

Immigration, integration and *Leitkultur* in German newspapers: competing discourses about national belonging

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Abstract: This research examines the use of terms for social groups in Germany, specifically *Personen mit Migrationshintergrund* 'people with migration background', *Türken* 'Turks', and *Biodeutscher* 'ethnic German(s)' in online discussions about the integration of immigrants into German society. These terms construct essentialist social categories that focus on ethnic background as inherent in cultural behavior, which makes integration for members of these groups impossible. Further, in some cases naming stigmatized groups is no longer necessary, as the discourses about members of these groups are so strong that the mere mention of particular cultural practices is enough to indicate who the unwanted members of society are. However, competing discourses, which challenge the use of these terms and the discourses of alterity, are also part of the discussion of national belonging exemplified in these data.

Key words: immigration, integration, *Leitkultur*, national identities, media discourse, critical discourse analysis.