



**INTEGRATION  
AND CULTURAL  
DIVERSITY**





# INTEGRATION AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

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## METHODOLOGY

1. **Invocation** (prayer or song)
2. **Objectives of Handbook 4:**
  - knowing how to evaluate cultural diversity in its various dimensions
  - familiarizing with the complexity of the integration topic
  - knowing how to distinguish and evaluate the different integration policies
  - becoming aware of one's own situation as a migrant in this regard
3. **Summary of Handbook 3**
4. **Glossary** of the most important terms (see appendix)
5. **Presentation of the handbook**
  - It is advisable to carry out this handbook in several sessions.
  - Various ideas are provided for group discussions.
  - It is advisable to distribute the text in advance.
  - To make it more participative, it might be interesting for participants to prepare a role play, in which they identify and represent the roles of the various systems (political, professional, religious, etc.) and various migratory experiences (migrants, second generation, volunteers ...). The representation then becomes the object of discussion and the facilitator helps to summarize it.
5. **The final sharing** can revolve around the following questions:
  - What has my experience been in the context of cultural diversity?
  - How do I define myself from the point of view of integration?
  - What would be useful to do to improve integration in the Church and in the society in which I live?
6. **To learn more**

Movies and readings on the subject can be recommended
7. **Evaluation**

Fill out the short form that is distributed
8. **Conclusion** with a prayer or a song

## **INTRODUCTION**

This fact sheet has been drawn up against the background of an analysis made on the basis of the situation in Germany with some comparisons at the level of the other Western European countries. The case of Germany is interesting because for decades political establishment had refused to recognize Germany as an immigration country. The 2005 Immigration Act (Zuwanderungsgesetz) shows a turning point. However, it is significant that the state at that time preferred to define itself as 'Integrationsland', i.e. 'country of integration' and not 'immigration'. In fact, from then on, this appears on all the initiatives which claim to favor the integration of newcomers. And therefore, a good look at the situation in Germany serves well, so that readers can easily compare with integration policies in other states. This is not so much because integration in Germany works better, but because the debate on this subject is very complex and multifaceted.

With regard to terminology, it should be noted that the paper uses "integration" and "inclusion" as synonyms. This is due to the fact that there are different schools of thought that use differing terminology to describe the same phenomenon. The author of the paper prefers to speak of "integration", because it corresponds to the language of public debate and because "inclusion" is increasingly used in reference to the participation of people with disabilities.

## **CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

Before going into the debate on integration, we should take a look at the issue of cultural diversity. Attention to integration is shown by the fact that people with different cultural heritages live in the same territory. This diversity is an opportunity and a wealth if recognized and shared, but it can be a source of conflict if misunderstood and if it involves differences that reverberate on people's rights.

Culture is a complex term, so a large amount of definitions has been given, depending on the perspective from which it is considered. In generic and simple terms, culture refers to all the institutions and customs that characterize the life of a society and the way in which all this is used in interaction between people. The language, symbols, values, and knowledge that people share within a group are therefore important.

Without wishing to exhaust the complexity of the subject, synthetic considerations can be made on culture and cultural diversity.

- Everyone is born within a culture. Culture precedes us and shapes us. In this process, language is of particular importance.
- Everyone has more than one cultural identity, according to the various perspective: civic, ethnic, religious, professional, etc.
- All cultures are hybrid, i.e. they are the result of a sharing of knowledge and traditions that come from meeting other cultures.
- All cultures are constantly changing. When a culture doesn't change, it's dead. A common mistake is to think that the cultural identity of a given historical moment is something that has always existed and will always exist in the same terms.
- Culture is always the result of social structure. For this reason, there are always attempts at revisionism, at rethinking historical or value-oriented aspects that characterize a people.
- Culture is essential for the bond between the individual and the community. The idea of the abstract individual, unrelated to a cultural identity, must therefore be overcome, as must the cultural dictatorship, which imposes a unique identity on individuals. One must be free to choose his/her cultural identity.
- Cultures have a dynamic character and, at the same time, they tend towards convergence. Despite the many differences, all cultures also have a lot in common.

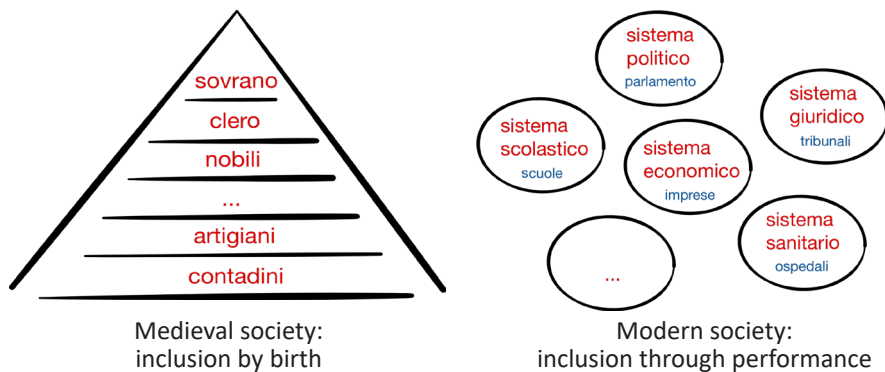
The management of cultural diversity has always been a subject that government representatives have had to address because it concerns two essential aspects of the life of the state: social cohesion (and therefore the limitation of contracts) and fidelity to the state. In the past, empires have found themselves managing several populations that had been conquered by a dominant power (e.g. the Roman Empire imposed its rulers but allowed religious pluralism). In more recent times, there have been migrations that have been real invasions and that have practically wiped out previous civilizations (think of the negative impact on the Mayan, Aztec, Inca civilizations in Latin America, or on the indigenous tribes in North America and Australia). The debate sparked by contemporary migration focused first on the assimilationist approach, theorized above all by the Chicago School around 1920 and then formalized in the early 1960s, and on integration, with which we deal in full here, on multiculturalism and on cultural integration.

**Multiculturalism**, practiced mainly in Canada and Australia, but embraced for a while by some European countries, should not be confused with cultural pluralism. Cultural pluralism is a mere fact. Multiculturalism is a policy of managing diverse cultural heritages, which foresees direct state intervention to protect and promote cultural diversity. Multicultural policies have fallen out of favor mainly because they do not fa-

clitate dialogue between the various groups and therefore tend to create fragmentation, rather than cohesion within the state.

In order to overcome the difficulties of multiculturalism, preference is given to **intercultural dialogue**. However, it is a reality that belongs to the field of education (education to intercultural dialogue) rather than to that of explicit policies for its promotion.

#### MODERN SOCIETY: THE PROBLEM OF INCLUSION.



Sociology identifies in history three forms of society which distinguish themselves from each other by their internal differentiation: the segmented society (e.g. the parallel coexistence of various tribes), the hierarchical society or stratified society (such as medieval society with the sovereign, the clergy, the nobility, craftsmen, farmers, etc.) and the functionally differentiated society (the so-called modern society). The latter is called such, because it is not so much distinguished by hierarchies, but by systems which have different functions, such as the political system, the economic system or the legal system, the education or health system, etc. The different systems each enjoy a certain degree of autonomy in dealing with matters within their competence, but they are not entirely disconnected from each other. Thus, politics gives rise to rights through legislation, but then the judicial system in turn places limits on the political system and determines its areas of competence. With regard to immigration, the economy wants free movement and open borders, while politics, concerned with maintaining sovereignty over the territory and the population, tends to restrict entry.

## INTEGRATED OR NONINTEGRATED?

Since modern society is organized as a set of functional systems such as politics, law, the economy, education, health, religion, etc., integration does not arise as a question of yes or no, but as a question of more and less. A person can be integrated into the work system without having the right to vote. An irregular migrant may have work and a home, but is often not integrated into the health system. Some dimensions (work, home, training, health, etc.) are central to a decent life, while others (leisure, sports, various associations) are more peripheral. In fact, some conclusions are interdependent: it is difficult to think that a person who has no home will find work and vice versa. To break this kind of vicious circle, the Diocese of Limburg in Germany, for example, has provided a home in which to welcome families and individuals of various nationalities by offering them a residence for a certain period of time, so that they can more easily find work.

In order to understand how the question and the need for integration arise, it is interesting to look at the difference between the last two types of society mentioned above, the medieval and the modern (see also graphs). In fact, while in medieval society the individual is included by birth (the son of the nobleman is a nobleman, that of the craftsman a craftsman and as such they are included in society from the beginning), in modern society inclusion is no longer obvious, but takes place mainly through a service. In other words, the social position is no longer determined by belonging to a given social class, the social strata become permeable. This, on the one hand, implies the possibility of making a career. On the negative side, however, it appears that the inclusion of people is no longer guaranteed in itself, but takes place mainly through the work that the individual does. And the ability to access work depends to a large part on the person's resume. For this reason, for the purposes of inclusion, school and vocational training as well as the various qualifications are very important.

But there is another important detail: in medieval society it is almost impossible to include those who come from outside. In a functionally differentiated society, on the other hand, the modern principle of freedom and equality of all individuals applies. This principle in itself has a universal value. In other words, in order to be included or integrated into society through a given benefit, the worker's provenance, his religious and political beliefs and the color of his skin no longer count. What matters is professional training which enables him to do the work required of him. It is this change that creates the basic conditions for increased human mobility, opening the door to the access of incoming so-



cities. The problem lies in the fact that the promise of universal equality, in practice, is difficult to keep.

## CITIZENSHIP

It is interesting to see how the granting of the right of citizenship is managed in the individual states. Citizenship can usually be requested after a reasonable period of stay in the host country. In addition to the time factor, states tend to require sufficient knowledge of the local language as well as, in some cases, integration courses in which notions about the history and culture of the country of residence are acquired. With regard to the children of migrants born in the host country, there are very different practices between states. Whereas, for example, in France there is the so-called *ius soli* which determines that those born on French territory are born as French citizens, in Germany for a long time the so-called *ius sanguinis* prevailed, namely the principle of descent. In other words, only those who had German parents were considered German. These different approaches also have to do with the history of individual states. Germany was divided in two after the World War II. The western part had good reason to keep the *ius sanguinis* and, to leave no doubt that the Germans in the East continued to be German. It is no coincidence that since reunification the laws on this subject have been changing little by little.

A related issue is whether or not to admit a dual nationality. Given the interest of states in maintaining, if not strengthening, their exclusive sovereignty over citizens, they often find it difficult to grant *dual citizenship*. However, the loyalty that states would like to see from their subjects could be reinforced by a more liberal management of the right to citizenship, while a restrictive management of this right makes it more difficult to identify who arrives in the host country. As can be seen, the granting of citizenship is an important key in the management of integration. In this respect, some studies propose dual citizenship in due course. Since integration is a process lasting several generations, it would be a question of granting the right to dual citizenship up to the third or fourth generation of migrants. In fact, from the point of view of the human sciences, dual citizenship in the long term would be a formula that would make it better to take into account the real dynamics of migrants' lives.

The principle of equality, on the one hand, and the awareness of the de-facto inequalities between citizens, on the other, give rise to the welfare state as a mechanism for compensating for existing inequalities be-

tween citizens. The welfare state therefore represents the effort of the state to keep the promise of equality first of all among citizens. The aim of this effort is to create and maintain social peace by promoting social cohesion and, with this, the integration of society. But the welfare state entails high costs which are shared out among citizens. The state's interest in minimizing spending leads it to first privilege the rights of its own citizens over others, such as migrants arriving on its territory. For this reason, for those who wish to enter, the welfare state functions as an access filter between those who receive permission and those who are rejected. But the legal distinctions of the welfare state also have an impact on the resident population. In fact, in dividing the population into different categories with their respective rights and duties, the state creates the conditions for the formulation and flavoring of ethnic conflicts or social classes. In fact, the national state's skepticism toward immigrants and their loyalty contributes significantly to the lingering of the narrative about foreigners as beneficiaries of the welfare state, while often completely ignoring their contribution to the growth of well-being in the host society. The contrast thus built between immigrants and natives lays the foundations for the perception of inevitable competition between these groups of people. In order to prevent possible conflicts and at the same time to keep the universal promises of people's freedom and equality, the laws usually provide for a later adaptation of the immigrants' rights to those of citizens.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What distinctions or categories of foreigners exist at the level of the laws in the state in which you reside (e.g. migrant workers, students, girls on an equal footing, refugees, European and non-European citizens...)?
- What influence do these distinctions have on public discourse and the relationship between the different groups? Do they help ensure social peace and a relationship of loyalty to the state?
- How good can the state deliver on its promise of freedom and equality?
- Does integration policy exist in the state in which you reside? If so, what are its characteristics?
- What do you think about the proposal for *dual citizenship* with a term limit? (see box)

#### INTEGRATION, AN AMBIVALENT WORD

The difficulty in using the term "integration" lies in the fact that the same word is used to mean different things.

In sociological discourse, the term "integration" is an analytic concept that serves to better understand the process that is established between

the individual who arrives and the society which welcomes him/her. In public debate, on the other hand, the term has a regulatory value.

In other words, integration is an objective to be achieved through certain policy measures. The objective of integration is based on the modern ideal of freedom and equality of all individuals subject to state sovereignty. Integration thus understood serves, at the same time, to guarantee social peace.

A further difference in the use of the terms in question between scientific approach and public debate is that, from a sociological point of view, it is obvious that integration is an intergenerational process, which takes several generations, whereas in public debate it is talked about as if integration would take place within a few years.

Integration policies are worth taking a look at. With the arrival of migrants, new segments of the population appear alongside the citizens. Integration policies in themselves aim to overcome the difference between citizens and non-citizens. On the other hand, the state has a strong interest in reducing as much as possible the costs of the welfare state. What is more, on the part of those who arrive, the state fears a lower degree of loyalty than that of the citizens, with whom there is a long history of mutual performance. Loyalty, however, passes through identification and this is strengthened by increasing equality and participation. The result is a mixture of factors which, depending on the political color of the government, will lead to very different integration policies. Indeed, the existence of a well-developed welfare state, which involves very high costs, does not always automatically imply a policy of restrictive integration. Vice versa, there are states with very restrictive immigration and integration policies despite the fact that the welfare state is practically non-existent.

With the widespread of media, symbolic policies are becoming increasingly relevant. In other words, in addition to political decisions and action, reading, interpretation and presentation of facts is becoming increasingly important. For a politician or party to be elected or re-elected, it is not just the facts that matter, it matters a lot what people believe. Now political establishment, in many fields, faces the challenge of having to save both realities. As far as integration issues are concerned, there is a growing risk that integration policy will increasingly be reduced to a symbolic policy, which aims at highlighting all apparent efforts and successes with a view to achieving equality between immigrants and citizens on one side, while on the other, at the level of rights, tends to maintain inequalities. It is a policy that seeks to nourish and maintain the confidence in the migrants that integration, in spite of everything, is possible, sought and desired.

The term "integration" also shows correlations with that of "assimilation" which shares the same fate of a fundamental ambiguity. Assimila-

tion, in the sociological field, is defined as aligning the behavior of individuals and communities with social expectations institutionalized in a given context. Thus, for example, there may be a social expectation in a given context that one greets another by taking off the head hat, that in marriages gentlemen wear suits and ties or that pupils in schools wear uniforms. Adapting to this type of written or unwritten rules generally brings benefits for those coming from outside. Spontaneous adaptation, in fact, is usually socially rewarded. And it is especially spontaneous assimilation that makes one returning to the context of origin feel like a stranger and out of place.

This type of advantageous assimilation differs from assimilation as a political strategy. While in some states integration policy consists of programmatic assimilation, in other states even the terminology of assimilation has been discredited, because it is seen as unfair imposition. And yet, a mere change in terminology doesn't necessarily mean changing the migrants' feeling that, in fact, the unilateral model of assimilation continues to be followed. In this regard, it is emblematic that the reciprocity of integration in Germany is described by the combination of "fördern" (promote) and "fordern" (demand). In fact, promotion here does not mean helping migrants to develop the characteristics of which they are carriers, but aid in assimilation, which, at the same time, is required (fordern). Reciprocity is therefore more of a show than a reality. But where integration policies do not achieve increasing equality between old and new residents, they, while preserving the legal distinctions between them, feed certain perceptions and interpretations that often generate conflicts along the lines of ethnic difference. The time factor plays an important role in this regard: while on arrival different treatment is often accepted and expected, the perpetuation of discrimination is felt as injustice or, to put it in the words of a political science scholar, as a democratic deficit.

In order to further broaden the perspective, it is instructive to look at how integration is understood in the field of psychology. Although social psychology essays are on the rise, psychological discipline has a long tradition of attention to the individual. That is why, explicitly or implicitly, integration in this field is not understood in itself as a process of increasing participation by the individual in the various fields of modern society, but mainly as a process in which the individual creates a new synthesis between the horizon of meanings learned in the first socialization in the context of his/her origin and that encountered in the new socialization in his/her arrival. This is often a painful process, but at the same time of growth. It goes without saying that the result of this process will not be a simple assimilation or even a simple preservation, but a process that produces something new. Where this novelty is wel-

come, the migrant will be comfortable and will be able to develop all the potential that comes with it.

The difficulty, on the other hand, lies in the fact that the novelty of which he is the bearer many times is not welcomed in the context of arrival or even in the context of departure. And the same phenomenon often occurs between the first generation of migrants and subsequent generations. What is interpreted as an identity problem of young people of the second and third generations should perhaps be seen more correctly as a loyalty problem and therefore as a problem built from the outside: the surrounding environment in the incoming society pulls on one side and the family and their ethnic and cultural community pulls on the other. In this way, the new synthesis that the young people of the second and third generations are called to live is nipped in the bud.

It would be more advantageous for all the parties involved if the psychological concept were to guide the debate on integration. The migrants themselves, as well as their children, would then be much freer to form their own synthesis from what they bring and what they find, and the indigenous population would be freer to innovate and grow.

## **INTEGRATION AND RELIGION**

It has been said above that modern society is in itself indifferent to the political or religious beliefs of its people. Yet, when it comes to integration, the theme of religion emerges here and there: not of any religion, but in particular of the Islamic religion. This is primarily due to the fact that, in many Islamic countries, religious laws and the laws of the

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

- What weight does the topic of integration carry in the country where you're at? What political methods are being adopted? What are the results that can be noticed?
- Looking back at your history, and the challenges you have confronted, the failures as well as the successes, what is the synthesis which consciously or not, you have built for yourself? What did you preserve of what you left behind? What do you hold on to as very dear to you from your old country and what do you appreciate in the new context?
- If you have children: what are they taking from the traditions that you have tried to hand down? Where do you detect resistances with regard to the culture of your country of origin? When you find new attitudes in them, which ones do you like and which you don't? How could you encourage them to form their own synthesis that may be different than yours?

state coincide. The question of compatibility between Islamic religion and secular state therefore arises. In addition, the question surfaces on whether or not integration demands a basis of shared values which goes beyond loyalty to the constitution of the host country, that is to say, in addition to so-called constitutional patriotism. In fact, the debate on the subject of integration is often based on a power struggle on the issue of values. It is curious to see that, precisely in the region of the former GDR, where communism has flattened much of Christianity, suddenly a movement called PEGIDA (patriotic Europeans against the islamization of the West) is born to defend Christian values. This becomes understandable, if we take into account that the discourse of values is a discourse of identity and that identity is not something that actually exists in reality. Rather, it is a construction made of selections and abstractions that, if successful, can help build bridges, but which can also be used to separate and destroy.

But what relationship is there between religion, migration and integration when migrants are Christians? This field of investigation still shows deficiencies. According to a Swiss scholar, who recently published an empirical survey on this subject, in the case of Christians (and most likely not only here), religion plays an important role in the context of migration because it helps to overcome the many contingencies and challenges related to the migration process and together offers contacts through the communities of believers, many times with the possibility of speaking one's own language and keeping alive its own traditions.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Which groups in the country you are express hostility to the arrival of migrants? What are their arguments? What identities are built, what characteristics are attributed to migrants and what qualities are referred to the natives?
- Christian migrants can also fall into the trap of adopting the identities of others as opposed to their own: if they do not feel welcomed, they can be led to disqualify certain characteristics of the natives; when other migrants or refugees (of another religion) arrive after them, they may be tempted to differentiate themselves from the new arrivals in order to be perceived as closer to the natives. Looking at your community, how do you see it in this field of conflicting forces?
- What role has religion/faith and the community of believers played and is playing in your biography as a migrant?

## TOWARDS CONVERGENCE IN PLURALITY

The protagonists of the debate on convergence in contexts of cultural diversity has mostly been between liberals and communitarians. The former are concerned with defending the rights of individuals. To say that all cultures have equal dignity can lead to the violation of human rights (e.g. infibulation). Unable as they are to reconcile the different notions of good present in society, they leave them to the sphere of the private sector, provided that the rules for resolving disputes (democracy) and human rights are respected.

Communitarians accuse liberal universalism of being abstract and a western fabrication. They are therefore advocating that the rights of minorities be recognized, but in doing so they risk being without common foundations for civil coexistence.

John Rawls proposes overcoming tension through overlapping consensus. At a given historical moment, an agreement is reached on those values that are shared at that time by the different traditions. Are these true values? Rawls rejects this presupposition, because he is only interested in respecting common rules to manage cohabitation.

Habermas suggests not to aim for ethical integration, on which consensus is impossible, and to concentrate instead on political integration. Migrants must give consent to the basis (the constitution) on which are rooted the lives of the people that lived there, because this is a fact that precedes them, in which they did not participate and which they cannot demand that it be changed with their arrival.

The State, however, is not just an administrative entity; it is also shared commonality. If migrants cannot share the past of the state in which they find themselves, they can be part of the construction of its future.



## GLOSSARY

### **ASSIMILATION**

In the field of migration, assimilation is a term that is used with divergent meanings: on the one hand, assimilation refers to the spontaneous adaptation of the migrant to institutionalized expectations, i.e. written or unwritten rules in the context of their welcome. The motivation to adapt freely stems from the fact that, in general, this behavior is socially rewarded. On the other hand, assimilation appears as a political program. In this case it is not a free choice of the individual, but an imposition from the outside, regulated by respective laws.

### **INTEGRATION/INCLUSION**

Integration and inclusion are two terms almost equivalent in the semantic field that concerns the phenomenon of migration. The difference lies not so much in the meaning of the term as in the language typical of the various schools of thought that deal with it.

The term “integration” has several concepts. In the field of sociology, the expression refers at first to the cohesion of society beyond migratory movements. The challenge of integration arises with modern society where inclusion is no longer guaranteed by mere birth in a given social class, but is mainly achieved through a certain performance.

With regard to the phenomenon of human mobility, while sociology uses the term “integration” to describe and analyze the process of integration and participation of migrants in the various functional systems of society, in political language the term is used with a normative value. In fact, efforts towards integration are formally oriented towards the modern principles of freedom and equality of all individuals subject to state sovereignty.

### **IUS SOLI – IUS SANGUINIS**

These are two Latin expressions which, in the legal field, refer to two different ways of dealing with offspring born on its territory. The *ius soli* follows the principle of the territory (soil) and means that anyone born on the territory of the state is legally a citizen of the same, regardless of the nationality of the parents. The *ius sanguinis*, on the other hand, follows the principle of descent and implies that the criterion applied to determine citizenship is that of parental citizenship. In addition to these clearly distinct criteria, there are also mixed forms, such as the temporary application of *ius soli* with the obligation of having to choose one’s nationality when coming the legal age.



## **MODERN SOCIETY**

The term “modern society” refers to a functionally differentiated society which, unlike medieval society, is no longer based on the hierarchy of social classes, but on the principles of freedom and equality of all the individuals who make it up. Political power is legitimized by the fact that its interventions are intended to ensure that these principles are safeguarded.

## **FUNCTIONAL SYSTEMS**

In modern society we are accustomed to talking about systems: the political system, the economic system, the legal system, the health system, the educational system, etc. These systems take the form of major issues which need to be managed for the proper functioning of society. Each issue is dealt with in certain organizations dealing with it: parliament, businesses, multinationals, hospitals, schools, etc. In dealing with their issues, the systems enjoy relative autonomy without being disconnected from each other. In order to allow the individual a dignified life, some systems are more relevant than others. Participation through work in the economic system appears central to participation to other systems. With regard to the integration of migrants, the subject is important, because it makes it clear that participation in the life of modern society is not a question of yes or no, but a gradual question of more and less.

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