

Creating Spaces of Fear and Spaces of Safety

Young Natives and Migrants in Metropolitan Neighbourhoods

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In public image repertoires, young people of migrant background are mostly associated with problems. In the more positive versions they are seen as *having* problems: they are caught between two cultures and between two languages, fluent in neither and longing to return home. The negative versions see them as *producing* problems: they are prone to criminality, they reduce the standards of the schools they attend, and they keep to themselves and form gangs. Such common assumptions are also largely reflected in scholarly work on migrant youth. They are a problem that needs to be solved (Heitmeyer, Müller & Schröder 1997; 13. *Shell Jugendstudie* 2000).

What is significant for the common sense notion, as well as for much of the scholarly work done in Germany, is that migrant youth are seldom situated within the context in which they grow up.¹ Therefore, one of the main goals of our research project on young people's everyday lives in European cities, conducted simultaneously in London and Hamburg, was to look at the *relationship* between migrant and native youth.² In the German part of the project (with which this article is concerned), our questions were deliberately broad: how do boys and girls of different ethnic and class backgrounds, from different neighbourhoods and in different European cities, negotiate their daily relationships? Under what conditions do they perceive each other as ethnic, male, female, rich, poor etc., and what meaning do these ascriptions take on in their relations to each other?

In Hamburg we worked between 1996 and 1999 with 160 thirteen to fifteen-year-old boys

and girls from two different neighbourhoods and from three different school types: secondary school, comprehensive school and grammar school. Most of them were born in Germany, but their parents were born in 13 different countries, including Germany.³ We gained access to the young people through the schools, and were able to conduct the majority of our research during school hours. This was certainly the main reason why almost all the young people remained in the project for such a long period. Using a diversity of methods, mainly designed in London by Phil Cohen, Les Back and Michael Keith⁴, we discovered many different kinds of relationships and ways of articulating and living ethnicity, gender, and class (see Cohen, Keith & Back 1999; Back, Rätzzel & Hieronymus 1999; Rätzzel 1998, 2000, 2003a, 2003b; Rätzzel & Hieronymus 2000).

The political background for our investigation is the tension that exists in Germany between being a country of immigration and (until the new government was elected in 1999, after we finished our fieldwork) the official notion of Germany as a nation-state consisting of a homogeneous population of ethnic Germans.

This tension leads to conflicts and limitations and has a negative effect on the migrant populations. The societal institutions have not been changed to meet the needs of a society of immigration, thus ignoring the needs and rights of such populations to full citizenship (in the juridical sense, as well as in the sense of their political and social rights, and of being seen as legitimate sectors of the population).

But this tension also has its negative bear-

ings on the native population in that it creates an inability to deal with and accept differences and enables them to construct internal conflicts (i.e. housing problems, unemployment) as external conflicts, that is, as conflicts brought into the society from outside by immigrants – so-called foreigners – thus preventing them from finding viable solutions to these conflicts. Against this background we asked: How is the tension that exists on a political, institutional level lived in the everyday lives of young people? More specifically: Among those young people who say that they don't know anything other than growing up with "foreigners" – or "as foreigners," do we find new ways of living with differences?

The two neighbourhoods we chose for our research consisted of one in which the migrant background population formed only a small minority of 7% (12% within our researched age group between 13 and 15) and another in which they formed around 30% of the general population (51% within the age group between 13 and 15). We called the first Inlandtown and the second Portville. (The neighbourhoods will be presented in detail during the course of the article.)

One reason for choosing neighbourhoods that differed in terms of their ethnic composition was the fact that, in Germany, the concept of the "threshold of tolerance" is quite popular, both politically and academically. It is generally assumed that conflicts between newly arrived populations and those who have lived longer in the region become prominent when the first group is "too large". The definition of what can be considered "too large" varies. In our study the aim was to examine the way in which the numerical ethnic composition of a neighbourhood related to its other characteristics, such as its built environment, its history and its political tendencies.

This article focuses on the relationship between space and perceptions of safety and danger experienced by young migrants and young natives in Inlandtown and Portville. It starts by presenting the ways in which young people define dangerous places in both neighbourhoods. In Inlandtown, ethnicised groups regarded as dangerous are seen to make places

dangerous, whereas in Portville people are seen as dangerous when they belong to dangerous places. After analysing the implications of these different conceptions, I elaborate on the manner in which young natives in both neighbourhoods position themselves in relation to their migrant peers. My thesis is that in both neighbourhoods, different "local spaces of normality" exist to which native young people relate in order to legitimise their relationship to young migrants. The article attempts to explain the existence of these different local normalities using Lefebvre's trialectical definition of space as space of representation, representational space and spatial practices. I conclude with the thesis that it is not so much the numbers of migrants in a certain area, but the over-determination of the three spatial dimensions that creates local spaces of normality that can help to explain the relationship between native and migrant youth.

Dangerous Places and Dangerous People

I begin with some quotes from young people in Portville and Inlandtown – fictitious names to protect the identity of the participants. In addition, all the names of those interviewed or involved in the project have been changed.

Inlandtown:

"Susi: I don't like to be in Inlandtown, 'cause there are always these kinds of people walking around. I walked there with my sister, we wanted to go home and there were some Turks or what that was and they molested us.

Simone: There are many foreigners living in Inlandtown. I find them quite violent. My father is a police officer and he told me the Turks already run around with a shooter or a butterfly knife.

Murat: I don't like to go to the station in the evening because Turks and Russians fight each other there most of the time."

Portville:

"Dina: I used to hang out with some German boys and they were always afraid the boys from

Koray Adan Square would steal their clothes or beat them up. But perhaps they wouldn't do anything. I haven't ever seen a real brawl there, but I've heard about some. They never touched me.

Patricia: I always make a wide berth and I don't go there, because I know, they think it's great to have a fight. Koray Adan, I have already seen an ambulance there, like eyes having popped out and bloody noses and things like that.

Vicky: There are two from Adan Square in our youth centre. I don't like them that much, because they think they can achieve something with violence and that bothers me. But these two are quite nice.

Idi: Adan Square, there are a lot there who are into violence and I'm not. I live there, so I pass by and sometimes I play there. But they don't do anything."

From the above comments we can see that there are a number of differences between the way in which young people talk about dangerous places in Inlandtown and in Portville: The most obvious difference is perhaps that violence is linked to ethnicity in Inlandtown, while this is not the case in Portville.

A second difference is the relationship that these youngsters have towards those of whom they speak. In Inlandtown they seem to have no other relation except knowing that these violent people are Turks or Russians and dangerous, whereas in Portville they know them either from a distance or they actually meet them at the youth centre.

In Portville, dangerous places become dangerous because they are occupied by dangerous people. An (in)famous group makes for an (in)famous place. The group becomes the signifier of the place and, in turn, the place becomes the signifier of the group. Place and people reference each other as in Zora's story:

"Zora: ... for instance, when I was hanging around Koray Adan Square, a girl from the Miles quarter didn't like that, cause she had a crush on him and he was my best friend. That's why we had a fight."

Places describe people, and for anyone familiar with the scene, the place people "come from", tells them what kind of people they are. The connection between a place and the kind of people that belong to it is so self-evident for the speaker that no further explanation is needed to make sense of a story. The power of place is strong. Just by being in a certain place, one becomes a member of the group seen as owning the place:

"Zelal: I am, well, I used to be with the Jasons, because they are Spider (a youth centre in Portville)."

Knowledge of spatialised individuals is necessary in order to navigate safely through the neighbourhood.

"Zora: Well, if I go through the streets here, I am always aware that I can be attacked at any moment. Because here in Portville it's really extreme with the different neighbourhoods and different areas and streets: they are enemies but I know my way around."

Everybody seems to carry their place of belonging with them, as well as the enmities/friendships that go with it. Nevertheless, the relationship between both is in constant change. People change groups or are even in two groups at the same time.

As opposed to Zora's experience concerning the enmity of groups from different places, opposing groups sometimes support each other against others from outside the neighbourhood. "If we don't manage on our own, then we have other friends who can help us, those from Eastvillage and partly the Eriksons", says Jamal from the Jasons in talking about fights the group sometimes have with enemy groups from outside.

Relations between places and people are different in Inlandtown. They do not reference each other in an interchangeable way. Rather, the people who are seen to live in or hang out in a place denote the place as dangerous because *they* are dangerous by definition. Turks walking around with their butterfly knives

transform a place into one of danger. The ethnicisation of places leads to an inflexibility in the relationship between places and people. The ethnic group becomes a signifier and the places become the signified. The relationship cannot be reversed. If you change place you do not necessarily change group. If somebody not belonging to that particular group hangs out in a place that is characterised by the presence of a specific group, he or she will not easily become part of that group if s/he does not share the group's ethnicity. We will see this later on in one of the examples.

The quotes I have chosen are not particularly exceptional as they are representative of the young people in our sample. We chose the two neighbourhoods because they had opposing positions in the local imaginary. We were suspicious of the strong impressions and differences that resulted from our fieldwork, and thought that we might have fallen prey to that dominant local imaginary. To test this we produced some statistics, and found that of the 56 young people who talked about violence in Portville, 16 (28%) connected it with "foreigners", while 17 of the 35 who constituted the sample talking about violence in Inlandtown did so (almost 48%).

It seemed apparent that our impression was correct, but as we are dealing with a relatively small sample, figures do not prove much. The question as to whether our findings indicate significant differences in the two neighbourhoods or not, can only be answered by looking more closely at the ways in which young people in both neighbourhoods talk about violence and migrants, and by analysing the actual contexts. If we find a good explanation for the different perceptions of violent youth by relating those perceptions to the social-physical context of the young people, we can claim that growing up in different neighbourhoods does indeed influence one's perception of and behaviour towards violence.

It is therefore not sufficient to just look at strong contrasts such as the ones found in the statements above. If there are significant differences in the two neighbourhoods, we might learn more about them by looking at similar

statements as well. This is how a boy from Portville and a girl from Inlandtown describe their respective neighbourhoods:

"Simone: A lot of Turks or others who are violent run around here, but violence is not that extreme. Other districts are worse.

Danny: I live in Theo Street. The street is kind of OK, but just around the corner, I couldn't take a photo of that, all these ... but not that I have anything against Turks, but they are Turks, they say things like: "hey, give me money". *Interviewer: How do you know they are Turks?* Danny: Because I know them, I have some Turkish friends and they don't like them either, that's why I know that. I don't have anything against Turks, one lived in my street and he was my best friend."

The most apparent difference between the two statements here seems to be Danny's effort to avoid any impression of "having anything against Turks". It is revealing how one of the most common arguments used to assure one's anti-racist attitude (some of my best friends are ...) never ceases to be re-invented. It indicates that an understanding of racism is deeply imbedded in our everyday thinking: it equates power relations on a societal (or worldly) scale with relations between individuals in daily life. Though they may relate to and influence each other, this is not necessarily the case. Remember the way in which those Germans who counted Jews among their best friends either took part in or supported racist practices during German Fascism.

Another difference between Danny's and Simone's way of talking about Turks is to be found in the kind of stories they tell. While Simone attributes them with violence, Danny's story is more about annoyance than open violence. Perhaps this has to do with the fact that both speak on different levels of generalisation. Simone has heard her father – a policeman – say that Turks are violent and carry knives. The identification of Turks with violence must have become self-evident, otherwise she would not present the contradiction that there is a lesser amount of violence in her immediate

neighbourhood even though there are so many Turks living there. Danny reports his personal experience and distinguishes between Turks who are his friends while disapproving of the behaviour of other Turks. It seems as if he is not identifying Turks in general with violence. Unfortunately, this conclusion is premature, as illustrated by another of his comments made later during the same conversation:

“Danny: For so many Turks living in our area, it is not as bad here as in other places, for that it is really peaceful, I’d say, but so many, yes, well, how should I say that, there are many Turks in our area, but hardly anything happens as opposed to other areas.”

Both Simone and Danny are surprised at experiencing relatively little violence in spite of being surrounded by a supposedly violent ethnic group. This does not make them insecure with regard to their general equation of Turks and violence, however. Does it make any difference, then, that Danny comes up with his best Turkish friend in order to avoid the impression of being a racist? According to van Dijk (1992), it would only show that he is better at denying his racism than Simone is. According to Billig (1991), he is arguing with himself about the two different beliefs he holds. I want to follow the latter a bit further and look at Simone’s and Danny’s answers to the question posed to all our respondents in the final feedback-interview: “Is it of any importance if the parents of young people you know or they themselves were born in a country other than Germany?”

“Simone: It doesn’t really bother me that they are here, as long as they don’t, like some Turks, who are thugs, then I ask myself often, well, they don’t belong here, but apart from that, they are quite nice, ... in my class there are foreigners as well and they are really quite nice. It doesn’t matter for me. I only think that those who are so violent, I don’t know.

Danny: That doesn’t matter, because they are only human beings as well. Why should one get along better with one’s own nationals than with foreigners? That’s daft. I’m not such a right

extremist or something, don’t know, somehow it doesn’t matter to me because one of my best friends is Turkish.”

Simone maintains her position of identifying Turks with violence. She comes close to demanding the expulsion of those who are “so violent”. The breaks and incoherence of her speech indicate that she knows she is on dangerous ground here, saying something that will not be seen as correct by the interviewer. In this case, the interviewer was herself of migrant background. Danny in turn, rejects any kind of differentiation between Germans and non-Germans.

Daily Friendships and Daily Racisms

One explanation the young people in our sample gave for such differences was that there were so many – as they called them – foreigners living in Portville that there was no point in calling somebody a foreigner. Or as Clara put it: “We are used to foreigners, we grew up with them. If they weren’t here – all the different shops and restaurants, something would be missing, it would be quite empty.”

The latter remark reproduces one of the most dearly held beliefs of anti-racist policies (at least in Germany): when people know each other and get used to each other, they get along and racism has no chance. This view is expressed in Danny’s sentence about his best friend being a Turk. There is certainly some truth in the argument that where migrants are a strong minority, as in Portville, they are better able to fight daily racism and are thus more difficult to marginalize. But I do not think this is enough, because we do find situations in which a large minority, or even a majority, is marginalized and oppressed. For instance, there is a neighbourhood in Maincity with the same degree of ethnic diversity and a very similar social structure (working class, with around 10% people living on social welfare), which, as opposed to Portville, has a strong right-extremist electorate.

A case that undermines the view that close relationships eliminate racist views is that of

Else: She attends a secondary school, which means that in her class – in relation to other schools in Inlandtown – there are a disproportionate number of young people of migrant background. Like Clara, she is used to living with quite a number of migrant youth. In addition, she is the only native person in our sample to visit the infamous Billy’s disco, seen by most others as frequented by dangerous Turks (compare quotes above). In answering the question about whether a migrant background makes any difference in Inlandtown she says:

“Else: No, I have only friends who are foreigners. Not in school, but in the disco, from the disco only. You can have much more fun with foreigners. Yes, somehow they are not that prudish, you can do anything together with them. In the disco, if something happens, it’s like: ‘what the fuck’.”

In explaining why she has predominantly migrant friends she describes them as different – though in a way that she likes. Such a positive distinction can easily turn into something negative:

“I have nothing to do with the Kurds, though, they are disgusting, they smell like hell and they think they can fiddle around with you. If you hit them you are a slut and if you put up with it you are a slut too. You feel really stupid. My friends come from Yugoslavia, Bosnia, Germans, some Turks, everything, really, Russians, Poles, except Turks and Albanians, no thanks, aaah, I mean Kurds and Albanians. Turks are okay as well, some of them. There are such foreigners and such foreigners, such Germans and such Germans, I’ll say, there are more handicapped and less handicapped ones in each race.”

One cannot really call Else a convinced anti-racist, despite the common wisdom she displays at the end of her statement about good and bad people in any “race” and that most of her friends are “foreigners”. While she excuses the Turks, the Kurds become the bearers of the traits her peers ascribe to the former. Friendship

and knowledge do not lead her to a rejection of racist images, or even to a more careful usage of them.

The need for Else to produce racist images of Kurds seems to arise from the need to legitimate her unruly behaviour. By applying these images, she tries to retain her membership of the peer-group she hides her “home” (the disco) from. Additionally, she can display her expertise concerning “foreigners” when claiming that it is not the Turks that are the problem, but the Kurds.

The structures of Else’s and Danny’s discourses are opposed to each other. While he starts with a negative description of ethnically marked individuals, and tries to correct the impression that this may reflect his general views about them, Else starts emphasising her good relations with migrant youth, and tries to correct the impression that this may reflect a disapproval of the commonly held views of “foreigners”. What Else is doing is to co-ordinate her practices and experiences with the dominating view about foreigners held by her native classmates, and in her neighbourhood in general. Although she does not go as far as to grant them their views in every respect, (when she talks with the interviewer) she does hide her visits to a place with an exceptionally bad reputation. For Else, her dissenting behaviour implies more than not fitting into the mainstream. Being a girl, she is vulnerable to losing her respectability (being seen as a slut), whereas a boy would only be seen as a wrongdoer without having to fear the loss of his integrity as a boy. She sees herself threatened from both sides: from the Kurds who may see her as a slut if she does not behave in the “correct” way and from the Germans who may regard her as such because she is seen in a place visited by Turks.

Thus, the mere friendship between migrants and natives is not in itself a basis for anti-racist views. It seems to be rather the social context within which friendships and encounters take place that is decisive.⁵ Therefore, I want to proceed by trying to describe the differences between Portville and Inlandtown on a different level than that of their more heterogeneous and more homogeneous inhabitants, respectively.

To do this I shall use Lefebvre's trialectical definition of space; the first being the "representation of space":

"Conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic sub-dividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent. This is the dominant space in any society (or mode of production). Conceptions of space tend, with certain exceptions ... towards a system of verbal (and therefore intellectually worked out) signs" (Lefebvre 1991:33).

I would like to include politicians, the media, youth workers and teachers as producers of representations of space. Their representations show Inlandtown as a place dominated by right-wing groups, while Portville is presented as a domain of the anti-racist left. Two reports (from the same conservative newspaper) about right-extremist demonstrations, which took place recently in both areas, provide good examples of such representations:

Right Extremists in Maincity

The last march of right extremist groups for the time being took place six months ago. Accompanied by a huge number of policemen, 100 Neo-nazis went through Inlandtown. The police managed to impede a clash with the 120 leftists, who wanted to disturb the group. In July 1999 more than 600 Neo-nazis marched through Inlandtown, shouting, 'fame and honour for the Waffen-SS', demonstrating against the so-called 'Wehrmachtsausstellung' (exhibition about the atrocities of the German army during World War II, NR).

Demonstrators Impede a Neo-nazi March in Portville

Meanwhile, around 50 demonstrators had sat down in front of the police in order to protect themselves from the expected water cannons. ... The water cannon should be directed towards the other side, said a woman, they have no business to be in Portville. Some of the

demonstrators compared the situation with 'bloody Sunday' on the 17th of July 1932, when the SA provoked fights with the Communists and 18 people died. While the police deployed their water cannons, about 1 000 demonstrators gathered on the street. They were not only organised anti-fascists, but also ordinary residents: elderly couples and families with children. The police had to choose whether they wanted to clear the way for the NPD against pensioners and children – or change the route. They changed the route."

In these two reports, Inlandtown is represented as a place where fascists can, although not undisturbed, succeed in having demonstrations, while in Portville even elderly people and families confront them. Note the historical link made in the second report, which evokes Portville's revolutionary past. It is not so much the fact that this link was made by a demonstrator, but the fact that it is reported in the conservative newspaper that is of interest. This links to and reinforces the image of the neighbourhood as one that has "always" had a left-wing population.

The electoral results in both neighbourhoods are another source of representation – representation in the double sense of who is elected to speak for the neighbourhood, and of the kind of images the results of these elections suggest. The table below shows the result of the local elections in both neighbourhoods in the year 1997. With regard to the main parties, the Social Democrats (SPD) and the Christian Democrats (CDU), the results do not differ that much. The former rules in both neighbourhoods (like in Maincity as a whole at that time).⁶ Differences occur at the margins of the political spectra, where the Green Party has 7% more votes in Portville than in Inlandtown, while the extreme right has 3% more votes in Inlandtown than in Portville. These margin differences account for the images of Inlandtown as the area of the extreme right and Portville as that of the alternative left, even though the percentage of people voting for the Green Party in Inlandtown is only 0.3% lower than in Maincity as a whole. These spaces of representation, that is the im-

Number of votes 1997:

	Portville		Inlandtown	
		%		%
Entitled	174 181		81 703	
Turn Out	118 275	67.9	56 129	68.7
Invalid votes	2 877	2.4	1 426	2.5
Valid votes	115 398		54 703	
SPD	35 773	31	19 668	36
CDU	37 720	32.7	18 184	33.2
GRÜNE/GAL	23 978	20.8	7 255	13.3
STATT Partei	5 156	4.5	2 299	4.2
F.D.P.	4 921	4.3	1 572	2.9
REP	2 023	1.8	1 877	3.4
DVU	4 686	4.1	2 974	5.4
NPD	254	0.2	59	0.1
Right extrem. total		6.1		8.9

age of Inlandtown as a centre of right extremism and the image of Portville as home to the anti-racist left, inform what I would like to call (using Lefebvre's second definition of space) young people's *lived spaces*:

"Space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users', but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who describe and aspire to do no more than describe. This is the dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects. Thus representational spaces may be said, though again with certain exceptions, to tend towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs (Lefebvre 1991:245)."

Such symbols of representational spaces are nowadays used in the websites through which neighbourhoods represent themselves. As examples, I have copied the homepages of Inlandtown and one of the neighbourhoods in Portville, in which a great number of our young people lived (see next page). It can be argued that such homepages belong to the space of representation, as opposed to representational space, because they are produced by those with resources. Yet, the ones I have copied are not

created by local officials but by private initiatives of people in the neighbourhoods. In this sense they represent the ways in which these initiatives live their neighbourhoods. They are like local newspapers made by committed local inhabitants.

The differences in the two homepages are striking. When visiting *www. Inlandtown.de* one is immediately confronted with advertisement from different businesses in the area – obviously the sponsors of the website. Before getting to the site itself, the first information one gets in Portville.de concerns the principles by which the site has been produced: in order to ensure that everybody has access, even if not having the latest equipment, the site has been produced without frames.

Whilst the Inlandtown site symbolises the power of individual entrepreneurship and appeals to the consumer, the Portville site is designed to be used as a means of gaining information about the community and as a means of communication between its members. Even buying and selling becomes a horizontal form of communication between those who want to get rid of things and those who want to acquire them.

The pictures of streets in the neighbourhoods are also very different. Those of Inlandtown suggest a beautiful, orderly and conflict-free neighbourhood, whereas those of Portville stress the everyday atmosphere: a rainy street, a dis-

1. Self-Representation: The Inlandtown Homepage

Welcome in Inlandtown !



BEST Travel agency









Building co-operative

Real-estate market in Inlandtown – free of charge and up-to-the-minute

Monoville: Images from above order online now!

"A Landmark to be sold." The Inlandtown Mill faces an uncertain future.

2. Self-Representation - The Portville Homepage

 <p>Network</p> <p>What really happens in the village. Here you can search for associations, initiatives, projects, branches, and private homepages. Join the network. Do you belong to Portville? Then you should be part of the mixville.de-network. As an association, a firm or a private homepage. Free of charge. Here you will learn how it works: Network under "join".</p>	 <p>Press overview</p> <p>Portville in the press - Here you find all articles in TAZ, Abendblatt, Morgenpost, Welt and Maincity.de, which include the keyword Portville.</p>
 <p>Market</p> <p>If you want to rent a couch, sell a husband or fall in love with a flat, place your ad here.</p>	 <p>Echo sounder</p> <p>Information and Stories from the depths of Portville. <u>Walk</u> through Portville III</p>
 <p>Calendar of events</p>	 <p>Clique</p> <p>More than a guestbook. Talk before others talk</p>
 <p>Trinkets</p> <p>The page for interactive trinkets. Choose your favourite place in Portville.</p>	 <p>Gastronomy</p> <p>See how others judge restaurants and judge yourself.</p>

The Inlandtown and the Portville Homepage.

orderly but well-used place – the Koray Adan Square about which the young people spoke so much (see quotes above). At the back of the Square we can see a camping van. It belongs to young people who choose to live this way. After the picture was taken, they have been removed

from the Square but have been assigned other places in the neighbourhood. The wall filled with graffiti is the back of a stage used for amateur theatre productions organised by the youth centre, The Spider.

These photos are accompanied by texts em-

phasising the diversity of the neighbourhood in terms of class and ethnicity. They talk about conflicts in Portville, poverty, unemployment, homelessness and racism, and about the initiatives existing in the neighbourhood to combat these problems.⁷

No text accompanies the pictures of Inlandtown. In fact, there is no overall description of the neighbourhood except for a section on its history that ends with the year 1938 – only mentioned because that was when Inlandtown became incorporated into the larger Maincity. That is all we learn about fascism on this site. The history section of Portville is notably different, however, in that it describes the fascist period in relative detail.

While the creators of Portville.de describe themselves as an initiative of individuals, who work voluntarily and are not attached to any party or to any specific politics, we learn nothing about the makers of Inlandtown.de.

A similar difference can be found in the way in which the two youth clubs of Inlandtown and Portville represent themselves. The first one shows young people in a room that resembles a family living room. The description emphasises the different atmospheres provided for different age-groups, the possibilities to play billiards and to eat fast food. This is the youth centre organising the disco, which Else attends.

The youth club in Portville is housed in a former factory, and the image shows the café where young people meet. It is described as having a special “atmosphere” of its own. The website offers young people the opportunity of taking part in creative activities and states that the young people’s own ideas and suggestions are welcome. The images and the texts create connotations of a harmonious bourgeois home on the one side, and an attempt to fuse cultural creativity with a free development of young people’s capabilities on the other.

Manoeuvring Within and Creating the Local Space of Normality

I would like to expand Lefevbre’s definition by interpreting the lived space as a set of practices which young people (and adults) create by mak-

ing use of the dominant spaces of representation, the signs and symbols of representational space, spatial practices (see below), and their, however limited, practices of opposition. An example of such a creation becomes tangible through Susanne’s account:

“Well, actually, I don’t know if I am left, right or in the middle. On the one hand I don’t have anything against foreigners, (...), as long as they are not Turks, especially with girls who come from a foreign country or who are born here and have foreign born parents because, they have to suffer. My friend’s father is Moslem and she had to suffer a lot because of that. And in this respect I am very strongly on the left, if somebody tries to harass my friend or something.”

Although she does not really know on which political side she is, wanting to defend her friend with a Moslem father automatically positions her strongly on the left, whereby left is defined through one’s relations to “foreigners”. At the same time, this does not prevent her from joining her fellow peers in rejecting Turks. The subject position of a leftist is somehow occupied by Susanne against her will, simply by rejecting racist harassment. This demonstrates the strong political connotations that “mingling with foreigners” has in Inlandtown. It is true that Danny created a political link by underlining his conviction that Germans and “foreigners” were equal, by describing himself as not being a right extremist. He did not imply, though, that his position was leftist.

This quote is another good example of the antagonistic ways in which discourses are structured in both Portville and Inlandtown. In the latter, it seems to be the rule that you have to say something negative about foreigners once you have opposed racism, in order to position yourself back into the group that is “entirely normal”, as Daria, a friend of Susanne’s calls themselves. In the first it is the other way round: once you have said something negative about “foreigners” you have to affirm your overall approving attitude. How is this to be explained?

A right extremist presence governs the representation of Inlandtown for these young people. Its consequence is that there is a large space in which to represent the Other as a threat without transgressing the boundaries beyond which a position comes to be seen as racist. By the same token, moving too far away from the beliefs represented by this group could mean to find oneself beyond the limits constituting normality. The boundaries of what I would call the *local space of normality* are drawn by the dominating and the dominated margins. Any trespassing has to be counterbalanced by a set of legitimations, which either reproduce the normal range of representations or they have to be openly opposed. Normally, a combination of both kinds of strategies will be applied – resulting in yielding to and resisting the regulating normality at the same time (see the examples of Else and Susanne).

The space of normality is created in the same way, but with a different result in Portville. Anti-racism is seen as dominating the space of representation. As Danny makes clear, believing that the country in which one's parents were born is of any importance amounts to right-wing extremism. Or as Patrick says: "It doesn't make any difference to me (national origin, NR), but for many it does, I think, they are Nazis. Such people are stupid." At the same time nobody, except one girl who dressed as a punk and had been a member of a Marxist group, spoke about being on the left because they opposed what they saw as a right extremist position. Doing this was simply being normal. As in Inlandtown, "Nazis" serve as the opponent against which one's own view is defined. However, what counts as a nazi view occupies a much broader space of representation. Consequently, the boundaries defining normality towards people of migrant background are tighter. A good example of this was Zelal's reaction to the video we had made of young people taking us on walks through their respective neighbourhoods. As soon as the lights were switched on again, Zelal immediately burst out: "Aaah, but these people in Inlandtown, they are all Nazis." "Why?" "Because all the time they are talking about foreigners, foreigners, foreigners, nothing else

but foreigners." None of the young people in the video had said anything negative about "foreigners" but indeed, when the interviewer asked them what kind of people lived in their houses and what kind of people used the youth centres, in most cases their answers had been "foreigners". One can argue that Zelal is especially sensitive because she comes from another country herself. But that only means that she is especially good at capturing the subtle differences in speech and naming that exist in the two neighbourhoods.

So far, only young people of native background have been used to analyse the different lived spaces of Inlandtown and Portville. For reasons of space I cannot include the representational space of young migrants (but see Rätzsch 2003b). A short summary must therefore suffice. Young migrants in Portville told us that they did not experience any racism in their environment or by their peers. Occasionally adults told them off using racist vocabulary. Young migrants in Inlandtown disagreed with their native peers that they all got on well, and stressed that they experienced racism in school as well. Yet they never talked about it with their teachers and regretted that there was no possibility for them to address these questions. The lived spaces of young migrants thus confirmed those lived by young natives, namely that migrants constituted a legitimate part of Portville, while they were seen as intruders in Inlandtown.

It is not so much that people are more or less racist in both neighbourhoods, but that they have to relate their views and actions to the local space of normality. Even when young people say the same things about migrant youth, they set them in a different context, negotiating their positions within the given normality. What is within the range of normality in Inlandtown will be seen as "Nazi-behaviour" in Portville, and what is within the range of normality there will be seen as "very much on the left" in Inlandtown. Consequently, when migrant youth is harassed, treated negatively or talked about negatively in Portville, there will be sanctions, either by peers or by the other part of that same abusing person. In Inlandtown, however, such behaviour will largely be seen as normal or as

a joke, and pass unheeded.

My point is that these differences are due to the representations of these places which enter the ways in which they are lived by young people (but not only by them of course). They give meaning to daily actions and constitute the background against which people understand and judge their own and other people's actions. It is not simply the presence of the Other (in whatever numbers), but the fact that people with different background share a common space that makes for good or bad relationships. What is decisive is the meaning these relationships have through the way in which this shared space is represented.

One could say that I am arguing in a circle: Migrants are more likely to be seen as a threat in Inlandtown because the place is represented as one where migrants are seen as a threat. A third dimension has to be introduced in order to (hopefully) get out of this circle. This is where Lefebvre's third definition of space as *perceived* comes in.

"The spatial practice of a society secretes that society's space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it. From the analytic standpoint, the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space" (Lefebvre 1991:38f).

Portville and Inlandtown are products of spatial practices. They are places that were built for a specific usage, following specific conceptualisations of who should use space in which way. These political goals and meanings are built into physical space and enter its representations and the way it is lived. Erdal and Angela describe the spatial practices of their respective neighbourhoods:

"Erdal: If you look at those chains of shops, the Turk starts there, and there the Albanian ends. And where the Albanian ends, the Yugoslav starts with his shop. And I mean, living together here – if we would look at Greece or Turkey and here, where the Turkish ends, you see only Greeks and they are fully satisfied with

it. I am also learning Greek.

Angela: They build residential blocks for Germans, for Russians, for Turks, and now they even want to build one for Blacks. Because you have to keep the different races apart. Because they do not get on with each other. They will fight."

Both talk about differences and how places are constructed to accommodate them. Erdal speaks about the way in which differences are shared and the way in which enmities (Greeks and Turks) lose their meaning through daily encounters engendered by physical proximity. Angela talks about the danger of differences and the need to physically separate them.

In looking at the history of the two neighbourhoods, two features are particularly striking as they relate to the statements cited above. Books describing Portville tell us that it has been a neighbourhood of immigration from the beginning. Founded by Sephardim Jews fleeing from the Spanish Netherlands and situated by the sea, it has been visited by people from many different countries, some of whom have stayed and settled. Until 1867, Portville belonged to the Danish state and only became incorporated into Maincity in 1938, during the fascist period.

While Portville has always been a centre of commerce, Inlandtown was a village within an agricultural area until the end of the nineteenth century, when industrialisation started to take over and big factories were built, as well as housing for the incoming workers. The history books don't mention immigration, and only describe working class populations moving to where the factories were being built. We find the following description about an area in Inlandtown:

"Kamp: The first house was built 1869 in the later working class area of Kamp. Until well into the nineties of the last century 80 households had settled. They were separated according to professions: In Kamp the factory workers, in the south of Inlandtown, the old part, the small craftsmen, and tradesmen, in the new part the skilled worker and the white collar workers."

This statement puzzled us because it resembled Angela's description of her neighbourhood in terms of the way in which she assigned residential blocks to different "races", as she called them. What does this tell us? Are we to believe that traditions of a neighbourhood are passed on from one generation to the other? One way in which this happens might be through the stories that people hand down to the subsequent generations, as quoted in the newspaper article above.

Walking through the neighbourhoods of Portville and Inlandtown, and experiencing the different surroundings, we thought that an additional explanation might be found in the built environment, because the way those neighbourhoods are populated is reflected in their different architectures:

Inlandtown is a planned construction. By and large, old housing was knocked down to make way for new buildings, built for the use of larger groups of the population that arrived with the developing industry. The built environment reflects the concepts of mass production with its similarity and repetitiveness; its homogeneity.

In Portville, we find a stratum of different kinds of buildings that reflect the different times in which they were built and the needs they were designed to fulfil. We find houses for the working classes (Portville is a traditionally left-wing working-class area), houses for the better off, new housing to replace the damage of the war, and empty places, where nothing has been replaced. We also find a lot of rundown places. In short, the structure is chaotic rather than planned.

One could thus argue that different ways of living differences are already inscribed into the physical arrangement of a place – into its *Dispositif* to use Foucault's expression – through the spatial practices that brought it into being. Foucault's thesis was that the arrangement of things (words, rules, institutions as well as physical entities) produced certain effects. One of the examples he analyses is the way bodies were arranged in schools and in the military to produce a certain kind of discipline (see for instance Foucault 1982, 1995).

A passage in Richard Sennett's book, the *Conscience of the Eye*, provides two useful concepts to think about the different dispositif of Portville and Inlandtown. Sennett describes two streets in New York as being arranged in two different ways, in a linear way and in a way where differences overlay each other (Sennett 1992:165ff).

The more diverse built environment in Portville, together with the more planned, homogeneous structure in Inlandtown and the different ways in which these neighbourhoods are populated, are accompanied by different usages. We find a considerable number of different shops, community based initiatives and cultural centres in Portville, while in Inlandtown we find mainly German-owned shops (often chains), and as far as we could see, only two alternative community centres. The pedestrian zone in Portville is mainly used by a group of punks, occasionally by street-traders, and in the warmer periods, by men and women of different ages and ethnic backgrounds representing the variety of the inhabitants. The pedestrian zone in Inlandtown is neat and tidy. Young people hanging around might disturb the picture. And indeed, some youngsters do sit there in order to do exactly that: disturb the adults and provoke angry looks.

Overlays of differences provide an opportunity to come to terms with each other, while the linear arrangement of differences makes it easier to produce, or maintain, divisions between "us" and "them".

The way in which physical space is organised seems to impact on the way in which people perceive and live differences. The "repressive homogeneity" (to use Gerald Suttles' term, 1968) which dominates in Inlandtown and the linear arrangement of differences there, seem to make it more difficult for young people to perceive ethnic differences as opportunities, or simply as a normality. By the same token, the more chaotic structure of Portville, with its overlaid differences, seems to make it easier to enjoy differences or to take them for granted, instead of feeling threatened by them.

Physical space can be seen as signifying all three dimensions of space, thus transmitting

its meaning from one generation to another. It is also, of course, constantly redefined and represented, as well as lived in different ways. There is reciprocity, I believe, between the way in which space *induces* representations, the way in which it is lived, and the way in which it acquires new meanings through new representations and spatial practices. Yet a certain stability seems to prevail.

The fact that fear of the Other also exists in Portville, though in different contexts, and also the fact that space is divided up among the different youth groups, indicates that we are not talking about an ideal place of constant harmony versus a place of constant aggression. But I do not believe that harmony is something to strive for. Harmony, as the absence of arguments, confrontations or even fights, would also be the absence of development and learning – and, according to Simmel, of social groups:

“Hostilities not only prevent boundaries within the group from gradually disappearing, so that these hostilities are often consciously cultivated to guarantee existing conditions. Beyond this, they also are of direct sociological fertility: often they provide classes and individuals with reciprocal positions which they would not find, or not find in the same way, if the causes of hostility were not accompanied by the *feeling* and the expression of hostility... The disappearance of repulsive (and, considered in isolation, destructive) energies does by no means always result in a richer and fuller social life ... but in as different and unrealizable a phenomenon as if the group were deprived of the forces of cooperation, affection, mutual aid, and harmony of interest” (Simmel 1955:18).

It was not the absence of conflicts that marked the difference between Portville and Inlandtown, but rather the way in which these conflicts were articulated. Simmel’s term “reciprocal” is decisive here: In Inlandtown young people of migrant background did not appear to have a chance to take part in conflicts on an equal footing with native young people, as their presence was not seen as legitimate. In Portville, confrontations took place between various kinds of op-

ponents; mainly between people from different places, or, sadly enough, between stronger and weaker young people, where the former made use of the latter’s disadvantage. Being on the receiving end one day did not exclude the possibility of being superior the next, however. In Inlandtown, confrontations took place between different groups defined as ethnic. This meant that the same group was always made inferior, which reinforced its construction as the Other in society at large.

To Conclude

Looking at the ways in which young people talk about violence in both Portville and Inlandtown, the most striking feature was the strong link constructed between violence and “foreigners”, namely Turks in Inlandtown. In trying to understand these differences, I described the two neighbourhoods as constituting different three dimensional spaces defined by Lefebvre as spatial practices, spaces of representation and lived spaces. These three dimensions produce what I call “local spaces of normality”, to which everyone arguing about ethnicity has to relate. These spaces of normality are defined through the extremes seen as dominating and being dominated. Right extremists are perceived as dominating Inlandtown. They are defined by their violence against “foreigners” with the consequence that a negative description of migrant youth becomes part of normality, while having migrants as friends constitutes an extreme leftist position.

Left anti-racists are perceived as dominating Portville. Consequently, to make a difference between natives and migrants already constitutes a rightist position, while the space of normality includes relations of equality between migrant and native youth, friendships, and the taken-for-granted nature of a migrant presence.

Individuals can, of course, cross these boundaries because they are not totally determined by them. In our sample, some young people in Inlandtown talked about their friendships with young people of migrant background while some young people in Portville talked about “violent Turks”. It is therefore necessary to further

specify why I suggest that these neighbourhoods constitute different local spaces of normality. It is not only the occurrence of native young people living ethnic relations differently that warrants declaring these spaces as different. It is the over-determination of differences on all the dimensions of representational space, spaces of representations, and spatial practices that leads us to the conclusion of different normalities.

If this analysis makes any sense, what does it mean for the issue of daily racism in places represented as racist or as anti-racist, as in our two cases? What I would say so far is this: within a space where anti-racism (to put it rather simplistically) constitutes the local space of normality, daily racism does not disappear altogether. However, its appearance is played down and counterbalanced, thus creating lived spaces of safety for a migrant population. Natives and migrants alike play a part in reproducing this kind of normality, which means that they subordinate themselves to the dominating representation. In Portville, this normalisation empowers migrant youth and thereby makes their lives easier and allows them to develop their capacities and their self-esteem. Virtually all the young people of migrant background in our sample in Portville told us that they felt safe in their neighbourhood. At the same time, they are locked into a local normality for their feeling of safety (in Rätzzel 2003b I have developed this point further). Local space does not exist in a vacuum. Young people in Portville knew that they were living in an enclave. Already the behaviour of adults, and especially leaving their area, showed them that they are not seen as a legitimate part of the population elsewhere. As institutions of society at large have not opened up and changed according to the needs of a more diverse society, the contradiction between local space and societal space in general produces feelings of ambiguity. In spite of this, young migrants' possibilities of appropriating space in Portville and their experience of being accepted as legitimate citizens may equip them with more strategies to make use of the scarce opportunities that society at large holds for them. It may also equip them with some skills

to fight off daily racism.

As for Inlandtown, native and migrant youth also share the local space of normality, although they occupy different positions within it. Daily racism is experienced as damaging by migrant youth, but is not discussed openly among peers or with teachers. As a result, self-normalisation has the effect of disempowering migrant youth and they instead become outsiders; some seeking redress by retreating into their respective communities. One example of a process of self-normalisation in Inlandtown is Svetlana, who arrived four years ago from Russia. During that time, her circle of friends has changed:

“Svetlana: Now, I spend more time with the German Russians, but before I spent more time with the Germans. That has changed a bit. It's not my fault. My mother doesn't like it, she says, we are in Germany now, you have to live with the Germans if you want to go on living here. I do understand her, but, if they don't have time, then I do something with my other friends.”

These young people's space of normality corresponds more to the space in society at large, and provides them with less self-confidence to confront it later in life. This may sound too bleak as a perspective, and I do not want to say that migrant youth in Germany does not have any perspective. Even under unfavourable conditions there are always possibilities and people can be lucky. However, on a more general level, and especially considering economic and political developments, there is no cause for optimism – if initiatives are not taken that is.

As young natives in Inlandtown generally construct migrants as violent and avoid contact with them, they create a more dangerous environment for themselves than the young natives in Portville. According to a quantitative study (Pfeiffer *et al.* 1999), the percentage of violent acts in both neighbourhoods is more or less the same (for instance, 27% of young people in Portville and 29% of young people in Inlandtown described themselves as perpetrators of violence). However, according to the same study, young people in Portville felt

safer and liked their neighbourhood much more than those in Inlandtown. The authors had difficulty explaining this difference. Perhaps our study can provide an explanation. On all three dimensions – representational space, the space of representation and spatial practices – Portville signifies diversification and the ability of people to respect and enjoy their differences. It provides diversified spaces for different kinds of people to use the way they want, and its socio-political and historical development is linked with notions of diversity as well as of empowerment. Thus, despite the existence of danger and violence, young people are able to create spaces of safety for themselves.

Finally, and to avoid misunderstandings, when I speak about different local spaces of normality I do not assume that these localities are isolated enclaves, undisturbed by what is going on in society at large or indeed at a global level. Our two localities are to be understood as a specific blend of views, ideologies and ways of living that exist in society at large, as well as at a global level, with local peculiarities. They draw on local histories that might stand in opposition to what is hegemonic at a national level and thus, through integrating and rejecting national discourses, they deal with them in their specific ways through their specific repertoires of interpretation. While they are in constant exchange with what happens in society at large and internationally, these local normalities also serve as ways to filter and interpret what happens “outside”. Therefore, such exchanges do not easily change the local brand.

Notes

1. In contrast, see the seminal work done in Britain, for example, Back 1996, Cohen 1997.
2. A note on the usage of words: (1) In talking about young people whose parents were not born in Germany, I should really use the term “of migrant background”, since most of the young people are born in Germany and are not themselves migrants. For easier reading I shall nevertheless use “migrant” as shorthand. (2) In scholarly literature, young people whose parents have not migrated are usually just called Germans. I shall not do this because it implies that the young people of migrant origin are not Germans, which in my terms they are, even if some do not have German

- citizenship. Therefore, I call the young people who do not have a migrant background “natives”.
3. The German project was funded by the Volkswagenstiftung and co-directed by Dirk Hoerder and myself. In London, a total of 120 young people participated in the study and shared their experiences with our colleagues, Phil Cohen, Les Back and Michael Keith. The project’s German title was: “Transformation of Daily Life in Processes of Migration. A Study of Immigrant and Non-Immigrant/Native Youth in Two Neighbourhoods.” The British project was financed by the ESRC and its title is “Finding the Way Home”. The following description of methods is taken from one of their reports (Cohen, Keith & Back 1999).
 4. *Fashion Parade*: Participants were presented with 40 images of youth styles (20 of young women and 20 of young men) which were also differently ethnicised, and asked to pick and comment on three images that they liked and three they disliked. *Photoscapes*: Young people were given disposable cameras and asked to photograph places they regarded as safe or dangerous, and places and people they especially liked. *Photo Storyboards*: Young people were shown a series of specially constructed photographs depicting young people in peer group situations, the meanings of which were ambiguous and cut across a range of ethnic and gender relations. Informants were asked to fill in captions and dialogue to explain the scene. *Geneogramme*: Young people plotted degrees of contact and levels of intimacy with their friends and relatives on paper and represented them spatially and with the help of colour codes indicating their emotional relation towards them. *Guided Fantasy*: Young people were given a trigger scenario and wrote a story utilising aspects of their real and imaginary landscapes. *Audio Diaries*: Young people kept a verbal diary over the period of a week documenting whatever they thought was important during that week. *Video Walkabouts*: Young people planned and then conducted walks through their neighbourhoods, giving a ‘guided tour’-style commentary as they went. This exercise was recorded on video. *Journeys to London and Hamburg*. With a focus group of 22 young people, we visited London and the young people who were part of the project there. A year later, a group of 7 young Londoners came to Hamburg. *Follow-up Interviews*: These took the form of individual semi-structured interviews in which we presented the young people with a preliminary summary of what we had learned from them, asking them to comment on it.
 5. In his path breaking work on new ethnicities and urban culture, Les Back (1996) has made a similar point about the different discourses around “race” dominating different areas in London.
 6. What the results do not show is the difference between the politics of the Social Democrats in

the two neighbourhoods. Pushed by the Green Party, the party's politics are much more left-wing in Portville.

7. The introductory text describing Portville says: "Maincity has 104 neighbourhoods. One of them is called Portville. It is not Maincity's biggest neighbourhood, nor is it the most beautiful, and certainly not the most modern or elegant. But many think that it is Maincity's most lively neighbourhood; some say it's most tolerant, while others complain that it's full of nooks and crannies. Some talk about a town the size of a waist pocket or about the most rebellious neighbourhood in the city."

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