**Statement of Contributions to Diversity**

We are living in an era of diversity. Diversity today is understood not only as the differentiation of cultural, ethnic, or gender categories, but also as the programmatic variation of individual lifestyles, which can find expression, for example, in musical, film, and literary preferences, as well as in religious and political orientations.

Examined historically, the rapid progress of transportation and communication technologies led to a dynamization of migration flows. The diversification of societies was a consequence of these dynamics, moderated partly by the media. Embodied feelings of belonging are being questioned in encounters between people from various sociocultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Modern societies develop dynamically and liberate individuals from conventional contexts. However, at the same time, this entails a destabilization of communities, individuals, and societies, which can lead to defensive reactions such as xenophobia.

The expansion of the global media market led to transnational *cultural flows*, which initially drove the diversification of societies. However, the further development and worldwide establishment of the Internet and its possibilities across national borders led to acculturation processes that established lifestyles and images of modernity shared worldwide. Under these conditions, the concept of “imagined communities” (Anderson) has to be completely re-considered. With diversity as the central theme, also the concepts of history and the social sciences have to be re-thought.

For example, when discussing intercultural encounters today, cultures cannot anymore be regarded as inclusive or exclusive islands, as Johann Gottfried Herder (1744‒1804) did in the 18th century. Welsch’s (2006) perspective on societal developments based on three conceptualizations is methodologically helpful here. He calls the first way to conceptualize a culturally diversified society multiculturality. Multiculturality thinking conceptualizes a society as the coexistence of diverse cultural groups. These coexist separately. Due to the relative insulation of the diverse groups, only few interactions between them take place. Isolated parallel societies characterize the societal organization described by this concept.

In contrast, the concept of an intercultural society emphasizes the interactions between cultures. The interactions between diverse cultural groups are at the core of an intercultural society. However, this conceptualization also remains within the limits of Herder’s island-like image of cultures. The analysis still starts with cultural differences, even if overcoming them is the goal.

Only the concept of transculturality transcends this image of cultures as islands. In the transcultural sphere, individuals acquire various cultural properties, which, however, can no longer be described as an island-like culture. For example, an individual may internalize aspects of punk culture while at the same time showing affinities for various media genres as well as cultivating various images of gender. In this way, identity is diversified because it is constituted by individual, pluralized preferences. This conceptualization pushes the very concept of identity to its limits. In this way, Herder’s concept of culture disappears in this conceptualization of a transcultural society.

Transculturality is not thinkable without diversity. However, diversity itself leads to transculturality. While transculturality seems to initially emphasize the existence of diversity, it will gradually supersede the latter as a cognitive category. However, this is not an ideal state. Rather, these are only conceptualizations describing societal relations whose shadow sides, related to extreme individualization and its effects, such as the allocation of responsibility in problem areas (Butler 2015), also have to be examined

My contribution to diversity in research and teaching consists of an investigation and presentation of the ambivalent nature of societal developments. My goal is to provide students with analytical tools with which they can learn to critically understand transcultural phenomena and developments. Transcultural diversity is not only a phenomenon of postmodern society, but also a guiding principle in research. The following two methods are important for such a research process: 1. a deconstruction of the traditional, fixed concept of culture and its continued inscriptions in media discourse, and 2. a sensitization to the opportunities and possibilities of transcultural phenomena. These two points are the basis of my teaching and research approach.