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**Education or Indoctrination
Migration, Integration and Political Education**

**Does civic education foster obedience to regime norms
at the expense of critical engagement?**

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Comparing International Approaches to Educating New Citizens**

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The idea of multiculturalism has lost its appeal in the last years. The term multicultural society is still used in various respects, but not even the Green Party wants to be associated with the original utopia any longer. The idea failed too obviously all over Europe regarding certain sectors of immigrants. With it also the communitarian approach lost its reputation, so that new concepts had to be found. Today having a language in common, understanding common values and adapting to them are regarded as essential. Successful language training is seen as the key factor for an integration leading to the absence of discrimination and equal opportunities. Integration is the new political guideline of governments all over Europe.

Civic education can, of course, be indoctrination in totalitarian or fundamentalist regimes. Education in general and especially civic education of immigrants is always a process of enculturation into an existing society (or, as we have to admit, in some cases into an imaginary society, which people love to see as reality). Nevertheless, however, integration always takes place in a surrounding which is among others constituted by a system of values, in our case these are modern liberal western societies founded on values based on human rights. Integration is never achieved in a vacuum, and there is always a mixture of values you have to accept as immigrant. If you want to achieve equal rights and equal opportunities in the end, you have to stick to the common basis and common set of values, otherwise you will have inequality forever leading to social unrest.

The basic demand of an immigrant today is to actively integrate himself into the existing majority, which normally does not mean that you lose your roots, give up essential traditions or lose your identity. It does not necessarily mean assimilation, even if this is often the result readily accepted by both sides. It is the successful avoidance of two negative extremes (the loss of identity in an unconditional assimilation and a self-imprisonment in religious-cultural ghetto) leading to a fruitful compromise.

The question, how much difference, how much cultural diversity a society can tolerate or has to accept, triggered violent arguments in the past, but with the fading away of the idea of a functioning multiculturalism and, I may add, the rise of fundamentalist Islamic terrorism this has calmed down.

European societies, which have historically always seen peaceful or violent interchanges of populations, changed dramatically within the last 50 years. As we live in tolerant, liberal societies, we are ready to accept compatible cultural habits of immigrants in the future as we have in the past. The definition, however, of what is compatible must not be decided by the migrants, but in good faith and tolerant benevolence by the country of immigration. So in some respects educating immigrants might in fact mean to make them give up parts of what they brought with them, if these habits or traditions are against the system of values, which is the basis of that specific society.

The vast majority of the immigrants is very ready to accept that, enjoys the greater individual freedom in their new home country and the better economic perspectives, but problems still remain with specific groups.

In democracies civic education is always aimed at forming critical and responsible citizens who accept the constitutional frame of values based on human rights. So the alternative in the past was not the above question, but rather, shall we further have a Laissez-faire –attitude and just ignore the immigrants who keep coming or shall the government play an active role to foster integration combined with the demand that immigrants have to engage in the process themselves actively? Only recently the latter has been decided all over Europe.

The situation in the European Countries varies very much. Great Britain has a more communitarian tradition. The majority of its immigrants came as Commonwealth citizens from the Indian subcontinent. They were mostly English speaking and used to British life style. They formed communities based on ethnicity and founded their own subsystems including a network of social institutions. The Dutch had a so called “Column-Society”, traditionally strongly divided along religious lines mainly Calvinists, Protestant sects and Catholics into subsystems. Immigrants easily fitted into that pattern. In France North Africans, mostly Algerians, often came as French citizens, or it was easy for them to obtain citizenship. France ignored the immigrants as they were French and spoke French and therefore were supposed to be good citizens of the Republic. Germany has a large Turkish immigrant population. Germany pretended for a long time not to have immigrants at all and thought of them as guest workers, who might go back one day. Apart from the “guest workers”, who came to stay, Germany has as well a strong population of immigrants of long ago German origin from Russia. All European countries have among others their special immigrant population: Belgium Moroccans, Italy Ethiopians and Somalis, Spain Moroccans, The Netherlands Indonesians, people from Suriname that is former Dutch Guyana, Turks and Moroccans etc.

In spite of the differences, though, you have the same development in the last years everywhere, ghettos have formed, where immigrants live within their ethnic, religious and language group with limited outside contact, just as Samuel Huntington describes in his controversial book “Who are we?”, published in Germany recently, or Victor Davis Hanson in his no less controversial “Mexifornia – A state of Becoming”. The young third generation of immigrants suffers from high unemployment rates, they are quite often less able to speak the language of the country than even the second generation, they show a high rate of school dropouts, they show a comparatively high rate of criminality and as far as the Muslims are concerned part of the young generation shows a tendency to join fundamentalist Islamic groups.

It is in Europe just as in California. Some migrant groups, e.g. Poles or Russians, Italians or Spanish have actively integrated into the respective society on their own within one or two generations in the past,. But this is dif-

ferent with a considerable part of the Muslim immigrants in Europe. This part more or less resists integration and has the tendency to form parallel societies within the European countries, of course intensified by a certain rejection of the majority, long term asylum seeker status, an illegal situation, social discrimination etc.

One of the main factors fostering segregation regarding Muslim families is the inferior status of women within large parts of the Muslim society combined with their even greater lack of language competence compared with the men, preventing integration of the families and crippling the education of their children and their future chances.

The trend in Government policy in France, the Netherlands, Great Britain and Germany is evidently moving into the same direction. In most European Countries the policy towards immigrants has changed recently or is changing at the moment. Immigrants have to accept the basic values and norms of a country. Critical engagement of the immigrants is something hopefully achieved at the end of a long and strenuous process of integration. The new approach is a double strategy: an active integration policy of the state on the one hand and demanding immigrants to integrate actively on the other hand - or in case of conflict, send them back from where they came.

The offer to help with integration is now counterbalanced by using part of the repressive arsenal of the state to curb activities of fundamentalist who aim at undermining integrative efforts: e.g. searching suspicious homes and mosques from the beginning, bugging suspects in bigger numbers, have fundamentalist organizations observed by the authorities responsible for the protection of the constitution. Working permits and entrance requirements for Imams become more demanding regarding language, than they were in some countries. France, Great Britain; Italy and Spain have started more or less successfully to send hate-preaching imams, who work actively to hinder integration, to the land of their origin. That is partly theory, though, because fundamentalists successfully exploit the European rule of law, and European courts have prohibited expulsion in various cases, at least for the moment. France e.g. prepares new laws. Apart from that, Muslim fundamentalists are quite often citizens of the European countries or have unlimited residential status in the meantime. There is no chance of integrating them and no chance of getting rid of them. There is little chance of controlling them in our liberal societies and little chance of prohibiting fundamentalists or Islamists to foster and form parallel societies with their own rules and even Scharia-laws.

So, for the methods used, the help offered, the demands asked, the overall proof of success has still to be produced.

To achieve long term success European governments think they face two different tasks. One is to educate newcomers to help them to integrate, obtain comparable opportunities and find their specific way in their new country, and prevent their being drawn into existing or forming parallel so-

cities. This task is attacked in several countries at the moment with a new set of laws and funds.

The second task is to find ways and means to foster the integration of people who have lived in the country for several years, who even may have the citizenship since a long time, and who are still - motivated by whatever cause - ghetto oriented and not integrated. Here we are only at the beginning.

Europe has no common approach to the problem, there are no common concepts. Each country has its own policy, but ideas seem to converge. Up to now we do not have something like the pledge of allegiance, but some countries will have something similar in the future. The British government is preparing a law, that requires language skills and includes a contract the immigrants have to sign, the French want to introduce an oath on the constitution of the republic. I doubt, though, that Germany will introduce something like that. And surely no country will have the words "under God" in it, which are part of the US-oath since Flag Day 1954.

France, Britain and Germany will set up compulsory integration courses for newcomers teaching language and basic knowledge about the country. Those who do not attend, will be sanctioned in Germany e.g. by having their financial support cut down. Attending these courses might also be a prerequisite for keeping ones resident permit. The government will pay for the courses, but whoever is able to do so has to pay part of it.

In various countries governments are also considering the needs of those who live in there for a long time already without being able to speak the native language properly and without knowledge, education and any chance of emancipation. Also for those not integrated long term residents educational projects are planned.

In Germany the legislative has recently passed an immigration und integration law, which also defines the future educational requirements. Apart from the far greater number of language lessons (600 lessons) which contents, however, are also aimed at integration in general, 30 lessons are particularly set aside for civic education of the immigrants. In July 2004 the Office of Migration, Refugees and Integration of the Interior Department set principles and had two curricula drafts drawn up, fixing the contents of a 30 lesson course for immigrants with sufficient German and a 30-lesson-course for immigrants, who have still to acquire basic German both aimed at managing everyday life, knowledge about political structures, the legal system, history and culture, values and traditions in Germany. Six aims constitute the frame, a conference paper describes the intent of the civic education course and its principles.

The civic education course is to impart

- *understanding of the German state system and knowledge of the institutions immediately important for the immigrant and foster competent judgement of the political process in Germany,*

- *positive identification with the host country and its state system. (Here you have an appeal to take over regime norms, if you will.),*
- *knowledge about rights and duties as inhabitant and citizen of the country. On the one hand the immigrants have to understand that they are protected by the rule of law, on the other hand they have to acknowledge that they have undeniable duties regarding their host country,*
- *the ability to find ones way without the help of the state*
- *the ability to take part in society and participate in the political process after the course has ended. This will only be possible if an immigrant knows about ways of life and traditions in his host country and understands the norms and values, on which they are based,*
- *intercultural competence, so that immigrants are capable of adjusting to everyday life needs and are able to relativize their own cultural background, without losing their identity.*

(Horst Harnischfeger: Rahmenkonzept für den Orientierungskurs im Rahmen des Integrationskurses nach dem Zuwanderungsgesetz, Erster Entwurf, Juli 2004)

I can follow these principles. The problem in my view is that the 30 lesson curriculum drawn from these guidelines is very far stretched, partly highflying and overburdened with contents, if you look closely behind the headings. Nearly all important items of historical-political education are bound together in one big bundle. A very well trained upper high school class would surely be overtaxed with it, or most contents can only be touched on very superficially and stay empty clichés.

The key words for the official 30-lesson-course are: *The federal system in Germany, constitutional institutions of the Federal Republic and the states, separation of powers, local autonomy, elections, opportunities to influence the political process via members of parliament, political parties and associations, rule of law, government bound to legality, your own legal possibilities to pursue your interests, the social obligation of the state and the social security system, trade union rights, the system of basic laws, human dignity, the right to develop your own personality, equality of man and woman, free thought, religious freedom, the rights of families, the right to assemble peacefully, duties of citizens or inhabitants to pay taxes, the draft system, the European Union including its development from the beginning, the history of Germany including Nazism, boundaries after the Second World War, the development of the FRG and the GDR after the war, the building of the wall, the political process between east-west and the reunification, history of migration in Germany including Huguenots and Poles, flight and expulsion during and after the Second World War, workers migration since the sixties, the new Immigration laws, social market economy, protection standards at work, social security, different conceptions of man, understanding of the concept of time in Europe versus Asia and Islam, understanding of norms and laws and rules and of the duty to obey to them in Germany, the role of the bureaucracy, liking for neatness and tidiness and discipline, religious diversity and mutual respect, rejection of missionary approaches and the demand to know the truth in*

religious matters, traditions of cultural diversity in Germany, strict separation of private, public and occupational spheres, national symbols.

(Gruppe 31/AG 311 Knipping – 29.7.2004 , Konzeption Sonderorientierungskurs A, gem. § 44 Abs. 3 AufenthG – für Zuwanderer mit „ausreichenden Sprachkenntnissen“, Konzeption Orientierungskurs B, gem. § 43 Abs. 3 AufenthG – für Zuwanderer zur Erlangung „ausreichender Sprachkenntnisse“)

One would will scarcely be able to fulfill these requirements in the given time. The authors of the guidelines write audaciously that they want an orientation at discourse and reflection regarding the teaching methods. But this abundance of contents with a cornucopia of details must necessarily lead to a strongly teacher- centered purely informing teaching with little if any lasting results, even if the authors ask for authentic examples from the background of the immigrants and German everyday life and propose to use a variety of modern media. This type of teaching might in practice indeed come very close to indoctrination, even if I consider it quite unsuccessful, as most indoctrination is.

What could be a solution? The articles of the constitution will be forgotten within a couple of minutes. The names of the German states will not last. The details of German past will have no meaning to an Iraqi immigrant. The downfall of the Berlin Wall will not be of importance for a Moroccan girl born 1986 marrying a cousin from Hamburg in 2006.

Let me develop the outlines of an alternative, which aims directly at the system and standard of values:

Immigrants have to understand the specific definition of the values in their host country, values, which they normally have known all their lives albeit in another context. And they have to understand that this process of integration, learning and understanding is essential for their own life, their own future. A limited amount of systematic knowledge, facts and details can be added, where it seems necessary. But the main carrier of contents have to be stories, cases and situations, which are to be analyzed, compared and reflected with the intended result, that people from other cultures understand the habits, traditions, esteem, judgment, attitudes and values which accompany their future life in Germany.

So the items on the agenda should be (one can easily argue about the order or the completeness):

- What is integration? What does it mean to me (to be reflected at the end of the course again) ?
- Individual human rights and the demands of the society, the state, the family, the neighborhood, the ethnic or religious community, private and public spheres, priorities in this society
- Human dignity and the ban on discrimination, courage of one's convictions Equality of women and men

- **Critical loyalty to your society, your state, your community, acceptance as your common task (We are the people. You will be part of it. What will be your contribution to civil society?)**
- **Political participation**
- **Civil society and the role of the public**
- **Rule of law, commitment to non-violence and the role of the state**
- **Solidarity, social system, self-responsibility**
- **Intercultural open-mindedness, cultural conscience, differences and points of common. What might be your contribution to the common cultural wealth? What priorities are to be set?**
- **How the Federal Republic of Germany became what it is today (short information about a few key aspects)**
- **Who is a German? (You will be a German! You will be a citizen of the European Union.) Clichés, symbols, consciousness**
- **Contemplation: the framework of individual and common freedom, peace and security, work and income: Why did you come here? Why did you choose this culture, this way of life? What are you going to contribute to the common cause? What does integration and living in Germany mean to you? How will you make efforts to meet the aims?**

All over Europe the immigration laws become considerably more restrictive and more demanding and the laws to send people home or where they came from are extended. In liberal Denmark you have to be able to speak Danish fluently and be fully integrated before you have any chance to apply for citizenship. The traditionally very liberal Netherlands want to introduce a law, that requires that possible immigrants have to learn Dutch before they come into the country. Illegal immigrants shall be asked to leave the country on their own or they have to live in camps before they are sent away under guard. From now on citizenship examinations will be required in Great Britain, Germany, The Netherlands, Denmark and other countries. So far at least the theory. Everywhere in Europe we have vast illegally resident populations. We will see what the new laws look like in practice.

Of course, this education can still be either indoctrination or education towards a critical engagement in a civil society. What it is in practice, is decided in class. And the results of all laws are decided in every day life. But if we are not successful, our society might disintegrate more and more because just as in California the waves of immigration in Europe have changed into a strong and steady inflow of immigrants from all around the globe especially from Muslim countries influencing our society a bit every day.