

# Alone Together–Alienation and Reconciliation

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Has it been, will it be, or is it even possible to be both alone and together? The challenges of individuals, cultures, and countries to be “alone” and “together” have existed historically in various, often complex ways. Yet the challenge of being “alone together” is now more pressing than ever.

What dangers, and what opportunities—at home and abroad, real and imagined—can we identify to these ends in Germany and German-speaking communities? How can attention to the themes of alienation and reconciliation in their myriad forms shed light on these questions?

Examples and analysis, case studies and aesthetic interventions are welcome from a broad range of discursive fields: from politics, literature, philosophy, linguistics, and history to social media forms, cinematic images, fashion, and religious incarnations.

As one example suggests, the challenges of being “alone together” are at times urgent: On 6 June 2019, France, Canada, Germany, Chile, and Ghana announced the initiative “Multilateralism Matters” with the accompanying social media handle #multilateralismmatters. The goal of the initiative, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas declared, is to demonstrate that “global developments such as climate change, terrorism, digital transformation and many other factors cannot be influenced unilaterally. Wherever people attempt to do so, there is either no change or the weakest pay the price.”

Maas’s press release announcing the initiative was entitled “Together or Alone? The Germans and Multilateralism.” But what does being “together” or “alone” entail? How do these categories relate to questions of tolerance, diversity, multilateralism, and community? In what ways can we be “together” without

homogenizing diverse voices, ideologies, beliefs, and positions? While some of the exceptional divides that can be found among countries and within their own borders can be problematic, others are necessary and even critical to ensure diversity, heterogeneity, and democracy.

Kontakt

Goihl

Ehrenbergstr. 26/28, 14195 Berlin

+49 30 838 56671

[bprogram@zedat.fu-berlin.de](mailto:bprogram@zedat.fu-berlin.de)

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