



# Social Cohesion in Post-Migrant Society

## On the interaction of community work and democracy in a culturally diverse housing estate



### The Lenzsiedlung

- housing estate in Hamburg
- approx. 3,000 residents
- approx. 70 percent with migratory background
- high proportion of single parents and people receiving social welfare
- often challenging life situations

### Exploratory Research Phase

This phase identified various relevant factors which can impede or even counteract the development of social cohesion, such as language barriers, ethnic diversity, low incomes etc. However, a closer look at the activities of the Lenzsiedlung e.V. also showed that the numerous services and activities, such as the annual neighbourhood festival and the tenant initiative, have a positive effect on social cohesion and participation in the neighbourhood.

## 2 Societal Relevance

### Social Relevance

Three pillars of social cohesion are social capital, social mobility and social inclusion (OECD [2011]. *Perspective on Global Development 2012. Social Cohesion in a shifting world.* OECD-Publishing).

If these are not or only little available, as is often the case in the Lenzsiedlung, social cohesion and democratic participation are particularly important topics.

### Anticipated Impact

A deeper understanding is expected among institutions and authorities concerning:

- the importance of social cohesion (especially with regard to people in precarious situations)
- the chances and limits of social work, especially community work
- specific aspects to be considered in the planning process of services of social work
- the importance of services which are labour intensive and difficult to document



## 5 Examples of Good Practice

### Neighbourhood Festival

**Initial problem:** How can better networks among the residents be established? How can the neighbourhood become more visible within the surrounding area?

- organized by community workers and the adjacent sports club
- the coordinator of the planning process is usually one of the residents
- various institutions and residents are actively involved with (food) stands, stage performances etc.
- the event has been very popular with both local residents and neighbours from adjacent communities

### Tenant Initiative

**Initial problem:** 800 social housing units fall out of fixed rental price system - what happens next?

- the initiative consists of 180 residents, of whom 30 are actively involved
- it represents the residents' interests towards the municipal housing authority (providing information, mediating role, negotiation processes)
- community work provides resources such as premises, participation in the district advisory board, publications in the neighbourhood magazine

### Language Mediator

**Initial problem:** Many people living in the Lenzsiedlung and beyond only have very limited knowledge of the German language.

- organized as part of the social-spatial services Youth and Family Aid (SAJF) - instruction, exchange, arrangement
- bilingual residents offer assistance for dealing with authorities etc.
- the service is free of charge for people from the local neighbourhood

**Title of project:** POMIKU (Postmigrantische Familienkulturen / post-migrant family cultures)

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**Further information:** [www.familienkulturen.de](http://www.familienkulturen.de)

[www.haw-hamburg.de/ws-soa/forschung/pomiku-postmigrantische-familienkulturen.html](http://www.haw-hamburg.de/ws-soa/forschung/pomiku-postmigrantische-familienkulturen.html)

## 1 Main Focus of the Project POMIKU

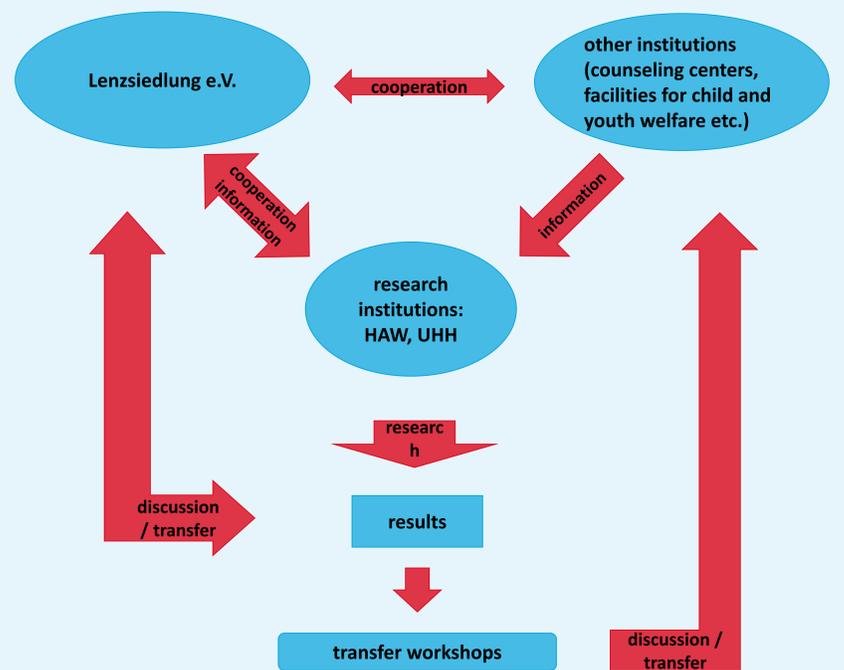
The joint research project POMIKU explores family cultures in a post-migrant context. It studies changing forms of family management and its effects on social cohesion and living together. It aims at a deeper understanding and promotion of social cohesion and processes of democratic participation in a post-migrant society.

One focus of the research is the interaction of (family) living conditions and local community work. The guiding question is what forms of support community work offers to the residents of the housing estate to promote social cohesion and to support democratization processes. The study also addresses questions of limits and implications for future services of social work.

### Project Partners:

- University of Applied Sciences Hamburg (HAW, Department of Social Work)
- University of Hamburg (UHH, Institute for German Studies)
- Lenzsiedlung e.V. (local association for community work and youth work)

## 3 Stakeholder Involvement



## 4 Measures to Maximise Impact of Research Results

### Transfer Workshops

The results of the study will be presented to relevant actors of social work (e.g. institutions, sponsors, authorities) in all districts of Hamburg, who will be invited to discuss the findings in several workshops. The results of the discussions will then be included in the further research process. This exchange of experiences and knowledge between researchers, social services and funding institutions will also serve to reflect, negotiate and possibly adapt professional action, e.g. by dealing with language barriers or by providing and supporting platforms for current and urgent issues within the estate.

## 6 Outcomes

### Opportunities

- closer networks between residents
- residents are encouraged and supported to contribute to the community with their own expertise
- residents experience self-efficacy which leads to more social cohesion

### Limits

- communal services and courses rarely promote networks and social cohesion between inside and outside residents
- men are only little involved in communal activities
- success of services often depends on personal engagement and personal networks of social workers

### Challenges

- diverse groups of people are difficult to integrate in services of social work
- services promoting social cohesion are time-consuming (comparatively high personnel costs)
- communal services often do not fit into the state-required documentation system



### Research Methods

Participant observation

Narrative guideline interviews

Expert interviews

Network analysis (n = 50)  
(scheduled for 2020/2021)

Analysis of requirements (n = 300)  
(scheduled for 2020/2021)

