

A decorative graphic consisting of a grid of dots in various shades of gray and red, arranged in a pattern that suggests a world map or a network of connections.

Living Together as Equals

Principles of Social Democratic integration policy:
democratic, pluralist and socially oriented

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- The integration of immigrants in the German host society has been largely successful. However, different problems still exist, e.g. the majority of immigrants experience serious discrimination in their everyday lives and at work. Also, the German education system does not yet guarantee everyone equal chances of success.
- For integration to be successful Germany must cease to regard its new citizens as foreign in the long term. We are committed to a culture of mutual recognition. All cultural and religious identities have a right to be recognised as of equal value as long as they extend the same recognition to others. The recognition of all cultures and religions as equal only assumes real meaning if it includes equal access to society's material and social goods.
- Integration is a task for the whole of society, for all social classes, all milieus, all regions, and for mainstream society as much as for immigrants. Integration requires a shared political culture and a common understanding of the basic values of social coexistence and of what it means to be a citizen. Unlike assimilation it respects cultural differences in personal lifestyles and in people's religious cultures. The only kind of culture that promises successful integration is a culture of recognition. This is an achievement both of the state and of the people involved.



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Theses¹

1. The integration of immigrants in the German host society has been largely successful. This is an achievement. But the problems that different groups still have with one another present an obstacle to integration. For integration to be successful Germany must cease to regard its new citizens as foreign in the long term. We are committed to a culture of mutual recognition. All cultural and religious identities have a right to be recognised as of equal value as long as they extend the same recognition to others. The recognition of all cultures and religions as equal only assumes real meaning if it includes equal access to society's material and social goods.

2. We want integration, not assimilation. Integration requires a shared political culture and a common understanding of the basic values of social coexistence and of what it means to be a citizen. Unlike assimilation it respects cultural differences in personal lifestyles and in people's religious cultures.

3. The failure of the German host society to change the structures of the education system to reflect the immigration society that Germany has de facto become and will continue to be and to guarantee everyone equal chances of success is a major deficit of integration policy with serious implications.

4. The majority of immigrants experience serious discrimination in their everyday lives and at work. These result from prejudices that ascribe unchangeable ethnic and cultural characteristics to immigrants and regard them as too foreign to be integrated. Professional qualifications and experience gained in the immigrants' country of origin are in many cases not recognised, and work permits for immigrants who have entered Germany on the grounds of marriage are still subject to inappropriately rigid restrictions. This makes integration considerably more difficult.

5. In our democracy the success of integration depends primarily on a shared understanding of what it means to be a citizen with equal rights and obligations.

6. By contrast, the culture of everyday life and religious or ideological belief are exclusively a matter for the individual. To permit and to guarantee diversity in these spheres is the true purpose of a constitutional democracy.

7. A defining culture that goes beyond the political culture of democracy and a commitment to the ethics of citizenship is at odds with the right of people in a democracy to coexist and exhibits features of fundamentalism.

8. Generally speaking many new arrivals in Germany lack a knowledge of the language. The specific guest-worker policy of the 1950s and 1960s that brought unskilled workers to Germany for what was expected to be a short period of time means that today large groups of immigrants have only a low level of education and training. Germany's education and training systems lack concepts for the acquisition of language skills and, what is more, the will to implement those concepts that do exist. Educational achievement and the acquisition of vocational skills are strongly linked to the language proficiency of children when they start school, to social class and to gender. This puts children from immigrant milieus in particular and children from lower social classes in general at a disadvantage.

9. It is of primary importance for our society, for social integration and for the political culture of democracy that immigrants should not through ignorance, indifference, denial of social opportunities or intolerance be cast as »different« or »foreign« and thus be permanently excluded. This applies also, and indeed particularly, to religion. With 4.3 million believers Islam is the largest religious community in the Federal Republic of Germany after Christianity. Five percent of the population are Muslims, 1.8 million German citizens are Muslims – these are facts that German mainstream society must accept along with their far-reaching implications for political culture and everyday life.

10. What counts is integration in everyday life. It can only be successful if immigrants have equal opportunities for participation at school, at work and in their living environments. If these are guaranteed then immigrants can be expected to participate as responsible citizens in the public and political life of a community shared by all. This will facilitate active tolerance and mutual understanding for different lifestyles on the part of all concerned.

1. This paper has been originally developed as a position paper by the Basic Values Commission of the SPD National Executive

11. The only kind of culture that promises successful integration is a culture of recognition. This is an achievement both of the state and of the people involved – the latter through mutual recognition in everyday life and by making active use of the equality of opportunity offered. This applies not only to relations between different immigrant milieus and with the host society but in our increasingly culturally diverse society in equal measure to relations between the highly diverse milieus of mainstream German society itself.

12. Integration is a task for the whole of society, for all social classes, all milieus, all regions, and for mainstream society as much as for immigrants. And it is a task that cuts across all fields of politics and that requires not only financial resources, but also that account be taken of the perspectives, the experience and the cultural knowledge of those who are customarily grouped together under the inadequate label of »immigrants«.

1. For a Culture of Recognition

In its report for 2011 the Council of Experts for Integration und Migration concludes that the process of integrating immigrants and members of ethnic minorities in Germany is by and large progressing successfully. This is an achievement both for Germany as the host society and for the immigrants themselves, and it is one of which we are proud. Yet we also take seriously the remaining problems and the resentment still harboured by some immigrants and by some members of the German host society. In many parts of Germany the different groups are still experiencing persistent problems in getting along together at school, at work and in everyday life. These stand in the way of successful integration.

Not a few members of the German host society are unable or unwilling to accustom themselves to the increasing, and increasingly visible, cultural diversity in their neighbourhoods and communities and in their broader environment. They are experiencing unaccustomed feelings of alienation and in some cases they even feel that their traditional identity is threatened. They blame those whom they regard as »foreign« for these feelings. Some of them – spurred by racist slogans – express these feelings of alienation or resentment through aggression. Yet to blame only one side for this state of affairs would be just as short-sighted and simplistic as to pursue a policy

that tries to deny or ignore the challenges of integration. A careful causal analysis reveals that above all members of those social classes that have themselves become the victims of social exclusion in the wake of rapid economic change and the erosion of the welfare state or who are threatened by social decline feel uncertain about social goods such as a job, a place to live and educational opportunities. Such people see immigrants as unwelcome competitors and as a threat to their own chances for participation and social inclusion. Many of these people perceive serious integration deficits on the part of those they regard as »other« or »different«, yet often the real problem lies in the inadequate concepts and provisions made for an immigration society, for example, in education and employment policies unsuited to such a society's needs.

The Federal Republic of Germany officially began calling itself an immigration country only a short time ago, even though it has de facto always been one. Promoting the integration of migrants is the central political task of our immigration society.

To ensure that foreigners do not continue to be regarded as »foreign« but instead are recognised as people who are simply »different«, and to ensure moreover that being different does not lead to being perceived as »foreign« or »alien«, requires more than just abstract information about other religions and cultures and a distanced attitude of tolerance. What we really need is a culture of coexistence and mutual recognition. For this to develop, social, economic and political conditions must be fulfilled that enable everybody to participate equally and to have equal access to the opportunities and social goods our society offers. A culture of recognition rests on three connected premises:

- First, recognition that different cultural and religious identities are of equal value.
- Second, acceptance of the framework of obligations underlying a constitutional democracy and of the existence of universal basic rights that extend through all cultural collectives – in other words, the formation of a common political culture.
- Third, equal access for everybody to the social and economic resources and opportunities of our society.

The recognition that all cultural identities are equal is inferred from the principle of the equal dignity of people of different cultures and religions. With respect to the content of different cultures, this is subject to the proviso that these cultures likewise espouse the basic principle of mutual recognition of all people as being of equal worth regardless of their different cultural and religious identities.

Immigrants must be granted full political rights and opportunities for participation and inclusion. All citizens should be able to live and work together as equals in a spirit of mutual understanding and solidarity. Equal participation for all in political institutions and equal access to and inclusion in all social, economic and political rights and opportunities, ranging from participation in political life and civil society to education, employment and social protection are necessary preconditions for social and civic integration.

2. Active Integration, Not Assimilation

Both the German host society and the country's immigrant communities consist of a great many different groups with often widely varying understandings of the term »integration«. Yet conservative political forces expect groups with different religious and cultural origins, above all Muslims, to first assimilate into the purportedly homogeneous culture of German mainstream society before they can be granted full recognition as human beings and as citizens. Assimilation demands a one-sided adaptation to the cultural norms and customs of mainstream society. Yet it always remains unclear to what precisely this demand refers and on which norms of a constitutional democracy it claims to be based. Given the open nature of this question, it can be answered completely arbitrarily or – as in the catalogue of questions for becoming a German citizen prepared by the CDU-FDP governing coalition in Baden-Württemberg while it was still in power in that state – even in a grotesquely absurd manner. Above all those who propagate a defining German culture (*Leitkultur*) as obligatory for everybody who lives in Germany are really calling for immigrants to adapt to this defining culture (which in reality does not exist) and relinquish their own cultural identity. We decisively reject any alleged »integration« of this kind as a one-way street that is tantamount to full assimilation and is also at odds with Germany's Basic Law.

The goal of integration, on the other hand, as what might be termed a »fitting together« of those who are different, is for immigrants to adopt the basic social and political values and be entitled to the basic rights that go with being German citizens – in other words the political culture of a constitutional social democracy – while preserving their personal cultural and religious identity. Indeed, they have a fundamental entitlement to this. The pluralist and democratic legal order of the Federal Republic of Germany stipulates that no-one may be discriminated against on account of their origin – be it region, class, religion, race or gender. This constitutional order expressly respects cultural, in other words, regional, religious and ethnic differences, in the population. In a constitutional democracy, therefore, integration has three goals of equal importance:

- First, all those who wish to live in this pluralist, democratic community must accept the values, norms and rules of democracy and the conditions of being responsible citizens. This applies irrespective of whatever cultural or religious identity they may claim for themselves.
- Second, our Basic Law guarantees that within this framework everyone may express the religious and cultural identity they have chosen themselves.
- Third, what is at stake here is the real chance of equal participation for everyone in the working and living environment along with access to education and social protection and not just the formal right.

Pluralist societies require shared basic values and norms for social and political coexistence, but they do not require a common cultural or religious identity. Indeed, every state is obliged to guarantee precisely these universal social and cultural human rights. Germany's Basic Law as a modern, exemplary constitution guarantees these basic rights for all citizens, according them precedence over everything else. These rights provide space for citizens to lead different lifestyles and to hold different religious convictions.

To see integration as a one-way process, as something to be expected from »foreigners« or »others« while the host society does not have to contribute anything at all, would be to fundamentally misunderstand the notion. Integration as conceived by our pluralist social order is a two-way process entailing rights and obligations on

both sides and at the same time an open process of mutual rapprochement. From the host society it requires the creation of the material conditions for real participation and equality of opportunity in all areas of society crucial to life, in particular in the key areas of school, work and the immediate and broader living environment as well as democratic participation. From religious and cultural minorities it requires that they recognise the values of democratic political culture and that they be loyal citizens. From everyone it requires the recognition of the equal value of all its citizens' cultural and religious identities and world views as long as they undertake to observe the basic rules of culturally pluralistic coexistence.

Members of cultural and religious minorities can hardly be expected to develop a sense that they are German citizens simply as a matter of personal conviction if the mainstream society does not fulfil its part of the unspoken social contract, namely the granting of equal rights to participation in central spheres of life. This is, however, currently the case with respect to the key areas of education and employment in the Federal Republic of Germany. And this is in fact where the main origins of the existing integration deficits lie, and not in the cultural, religious or even ethnic differences between mainstream society and immigrants.

3. The Integration Failure of Our Society

Contrary to widely held prejudices, both male and female immigrants do, as a rule, possess a wide range of professional skills and a strong desire to find gainful employment. They often have many years of professional experience and are in most cases willing to build a new life in Germany. This potential remains largely unused or is wasted by employing such people in jobs for which they are overqualified and that fail to make use of their skills. For many immigrants in Germany the only prospect of finding work is in jobs that non-immigrant Germans avoid. Immigrant women, for example, are in many cases only able to find work in so-called »mini-jobs« (marginal part-time work with a maximum gross monthly wage of Euro 400) where they typically work as cleaners or as domestic carers for the elderly. This applies, incidentally, in equal measure to late repatriating ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe, Jewish refugees subject to a quota regulation and Turks. Immigrants are discriminated against in many ways: on account of their ethnicity, religion,

language, nationality, social class, region, gender or as parents. These people experience discrimination both in employment and in education – from day-care to school, vocational training and university study.

Turkish immigrants, in particular, have since the late 1980s experienced a dramatic decline in employment opportunities. Together with people of Arab or African origin they have a particularly low status and are the target of discriminatory debates. That said, the regional labour market is the most important factor in determining whether integration is successful or not. Under favourable conditions, female immigrants including Turks often manage to find work, many of them even in full-time jobs. Yet as soon as there is a shortage of jobs, female immigrants are the first to lose out. They fail to find work commensurate with their qualifications, and instead often work in low-skilled jobs and have an above-average risk of becoming unemployed.

Young female immigrants, particularly Muslim Turkish women, are in some cases hindered by their families in gaining access to education and employment. The disadvantages that women experience on account of traditional family structures do not only result from the culture of their country of origin, however. The poor employment prospects of Turkish, Arab and African women and other female immigrants and the consignment of these women to unskilled, typically »female« occupations and domestic work as well as the official ban on employment for female immigrants who have entered the country on the grounds of marriage are all contributions the host society makes to reinforcing the effects of traditional family structures in certain immigrant milieus. If, on the other hand, immigrant women manage to do well at school and succeed in getting a good job, then their families are also more likely to adopt more modern attitudes towards them. Thus, the overwhelming majority of parents born outside Germany support in equal measure the efforts of both their sons and their daughters to get an education, and they are, moreover, no less supportive than non-immigrant parents. In many cases they do so in a poor educational environment in which even members of the host society encounter problems. In fact German-born women in the lower social classes receive the least support in their efforts to get an education and to find a good job. The issue is therefore to provide a better education for all children from lower social classes.

The anti-discrimination law, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of origin, religion or gender, is a challenge both for society as a whole and for employers. While prohibiting discrimination against individuals, at a more general level the law also calls for support and assistance strategies for those liable to suffer discrimination because a country with a shortage of skilled labour must make maximum use of the skills and talents of everyone who lives in that country. And since immigrants offer great potential in this respect, it is important for the development of German society and of Germany as an economic location to overcome discrimination against immigrant groups in education and training and in employment by pursuing an active policy of integration.

4. Ethnic Discrimination and Cultural Foreignness

Immigrants living in Germany are at a disadvantage. The reasons for this are discrimination in education and in the work place, problems on the juridical level (i.g. when it comes to the legal recognition of educational qualifications and skills), the traditional gender roles prevalent in »foreign« societies and discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity. Currently we do not know enough about how these different dimensions of disadvantage interact, but we can assume a connection between ethnicity, gender and social class as dimensions of disadvantage.

The legal barriers are two-fold: (1) The formal conditions for obtaining a residence permit hinder access to paid employment; (2) Vocational qualifications or university degrees obtained abroad are often not formally recognised in Germany. The excessive value that Germany attaches to qualifications on paper stands in the way of more informal qualifications or professional experience being valued. By de facto refusing to recognise these, Germany is contributing to a situation whereby immigrants lack the formal qualifications required to enable them to work.

Many more recent immigrants have an insufficient knowledge of German and as a result of the specific guest-worker policies of the 1950s and 1960s aimed at attracting unskilled workers expected to stay for only a short time there are large groups of immigrants who came to Germany with little education or training. The German education and training systems not only lack concepts for

ensuring an adequate acquisition of language skills but, what is more, the willingness to implement the concepts that do exist. In the German education system the level of educational achievement and the acquisition of vocational skills are closely linked to children's linguistic competence when they start school as well as to their social class and gender. Here prejudices exist both in immigrant milieus and in mainstream society that put immigrants at a disadvantage and often block their access to employment. Particularly problematic here are stereotyped ideas held by members of German mainstream society about »foreign« cultures as well as about class and gender relations in these cultures.

Hence it is not only a lack of education, training, professional experience and language skills that are responsible for immigrants' failure to obtain good jobs, but also their »ethnicisation« in the sense of stereotyped ideas held by mainstream society about those who are »foreign« or »different«. This leads to certain sweeping generalisations being made at school or in the workplace about these people's alleged shortcomings or modes of behaviour. Stereotyped roles of this kind are strongly fixated on ethnicity and as such they diminish chances and erect obstacles to immigrants' securing their own independent existence which are almost impossible to overcome.

For immigrant women this meant, for instance, that until well into the 1990s they were ignored in research on guest worker immigration. And even today they are still perceived by many people simply as their husbands' dependents or as victims of their male-dominated cultures. It is often assumed that female immigrants, particularly Turkish women, do not wish to seek gainful employment or else that their husbands or parents forbid them to do so.

Patterns of religious, ethnic and gender-related discrimination are frequently interconnected. Practicing Muslima often experience religious discrimination, for example, because they wear headscarves, whereas other kinds of religious clothing or jewellery are scarcely seen as problematic. What is often forgotten here is that the headscarf is a source of much greater controversy among Muslims themselves than between German mainstream society and Muslims.

Ethnic discrimination is directed above all against men, women and children with dark skin and hair. Gender-re-

lated discrimination tends to be directed against mothers with many children, and immigrant women experience even greater difficulties than other women in combining childcare with going out to work. Women are put at a disadvantage by having to look after children and run the family household, but also by the unequal treatment of men and women in education and training and on the labour market, and it is worst in the low-wage sectors in which most female immigrants have to work. In international comparisons of the conditions for working women Germany scores particularly badly on day-care for children, while its taxation and social security systems benefit housewives who do not go out to work.

A further problem in some immigrant communities is the macho behaviour of young men: the importance attached to being »cool«, which is in itself mainly a reaction to a lack of opportunities, has a paralysing effect on the efforts of young male immigrants to obtain an education, and this is compounded by widespread assumptions that they will engage in criminal behaviour. Gender aspects are thus a particular problem for young male immigrants, including ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe, since there is a clash between the prejudices that mainstream society holds towards immigrant boys and men and these young immigrants' own view of themselves as men who determine their own lives. This is another important reason for educational failure and the emergence of criminality in these groups, although it must be said that similar attitudes and modes of behaviour are also to be found among young men in German mainstream society, where working-class boys have a particularly poor educational track record.

Germany's education system, employment policy and taxation policy all have a discriminatory effect on immigrants. It is high time that these were changed and adapted to the needs of an immigration society.

5. Shared Citizenship, Cultural Pluralism

Before we talk about cultural pluralism we should first clarify what cultural identity means today. What is German culture? What is German identity? Does Herder's image of a number of different cultures hermetically isolated from one another like separate spheres still hold true in the middle of Europe today? No. Today culture manifests itself as a dynamic process of change and of

exchange with other cultures and not as a fixed possession that must be defended come what may. The history of Germany at the centre of Europe is a history of dramatic cultural change. Like all modern states Germany is multi-ethnic and even within ethnic, cultural and religious groups there are often big differences in the everyday culture and customs that shape people's lives. While it is natural that cultural pluralism should sometimes give rise to conflicts, this does not mean the differences are unbridgeable as long as they remain embedded in an over-arching common political and civic culture. If the origins of potential conflicts evoke the right political response, cultural differences can even enrich us and our lives.

Even within German society there have always been marked cultural differences and contrasts: between North and South and between East and West, between city and country, between different religious communities and ethnic groups, between language areas and between social classes. Only a few decades ago North Germans and Germans from the Alpine regions could barely understand each other's languages. The idea of a Bavarian on the Baltic island of Rügen even today still prompts a smile at the thought of this clash of cultures. The print media, television and radio have done a huge amount to promote integration between the different regions of Germany and to homogenise the language, to the point where in the episodes of the cult TV detective series *Tatort* set in Frankfurt, no-one speaks Hessian dialect any more, even though this is by no means a reflection of reality in the Frankfurt police force. The real reason why some German dialects such as Mosel Franconian are threatened with extinction and why many young people have little time for the traditional customs of the older generation is not immigration but rather this newly created pan-German or indeed international mass culture.

At the same time German society is becoming ever more strongly differentiated, partly through the diversity of the media and partly through the increasing rift between social classes – whereby those at the top are losing touch with the real world while those at the bottom are experiencing a further decline in their social status. The various cultural, social and religious milieus of mainstream society are just as different from one another as the religious and everyday cultures of immigrants, who can by no means be regarded as a homogeneous collective. Together with the considerable increase in inequality, poverty and the

number of people who are socially and materially vulnerable this development has produced a situation where even within German mainstream society considerable disintegration tendencies can be observed at the lower end of society that are associated with people turning their back on common cultural values and norms.

Empirical research has put paid to the myth of sharply defined differences between the major religions and cultures with respect to fundamental social, personal and political values. Instead, through their diverse kinds of interaction the different cultures and religions are to a growing extent starting to fuse, so that while differences remain, they also evince many shared features.

Almost nowhere in the world do the boundaries of cultural milieus correspond with geographical areas, let alone national borders. Cultural networks run both through social domains and between different societies. Hence everywhere in the world the unity between cultural or religious identity on the one hand and citizenship, territory or membership of a political entity on the other is increasingly starting to dissolve.

In terms of culture and religion modern societies are pluralistic. The task of politics is to enable social cohesion. This cannot be done via prescribed uniformity, but it can be achieved via integration and social equity and redistribution. The role of women provides a good illustration of this: Our Basic Law guarantees gender equality, yet in German mainstream society there are still considerable gender equality deficits, for example, in the workplace. At the same time, German mainstream society accuses »the Turks«, for example, of having more traditional ideas about the role of women. This ignores the fact that in their role as »guestworkers« far more Turkish women went out to work (or at least sought work) and continue to do so than »German« women.

Integration means to assert this basic right to gender equality, to heed the principle of gender equality and to tackle problems together. This includes, for example, not permitting a situation whereby girls do not have access to education or employment because their culture does not provide for this. In addressing this issue we must look at the chances and deficits in all milieus. The crucial point is to gain an understanding of how social coexistence and democratic citizenship may be shaped so as to enable

citizens with different cultural identities to live together as equals and to make this coexistence empowering.

6. Culture and Cultures

The coexistence of people with different cultural and religious identities requires a common political culture of constitutional democracy as a secure framework in which different cultures and identities can develop freely. This political culture based on the rule of law and democracy embraces the attitudes, orientations, emotions, value judgements, knowledge and behavioural dispositions of a general culture related specifically to political life. It also includes a shared concept of what the political community regards as its political identity and of the central ideas that inform and guide its political activity.

The experience of nations with a long history of multiculturalism, in particular the world's largest culturally pluralist democracies India and the United States, shows that it is possible for highly diverse religious and cultural milieus to develop a common political culture and a civic consciousness shared by all. Of course this depends on each individual cultural tradition being seen as compatible with the values and norms of the common political culture, and hence excludes fundamentalist views of culture that arrogantly claim ideological supremacy for a single interpretation of a particular cultural tradition and, furthermore, its superiority over all other cultures and religions.

Different cultures and ways of life that coexist under the umbrella of a political culture that links all who share it are more likely to overlap since they become less isolated from the outside world and develop as dynamic and vibrant social domains rather than as internally static systems. Such cultures are to a certain extent inherently dynamic since different tendencies and currents within them constantly compete to become dominant and to gain interpretive power. All cultures today generate increasingly nuanced norms, convictions, customs and practical guides for actions and behaviour that can be divided into three distinctive levels:

- The first level embraces the *metaphysical* interpretations of life. These are at the heart of all views of the world and all religions and offer both the individual and the collective ways of interpreting the world and ascer-

taining life's certainties as well as promising hopes of salvation.

- The second level comprises the values and orientations that determine how the individual and the collective *lead their practical everyday lives*, in other words, ways of life and everyday culture.
- The third level consists of the basic social and political values governing coexistence with others. These comprise mainly the norms for coexistence in societies and states.

While these different levels obviously influence one another, they are nonetheless largely independent. All contemporary cultures illustrate clearly that individuals and collectives who share a particular religious orientation or hold a similar world view may occupy a different position on the other two levels – i.e. with respect to individual everyday culture and basic social values. Conversely, people may share basic social and political values out of a profound conviction without necessarily having similar attitudes to faith or similar lifestyles. This can apply both to people who belong to the same broad cultural circle and to the same religion and to those from different cultural circles who hold different world views.

These differentiations, which can be observed the world over, do not, however, mean that religion is of no significance for the everyday culture or political attitudes of believers. It shows, rather, that believers are making different connections between their religious convictions and what these convictions imply for other spheres of life. This development can be discerned in all cultural spheres of the world, and Islam is no exception, despite widely held stereotypes that suggest the contrary. Just like Christianity with its different Churches or the different branches of Judaism, so the different branches and regional variants of Islam face the challenge of making different religious convictions and lifeworlds compatible with and tolerant of one another. Moreover, even those who hold non-religious world views continually redefine their attitudes and in this process they themselves change.

The evolution and indeed the real function of constitutional democracy consists in laying down basic political values and creating institutions that embody these values so as to allow maximum scope for individual freedom

with respect to the question of lifestyle and religious belief. Both of these levels of culture concern personal autonomy and the freedom of the individual to act and hence remain the prerogative of the individual and the self-determined social collective. This can provide the basis for an appropriate and fair concept of integration.

7. Integration without a Guiding Culture and without Fundamentalism

Religious fundamentalism seeks to annul the relative independence of the three cultural levels, namely the personal interpretation of the world, the culture of everyday life and the basic social and political values governing coexistence. By laying down backward-looking and absolutist religious norms it seeks to exert total control over individual lifestyles and over the state and the polity and to make these conform with its own ideas. Democracy by its very nature does not tolerate fundamentalist forms of cultural identity any more than it does totalitarian atheist ideologies. In no cultural sphere of the world can these claim to be the authentic, let alone the solely legitimate form of the tradition in whose name they speak. For the reasons outlined and as the empirical evidence suggests, the cultural identities generated by the world's cultural-religious traditions can exist only in the plural.

Conservative political forces have called for all immigrants in the future to orientate themselves towards a German guiding culture (*Leitkultur*) in order to obtain German citizenship or indeed to be recognised at all in Germany. Like religious fundamentalism, such a view seeks to de-emphasise the difference between an individual's role as a citizen of a state and his or her personal ethics and lifestyle – a difference that is a central component of a state based on the rule of law. In actual fact it is impossible to comply with this requirement in practice because inherent in the as yet to be clarified concept of a defining culture is the unreasonable demand that immigrants should adopt a »German« culture of everyday life – whatever that may be. Given the enormous diversity of milieu-specific and contradictory everyday cultures in Germany, this idea can amount to no more than a fiction to be used more or less arbitrarily in political debate.

The demand already implied by the term defining culture that immigrants should assimilate is unreasonable above all because it constitutes a violation of basic rights. The

legitimacy of a constitutional democracy is conferred precisely by the principle that legal restrictions on the freedom of the individual should be imposed only to the extent and only for the purpose of ensuring that the scope for individual self-determination, particularly with respect to religious belief and everyday orientation, remains as large as possible. Newly arrived citizens therefore cannot legitimately be expected to adopt anything more than the norms and rules of a political culture that accords with a constitutional democracy. Such a democracy loses its credibility if it yields to the temptation to lay down cultural norms for religious or everyday life. A defining culture that demands more than loyalty to the basic political values of a secular constitutional democracy and a command of the language sufficient for the individual to form his or her own political opinions in the host country would represent a decisive step in the direction of a kind of cultural fundamentalism.

The respect for human dignity that lies at the heart of all religions and cultures enables individual development. We must be uncompromising in our adherence to the universality of human rights to which representatives of all cultures and states have pledged their commitment under the auspices of the United Nations and which, since it was adopted in 1949, have made the German Basic Law one of the world's most modern constitutions. Wherever it is called into question by the assertion of one culture over others, we must defend it, precisely so as not to deny minorities in other cultures of the world, which are alive everywhere, their right to assert their own religion and culture. Not infrequently, human rights are called into question in the name of cultural identity by those who refuse to recognise »other« or »new« elements in their own culture.

In contrast to this, the institutions of the state based on the rule of law and constitutional democracy demand an espousal of the basic values of human rights, the secular state and democracy. Anyone who challenges these has no legitimate place in a democracy, whatever religious or cultural justification they may advance. Thus neither co-existence, nor the dialogue of religions and cultures nor indeed tolerance can be without substantial grounding. Orientation towards a common political culture of democracy endows integration and coexistence with meaning and direction.

8. Integration in Everyday Life

The basic norms of a constitutional democracy thus stand at the centre of any integration policy, which at the same time is inextricably linked with the everyday lives of citizens. Research on political culture has shown that political culture is learned not so much at school, in seminars or by listening to major speeches but rather through the experience gathered in the course of everyday life. If liberal and social democracy in practice exclude some citizens, because their everyday experience is not one of inclusion as equals, of coexistence characterised by tolerance and of full recognition of their cultural identity, then it has failed to create the culture that forms its own *raison d'être* and that it requires for its own survival. If many members of our society feel that on account of their immigrant origins they are being treated as second- or third-class citizens in education, at work or in other crucial areas of social inclusion – or indeed in political parties – then democracy undermines its own principles.

An immigration society must guarantee immigrants equal opportunities at school, at work and in their living environments. To see that it does not one need only take a brief look at education statistics: Germans on average leave school with far higher qualifications than immigrants or than ethnic Germans born outside Germany. Two-thirds of boys from immigrant communities (including not only Turks and Arabs but also Greeks and Italians) leave school either with no qualifications at all or with only a general certificate of secondary education (*Hauptschulabschluss*). At the other end of the spectrum, this applies to only a third of German girls. Both male and female immigrants are less likely to receive a vocational training than Germans, although this does not apply to all immigrant groups and, despite being especially stigmatised, Turkish women and men do not always score worst here.

Particularly striking is the fact that the level of school achievement of girls and young women from immigrant communities has steadily risen in recent years, yet without them being rewarded with greater chances of vocational training or employment. Thus despite their efforts to do better at school, the rate of vocational training in this group has fallen! The likelihood of young immigrants entering employment after completing their training is 10 percent below that of young Germans. This applies particularly to young Turks. This is rarely due to the im-

migrant milieu itself, for immigrant parents support both their daughters' and sons' efforts to get an education (although in the case of a few smaller groups support for daughters is conditional on their educational efforts not coming into conflict with the family's traditional ideas about the role of women). Another big problem for women, and to a lesser extent for men, from immigrant communities is combining parenting with learning a profession, since young parents, particularly young mothers, often fail to obtain vocational qualifications. The more general issue of getting an education while looking after a family hence also has an integration policy dimension, insofar as it promotes the integration of young (German and non-German) mothers in the German education and training system (the so-called dual system) and full-time schooling.

As illustrated dramatically by the educational statistics, young immigrants are particularly prone to structural disadvantages, which they experience as a fundamental lack of opportunity, non-recognition or even exclusion. What they lack are not the resources, the effort or the good will for their own educational and professional success but the confirmation on a day-to-day level that their efforts – for themselves, for their children and for the country in which they live – are worthwhile and visible.

9. Islam Is Part of Germany

It is of primary importance for our society, for social integration and for the political culture of democracy that immigrants should not through ignorance, indifference, denial of social opportunities or intolerance be cast as »different« or »foreign« and thus excluded. This applies also, and indeed especially, to religion. With roughly 4.3 million believers, Islam is the second-largest religious community in Germany after Christianity. Five percent of the population are Muslims, 1.8 million German citizens are Muslims – these are facts that mainstream society must accept along with their full implications for political culture and everyday life.

In recent years Islam has become the subject of ill-informed debate, aggressive prejudice and latent or open resentment all over Europe, including in Germany. Muslims have been declared an imaginary collective onto which people project or give vent to their own fears, feelings of alienation and prejudices, usually without adverse

consequences. »Muslims« are thus regarded by conservative political parties as the embodiment of »foreignness« in contrast to an allegedly culturally homogeneous »Germanness«, in other words »our German defining culture«. Yet the contribution of Islam and the Muslims to German, European and Western culture in general is much larger than most people would suppose. The great works of European literature based on Indian, Persian, Arab and Islamic sources include Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan*. Without Islamic scholars and their preservation and transmission of text fragments we would probably know nothing of Aristotle's work. The most beautiful poems and songs of the Troubadours are modelled on or translated from the language of Islamic Andalusia. In mathematics we use Arabic numbers, while the influence of Islamic scholars on European scholarship in mathematics, optical physics and medicine has always been immense. Our languages contain many Turkish words, like yoghurt and coffee.

What is more, the world has many different forms of Islam, so it is by no means a homogeneous dogma with a single set of prescriptions for living or a uniform view of the relationship between society and the polity. Alongside more traditional Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia or Iran that might be regarded as the epitome of Islamic fundamentalism, Turkey, in particular, is a good example of a secular interpretation of Islam based on the separation of Church and State and of public life and private religious practice. In Turkey as well as in Bosnia and in a number of other partly or mainly Muslim countries such as Indonesia or Malaysia new forms of Islam – or forms derived from older undogmatic interpretations – are practiced that enable private religious orientations to be combined with an open form of public life and with respect for democracy, tolerance and human rights. Thus Islam in Germany and in its European neighbours is not only characterised by the much-discussed tendency towards fundamentalist attitudes and organisations but is also developing in the direction of a modern »Euro-Islam«.

If it is to achieve social and political cohesion, the Federal Republic of Germany requires practical answers to the new challenges it faces. Mainstream German society must not only ensure equal opportunities in employment and in living environments and lifeworlds, but also tolerance towards all religions and lifestyles based on religion.

The limits of tolerance are already clearly delineated by the recognition of the principles ensuing from the state based on the rule of law and those underlying basic rights and democracy.

In order to make tolerance tangible, so that all concerned feel that their rights and claims to a cultural identity are recognised and accepted, certain concrete practical questions must be answered in the form of a dialogue. These questions include issues like the building of mosques, Islamic places of burial, the care of elderly Muslims and the teaching of Islam in schools. Is there any reason why mosques should not be allowed at least once a week to call the faithful to prayer in the way and at the volume envisaged for a rite of this kind? Why shouldn't the Islamic religious community be recognised as a public body? Can't Turkish or Arabic be integrated into the school curriculum as recognised foreign languages? How should the wishes of some parents to have their children excused from certain parts of the school curriculum (e.g., swimming, gym or school trips) be addressed? To ask these questions openly would be a first step. A second step would require dialogue – a dialogue aimed at finding out who is afraid of what: why people practice their religion in a way that seems foreign and strange to others, why for some people the headscarf is important while others perceive it as a threat, why ideally all children should be able to participate in gym lessons and school journeys, what the obstacles and fears really are, and how they could be removed. These are all issues that can be resolved if there is goodwill on both sides. And it is these apparently petty details of everyday life that provide an indication of mutual understanding and recognition of others, in other words, that determine the extent to which a political culture of respect and tolerance exists.

10. A Culture of Active Integration

In order for the foreign not to remain foreign but to become a recognised other, and for that other not to be made foreign again we require more than just abstract information about other religions and cultures and a distanced tolerance. What we require is a culture of living together, of recognition – what one might call a political and social culture of integration. The prospects for such a culture in the Federal Republic of Germany are good, for Germany has already been a country of in-

and trans-migration for a long time – not only for the guestworkers actively recruited from 1954 onwards, but also for the many East Europeans in Germany's industrial regions, for the large numbers of refugees from regions that Germany lost through war, for the ethnic Germans who have recently been repatriated, and for the politically persecuted. In the post-war era Germany's federal states succeeded in integrating migrants from a variety of other regions, and reunification too has been a major integration achievement.

All these processes show in an exemplary way not only the contradictions and problems but also the great successes of integration processes. Integration is an achievement of both the state and society with its diverse milieus and cultures. Nation states and the regions of which they are comprised today embrace different language areas, religions and world views in single political units. The European Union brings together twenty-seven countries with numerous regional languages and many different constitutions; the euro as the common currency is valid from Finland to Malta. The European Union permits free movement of labour, and many Germans use this freedom to live and work abroad. Germans of all social classes and milieus are curious about foreign cultures and countries – for years now Germans have been among the world's greatest travellers. Not only many icons of sport or popular culture but also millions of ordinary working women and men living in Germany today migrated to the country at some point and have helped to make it one of the economically most powerful and culturally most interesting countries in the world.

While integration indisputably presents some problems, a complete refusal to integrate in the political and social community is an isolated phenomenon (and is not limited to immigrant groups). Nevertheless, living together in a multicultural society does not mean participating in a permanent street party with pizza, doner kebabs and shashlik. Encounters with the »foreign« in our society sometimes cause irritations, a lack of understanding, puzzlement or even fear. And this can happen in both directions, for some of the practices that we take for granted and hold dear are unfamiliar to other people and are sometimes even perceived as frightening. Thus some immigrants, but also some natives – i.e., both those who were »born« German and those who have »become« German – may at times feel like strangers in Germany, in their own country.

Yet different milieus are affected to differing extents by integration processes and the problems they entail. Among workers with few qualifications, for example, economic restructuring has led to an erosion of unskilled work with an enormous reduction in jobs in this sector. These people have experienced a considerable increase in competitive pressure in the form of wage dumping and temporary jobs. The sole chance of finding any work at all for many immigrants is to take a temporary part-time job, but this is the very sector where the German underclass is also subject to enormous pressure. Particularly at the lower end of society competition for jobs between Germans and immigrants is indeed perceived as a kind of struggle for existence. In the selective conservative education system general secondary schools (*Hauptschulen*) and special schools often deteriorate into »sink schools« where few children have German as a mother tongue, especially in socially disadvantaged areas. Children of better-off parents are not even confronted with his situation because they do not (have to) attend these schools. It is the inhabitants of particularly poor urban areas that have become immigrant districts and undergone major changes in the living and business environment who find out what integration really means in practice. These changes go largely unnoticed by those who live in well-to-do districts and do not have to cope with integration processes or problems at school, at work or in the neighbourhood.

Nevertheless, integration is a task for the whole of society, for all social classes, all milieus, all regions, and for mainstream society as much as for immigrants. And it is a task that cuts across all fields of politics. If policy-makers demand and require language competence they must equip schools accordingly. Those who work in education or in job-creation schemes require intercultural skills. To qualify people in this way takes not only financial resources, but also that account be taken of the perspectives, the experience and the cultural knowledge of those who are grouped together under the inadequate label of »immigrants«. These include those who originally came to Germany as labour migrants and have grown old here, those who are likely to arrive as a result of the free movement of labour in Europe, those third-generation immigrants many of whom not only hold German citizenship but also regard themselves as Germans and wish to be recognised as such, but also those who wish to retain their own cultural and religious identity and to be accepted.

Anyone who takes immigrants seriously as fellow citizens must also make room for them in their own party and allow them to assume leading functions, as the SPD is beginning to do actively. The humanist principle of equal dignity for all human beings postulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and on which everything in our society that is valuable and worth defending rests includes for us the task of ensuring the equality of all citizens in political life as well.

Before criticising the purported or real integration deficits of citizens of our country who belong to immigrant communities, mainstream society should ask itself the question whether in our schools, in our employment practices and in our living environments all that is necessary is being done to enable and facilitate integration. If we ask ourselves this question, it will quickly become apparent that our culture of recognition still exhibits major deficits. To overcome these deficits quickly is the most urgent obligation of an immigration society, which the Federal Republic of Germany indeed is and will remain.



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