Audience development in the migratory society Insights for cultural institutions based on current research

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Abstract

Barely a decade ago cultural management in Germany recognized migrants and their descendants as an important audience segment in the strategic planning of cultural institutions. Since then, empirical audience research has focused on this issue and cultural institutions have been active in trying to develop audience development strategies for this specific group. However, it is clear that many institutions are still facing difficulties while dealing with the subject practically. The aim of this article is to provide a deeper understanding of the issue's complexity; it wishes to focus on the current state of research in Germany and provide implications for cultural management. It includes the results of a recently published qualitative study of the author that indicates it is the combination of a milieu-oriented and a national/ethnic-based approach that increases the chances of future audience development strategies for the growing target group with a migrant background.

Keywords

Arts education, arts marketing, audience development, diversity, migrants

1. Introduction

Germany has been an attractive immigration country for many years. However, only after it officially accepted becoming an immigration country at the beginning of the new millennium have there been significant discussions about the country's role as a multicultural society, how migrants and their descendants might be best integrated and how the cultural sector might approach them (MINKENBERG 2004: 223).¹

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1 The statement 'Germany is not an immigration country' was the dominant political formula of the governing conservative party (Christian Democratic Union of Germany) from the 1970s until the end of the 1990s (MINKENBERG 2004: 211). For more information about the immigration policy in Germany (KLUSMEYER/PAPADEMETRIOU 2013). For more information on the German Law on Nationality (AUSWÄRTIGES AMT 2017).

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Even then, a discussion about art and culture with respect to that population group was highly topical; one could barely speak of insignificant minorities in many cities (for example: Stuttgart 40 %, Frankfurt/Main 39 %, Nuremberg 37 %) (STATISTISCHES BUNDESAMT 2009: 8). Strong migration within the European Union to Germany and a significant increase in the number of asylum seekers since 2009 have exacerbated the relevance of this topic area (OECD 2016).

Considering the above-mentioned points, the open debate in Germany regarding cultural participation, social inclusion and on how to reach new or other target groups in the cultural sector has (also) shifted to this population group in recent years. One of the key terms in this context is 'audience development', which can have a wide range of objectives in the overall context of attracting new or other visitors to cultural institutions and to intensify visitor loyalty. It puts a strong focus on visitor orientation within the institutions and combines cultural marketing instruments and methods of education at the operational level. Irrespective of its objectives, the major prerequisite for audience development is a detailed profile of its (potential) target groups. Of course, this is also the case for target groups with foreign roots. However, although empirical research about cultural visitors has been focusing on this segment of the population since 2005 (CERCI 2008; CERCI/GERHARDS 2009; GERHARDS 2013a; KEUCHEL 2012a, b) and numerous scientific publications have offered examples of how a specific 'intercultural audience development' is put into practice (ALLMANRITTER/SIEBENHAAR 2010; MANDEL 2013; SCHNEIDER 2011), it is evident that many cultural institutions are still facing difficulties in implementing this subject practically.² Long-term audience development strategies and a focus on diversity rarely seem to play a role in the overall structure and organization of such institutions. Both the cultural and political debates in Germany, as well as research literature, still indicate insufficient conceptual-theoretical foundations in this topic area. They also highlight shortcomings in the

2 The focus of this article is on cultural institutions in Germany in the field of the so-called high culture or classical culture (e.g. museums, theaters, operas). But this is not to mean that the topic is not also of relevance for any other cultural and leisure offerings regardless of their profile, thematic orientation and/or sources of finance. For a reflection on high culture or classical culture (e.g. versus popular culture) see ALEXANDER (2010). Traditionally, in Germany the vast majority of those classical cultural institutions is financed through public funds, see RECTANUS (2002). For a brief overview of Germany's publicly funded cultural landscape and Germany's cultural policy see BLU-MENREICH (2013).

practical approach of this target group (HÖHNE 2012: 136; KULTUR-POLITISCHE GESELLSCHAFT 2010: 9).

Knowing just how complex the issue is, this is not surprising. First, 'the' people with migration background do not exist. In Germany, the designation 'person with migration background'³ is, first of all, a statistical term used to describe anyone with a different ethnic origin (STA-TISTISCHES BUNDESAMT 2017).4 Second, there are no homogeneous national cultures (of central importance BHABHA 1994). Moreover, widespread prejudices against this population group make 'intercultural audience development' approaches even more difficult. For example, one erroneous assumption seems to be that people with migration background are not interested in cultural offerings. Instead, scientific studies show the same amount of interest in cultural offerings of persons without and with migration background. The latter just visit them more rarely (KEUCHEL 2012: 102ff.). In addition, a widespread deficit-orientated view seems to be that this population group is rather uneducated and in need of special low-threshold educational offerings from cultural institutions. Instead, studies show that various social milieus apply to both people with or without migration background (SINUS 2011, 2017a, b).

With this in mind, the key reason for the difficulties facing cultural institutions could be that the result of the research currently does not conclusively answer fundamental questions about approaching people with migration background effectively. When addressing different target groups, is it useful to emphasize their national and cultural roots (ethnic marketing), their affiliation with different social milieus (milieu marketing) or to emphasize both factors equally? With this question in mind, the author's contribution here summarizes the recent findings of arts management research for reaching this target group. It also

- 3 'The population group with a migration background consists of all persons who have migrated to the territory of today's Federal Republic of Germany after 1949, and of all foreigners born in Germany and all people born in Germany who have at least one parent who immigrated into the country or was born as a foreigner in Germany (STATISTISCHES BUNDESAMT 2017).
- 4 In summa in 2015 around 17,1 million people, that is 21 % of the inhabitants in Germany, had a migration background (STATISTISCHES BUNDESAMT 2017). Around two-thirds of all persons having a migration background have immigrated to Germany, the other third was born in Germany. More than half of all persons having a migration background have German citizenship. Until the new category 'migration background' was introduced, official statistics only covered 'foreigners' - which as shown above underestimated the real number of people with foreign roots within Germany by a very high percentage. For more information on the term 'migration background' as a political and scientific category see SCHERR (2013).

summarizes the results of an extensive empirical study recently published by the author. ${}^{\scriptscriptstyle 5}$

2. Findings from the current state of research in Germany

Over the past decade, several studies have been presented in the framework of empirical audience research that deal with migrants and their descendants as potential demander of cultural offerings. Two fundamentally different approaches to this topic can be identified here: a focus on social milieus within the population with migration background and a focus on different national or ethnic roots.

In Germany, only one study exists that focusses on social milieus within the population with migration background: the empirical Migrant-Milieu-Model by the market research company SINUS.⁶ It highlights the cultural usage patterns of people with migration background according to social milieus. From this study, the following key results can be derived:

- The individual national or ethnic background of a person does not affect his or her affiliation to a social milieu (GERHARDS 2013a: 10).
- People with different national or ethnic backgrounds belonging to the same social milieu are more similar to each other than people with the same migration background from different social milieus (GERHARDS 2013a: 10).

⁵ This text is a summary of a recent empirical study by the author. For a full-length version see ALLMANRITTER (2017).

⁶ Although the SINUS Milieu-Models are widely used in various contexts within the profit and non-profit sectors it should be noted at this point that SINUS is a private market research institution without a scientific orientation. Whoever uses the Milieu-Models® faces one significant disadvantage that needs to be critically reflected upon: neither the evaluation tools nor the method or the statistical processes are available to the public. Unfortunately, there are no other milieu models in Germany that deal with the population with migration background as a special group. Only one other attempt has been made to apply the concept of social milieus especially to the population with a Turkish migration background. It originates from the Center for Turkish Studies. But, the authors conclude that their approach is particularly inappropriate for this singular ethnic group (HALM/SAUER 2011).

• People with diverse national or ethnic backgrounds can be classified in a model based on 'social status' and 'basic values'. 'Social status' ('low', 'middle', 'high') corresponds to social classes and depends on people's education, profession and income while 'basic values' represent their attitudes and values ('traditional', 'modern', 'new identity') (see figure 1) (SINUS 2011).

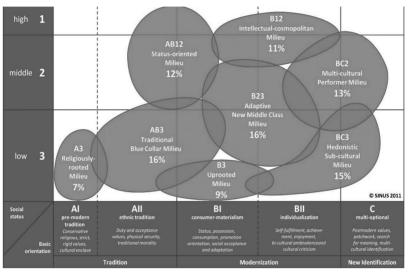


Figure 1: The SINUS-Migrant-Milieu-Model Germany (SINUS 2011).

- It is possible to identify eight Migrant-Milieus that cut across all national or ethnic backgrounds. They are distinguishable from one another in their status, values, their outlook on life and life-style, as well as in their cultural identity, cultural interests and use of cultural offerings and media (CERCI/GERHARDS 2009).
- A person's individual national or ethnic background influences his or her everyday culture. However, how a person consumes cultural offerings is not dependent on his or her individual migration background but instead on his or her education, outlook, social status and where he or she comes from (city vs. rural region) (DER MINISTERPRÄSIDENT DES LANDES NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN 2010; CERCI/GERHARDS 2009: 3).⁷
- 7 An updated version of the Migrant-Milieu-Model is supposed to be published in 2018/2019. For interim results see SINUS (2017).

Nevertheless, within the specific context of each Migrant-Milieu, explicit information can be found in five of them indicating how a person's individual national or ethnic background plays a significant role in their specific cultural preferences or consumption. This applies to the 'religiousrooted milieu', the 'traditional blue-collar milieu', the 'uprooted milieu', the 'status-oriented milieu' and the 'hedonistic sub-cultural milieu'. Only three of the eight milieus, the 'adaptive new middle-class milieu', the 'multicultural performer milieu' and the 'intellectual-cosmopolitan milieu' show no such explicit preferences. These three milieus are very international and cosmopolitan in both their focus and self-image (DER MINISTERPRÄSIDENT DES LANDES NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN 2010: 18ff.). Additionally, the publication about those Migrant-Milieus comes to the following conclusion:

Immigrants increasingly want to see themselves represented in art and culture. People with migration background indicate a great interest in art and culture, provided that they can directly identify with the offerings. Their personal experiences should be represented in the content; they wish to be reflected in the actors. (DER MINISTERPRÄSIDENT DES LANDES NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN 2010: 15; transl. by the author)

Does the migration experience or heritage of an individual indeed influence his or her own cultural interests, wishes and expectations of cultural activities? Are these influences decisive in the way a person approaches cultural offerings? Results from empirical studies shedding light on people's national or ethnic background affirm this assumption. They draw the following basic conclusions:

- A person's national or ethnic background (as well as other factors such as their education, age and family values) has a very specific and concrete influence on his or her interest and use of culture. Specific cultural infrastructures, cultural-historical traditions as well as political and cultural social value systems affect experiences, practices, and the development of visual and listening habits when experiencing art. This is something that people bring with them from their country of origin to the host country (KEUCHEL 2012b: 81ff., 88ff., 102ff., 183ff.; KEUCHEL/LARUE 2012: 144ff.).
- These effects can not only be found in those who have migrated themselves but also in their descendants. Young people stemming from second or third generation Eastern European immigrant families (especially Russia) for example place significantly more emphasis on classical cultural events than on contemporary

or avant-garde cultural offerings. Youths with Turkish roots are more interested in Islamic or Turkish cultural offerings than those without (or with a different) migration background (KEU-CHEL 2012b: 64ff., 81ff.; KEUCHEL/LARUE 2012: 144ff., 171; KEUCHEL/MERTENS 2011: 4).

- The national or ethnic background and the resulting hybrid, bior multicultural identity of a person (BHABHA 1994) lead to a broader understanding of culture. when thinking about a definition of 'culture', people without migration background primarily focus on classical arts, people with migration background comparatively put a stronger emphasis on matters such as 'life', 'cultural diversity', 'family' or 'religion' (KEUCHEL 2012b: 36ff.).
- The migration experience of a person (or of their ancestors) creates a great openness for offerings from various cultural venues. While people with migration background are often interested in European culture as well as other ethnic cultures, people without migration background often limit their interest to art and culture of primarily European origin (KEUCHEL 2012b: 86ff.).

3. Key findings of a recent study by the author

Is information about the affiliation to specific Migrant-Milieus sufficient for audience development strategies aimed at people with migration background? Would not an additional use of the specific migration background of one focal group help increase the chances of a successful discourse in almost all milieus? In her current empirical research project, the author of this article tried to connect the milieu-oriented approach with the national/ethnic approach in order to find answers to these questions. In the framework of a heuristic study with a newly developed method, slightly more than 50 members of the 'intellectual-cosmopolitan milieu' were identified to illustrate this. A focus on this milieu was made for several reasons: 1. It is the Migrant-Milieu that, comparatively, uses (high) cultural offerings the most (GERHARDS 2013a). For cultural institutions, approaching this milieu means the highest potential synergy with previous activities and therefore takes the least effort and has the least risk (ALLMANRITTER/SIEBENHAAR 2010: 182). It is particularly attractive when addressing people with migration background as (potential) visitors for the first time. 2. Furthermore, this milieu is described in the SINUS-study as a trendsetter and multiplier that can have a significant impact on other milieus. Since there are many artists and cultural managers in this milieu who serve as cultural mediators, it has great potential to act as an intercultural mediator (GERHARDS 2013a: 55f., 104). 3. Moreover, because of their strong experience with the use of cultural offerings, it is assumed that those belonging to the milieu could offer a substantial stimulus for the development of audience development strategies for people with migration background. 4. Based on their cosmopolitan attitude, they also appear to be particularly qualified to determine whether the influential cultural factors are indeed secondary to the influence of their milieu affiliation. 5. Moreover, it is an affluent milieu with a large amount of cultural capital (BOURDIEU 1979). Evaluating this milieu`s use of cultural offerings ensures that effects of national/cultural affiliation can be measured reliably, neglecting potential effects of changeable socioeconomic factors.

The individuals selected were interviewed in detail about their cultural interests and their culture usage behavior (e.g. extent and frequency, geographical radius, information channels, language, pricing and ticketing preferences, preferred companions, combined activities). They were asked about what specific things motivated or deterred them, and other Migrant-Milieus, to attend. This qualitative survey was taken in Berlin, Frankfurt and Stuttgart, primarily because of the broad range of cultural offerings and because a relatively high percentage of the local population has a migration background. Previous research data showed that significant cultural differences were expected for two large migrant groups in these cities - people with a Turkish background and people from countries of the former Soviet Union (KEUCHEL 2012b; KEUCHEL/WIE-SAND 2006). Therefore, for purposes of comparison, the respondents stemmed from these two countries of origin.8 As a result of an extensive data analyses (content analysis with MAXQDA, frequency count with EXCEL) the study came very much condensed to the following basic conclusions:

 Consistent with the description of the SINUS Migrant-Milieus, this study (not surprisingly) confirms that the different migration backgrounds of those respondents who associated themselves with the 'intellectually-cosmopolitan' milieu had no apparent

⁸ This is only a very short a summary of the methodology of the empirical study by the author. For a detailed description of the methodology of appr. 230 pages (free PDF download) see https://www.transcript-verlag.de/shopMedia/service_media/books/ts3788_wo1.pdf>.

influence on the answers they gave to questions about their general cultural and media usage:

- Depending on their social milieu, both respondents with Turkish roots as well as those descending from countries of the former Soviet Union displayed a very high interest in various cultural offerings; they frequently attended cultural programs (both fine arts as well as pop, classic and contemporary culture).
- As members of both groups are often the initiators of joint cultural visits, they – typical to their milieu – equally displayed a high potential of acting as mediators and multipliers for cultural offerings as well.
- As might be suspected from the milieu description, the respondents from both groups indicated that, alongside recommendations from their own circle, the Internet played a huge role as a source of information for art and culture (especially the social media platform Facebook).
- Visitation barriers played no significant role for both groups of respondents.
- However, based on their attitude towards cultural and media use as well as barriers for other Migrant-Milieus, nationally/ethnically related differences between the two groups of respondents were evident:
 - Respondents with a Turkish migration background and those stemming from countries of the former Soviet Union indicated that they are interested and participate in offerings from countries around the world. When asked in greater detail, however, it turned out that offerings (including those that are 'cross-cultural') specifically related to their respective culture of origin are especially attractive.
 - Additionally, a difference was seen between the two groups surveyed regarding the preferences for specific cultural events. It appears to confirm the research results mentioned above about the aesthetically formative influence of native cultural circles on the use of culture, at least in tendency: Unlike those with a Turkish background, those questioned stemming from countries of the former Soviet Union indicated that they could be offended by very modern productions

of classical concerts, operas, operettas, staged theater events and dance productions.

- In both groups surveyed, the use of media in their (possibly second) native language, in particular media from their respective culture of origin, played a role as a source of information for art and culture. Despite excellent knowledge of German, both groups of respondents reported that they would find informational material in their own (possibly second) native language very attractive (e.g., as a special welcome).
- Both groups of respondents presumed the lack of intercultural competence in cultural institutions apart from an insufficient educational background and social reasons to be a likely visitation barrier for Migrant-Milieus which are not involved in (high) cultural offerings.
- In their opinion, cultural institutions have failed to reflect the different living environments of these people, which are based on their (possibly second) native culture, in their program policy and have neglected offerings and information in their respective (possibly second) native language.
- Respondents stemming from countries of the former Soviet Union also assumed that extremely modern productions don't appeal to the taste of most people with this national/ethnic background and that this could be a strong deterrent for milieus having no involvement with cultural offerings.
- Both groups of respondents overwhelmingly admitted that an increase of intercultural competence within cultural institutions and references to their respective ethnic cultures in programming and communication would (also) be greatly attractive to them.

The study concludes that the general use of culture and media by the respondents (Turkish/former Soviet Union) strongly corresponds to the description of the 'intellectual-cosmopolitan milieu' in the SINUS-Migrant-Milieu-study. At the same time, it differs significantly from the description of other milieus. Therefore, a pure milieu-based approach when addressing members of the 'intellectual-cosmopolitan milieu' seems possible. In accordance with the SINUS-study, it also becomes evident that a pure approach based on nationality or ethnicity when dealing with people with migration background, without information about their milieu affiliation, is not recommended. With respect

to cultural and media use, the study shows origin-related differences between those with a Turkish migration background and those with a background from countries of the former Soviet Union. At least for those two migrant groups, this shows that it is highly probable that information about the individual national/ethnic background of each member supplies valuable reference points for cultural institutions. It is a point that applies particularly to program planning and communication (ALLMANRITTER 2017).

4. Implications for Arts Management

In cultural marketing literature, it has long been noted that addressing a target group using socio-demographic factors is effective only to a limited extent. Instead, social milieus, which next to these factors also incorporate values, attitudes, and everyday characteristics, are better suited for addressing target groups (KLEIN 2005: 138ff.). If information about Migrant-Milieus is used to target audiences with migration background, this corresponds to what is called `milieu marketing`. Such an approach implies that the individual ethnic or national roots (e.g., French, Chinese, Turkish or Russian) are ignored. Ideally, there is information for cultural institutions about the distribution of certain SINUS-Milieus or even SINUS-Migrant-Milieus available. However, this is rarely the case. The tools and methods for gathering information and creating SINUS-Milieus are not freely accessible. Additionally, literature in the wider field of non-profit management about how they might go about approaching (migrant) milieus is scarce (GERHARDS 2013b; BARZ et al. 2008; BARZ/TIPPELT 2007). Nevertheless, even the abstract, general and public descriptions of milieus can significantly contribute to cultural institutions understanding individual social milieus within the population with migration background and assist in determining (potential) audiences for their offerings.

If information about national or ethnic origin is translated into addressing target groups with migration background, this corresponds to what is called 'ethnic marketing' (PIRES/STANTON 2005). Here, different target groups are addressed according to their national or ethnic origin or their ancestry. This approach has already been established in the commercial sector. However, apart from the probable lack of a successful use of socio-demographic factors for targeting – as previously mentioned – it appears to be confronted with a key finding of cultural studies research: there are not 'those' people with migration background or 'certain' homogeneous national cultures, ethnic groups or identities (BHABHA 1994; HALL/GRINDSTAFF/LO 2010). Therefore, such an approach is viewed critically because there is the danger that forming such a target group and using ethnic marketing might create and consolidate differences between different ethnic groups that do not exist in the first place (KULINNA 2008). Hence, addressing people with a migration background only according to their respective national or ethnic roots is not recommendable for cultural institutions.

But the combination of the milieu-oriented concept and the national/ ethnic-based concept - through a cautious approach as well as a constant and critical reflection of the procedure - can significantly increase the chances of successfully addressing target groups with a migration background. If information about the national or ethnic background of a target group and the audience development associated with it is left out instead, various consequences can be derived from the respondents' answers in the author's study for various SINUS-Migrant-Milieus. In the case of the culturally disposed 'intellectually-cosmopolitan milieu', this does not seem to lead to refraining from (high) culture offerings. However, taking the factor 'migration background' into account can act as a not-to-be-underestimated incentive for attendance and serve as a means for increasing visitor loyalty. Potential intermediary and multiplier effects are not to be underestimated either because the members of a milieu often act as catalysts for cultural visits in their surroundings. Considering the speculations of the respondents as to what deters a cultural visit of other Migrant-Milieus who have little involvement with (high) cultural activities, it can be deduced that an approach with an explicit reference to the specific migration background of the respective members of the milieu may be decisive in ensuring that such a cultural visit takes place at all. Whether this is indeed the case has to be further investigated using studies focusing on SINUS-Migrant-Milieus that are less likely to consume art and cultural offerings.

Based on the most recent research results described above, the following four key points for audience development strategies are recommended for cultural institutions interested in attracting and engaging people with a migration background:

• In the discourse about audience development strategies, a stronger awareness of the 'migration background' factor is required: Cultural institutions need to sincerely embed 'intercultural opening'⁹ into the context of a comprehensive and long-term change management. At the same time, a constant radical reflection on their thinking and action is needed in order to overcome, rather than reinforce stereotypes.

- A particularly important role for audience development strategies, at least with respect to the 'intellectual-cosmopolitan milieu', includes attendance incentives in the realm of product and service policy. For example, one might consider an extended program with offerings by directors, writers and composers as well as artists, musicians and actors of the target group's origin and a stronger presence of offerings in their (possibly second) native language. In communications policy, addressing the audience in their (possibly second) native language provides a further incentive to visit (e.g., as special welcome). Such an approach might simultaneously help dismantle the barriers for milieus with no involvement with high cultural offerings, making it therefore even more recommendable.
- To make cultural offerings as attractive as possible for the many different migrant groups within the 'intellectual-cosmopolitan milieu', providing a broad spectrum of offerings of high artistic quality with references to the widest range of cultures and in numerous languages is recommended. Notably, hybrid cultural offerings, which consist of a mix of national/ethnic cultural elements and in which something new is presented, would speak to the hybrid identities of many people with migration background and would create references to the various ethnic living environments at the same time.
- Since members of the 'intellectual-cosmopolitan milieu' as frequent visitors of cultural activities – act as mediators and multipliers in their circles, it is extremely worthwhile to ask specifically these people to serve as intermediaries (e.g., by reduced group prices, information that can be easily passed on).

Through appropriate efforts in audience development, cultural institutions can make a valuable contribution to all of society by better portraying pluralistic realities. Bridges can be built between people with and without migration and/or multicultural backgrounds by giving all

⁹ The idea to "open up institutions interculturally" (German: Interkulturelle Öffnung) is referring to various welfare, political or educational institutions and has been a topic of discussion in Germany since the 1990s (MOISMUELLER/SCHONHUTH 2009: 215ff.).

groups an equal opportunity to participate in the art and cultural sector. Additional steps could lie in participatory approaches and in an integration of a variety of societal groups into the further development of cultural institutions. In their future efforts, cultural institutions are clearly encouraged to integrate the 'intellectually-cosmopolitan milieu' with its self-image as a cultural mediator between different communities, thereby taking advantage of the great opportunity to jointly form a culturally diverse future of the art and cultural sectors and make the topic 'audience development in the migrators society' become obsolete in the long term.

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