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4 The "Cultural Turn" of Postmigrant Conviviality. A Historical Case Study on Practices and Discourses of (Multi)Cultural Diversity in Switzerland, 1970s–1990s

Galinha Portuguesa—Portuguese Style Chicken
1 young oven-ready chicken
  some rosemary
  pepper
  salt
2 onions (finely chopped)
2 garlic cloves (finely chopped)
1 cup of hot chicken broth
4 tomatoes (peeled)
12 olives (pitted)
12 almonds (peeled and cut in leaves)
1 glass of port wine (red)

4.1 Portuguese Style Chicken

This recipe of "Portuguese style chicken" was published in a cookbook of the *Mitenand*-initiative in Switzerland in 1981 (Berner Komitee, 1981, p. 23). "*Mitenand*" means "together" respectively "with each other" in Swiss-German dialect. The civil rights coalition was founded in 1974 and existed until the end of the 1980s. Sharing food was part of lived solidarity within the immigrant solidarity movement (Espahangizi, 2018a). The cookbook gathered recipes from women of different national backgrounds who had participated in language classes organized by activists of the *Contact Point for Foreigners and Swiss in Bern* and the ECAP, an adult education institution founded by members of the Italian trade union CGIL in Switzerland. The publication included short texts on immigration issues, biographical accounts of immigrants, political poems, photographs, and cartoons. The *Mitenand-Cookbook* was a tool for political campaigning as well as a product of the micro-practices of conviviality emerging in the everyday life of the movement. From today's viewpoint, the culinary exchange documented in the *Mitenand-Cookbook* seems to be a good example for the historical emergence of intercultural practices in Switzerland in the early 1980s. But when we browse through the cookbook, one thing strikes the eye: The word "culture" does not appear once, nor any of its cognates. For readers of today

who are used to employing *culture* as a *passe-partout* category to talk about conviviality in immigration societies, the lack of explicit references to the inter/multi/cultural dimension in this culinary encounter is rather surprising. It is even more so if we consider the widespread perception of food as a facilitator and epitome of (multi)cultural or ethnic diversity (Bellofatto, 2017).

The notion of (multi)cultural or ethnic diversity has played an important role in international scholarly debates on immigration since the 1960s. Diversity approaches provide a useful framework in order to analyse and describe the transformations of societies like Switzerland in the face of immigration and globalization (Faist, 2009; Vertovec, 2017). There is, however, a major methodological challenge: As Sara Ahmed (2007, 2012) and others have shown, the "language of diversity" is not simply descriptive. Claiming (multi)cultural or ethnic diversity is itself a political strategy that plays a constitutive role within the history of the societal transformations that are being analysed (Lentin & Titley, 2011; Chin, 2017). The epistemological difficulties that arise from the historical co-emergence of concept and object of analysis cannot be entirely resolved, but they can be taken into account. One way to do that is by historicizing the mutually constitutive interaction between social and discursive change that has led to this challenging situation in the analysis of cultural diversity today. In order to develop such a reflexive historical perspective, it is helpful to distinguish between different social processes of pluralization due to immigration and practices, discourses, and projects that emerge *in relation* to these social processes and underlying demographic shifts. This strict analytical distinction between "hard" social dynamics on the one hand and discursive processes of collective sense-making on the other hand is something of an ideal type, of course. Yet it highlights the historical contingency of the different interpretative frameworks that have been mobilized in order to make sense or make claims with regard to ongoing social processes of pluralization due to immigration. The *Mitenand-Cookbook*, for example, reminds us of the historicity of culturalist perspectives. Obviously not too long ago, in this particular historical context, people talked about social processes of what I shall call *postmigrant conviviality,* without presupposing any categories of *inter/multi/culture*.[78] History shows that it is possible to describe the same material practice—in this case the cooking of food— as an act of solidarity in one context and as an act of a cultural encounter in another. The socio-political effects and consequences of this interpretative framework may vary, but the meal will most probably taste the same, figuratively speaking. My notion of postmigrant conviviality tries to grasp this historically contingent relation between the material dimension of social practices that follow immigration and their respective interpretative frameworks. Academic perspectives play an important

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[78] This composite notion tries to bring together the debates on postmigrant societies in a German-speaking context (Foroutan, 2016; Espahangizi, 2018b) and Paul Gilroy's (2004) reflections on convivial culture.

role for the way postmigrant conviviality has been framed, analysed, managed and governed throughout the 20th century. It will, therefore, be crucial to keep an eye on the various knowledge claims that come into play with regard to immigration over the course of time.

In my paper, I depart from the contrast between today's ubiquity of "culture" and its striking absence in the *Mitenand-Cookbook*. Instead, I will ask: How did "culture" become the key signifier with regard to immigration and integration since the 1980s in Switzerland? What are the historical conditions and consequences of this shift? Is the assumption that there was a "cultural turn" true in the first place, and if so with regard to which societal contexts? In order to tackle these questions, in a first step I will look at the histories of the *Mitenand*-movement and Swiss refugee aid projects. Comparing both these cases will help us to understand how different projects of postmigrant conviviality involved (or did not involve) categories, semantics, and arguments of cultural difference and cultural diversity with regard to the ongoing social processes of pluralization through immigration. In a second step, I will analyse the relation of these projects to public and academic discourses on cultural diversity at this time. Since the foundation of the Swiss nation-state in the mid-19th century, cultural diversity, or more specifically regional multilingualism, is a basic pillar of Swiss national identity. It will be interesting to see how immigration fits into this picture. The public and academic debates that preceded the 700-year anniversary of the Swiss Federation in 1991, as well as the public controversies on the notion of "multicultural society" in the early 1990s, both provide an empirical lens through which to analyse the relation between the two different notions of cultural diversity in Switzerland: the traditional four language regions on the one hand and the "ethnic diversity" of the immigrants on the other.

4.2 The Mitenand-Movement—Solidarity, Equality and Integration

The *Mitenand*-movement—called Être *solidaire* in the French-speaking and *Essere solidali* in the Italian-speaking regions of Switzerland—was initiated by the Swiss Catholic workers' and employees' association in 1974. In the decades after World War II, hundreds of thousands of so-called "foreign workers", mostly from Italy and other Mediterranean countries, had come to Switzerland in order to work in factories and workshops, hotels and restaurants, in fields and on construction sites. These seasonal and annual workers fuelled the economic growth of the boom period and contributed significantly to the wealth of Swiss society, but they were not supposed to settle or bring their families (Tanner, 2015, pp. 338–343). In the mid 1960s, anti-immigration voices started to mobilize, and they were able to gain a significant influence on public opinion, politics and state administration until the early 1970s (Skenderovic & D'Amato, 2008). The *Mitenand*-initiative tried to counter this development with a

nation-wide civil coalition of solidarity with the "foreign workers".[79] The movement brought together a broad range of organizations and individuals, from the churches to the radical left, who wanted to take a stand in defence of legal reform and a "more humane" immigration system.

In April 1981, the national referendum on this legal initiative was rejected with over 80% of the votes. In spite of the clear defeat at the polls, the *Mitenand*-movement continued until the late 1980s. Its nation-wide network of activists, work groups, and local projects played an active role in establishing a more inclusive perspective on immigration in Switzerland. Both Swiss citizens and foreigners engaged in micro-practices of postmigrant conviviality: organizing events together, sharing food, music, folklore, stories and recreational activities, such as the "abundant and creative Pick-Nick as it is common in countries of the South" (Franzini, 1988).[80] The *Mitenand-Cookbook* was a product of these new practices in the life-world of the movement. There are more examples of this same phenomenon: Already in the mid 1970s, the new left party POCH (Progressive Organizations of Switzerland) that supported the *Mitenand*-initiative had started to organize "popular festivals" together with immigrant communist "comrades" from Spain, Italy and Chile. Events such as *Volksfäscht / Festa Populare / Fiesta Popular* in Zurich and *Unser Fescht / Nostra Festa / Nuestra Fiesta* in Basel were hugely successful in celebrating the "solidarity between Swiss and foreigners". Each year, throughout the late 1970s and the 1980s, these two festivals alone were able to attract thousands of visitors with a "colourful mix of booths, music and delicious smells from the kitchen," with performances, dance, film, theatre, poetry, political discussions, flea markets, and tombolas (Bloesch, 1978). In the mid 1970s, the gastronomic "specialties" offered at these festivals ranged from "risotto, pizza, lasagna, calamares, gambas, meat skewers" to "sangria, wine, and beer". This culinary variety mirrored the Mediterranean origins of the immigrant comrades (Advertisement, 1977). In the course of time, most of these "foreign" dishes and many others, bit by bit, would enter into Swiss cuisine.[81]

These kinds of events were popular not only among the leftist activists but also in the liberal and church contexts of the *Mitenand*-movement. In 1978, "culinary specialties from different countries" and "folkloric performances" were offered on the ten-year anniversary celebration of the *Contact Point for Foreigners and Swiss in Zurich*, a local association that was an important member of the *Mitenand*-coalition (Zürcher

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79 On the broader context of the movement, see Haug (1980).

80 See also the film documentary *Meine Eltern haben den C-Ausweis* of Eduard Winiger (1982), on the life of the children of foreign workers in Switzerland. In one scene the Swiss teacher visits the family of one of his teenage students in South Italy during the summer holiday and joins a family picnic (Espahangizi 2019a).

81 The "*Betty Bossi*" cookbooks that populated Swiss households since the 1970s are a good indicator of this process of culinary integration. The *Betty Bossi* cookbook on "Italian cuisine" from 1987 was a huge success. See also Bellofatto (2017).

Figure 4.1: Announcement of a Popular Festival for Immigrant Solidarity in the 1970s in Switzerland

Figure 4.2: Announcement of a Popular Festival for Immigrant Solidarity in the 1970s in Switzerland

Note. *PZ-Wochenzeitung der Progressiven Organisationen der Schweiz* (POCH), 7(22), June 16, 1977, 3&4 [Party newspaper]. Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv [Swiss Social Archives] (Z563/1977), Zurich, Switzerland.

Figure 4.3: Nostra Festa: Three Awesome Days!

Note. *PZ-Wochenzeitung der Progressiven Organisationen der Schweiz* (POCH), 8(23), June 22, 1978, 3 [Party newspaper]. Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv [Swiss Social Archives] (Z563/1978), Zurich, Switzerland.

Kontaktstelle, 1978). The same was true for the first national rally of the *Mitenand*-movement on October, 28 1978 with over 3000 participants on the place in front of the Swiss federal parliament in Bern.[82]

New social spaces and formats of conviviality between Swiss people and foreigners emerged within the *Mitenand*-movement. "Folkloric" practices such as sharing music, food, etc. played an important role. This experience of solidarity was accompanied by a certain awareness for the "different ideas and perceptions" of "the representatives of different countries" that could eventually present a challenge to (Bloesch, 1978). But then again, as in the cookbook, these things were not explicitly framed as cultural issues. The political language of the *Mitenand*-movement was based on the semantics of solidarity, equality, and human rights rather than cultural difference, diversity, or the like. The very name of the campaign, as well its iconography, were based on the idea of a solidarity-related but nonetheless asymmetric (and gendered) relation between two legally (not culturally) defined groups: "[T]he Swiss" on the one hand and "the foreigners" on the other were literally upholding the banner of social

Figure 4.4: Cover of the Mitenand-Cookbook, 1980

Note. Berner Komitee zur Unterstützung der Mitenand-Initiative. (1981). *E Guete! Buon appetito! Rezepte aus Italien, Spanien, Portugal, Griechenland, Türkei und Jugoslawien*. Copy in possession of author.

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82 A report on this event in the *Mitenand*-circular even refers explicitly to the "cultural performances of the emigrants" and the general "cultural diversity" of the rally R. G. (1978).

justice "together". The political project of *Mitenand* was also based on the discursive framework and narrative telos of the integration of foreign workers into Swiss society that had been going on since the mid 1960s (Espahangizi, 2019b).

4.3 The Sociology of the Integration of Foreign Workers

In the course of the 1960s, longer-term immigration of a foreign workforce turned out to be not only a necessity for the Swiss economy but also a social reality that could no longer be ignored. The rotational model of guest worker migration, widespread in booming industrialized countries at that time, came under pressure. Various Swiss organs of state as well as many other societal actors started to face the so-called "problem of the foreign workers" (Espahangizi, 2019b). The various parties that were involved in these public debates had very different interests and political views, but they all started from the same basic question: How should the foreign workers and their families who would stay in Switzerland be incorporated into the society? The possible answers to this question differed widely, ranging from repressive assimilationism and subordination to what sociologists in Switzerland started to call structural integration. The spokesmen of the rising anti-immigration movement mobilized successfully against the alleged "overforeignization" of Switzerland. They emphasized cultural differences from the foreign workers as a major obstacle to total assimilation, and they had the advantage of being able to draw on ideas that already had been established in Switzerland in the early 20th century (Kury, 2003; Argast, 2007). This is why even beyond the ranks of the anti-immigration movement, concerns about cultural assimilation were widespread: in the public discourse, in state institutions such as the police for foreigners (*Fremdenpolizei*) and the Federal Commission for Foreigners (EKA, 1979) as well as in many other contexts.[83]

More liberal voices, however, started to emphasize the priority of structural integration, focusing on the legal and educational system, the housing market, and so on. Their turn away from culture as the main framework to think and talk about immigration was closely related to the rise of sociology at the Swiss universities (Espahangizi, 2019b). The sociological institute at the University of Zurich, and especially Hans-Joachim Hoffmann-Nowotny's (1973) *Sociology of the Foreign Worker Problem*, played an important role for the academic elaboration of this structuralist perspective on integration in Switzerland. Seen from this angle, integration more than anything meant opening the structures of Swiss society to immigrants. Cultural differences

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[83] Various representatives of Swiss folklore studies (*Volkskunde*) participated in the public debates on foreign workers in the 1960s and held a liberal view with regard to immigration. They would frame the "incorporation" of immigrants as a "socio-cultural" process, on which see most importantly Rudolf Weiss, Arnold Niederer (1967) and Rudolf Braun (1970). See also Kuhn (2015).

between the Swiss and the foreigners were considered negligible or at least secondary. They were expected to become more and more irrelevant in the course of the process of integration.[84] In the late 1960s, a growing network of initiatives, associations and individuals, especially in the context of the Swiss churches but also in the foreign worker organizations, took up this new "sociologic" of integration and distanced themselves from the rhetoric of the anti-immigration movement and the Swiss Federal Aliens Police on the need for hard cultural assimilation (Espahangizi, 2017; 2019).[85] In addition, these initiatives promoted direct communication, exchange, and cooperation between the Swiss citizens and the immigrants. Values of Christian brotherly love, liberal humanism, leftist solidarity, and sociological objectivity towards the "foreigners" converged in this new concept of integration and prepared the ground for the *Mitenand*-movement. Against this historical background, it becomes clear why cultural arguments or references to cultural differences would not play a crucial role for the *Mitenand*-initiative. Yet there was one political claim in the "white book" of the movement that involved a culturalist argument: *Mitenand* rejected the idea of a total assimilation of foreigners and defended their right to structural integration without being forced to abandon their "cultural identity" (Arbeitsgruppe Mitenand, 1979, p. 41). This reference to cultural pluralism was, however, far from elaborated. Compared to the "ethnic revival" (Smith, 1981) and contemporaneous developments with regard to ethnic minorities in other countries such as the US, Canada and the UK (see e.g. Glazer & Moynihan, 1964), it played only a minor role for the general outlook of the Swiss movement. One important exception were the debates on the children of the foreign workers, who represented the so-called "second generation" (Jain, 2018).

In the 1950s, the developmental psychologist Erik H. Erikson developed the notion of "identity crisis" which was also closely related to the idea of cultural "uprooting". His work had a huge impact on international academic debates and also shaped the perception of immigrant adolescents in Switzerland (see e.g., Hurst, 1974). Erikson's own experience as a Jewish refugee in the US had served as an important reference point for his conceptual approach. There was, hence, a close conceptual link between ego-psychology and migration studies after World War II (Erikson, 1959). In the 1970s, various actors and institutions started to become interested in the life-world of the "foreign child," who seemed to be stuck in a "traumatic worldview" (Erikson, 1959, p. 27) between two cultures and two options: staying or returning home (Jain, 2018). The Federal Commission for Foreigners published an influential report on "second

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84 There were also sociologists that criticized the neglecting of certain cultural aspects, like for example Willi (1974).

85 This scientific impact was not always explicit or visible. Some works were influenced by foreign workers' sociology without referring to it, such as the publication *Basta! Fremdarbeiter in den 80er Jahren. Ein Lesebuch* [Enough! Foreign Workers in the 80s. A Reading Book] of the leftist A*uthors group for a progressive immigration policy* (Autorengruppe für eine fortschrittliche Ausländerpolitik, 1980), which was close to the *Mitenand*-movement.

generation foreigners" that supported this "cultural identity"-centred perspective (EKA, 1980). In accordance with the pedagogical and psychological state of the art, the recommendations of the Federal Commission and not least the demands of the parents who planned to return to their home countries and who feared the cultural alienation of their children, Swiss school authorities in the 1980s started to introduce special courses to "enroot" the foreign children in their "native language and culture" (Steiner-Khamsi, 1988). It was in this context that social research on the second generation (Hoffmann-Nowotny, 1985) and also first explicitly "intercultural" approaches took hold in Switzerland, in close exchange with international debates and initiatives especially on the European level during the 1980s (Steiner-Khamsi, 1995). One could conclude that the debates on the second generation contributed to the convergence of immigration debates and ideas of cultural identity and difference.[86]

In the 1980s, the general perception of postmigrant conviviality changed. In those contexts that pursued projects of immigrant integration, new interpretative frameworks of cultural difference and cultural identity gained importance. In 1988—when the *Mitenand*-movement was drawing to an end—one activist looked back on ten years of personal engagement. His recollection of the experiences of postmigrant conviviality within his local activist group bears witness to the culturalist shift in perception. The notion of cultural difference played a key role in structuring his memories and reformatting the past:

> After the party—it had struck midnight—all the members of the *Mitenand* group sat down together at a big table, eating the leftovers, drinking wine, delighted by the great success of the event, and singing songs from different countries. I remember when I came home that night and went to bed happily. I had come in contact with foreigners. I wanted to know more about them. Therefore, I joined the "*Mitenand* group" which is still active after ten years. The many experiences in this group shaped my attitude towards foreigners. ... We learned that every culture has its characteristics that have to be respected, which requires great openness on our side. (Franzini, 1988)

In order to understand this change in the perception of postmigrant conviviality, it has to be seen in the broader historical context, especially with regard to the changing relation of labour migration and the reception of refugees in Switzerland.

4.4 Cultural Encounters in Swiss Refugee Aid

When the *Mitenand*-initiative was finally put to the vote in 1981, the focus of the public debates had already started to shift from the ongoing incorporation of the mostly European foreign workers and their families to the growing number of non-European refugees. This process started in the late 1970s, when several thousands of refugees

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86 The *Mitenand*-Bulletin dedicated this topic an issue in September 1983 (No. 28).

from Indochina were brought to Switzerland. The willingness among the Swiss population to host and help the mostly Vietnamese refugees was initially high.[87] The government approved further contingents of refugees until the humanitarian enthusiasm of the Swiss with regard to the "boat people" waned in the early 1980s. The *Swiss Refugee Aid* [Schweizerische Zentralstelle für Flüchtlingshilfe SZF, renamed in 1991 to Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe SFH], an umbrella organization of various humanitarian organizations involved in refugee aid, held an official state mandate to organize the transfer and accommodation of the refugees. In 1979, the refugee aid organizations implemented a new approach that aimed at a quick integration of the Indochina refugees into local communities after only three months in reception centers[88] (Karlen, 2018). They adapted the integration approach of the civil disobedience initiative "*Freiplatzaktion*" (Shelter action), that had helped and hosted refugees from Chile against the will of the Swiss state and not forgetting the established refugee aid organizations in the mid 1970s.[89] The leftist, often even communist, Chilean activists who had to flee their country after the violent overthrow of President Salvador Allende in 1973 did not exactly fit into the humanitarian scheme of the Swiss during the Cold War. In the case of the refugees from Indochina, however, hundreds, especially in the context of church congregations, volunteered for so-called support groups [Betreuungsgruppen]. At least in the beginning of the so-called "*Indochina Aktion*" there were more volunteers for support groups than refugees.

Professional social workers accompanied the support groups and the local integration process of the refugees (Karlen, 1980a). In order to guarantee a systematic exchange of experiences between the volunteers, to learn about the needs of the support groups, to discuss the situation of refugee care, and to provide collective supervision, Swiss church aid organizations such as the Protestant HEKS and the Catholic Caritas held several meetings in 1980 and 1981 (Karlen, 1983). The memoranda of the meeting documents show that the participants demanded more background information about the refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos (Spurgruppe Basel, 1981). In order to be able to provide support, volunteers, social workers and others involved in refugee integration felt that they needed to know more about these foreign cultures. This demand was based on the common idea within these groups, as well as among the public, that the Swiss had to "respect the otherness" of the refugees and help them to "maintain their cultural identity" in order to guarantee a healthy process of "psycho-social integration" (Bienz, 1978). The integration of foreign workers in the 1970s had mainly been perceived as a legal and sociological

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87 On the broad solidarity movement for Vietnam in the late 1960s, see Kuhn (2011).

88 Rudolf Karlen was the public relations officer of the Swiss refugee aid organization HEKS at that time. See also Karlen (1980b) and SGP (1979).

89 Rudolf Karlen had also been a member of the *Freiplatzaktion für Chile-Flüchtlinge* in Biel together with his wife (Karlen, 2018).

problem. Refugee aid contexts in contrast tended to draw on psychiatric approaches since the end of World War II. In Switzerland, the first comprehensive study on the mental health of refugees, in this case from Hungary and Czechoslovakia, was made in the 1960s (Pintér, 1969).[90] Again Erikson's (1959) psychological concepts of identity crisis and cultural "uprootedness," as well as the focus on the potentially traumatic effects of migration experiences, provided a persuasive interpretative framework.[91] The letters of Ton That Ba, a Vietnamese refugee, that addressed the Swiss volunteers and social workers indicate that refugees shared this view. Two of these letters were first published in the refugee newspaper called *Huong-Que* [The scent of home], which was supported by Swiss Refugee Aid until 1979, and then translated for Swiss newspapers (Ton, 1981). Very cautiously, the author hinted at the ambiguity of the unequal encounter between the Swiss and the refugees, trying to give insight into the Vietnamese "mentality":

> We Vietnamese are rather introverted, that means we can hardly express or feelings and emotions. We hardly let out great joy or deep sadness. This is why our helpers sometimes get the impression that we are not grateful. But, on the contrary, we are. A deep gratitude fills our heart. … We are not yet able to communicate well in your language and ask you devoutly to be patient with us and try to understand us. We have become homeless and this fact pains us every day anew. Our helpers focus on satisfying our material needs like food, clothes and housing. With that, our existence as refugees is secured. But what we need above all is your understanding, not your compassion and charity. … We only ask for one big favor: please show consideration for the needs of our souls. (Ton, 1980)

Due to this urgent demand from "both sides" for understanding, the Swiss church aid organizations organized a series of conventions in different cantons on "Cultural Encounter and Integration". The programme of these conventions in Zurich, Berne, St. Gallen, Chur, Windisch, Olten, and Basel, as well as the final publication, included sessions on the history and culture of South Asia, on "Expectations and the Integration Process," on the "Togetherness of Different Cultures" as well as slots for the feedback of both groups, the Swiss as well as the Indochina refugees (HEKS, 1981). The experiences of Tibetan refugees who had come to Switzerland in the 1960s were used as a reference point in order to understand the new Asian refugees (Karlen, 2018).[92]

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90 There were already psychiatric approaches to the "problem of foreign workers" in the 1960s, but they did not gain much influence among integrationists at that time. See Villa (1960) as well as Risso and Böker (1964). For later studies on traumatization in foreign worker families would rediscover these publications, see Frigerio Martina and Merhar (2004). For a broader international perspective on migration, ethnicity, and mental health, see McCarthy and Coleborne (2012).

91 On the historical rise of trauma as an interpretative framework in 20th century, with a particular focus on refugees, see Fassin and Rechtman (2009).

92 See also the text of Gyaltsen Gyaltag, a Tibetan refugee and later ambassador of the Dalai Lama in Switzerland, in the publication on *Asian refugees in Switzerland* (Huber, 1984) as well as Ott-Marti (1980).

A newspaper report on these conventions concluded:

> Every process of integration changes the parties that are involved. The convention showed very clearly that we, the Swiss, have to be open for an unprejudiced dialogue with the strangers. The aim cannot be for the refugees to abandon their otherness and assimilate. (B.A., 1981)

And in fact, the protocols of the refugee aid organizations indicate that both the volunteers in the support groups as well as the refugees accepted and engaged in the transformative social script of this "cultural encounter". This specifically culture-specific form of postmigrant conviviality was, of course, not immune to tensions. On the Swiss side, it oscillated between a tendency to patronize (Swiss Refugee Aid, 1981)[93] and infantilize the "always smiling" (Deutschstunde, 1979; HEKS & Caritas Zürich, 1982, pp. 21–22) South-Asian refugees, and a sincere respect and interest for their foreign culture. The refugees on the other side felt gratitude but also discomfort to meet the expectations of the Swiss hosts and had a feeling being in constant need (HEKS & Caritas Zürich, 1982, p. 7). They were also aware of their rather privileged
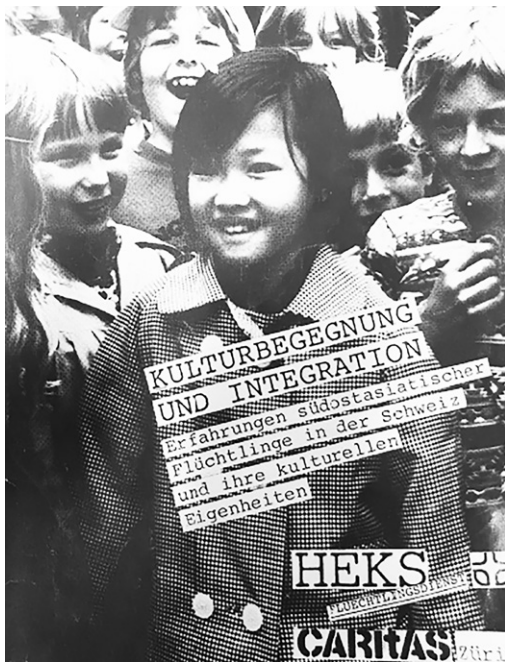
Figure 4.5: Cultural encounter and integration in Swiss refugee aid in the 1980s

Note. HEKS & Caritas Zürich (1982), cover picture.

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93 Such patronizing attitudes were common in the context of budget planning of the refugee household (Karlen, 2018).

position as officially accepted refugees in comparison to the "foreign workers" that they met in everyday life (HEKS & Caritas Zürich, 1982, p. 9).

This cultural dimension served as an explicit and overarching discursive framework for postmigrant conviviality in refugee aid contexts, in contrast to the *Mitenand*-movement at the same time. It is important to keep in mind that there was some overlap, but in general the social basis of both contexts—established humanitarian organizations and their volunteers on the one hand and a political grassroot movement on the other hand—were far from altogether congruous. It fits into the picture that the culturalist perspective of the refugee aid resonated more with the mainstream public discourse in the media.[94] Newspaper articles oscillated between pessimistic assessments of the "cultural uprooting" of the refugees, exotic accounts—for example on Cambodian spring festivities in Swiss city halls—and more optimistic visions of a successful overcoming of cultural differences (Wigdorovits, 1980). In general, the cultural factor gained significance compared to the earlier debates on foreign worker integration. The humanitarian aid organizations, psycho-social services, and the Swiss public took a strong interest in the cultural identity of the refugees not only from Indochina but also from various other non-European countries, who started to come in growing numbers.

In the early 1980s, other groups of refugees, mostly from Sri Lanka and Turkey, started to arrive on their own initiative without being part of an officially admitted humanitarian contingent. For the first time since the economic crisis in the mid 1970s, the rate of foreigners started to raise again—a statistical turning point that was duly noted by the Swiss public. Unfortunately for the *Mitenand*-initiative this happened shortly before the vote in 1981 (Bundesrat, 1981). These new groups of refugees did not receive the same welcoming offer of integration and good will from the Swiss population as did those from Indochina. The racialized idea of a problematic assimilation of immigrants from more distant "cultural spheres" had existed throughout the 20th century in Switzerland (Kury, 2003). It gained a new character and popularity with the arrival of the so-called "asylum seekers" from Asian and African countries. In the media, this derogatory label started to replace the humanitarian term "refugee", the status of which was protected by international law. Right-wing populists capitalized on this development through-out the 1980s, and they were able to mobilize a new wave of anti-immigration sentiments and racism against "false" asylum seekers and a presumably all too "liberal" asylum law and emerging pro-asylum movement (Skenderovic & D'Amato, 2008).

In the media, the presence of these "new immigrants" in Switzerland was predominantly framed as a problematic clash of cultures rather than an open-hearted

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94 See the newspaper articles in the documentation on Indochina refugees in Sachdokumentationen (ZA 69.0), Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv [Swiss Social Archives], Zurich, Switzerland.

cultural encounter.[95] Experts were needed to make sense of the situation. In the mid 1980s, the refugee aid associations set up a so-called "Tamil study" (HEKS, 1984)—an ambitious and multidisciplinary research project in order to assess the chances of returning the Tamil refugees to their homeland, and only as an issue of secondary importance to assess the prospects of their staying in Switzerland. Instead of asking sociologists as had been done in earlier cases,[96] ethnologists were now invited to contribute to this NGO research project by studying the "socio-cultural background" of the Tamil refugees in Switzerland. One of the conclusions of the researchers from the University of Berne was that intermediaries were urgently needed in order to deal with the situation of the Tamil refugees in Switzerland, and ethnologists could be helpful in providing this service (Wicker, 1984). Not only in Switzerland, but also elsewhere, ethnologists started to challenge the sociologists as the primary scientific consultants for immigration issues. Ethnological expertise on non-European "foreign cultures" applied to immigrants in Europe was in demand.[97] This looming changing of the guard was part of a broader transformation of discourses on culture in the 1980s. It is beyond the scope of this paper to sketch the history of this process that affected a wide range of societal contexts, as well as both public and expert discourses. It makes sense, however, to hint at a few aspects that can help to understand the specific situation with regard to inclusion-oriented contexts in Switzerland.

One driving factor that put "culture" back on the political agenda in Switzerland at the beginning of the 1980s was the "youth movement". Their turn to "cultural politics" affected new left and liberal activists as well as academic contexts (Zutavern, 2016). Attracted by the ground-breaking work of British cultural studies and ethnologists like Clifford Geertz and Claude Lévi-Strauss, young students who would have chosen sociology in the 1970s started to turn to ethnography, to cultures instead of social structures (Nigg, 2015; Erdheim, 2015). The new anthropological notion of culture "with a little c"—dynamic, complex, and popular—challenged the established Herderian notion of Culture "with a Big C", which was perceived as monolithic, immutable, and politically conservative.[98] In the 1980s, culture turned into an interpretative framework that appealed to Marxists in Switzerland. In 1983, the POCH renamed their party's main institution and called it the Weekly Newspaper for Politics *and Culture*. Moreover, in the early 1980s, Zurich was an important center for "ethnopsychoanalysis", which had merged ethnological and psychological approaches

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95 On the figure of "new immigrants" in migration historiography, see Lucassen (2005).

96 In 1981, the *Swiss Refugee Aid* (SZF/SFH) asked sociologists of the University of Zurich to study the integration of the Asian refugee and their support groups. See the correspondence between fall 1981 and fall 1982 (SFH Papers)

97 For a critical perspective on this shift to ethnology, see Meillassoux (1980).

98 Hans-Rudolf Wicker (1996), who provided the mentioned ethnographical study on Tamils in Switzerland for the refugee aid organizations in the mid 1980s, would reflect on this historical change of the notion of culture a couple of years later.

into a new critical practice since the 1950s (Krüger, 2016). Swiss students learned to reverse their ethnographic gaze and analyse their own society, specifically their own "ethnicity" (Parin, 1980)—a terminology that became more and more current in German at that time.[99] The relation between *the Self* and *the Other*, *cultural identity*, and *alterity* became an influential topos in debates on immigration throughout the 1980s and 1990s and across political and ideological camps. At the same time and as in other Western countries, immigration to Switzerland became increasingly more global and more plural with regard to countries of origin and forms of migration. Both these developments, demographic and discursive, converged in the debates on "ethnic diversity" and "multicultural societies" that developed in Switzerland in the 1980s, for example in the context of the so-called *Day of the Refugee*.

4.5 The Day of the Refugee—From Cultural Encounters to Ethnic Diversity

Following the suggestion of the refugee aid organizations, the Swiss government declared June 21, 1980 to be the first Day of the Refugee (HEKS, 1980). The aim of the event was to provide more information to Swiss citizens about the situation of refugees and to create an opportunity for them to get to know "each other". In Basel and other cities, the refugee aid organizations invited various old and new refugee groups to organize fairs with booths and folkloric performances—including Hungarians, Czechs, and Tibetans who had arrived in the 1950s and 1960s, and Chileans and South-Asians who had arrived since the 1970s. The Swiss visitors were invited to learn about the situation of different refugee groups, and they were able to obtain a better overview of a whole variety of "ethnic" backgrounds. The locals could learn about the "culture" of the various refugee groups by trying their food—Hungarian Goulash, Vietnamese tea, South-American Empanadas, and so forth—and by watching folk dances from different parts of the world. The political semantics of solidarity faded into the background, unless it was brought up by the refugees themselves—sometimes against the will of the organizers, as in the case of leftist Chilean refugees (Plüss, 1980). Other refugee groups, such as those who had fled communist repression, were less rebellious and less interested in politicizing this set-up. The whole fair—a format which would be repeated all over the country in the following years—was designed as an explicit setting and infrastructure not only for contact but for "cultural encounters", between Swiss people and the different groups of refugees, and also among these groups themselves. More than that, the spatial arrangement

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99 Mario Erdheim (1988), who taught at the University of Zurich in the 1980s, provided the personal link between the ethnological institute and the private ethnopsychoanalytical practice of Paul Parin and Goldy Parin-Matthèy. For a critical position on the spread of the ethnological gaze on the topic migration, see Radtke (1996).

of the fair with its juxtaposition of the ethnic booths materialized and performed the idea of a diversity of "foreign cultures" in Switzerland. From a more critical perspective, this foreign diversity seemed to be a mere "muddle", not only on the fair but in daily life too (Mangold, 1982).

The organizers of the *Day of the Refugee* asked the Swiss artist Thomas Blank to represent the process of integration of the various "ethnic groups" into Swiss society (HEL, 1980). His chrome steel sculpture was called *INTEGRATION*, but it did not answer the question that seemed to become more and more urgent until the late 1980s: Would the foreign ethnic groups finally acculturate and disappear during this process of integration, or would they constitute a new cultural diversity within Switzerland? How would this cultural diversity of foreigners that materialized in new practices as well as in explicit discourse during the 1980s relate to the traditional notion of cultural diversity in Switzerland, which was based on regional multilingualism?[100] Both the academic and public debates on "national identity" that emerged with regard to the 700-year anniversary of the Swiss Federation in 1991 provide an empirical lens through which to study the changing relation of these two forms of diversity in Switzerland, the traditional four language regions on the one hand and the "ethnic diversity" of the immigrants on the other.

4.6 Cultural Diversity and National Identity in Switzerland—A Research Programme

> How does this [modernization] relate to cultural diversity and national identity? The homogenization, universalization and levelling that comes with this social change threatens the cultural diversity, the inner diversity of Switzerland and the Swiss identity with regard to the exterior, global diversity. ... The accelerated social change is a transnational phenomenon. Switzerland, however, is particularly affected by it. It attacks its structures and corrodes its substance. (Kreis, 1986, p. 3)

These introductory remarks from the first newsletter of the *National Research Programme 21*, "Cultural Diversity and National Identity" indicate a certain destabilization with regard to the ideational pillars Swiss society in the mid 1980s. Structural changes not only in the mode of production of capitalism and the global conflicts of the Cold War era, but also social movements in Switzerland such as the already mentioned uprising of the youth and their claim of a political as well as cultural rebellion in the early 1980s, all contributed to this sense of incertitude (Tanner, 2015, pp. 420–428). In the mid 1970s, the Swiss state introduced so-called *National Research Programmes*

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[100] For an early reflection on this issue in the context of refugee aid, see the postscript of the Swiss Buddhist monk Roland Steffan in HEKS & Caritas Zürich (1982, pp. 55–58).

Figure 4.6: Day of the Refugee, June 16, 1982

Figure 4.7: Day of the Refugee, June 16, 1982

Note. HEKS Papers (J2.233-01#2004/464#237* / 2.990.12.1), Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv [Swiss Federal Archives], Bern, Switzerland.

Figure 4.8: Integration and ethnic diversity, 1982

Note. HEKS Papers (J2.233-01#2004/464#235* / 2.990.1.19), Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv [Swiss Federal Archives], Bern, Switzerland.

[Nationale Forschungsprogamme NFP] in order to tackle urgent problems of national importance from a multidisciplinary perspective and to provide academic solutions to them. With the "700-year anniversary" of the *Eidgenossenschaft* [Swiss confederation] in 1991 on the horizon, the Swiss government decided to fund the NFP21 in order to understand the changing role of cultural diversity in Swiss national identity in a modernizing and globalizing world. Surprisingly, at least from the view of today, immigration-related pluralization did not play a relevant role in the general outlook of the research programme. Only two out of more than forty individual research projects dealt with the "integration of foreigners" and the questions of "naturalization and cultural pluralism" (NFP21, 1991). In the NFP research programme, cultural diversity primarily referred to the four linguistic regions and the different religious denominations in Switzerland. It was based on the foundations of federalism and direct democracy and it focussed on the particular national identity of Switzerland in relation to other countries. For this reason, the diverse Swiss nation gained inner unity against the environment of external diversity. This idea of cultural diversity as a pillar of Swiss national identity can be traced back to the modern constitution of 1848, but it had been renegotiated and reinvented in the era of nationalist awakening in the 20th century, including the so-called "*Geistige Landesverteidigung*" [spiritual/ intellectual national defence]. Between the 1930s and the 1960s, "unity in diversity" turned into the "vital law" of a national body that felt the strong need to demarcate its boundaries and define its identity against all external powers. The national defence aimed in two directions: closure against the surrounding foreign countries but also closure against forms of social heterogeneity within the country that did not fit in with this cleansed image of the Swiss nation. The ideological exaltation of linguistic and regional diversity went hand in hand with the exclusion of unwanted groups such as "the Jews, the vagrants, the eugenically unwanted" (Germann, 2013, p. 94). The historical context and social groups that represented externalized heterogeneity within Swiss society had changed in the 1980s, but the double structure of the diversity, as I would call it, continued to shape thought, practice, and institutions, for example in the programme NFP21.

The national research programme NFP21 departed from the assumption that the precarious relationship between inner and exterior cultural diversity was at risk due to processes of homogenizing modernization and globalization. Against the backdrop of these powerful and large forces, immigration was not yet considered to be a relevant factor. It was not before the late 1980s when the topic of immigration and "ethnic diversity" started to play a more prominent role in the context of the research programme. The NFP21 periodical of June 1988 published a series of papers on this topic. They all reaffirmed and reproduced the double structure of the discourse on Swiss diversity. The national cultural diversity was perceived as being strictly separate from the "diversity of ethnic minorities"—the title of a workshop of the Swiss UNESCO commission in Lucerne in April 1988, in which various NFP21 members participated (NFP21, 1988). Seen from this perspective, the Swiss had to be "rooted" in

their own diverse culture in order to be able to deal with the cultural diversity of the "strange and different people" that were coming to Switzerland (Arend, 1988, p. 9). The idea of two separate diversities can also be found in the papers of the *Mitenand*-movement that was coming to the end at that time:

> The origins of the foreigners in Switzerland are as different as their cultural backgrounds. They bring their culture and want to live in our country. The cultural influences from the outside on the diversity of cultures in Switzerland are not only negative. They are not so great so that the Swiss cultural identity could become lost. On the contrary, one can justifiably talk of a cultural enrichment of Switzerland (Sozialinstitut der KAB, 1988).

The notion of cultural enrichment created a new, positively connoted channel of communication between the two cultural diversities in the late 1980s, opposing the widespread fear of a cultural threat. Yet, it reaffirmed the underlying distinction of the cultural Self and the Other. Around 1990, public controversies on the notion of the "multicultural society" enforced this bipolar logic of diversity: Swiss vs. foreign, and cultural enrichment vs. cultural threat.

4.7 The Multicultural Society—A Contested Concept

In July 1991, the historian and director of the NFP21 Georg Kreis published a short text on "The Multicultural Challenge" in which he explicitly reflected on the relation of both forms of diversity in Switzerland. As he wrote,

> because of our own traditional multiculturalism, we have not been very attentive to the new multiculturalism. The old form of cultural diversity does not give us any competence in dealing with the newer version. But the other way around, dealing with the new diversity can make it easier for us to handle the older one. (Kreis, 1991, p. 28)

Kreis did not provide an answer to the question of how the "new" diversity could prove helpful to re-think the "old" diversity, apart from offering a simple contrast to unify and identify the national Self. By distinguishing between a new and an old diversity, he overlooked the fact that the underlying discursive double structure itself was all but new.

Kreis' text was a review of German publications on the topic of multiculturalism, like Claus Leggewie's (1990) much-debated *Multi Kulti. Spielregeln für die Vielvölkerrepublik* [Multi Kulti. Rules of the Game for the Multi-ethnic Republic]. In Germany, multiculturalism had turned into a hot political topic in the late 1980s, for example with the founding of the so-called *Department for Multicultural Affairs* in Frankfurt. Kreis' reference to international debates was no exception. The Swiss controversy on "multicultural societies" in the early 1990s was triggered and influenced by debates in other European and North American countries where cultural pluralism and ethnic minority

politics had been an issue already since the 1960s. Gita Steiner-Khamsi (1992), for example, who had been important for introducing intercultural perspectives in the Ministry of Education of the Canton of Zurich, published her book *Multikulturelle Bildungspolitik in der postmodernen Gesellschaft* [Multicultural Education Policy in the Postmodern Society] in 1992 after research stays in the US, Great Britain, and Canada (Steiner-Khamsi, 2017). In the same year, the renowned German-Polish migration sociologist Hans-Joachim Hoffmann-Nowotny (1992a), director of the Institute of Sociology at the University of Zurich, published a report for the Swiss Science Council, in which he weighed up the "chances and risks" of multicultural immigration societies. He had developed his critical position on cultural pluralism in exchange with the international scientific community and especially during a defining visiting fellowship in the Netherlands.[101] When the doyen of foreign worker sociology presented his critique of multiculturalist claims on a podium on Swiss television in March 1992, his

Figure 4.9: Public debate on the multicultural society

Note. Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen SRF/SRG [Swiss broadcasting company] (March 18, 1992). Ergänzungen zur Zeit: Die multikulturelle Gesellschaft—Ein neues Schlagwort?, screenshot at 1h:15min:54s.

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101 He started publishing on this topic and had been a member of the Research Committee on Ethnic, Race, and Minority Relations of the International Sociological Association since the mid-1970s. See his curriculum vitae and bibliography in the special issue of the *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungswissenschaften* (2003). 28, 2(4), 145–166, in commemoration of Hoffmann-Nowotny.
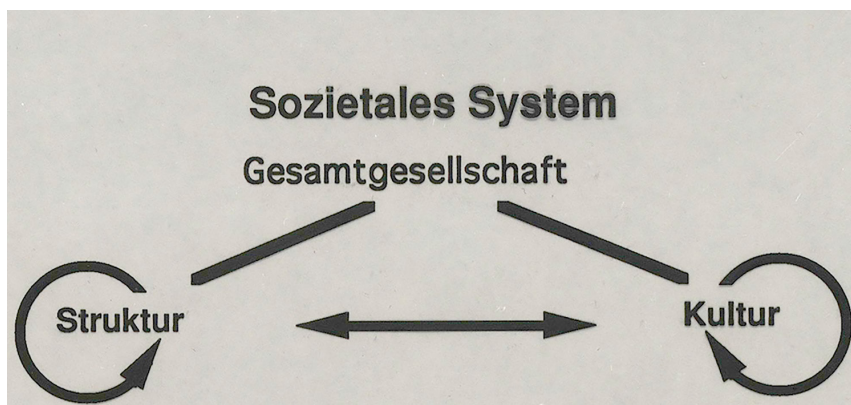
Figure 4.10: Structure, Culture, Society

Note. Hoffmann-Nowotny Papers (box 6), Zentralbibliothek Zürich, Handschriftenabteilung (Central Library Zurich, Manuscript Collection), Zurich, Switzerland.

prominent counterpart was the German politician Heiner Geissler, who had stirred up the German Christian Democratic Party with his plea for a multicultural society since the late 1980s. It is safe to conclude that the Swiss debates on multicultural societies and related topics were part of a broader international one.

In the Swiss debates on "multicultural societies" in the early 1990s, the divergence of different understandings of "culture" that had been in the making for more than a decade became apparent. Sociological and anthropological notions of culture clashed in ways that complicated deliberative communication. Hoffmann-Nowotny drew on his theoretical approach to immigration developed in the era of foreign workers in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. He departed from a categorical distinction between structure and culture, structural integration and cultural assimilation. In the case of the mostly Italian foreign workers coming to Switzerland until the mid 1970s, however, he did not attach much importance to the cultural dimension of immigration. As mentioned above, his structural-functionalist perspective on integration resonated with political claims to open Swiss society to the immigrants, for example in the earlier *Mitenand*-movement. The situation changed in the face of new global migration dynamics and the growing number of asylum seekers during the 1980s, and even more so after the fall of communism. Against the backdrop of a supposed "*neue* Völkerwanderung",[102] as Hoffmann-Nowotny (1992b) and others started to call it, the cultural dimension appeared more relevant not only to him than it had in the 1970s. In his report of 1992, Hoffmann-Nowotny (1992a) concluded that

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102 "*Völkerwanderung*" is an old-fashioned term for the migration of peoples (*migratio gentium*) in late antiquity which has been used since the 18th century.

a plurality with regard to the basic norms, values, and institutions of the host society would endanger social cohesion. He called this societal building block "*Kultur*" in contrast to "*Struktur*", that means the social structure (Hoffmann-Nowotny, 1992a, pp. 10–11). On the level of every-day practices and popular culture (food, music, taste, etc.), however, plurality was acceptable for Hoffmann-Nowotny. But on his view, this was only "folklore", not "*Kultur*" (Hoffmann-Nowotny, 1992a, p. 15). After publishing his report, Hoffmann-Nowotny was fiercely criticized, mostly from leftist scholars, for his supposedly "right-wing" dismissal of multiculturalism (Castles, 1994; Sancar & Sutter, 1995). He was blamed for providing the scientific legitimation for the new supposedly "racist" immigration policy of the Swiss state envisioned in 1991, that divided the world in three cultural zones. The inhabitants of the third sphere, that meant most of the world except the Western countries, were considered to be culturally too distant to integrate and therefore to immigrate to Switzerland. The strong political polarization of this debate in the following years has to be understood in the historical context of the changing dynamics of global migration after the fall of communism, the wave of racist attacks against immigrants that was not exclusive to Switzerland, the rise of the right-wing Swiss Popular Party, and new movements against racism (Gerber, 2003).

The heated media debate on Hoffmann-Nowotny's (1992a) report introduced the concept of "multicultural society" to the wider Swiss public. It also showed that the ethnological perspective on cultural issues of immigration had gained further ground in academic and activist contexts since the 1980s. Swiss ethnologists now claimed the intellectual lead on migration and integration issues, whereas the sociologists seemed to be stuck in an obsolete structural-functionalist perspective. The "ethnology report" for the Swiss Science Council from 1992 emphasized the need for a culturalist paradigm change and a disciplinary changing of the guard in Swiss migration studies (Knecht, 1992). The same ethnologists who had proven their usefulness in providing expertise on the "socio-cultural background" and "psycho-social" integration of non-European refugees in Switzerland in the 1980s were among those who participated in the hearings of the Swiss Science Council for a new national center for interdisciplinary migration studies, the *Swiss Forum for Migration Studies* (SFM) which was founded in 1995 in Neuchâtel.[103]

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103 A leading figure in this process was the ethnologist Hans-Rudolf Wicker from the University of Berne, who had worked in the psychological ambulatory *An Lac* for Indochina refugees in cooperation with the Swiss Red Cross as well as the ethnographic study on Tamil refugees. He participated in the ethnology hearings of the Swiss Science Council and became a leading figure in Swiss migration studies until the 2000s (Wicker, 2016).

4.8 Conclusion

The historical analysis of the *Mitenand*-movement and Swiss refugee aid projects of the 1980s show that it would be inaccurate to diagnose a general "cultural(ist)" turn with regard to the perception of postmigrant conviviality over the long 1980s. Most societal contexts, actors and institutions in Switzerland had used culturalist categories before, during and after this decade. One could, however, argue that immigration debates in certain integration-oriented contexts in Switzerland returned to a mainly culturalist framework after a short period of sociological abstinence in the 1970s.[104] Yet, you cannot step into the same river twice. Between the 1970s and the 1990s, the discourse on "culture" had broadened and transformed into a vast and contested field structured by many contradictions and polarities, such as stable/fluid, high/low, holistic/rhizomatic, self/other, identity/difference, essentialist/constructivist, traditional/modern, European/non-European, conservative/innovative, and inclusion/exclusion. The controversies accompanying the multiculturalist interpretation of societal pluralization through immigration that flared up in the first half of the 1990s in Switzerland got caught up in, and further propelled this complex tectonic shift of the cultural discourse. But in spite of all the differences, advocates and critics of the "multicultural society" alike reproduced the dominant dual structure of diversity in Switzerland. Both sides focused exclusively on the "new" immigrant diversity and the question of integration of "the Others" without trying to integrate the two discourses on cultural diversity.[105] As in other countries, the notion of "multicultural society" was contested from the very moment it entered the Swiss media (Chin, 2017), but at the same time multiculturalist practices of postmigrant conviviality, commercial and non-commercial, started to permeate public spaces and everyday life in Switzerland, especially in the cities which needed to respond to the on-going structural changes of globalization.[106] It is hardly surprising that in 1991 in Basel, the *Day of the Refugee*-fair and the leftist *Nostra Festa* merged into a "multicultural" urban festival.

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104 This means that the popular assumption that culture replaced "race" as the main category of racist exclusion in the 1980s is at least inaccurate for Switzerland. The semantics of "race" did indeed mostly disappear in Swiss academic and public discourse after the mid-1970s, but the transformation of "racism" in Switzerland in the 1980s and 1990s is far more complex than a simplified formula suggests.

105 Except for the less known association "*Aktionsgemeinschaft CH 701*" (the name refers to the year after the 700th Anniversary of the Swiss Federation), whose founding members in 1991 included the ethnologists Verena Müller-Tobler and Rolf Probala, who had participated in the Tamil study, as well as the lawyer Walter Schmid who had been the general secretary of the *Swiss Refugee Aid* (SFH). Papers of the *Aktionsgemeinschaft CH 701* (IB Verein CH 701), Archiv für Zeitgeschichte [Archives of Contemporary History], Zurich, Switzerland.

106 See for example the debate on "ethnic business" in Switzerland that came up in the late 1990s (Piguet, 1999; Jain, 2018).

Since the early 1990s, Switzerland has slowly become a "postmigrant society" (Foroutan, 2016; Espahangizi, 2018b). Today, more than one third of the Swiss population has a migration background, with even higher rates in urban centers. Nonetheless, most of the "non-immigration immigration country" (Hoffmann-Nowotny, 1995) still struggles to recognize this transformation and to face the ambiguities, uncertainties and contradictions that it has given birth to. The sequence of various inter-, multi-, and trans-cultural approaches that have come up during the last decades affected and dynamized, but also constrained, societal debates on immigration in Switzerland. They have reframed and sharpened our view on postmigrant conviviality, but they have also given birth to new blind spots and ambiguities. Culturalist perspectives may help to recognize and nourish postmigrant conviviality, but they can also be used to obstruct our view and inhibit its development. Culturalist arguments can be mobilized to legitimize exclusion and to claim inclusion as well. Cultural diversity analysis can open our eyes to social inequalities, but it can also divert our attention from them. Against this backdrop, it seems necessary to engage in a more critical reflection on culturalist approaches to postmigrant conviviality and to assess their effects and consequences for specific contexts, their gains and risks, uses and their shortcomings. The omnipresence of "culture" today poses a serious epistemological challenge for academic research on immigration and societal pluralization. It tends to blur the important lines between the subjects, means and objects of analysis. One way to see more clearly again, and to develop a critical but nonetheless productive relation to inter/multi/transculturalist perspectives on postmigrant conviviality, including our own academic concepts, is by reconstructing their historical genealogy.

4.9 Postscript

In 2015, a series of portrait photographs populated Zurich's main train station. The blow-ups were part of the so-called *Switzers*-project that aimed at representing the whole diversity of the Swiss population today. Each face stood for one of the 193 nationalities of the world living in Switzerland. The portraits and their individual histories were published in a separate book that provides touching insights into the diversity of life-worlds and biographies in postmigrant Switzerland (https://www. switzersbuch.ch). And yet the narrative framework of even this ambitious and well-intentioned project still fails to integrate the two cultural diversities:

> Today, Switzerland has 8 million inhabitants. 2 million of them are migrants from 193 nations.[107]
> *They* enrich *our* country with *their* knowledge and *culture* [emphasis added]. They open interes-

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[107] Actually, many of the 6 million Swiss have a migration background, too.
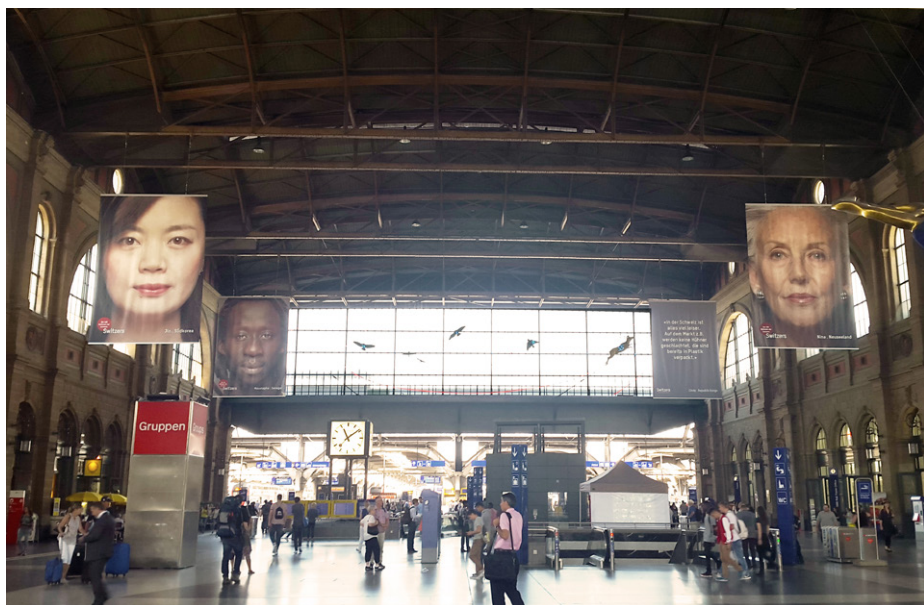
Figure 4.11: Switzers at the Zurich railway station

Note. Photograph by Kijan Espahangizi, 2015.

> ting and exotic worlds for us and create a living connection between Switzerland and the world. (Roduner & Schmid, 2016)

The culinary and folkloric programme at the opening of the "*Switzers* nation walk" exhibition stood, without knowing it, in the tradition of practices of the *Mitenand*-movement and the refugee aid projects of the 1980s. It celebrated the "ethnic" diversity of the Others while making invisible the diversity of "the Swiss". One of the portraits, hung up on Platform 3 at the Zurich main station, boiled the whole ambiguity of the project down to its essence: There were 193 *Switzers* but only one representative of Switzerland. The meaning of this single portrait within the exhibition remains open to debate. During an interview I carried out with the inventor of the *Switzers* in 2015, it turned out that he was well aware of the inner contradictions of the project, but he did not know how to tackle them (Roduner, 2015). Being a hands-on professional advertising photographer, he decided to employ the popular textual and visual discourses of ethnic diversity he had at hand in order to realize his contribution to a more inclusive society. The intentions were sincere, but knowing more about the ambiguous history of (multi)cultural diversity in Switzerland might have helped to reflect on a new way of thinking, representing and performing postmigrant conviviality.

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