and thus around the time when the concept of interculturality had gained popularity in Berlin’s political landscape. However, Frank, who had already been employed at the centre at that time (the head of the centre had not), did not relate this labeling to developments at the level of migrant integration politics. He stressed that he had not heard about the paradigm of “opening up to interculturality” and in his view, the centre’s approach was not directly related to that issue. He said that at the time when it had been decided to let parents into the centre, there had been a team conference of some youth office staff, where they had discussed a new approach for the centre. As Frank remembers, the label “intercultural” had been given “because people of many nationalities frequent the centre. That’s why we thought ‘intercultural’ was an appropriate name”.

In this institution, the staff were ready to admit that they had not had time to develop an established meaning of the intercultural aspect of their work. As Frank put it, there had not been much reflection behind this issue: “It was just a name, and will...

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159 In terms of the anthropology of policy, this can be described as a case of a gap between policy discourses and the practices of actors, a gap which is thought to be characteristic of the relationship between policies and practices more generally. As stated above, the anthropology of policy is concerned with the relationship between policies and their implementation – practices that are usually thought to result from these policies. In that respect, it is often argued that there is a certain gap between policies and practices (Mosse 2004:640), for practices are often not directly driven by policy (661), but are influenced by the requirements of organisations, organisational culture and networks of relationships (639; 661). Mosse concludes that “the intersection of the world of policy thought and the world of development practices is partial” (663) – as can also be held for the relationship between policy discourses regarding migrant integration and the practices in this centre.
still have to be filled with content”. He also said he thought “The intercultural aspect should play a bigger role in our work”. When I asked why they had not engaged with it, he said that they had too many “areas to be worked on” (Baustellen), one of which was the one of social work with parents, and that so far, the head of centre had given priority to the latter. He thus referred to work overload and lacking staff resources as an impediment to developing more conceptual guidelines for their work.

Stephan Lanz, who for his study on “Political Constructions in the Immigrant City of Berlin” (Berlin aufgemischt: abendländisch – multikulturell – kosmopolitisch? Die politische Konstruktion einer Einwanderungsstadt, 2007) conducted interviews with officials in various Berlin agencies, writes that people he interviewed reported that such institutions, in effect, commonly ignored the issue of interculturality. He says that agencies often mentioned work overload or organisational problems as a reason for why they did not engage with the principle of intercultural opening (Lanz 2009:118), as it was the case in this centre as well.

When I asked Frank what he thought an intercultural approach might mean, he said that it might be important to “counter the prejudices among all the different nationalities that come here”. In his view, there had been more and more conflicts between children (he was not responsible for parents’ work but worked with children only), like “Arabs against Turks”, “Balkan people amongst each other”, or “everyone against gypsies”. On another occasion when I broached the subject, he said that the centre should perhaps think about giving more appreciation to Islamic festivals and that they had only recently started to officially celebrate Islamic festivals in this centre. Drawing on Lanz’s discussion, one might say that Frank’s position embodies an ethnoculturalist understanding of interculturality. Lanz, in line with his classification of different understandings of integration (differential and diversity ones, as I laid out in chapter section 2.4.1), distinguishes between different understandings of interculturality: a critically-political and an ethno-culturalist one.
A critically-political approach is one that focuses on the necessity of institutional change. It is argued that public structures do not represent the diversity of urban society, and that one has to reflect on social power structures. Lanz writes that this understanding of intercultural competence was prevalent among agents of the Advisory Board for Migration and Integration (Lanz 2009:117). "Ethno-culturalist" refers to a position where interculturality is seen mainly as an additional competence of state institutions to better cope with migrants whose major characteristic is perceived to be their alien culture (Lanz 2009:116). From this perspective, the difference between the majority society and migrants is mainly conceptualised in terms of their different cultures (after Mecheril 2004:22). An ethno-culturalist approach is not much concerned with possibilities of migrants' participation in public institutions or with power imbalances between majority and minorities (Lanz 2009:117).

When Frank spoke about celebrating Islamic festivals, or about countering prejudices amongst different groups, he mainly referred to the people who attended the centre in terms of their different cultural identities and practices. There were no attempts in the centre to employ people of migrant background, to cooperate with migrant organisations, or to enhance the parents' participation in questions related to the organisation of the centre. As described in the last section, parents were only considered a means in order to promote what one considered children's interests.

6.1.4 “Our Work Is Directed at the Same Integration”

In this section, I describe how the head of centre Monika related to the discourse about integration at Neukölln district level (chapter 2) and how she conceptualised integration. Monika was aware of the fact that the Mayor Heinz

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160 See chapter section 2.5.2, where I sketch the role of Migration Advisory Boards.
161 Lanz found that this approach was prevalent among officers in agencies that were connected to the Senate’s Commissioner for Integration.
Buschkowsky’s polemics about migrants who are unwilling to integrate was in Neukölln mainly directed at those of Arabic-speaking background, and she was critical of how they were being scapegoated:

In the public discussions, it's often the Arabs who are the scapegoat. It’s said that they’re not willing to integrate. The public discussion, at least the one that Neukölln's mayor, and Sarrazin, started, stigmatises a lot, ”Those who are not willing to integrate, we have to be tough on them”, and so forth. ... In that respect, Buschkowsky talks more about the Arabs [than the Turks].

As stated above, Monika had previously been employed in a role in the youth office that involved visiting families at their homes. During that time, she worked with many Palestinian refugee families and remembers how the tolerated residence status (chapter 3) wore out those families, e.g. youth getting a school certificate and then not being allowed to do vocational training afterwards, or families living under the constant fear of being deported.

Once a father, who was around forty and had put up with this for ten years already, said to me that here, he’s had to waste his best years, where he’s most able-bodied and capable of work. And that was true, because he was told, „You don’t have any rights here, you’re just tolerated”. There were not rights for the tolerated. ... Also, it was horrible for the children, who went through this for ten, fifteen years, to see that one had to go to the office several times a year and say, ”Please, please”, so that one is allowed to stay, whereas for the children it's their home. That’s in fact horrible. And that was a generation of children where especially among the Arab community here, many didn't integrate. If you keep telling children that you don’t want them, then you shouldn’t be surprised when as youth, they turn away from our society.

162 “In der öffentlichen Diskussion dienen Araber oft als Sündenbock. Die sagt, die sind ja nicht integrationswillig. In der öffentlichen Diskussion, zumindest in der, die hier vom Neuköllner Bürgermeister ausgeht, und von Sarrazin, da wird ja ziemlich stark stigmatisiert, ‚Die Integrationsunwilligen, und die müssen wir mit der harten Hand anfassen’ und so weiter. ... Buschkowsky spricht in der Beziehung eher die Araber an [als die Türken].”

163 “Also mir hat mal ein Vater, der vierzig Jahre alt war und das schon seit zehn Jahren mitgemacht hatte, der hat mir gesagt, er wird hier darauf ausgerichtet, seine besten Jahre, wo er am arbeitsfähigsten und am leistungsfähigsten ist, hier zu verplempern. Und das stimmte auch. Indem man ihm gesagt hat, du hast hier keine Rechte, du wirst hier nur geduldet. Es gab keine Rechte für Geduldeten. ... Es war auch schrecklich für die Kinder, das zehn oder fünfzehn Jahre lang miterleben, dass man da mehrmals im Jahr hingeh und sagt, „Bitte, bitte’, dass man bleiben darf, wo es für die Kinder die Heimat ist. Also das ist schon schrecklich. Das ist auch eine Kindergeneration gewesen, wo hier gerade aus der arabischen Community hier sich viele nicht integriert haben. Wenn man einem Kind ständig sagt, dass es nicht erwünscht ist hier, dann muss man sich hinterher nicht wundern, wenn dann ein Jugendlicher dabei herauskommt, der sich von unserer Gesellschaft abwendet.”
Monika said she had supported those families in getting a residence permit, “because due to the war, the people could not be sent back anywhere”, and because the tolerated residence status was impeding the children’s integration, which it was her job to promote.

Though Monika was critical of Buschkowsky’s position in some respects, she also stressed that she saw her work as “directed at the same kind of integration” which he also demanded (section 2.4), in that she saw it as her job to help people integrate “into this, and not into any kind of society”.

Well, we’re the ones who work with the people on the ground, and the mayor, or the whole district administration, agree on a certain tenor according to which they conduct programmes and finance them. I think we’re working on the same integration of the same people, whom we – well, we’d like to raise the children so that they will be citizens able to live in society [gemeinschaftsfähig], and with this of course I mean this society, the way it is at the moment. Well, that pertains to the colourful diversity of migrants, but also to the German majority society, who in some boroughs are the minority. ... social and democratic behaviour. It’s about making children capable, once they’re grown up, of getting along in this society specifically. They have to get along in this society, and this society is most peaceful when the members learn how to get along with each other. And that’s where my position meets the one of the mayor. In the interest of the children, but also in the interest of the whole community, we have the common aim that people get along in this society, where they have been born and where they are being raised, and that they don’t open up a parallel society.  

In chapter section 2.2 I described how in Germany, the term “integration” has come to be used by the state mainly to refer to what is considered a duty of migrants, and pressures to change, whereas formerly, it had been used positively as referring to migrants' rights, like being able to receive state benefits. Monika did not stress the

164 “Wir sind ja diejenigen, die hier vor Ort mit den Menschen arbeiten, und der Bürgermeister, oder das ganze Bezirksamt, einigen sich auf eine gewisse politische Grundhaltung wo sie auch Programme auflegen und finanzieren. Ich denke, wir arbeiten schon an der gleichen Integration der gleichen Leute, die wir gerne – die Kinder möchten wir ja zu gemeinschaftsfähigen Bürgern erziehen, und das meint natürlich unsere Gesellschaft, so wie sie jetzt hier momentan ist. Also, das betrifft natürlich die bunte Vielfalt von Migrantinnen und Migranten, aber auch die deutsche Mehrheitsgesellschaft, die hier in manchen Stadtteilen in der Minderheit ist. ... soziale und demokratische Verhaltensweisen. Es geht darum, die Kinder, wenn sie erwachsen sind, zu befähigen, sich in dieser Gesellschaft zurechtzufinden und nicht in irgendeiner. Sie müssen sich in dieser Gesellschaft zurechtfinden. Und diese Gesellschaft ist dann am ehesten eine friedliche, wenn alle Mitglieder gelernt haben, miteinander auszukommen. Und ich denke, an der Stelle treffen ich mich mit dem Bürgermeister. Dass wir gemeinsam das Ziel haben, dass die Leute, im Interesse der Kinder, aber auch im Interesse des gesamten Gemeinwesens, dass sie sich in der Gesellschaft in die sie hier nunmal reingeboren sind und reinwachsen, dass sie sich innerhalb dieser Gesellschaft zurechtfinden und nicht eine Parallelgesellschaft aufmachen.”
necessity for institutional change, but tended to conceptualise integration as adaptation to the majority society’s values, and considered it her job to help in that respect.

6.2 Contact Between Staff and Attendees

In this section, I analyse encounters between the centre staff and the attendees. In sociological theory, it has often been held that in modern societies, citizens’ contact with organisations or institutions most strongly shape how they experience society more broadly and their feelings of belonging to a society (e.g. Preisendörfer 2008:154). In the last chapter I introduced Michael Lipsky’s approach to street-level bureaucrats, bureaucrats like teachers, social workers, and others, who are in contact with large numbers of people on a daily basis (Lipsky 1969, 1980). Lipsky argued that it is people’s interactions with these street-level bureaucrats that shape how people perceive the state more generally (Lipsky 1969, 1980). This point has been made for migrants and refugees especially, because state institutions like schools are often their first or major place of contact with the wider society, a point implicated in Aihwa Ong’s cultural citizenship theory, when she stresses the power of the state to shape migrants’ and refugees’ possibilities of participation and belonging. In this section, I ask: How did the attendees experience the institution of the parent-child centre? What kind of participatory possibilities did it offer them? How and to what extent did these issues affect their sense of belonging?

6.2.1 “Parents Should Play with Their Children”

In this section, I describe some incidents where the attendees of the centre felt that they were not being given enough of a voice in things regarding the organisation of the centre. As stated above, the head of centre Monika stressed that the institution was
under the youth office and focused on children, and that parents had only been allowed in later, and "were only of interest to her in their roles as mothers and fathers". Monika took the position that parents should only be allowed into the centre if they played with their children and were engaged with them. If mothers were not focused on their children, and not doing anything for them, "just coming to the centre for their own sake", such as playing tabletop soccer, chatting, having coffee, and letting the children play with each other, this was not consistent with the centre’s function.

Besides playing something with the child (etwas mit dem Kind spielen), a key idea in this regard was sich mit dem Kind beschäftigen (to be occupied/engaged with the child). In her ethnography on child rearing in a German village near Frankfurt, Norman uses the German term, Beschäftigung, because it cannot be translated that easily into English (Norman 1997:111). The social workers and child care workers in this centre frequently stressed how important Beschäftigung was for children. There seemed to be an implicit assumption that children without Beschäftigung were dangerous; they were likely to become aggressive and to start fights with each other. Monika always got nervous when she saw a bunch of children who were not engaged in any obvious Beschäftigung. She said, "It would be so great if the parents did something nice together with their children, in order to strengthen the relationship. If they did something (beschäftigten) positive with their children."

Monika mainly related this issue to the centre’s function and to her role as a bureaucrat charged with ensuring its realisation: the centre’s legal basis was in the promotion of children's interests, rather than providing parents with a space to socialise with one another. Her stance, she told me, was also shaped by the fact that she herself had had parents who could not engage with her very often: as she had six

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165 Perhaps it might be translated as “busying”, a verb that implies a value placed on being occupied in itself.
166 The fact that she was afraid of accidents was another reason why Monika insisted that children should always be engaged in some kind of Beschäftigung. She was nervous that the situation would get out of control. She often made remarks about how she was afraid to be made responsible for everything that happened in this centre by the head of the youth welfare office and seemed to be a bit overburdened, especially on days when the centre was very crowded (Thursdays and Fridays).
brothers and sisters, they were not able to take that much time for her and she had always loved it when her father had played something with her.

A related issue was that staff wanted the parents to look out for their younger children themselves, instead of letting the older children do it. "Especially among Turkish and Arab families", Marliese, a child care worker, said,

the older children had come with their younger brothers and sisters whom they had to watch, and we didn't want that. In that culture area (Kulturkreis) it’s quite common for older children to have to take care of the younger ones.167

When I asked her to specify the culture area she was referring to, she said, "the Islamic one".

The agents’ insistence on avoiding the practice of older siblings watching out for younger ones is likely to be influenced by the strong valuation of childhood as a right in itself in Western industrialised societies, where differences between grown-ups and children are underlined (cf. Ntemiris 2011:15). I overheard the following talk between Hilde, who oversaw the computer room, and a ten year-old German girl, in which Hilde talked about childhood and youth as a time of freedom, and grown-up life as full of hard work and burdensome responsibilities:

Hilde: You should enjoy your youth and your freedom. Being a grown-up isn’t very nice.

Girl: I don’t want to grow up.

Hilde: Right, then you’ll have to work the whole time. You’ll have too many responsibilities.

Girl: I just want to stay with my mom forever.

Hilde: Yes, stay with your mommy. Then you can take care of her when she’s old. Well, but taking care of someone is also very hard. I married too early, when I was twenty. Since then I’ve had too many responsibilities.

Girl: I don’t want a boyfriend.

Hilde: Right, don’t marry, stay with your mom.168

167 This is a reconstruction of what Marliese said, which I did not record.
168 This is reminiscent of Karin Norman’s ethnography on child rearing in a central German
Marliese stressed that if children did not have the opportunity to “to be completely a child” (ganz Kind zu sein), this would impede their positive development, and something crucial would be lacking in their later lives. The staff’s adherence to the idea of childhood as a time of freedom from the sorts of concerns and responsibilities adults have is presumably one reason why they did not want older siblings to look after younger ones in place of parents. They thought it an imposition on the older children, who should have time to play for themselves, without duties.

This perspective caused some friction between Monika and some of the mothers, who used the centre as a space where they could escape their households and rest while having some fun in the afternoon, without being focused on their children for the whole time. The mothers considered this beneficial for their children as well, because they could run around freely in this huge space and play with each other or take part in the centre’s activities. Shams said,

Monika wanted us to be with our children the whole time and play with them. I said, “The children don’t want to play with us now”. She said lots of things. Not only to me, also to other women.169

The mothers experienced these demands as patronising. Hafa said, "I feel like in a sanatorium, like being observed the whole time”. She continued,

There are always new rules. Here, this baby, for example [turns to other mother] How old is she? Eight months. She’s always in her buggy, and then Monika suddenly said, she should get down and play. “You have to play with her now.” What does she care, whether this eight month old baby is

village, where she describes a “problematic closeness to the mother” (Norman 1997:103), which she relates to a more general German ideology in which the mother is idealised and her role as the foundation of society over-emphasised (234). However, in Norman’s village, on the other hand, children’s dependency on their mothers was frequently criticised, especially by the child care workers in kindergarten (Norman 1997:116). In the parent-child centre in Berlin, I never heard a strong dependency of children on their mothers being criticised by the staff. For instance, the children of Petra, a German mother, were very affectionate and clingy towards their mother and also towards the child care workers. Marie (five) sat on her mother’s lap very often and cuddled with her, and always wanted to cuddle with the child care workers. Güler, mother of one daughter who had come to Berlin from Muş in Turkey for marriage but since then had got divorced, had criticised this and thought it strange when children wanted to cuddle that much. She thought this behaviour was not good for the children because it would make it hard for them to separate from their parents. However, I never heard this issue being criticised by the social workers and child care workers. They seemed more critical towards mothers who were not completely focused on their children.

169 ”Monika wollte, dass wird die ganze Zeit bei den Kindern sind und mit ihnen spielen. Ich hab gesagt, „Die Kinder wollen jetzt nicht mit uns spielen“. Sie hat viel gesagt. Nicht nur zu mir, auch zu anderen Frauen.“
playing something or not? Well, that’s the stuff she meddles in. Or she tells her, “You should carry her.” She gives us orders what we should do with our children. Well, stuff that stuff’s none of her business. Or she says, “Why does the child eat that much? She can’t eat that much, she has to lose some weight”. It’s none of her business if my child eats much or not. Us women, we met each other here like a family. We look after our children, what they’re doing, and that they don’t get injured. We take care with whom they’re in contact. And she’s here and gives orders. “You mustn’t do that”, and so on. As if we were her guests. I also had education science as a subject. I attended the state’s vocational school for social pedagogy. I’m a child care worker with state recognition and I know about educational science and psychology, I took all that at school. And then she doesn’t need to tell me anything.¹⁷⁰

The mothers were frustrated because they experienced these demands as an intrusion, and felt that their “moral authority” was being undermined (cf. Ong 2003:20). In Ong’s cultural citizenship framework (Ong 1999, 2003), one of state agents’ main characteristics is that they try to extend the governmentality of the state. Regarding their relationship with migrant and refugee populations more specifically, Ong stresses that such agents exert a kind of cultural dominance over them, in trying to make their behaviour become more adapted to the one of the majority society. The case I described was actually one where mothers felt patronised due to such demands. However, in section 6.1.3 I argue that this was not characteristic of their relationship with all social workers, as the mothers also described times where they had been very content with what was going on in the centre.

Mothers often demanded more parents’ participation in decision-making at the centre, especially about organisational matters. It had been decided that the centre would be completely closed for parents on one day a week, and only children would be

allowed in. The mothers experienced this change as directed against them personally, and Hafa criticised the exclusion of parents from the centre on one day a week. The mothers said they did not know where else to go in the afternoon, and did not want to leave their children alone in the centre. They were disappointed because they had been attendees of this centre for so long and their voice was not being heard in that matter. Hafa said that they were citizens and would like to be treated like that.

However, they did not dare to take any action because they were afraid the youth office might brand them as bad parents and rather believe the staff than them, for instance, they were afraid that the latter would claim that they did not look after their small children well enough in the centre. This is reminiscent of a point in Lipsky’s theory about the interface between street-level bureaucrats and their clients: he mentions certain “dilemmas of action” for the clients regarding this contact. It is often the case that people do not dare to exert their rights as citizens against street-level bureaucrats because they do not want to “risk the antagonism of the workers”. Lipsky writes that “the dilemmas of action are particularly acute if attendees are poor, and racially, ethnically, or linguistically different from most of the public employees.” (Lipsky 1980:xiv). This was the case in this centre as well, where some of the attendees did not dare to take action regarding their own concerns, because they were afraid that they might be branded as bad parents by the youth office, and their voice might not be heard anyway.

Unlike schools, this centre did not require a child’s attendance; however, the mothers said they depended on its space. They had big families and their flats were too small to visit each other there every afternoon. This illustrates another of Lipsky’s points about the street-level bureaucrat’s contact with the population: he stresses that it is minority or poorer populations who are especially dependent on such bureaucrats, because the former do not have enough resources to choose a school in another suburb, or to do without the social services provided by these agents (Lipsky 1969:3; 1980:xiv), as I described here for Hafa, Shams, and their friends.
6.2.2 Practice of Islam

In this section I discuss what stance the centre took towards Islamic practices and how this was perceived by the attendees. Monika thought the Arab population in Berlin to be more conspicuously religious than the Turkish one. She said,

Well, I regard the way they live their religion as a means to separate themselves from others. ... Among Turkish women, there are many more who don’t wear headscarves. At the moment, when I talk to them about whether they’re fasting [this was during Ramadan], they more often say, “No, I don’t do it.” Or, “It’s actually not meant like this, you don’t have to fast for twenty-eight days. It’s only about one day.” Or the like ... And those who are really strict, where also the children say that they fast, that’s only Arab children. They participate in fasting at the age of eight or ten years. ... Among the Arabs I haven’t met anyone who said that they don’t participate, in contrast to the Turks. That’s really striking.\textsuperscript{171}

Monika’s view of the attendees’ Islamic practices and their origin was not in line with mainstream public discourse, which sees Islam as being transmitted from country of origin to host country, and from parents to children. She was aware of the sociological point about minority religion and the dynamics of rejection from the side of the host society and people’s increased stress on their religious traditions. Monika also thought the Arab community’s practice of religion was influenced by their residential rights situation:

Formerly, these Muslims did not practise their religion much at all. They were pressured into it only here. And today it’s like, and I can really understand that, if you don’t recognise their identity or their specialness, well if you always signal them that in fact you don’t want that here at all, they get more and more fired up with it. I can understand that. ... I think every human being wants to be part of a group, wants to be recognised and welcomed. And if the state again and again makes life difficult for you, I think our majority society shouldn’t be surprised that people withdraw towards what else they have.\textsuperscript{172}

\textsuperscript{171} “Also ich betrachte ja diese Art und Weise wie sie ihre Religion leben, als ein Mittel, sich abzugrenzen. ... Unter türkischen Frauen sind viel mehr ohne Kopftuch. Im Moment [Ramadan], wenn ich mich mit ihnen darüber unterhalte, ob sie fasten, sagen die viel mehr, ‘Nee, ich mache das nicht’. Oder, ‘Das ist gar nicht so gemeint, dass man da 28 Tage lang fasten muss. Es geht um einen Tag’. Oder so ... Und die, die hammerhart, wo auch die Kinder sagen, dass sie mitfasten, das sind nur arabische Kinder. Die fasten im Alter von acht oder zehn Jahren mit ... Unter den Arabern habe ich noch niemanden getroffen der sagt nee, er macht nicht mit. Unter den Türken schon. Also das ist ganz auffällig.”

\textsuperscript{172} “Das waren Muslime, die haben das damals gar nicht so gelebt, die sind dann auch erst hier da reingedrängt worden. Und heute ist das so, was ich dann auch verstehen kann, wenn man ihre Identität sozusagen oder ihr Besondersein nicht anerkennen, also ihnen immer signalisiert
For these and other reasons, she thought that one had to allow some display of religious identities in the centre.

I think it’s right that one accepts and apprehends it [their religion], and maybe also partly includes it here [the centre]. Well, it’s an important part of people’s lives. And then you can also discuss with them a little about how it’s being lived and you can give information to the children. That’s surely better than saying, “Once you pass that door there, religion doesn’t play any role more”. Whether they come here covered up or not – whether I think that’s right or not – the moment I start to discuss these issues, I’ve actually already lost. I can’t reach them anymore. Because then I’m only judging them in terms of their outward appearance.\(^{173}\)

She considered an appropriate level of inclusion of Islam into the centre the official celebration of Islamic festivals. She said this had something to do with a culture of welcome (\textit{Willkommenskultur}), and considered it an act of generosity (\textit{Großzügigkeit}) towards religious issues:

Well, I made religion a topic of conversation here. I talked with them about their religion and allowed them to spread their religion here cognitively. The parents – those were converts – asked if they could celebrate Eid al-Adha here, and I said yes. I said, “Do it, but do it on your own.” ... And later we included this into our programme. Quarter Management\(^{174}\) [\textit{Quartiersmanagement}] organises a “week of visits” [\textit{Woche des Besuchs}] every year, where project groups get to know each other. Last year, during this week, we asked the parents to organise a dinner for Eid Al-Adha, because in my view that’s got something to do with a culture of making people feel welcome [\textit{Willkommenskultur}]. That they’re allowed to display what makes them special. And show that it’s important for them and that it’s also something great. And then I asked them, because Eid al-Adha was right in that week, to organise a dinner for that. That was really great, they made a lot of an effort. They brought food without end, and it looked good. There was a good atmosphere.\(^{175}\)

dass man das eigentlich nicht haben will, dass sie sich dann immer weiter da reinsteigern. Das verstehe ich. ... Jeder Mensch will glaube ich einer Gruppe zugehörig sein, will anerkannt sein und erwünscht sein. Und wenn man hier von staatlicher Seite so viele Knüppel zwischen die Beine kriegt, dann finde ich, muss sich unsere Mehrheitsgesellschaft nicht wundern, dass sich die Leute dann auf das zurückziehen, was sie sonst noch haben.”


\(^{174}\) I sketched the Quarter Management policy in chapter 2, section 2.3.2.

\(^{175}\) “Also ich habe die Religion hier zum Gesprächsthema gemacht. Ich habe hier mich mit ihnen über Religion unterhalten und ihnen erlaubt, ihre Religion hier kognitiv zu verbreiten. Also, die Eltern – das waren die Konvertierten – haben irgendwann mal gefragt, ob sie Opferfest machen dürfen, da habe ich ja gesagt. Ich habe gesagt, „Macht, aber macht selbständig.” ... Und später
However, the centre took a rather strict stance to some Islamic practices. Monika was very firm, for example, about the attendees not praying in the centre. For her, praying constituted a religious act in the strict sense, and she had anxieties about religious practices becoming more conspicuous in the centre.

Anyway, I don’t allow anyone to pray here. ... Worship has to take place outside. ... You can go home for five minutes and do it there. If I saw it, I always said, “Please, not here, please do it at home.” Because word will spread and then you’ve got a mosque substitute here. Then they all come here, and then a self-determined leader will dictate whether the Muslims do their afternoon prayer here or not. For then the community controls it and says, “You’re a bad Muslim [female form] if you don’t participate in praying here.” Well, I’m completely convinced that one shouldn’t pray here. 176

There were no guidelines or rules from the youth office in that respect, and Monika had discretion in handling these issues. When I asked her if praying was allowed in other similar institutions in Neukölln, she stressed that they were the only institution that was “that open for parents”, so that other institutions were not faced with the issue. It had been decided that praying would not be allowed in this centre at a team session. Monika stressed that the state’s guideline was the provision of “freedom of religion”, but that the institution had to decide what would count as conforming to it.

The state says that there is freedom of religion. Everyone can practise their religion. And we here, we have to decide how to interpret this. Well, the state – there’s no state religion. Even if some claim that Germany’s a Christian culture. I think it’s right not to pray at all here. There’s a lot of control exerted here, I notice, social control that the attendees exert amongst each other, about who are the best Muslims. This shows in very small issues. For instance, I’m asked whether the sausages are halal or not.

176 “Trotzdem, ich erlaube hier niemandem zu beten. ... Gottesdienst muss bitte draußen stattfinden. ... Da könnt ihr fünf Minuten nach Hause gehen. Wenn ich das mitbekommen habe, habe ich immer gesagt, bitte hier nicht, bitte zu Hause. Weil das spricht sich hier so schnell rum, und dann hast du hier einen Moschee-Ersatz. Dann kommen die alle hierher und dann bestimmt sozusagen auch irgendein selbsternannter Wortführer, ob die Muslime hier ihr Nachmittagsgebet durchführen oder nicht. Weil ja dann die Community das kontrolliert und sagt, du bist aber eine schlechte Muslimin, wenn du hier nicht mitbetest. Also, dass hier nicht gebetet wird, da stehe ich auch voll dazu.”

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I say, “They’re not pork, but I didn’t exactly buy them in a Turkish supermarket”. Then the person says, “It’s not halal”, and then no one dares to eat them anymore, including those who would otherwise eat poultry sausages which you didn’t buy at a Turkish supermarket. In public, they then don’t dare to say, “I can eat that”. And if people pray here, then I’m sure there’ll be pressure that everyone has to participate in the praying. And there, I think, it’s our responsibility not to give that much power to certain people. ... And it’s their rules, not ours. ... Religion is an issue between myself and God, and should remain there.\textsuperscript{177}

Monika thought during Ramadan, people would then pray even more than usual, and those who said that they did not participate in Ramadan too much would feel pressured. “This will exclude people who don’t participate”. However, to me, these anxieties seemed a little exaggerated, as there were not that many people who in fact wanted to pray there. For instance, among Shams, Hafa, and their friends, it was only Abidah who regularly wanted to pray in the centre.

The mothers did not understand what was so dramatic about praying and why they were allowed to celebrate certain Islamic festivals at the centre, but not to pray, which in their view constituted a harmless daily practice. Shams said,

\begin{quote}
Shams: Monika said, you’re not allowed to pray here. Not only to her [Abidah], but to many people. She said, “It’s not a mosque here.” But if Abidah sits in the corner and prays, she doesn’t do anything. It just takes five minutes, not more.

Abidah: You saw how I prayed, right? Just five minutes. I don’t do anything.

Shams: She doesn’t do anything, no noise or the like.\textsuperscript{178}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{177} "Der Staat sagt, es herrscht Religionsfreiheit. Jeder kann seine Religion ausüben. Und wir sind ja hier jemand, die dann auch schauen müssen, wie das realisiert wird. Und der Staat – es gibt ja keine Staatsreligion. Auch wenn manchen behaupten, dass Deutschland eine christliche Kultur ist. Ich finde das richtig, dass hier überhaupt nicht gebetet wird. Es wird hier schon, das merke ich, sehr viel Kontrolle ausgeübt, also gesellschaftliche Kontrolle, die die Besucher untereinander gegenseitig ausüben, wer hier wie, was, wer hier den muslimischen Glauben am besten lebt. Das zeigt sich an ganz kleinen Stellen. Zum Beispiel werde ich gefragt, ob die und die Würstchen halal sind oder nicht. Ich sage, da ist kein Schweinefleisch drin, aber ich habe das nicht unbedingt beim Türken gekauft. Dann sagt derjenige, das ist nicht halal, und dann traut sich niemand mehr das zu essen, auch die, die sonst auch Geflügelwürste essen würden, wenn sie nicht unbedingt beim Türken gekauft sind. Hier in der Öffentlichkeit dann auch zu sagen, ich esse das. Und wenn hier gebetet wird, dann wird garantiert hier ein Druck ausgeübt, dass dann alle mit zu beten haben. Und da finde ich, da haben wir eine Verantwortung auch nicht bestimmten Menschen so eine starke Macht mitzugeben. ... Und, es sind ihre Regeln, nicht unsere. ... Religion ist eine Sache zwischen mir und Gott, und da soll es auch bleiben.”

\textsuperscript{178} "Shams: Sie hat gesagt, ’Du darfst hier nicht beten.’ Nicht nur zu ihr, sie sagt es zu vielen Leuten. Sie hat gesagt, ’Hier ist keine Moschee.’ Aber wenn sie hier in der Ecke sitzt und betet, sie macht doch gar nichts. Das dauert nur fünf Minuten, mehr
Abidah here refers to a day when she had asked me if I wanted to join her to watch how she prayed. After praying, she said to me “See, it's all normal”, and the like.

In the urban geographer Lanz's terms, whose approach towards integration discourses I presented in chapter 2, the head of centre’s stance might be interpreted as one that evaluates cultures according to the exotic goods they offer for consumption (*Grad an konsumierbarer Exotik*) (Lanz 2009:110). Monika appreciated the official celebration of Islamic festivals during events like week of visit, in order for people to present their cultural identities. For the mothers, it would have been more important if there had not been such strict rules regarding the everyday practice of praying. Recently they had experienced the organisation of Islamic festivals more as a demand the centre had towards them, than as a concession anyway, as I illustrate in the next section.

### 6.2.3 Parent Activation

In chapter 2, I sketched how approaches to migrant integration in Berlin have been more and more marked by the concept of activation, a political buzzword that is usually taken to be an indicator of a “neo-liberal” kind of politics, where governmental mechanisms are set up that “work by themselves” (section 2.3). In this section, I describe one way in which the concept has been interpreted on the ground in this centre. I show how since the head of the centre had consciously been trying to follow what she perceived as an “activating” approach to social work in the centre, the relationships between the staff and the mothers had deteriorated.

The anthropologists Chris Shore and Susan Wright draw on the political scientist Barbara Cruikshank’s work and write about “participatory” and “self-


| Shams: | Sie macht gar nichts, keinen Krach oder so." |
government” approaches in the US that they are “often seen as solution(s) to something that is deemed to be lacking in the population. This idea is consistent with the goal of the early US philanthropy movement of 'helping people to help themselves’” (Shore & Wright 2011:9; Cruikshank 1999:4). This is exactly how Monika framed the aim of activation: “helping people to help themselves” (Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe).

Monika mentioned the concept of activation (Aktivierung) to me only in relation to social work with parents (and not in relation to the children). As I stated, the staff had been officially responsible for doing social work with parents (Elternarbeit) since 2004. By 2011 and 2012, the staff admitted that they did not really know yet how to and had not developed any guidelines yet. When I went back to the field site in 2014, Monika said activation was the main aim of this work (I had not mentioned this term to her before). When I asked her about guidelines for social work with parents, she said,

Actually one should think about whether it makes them better parents. That’s a question one can ask. And speaking about parent activation, I think it’s about first getting active for one’s own interest, in order to then know how to get engaged for the interests of one’s children, and not just accept everything just as it is and let things rip.179

As I mentioned above, parent activation (Elternaktivierung) was a buzzword in the German social work scene at the time, and many projects conceptualised their aim in these terms. I asked Monika where she had got that concept from and if she remembered where she had heard it for the first time. She said she did not remember but thought it had been around for four to five years.

How did Monika concretely try to implement such an approach? As I explained above, on four afternoons a week there was a parents’ café where parents were offered a space to socialise, and coffee and snacks were sold. This café, which basically consisted of a counter where coffee was sold, and chairs and tables, was taken care of by Berkay, an elderly man who volunteered for this job, as his children had grown up

179 “Man kann dann überlegen, ob es sie auch zu besseren Eltern macht. Die Frage kann man stellen. Und wenn man von Elternaktivierung spricht, finde ich, geht es eigentlich darum, erstmal für seine eigenen Interessen aktiv zu werden – und damit ein Modell für sich zu haben, sich auch für die Interessen seiner Kinder aktiv einzusetzen, und nicht alles einfach so hinzunehmen und allem seinen Lauf zu lassen.”
and he lived around the corner and did not have anything to do in the afternoon. He enjoyed coming to the centre and chatting with people there, and he also volunteered at other parents' cafés at primary schools.

When Monika started to think about how to implement an activating approach, she came to the conclusion that the mothers had adopted the attitude that they should be served, because Berkay took care of making the coffee, selling it, and cleaning up. Monika said that the mothers should themselves participate in organising these issues. She thought activation meant that women should change their attitudes and share some of these responsibilities, so that they could be good role models for their children.

The question is, do I exemplify to my children in such a centre that the staff is only there to serve me hand and foot. That’s in fact already a question of attitude and being a role model. Or do I exemplify to my children, “Hey, that’s a great place here, and the state puts a lot of money into it, and there’s many opportunities here. And I assist here. And I do stuff here.” In my opinion that’s why we, or I, endorse parent activation, because parents then set another kind of example for their children.¹⁸⁰

Monika thought the staff of the centre had put the parents in a “passive consumer role“, and that now they had got used to it and that that was why it was difficult to convince the mothers to organise the café themselves. She wanted them to sell the coffee and to clean up the cups and dishes, and said that the mothers should take turns and sell coffee for half an hour each one. From Monika’s perspective, her policy constituted an attempt to educate parents so that they could set better examples for their children. The mothers, it turned out, did not understand the logic behind this change of policy and experienced it as a kind of bullying. Shams said,

Every Thursday now she [Monika] takes out a sheet of paper and every woman has to sell coffee. But Berkay wants to do it, right? Monika just wants it like that. ... Another time Aline [a student member of staff who helped out on some days a week] came and gave us this sheet, and all women said, “No, we won’t do it”. Aline said, “What’s this, Arab Spring here at the centre?” Are we tourists or what? It’s her opinion; I didn’t want to do it. It’s not my opinion. If she needs help, she should ring the town hall.

There's many unemployed who could work here.\textsuperscript{181} If Berkay is sick, someone else should do it, and not the parents. I don't come here for work. I work in the mornings.\textsuperscript{182}

Hafa said,

And then there are constantly new rules, like, take your dishes and put them into the dishwasher. The week later it'll be, no, leave the dishes on the tray. Well, new rules every time. Well, every time! ... And then she is constantly asking for help. We don't have to help her. We don't have to! We always liked to help Frank. We were the first who went there and helped cutting vegetables. And we always helped him. To her [Monika], we said, no, we won't do it. We're not in fact slaves or employees so that she can demand that from us.\textsuperscript{183}

The mothers did not really understand the practical purpose of this attempt, as there was already someone who liked to sell coffee. It did not seem reasonable to them that they should be made to sell coffee, if they did not want to, especially as Berkay really wanted the job. They said they were no longer willing to help in organising celebrations and providing food like for Eid al-Adha as described in the last section.

However, this conflict had mainly arisen in relation to the recent "activating" social work approach, and was not characteristic of their relationship with all staff who worked, or had worked, in the centre.

Interviewer: So are you saying that you [plural] don't really feel accepted here?

Hafa: Well it depends. With Frank it's great, he's very friendly, with Peter it's great;
And the other one, Andrea, well, everybody is in fact really really nice here. Aline tries to imitate the boss too much, but she realises we won’t let this happen. ... Marliese was very fond of children. She always treated the children very nicely. If she wanted something, she always smiled, just appropriate for children. Frank also treats the children very nicely. In fact, everybody is very very nice here.\textsuperscript{184}

Shams also reported that she and the other mothers had formerly been content with the centre:

Formerly, it was different. I’ve been living around the corner since 1996 and have been coming here for thirteen years. ... Formerly, many people came here. The child care workers did a lot with the children. They played with them with a rope or with the trampoline. Now it’s not like that anymore. The children have to do everything by themselves. Formerly, the child care workers were better. The head of centre was very good. We helped her a lot. We liked to do that. We cooked, and sold the food. She got the money for that. But now we’re not doing anything anymore. We’re fed up.\textsuperscript{185}

In this case the mothers were critical of very specific issues in the contact with social workers, but still appreciated the services provided and how the staff took care of the children. They referred to times where their relations with the staff had been much better. Ong’s approach, which is focused on an inherently conflictual relationship between state agents like social workers and migrants and refugees, oversimplifies the nature of such relationships. The material in this section shows that the mothers only experienced a small number of such relationships as conflictual or patronising. Ong tends to neglect that social services for migrants do not only work to govern people, but also provide assistance that is highly appreciated by the people (cf. Ong 2003:124).

\textsuperscript{184} “Interviewer: Also ihr fühlt euch eigentlich nicht so richtig akzeptiert?

6.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I illustrated how the relationship between the staff and the mothers in this centre had changed since the introduction of a consciously “activating” approach to social work. It is not clear whether the head of centre got the impulse for such an approach from a political or a social work discourse, where the concept of parent activation (Elternaktivierung) had also been around for some years. However, the way the concept had been interpreted in this institution was not well received by the attendees. They did not appreciate the mere focus on being active without any apparent good reason. Such conflicts, however, were not intrinsic to the contact between social workers and attendees in general, as implicated in Aihwa Ong's cultural citizenship theory. The attendees reported that there had not been such conflicts previously; that they did not experience them with most of the staff; and that they were generally happy with the staff and enjoyed being with them. They also highly appreciated the services that were offered to them, and the activities the social workers organised for the children.

The mothers would have been happy to be given more of a voice and opportunities to participate regarding the rules of the centre, and thus be more active. However, though the centre was called intercultural, a concept which in the German context is a rather progressive one, aimed at ensuring the representation of migrants’ voices in public institutions, there were no attempts to enhance employment of people with migrant background, cooperate with migrant associations, or increase parents’ participation in decision-making. There had not been much engagement with what an intercultural approach to such a centre might look like.

Although the services offered were highly appreciated by the parents, the centre’s approach – based on ethno-culturalist understandings of integration and interculturality; on seeing parents only as a means to an end; and not aimed at enhancing opportunities of participation for parents – did not directly foster a sense of
belonging to public institutions among the attendees. They sometimes felt that they were treated as guests rather than participants or citizens.

The material presented in this and the last chapter suggests that policies aimed at enhancing personal contact between parents and those employed to help children's development have had some success in the local context. A good number of mothers who attended the parents' café described in the last chapter were happy to make time to engage with teachers and for their children’s education; they welcomed it if the teachers gave them that opportunity. The institution of the parents’ café was well received because it allowed parents to get to know the context of the primary school in an informal way, socialise with other mothers, and exchange feelings and ideas relating to their children's upbringing.

As the present chapter (6) shows, mothers were also generally happy to contribute and to help out with various issues regarding the organisation of the centre. They chatted with the staff regularly and enjoyed their personal contact with most of the social workers. Granting parents opportunities to participate in local child-centred projects, and treating them as active agents in them, would most likely contribute to their sense of belonging to public institutions and feelings that they can “hold their heads high” (cf. Hage 2002:2, see introduction section 1.4).

The next chapter presents the last of my case studies of local social work projects. I show some of the concrete effects the Mayor Buschkowsky’s differential conception of migrant integration (see chapter 2) has had by means of this project. Buschkowsky's view of integration policy is based on a clear distinction between German and non-German families, not conceptualised in terms of citizenship, but in terms of ethnic or linguistic background. I argue that this approach did not foster a more comprehensive sense of belonging among the participants, and point to a gap between Buschkowsky's approach to integration politics and various other actors in the process.
7. The Borough Mothers Project

The last two chapters analysed migrant integration practices in the context of the school and a social work institution concerned with child rearing. In this chapter, I discuss another project aimed at integration and child rearing: the Borough Mothers project (Stadtteilmütter), Neukölln’s most widely known integration project. The project has become an employment creation measure, and its aim is stated as one of parent activation (Elternaktivierung). It employs mothers of different linguistic backgrounds and trains them to pass on information about schooling and pedagogical issues to families with the same linguistic backgrounds. This makes it a paradigmatic example of those policy strategies Nikolas Rose has called “government through community” (1996a:332). The district government uses women's capabilities to make contact with people of their own linguistic communities in order to pass on the relevant information.

In terms of theoretical background, this chapter is closely connected to the last two in that it looks at the implementation of policies; at how project coordinators think about a project (which might contrast with official policy); and in that it considers how people who are thought to be the target group engage with this project and how this influences their ideas of participation in and belonging to society. I first describe the project in more detail (7.1.1), and analyse how the conceptualisation of its target group changed after it became an employment creation measure (7.1.2). Then I look at policy makers’ and project coordinators’ perspectives. How is the target group conceptualised and what conflicts over this conceptualisation are there? (7.2) The final part analyses voices of women who work as Borough Mothers, and explores forms of women’s engagement with the project. How did Borough Mothers perceive their work in the project, what aspects were they critical of? (7.3) The chapter conclusion then builds the bridge to the thesis conclusion, in that it takes up the major points and threads
regarding issues of cultural citizenship and belonging that I made throughout part II of this thesis, where I looked at three different institutional settings (7.4).

7.1 The Borough Mothers Project: Aims and Definitions

In chapter 2, I described how the district government of Neukölln, as compared with other districts, practises a rather strict approach regarding issues of integration. Its Mayor Heinz Buschkowsky has attracted nation-wide publicity with his statements about failed integration in Neukölln. The integration project I discuss in this chapter, the Borough Mothers project, is an attempt to address that perceived problem and is another reason why Buschkowsky has become well known. The project started in 2004, was extended to a broader level in 2006, and by 2009 it had won seven national and international prizes. It has often been described as one of the most successful integration projects. As Frank, one of the child care workers in the parent-child centre described in the last chapter, said,

The Borough Mothers project sells really well. Because it includes everything that's politically fashionable these days. One reaches families that cannot be reached otherwise. Parent activation [Elternaktivierung] is a major buzzword these days.

This project was intended to reach and activate parents thought by civic authorities to lead rather secluded lives. In the next section, I describe the major contents and aims of the project in more detail.

7.1.1 Project Aims

The Borough Mothers (Stadtteilmütter) project is the biggest state-subsidised integration project in Neukölln. It is officially aimed at "unemployed women of non-

186 In 2008 the project had even won an award in Sydney, the Sydney Metropolitan Award. The Administration of Urban Development of the Berlin Senate claimed the reception of the prize and a secretary of state of the Senate of Berlin travelled to Australia; none of the women who were working for the project were allowed to travel.

187 This is a reconstruction of what Frank said, which I did not record.
German-speaking backgrounds” who go through a six-months training course in topics around child rearing and the German education system, and are then supposed to pass on this information to families in their own language. Their work for the project counts as an employment creation measure and once they have finished the six-months training, Borough Mothers earn 850 €/month for 30 hours of work a week.

Women who work as Borough Mothers have to be mothers themselves. The official description on the leaflet of the project says,

In our project, mothers and grandmothers are trained as Borough Mothers and pass on their knowledge to other mothers/parents in the neighbourhood. The trained Borough Mothers visit families at home in their apartments and inform them about various topics of child rearing and about support programmes for families in the district. The project is aimed at families in the north of Neukölln and in Gropiusstadt.188

The course covers issues like healthy food, physical and psychological development, and sexual development. As the Borough Mothers’ topics of instruction, the leaflet lists

1. Day care centres and education system
2. Bilingual child rearing
3. Rights of the child
4. Health promotion
5. Sexual development
6. Motor development
7. Exposure to media
8. Healthy nutrition
9. Prevention of addictions
10. Prevention of child accidents189

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189 "1. Kindertagesstätten und Schulsystem
2. Zweisprachige Erziehung
3. Rechte des Kindes
4. Gesundheitsförderung
5. Sexualentwicklung
6. Motorische Entwicklung
7. Umgang mit Medien
8. Gesunde Ernährung
9. Suchtvorbeugung
10. Verhütung von Kinderunfällen"
Though women of many different language backgrounds are trained in the programme, the majority are of Turkish and Arabic-speaking backgrounds. The leaflet of the project says,

The project Borough Mothers in Neukölln qualifies unemployed mothers of non-German origin – preferentially of Turkish and Arabic mother tongue – in ten areas of child rearing, education, and health through a six months course.

As stated in this description, only mothers “of non-German origin” are allowed to work in the project (they are also only allowed to visit families of non-German origin). Citizenship is not a criterion in that respect, i.e. someone with German citizenship, or who was born in Germany, but has another first language besides German, is eligible. As the local project coordinator Ms. Acar told me, in 2014, there were ninety-seven Borough Mothers working in Neukölln, forty-four being of Arabic-speaking background, twenty-nine of Turkish-speaking background, and twenty-four of other language backgrounds, like Polish, Thai, or Urdu. In section 7.2.2 I discuss more closely how the target group of the project is being conceptualised by the Heinz Buschkowsky as a major policy maker, and by the local project coordinators, and how their opinions in that matter diverge.

Borough Mothers have to visit two families each month, and the programme allots ten visits for each family; one visit for each of the projects’ topics, enumerated above. After ten visits, their work with a family is finished, and the Borough Mothers have to find new ones they can visit. However, they are free to arrange those visits as

\[190\] Newspaper articles about this project also often mention that it is mainly aimed at the integration of Turkish and Arab families (Ataman 2009). For instance, it has been stated that Borough Mothers are mainly of “Turkish or Arab migration background”, and “take care of families from the same culture area” (die sich um Familien aus demselben Kulturkreis kümmern) (Oppermann 2009). Other newspaper article title, “They help when social work does not have a chance”; "the Borough Mothers come equipped with information material in Turkish and Arabic and are supposed to convince families to send their children to a German day care centre.” (Oppermann 2009).

\[191\] “Das Projekt Stadtteilmütter in Neukölln qualifiziert arbeitslose Mütter nicht-deutscher Herkunft – vorrangig türkischer und arabischer Muttersprache – in einem sechsmonatigen Kurs zu 10 Themen der Erziehung, Bildung und Gesundheit.”

\[192\] The project is not part of the district government’s Department of Youth and Health (Abteilung Jugend und Gesundheit) like the parent child centre described in chapter 6, but belongs to the Department of Finances and Economy (Abteilung Finanzen und Wirtschaft), which is directly under the administration of the Mayor Heinz Buschkowsky.
they like so that, for instance, they could visit four families over the course of two months.

During the training course, the women receive a folder for each of the ten topics. Before a house visit, they then take the relevant material out of the folder. They choose the material that fits the family’s situation and number of children. If a family does not have a baby, they will not need the material about prevention of accidents especially for babies. During the visit, the Borough Mothers explain the various issues to the mothers. Sometimes they also bring along special items in order to illustrate their points, such as for instance, bags of sugar, to illustrate the amount of sugar contained in soft drinks. After a Borough Mothers’ visit, the mother in question has to sign a form. For a while now, Borough Mothers have also been allowed to accompany mothers to certain agencies, instead of visiting them at home, and translate for them if necessary.

This is what a typical week of a Borough Mother looks like: the programme allots 12.5 working hours for house visits a week, the times of which they are free to arrange. In addition to the house visits, on one day a week, they have three hours of further education classes (called Quali), similar to the six-month training course, but regarding topics that were not covered during that time. Topics for Quali classes have been: History, where women engage with the history of Germany during World War II and the Holocaust;\textsuperscript{193} German Basic Constitutional Law (\textit{Grundgesetz}), where women compare issues of the German Constitutional Law with the Sharia; school law; early childhood education (\textit{frühkindliche Bildung}); or children and youth welfare services (\textit{Kinder- und Jugendhilfe}).

On another day, Borough Mothers attend a local team session which lasts a half day. The Borough Mothers of the district of Neukölln are organised into five groups of fifteen to twenty Borough Mothers with a coordinator each, and on one day a week a team meets with their coordinator. I participated in some meetings of the local group of

\textsuperscript{193} These classes are organised by the organisation Action Reconciliation/Service for Peace (\textit{Aktion Sühnezeichen}).
Ms. Canan Acar, which most women I talked to were part of (see Borough Mothers’ voices in section 7.3). During these meetings, the women discuss their *Quali* classes with their coordinator; talk about how they experienced them and what they learned there; discuss issues regarding their house visits; practise talks they are supposed to give at parents’ cafés, and the like.

Additionally, for four hours a week, they are supposed to promote the project at day care centres and schools, mostly at parents’ cafés. Three hours a week are allotted for the preparation of house visits or other activities. Many Borough Mothers I talked to stressed that one major reason why they decided to take on this work was that due to the rather high amount of flexible time, like house visits and preparation time, it was work that was compatible with caring for their children. They did not have to be in an office nine to four, and if there was something urgent with their children, they could rearrange appointments.

### 7.1.2 The Borough Mothers Project as Employment Creation Measure

The Borough Mothers project had started in 2004 on a neighbourhood level. By 2006, the district’s mayor Heinz Buschkowsky had endorsed it and expanded the project from a small area within Neukölln to the whole district; subsequently other districts and then other cities started to copy the project. At that time it also got registered as a job creation programme as part of the secondary labour market (*zweiter Arbeitsmarkt*). From then on, working for the project counted as an employment creation measure (*Maßnahme*[^194]) supported by the Job Centre. This meant that women who were receiving welfare money and worked in such an employment creation measure were paid an extra 1.50 € an hour on top of the regular welfare money. Work in the Borough Mothers project was rather popular with women; in

[^194]: *Maßnahme* is short for *Arbeitsbeschaffungsmaßnahme* and can be translated with “sanction” – as a sanction for people who receive welfare money and do not work, the welfare agency can make them work in a *Maßnahme* in order for them to continue receiving welfare money.
2013, there had been seventy-five applicants and twenty-five women had been admitted.

Ms. Bergmann, one of the two major project coordinators, who had been a main actor in developing the project right from the start, had migrated to Berlin from Hungary for university studies and finished a degree in educational science (Erziehungswissenschaften). Afterwards, she had been employed as a family social worker, before she got involved in the Borough Mothers project. Ms. Bergmann said that the fact that the project became an employment creation measure, with the major aim of preparing women for the labour market, had only been a by-product for her. “By now, the Borough Mothers themselves have become one target group of the project, because we’re supposed to prepare them for the labour market”, Ms. Bergmann said, and stressed that this had not been the case in the project’s original conceptualisation. Her major intention had always been to “strengthen families’ parenting skills” (Erziehungskompetenzen von Familien stärken) by means of the Borough Mothers’ interactions and negotiations, to convince parents to send their children to day care, and to encourage them to use the available advisory services. The general aim had been to improve future educational prospects of children in Neukölln.

Though it had not been her primary intention, Ms. Bergmann partly considered the project’s appropriation by the Job Centre as employment creation measure an advantage, because before, the women they were training and working with, who had also been unemployed, and had been paid on contract basis, would often have to stop working with them once the Job Centre made them take part in employment creation measures. Ms. Bergmann said,

In 2006, when the pilot phase began and the project got extended, the cooperation with the Job Centre started. This was really helpful. One then left women in peace while they were doing their training. The Job Centre’s director offered us a well-paid employment creation measure for women who had been receiving welfare money.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ “2006, als die Pilotphase begann und das Projekt ausgeweitet wurde, kam die Kooperation mit dem Job Centre. Das war sehr hilfreich. Die Frauen wurden dann während ihrer Qualifikation in Ruhe gelassen. Der Geschäftsführer vom Jobcenter bot uns für Frauen, die Hartz
However, over the years, the conditions for the various employment creation measures changed, and the changes over the last years had made their work more difficult, as Ms. Bergmann said:

The employment creation measures we had during that time have always had different entry conditions. The federation always fixes the target groups for the various employment creation measures by means of laws. These conditions tightened over the years. This means that in the beginning, all kinds of women came to us, younger women, women who had vocational training, even women who had gone to school here; there were women with perfect knowledge of German, all kinds. But at the moment the entry conditions specify that applicants must be in a really bad situation, so that one can say, this person does not have any chances in the regular labour market, not at all. This used to be more open, anyone unemployed could be employed in such measures. ... Concretely, this means that only women over thirty-five are allowed to come to us now. Otherwise they'd still have the opportunity to do vocational training. This means, they also have to have bad knowledge of German, no vocational training, no school certificate. At one point, they said, the person must at least have five employment barriers [Vermittlungshemmnisse].

In the beginning, there had thus been better chances of placing women into the regular labour market after they had been through the programme. By now, this aim had somehow become futile, as they were only allowed to employ women who were regarded as not having any chances in that labour market. Ms. Bergmann said,

In the beginning, the chances of placing women in the regular labour market were higher. In the beginning, we had more chances of placing women into vocational training afterwards, because they had school leaving certificates. Now, women who stop working with us after two years and are over fifty, and don't have a school leaving certificate – we can't say to them, "Please first finish school, and then also do vocational training." This means, the chances of employment, or prospects of success, have become fewer and fewer. ... We work together with a coach, but she often
gives us the same feedback: "Ms. Such-and-such came to see us, but unfortunately I cannot do anything for her."

Ms. Bergmann bemoaned the fact that though there was so much money invested in employment creation measures, there was no agency that could further assist women after they finished the Borough Mothers training, so that they could in fact take steps towards finding another paid job they liked.

It’s very difficult to gain a foothold in schools and day care centres, for instance. Many women got some contract work, but still had to take financial support from the Job Centre. Women who set out, who said, “I’m going to do vocational training, and will still do my school leaving certificate” – well, some made it, but many broke off, because they were lacking assistance. They often gave up when there were difficulties. It’d be necessary to really assist such people regularly – whoever might do that, the Job Centre or someone else. To give them feedback and look how one might support them. That’s just not the case. There’s so much money being invested into such employment creation measures, but the people are left alone. If they haven’t attended a school for twenty or thirty years, and then have to study every day, one really needs to take them by the hand. We don’t have the capacities to offer that for the women who used to work with us, and there are no other agencies who do that. It’s really a pity that the women who leave us are really motivated and say, “We’ll make it”, and then – [ended her sentence here]

From the project coordinator Ms. Bergmann’s perspective, preparing women for the labour market had only been a by-product of the project, which had for her mainly been about strengthening of parenting skills of those parents who lead rather secluded lives. For her, Borough Mothers had been employees in order to reach the

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project’s aims, and not one of the project’s target groups. In the next section I further discuss how the conceptualisation of the project’s target groups has evolved.

7.2 Policy Makers Versus Project Coordinators: Conflicts About Definition

In this section, I discuss policy makers’ and project coordinators’ conceptions of the project; explore to what extent they differ; and what conceptions of citizenship and belonging they are based on. In the words of Shore and Wright, the questions I follow up here are, “what are the different perspectives on an issue? Whose views prevail? How do these ways of seeing become hegemonic?” (Shore & Wright 2011:13).

7.2.1 Buschkowsky: Turks and Arabs as Targets of Activation

In chapter 2 I described Mayor Buschkowsky's stances towards integration politics. To summarise, I argued that his approach was characterised by a differential conception of integration, in that he stresses that there is a fundamental difference between assumed German or central European and Muslim values, and that he argues that many of Neukölln's social problems are caused by immigrants' attitudes. His view that issues of child rearing are especially important regarding integration is mainly based on such an approach. For instance, he states that schools and day care centres have to intervene because many parents in Neukölln do not manage to teach their children the basic social values for functioning in society.

Buschkowsky's stances towards integration have also influenced how he views the Borough Mothers project. He holds that the project is important because "no one will seem more trustworthy to the difficult immigrant families than their own compatriot woman" (Ataman 2009). and stresses that "If there is anyone who will be

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199 "da niemand auf die schwierigen Einwandererfamilien vertrauenswürdiger wirkt als die eigene Landsfrau"
trusted and heard by those families, then it is them” (Oppermann 2009). In interviews, Buschkowsky has expressed doubts about what the women would tell the families on their visits. “Of course we cannot control what a Borough Mother says when she visits a family”, he said, “But there’s no other way for the state to reach those families in an area where twenty per cent of migrants live in parallel universes beyond society” (Fahrun 2008). With projects like the Borough Mothers one, he wants to help prevent the scenario in which, “in a few years, life here will be unrecognisable as central European” (Fahrun 2008).

Regarding the conceptualisation of the project’s target group, Buschkowsky had wanted the project to be only aimed at women and families of Turkish and Arabic-speaking backgrounds, which was probably based on his view that those were the parents that had the highest need to be activated. While generally, active citizenship policy approaches have not only been directed at immigrants, but have been spread throughout Western Europe in various policy domains (Hurenkamp et al. 2011:209), Buschkowsky’s is a position that conceptualises certain population groups, defined in ethnic terms, as more in need of activation than others. In Buschkowsky’s view, the project is based on a strong distinction between German and migrant women and families, not based on citizenship, but on ethnic or linguistic background.

The local project coordinators, however, did not share his view that the project should only be directed at Turkish and Arabic speakers, and started to train women of other linguistic backgrounds as well, as I describe in the next section. This was something Buschkowsky at first did not approve of but in the end did not impede either. The project coordinators would also have trained mothers of ethnic German background as Borough Mothers. However, as they told me, Buschkowsky kept insisting that the project was only for migrant families and not for those with only a

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200 "Wenn einer bei diesen Familien Vertrauen und Gehör findet, dann sind sie es"  
201 "Natürlich können wir nicht kontrollieren, was die Stadtteilmutter bei ihrem Besuch einer Familie sagt‘, räumt Buschkowsky ein. Aber er weiß auch: Anders kommt der Staat an die 20 Prozent der Migranten, die in Parallel-Universen jenseits der Gesellschaft leben, nicht heran“  
202 "um zu verhindern, „... dass das Leben hier in wenigen Jahren „nichts mehr mit Mitteleuropa‘ zu tun hat, wie er es nennt.”
German-speaking background, and thus they could not do so. This is a conception that Borough Mothers were also critical of, as I illustrate in section 7.3.6. The project coordinators’ critique of this conception is described in more detail in the next section.

7.2.2 Project Coordinators: “We Managed to Smuggle in Other Groups”

The project coordinator Ms. Bergmann and the local group coordinator Ms. Acar did not share Buschkowsky’s views regarding the conceptualisation of the project’s target group. Ms. Acar was from Kreuzberg with a Turkish background and had done social work assistance for families before she started as a coordinator for the Borough Mothers project. Ms. Acar criticised Buschkowsky’s views, and thought that his attitude in that matter was indicative of his general understanding of integration.

Buschkowsky wants the project to be for migrants only, because he thinks that they are the ones who most need to integrate [die den meisten Integrationsbedarf haben], and those who should integrate. It becomes evident here what kind of understanding of integration he has; he desires and demands it from the other side, but not from German society.

Ms. Acar thought that everyone who was interested in the project should be able to take part.

I think everyone who’s interested, who’s open, and who has a need, should actually be able to benefit from it. After all it’s about integrating mothers into society, no matter what origin. Of course there are also German families who are overburdened, who have problems, need counselling. It’s somehow absurd to exclude them, well it’s not ok. If they come on their own initiative and say, “I’m interested, I’d like to get information as well”, and then to say, “Well no, it’s not for Germans”, that’s in fact strange.

Ms. Acar said she thought that

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203 “Buschkowsky will dass das Projekt nur für Migranten ist, weil er denkt, dass sie mehr Integrationsbedarf haben und sich integrieren sollen. Da sieht man ja, was für ein Integrationsverständnis er hat, dass es von der anderen Seite gewünscht und gefordert wird, aber nicht von der deutschen Gesellschaft.”

204 “Ich denke, alle die Interesse haben, offen sind, und Bedarf haben, sollten davon eigentlich auch profitieren. Weil es geht letztendlich wirklich darum, Mütter in die Gesellschaft zu integrieren, egal welcher Herkunft. Natürlich gibt es auch deutsche Familien, die überfordert sind, Probleme haben, Beratung brauchen, sie auszuschließen, ist irgendwie absurd, also nicht ok. Wenn sie von alleine kommen und sagen, „Das interessiert mich, ich würde auch gerne Informationen haben”, dann zu sagen, „Ah nee, an Deutsche nicht‘, das ist schon komisch.”
There are also Turkish and Arab families in Berlin who don't attract attention at all. We mustn't speak for all Turks and Arabs. I'm against that anyway, because the Turks or the Arabs don't exist. [pause] I just had to get rid of that now. It's being generalised way too often.\(^{205}\)

From Ms. Acar I know that Buschkowsky had in the beginning wanted the project to be directed at women and families of Turkish and Arabic-speaking background only. However, they also employed other women:

We smuggled in other nationalities as well. Buschkowsky directed that it should be Turkish and Arab mothers. But people of other nationalities also applied, and we didn't say no to them right from the start. ... Even if it was written in the guidelines, only for Turkish and Arab mothers, we didn't send women away who were interested. And we're happy about it. Other mothers can be overburdened in the upbringing of their children as well. ... Sure, Buschkowsky took note of it, but he didn't directly oppose it. It wasn't like this, after all. But regarding Germans, he's obstinate. Probably because he first wants all migrants to integrate, and Germans can participate afterwards.\(^{206}\)

I asked Ms. Acar whether they had directly asked Buschkowsky if the project could be extended towards German mothers, and she said, yes, from the beginning, they had reported to him during project meetings that there were high demands among German mothers to participate, but he would not change his mind. It was also a question he was regularly being asked by journalists.

Ms. Bergmann similarly stressed that for her, the main reason why German women could not work as Borough Mothers, and German families could not be visited, was that the district government insisted that it was a project for migrant families. What, exactly, was the reason behind this demand, she did not know. When I asked her why the Borough Mothers were not allowed to visit German families, she said,

\(^{205}\) "Es gibt auch ganz andere türkische und arabische Familien in Berlin, die gar nicht auffallen. Wir dürfen nicht für alle Türken und Araber sprechen. Da bin ich sowieso dagegen, weil die Türken oder die Araber, die gibt's nicht. [Pause] Das musste ich einfach mal loswerden. Das wird viel zu oft verallgemeinert."

Because the project is partly being financed by the district government. To them it was important that the project is one for families with migration background. But I think many topics would be of interest for German families as well.\textsuperscript{207}

Ms. Bergmann also found it a pity that the project was restricted to women of non-German background, and said that in the beginning, she had trained German women as Borough Mothers as well.

I really find it a pity that there are no women of German origin among the women. The women often have little contact outside of their communities. In that respect, the work is really fostering integration. They develop good contacts and also friendships; because they're together every day, they develop many contacts. Many women wish to have contact with German families very much, but they don't know any, because there's none in their apartment building. The work would be a good opportunity in that respect, building up relationships through work. And that's missing. I really find it a pity. ... In the beginning, I also trained German women.\textsuperscript{208}

Ms. Bergmann also referred to the influence of Buschkowsky's project conception on the Borough Mothers, when she said that "It's also very difficult for Borough Mothers to explain these issues when they are being asked by others", meaning, to explain why they could not visit German mothers, as they were often asked to. The next section analyses Borough Mothers' the views voiced by women about their work in the project.

7.3 Borough Mothers' Voices

In this section, I discuss how the women perceive themselves and their work in the project. What are the "meanings that ... policies hold for those actors whose lives

\textsuperscript{207} "Weil das Projekt auch teilweise vom Bezirksam finanziert wird. Denen war es wichtig, dass das Projekt für Familien mit Migrationshintergrund ist. Aber ich denke, dass viele Themen auch für deutsche Familien interessant wären."


\textsuperscript{209} "Es ist auch sehr schwierig, für die Stadtteilmütter, wenn sie darauf angesprochen werden, das zu erklären."
they touch”? (Shore & Wright 2011:8) How do Borough Mothers view the opportunities for participation that the project offers them? What aspects of the project do they criticise? What kinds of relationships and networks come to being through this policy? (cf. Adam & Vonderau 2014:19) How does the conception of the Borough Mothers project influence women’s sense of belonging?

7.3.1 “Women in Berlin Fly”

Dalia had migrated from Egypt to Berlin for marriage in 1996; she had been born in Lebanon and lived in Egypt after she was ten. She had done her higher secondary education in Egypt and then studied law for two years there before she migrated to Germany. She identified as Palestinian and had married her husband, who already had German citizenship, in Egypt. She moved to Berlin and by 2014, they had five children. Dalia had been working as a Borough Mother since 2011 and said she saw her work as mainly related to women’s rights. She said,

I want every woman to know her rights and that no one can force women to do things. For example, some women are beaten by their husbands, and don’t want to report it. I tell them to go and seek help, and that it doesn’t matter what other people say or think. I think that’s my work, that’s my job.210

Dalia knew that “Arab men” were often depicted as especially repressive towards their women, but in her view, this was not the right way to portray the situation.

You know, a man said to me, “Here, women fly. They are free, they can do everything.” And I think that’s true. Only ten percent of the men say, “You’re not allowed to do this or that”. Like going to German classes. There are some families I visit where the husband always wants to sit next to us and wants to know what we’re talking about, but it’s actually not that many.211

210 “Ich möchte, dass jede Frau ihre Rechte kennt und dass niemand die Frau zwingen kann, irgendwas zu machen. Zum Beispiel, manche Frauen werden von ihren Männern geschlagen und wollen sich nicht beschweren. Ich sage zu ihnen, dass sie etwas machen sollen, und dass es egal ist, was die anderen Leute denken. Ich glaube, das ist meine Arbeit, das ist mein Job.”
211 “Weißt Du, ein Mann hat zu mir gesagt, „Hier fliegen die Frauen. Sie sind frei, sie können alles machen.” Ich glaube das stimmt. Nur zehn Prozent der Männer sagen, „Du darfst das nicht
Dalia thought women usually had better chances to participate in society and to receive support than men:

Women here know everything; they know all their rights. The husband can’t do anything against it. We say, the woman marries the Job Centre. Almost fifty percent of the women are divorced. Some women are married for one month, get pregnant, and then leave. In Arab countries that’s not possible. Here there are many rights for women. Well, Islam actually also gives many rights to women. But many men don’t take them seriously, and many women in Arab countries don’t know their rights. In Germany, these rights are open. Women come and take these rights. It’s easier for women [than for men] to get support here, from the youth office or from the Job Centre, and the like.  

Dalia said that if families were unemployed, women, because they were mostly responsible for looking out for the children, often had more contact with institutions than men, and men could not prevent them from doing so even if they wanted to. “Women also learn much when the children go to kindergarten. They talk to other women there, and get to know many people”, Dalia said.

One major reason she enjoyed her work so much was that she had met so many people through it. ”When I walk through the streets, everyone says, hello, hello, hello”. Once her husband picked her up in front of the primary school after a parents’ café meeting, and we walked a bit together. Dalia greeted some people on the street, and her husband joked, “She’s like a minister of Neukölln. She knows all the people. She says hello all the time”. Dalia said she especially enjoyed getting to know all the women in the Borough. She said,

Before, I didn’t know what was going on in the borough. But now I’m a grown up woman. I know all women; I know what that one thinks, or what the other one thinks. I can say, I want to talk to that one, or go for a walk with that one. I don’t want to talk to that one. No one can force me.
Dalia contrasted this behaviour with how she had acted earlier, in that she said that she was now ready to speak out against people she did not like, for instance, if they wanted to visit her, and that while she had extended her network of collegial relationships through the project, she had less contact with relatives now. The latter was the case for Badra too, whom I introduce in the next section.

7.3.2 “I Don’t Have Time for Visitors Anymore”

Borough Mothers were often very busy. Not only did they sometimes work more than the thirty prescribed hours of work as a Borough Mother, but many of them also had three or more children and had the main responsibility for looking after them as well as the household. Badra, who was forty-four, was a mother of six children, the three youngest of whom were still living at home. The three oldest were married and lived in the same apartment building; she had nine grandchildren with two more on the way. She and her husband Bassam had been living in Berlin since 1994; the first two children had been born in Lebanon before that. Badra and Bassam identified as Sunni Muslim Lebanese and had come to Berlin as refugees from villages near Tyre in South Lebanon.

Bassam had worked as a truck driver and a plumber in Lebanon but did not find work in Berlin; he was subject to work bans that applied for the first years of their stay in Berlin (as I have described in chapter 3). The family was in a difficult situation regarding residential rights; none of them had been granted a permanent residence permit so far. They had lived with tolerated residence for years, and since then had only got a limited residence permit. Because Bassam did not have any work, they had not been able to apply for permanent residence so far. Badra was hoping that her work as Borough Mother would help, because it counted as regular employment for the
purpose of citizenship issues, and also, once her daughter Safiye, who still lived at home, turned eighteen, Safiye could apply for permanent residence and then for citizenship, and then Badra would be able to do the same.

In the division of household labour, Bassam did most of the shopping, while Badra did all the cooking and cleaning, as well as vegetable shopping, which she preferred to do herself. Because their three oldest children and grandchildren all lived in the same apartment, on the weekends, they would often drop the children at her place so that they could go out for shopping or the like. Badra was very proud of her children and grandchildren, but said that since she worked as Borough Mother, she felt that all this was too much for her. "With my son Mohammad, I've got twelve children – a whole kindergarten in my apartment!”, she said. Bassam had many relatives in Berlin, around 300 families, and thus they were often invited to weddings or other social gatherings. Bassam received at least two wedding invitations each month, but for religious reasons, Badra only joined celebrations when they were gender separated, which was only rarely the case. Before she worked as a Borough Mother, Badra had also spent much time on visits to her husbands’ kin, but said that since she worked, she did not have time for relatives any more except for visiting them in connection with the Borough Mothers project and handing on the required information to them. When there were school holidays, there were fewer meetings for the Borough Mothers project, and during that time, she had to do all the visits of their relatives, but altogether, the contact had diminished through her work in the project.

Dalia stressed similar issues to Badra’s. She said that while she had got many visitors earlier, this was not the case anymore. She would come home from work, clean and check the children’s homework, and said that now she had to be careful not to waste her time. She stated that her work in the project had made her self-confident in that when a relative or friend of hers brought another person to visit her, and she did not like the other person, she now dared to tell her friend not to bring them anymore.
Before, when I had visitors, and they had invited another woman – I mean, when a strange woman came, and I did not want her to. I was shy and did not say no. But now, if something like that happens, I say, no, I don't want this woman to visit me again. Before, I thought this was impolite, but not any more now,²¹⁴

Adile, whom I further introduce in section 7.3.5, said,

We get along well in our team, but we remain colleagues … I have fewer contacts with relatives now. They call me and ask, “When can we meet, on the weekend?” I say, “I don’t want to. I have to stay at home. I have to have some time for myself at first. I have to calm down, I need peace.” If the week is exhausting, I need peace. I also have to take care of my son. It’s not always like that, but sometimes I don’t call anyone among my family or friends for two months. They call: “Are you still alive?” I go “Yes, I’m working a lot. I have to go there and there” … I worked as charwoman for three years. I always worked from twelve to six. You do your work, and then you’re done. But here I have to think about how to behave. The families trust me and tell me about their problems and together, we try to find a solution. You also have some responsibility. I thoroughly think about these issues. But as charwoman, it was dirty, you clean it, and then it’s done. As Borough Mother your head is not empty at night. At the beginning I had so many of the Borough Mothers’ topics in my dreams, and my coordinator Canan [Ms. Acar] also appeared. I later told her [laughs], “Canan, go away from my dreams, what do you want from me?”²¹⁵

The processes described by the women in this section are an example of how policies constantly generate new social relations (Adam & Vonderau 2014:18). It seemed that the Borough Mothers project had the effect of creating a network of collegial or professional relationships for the women, which often happened at the expense of contacts in their network of kinship and friends. The fact that women who


had many relatives in Berlin would often use these contacts for their work, shows how a “government through community” approach (Rose 1996a) regarding migrant integration has worked in Berlin.

7.3.3 “If I Had Known”

Najat had come to Berlin for marriage from Morocco in 1997. When I met her, the marriage had been dissolved in divorce and Najat was raising the two daughters on her own. She had been a Borough Mother since 2010. Najat said that for her, one of the most interesting topics the project offered was bilingual child rearing.

Najat: I find the topic of bilingual child rearing interesting. For instance, my German isn’t perfect, and if I always speak German with my children, then maybe they won’t learn the right grammar. Thus it’s best when I speak my mother language, and the children learn German in kindergarten and in school. … Ten years ago, people still said that the parents should definitely speak German with their children. This is still the case now. Many child care workers say that you have to speak German to the child. But now many schools say that if someone doesn’t speak German perfectly, it’s better to speak the mother language.

Rahma: From the beginning, in the Borough Mothers project it was said that parents should speak their mother tongue with the children, and that it’s enough if the child learns German outside. For a child can quickly learn more languages, and not only one.

Najat: Right, when children are small, they can quickly learn several languages.216

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Rahma: Im Stadtteilmütterprojekt hieß es von Anfang an, dass Eltern die Muttersprache mit den Kindern sprechen sollen. Und dass es reicht, wenn das Kind draußen deutsch lernt. Weil ein Kind sofort mehrere Sprachen als nur eine beherrscht.

Najat: Ja, wenn Kinder klein sind, können sie schnell mehrere Sprachen lernen.”
Najat’s husband used to mainly speak German with their two daughters, and Najat assumed that this was a reason for why one of her daughters struggled with speaking Arabic now, which she found a pity. Had she known that it would not impede the children’s chances of learning German when they spoke their first language with them, as it was being promoted through the Borough Mothers project, her daughter’s Arabic might perhaps be better.

I committed this mistake with my daughters. If I had known, I would have done it differently. One daughter speaks Arabic perfectly, even though she only spoke German with her daddy back then. But the little one, she doesn’t want to learn my language at all. Maybe that’s also because we have two different dialects. My husband is from Syria; and Morocco, that’s a different dialect. And that’s why she only wants to speak German. Sometimes, when she hears others speak Arabic, she says, “Mommy, I want to learn that, but I can’t.” ... The children learn German anyway in day care and in school, but if they don’t learn Arabic at home, they’ve lost it forever. They can also use it for their future, there are so many students now who work in Arab countries, or translate into Arabic. If someone learns another language, it’s of benefit for their future.²¹⁷

Many women reported similar issues: Anisah, whose family’s situation regarding schooling and employment I discussed in chapter 4, said that because teachers, child care workers, and others had always stated that one should speak as much German to the child as possible, she had tried to speak German to her children at home. Now some of them did not speak Arabic well either, and she was sad about this. Anisah greeted the change that had started in public discourse regarding that matter, which the Borough Mothers project also promoted.

Adile stressed similar issues when she told me about how she had raised her son. When he was in the first class primary school, the school offered one class where children would have extra Turkish classes. However, Adile decided against it, as she

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²¹⁷ “Ich hab den Fehler mit meinen Töchtern gemacht. Wenn ich es gewusst hätte, hätte ich es anders gemacht. Eine Tochter spricht perfekt arabisch, obwohl sie früher mit Papa nur deutsch gesprochen hat. Aber die Kleine, sie will gar nicht meine Sprache lernen. Vielleicht auch weil wir zwei Dialekte haben, mein Mann ist aus Syrien, und Marokko ist ein anderer Dialekt. Und darum will sie nur deutsch sprechen. Manchmal, wenn sie die anderen auf arabisch sprechen hört, sagt sie, ‚Mama, ich will das lernen, aber ich kann nicht.‘ ... Deutsch lernen die Kinder sowieso in der Kita und Schule, aber wenn sie Arabisch nicht zu Hause lernen, verlieren sie es für immer. In Zukunft können sie das auch gebrauchen, es gibt jetzt so viele Studenten, die arbeiten in arabischen Ländern, oder übersetzen auf Arabisch. Wenn jemand eine andere Sprache lernt, ist es gut für die Zukunft.”
thought he should first learn German, and that he might not learn enough German then in the end. At present, his Turkish was not very good. He was fourteen and understanding Turkish alright, but could not speak well, and only for a month had she been sending him to Turkish classes on the weekends. If Adile could do it again, she would send him to Turkish classes from primary school on.

This is how Ms. Acar, one of the project coordinators, described the Borough Mothers project’s stance regarding that issue:

Mothers who don’t speak German well should in any case speak the mother language first and not try to speak broken German because they’re pressured. In the case of bilingual marriages, you can speak both languages with the child. It’s best then if one person stays with one language. ... Earlier, the general opinion used to be rather strange. Children were supposed to only learn German at first and be supported only in German. But we support the theory that every child can learn several languages at the same time. The most important thing is that they’re supported well, and the person who knows a language very well should speak it with the child. Earlier, parents felt totally under pressure. There was always pressure from society that children must know German and have to speak German everywhere. If the parents didn’t know the language, this was of course irritating and a strain for them.218

The stance towards language that was promoted through the Borough Mothers project was experienced as real progress by the mothers, who now often had regrets that they had not spoken more of their own language with their children.

7.3.4 “Finally I Got Some Recognition for My Work”

Shahirah, who had built up the parents’ café I discuss in chapter 5, was one of the first women to work as a Borough Mother, when the project was still in its pilot

218 “Mütter, die nicht gut deutsch sprechen sollen auf jeden Fall die Muttersprache zuerst sprechen und nicht durch Druck noch versuchen, gebrochen deutsch zu sprechen. Aber bei zweisprachigen Ehen kann man auch beide Sprachen mit dem Kind sprechen. Dann ist es am besten wenn eine Person bei einer Sprache bleibt. ... Die allgemeine Meinung war da früher komisch, und zwar, dass die Kinder zuerst mal nur Deutsch lernen sollen und in Deutsch gefördert werden sollen. Aber wir vertreten die Theorie, dass jedes Kind mehrere Sprachen parallel lernen kann, Hauptsache, es wird gut gefördert, und die Person, die eine Sprache sehr gut kann, sollte das auch mit dem Kind sprechen. Früher haben sich die Eltern ja total unter Druck gefühlt, immer kam von der Gesellschaft Druck, die Kinder müssen Deutsch können und überall deutsch sprechen. Sie konnten die Sprache nicht, und das irritiert dann natürlich und belastet auch.”
phase. Shahirah had migrated to Berlin for marriage in 1990, but as she told the story, her main motivation had been to find a job. In Algeria, she had worked as a secretary, first in the finance office and then in a big company. Then she was shifted to a department where she did not like her work. She had the dream that in Europe it would be easy to find a job as a woman. When she arrived in Germany she was quite shocked that her husband, who had been in Berlin since the 1960s, did not speak German well and “didn’t have a clue about anything”. She liked to tell the story about shouting at him, “You have been here for so long and you don’t even know where the town hall is?” Regarding her first years in Berlin, Shahirah said,

The first years I spent here were horrible. My husband was working the whole day and I didn’t have any children for three years. I spent my days in the neighbourhood and went around the playgrounds. I wanted to share my food with children there but I realised Germans don’t like this. Where I’m from, children are allowed to eat from strangers. But here, German children aren’t allowed to take food from strangers. The Germans don’t want others to undermine their ways of child rearing [Sie wollen nicht dass man ihre Erziehung kaputt macht].

Shahirah described her first years in Berlin as experiencing the pain of invisibility: she did not have children; her husband was working full time; she could not find a job and did not have any friends. She said that at some point, out of boredom, she started to spend a lot of time in mosques and to wear a headscarf, which she had not used to before. In Algeria, she had been wearing miniskirts and the like. As she told the story, “I thought to myself, if this is what you [German society] want, then I will just go to the mosque and then back home again and to the mosque again”.

At that time, Shahirah also started to do voluntary work at schools and kindergarten, and said that she did all this work “in order to get some kind of recognition”. She had started to learn German, which she had to pay for herself, and subsequently looked for a job. However, as she did not have vocational training, and her former work experience in Algeria was not recognised, she only got refusals. The job agency did not feel responsible for her as she had not worked in Germany before

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219 This is a reconstruction of what she said during a parents’ café, of which I did not take any recording.
and told her she was too old to start vocational training. Around ten years after her arrival in Berlin, Shahirah was so frustrated at not finding any job that she took her three children out of school and went back to Algeria, because in Berlin, she saw herself as being stuck at home with the children forever and she did not want that. After two months in Algeria, however, she saw that the children were having problems in accommodating to life and school there and thus decided to return to Berlin.

Shahirah portrayed the start of her work in the Borough Mothers project as a big moment in her life, because it was the first time she had got some recognition for the voluntary work she had done, and also some financial recognition. While she still did not receive a large amount of money, this meant much to her as a final small recognition for the work she had done so far. As an Arabic native speaker, she worked mainly with families of Palestinian and Lebanese background. She said that she had to learn their dialect and culture, and underlined that she had spoken so much to families from that region that people sometimes thought she was from the Middle East when they heard her talk. Shahirah’s life story calls to mind what Ruth Mandel writes about people who had migrated from Turkey to Germany for professional training and could not find a job there: they

... learned that the only way to succeed is by mirroring ready-made expectations for them: transforming themselves into the spokespeople for their working-class compatriots – a stance that never would have emerged had they remained in Turkey (Mandel 2008:7).

Shahirah did not exactly work with “compatriots” only, but the mechanism was similar: at first, she had not wanted to get a job related to child rearing, nor to migrants’ issues especially. She had wanted to get an office job or the like. However, she learnt that working in that area provided her with an accepted role and some recognition in the wider society, an opportunity for cultural citizenship and belonging.

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220 180 € for ten house visits; this was during the pilot phase of the project when women were still paid on contract basis.
7.3.5 “Why Are There No Permanent Positions?”

Adile, a single mother of a teenage son, had in 2014 been working as a Borough Mother since the end of 2011. She had had no vocational training before that, which she attributed to the fact that, after she had come to Berlin with her parents from Turkey when she was fourteen, she did not receive any support, tutoring or the like, and it had been too difficult for her at school then. She got her lower secondary school certificate, but could not find a place for job training afterwards. Afterwards she started to work as a charwoman, got pregnant, was at home for a few years, and then started to work in employment creation measures. She got to know the Borough Mothers project in 2006 when she had been visited by a Borough Mother, with whom she became friends.

Like many other Borough Mothers, Adile stressed that one of the things she enjoyed most about the project was the continuous process of learning. One did not only study new topics during the six-months training course, but continued to learn about various topics for the whole time, during the Quali classes and while working as a Borough Mother. When I asked her why she found working for the project interesting, she said,

Well, first of all, you really learn a lot through this project. I also thought I could pass on my own experience as mother. Or you have come to a conclusion about what you did wrong [as a mother], and what might be done better. I also personally developed. I’ve enhanced my self-confidence. I can express myself better now. You have more knowledge, more advantages. Well, through this project, I learned a lot. Well, you still learn, you continue. It’s ongoing.221

Najat also said she enjoyed the fact that she had learnt so much through this project:

I came here with my husband. I used to work with my husband, we had an electric shop. I always only worked with my husband. My work with the

Borough Mothers is my first own work. And I’m happy about this, I’ve learned so many things. ... I got to know the project through a friend. She told me, we learn every day, and we do classes every week. At that time, I had been working at a bakery for a while and then I said, why not. I’ll apply and I’ll see what it’s like. During the six months training I learned so much, and I continued to work after those six months. We learn every day, really, there are so many things. Well, in addition to the house visits. I developed. I had only been at home. I learned many things.222

Because they felt they learnt so much during the project, Adile and others found it even harder that because the project was an employment creation measure, there were no prospects of being employed in it on a long term basis223. Every six months, the women had an appointment at the Job Centre, and once a year, their official in charge would decide whether they were allowed to continue their work in the project. The maximum length, however, was two or three years, depending on what kind of employment creation measure they were in. Adile said,

I think by October [2014] I won’t be allowed to continue this work. Well that’s not good, of course. You learn a lot, you make an effort. Let me put it this way, you mature, and then it should all be finished? That’s not easy.224

Najat said,

We learned so much. We’re doing so many things. We only have six hours of work a day, but sometimes we work eight. Because we’re at so many schools and day care centres, we travel, and have to prepare. It’s often stressful. There’s always new information. And then the project is finished, “You have to do something different”. The contract is always for one year and then gets extended, but you never know for how long. Sometimes it hurts, really, when someone goes to the Job Centre, for example, and has an appointment with the official in charge. It’s not only a project. We do so many things, and I learnt so many things through this project. They should accept this a bit more. Every six months we have an appointment with the official, and they say, “What are you doing?” – “I want to continue to work as Borough Mother.” They say, “Perhaps you should do something different


223 By 2014, there were also ten Borough Mothers positions that were part of the regular labour market; they were non-permanent positions limited to one year.

now." I say, "I learned so many things." They say, "We have so many [women working as Borough Mothers], you can do something different now."

Rahma, who was present during the same interview, added,

I think that’s because they’re not regular labour market positions. They want us to find work in regular positions. But not every job fits with every woman. We all have children. And I think the employers won’t give us work anyway. I applied several times, and when they hear that I have four children, they immediately say no. I applied at New Yorker [clothes store], at Rossmann [drug store], at many stores. I had started training as a hairdresser, but stopped. I had been doing it for one year. And today I feel sorry that I had to stop because I got married.

Dalia had similar concerns like Najat. She said,

Our work helps migrants a lot. We do lots of things for migrant people, from different countries. I think our work is important. Why are there no fixed positions, no long term contracts? Regular labour market contracts, I mean. This would be very good. We earn just under 850 € a month for thirty hours of work, and sometimes we work more than thirty hours. Sometimes there’s street parties and the like, and then we’re always there much longer. Many things. And, one thing: thirty hours and more, and I’ve been doing this work for more than three years. And then – everything been and gone? Even if you did good work, and everything was very good. And after three years, they say, bye. Once a year we have to go to the official because of the extension. My official now is very good, but the one in the first year railed at me a lot.


Adile and others were not looking forward to the time when their work for the project ended. They were sceptical of their chances of finding employment afterwards, especially something that was interesting and where they could apply the knowledge they had gathered during the course.

7.3.6 “Why Can't We Visit German Families? It's Like a Big Question Mark”

Almost all Borough Mothers I talked to reported that they were regularly being asked by "German families" (not referring to citizenship, but to ethnic or linguistic background) whether they could come and visit them at home and pass information on to them as well. Najat said,

Najat: I also go to a neighbourhood centre in order to promote the project. There was a German woman, she said, "Why are you only allowed to visit migrants?" I said, "Our project is like that, we're only allowed to visit migrants." She said, "Don’t you think we have problems as well?" [laughs] I even told Canan [Ms. Acar], but we're not allowed to. She said to me, “You can only give her flyers.”

Interviewer: Why is it like that?

Najat: I don't know. Our project is like that. The coordinators have to explain these things, but we're only allowed to work with migrants.

Interviewer: [to Rahma] Did it happen to you as well that German families were interested but [Rahma interrupts the question and immediately answers]

Rahma: Yes. There's a mother whose children attend the school here. She also asked me, and then I said, no, we’re only allowed to visit migrants. And then she found it unfair.

Najat: To me, that even happened several times. One woman discussed so much with me, right, she said, "Why not? We also need those topics." I said, "Don’t ask me, please ask our coordinator. She’s responsible for this project.”

Interviewer: I also heard there are German women who are jealous because they can’t work for the project.

Najat: [laughs] That’s right. At one school there was a German, she’s married to an Arab man, from Palestine. I’m allowed to visit her

ersten Jahr hat viel mit mir gemeckert.”
because she's married to a migrant. But she's not allowed to work as Borough Mother.228

Badra also told me that she and Rabia had been asked by some German families to visit them, and that they had asked Ms. Acar about it, but she had declined their request. Badra said she did not understand why they were not allowed to visit "German families" because "they were all human beings". Dalia said,

Dalia: I have many families, and there are also German ones – real German families, who want that I visit them. I asked the coordinator, but she said, I'm not allowed to. These topics are only for migrant families. But many, many German women say, I can come and visit them. They want the flyers. But I don't know why that's not possible. It's a big question mark.

Interviewer: Did you ask your coordinator why it's not possible?

Dalia: Yes. I asked the coordinator, she said: "I don't know. We're only allowed to visit migrant families." ... Sometimes I take the flyer and give it to the German families and explain a little to them anyway, in the parents' cafe, for instance.

Interviewer: Why do you think you're not allowed to visit German families?

Dalia: I think – well that's my opinion – they think German families know everything, and migrant families don't know everything. But for me, that's not true. There are also German families who don't know about these things, about these topics. About healthy food, about many things. It's not only us.229

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Interviewer: Warum ist das so?

Najat: Ich weiß es nicht, unser Projekt ist so, die Koordinatorinnen müssen diese Sachen erklären, aber wir dürfen nur mit Migranten arbeiten.

Interviewer: [zu Rahma] Ist das dir auch schon passiert, dass deutsche Familien eigentlich Interesse hatten aber [Rahma unterbricht die Frage und antwortet schon]


Najat: Bei mir war das sogar öfter. Eine Frau hat mit mir so viel diskutiert, ja, sie hat gesagt, 'Warum denn? Wir brauchen diese Themen auch.' Ich hab gesagt, 'Du kannst mich nicht fragen, bitte frag die Koordinatorin. Sie ist für dieses Projekt zuständig.'

Interviewer: Ich hab auch schon gehört, dass es deutsche Frauen gibt, die neidisch sind, weil sie nicht als Stadtteilmutter arbeiten dürfen.


229 "Dalia: Ich hab viele Familien, und auch deutsche – richtig deutsche Familien, sie wollen, dass ich sie besuche. Ich frage, aber die Koordinatorin sagt, ich darf
However, Dalia also added,

For us, it’s the big majority. Among migrant families, the big majority don’t know about these topics. Or they don’t want to talk about them, or are afraid ... They’re afraid when we come to visit them. They think we work with the youth office,\textsuperscript{230}

Thus, though Dalia was at first self-confident in saying that she thought it was not true that German families had more knowledge about issues related to child rearing than migrant families, she also added that she thought it was the big majority among migrant families who had a need to be taught in these topics, which shows that she partly agreed with the project’s basic assumptions. However, as Shore and Wright remind us, “external constructions of the subject [through policy] are not adopted unquestioningly by people in the formation of their own identities” (Shore & Wright 2011:17). Dalia and other Borough Mothers were generally critical of the fact that the project was only directed at migrant families, and did not understand the reason behind this conception.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the last of my three analyses of contexts in and through which integration is supposed to happen: Neukölln’s best-known integration project, which is focused on issues of child rearing. Although the project is one that has won

\begin{quote}

\textbf{Interviewer:} Hast du deine Koordinatorin gefragt, warum das nicht geht?


\textbf{Interviewer:} Was glaubst Du, warum du die Familien nicht besuchen darfst?

\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{230} “Aber bei uns, die große Mehrheit. Bei den Migrantenfamilien kennt die große Mehrheit diese Sachen nicht. Oder wollen nicht darüber sprechen, oder haben Angst. ... Sie haben Angst, wenn wir sie besuchen kommen. Sie denken, wir arbeiten mit dem Jugendamt.”
national and international prizes, and has often been called a very successful integration project, the way its target group is conceptualised by the district government is in some ways hindering a more comprehensive participation in society. Only women with other linguistic backgrounds than German are allowed to work as Borough Mothers, though there is a demand for these positions by women of ethnic German background as well. If the project was not conceptualised in ethnic terms like this, it would be more appropriate to help fostering interactions between women or the population more generally, regardless of ethnic or linguistic background.

My analysis of Borough Mothers' voices suggests that the women generally experience the project as very beneficial for themselves: they value getting to know important institutions and actors through their work in the project and expanding their theoretical knowledge about child rearing, for instance. However, the conception of the project based on a gap between migrant and German families is not good for fostering a more comprehensive feeling of belonging or cultural citizenship. It leaves the impression of being stigmatised, of being regarded in terms of deficits or of a "question mark", and enforces a discourse of us and them, migrants versus Germans. This is one example of the concrete effects of Buschkowsky's differential approach to migrant integration politics. Adam and Vonderau (2014:18) remark that the categorisations of policy often help to form new subject positions, and in this case, the perceived contrast between the positions of migrant as opposed to German is strengthened.

Buschkowsky's conceptualisation is something none of the project's actors on the ground can satisfactorily explain to others, nor support. However, for the sake of the project's financial support, they comply with the guideline directed by the district government, and above all by Buschkowsky, not to employ women of ethnic German background, and not to send out Borough Mothers to visit German families. They have,

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231 I did not mean to evaluate women's participation in the project as a whole, which, as I stated, many women perceived as very beneficial, as they enjoyed the process of learning: got to know many actors and institutions in Neukölln; and established friendships. My point here only relates to the effects of the project's conceptualisation of its target group on women who work as Borough Mothers.
however, changed the project in that, while Buschkowsky had directed it to be for Turkish and Arab families only, they have extended it to other linguistic groups. The project coordinators did not share the view that it was Turkish and Arab families especially who had deficits regarding child rearing, as it was often implied in Buschkowsky’s statements. Bierschenk and de Sardan (2014:37) remind us that projects are never fully implemented and that there is always a gap between policy discourse and practice, an issue which has been called the “implementation gap” (Lane 2009:47 ff). In this case, the project coordinators’ refusal to only employ women of Turkish- and Arabic-speaking backgrounds constitutes such an implementation gap.

The material presented in this chapter suggests that there is an overall gap between the district government’s view of integration, which rests on the assumption that it is migrant families, and families of Turkish- and Arabic-speaking backgrounds especially, who lack certain parenting skills and who need to be activated, and the views of the overall population. The fact that there were so many German families who requested to be visited by Borough Mothers shows that these residents did not share the Mayor Buschkowsky’s conviction that it is only the migrant families who benefit from being taught about pedagogical issues. Instead, they requested to also be able to receive information spread by the Borough Mothers. This leaves the impression that “integration” in Neukölln is not as problematic as Buschkowsky and other hardliners assume. Similarly, in White Nation, for the context of Australia, Ghassan Hage states that everyday interactions between people of different ethnic backgrounds or otherwise in districts that have been branded as problematic due to their big migrant populations, are usually rather unproblematic (Hage 1998:233).

In Part II of this thesis I analysed social and symbolic practices that are meant to constitute “integration” in three institutional settings, focused on issues of child rearing and schooling. My analysis of interactions in the context of the school (chapter 5) built on the previous chapter about refugee families’ situation and prospects
regarding issues of schooling and employment (chapter 4). In public discourse of recent years (see chapter 2) it has often been claimed that Muslim parents need to be especially activated regarding issues of education and schooling, and that they tend to be uninterested regarding their children’s educational prospects. This issue has even been framed as an “educational conflict between Muslim parents and schools” (Kelek 2006:66).

An analysis of the context of a primary school in Neukölln with its institution of parents’ café showed that in this setting, the basic assumptions of public discourse were not borne out. The parents valued it when teachers engaged with them and consulted them because of their children. These were in fact the teachers whom parents thought most highly of. Teachers, in contrast, were often of the opinion that it was they who were mainly responsible for the children and said they did not have time to consult the parents in more detail. If there is a perception of conflict, it cannot merely be explained by an alleged contrast between “Islamic” and “Central European” values, but is created through the nature of interactions between school staff like teachers and parents, as interactions between street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky 1969, 1980) and the population, which often mainly consist of problem-centred interactions.

In my discussion of the welfare centre for parents and children in chapter 6 I described how the introduction of a consciously “activating” approach to social work changed the relationship between social workers and attendees, leading to the enhancement of conflict. However, interactions with the staff had before mostly been unproblematic, and were described as pleasant by the mothers who attended the centre. In Aihwa Ong’s cultural citizenship framework, relationships between social work staff and migrants and refugees are by their nature conflictual, and social workers’ motives are mainly interpreted as exertions of dominance over migrants’ and refugees’ own cultural practices. For instance, Ong writes that social workers “sought to undermine the moral authority of Cambodian parents while claiming that they were assisting refugees in adapting to an American ideal of middle-class parenting” (Ong
2003:20). As I argued in chapter 6, such an interpretation seems to be too one-sided and neglects to look at the quality of such relations in each setting, and that social workers do in fact provide services that are needed and appreciated by the people.

Finally, my analysis of the Borough Mothers project in this chapter showed up a gap between policy discourses about integration on the one hand, and the views of project staff, as well as Neukölln's general population on the other hand. Both local staff and many of Neukölln's residents criticised the view that it was migrants specifically who needed to be activated because of certain deficits in their ways of child rearing.

As the overall focus of Part II of this thesis, I looked at how policies based on ideas of parent activation have been understood in pedagogical institutions on the ground, and what the effects of such policies have been. In the following chapter I conclude the thesis as a whole by connecting these themes to those of Part I, and bring the results back to some of the more general questions raised in the thesis' introduction.
8. Conclusion

In this thesis, I have analysed current conceptions of migrant integration and how they have influenced people intended to be their targets. I first portrayed some of the life conditions of migrants and refugees from Lebanon in Berlin (part I), because they form one big group of people identified as Muslim in Neukölln, and then analysed three state-funded migrant integration projects focused on issues of child rearing and schooling. I analysed how the participants have interacted with them and what effects the projects have had on people’s feelings of belonging and participation to society (part II).

In part I, I showed how integration has been discussed in political discourse, and how in recent years, it has tended to be conceptualised as a duty for immigrants, indicating a pressure for them to change. In former decades, however, the term “integration” had been used by migrant organisations themselves in their campaigns for equal political rights (section 2.2.1). In the Berlin context, as in Germany, demands for integration have been more and more directed at those people identified as Muslim, and the discourse about an allegedly failed integration of Muslims has often turned on issues of schooling and child rearing (section 2.2). I compared approaches to integration between the districts of Neukölln and Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, and showed how the government of Neukölln practises a rather restrictive approach to integration policies (section 2.5).

Refugees from Lebanon have been affected by difficult policy conditions, which have hindered their participation in the labour market and educational institutions (section 3.2). An analysis of families’ situations regarding issues of schooling and employment suggested that it was not people’s own cultural practices, like Islam, that kept them away from full participation in the labour market and educational institutions. What made their situation especially difficult was Berlin's deteriorating economic situation and changes in policies towards welfare recipients (chapter 4).
In Part II I suggested that the alleged conflict between people of Muslim background and pedagogical institutions, which is much discussed and portrayed as deeply entrenched, is exaggerated. The evidence from Neukölln suggests that the friction that sometimes develops between, for example, primary school teachers and parents, is generated by a range of factors that are part of the total social setting of the schools and the agents involved (section 5.1.4).

My study of a parents’ meeting at a primary school showed that it was not the case that teachers thought to improve matters simply through more engagement with parents. A group of mothers was present at school regularly, but most of the school staff did not take the opportunity to talk to them during these meetings (section 5.2). Frustrations on both sides remained, produced as they are by the wider social setting of which parent-teacher relations are one dimension.

Current progressive concepts of migrant integration, like the one of “opening up to interculturality” (*Interkulturelle Öffnung*), which is aimed at enhancing migrants’ representation in public institutions, are not always well reflected on in such institutions. Agents like social workers say they lack the time to engage with such ideas, and in the parent-child centre I studied, interculturality was admittedly present “in name only”, and had yet to be filled with content (section 6.1.3). The centre’s services and social workers’ efforts were generally appreciated by the attendees; however, if the centre’s approach had been built on including parents in decision-making processes, this could have fostered a sense of belonging to public institutions among the attendees, which had not been the case so far.

I showed how the differential (Lanz 2009) approach to migrant integration advanced by the Neukölln’s Mayor Heinz Buschkowsky had some effects on women who worked as Borough Mothers. The distinction between German and non-German women and families which the project was based on, not in terms of citizenship, but of ethnic or linguistic background, worked against a comprehensive sense of belonging or cultural citizenship for the Borough Mothers (section 7.3.6). However, the material also
suggested that Buschkowsky’s ideas were not shared by the local project coordinators, or by Neukölln’s overall population. Everyday interactions between people of different ethnic backgrounds seemed to be more unproblematic than Buschkowsky and other hardliners suggested. In what follows I consider the results of the study in relation to the main issues addressed in the thesis.

8.1 A Cultural Conflict?

It is clear that “the state” and “Muslims” do not “form two homogeneous blocs, facing each other” (cf. Bowen et al. 2013:4), and that people who identify as Muslim do not all practise their religion in the same way, or even stress their identity as Muslims in all situations (cf. Bowen 2010:11). Nevertheless the migrants and refugees I write about identify as Muslims and are seen as such by others, and I have asked how they are affected by powerful views that see Muslim parents as poorly qualified to adopt an appropriate role in their children’s education.

As Greg Noble and Scott Poynting point out, in recent years, the “primary axes of othering” (Noble & Scott 2010:491) of Arabic-speaking immigrants to Australia has moved towards the religious identity of Islam, and a similar process can be traced for Germany as well. In Berlin public discourse, Islam is often regarded the most important marker of identity for Arabic-speaking people, and their difficulties regarding employment (which were influenced by the difficult policy conditions this group was affected by) have been related to Islam (Kleff & Seidel 2008:87-88).

However, my research indicates that Islam had not been of major importance for the generation who had arrived from Lebanon during the 1980s, and gained significance in the decades that followed. Islam has not been merely passed on from parents to children. In Neukölln, the younger generation often stressed that their parents were not strict enough in their practice of Islam (section 3.3.6). Young people, then, do not just reproduce a “non-modern” or “traditionalist” religious culture of their
parents’ places of origin, but are influenced by the socio-historical context of their own generation (Nökel 2002:13).

Noble and Poynting go on to write that while there has been much analysis of the socio-historical context of the above mentioned processes of “othering” in relation to Islam (2010:491), not much consideration has been given to the experiences of people who might suffer from the consequences of such processes. In the context of my study, one thing that made participation in educational institutions difficult for some parents were assumptions about Islam held by actors in pedagogical institutions, such as assumptions built on a simple contrast between a “free”, “democratic”, or “liberal” society on the one hand, of which educational institutions were thought to be important representatives, and Muslim families on the other hand, characterised as “traditional”, “unfree”, or “repressive” (section 5.1.5).

In some public discourse, as for instance in reports commissioned by the government like the one by Necla Kelek mentioned in the introduction and in chapter 2, it has been stated that, due to characteristics of Muslim families framed in the terms described in the last paragraph, there is an essential “educational conflict [of German schools] with the Muslims”, located in “the different view of man and worldview of Islam” (Kelek 2006:65). The families I worked with valued education, an emphasis which for many was not in contrast with, but explicitly supported by the religious values of Islam (chapter 4).

The assumption that there is an essential cultural mismatch (e.g. Nozaki 2000:357; Mehan 1992:4) between working-class immigrants and the demands of education in Western societies, which consists of teachers wanting to be in contact with parents, and parents refusing to interfere in children’s schooling issues, was not confirmed at all primary schools in Neukölln. The mothers who frequented the parents’ café where I conducted research valued it when teachers consulted with them or interacted with them informally, which had not necessarily been an established cultural practice for them. In fact, they valued those teachers most who informed them
regarding decisions about their children, and who offered opportunities for them to be present during school classes, for instance (section 5.2.3).

Families were concerned to overcome their dependence on the state, and aware that their children’s prospects for finding work and escaping welfare dependence, in a borough of Berlin with high unemployment rates, were strongly dependent on their school achievement (cf. Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco 2002:124). Besides the policy conditions under which they had lived, what made the situation difficult for families was the deterioration of Berlin's economic situation and policy changes for welfare recipients (chapter 4).

As a result of her research about Turkish women’s views on integration policies in the boroughs of Kreuzberg and Neukölln, Annika Marlen Hinze states that immigrants’ perspectives and practices generally “stand apart from public discourse” (Hinze 2013:146; xxvi). While this may be true in many cases, as I have described above, it is certainly not true in all cases. Immigrants do not always oppose the mainstream discourse regarding issues of integration. They also agree with such assumptions, instead of always standing up against them, as it was the case regarding assumptions about the relation between the quality of a school and its percentage of immigrant children (e.g. OSI 2010:147).

8.2 The Heterogeneity of State Practices

Throughout part II of this thesis, I have tried to add a more particularistic perspective to state-funded social work projects for immigrants than the one offered by Aihwa Ong through her cultural citizenship approach, which, in the terminology offered by Josiah Heyman, has been called a “broad-brush” one (Heyman 2004:490). Regarding the benefits of broad-brush approaches, Heyman writes,

Broad-brush approaches are inspiring and persuasive, distilling a great many observations into seeming "truth" about the way all bureaucracies
(or states, or experts) think and act. They often point us towards insights we need in anthropological engagement (Heyman 2004:491).

Thus, Ong’s cultural citizenship approach has the benefits of reminding us what is often the case: that immigrants feel misunderstood, or patronised, and that they feel there might be a gap between how they view their own cultural practices, and how they are being evaluated by the outside. However, this is an issue better to be considered anew in each setting, instead of being taken as a given.

An example of Ong’s broad-brush take is where she writes that a “a racist hegemony ... pervades all areas of Western consciousness”, and goes on to say,

These historically specific ideologies, Western European in origin, order human groupings distinguished by real and alleged biological features into status hierarchies that become the basis of various forms of discrimination and exclusion in Western democracies (Ong 1999:265).

While Ong states that the same ethnic hierarchies “pervade ... Western consciousness”, and form the basis of discriminative practices in institutions, my study indicates that ethnic categories232 were used by different actors in different ways. While comparisons regarding the integration of population groups defined in ethnic terms were common in certain kinds of political discourse, like the one advanced by Neukölln’s Mayor Buschkowsky, many of the social workers I interviewed refrained from making such statements. They mostly did not relate children’s difficulties to the parents’ culture, but, being in regular contact with parents, were informed about how difficult the residential rights situation for many families was (section 5.1.2).

From what social workers reported to me, it seemed that teachers were more likely to make comparisons between groups in ethnic terms. However, this would be an issue for further research, as I have not conducted enough interviews with teachers in order to draw any conclusions here. If this was the pattern, one possible explanation might be that teachers’ work allows them less personal contact with parents than social workers have. Another explanation might be found in Lipsky’s approach to

232 Richard Jenkins, a specialist on theories of ethnicity in anthropology, writes that while the terms race or ethnicity had often been used in order to distinguish a focus on physical from one on cultural differences, currently there is no consensus on how these categories are to be used. Many scholars use them interchangeably (Jenkins 2008a:77).
street-level bureaucrats (1969, 1980). Lipsky argues that different kinds of street-level bureaucrats are subject to different intensities of public expectations, and teachers are of course subject to especially high ones. In order to cope with these expectations, and as a possible defence in the cases where they do not manage to arrive at the desired results, they might develop certain strategies, like “segmenting the population” (Lipsky 1969:21). If they define a group as culturally backward, they can disclaim some of the responsibility.

While Ong uses the term “racism” to describe the categories that influence the thinking of state agents like social workers or teachers, I have tried to avoid this term throughout this study. One reason is that in the German context, the term is associated with physical violence and still connotes Germany’s history of ethnic cleansing during the Holocaust. Further, the terms “racism”, or “racist”, are terms that in general are mainly used to designate others; they are hardly ever used for self-identification. These are the reasons why I have not found them useful for looking at current state approaches towards integration. They would not be beneficial in fostering dialogue with state agents like social workers about how certain categories are used in social work, or in making policy recommendations.

Another way in which Ong’s approach can be supplemented is through the concept of “implementation gaps”, a concept introduced to anthropology from political science (e.g. Lane 2009:48). This concept refers to differences in how policy is conceptualised from above, by higher level bureaucrats, and how it is implemented by the people on the ground, who are in direct contact with the population. My study showed how in the Borough Mothers project, there had been a major implementation gap, in that the local coordinators did not implement the project in the way that it only included Turkish and Arabic-speaking mothers, as the mayor had directed (sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2). Thus, ethnic categories being ordered into “status hierarchies” (Ong 1999:265) as Ong states in the quote above might not be taken as a given, but considered anew in each context.
In this section, I pointed out possible amendments to Aihwa Ong’s cultural citizenship theory, which attempts to grasp the influence of state agents on issues of belonging and cultural citizenship. As Heyman states, a totally negative view on institutions and bureaucracy does not leave room for counteranalysis and constructive critique (Heyman 2004:491). The next section will have a more applied purpose, in that it sums up aspects of my evaluation of the studied institutions per se.

8.3 A Need to Activate Parents?

My analysis has shown how Neukölln’s social work policies regarding migrant integration, which show resemblances with policy approaches which have been called active citizenship approaches by sociologists and political scientists (e.g. Rose 1996a, Marinetto 2003, Hurenkamp et al. 2011), have been implemented and received on the ground. Recently, the paradigms of parent activation (Elternaktivierung) and parents’ work (Elternarbeit) have been buzzwords in the local social work scene. From a policy perspective, they are regarded as means to improve participation of migrant parents in pedagogical institutions, and thus ameliorate the low mean attainment level of Neukölln students.233

Mayor Buschkowsky’s perspective is one that posits the reasons for these problems at schools in Neukölln in migrants’ cultural deficits. For instance, he states that, “in many traditionally oriented immigrant families ... [there is an atmosphere so that] a person cannot learn the social competence they need in order to be part of a democratic, liberal society and in order to be successful” (Buschkowsky 2009:10). In his view, this is why social work institutions are so important (section 2.4.4).

However, the way the concept of activation was implemented in projects on the ground differed from case to case and was not always based on the idea that immigrant parents were marked by deficits. In the primary school’s parents’ café (chapter 5), the

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233 There are less higher secondary schools (Gymnasien) in Neukölln than in other boroughs, and more pupils who drop out of school without certificate.
name “Active Parents Café” had been suggested by a very engaged teacher, who had much contact with a group of mothers who were regularly present at school, and with whom he had built up a very good relationship. He thought the label “active” would enhance the chances to receive funding from Quarter Management, and the mothers to get recognition for their work (section 5.2.1).

In the parent-child centre, the head of the centre had only recently started to implement an activating approach to social work. She tried to change parents’ behaviour for the mere purpose of being good role models for their children. This resulted in a situation where the mothers were supposed to contribute to tasks which they did not see any purpose in, and which were done voluntarily by someone else already (section 6.2.3). The overall approach of the centre was not based on cooperating with parents; parents were officially only regarded as a means to reach children, and one only admitted them into the centre in their role as parents (section 6.2.1). This kind of activating approach missed its purpose, in that the mothers felt patronised and more and more lost interest in what was going on in the centre.

In the words of the political scientist Elizabeth Meehan, “Enabling people to be active citizens is one thing. Promoting active citizenship is not necessarily the same” (Meehan 2010:115). It seems that the mere teaching about becoming active in support of pedagogical institutions, and in order to be good role models for children, is not effective, if it is not accompanied by enhancing parents’ participation over decision-making processes, or opportunities to be present in pedagogical institutions. In my view, the case of the parents’ café and the fact how much the mothers appreciated Mr. Fischer’s approach shows how beneficial it can be to include parents into processes in pedagogical institutions. Such an approach not only helps parents to feel accepted and feel able to “hold their head high” (cf. Hage 2002:2, see introduction); it is also beneficial for the children, whose sense of belonging to the school was fostered through this approach (section 5.2.3).
8.4 Cultural Citizenship and Belonging

To conclude, what about issues of cultural citizenship and belonging among Arabic-speaking background people in Berlin, who have been affected by highly difficult policy conditions, and subject to some public discourse which positions them at the margins of Berlin society? These issues are not meant to be the end of the story. John Bowen writes, “Germany has moved at glacial speed from ethnic notions of national belonging to entertaining the idea that immigrants could become citizens” (Bowen 2011:1602). I have described how changes in German citizenship policies have led to the fact that many people among this group have actually acquired citizenship (section 3.2.4).

During my fieldwork, I have heard many with an Arabic-speaking background, who had not necessarily been born in Germany, readily say that they are “German”, as I described for Fatima and her sister Aida, who said to me when we first met, “We’re also Germans, but with migration background” (section 4.3.4). Similarly, in the parent-child centre, Shams was proud to tell the story of how she had “become German” and was now allowed to vote, with her children being born with full citizenship rights in Berlin (section 6.1.1). The fact that many were proud of their citizenship rights and identified as Germans, in addition to their previous cultural identifications, indicate some progress in cultural citizenship among the Arabic-speaking group.

A minority like the Arabic-speaking one in Berlin, which has been subject to highly difficult policy conditions in Germany, not to mention the experiences of war trauma and discrimination in Lebanon, needs some time to even be able to “claim space and their rights to be full members of a society” (Rosaldo 2013). For many people it was a major aim to overcome their dependence on the state, at least regarding their children’s future, as I have shown for Anisah’s and Farihah’s family, and as many other people also stated in the course of my fieldwork (chapter 3). What Fatima actually told Neukölln’s migration commissioner during a personal encounter in which he had
reproached the "Arab population" of Neukölln for "not caring about anything" (section 2.4.6) illustrates changes in cultural citizenship processes among the younger generation. She had replied to him, "How should we take care if we're not allowed to work, if we're not allowed to do anything?" Fatima continued,

Well, the problem is the conditions under which we arrived; we Arabs, we all had a status of tolerated residence. We weren't allowed to work, and we weren't allowed to vote. I also told him [Mr. Mengelkoch], "My parents were unavailable the whole time, busy with their existential needs. But now it's our turn. Now we will do something." And then he was shocked. He was really shocked.234

People did not always have the idea that they would be stuck in a difficult situation forever. Anisah encouraged her daughter to study in order to become a teacher, even though because she wore a headscarf, she would not be allowed to teach at public schools. Anisah had hopes that the situation might actually change, with Muslims gaining more rights in political decision-making in Germany (section 4.3.4). Perhaps it is only a matter of time until more people will stand up against assumptions like the one of the quality of schooling being related to the mere number of Muslim children at a school (section 8.1).

In 2013, Fatima bemoaned that there was no "Arab lobby" and not many politicians of Arabic-speaking background in Berlin yet. However, she also pointed to Raed Saleh, an SPD politician of Palestinian background whose family had moved to Berlin from the West Bank when he was a child, and who explicitly identified as Muslim. Saleh has been the chairman of the Berlin SPD parliamentary group since 2011, and was one of three candidates for the office of mayor of Berlin in 2014, when the former mayor Klaus Wowereit had announced that he would resign. Saleh did not succeed, but he remains chairman of the SPD parliamentary group in the city state of Berlin.

In this thesis, I have described some cases where parents have felt alienated from pedagogical institutions due to certain assumptions which position Islam and education in Germany as incompatible. Many, however, also stressed that during their lives in Neukölln, they had not experienced major discrimination as Muslims. As stated, everyday interactions between people of various backgrounds are often more unproblematic than suggested by Buschkowsky and other hardliners. Badra said that she thought the teachers of her children had mainly “seen the person and not Islam”. Rabia also reported that besides some small issues, her children had not experienced any issues at schools. When I asked Shams whether she felt prejudices towards Muslims or Islam were a problem in Neukölln, she said she thought “Ten percent of the population might think like that”. Hafa projected such issues to a world outside of Neukölln and said that that in Neukölln, they did not feel much of it, and that this would probably be more of an issue if they lived outside of Neukölln.

While many people said that they liked living in Neukölln, but would not dare to move to another borough, Akilah, in contrast, explicitly claimed her right to go to places outside of Neukölln:

I don’t want us to be stuck in Neukölln forever. We also have to go outside a little. We shouldn’t only stay in Wedding, Neukölln, and Kreuzberg. We have to go outside. To Hellersdorf, Marzahn. You know - we shouldn’t all be sitting in one place. Arabs, Turks. All in the same area. There are not many Arab people in Spandau or Charlottenburg. It’s time.235

While there has been much research on the Turkish minority in Germany, Germans with Arabic-speaking background have not been given much attention in social science research. Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis, in particular, were a first step in this direction. However, the main part of this thesis was focused on pedagogical institutions. Processes of cultural citizenship among the former refugees from Lebanon,

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and the ways young people overcome a difficult history, as indicated in Fatima’s quote above, could be a fascinating area for further research.
Appendix

Map 1. The District of Neukölln in Berlin


http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bezirk_Neuk%C3%B6lln
Map 2. Single Boroughs Within the District of Neukölln


http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuk%C3%B6lln#/media/File:Berlin_Neuk%C3%B6lln.svg
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