

VID Colloquium

Vienna Institute of Demography
Welthandelsplatz 2 / Level 2
Nathan Keyfitz Library
1020 Vienna

Bernhard Köppen

German Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB), Germany

Tuesday, 16 August 2016

11:00 - 12:00 am

"Self-attribution and Identity of Ethnic-German 'Spätaussiedler' Re-patriates from the Former USSR: An Example of Fast-track Assimilation?"

In the light of the so called "refugee crisis" in Germany, questions of immigrant integration and assimilation are currently most prominent topics not only in research but also in mass media and politics. Having had a ethnocentric tradition concerning citizenship until the early 2000 years, only few attention was given to systematic and sound policy making on this behalf in the Federal Republic of Germany, although immigration is an important phenomenon since decades. Expatriates and repatriates from republics of the former Soviet Union are one of the most important groups of immigrants in of Germany. Granted German citizenship according to Art. 116 GG (German Federal Constitution) due to their Germanic ethnicity, they were deemed ex-ante to possess a high potential for smooth and rapid integration. The highest influx of these migrants was in the mid- and early 1990s. A standardised survey covering ethnic self-identification, cultural habits as well as language skills and the linguistic behaviour of repatriates and qualitative interviews about 15 years after the main flow of Spätaussiedler-immigration shows, that a specific, split "Russian-German" identity emerged amongst many re-patriates. It remains unclear, yet, whether this two-tier identity will prove to be a persistent pattern of self-attribution or if it is just a step on the way to complete assimilation.

About the presenter

Bernhard Köppen is senior research fellow at German Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB) in Wiesbaden, Germany. His expertise includes population geography, urban geography, demographic change and spatial planning, (internal) migration and regional development, world population as well as border studies. He studied geography in Erlangen, Bamberg and Grenoble (maitrise géographie in 1997, Diplom Geograph in 1999), received his PhD from Technische Universität Chemnitz (2004) and was junior professor in Demographic Research and Human Geography at Universität Koblenz-Landau (2006-2013). Before joining BIB, Bernhard Köppen was a senior researcher at Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Demographic-Research in Esch-sur-Alzette (Luxembourg) as responsible coordinator within the CURHA project - Contrasting Healthy Ageing in Urban Contexts - and conducted the Luxembourg cohort survey. Furthermore he is full affiliated professor at Universität Koblenz-Landau and member of the scientific council "Demografiepolitik" of the German Federal State Rhinelande-Palatinate. At BIB, he works on world population and the "demographic dividend" as major field of research interest.