

Abstract for

**20th WADP congress / XXXIII International Symposium of the German Academy
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"Social Challenges - Shared Responsibility in Psychiatry and Psychotherapy"**

Presentation

Workshop

Male / Female / Diverse

Name: **Ketteler**

First Name: **Daniel**

Title / Position:

Prof. Dr. med. Dr. phil., Professorship for Social Medicine

Country:

Germany

Male / Female / Diverse

Name: **Nieberg**

First Name: **Holger**

Title / Position:

Prof. Dr.

Country:

Germany

Presentation title:

**The Multidiverse Society. Tensions between Individualism and Collectivism
in Personal Relations and Society.**

Abstract text up to 20 lines in English :

Tensions between individualism and collectivism were discussed basically within marxist theories (e.g. Ernesto Laclau) but also have an impact on sociopsychological phenomena broadly influencing the relationships within society and, on a microlevel, within personal relationships and couples. From a social psychologist view, it might be worth looking at dysfunctionalities within these tensions. Fearing and dismissing the other might help to stabilize the own individual position (Wielant Machleidt). Therefore, narcissistic features and xenophobia seem to be deeply interwoven and reflect tensions between egocentrism on the one, and collectivism or altruism on the other hand. In opposite e.g. to the northern African countries, where there were historically broad migrations not only by trading activities, central Europe traditionally and for a long period of time had relatively little experience with multiculturalism, diversity and interaction with different cultures and religions. The city of Marrakesh, as an example of a historic trading hub and where this conference is held, was explicitly mentioned by the Arabist Thomas Bauer to exemplify these historic preconditions.

More recently, concepts of an increasing narcissism in western societies have been widely discussed by sociologists such as Andreas Reckwitz who assumes that the creativity of the 60ies and the aims of the so called new age movement might be responsibly for recent sociological developments regarding an increasing individualism in western societies. The duty of curating one's own life by exhibiting it via social media or, in a more bourgeoisie way, by buying expensive furniture or art, caused new styles for comparing one's life to others. The psychiatrist Stefan Roepke found out, that there was a difference between narcissistic features of people grown up in the GDR and BRD, which is now narrowing. Collectivism in the GDR might be a factor, influencing these personality structures. These findings could also be of interest for ethnographers who focus on collectivistic traits and attitudes, which differ depending on the country or culture (there are in fact sociopsychological studies finding more solidarity in countries; Chile is one example, which, on the other hand, has a highly neo-capitalistic or neo-liberal system). So there are trends and opposing movements too. Post neo-capitalistic phenomena such as blogs or social media might perpetuate these processes towards higher grades of individualism and might tend to less empathy and darker sides of an outraged individualism. A lack of religion might also perpetuate these processes, which might be reflected, on a microlevel, by increased cluster B problems in our daily practices. But although western societies seem to be more and more polarized, recent empiric studies e.g. by Steffen Mau found that, in Germany, the society has become more tolerant and open minded in general. From a psychodynamic view, these developments and tensions can and should not be eliminated but societies but therapists could also be aware of the psychopathological side effects within these developments. If these features show tendencies to radicalize and polarize, societies should be aware of them. The analysis of psychodynamics could be a useful tool by finding compromises and constructive positions within conflicts on a macro- (politics) and microlevel (personal relations, psychotherapy).