

**The Politics of Otherness —  
Constructing the Autonomy of Political Subjects in the Migrant Minorities as a way of  
Reforming Western European Democracies<sup>1</sup>**

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## 1. Introduction

The integration of migrant groups within the respective majority political systems is already seen in Western Europe as the best way to reduce xenophobia, racism and ethno-cultural discrimination. With differing rates of success some countries have tested the alternative of strengthening the political participation of groups with migrant origins. But Western European democracies have had very great difficulties in pushing back the frontiers of their political systems and adapting their rules to the different political expectations of the new subjects. No Western European country has achieved an articulate political “melting pot” according to its specific characteristics. Ruud Koopmans<sup>2</sup> explains this relative failure through the effects of the predominant Nation’s images on the definition and structural positioning of migrants. In several comparative studies among Western European countries (mainly between Great Britain, Netherlands, France and Germany) he has attempted to establish a causal interrelation between the predominant Nation’s image, the definition of citizenship and the political mobilization of migrants. Comparing Great Britain, Netherlands and Germany he and Stratham put it in the following way:

There are significant cross-national differences between the levels and forms of transnational claims-making by migrants and minorities, and these are best

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<sup>1</sup> We thank Prof. Dr. K.-Peter Fritzsche, from the UNESCO-Chair for Human Rights Education at the Institute for Political Sciences at the University of Magdeburg, for his permanent support and scientific accompaniment.

<sup>2</sup> Ruud Koopmans, “Deutschland und seine Einwanderer: ein gespaltenes Verhältnis”, in Max Kaase & Günher Schmid (eds.), *Eine lernende Demokratie – 50 Jahre Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, (Berlin: WZB-Jahrbuch, 1999), pp. 165–200; Ruud Koopmans, “Partizipation der Migranten, Staatsbürgerschaft und Demokratie: nationale und lokale Perspektiven”, in Marga Pröhl & Hauke Hartmann (eds.), *Strategien der Integration – Handlungsempfehlungen für eine interkulturelle Stadtpolitik*, (Berlin: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2001), pp. 103–111; Ruud Koopmans & Paul Statham, “Migration and Ethnic Relations as a Field of Political Contention: An Opportunity Structure Approach”, in Ruud Koopmans & Paul Statham (eds.), *Challenging Immigration and Ethnic Relations Politics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 13–56; Ruud Koopmans & Paul Statham, “How national citizenship shapes transnationalism. A comparative analysis of migrant claims-making in Germany, Great Britain and the Netherlands”, in *REMI* Vol. 17, No. 2 (2001), pp. 63–100.

explained by the type of citizenship which a country uses for politically including migrants in its national community. Thus ethnic exclusionist Germany defines its former guest worker migrants as “foreigners”, and this is how they see themselves, directing their energies into “transplanted homeland” affairs, much more than their British and Dutch counterparts. In contrast, cultural pluralist Britain has made significant efforts to shape its resident former colonial subjects into nationalized “minorities”, and they have responded by voicing their demands for further symbolic and political gains in the nation-state. The case of the Netherlands sits between Germany and Britain, but strongly underwrites our primary thesis that transnational claims-making is best understood as a dependent variable of national citizenship. In the Netherlands a guest worker hangover plus a state sponsorship of ethnicity and nationality as the basis of incorporation of, and resource allocation to minorities, has led Dutch minorities to retain strong identifications with their ethnicities and nationalities, albeit to a lesser extent than in Germany. At the same time regarding the direction of the claims of Dutch minorities they are much closer to their British counterparts, and focus strongly on their position in the country of settlement.<sup>3</sup>

Synthesizing his three models<sup>4</sup> we can present it as following: 1) the “French model” which places the equality of all citizens above their differences of origin and attempts to assimilate them in the national community, 2) the “British-Dutch model” which recognizes the equality of all ethno-cultural groups supporting the democratic state and promotes their autonomous development through the transference of state faculties to them, and 3) the “German model”, applied until 1998 treating migration principally with the instruments of labour and social policies.

Koopmans’ approach means that the key to understanding the problems of integration and participation of migrants in the political systems of their new settlement countries lies in considering the interrelation between the national self-understanding and the migration policies of the systems.

In the following, we affirm that it is impossible for the groups originating from migration in the last 40 years to integrate themselves in the political systems of their new countries, if the respective states do not change their ways of treating these groups. After we have applied Koopmans’ theses to some German examples we put under discussion the ability of Western European states to radically change their points of view in relation to the integration of migrants in their political systems. It is not a matter of “including” migrants into unchangeable national models, but of changing the national models in order to make them capable of adapting themselves to the new conditions created by migration. It would require the government and government officials to begin thinking in another way, *i.e.*, from the

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<sup>3</sup> Ruud Koopmans & Paul Statham, *loc. cit.* (note 2), p. 94.

<sup>4</sup> Ruud Koopmans (2001), *loc. cit.* (note 2), pp. 63–99

periphery of the political systems to their centres. We name this new type of political thinking “Politics of Otherness”.

The assimilative policy of the “French model”, in which migrants very easily received French citizenship up to three years ago, but were never recognized in its peculiar cultural background, and the tolerating policy of the “British-Dutch model”, as well as the head-in-the-sand-policy of former German Governments all failed in the attempt or denied the necessity for integrating migrants in their political systems. In the last few years, in some cases, the situation has got somewhat worse because of economic transnationalisation, the dismantling of welfare states and through cultural de-localization.

Through increasing spatial mobility and better communications migrants can nowadays live simultaneously in diverse relational contexts and construct more complex identities. But these changes bring about contradictory consequences. As Claus Leggewie put it:

Insofar as these “transmigrants” are increasingly rooted in two societies, the paria-existence of the >marginal man< (Robert Ezra Park) >between two cultures<, as we knew it in the classical migration research, loses its dramatism. The already known national framework for social and political integration vanishes. (...) The chances for ethnical mobilization are growing because the expectations of structural and identifying assimilation increased, but the second — and probably also the third — generation cannot fulfil the demands that are being put on it in the immigration process. What is more, if the majority society add open hostile attitudes and latent or institutional discriminations, also mistakes of the political elites and opinion leaders, it is >rational< if the second generation reinforces its identitarian reactions.<sup>5</sup>

These (self-)ethnization phenomena in the social groups with migrant origins, puts into question how far we can continue to see these groups as migrant ones. If one considers that the population groups we are researching have already been living for four or five decades in the mentioned Western European countries, it might be very difficult to continue naming them migrants. Would it not be better to talk about ethno-cultural minorities in these cases?<sup>6</sup> If we consider the minority-concept as an ethnological category, we can use Heckmann’s description of the transformation of migrant communities in Germany into ethnic minorities eleven years ago:

In the Federal Republic of Germany live about 5 million foreigners. Considering the pluralisation of Germany’s population, the foreigner-status continues to stay very close to that of ethnical minority. Only the “old” ethnic minorities, as Sorbs, Danes

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<sup>5</sup> Claus Leggewie, “Integration und Segregation”, in Klaus J. Bade & Rainer Münz (eds.), *Migrationsreport 2000*, (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2000), pp. 104–105. Translation by E.J. Vior.

<sup>6</sup> Faruk S. Şen, Marina Sauer & Dirk Halm, 1 – *Intergeneratives Verhalten und (Selbst-)Ethnisierung von türkischen Zuwanderern*, (Essen: Report of the Zentrum für Türkei-Studien [Centre for Research on Turkey] for the Independent Commission on Migration, 2001).

and partially Sintis and Jews combine the German citizenship with their minority status. Through becoming naturalized former foreigners without passport, migrant workers and refugees have also combined the German citizenship with a minority status. (...) The new ethnic minorities which arose through the immigration constitute together with the old ethnic minorities a structure characterized by the combination of few, relatively great groups, and a great number of little and very little minorities, which have relatively unstable basic structures for their ethnical interaction. (...)<sup>7</sup>

Looking at this question from the perspective of the political sciences, we can put this concept in the context of state policies:

In Europe we understand under “minorities” national groups who have their vital space at the interior of a Nation under the political control of another national group which constitutes the population’s majority.<sup>8</sup>

On the one hand we consider that the predominant nation’s images affect the identity-building processes of migrant groups through the linkages between its citizenship-concepts and the government’s policies for the integration of migrants in the political systems. On the other hand we also take into account the self-ethnization phenomena developing since the beginning of the 1990s everywhere in Western Europe, a process which has been confirmed by the already mentioned studies carried out in Germany. Thus one can put the question, how far has the German State induced and is still inducing the building of an ethno-cultural minority in the population groups originated in Turkey?

As the German definition of what constitutes a minority is very restrictive, this question is already answered in a negative sense by government and government officials:

Except the German Sinti and Roma, the members of the groups protected by the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities which have the German citizenship (the national minorities of the Danes, Sorbs, German Sintis and Romas as well as the Frisians’ group in Germany [...]) have their hereditary settlement areas only in certain *Länder* of the Federal Republic of Germany. These are the *Länder* Schleswig-Holstein, the Free State Saxony, Brandenburg and Lower Saxony.<sup>9</sup>

(...)

The following groups of German citizens which have traditionally settled in the Federal Republic of Germany and have been living there in hereditary settlement areas, but differ from the majority population through their own language, culture and history, thus through their own identity, and are willing to conserve this identity, are considered in Germany as minorities. The four mentioned groups include all groups with an own identity differing from the majority population which are

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<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Heckmann, *Ethnische Minderheiten, Volk und Nation*, (Stuttgart: Enke Verlag, 1992), p. 10. (Translated by E. Vior.)

<sup>8</sup> Petrus Han, *Soziologie der Migration*, (Stuttgart: Lucius & Lucius Verlagsgesellschaft, 2000), p. 315. (Translated by E. Vior.)

<sup>9</sup> Bundesministerium des Innern: Erster Bericht der Bundesrepublik Deutschland gemäß Artikel 25 Absatz 1 des Rahmenübereinkommens des Europarates zum Schutz Nationaler Minderheiten, Berlin 1999, p. 3. (Translated by E. Vior.)

traditionally settled in Germany. (The Jewish community in Germany does not consider itself as a minority, but as a religious community.)<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, we cannot speak of a “Turkish minority” in Germany in a legal sense, but as many elements in this group are indicating a tendency to self-identification as a separate culture or as a sub-culture, we have to consider them as constitutive aspects in the building of political subjectivities. We shall not continue here to discuss the minority concept, but it is already clear to us, that the combination of the policies regarding the groups with a migrant background, the self-ethnization of these strata and the new transnationalisation are contributing to the consolidation of group identities, which are the bases for any policy attempting to integrate them in Germany’s political system. Only by taking into account this identity-building process can one realistically try to expand the democratic system through integrating groups originating from migration.

As researchers at the UNESCO Chair for Human Rights Education at the Institute for Political Sciences we are always concerned with the structural position and the function of human rights in political life. We are not only interested in its protective function relating to human dignity, but also in its normative one relating to the goals and directions for the development of political systems. From this point of view, we put forward here the question of how to support and promote the political participation of the population groups originated in the migration from Turkey, from the perspective of human rights. Therefore, we are relating our hypotheses to the definition by Christian Scherer-Leydecker on cultural identity in Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR<sup>11</sup>):

Summarizing, we can confirm that in the context of Art. 27 of the ICCPR, culture means a coherent system of components of human way of life, either material or immaterial, which are not determined by biological heritage, being repeatedly put into practice, experimented and transferred by a defined group. Because of their symbolic character or axiological status they are used by the group members as orientation in their identity search.<sup>12</sup>

Keeping this definition in mind and considering the specific cultural and political manners of the political socialization of our target-group, we can put the main question of our study in the following way: *Under which conditions would it be possible for the Muslim youth in Germany to build up a democratic political subject able to participate autonomously in Germany’s political system?*

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> Concluded 16 December 1966. 999 UNTS 171.

## 2. Our Study

From October 2002 to February 2003, at the Institute of Political Sciences of the University of Magdeburg, we conducted a *Survey on the democratic initiatives in the civic education of Muslim youths in Germany* for the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs.

At the beginning, we were given the task to survey the “democratic organisations of Muslim youth”. From the point of view of human rights this means to survey the existing initiatives for their ability to support the independent articulation and organisation of these young people, both face to face with the majority population and the German State. The principal purpose of this articulation and organisation should be the implementation of the following rights: freedom of opinion, of assembly and of religion (Articles 18–21 of the ICCPR), right to work (Article 6 of the ICESCR<sup>13</sup>), social support and education (Articles 11, 12, 13, and 15 of the ICESCR). These rights affect directly the existential situation of the young people with a migration background.

We proceeded on the normative assumption that democratic political education attempts to set up human rights as a conscious basis of autonomous actions for both individuals and collectives. It appears then appropriate to closely examine the initiatives in the civic education of young Muslims with reference to the human rights specifically concerning this group. Therefore we wanted to judge selected examples of initiatives in the civic education of young Muslim people through their ability to set up together with this social group a community of communication, norms and values based on human rights.

Considering the fact that on the one hand, although human rights are universal and indivisible always appearing in particular forms and repeatedly submitted to a balance of goods [juridical term], one has to put the emphasis on the priorities set by the target groups in their civic education. And on the other hand, that human rights always imply obligations which the state or the international community has to fulfil. Therefore we also directed our attention toward the demands of the young people from the majority society. In our research, beside the normative function, the reference to human rights then fulfils an epistemological function.

When we began to research, we discovered that in Germany there was no “democratic Muslim youth” as an active political subject, because from the beginning of the migration to

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<sup>12</sup> Christian Scherer-Leydecker, *Minderheiten und sonstige ethnische Gruppen. Eine Studie zur kulturellen Identität im Völkerrecht*, (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 1997), p. 305. (Translated by E.Vior.)

<sup>13</sup> International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, concluded 16 December 1966. 993 UNTS 3.

Germany in the early 1950s to 1998 there was no official migration policy in Germany.<sup>14</sup> There was no perception of the presence of migrants in German society at all, for the majority of the people there were only “guest workers”, whom the government and the majority society expected, would return home after some years. But instead they remained in Germany and had children who also remained “foreigners”. In this way the psychological resistances against the formulation of a migration policy led to a disguise of the existence of the migrants themselves.

For this reason in the past there has not been any interest in organizing the Muslim youth or to allow them to participate actively in politics and social affairs, or elect their own representatives and defend their interests face to face with the authorities.

As a result of our preparatory investigation on the state of the scientific research in this area we changed the direction of our survey in such a way that we went on to look for democratic initiatives in the civic education work with young people with Muslim backgrounds. We decided ourselves on a pragmatic approach. First of all, we regarded as democratic all initiatives, independent of their upholders, which educate these young people towards autonomy. Secondly, we understood the subject group of this study, in this study, in a broad mode: it covered all young people between 14 and 18 years, which directly or indirectly experience or have experienced a socialization shaped by Islamic values.

In spite of this pragmatic decision we are conscious of the necessity to define precisely what we understand as Muslim youth in Germany. We hope, nevertheless, to help define this object through this contribution.

With this approach we took an explicit distance from the equation Migrant=Turk=Muslim=Strange<sup>15</sup>, which shapes the prevailing conceptions in this question in the majority society. Most people with migrant background in Germany originate directly or indirectly from Turkey, but many of them were born and grew up in the Federal Republic of Germany, and a majority has only indirect relations to the original homeland. They cannot be defined as Turks. By researching into the scientific literature on the living conditions of the young people examined we found that there were extreme differences in the material and legal situation on one hand, and the perception of their own and their relations to the majority

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<sup>14</sup> Ruud Koopmans, 1999, *loc. cit* (note 2); Andreas Goldberg, Dirk Halm & Martina Sauer (eds.): *Migrationsbericht des Zentrums für Türkeistudien*, (Muenster: Lit-Verlag, 2002); Claus Leggewie, *loc. cit.* (note 5), pp. 104–105.

society on the other hand.<sup>16</sup> This makes it impossible to consider them uniformly as migrants. The religious experiences of these groups take so many various forms that they cannot be easily summarized into the category Muslim. For this reason, and also because of the typology we were using (see below), we intentionally surveyed two projects without explicit religious background, and an additional one which is on its own avowed a Muslim initiative.

The objections already mentioned induced us to give up the search for a definition of the empirical category “Muslim youth”, but instead to try to draw the outline of this group by concentrating on the effects of the social and political practices which have it as an object.<sup>17</sup>

Beside the state instruments, in the course of the last four decades a multiplicity of private, mixed and religious initiatives oriented to the social, religious and educational assistance of immigrants has developed. In addition, there have emerged various self-organisations of the immigrant milieu. These initiatives, working with the young people with Muslim backgrounds, all seem to be trying to bring the young people into the majority society. They bring very few impulses for achieving integration through promoting the reform of the entire German society. Their relations with other initiatives, trying to bring forward the integration through promoting the reform of the majority society and the state, are weakly developed. Representatives of the immigrant self-organisations did not even understand that they can and should enter into a political dialogue with the state and the representatives of the majority society in order to achieve these changes.

In our project we examined and compared three examples of democratic initiatives in the civic education work with young people with Muslim backgrounds in Germany. As we could not define the target group in itself, we tried to approach it by looking at the effects of the social and political practices which have them as an object:

- The attitudes of the majority society, which still regards Islam as a strange phenomenon in German society could be synthesized through the following equation: Migrant=Muslim

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<sup>15</sup> For this equation see Höhne Thomas, “Zur Theorie und Praxis dekonstruktiver Kritik am Beispiel des Kulturdiskurses”, in Johannes Angermüller, Katharina Bunzmann & Christina Rauch, (eds.) *Reale Fiktionen, fiktive Realitäten* (Hamburg: Lit-Verlag, 2000), pp. 48–49.

<sup>16</sup> Andreas Goldberg, Dirk Halm & Martina Sauer, *loc. cit* (note 14); Martina Sauer, *Kulturell-religiöse Einstellungen und sozioökonomische Lage junger türkischer Migranten in der Bundesrepublik: eine empirische Untersuchung*, (Essen: Zentrum für Türkeistudien [Centre for Research on Turkey], 2000); Faruk Şen, Martina Sauer & Dirk Halm, *loc. cit* (note 6); Zentrum für Türkei-Studien [Centre for Research on Turkey] (ed.), *Das ethnische und religiöse Mosaik der Türkei und seine Reflexionen auf Deutschland*, (Muenster: Lit Verlag, 1998).

<sup>17</sup> We are applying here an approach developed by Johannes Angermüller and Katharina Bunzmann which combines the critic with the de-construction of political discourses (Angermüller, Bunzmann & Rauch (eds.), *loc. cit.* (note 15).

=Turk=Strange. In this way the migration problem is being reduced to a religious question in the political discourse and through its treatment as “strange” placed outside of the society of the Federal Republic. The integration question is thereby simplified: The immigrants have to bring themselves individually in and adapt to the values of the majority society.

- The interest conflicts between Germany and the countries from which the Muslim immigrants came, *i.e.*, mainly Turkey and other Islamic states, as well as the political-religious forces struggling in Germany for influence. There are visible interrelations between the changing processes in the Turkish policy and the relations between the German State and/or the majority society on the one side and the population with Turkish socialization on the other side.<sup>18</sup> Many people with migrant background are inclined to assume the adscription as foreign/strange, mentioned above, as a positive identity characteristic and therefore to adopt religious and/or ethno-cultural images for their identity building.<sup>19</sup> Thus they only widen the gap with their environment: They live in a social context, which they keep on finding strange and are trying to find a sense of life by idealizing far societies and communities, which they often do not know and which are only partially compatible with the *Lebensführung* and the attitudes which they have developed in Germany. From this basis fractured personalities and group identities are developing which make the development of an independent (*i.e.*, democratic) political will more difficult.
- The orientation and the situation of the Muslim organisations in Germany, which frequently influence, in a negative sense, the civic education of young people with Muslim background through their attitudes towards the democratic order, their foreign relations, goals, organisational forms and personnel.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> At this point we are referring both to the complicated negotiations about the possible integration of Turkey into the EU, which were accomplished by encountered pressures on the situation of the population groups with Turkish origin in Germany, as well as to the mutual influences between the participation of an Islamic party in the Turkish Government between 1995 and 1997 and its effects on the treatment of the Islamic organisation Milli Görüs by the German Government.

<sup>19</sup> Ahmet Bayaz, “Das Türkeibild der Deutschen und das Deutschlandbild der Türken”, in Hans-Georg Wehling (ed.), *Türkei, Politik-Gesellschaft-Wirtschaft*, (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 2002), p. 202.

<sup>20</sup> For the Islamic organisations in Germany see Albert Reiner, “Mehrheitsgesellschaft und türkisch-sunnitischen Migranten”, 1998, (available at <http://www.uni-muenster.de/PeaCon/wuf/wf-98/9841000m.htm>); Nils Feindt-Riggers & Udo Steinbach, *Islamische Organisationen in Deutschland – Eine aktuelle Bestandsaufnahme und Analyse*, (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, 1997); Gerdien Jonker, *Eine Wellenlänge zu Gott – Der “Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentre” in Europa*, (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2002); Thomas Lemmen, *Muslimen in Deutschland – Eine Herausforderung für*

- The influence of the social, economic and cultural situations of the young people with Muslim backgrounds on their efforts toward autonomous identity building.

Considering these four factors mentioned we located the development of democratic identities among young people with Muslim background in Germany in the contact area between the majority society and the social groups developing from immigration.

In the following section we define our research object and hypothesis, as well as describe the applied typology and the method of the field research.

## 2.1 Defining the Research Object

From the beginning it was the concern of this research project to look for initiatives, which strengthen democratic, in this case integration-promoting tendencies among young people with a Muslim background. Through preparing this research we now know however: 1) that there are no “democratic Islamic organisations” according to the understanding of the constitution prevailing in Germany;<sup>21</sup> 2) that the subject “Muslim youth”, due to the different approaches of this milieu to migration, life and religion is nonexistent. We have only a multiplicity of groups of adolescents, which are seen as “strange” by the majority society and as such are treated as strange politically, administratively and legally. In fact some of the existing sociological and demographic investigations studying the structural living conditions of these groups have contributed explanations to their existential situation.<sup>22</sup> However, they cannot outline the contours of these layers due to the constantly ongoing processes of differentiation and integration as well as the self-ethnization phenomena. It appears that many scientific studies take over the equation Migrant=Muslim=Turk=Stranger without critical thought and concentrate their work on the question, how to “squeeze” these groups into the majority society. If one proceeds in such a way, the question already contains a strangeness construction, which prefigures the message to be transmitted through the publication of the results. It is a typical ideology construction. As a result of this way of arguing the scientific

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*Kirche und Gesellschaft*, (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsanstalt, 2001); Werner Schiffauer, *Die Gottesmänner – Türkische Islamisten in Deutschland*, (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> We make a distinction between the text of the Constitution and the constitutional reality of the land inside which the legislation and the administration of justice work on the one side. On the other side we consider also the practise of the state institutions on all levels and of those institutions and organisations of the civil society which practise and discourses have an effect upon the public opinion. This reality is complemented by a changing understanding of the constitution, that conditions the everyday relations between the state and the civil society, as well as between it and the groups with migrant origin.

<sup>22</sup> Hartmut Esser, *Integration und ethnische Schichtung*, (Berlin: Report for the independent Commission on Migration, 2001).

main-stream sets up a measure catalogue, which the young people with Muslim background must follow, if they want to join the majority society.<sup>23</sup>

Following this critical de-construction of ideological approaches we see ourselves confronted with a methodological problem: The object of our investigation (at the same time the subject of the measures aimed at) does not exist as a social or political actor. According to Koopmans<sup>24</sup> a causal connection exists between the national policy for the migrants and the means of political participation of this subpopulation. The future position of these young people in their surrounding political field depends on the objectives, characters and implementation of the civic education measures being planned for this group.

*A central hypothesis of this study is the fact that only the offer of autonomous political participation by the state and the majority society can create a democratic political subject from the group of the adolescents with Muslim backgrounds, who should be able to appear as independent partners in civic education according to the spirit of human rights.*

Applying Koopmans' typology to the internal reality of the Federal Republic of Germany we selected three initiatives, which represent examples of the existing "models" in Western Europe of political treatment of the migration phenomenon.<sup>25</sup>

- A self-organisation of migrants in Berlin, which (in some aspects it is similar to the integration policy prevailing in France) tries to prepare young people with migration backgrounds for their integration in the majority society independently from ancestry and religious connection.
- A project for Muslim women and girls in Cologne, which (is quite similar to the "Dutch model") prepares them by a limited retreat into a protected cultural environment for their personal development in the majority society.
- An initiative in Bremen for the support of "young entrepreneurs with migrant origin", which tries (in the tradition to the social work with migrants of the German welfare organisations) to motivate young persons in a migration milieu to begin and carry out successfully a professional training.

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<sup>23</sup> This attitude shared by many experts, politicians and functionaries seems to cause corresponding reactions in groups originated in the immigration from Turkey. During our meeting with young people, who participate in the measures of the initiatives we have researched, we have perceived the inclination of the respondents to attribute their problems in the school and/or professional trainings to their own lacks and/or inadequacies and not to discriminating practices.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Koopmans conducted by Eduardo J. Vior in Berlin, 2 December 2002.

<sup>25</sup> About the three European models see Ruud Koopmans, 2001, *loc. cit.*, (note 2), pp. 63–99.

All three initiatives together have the intention of encouraging young people with migration backgrounds to make self-acting and independent relations to the majority society. However, they pursue this goal in different ways in each case. Through the evaluation of these three initiatives we aimed at providing generalizable statements on the pros and cons of these alternative models when defining the subject “democratic youth with Muslim backgrounds” and recommending further measures.

## **2.2 Report on the Activities and Evaluation**

The initiatives examined by us were the Action Courage (AC), the Association “Forgotten Youth” in Berlin (VJB), the Meeting and Training Centre for Muslim Women (BFMF) in Cologne and the Advice Centre for the Qualification of Young Entrepreneurs and Specialists (BQN) in Bremen. We selected these special initiatives for our project, on the basis of their methods of working and their self-understanding, since they show many similarities with the three European models for the integration of migrants, systematized by Koopmanns. Of course one cannot identify the previously mentioned models in a pure form in organisations, which are active in only one country, Germany, with its special conditions. This classification, however, served as rough master for our comparative evaluation. By taking into account two initiatives which are not typically “German” we intended to underline the differences with the methods applied in other European countries in order to evaluate the achievements and limits of the “German model”.

For local discussions we uniformly provided the following qualitative questions, which our team-members used as a manual for their interviews:

- \* What sort of discrimination experiences have the young people had?
- \* How intensive are their contacts to the majority society in Germany?
- \* How do both the projects and the young people judge the failure of their contacts with the majority society at the German state schools?
- \* Which motivation problems do the young people have in their school and educational careers?
- \* To what extent has the achievement of the young people in the school and the education system been changed by the support of the initiatives examined by us?
- \* How many young people reached graduation owing to these care measures, and did they receive an apprentice position or a job?

- \* How do the three initiatives support the integration of the young people with a migration background into the majority society?

The Advice Centre for the Qualification of Young Entrepreneurs and Specialists (BQN) organises consultation and information evenings for young migrants with consideration for their social situation. By educational measures, contacts and information meetings the BQN-team bring together young migrants, entrepreneurs, enterprises and independent people from the migrant society and partners from the state administration. The initiative takes the differential existential situation of the migrants as the starting point for its work. One goal of their activity is to put the migrants into a position of being able to move without assistance into the majority society.

The work of this initiative — as already mentioned — corresponds to the ideal type of the “German model”: organisations of the majority society (here the Workers’ Welfare Institution, AWO) care for the migrant groups with instruments from the social and labour policies. They aim at successfully adapting individuals from these groups into the majority society. The independent articulation of interests and the autonomous organisation of these social groups, in order to put demands on the state and the institutions of the majority society, are not intended as part of this model.

The Association in Berlin (VJB) succeeded in achieving a kind of articulation of the demands as the young people can take part in the work of the association. The Association “Forgotten Youth” in Berlin is an independent association with team-workers from the migrant milieu. Nevertheless, the fact remains that they do not carry out any articulation of political demands. In order to speak in this case of an independent democratic subject from the migrant society, visions should be devised and projects and strategies for communication between the majority society and this minority, which we did not see yet in our work. Neither could we determine the implementation of the culture spreading proclaimed by the association, because all team-members we contacted were Turkish and the young people communicated frequently among themselves in Turkish.

According to our ideal-types and with their own requirement the VJB falls into the “French model”: Beyond the migration situation the young people are educated to be independent citizens of the democratic state. Through the integration of the migrants into the democratic society the migration situation is treated as a transitional phase. Their coming into the majority society is intended to restore the unit of the nation. Different factors, however, speak, in this case, against the applicability of this model under the specific conditions, on which

VJB works: 1) the stratum-specific and ethno-cultural reality of Kreuzberg (in Berlin), where unemployment and poverty is common, coincides with a very high ethno-cultural self identification as “German Turks”; 2) the lack of preparation of the German State and its personnel on the admission of people with migrant background into the majority society; 3) the job-specific and ethno-cultural composition of the association personnel and 4) the structurally caused social character and the peculiar mode of the civic educational activities observed by us.

The Cologne Meeting and Training Centre represents, by its mere existence, a challenge for those dealing with the migrant population, as practiced in Germany. Its concept of school training does not correspond with the homogenizing training and education politics prevailing in Germany.<sup>26</sup> According to the “British-Dutch model” the association not only perceives the socially designed difference of the young women and girls, it supports them in their heterogeneity and motivates the development of a self-confident personality with Muslim values. Perhaps one should discuss the question of whether the association with its work does not support the development of a parallel society. The school, maintained by the association, already now experiences a large demand that it cannot satisfy. It is quite foreseeable that similar concepts in other large German cities would be met with considerable approval. We think that such a perspective should be debated publicly and without prejudice.

The test results of Koopmans’ study in the Netherlands, states, however, that the policy practiced there (large concessions to maintaining the cultural differences of migrant groups, even by the transmission of national powers without returns for the total society) reduces the pressure on the migrants to have to accommodate themselves within the majority society. Migrants can then become more concentrated on their own interests rather than on working together with the majority society on an integration course.<sup>27</sup> Through this reduction of the pressure on both sides in order to articulate a common understanding on basic values, norms and political principles this concept offers to the majority of the Dutch people the chance not to have to concern itself with the accomplishment of its colonial past. So that a possible extension of the successful Cologne model does not repeat the errors constituted in the neighbouring country, the question of the difference must be put on the agenda in school and education politics. Only the inclusion of the migrant groups into a conceptual transformation

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<sup>26</sup> Mechtild Gomolla & Frank-Olaf Radtke, *Institutionelle Diskriminierung – Die Herstellung ethnischer Differenz in der Schule*, (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 2002).

<sup>27</sup> Ruud Koopmans, 2001, *loc. cit.* (note 2), p. 110.

of these important policy-areas can secure the equilibrium between the integrating interests of the majority society and the request of the minorities for recognition.

### 3. Conclusions

Our task was to survey the democratic initiatives in the civic education of young Muslim people. From the point of view of human rights this means surveying the existing initiatives and considering their ability to support the autonomous articulation and organisation of these young people face to face with the majority population and/or the German State. From the beginning the principal purpose of this articulation and organisation should be the implementation of the following rights: freedom of opinion, of assembly and of religion, right to citizenship and to work, social support and education. These rights directly affect the existential situation of these young people with migration backgrounds.

In the whole Federal Republic of Germany we did not succeed in finding any initiatives fulfilling these normative conditions. We have already excluded explanations arguing either for the Islamic orientation of these social groups or for their unwillingness to integrate themselves in the majority German society. Therefore, according to Koopmans we must conclude that the causes for this absence have to be looked for firstly in the migration policy carried out until 1998 and its consequences, and secondly, in the self-ethnization processes going on since the racist persecutions in the beginning of the 1990s.

It may be, that the successful approach to the democratic civic education of young people with a Muslim background lies in a flexible combination of the three models applied until now: a) "intermediate organisations", b) the traditional social-political approach, and c) the difference-approach. However, we only see a chance to successfully combine these three policy-approaches, if two new ideas, *i.e.*, the "intermediate organisations" principle and the difference-approach, are promoted in a stronger form. This would improve the traditionally applied method of trying to integrate migrants into the majority society merely with the instruments of labour and social policies.

Under the existing conditions only the German State has the material instruments and the faculties to encourage this process. There is a great lack of vision, projects and strategies as well as personnel and organisation on the one hand, and of favourable structural conditions on the other, so that, without state intervention we cannot expect the emergence of these initiatives.

Only through recognizing and discussing structural discrimination and self-ethnization in public, combined with the simultaneous systematic construction of channels for the articulation of demands addressed to the majority society, and qualifying the leaderships and teams which should emerge from this social group, can we expect the emergence of a democratic subject “Muslim youth in Germany” able to contribute to a development of German democracy in cooperation with the majority society in a more pluralistic system.

In the same way as Great Britain, France and the Netherlands, Germany has a minority-problem: namely the construction of an ethno-cultural minority developing itself among the population groups and originating in migration from Turkey.<sup>28</sup> Germany’s legal system refuses recognition of this population with a Turkish background as a minority, either because they have no closed settlement area, or because they have not been living in the contemporary territory of the Federal Republic of Germany for the last centuries. But we cannot deny the transformation of these former migrants in an ethno-cultural minority through social, cultural, educational and political segregation as well as through self-ethnization, following the persecutions at the beginning of the nineties.

The emergence and possible consolidation of ethno-cultural minorities proceeding from migrant groups changes Germany’s self-image as a nation in a negative sense. As Benedict Anderson<sup>29</sup> thought, an “imagined community” requires a delicate balance of exclusion and inclusion. Each national community needs limits in order to set up its identitarian patterns. If these limits however are too narrow, the exclusion of too many groups can destabilize the political system. The consolidation of excluding patterns of treatment for groups originating from immigration, in the state and the public administration, may lead to a closing of ranks in the majority society, making the majority society more intolerant and authoritarian, increased by the fact that both groups share the same territory. And simultaneously this process can lead to a tendency to segregation among the minorities.

As Germany’s minority question is shared with other characteristics by its European neighbours, all have to face up to the task of re-building their nations’ images in order to include ethno-cultural pluralistic representations. This is by no means a way to favour multicultural or communitarian solutions, but to plead for new representations of citizenship, which allow the recognition of different ways of developing democracy.

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<sup>28</sup> May be we have the same process among the groups coming from the former Soviet Union, the so-called “German Russians”.

<sup>29</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1996 [first edition 1983]).

Our thesis is that the enlargement of the Western European political systems through increasing the chances of participation for groups with migrant origins cannot be achieved through co-optation. On the contrary, only the emergence of autonomous subjects at the periphery of the political systems can bring about a competition between the power-centres which will lead to a new social contract which includes the new groups.

Therefore the only possibility of having a “democratic Muslim youth” is to create conditions favourable for their self-organisation. That is a central task for the policy of the German State in its relationship with social groups of migrant origins. Only with their own “loyal opposition”, can groups with a migrant origin integrate themselves in the democratic system as citizens with the same rights and obligations as the majority population, while retaining their own particular cultural codes and symbols.

The political subjectivation of the social groups with a migrant origin can take place either through the transfer of decision competence from the centre to the periphery or through the appropriation of these competences by the newly arrived groups. The system-opposition alternative is however too expensive. Therefore, we advocate for successive state-lead growth offering material and symbolic instruments in order to make possible the self-empowerment of the groups with a migrant origin.