

The importance of the citizenship and ethnical connections for the educational work with (young) immigrants in the Federal Republic of Germany

The educational work with immigrants in the Federal Republic of Germany - whether political, cultural or physical - does not take place in a vacuum. The works are substantially influenced by the political discussions, which took place over the last years and decades concerning the right concepts of immigration and integration. In Germany, the political discussion of the last two decades concerning foreigners was overlaid mostly by the question of whether the Federal Republic of Germany would be an immigration country, or not. Depending on different definitions and political point of views, various answers were given. On one side stood the firm proponents of the thesis that Germany is an immigration country. They argued from the view of the international-law linguistic usage, according to which immigration already takes place if a foreigner settles down for a substantial amount of time on the territory of a state; the intention of a long-term stay would not be necessary. Besides, immigration is also to be understood as a comprehensive cultural and social process, thus no one off event, but a long-term, gradual process (Bade 1994: 21, 42 – 46). And here it would be established that in nearly all dimensions of the social circumstances – the living situation, family background, schooling and forms of socialization and social cultural self-organization - the predominant part of the foreign population showed typical characteristics of an immigration situation (Heckmann 1985: 644f.). On the contrary, up to the year 1998 stood the clear statement of all Federal Governments that “the Federal Republic of Germany is not an immigration country”. The conflicting views often hindered a really constructive discussion about the requirements of the policy on foreigners of the German Federal Republic as well as many related topics, for example the question of a political education for immigrants (Ahlemeyer 2001: 4f.).

A distinction between citizens and foreigners is recognized and, as an international law principle acknowledged and practiced by each state. In the Federal Republic of Germany, foreigners are defined as persons who do not have the German nationality. However, in political discussions, the term “foreigner” is often used unreflected. As a rule, meant are not foreigners with unemployed capital income or tourists, but foreign workers and their families, which emigrated from the former enlisted countries. If one takes into account the way of life, mentalities and self-understanding, most of them would be something like native foreigners, foreign residents, passport foreigners or Germans with a foreign passport (Bade 1994: 10). On the other hand there are more than one million refugees who reside in the Federal Republic of Germany. Both groups have one thing in common: Their lives are dominated by an excluding legislation, which makes them, no matter how long they already live in the Federal Republic of Germany, “second-class citizens”. Even the Basic Law, the aliens act, the asylum-seekers achievement law and create a legal difference between German and foreign citizens, which cannot be balanced by equalizations within the social and economic area. To be a foreigner does not only mean formally to be a person with another nationality. It also means socially to be a stranger, who is regarded with distrust merely because of this. The history of rights and the social history show that these people have always been regarded as threatening or dangerous. Their stay was predominantly regulated from a position of safety, rather than a position of integration (Bischoff/Teubner 1990: 13).

The situation of the Federal Republic of Germany as an immigration country is also marked by the characteristics of the German nationality law. In particular, since the upheaval in the former Soviet Union, many late repatriates immigrated to Germany from the beginning of the nineties. These people hold the German nationality and thus full civil rights. Nevertheless it is

to be observed that there are substantial integration problems. This is particularly due to a lack of knowledge of the German language, a growing cultural distance to the native population and a difficult job market. Even if the late repatriates are formally and legally defined as Germans, their social situation cannot to be compared with that of German citizens and exhibits many similarities with the situation of the foreign citizens.

Looking at all people who immigrated to the Federal Republic of Germany during the last nearly 50 years, one can state however that integration can be considered as relatively successful. But this is not due to a concept thought out policy, since the policy on foreigners in the Federal Republic of Germany up to the change of government in the year 1998 was almost exclusively based on labour politics applied to foreigners, which focused on the 'economical dogma' of full employment. It was not integration and/or minority politics (Ahlemeyer 2001, 1). This of course creates problems in the most important European immigration country that has been operating immigration politics with regulations and instruments, which for a long time were also used by the traditional immigration countries. However, it pursues integration only on basic integration politics, where foreigners are depicted as 'second class inhabitants' with inferior rights. Even this years dedicated immigration law does not alter this fact.

Integration politics, which should be arranged no longer as a foreign policy only but as a minority policy, must aim at affiliating the immigrant minority to the society of the German Federal Republic, make emancipation of this subpopulation possible, reduce social inequalities and add to the democratization within the political, social and cultural range. Above all, this politics must cover measures directly and particularly tailored to the immigrants. This also applies to the range of political education, as many educational organizations have not yet reacted sufficiently on the social reality of the immigration society.

The discussion on educational work with immigrants must also consider that the debate on the policy on foreigners in the Federal Republic of Germany is characterized by three factors: First of all by the fiction of non-prerequisite, i.e. since the seventies the discussion kindles every four, five years in always new conversions, in the course of which allegedly completely new problems emerge. Secondly by ideological-moral fundamentalism, i.e. on the one side immigration is fought as a threat, while on the other side all attempts of delimitation are branded as the end of the liberal constitutional state. Thirdly by the fiction of the 'solubility', i.e. proponents of a radical influx barrier as well as advocates of a radical border opening suggest that existing conflicts and problems are solvable (possibly fast) in this way (Herbert 2001: 9).

Educational work with and/or for immigrants in the Federal Republic of Germany is not only overlaid by the debate on a correct form of immigration, but it must also consider several basic conditions of democracy-theoretical nature.

Firstly: The policy on foreigners does not follow the usual basic conditions of a functioning democracy. There are two reasons for this. Democracy is ruled on time. It is based on the basic ideas of equality and equal rights. If under these preconditions majorities rule over minorities, then this rule is based on the basic idea of the exchangeability of the roles. The one who rules today, can be voted out tomorrow and thereby belong to those who are ruled. This logic of the exchangeability of the roles does not function with foreigners: They are and remain excluded from this rule. They do not (at least on federal and regional level, and if they do not come from a state within the European Union on a local level, too) have any possibility of political co-operation by election. Vice versa, Germans cannot drop back into the role of

the merely controlled ones. Thus policy on foreigners does not follow the democratic rule of the exchangeability of the roles as the dominant and controlled ones. It follows the pre-democratic rule of separation in principle between rulers and the controlled (Gusy 1999: 270).

Potentially, the general right for foreigners to vote would make a 'problem-group' to a substantial voter over night, whereby the quality of the policy on foreigners would change probably faster than undergoing thousand well-meant panel discussions. The exclusion of the foreigners from the right to vote is also one explanation for the positive election results of the right-wing extremist parties, since with the elections of the Lower House of the German Federal Parliament and the Federal State in the large cities, a quarter to a fifth of all inhabitants are refused the right to vote (Prantl 1994, 80).

Secondly: In the Federal Republic of Germany, the political fundamental rights are only partly at a foreigner's disposal. The right to freely express ones opinion, as well as the freedom of coalition, are fundamental rights to everybody, including foreigners. But the fundamental right to protest and the freedom of association, thus the collective fundamental rights to put pressure on the political instances, are under formulation of the Basic Law only German fundamental rights. Besides, under certain conditions, the political activities of foreigners can be limited or forbidden by the foreigner authorities, an approach not likely to be carried out on German citizens. On one hand, the political education faces the difficult task of obtaining the chances and possibilities of political participation, while it must be pointed out that simultaneously foreign participants are refused many participation possibilities. As a result they are socially and politically excluded. Political education cannot compensate for the omissions of the policy, but it can make this problem itself the focus and discuss ways towards an active integration and equalization policy. Finally, this can be pointed out through the co-operation with immigrant associations, commissioners for foreigners and political initiatives within the existing society.

Thirdly: Not only the policy on foreigners , but also the foreigner-political discussion exhibits characteristics. It reveals a profound divide of the society not only between Germans and foreigners, but also amongst Germans themselves. Germans, who are politically particularly articulate and – willing, often determine this discussion. At the same time, these often reveal relatively little contact with foreigners that go beyond cultural events, street festivals, visits to the restaurant, or at work. Here they meet foreigners who comparatively, are strongly integrated already. The task of integration is far more difficult in the less privileged residential areas where to a large extend foreigners live today, amongst the less privileged Germans. The task of integration is therefore given to those Germans who are disadvantaged themselves. Those who take part in the foreigner-political discussion on integration are hardly affected by their own surroundings. The social split of affected and non-affected people creates understanding and language barriers (Gusy 1999, 270f.).

Fourth: The pressure groups of the foreigners have to fight with special difficulties. Since the mid-seventies, foreigners joined into pressure groups, first on local and later on regional and also on federal level to represent their issues and demands. However, these pressure groups lack two important requirements to enable successful lobbying: Due to their nationality, their representatives lack opportunity to infiltrate into parliaments and governments personnel and in this way to influence politics through internal lobbyism (Aleman 1989, 172 – 175). In addition, they often lack 'common social integration' with the policy decision makers of the German Federal Republic, which other pressure groups can access without difficulty. Besides, institutionalized interfaces do not exist in the Policy-Network. A further difficulty for the pressure groups of the foreigners is that they cannot use the particularly effective lever of vote

withdrawal in order to articulate their interests 'effectively'. With an absent right to vote, the pressure groups of the foreigners are only partially capable of dispute. Next to the conviction work, they are left with nothing other than their moral appeals towards the decision makers, or to call upon the organizations, whose members possess the right to vote and are ready, in their name, to operate 'deputy politics' (Ahlemeyer 2001, 24).

Apart from these basic conditions, political educational work must consider the social situation of the immigrants. The situation of foreigners related to social indicators differs significantly from that of the German population. In proportion, foreigners are more affected by unemployment than Germans. In addition, the quota of foreigners amongst the recipients of social assistance benefits is substantially higher than the quota of foreigners in the total population. Here it is remarkable that more than half of the foreign recipients of social assistance benefits are younger than 30 years (Statistisches Bundesamt 2001: 84 – 89). Also, compared to Germany children, children of foreign origin are disadvantaged within the educational system with regard to the type of school and the duration they are attending. Children of foreign origin leave school more frequently without graduation. In 1999, the portion of foreign children who left the general schools without graduation was more than twice as high compared to German pupils (Statistisches Bundesamt 2001: 90). The comparison of the training quota shows similar results. Hence the conclusion can be drawn that the educational opportunities in Germany, with certainty, can be characterized by ethnical factors and not only by social cultural barriers, e.g. as confirmed by the higher portion of foreigners in the working class.

Even if the integration of the immigrants in the Federal Republic of Germany can be regarded as comparatively successful, it must be noticed that integration came increasingly to a standstill during the last years. Especially in conurbations, tendencies of spatial segregation emerge. Cultural, religious and ethnical differences are more strongly exercised and cause extreme division from the German society. To a small extent this development is to be attributed to the foreigners themselves. However, above all, this development is a reaction of the foreigners towards the policy on foreigners and the social climate of rejection towards immigrants. The situation was and is particularly characterized by the defensive-negative self-description of the Federal Republic of Germany as a non-immigration country and the rigid legal and political differentiation resulting from it. Over and over, the foreigners were referred as non-Germans, whether through the return promotion law, the aliens act or with the decisions of the Federal Constitutional Court on the local right to vote. Especially in the years 1989/90, which were substantially characterized by fundamental upheavals in the states of 'real existing socialism', the entry of the German Democratic Republic into the Federal Republic of Germany and the revival of a vague national pride, a clear confession in favour of the foreign resident population by a volte-face in the policy on foreigners would have been essential (Ahlemeyer 2001: 97).

For late repatriates, who have through their German nationality all participation possibilities, problems arise on another level: Late repatriates identify with being immigrants and Germans at the same time. Especially for young people, this leads to a more difficult search for identity than for other young people. The equalization with other immigrants is perceived as an insult. This must be considered and accepted when discussing immigrant integration and while performing educational work with this group of people. Many late repatriates react on this perceived insult with retreating into their own, familiar ethnic group. Here one is accepted as who one is: German and immigrant at the same time. Educational work with this group of

people must take into account their characteristics and develop special concepts and methods to enable work with these people.

Both the vehemence of the political confrontations around questions concerning the topic of the immigration and the importance of the phenomenon immigration and its consequences for the society in its entirety are a special challenge for the political education. Political education should be central information and learning places for the society of the German Federal Republic; in particular the topic immigration for the majority society such as for the immigrants. If the self-description of a society changes or extends, then this above all puts special demands on the educational and mediatory ability of political education (Landeszentrum für Zuwanderung Nordrhein-Westfalen 2002: 3). As an educational establishment or institution, here it is often not sufficient to be open to all immigrants. So far there is little statistical information relating to the number of immigrant participants at organized educational events. One can say however that Germans pursue offers of further education much more frequently than German speaking foreigners, in fact twice as frequent on an average. The German educational establishment and institutions did not yet react adequately on this subject matter, as the immigrants did not become a “sought after” group within the established ranges of further education (Landeszentrum für Zuwanderung Nordrhein-Westfalen 2002: 16).

Therefore, steps must be taken towards immigrants, late repatriates and refugees with appropriate offers, as these people are often very shy in pursuing offers of educational work. Here, political education should not only include narrow, central categories such as state, system and institutions, but a wide definition of politics, which includes the social context and everyday life. Educational work should content matters of

- polity, thus the institutions and basic conditions of democracy,
- policy, thus the articles and contents,
- politics, thus forms of self-discipline development, citizens' action and supply of interests.

Political education in the immigration country Germany seems to move between classical and innovative topics and forms. Particularly between political education, cultural education and intercultural learning there is an interesting interrelationship and according to circumstances also strained relations. While political education work is strongly geared towards knowledge transfer, the educational establishment and institutions want to offer opportunities for creativity and orientation with the formation of an own cultural identity through cultural education. They want to contribute to the preservation of cultural diversity and build a bridge between “the own” and “the strange”. A clear division between political and cultural education is however very difficult to maintain, transitions are almost comparable: Topics of the cultural education work such as music, dance and theatre nearly always involve political discussions; a separation between intercultural and political learning is thus often not given and also not desirably. The continuous topic “difference” for example causes discussions on the social state of mind, and the topic “integration” is always present. For cultural and political openness in mixed groups, the presence of an intercultural composed team is important in many cases (Landeszentrum für Zuwanderung Nordrhein-Westfalen 2002: 33).

The thematic spectrum of political education work from and for immigrants ranges from German domestic topics such as the reform of the nationality right, conferences on the topics of racism and right-wing extremism, the work of immigrant self-organizations up to an external view, for example on the situation of minorities in Turkey. Beyond that, topics affect the field of culture: Integration and problems in a foreign country, conflicts in various cultures living together and religion are often realized via stage-plays or exhibitions. (Writing-)

Competitions embrace the history of migration and the possibilities of different cultures and ethnic groups to live together in Germany.

Immigrant self-organizations play an important role here. Two examples from the area of youth are given: The Verband der russischsprachigen Jugend in Deutschland e.V. "JunOst" (Federation of the Russian speaking youth in Germany e.V.) not only made it to its business to represent and highlight the interests of children and young people, but to include young immigrants themselves in the active integration work and to promote their integration into German society. Furthermore, "JunOst" wants to take care of and maintain the cultural achievements of people from and in the GUS-countries, enable future development, promote tolerance, partnership and mutual understanding amongst young people of different ethnical, religious, social, economic and ideological origin and to close the knowledge gaps with regard to the political and social life in Germany.

The Vereinigung der Jugendverbände aus Kurdistan e.V. "Komciwan" (combination of the youth federations from Kurdistan e.V.) sees its fields of activity concerning Germany and Kurdistan in two main areas. From an internal viewpoint, the integration work, the maintenance and development of the Kurdish language and culture as well as the general education and leisure, is the central focus of their works. The external perspective focuses on activities under the slogan "Democracy for Turkey, Liberty for Kurdistan", which essentially relate to the support and the solidarity with the Kurdish liberty movement and its organizations.

Education is the foundation for social, political, economic and social equalization of immigrants within the society. The average educational level of immigrants is however (like mentioned above) below that of the German population and despite many executed politico-educational integration programs, there are still no equal opportunities in the field of education. Immigrants are often regarded as having a deficit pertaining. Existing abilities and qualifications are never noticed and cannot be expressed because on one hand they are not promoted and on the other hand the immigrants are in the minority and most likely adapt to the current conditions. However, a promotion of these qualifications contributes to a strengthened self-confidence.

Here not only the immigrants, but also the German society are called for. Particularly children and young people with migration background have cultural, linguistic and religious potentials from different cultures and societies - those from their culture of origin and/or the culture of origin of their parents or grandparents. These potentials must be realized as a chance and not as a risk. Young immigrants by rule do not have more deficits and therefore do not need compensatory-educational supervision. Nevertheless, the associations of young immigrants who work successfully in the range of political and cultural education, have to be specifically supported, since they apart from a difficult financial situation have to deal with further specific problems: For instance is the fluctuation with the volunteers even stronger within the foreign associations than within the German ones. The uncertain legal status of residence of young refugees has its effects on their motivation and power of endurance within the range of the honorary commitment. Furthermore, they often lack female volunteers due to religious and cultural reasons.

The use of existing educational programmes contrasts above all with the comparatively small educational consciousness, language and culture-caused barriers in the use of the conventional educational programmes, as well as the spatial and social retreating into their own in relation to the mainstream society. In addition, the higher than average strain and insecurity due to

permanent discrimination and higher unemployment, lower schooling leaving certificates, poorer living conditions and smaller wages and salaries are counter productive elements for the educational work with immigrants.

As elaborated above, political education plays a vital role in the process of integration of young people and adults. On one hand, the main aim must be consciousness-shaping and education promoting tolerance and acceptance on the part of the mainstream society, on the other hand to position the members of the minorities so they can take competent responsibility for the local society on different levels. Regarding the immigrant's external school education, it is the more important since one has to deal with a target group, which goes through shorter training periods not least because of the difficult conditions at school and at work (Kolatz 2002: 104).

Political education does not only engage in social relevant topics, but rather it serves for reflection and information, the forming of self identification, as well as for the development of one's own identity. Political education enables accumulation of experiences from which one learns to formulate one's own interest as well as to include the interests of others. This contributes to the development of political awareness and discernment in a democratically constituted society. Political education enables the individual to develop a plan of life for oneself, to find orientation, to understand the complexity of life and to act responsible. Thus political education is a spreading principle, which is based on the necessity for lifelong learning and contributes to the development of the personality of individuals. All these aspects are of special importance for people with migration background to develop their personality.

Education, training and further education also determine the developmental opportunities of a society considerably. The acceptance of immigrants to be a strong part of the society enables them to take part in the social developments. Programs (or proposals), which meet their special needs, are prerequisite here. Multi-cultural variety in a society also requires the acceptance of ethnicity to articulate itself. Amongst other things, this means the running of culture-specific methods and forms of transmission as well as educational programmes in the native languages of the immigrants. In return, this institutional acceptance contributes to the realization of a general acceptance of ethnicity. Here, the educational establishment and institutions and the state can demonstrably show that immigrants have become a natural part of our society, not assimilated, but with their own identity and ways of life.

In collaboration with juvenile immigrants and/or their youth federations and self organizations it must be noted that the motives for juvenile female and male immigrants to participate in political or cultural events or to engage in honorary work, are not necessarily congruent with those of German young people. For many of these young people the group-experience is much more in the forefront than for comparable German young people. The methods of organized work with young immigrant people, has to take this into account. Juveniles and young adults, who came to the Federal Republic of Germany following into the steps of their families, as late repatriates or refugees, are accustomed to different types of educational work from their native countries. The youth leaders and responsible people in the organizations must intercultural be trained, in order to prevent misunderstandings beyond linguistic frontiers. Other types of organized youth and educational work from different countries are to be examined in order to find out to what extent they can be transferred to the local conditions. Where this seems to be sensible, one should not recoil from it. Sometimes a view over the border opens the eyes for the own doing and acting. An example are the KWN-festivals in the

former GUS countries which make the juveniles and young adults familiar with political and cultural education by means of playful competitions.

Also, it is to be noticed that in the German society, a participating teaching style is promoted in order to develop the pupil's maturity through critical questions and discussions. In the Asiatic or Arabic culture, the relationship between teacher and pupil is characterized by a hierarchical distance. To ask questions or criticize the teacher in the presence of others undermines the hierarchical difference and is considered as disrespectful behaviour. In this environment, a teacher who puts his opinion up for discussion or who allows criticism, seems to be incompetent and unable to cope with his task. Therefore teachers need a large action-repertoire. While in the western culture the methods of self-manifestation, self-confrontation or self-development in feedback circles, role games etc. are usual and desired procedures, they can release intense shame in societies which are less individualistic and rather group oriented. With the deployment of materials it is to be noted that people develop specific patterns of conception according to their cultural socialization. This for example becomes apparent in taboos and conceptions about what may be shown in a picture or an illustration. Humorous designs are susceptible to misunderstandings. The frequently ironical and exaggerated message of caricatures and cartoons is not understood and can be felt as an offence at the worst (Kammhuber/Thomas 2004: 157 – 159).

The people responsible for the educational work with immigrants must also realize that especially children and young people, who came to the Federal Republic of Germany as immigrants, often face the German organizations with great distrust. The reasons for this can be found particularly in the socialization of the children and young people. Many organizations or institutions in the countries of their origin are governmental or semi-governmental and therefore perceived as rather negative. Besides, many immigrants come from countries where democratic structures do not necessarily have a long tradition. Therefore, the training of people responsible for political and cultural education work with regard to intercultural competence is of great importance. The eagerness of German staff to continue their studies however falls short of the given intercultural competence of the society. At the same time, plenty of advanced training for pedagogues is on offer. These available programmes have one thing in common: the aim to learn and arrange a co-living in a multi-cultural society. Not only the immigrants have to study the topic of immigration, but also the native population. Thereby it is frequently uncovered that not the immigrants but the native population lack intercultural competence, the ability to alter their perspective and to recognize the relativity of their own position. It is also important that immigrants do not appear or are perceived as being deficit in the role of educational consumers, but as problem conscious agents and providers of educational programmes. Thus they are proactive and socially responsible and contribute to their own and to the general identification of immigrants within the society (Kolatz 2002, 105).

Finally, the question to be followed up is whether the self-organization of immigrants in federations promotes integration or segregation. Herewith the question whether it must be the task of political education to qualify immigrants on this score can also be answered. Principally, in the classical immigration countries - also in Europe – great importance is attached to immigrant self-help organizations. They are institutionally supported by the government acting as representators of their interests (Kolatz 2002: 101). For some time, these ethnical connections are interpreted as threatening and disintegrative, the formation of parallel societies is often deplored. In principle it is to be noticed that this polarization of ethnic groups of the immigrants has strengthened rather than declined over the last years. The immigrant's affiliation with cultural associations of the ethnic group, which frequently occurs,

is predominantly judged as negative, even if it doesn't restrain integration per se. Empirical reports on membership of ethnical groups in cultural, religious and political associations and organizations suggest another conclusion: Amongst immigrants there are, as there are in the German population, sociable people who are active members of ethnical associations and who strive for social contacts outside their own group. Particularly for the male young people, social connections in immigrant organizations prevent a 'fall into' a borderline or criminal milieu. On the other hand, those people who live socially isolated, i.e. who are less interested in contacts inside or outside the ethnical associations, are less integrations oriented in both directions (Leggewie 2000, 97 – 101). Therefore, engagement and the cooperation of immigrant organizations and/or immigrant youth organizations enhances interethnic communication and consequently the understanding between the immigrated and native population. The threshold for immigrants first to begin with honorary work in an educational organization within their own community is far lower than it would be within a German organization. Through the exchange with volunteers from other educational institutions can the intercultural exchange between the different educational organizations take place.

Late scientific investigations refer to the social function of integration of immigrant self-organizations and the formation of social capital. The success of the results with regard to education and employment can be attributed to the quality of the immigrant self-organizations. The boundary dissolving bridging of the self-organizations between immigrants and the Germans population is also emphasized. There are clear parallels between the organizational patterns of the individual groups of immigrants and patterns of integration. Particularly those groups, which developed homogeneous and effective organizations and were able to represent and implement the interests of their group, were successful with their integration into the German society (Thränhardt 2000, Hunger 2002, 2).

The support of the organization of young immigrants in self organizations and associations is thus a quite practicable approach and worthwhile to support. The State government of Niedersachsen defines such in its plan of integration from August 2002 as follows: "The self organizations, in which female and male immigrants unite, are particularly suitable due to their experiences to support the process of integration of the immigrants in a lasting way. (...) Self organizations establish contacts between the minority- and the majority society. They act as representatives of their interests and as spokesperson for the summoning of rights and in addition as 'multipliers' for the elucidation of obligations in the country of entry. Due to their role as mediators in the network of the social infrastructure, they can make a substantial contribution to the improvement of the conditions for a political, social and economic integration of the immigrants." (Niedersächsischer Landtag 2002, 33f.)

The importance of this task is also highlighted by the Enquete-Commission's report of the Lower House of the German Federal Parliament from June 2002 "Future of civic commitment – Civic commitment: on the way to a futuristic citizen's society". In this report it is stated that civic commitment plays an important and so far underestimated role in the process of integration of minorities in the admitting societies and for the equal co-existence of different ways of life. Likewise, the common commitment of immigrants and locals in associations and organizations is stressed. It may contribute to intercultural learning processes on both sides and offer possibilities of social and cultural participation for immigrants. In the last decades, civic commitment of and for immigrants was instrumental in the integration of the immigrants in the Federal Republic of Germany (Deutscher Bundestag 2002, 104 – 106).

As already described in detail, the missing grant of civic rights for foreign citizens poses a great problem for a multi-ethnic society like the Federal Republic of Germany. A part of the population is excluded from the democratic participation rights. The produced difference between German and foreign citizens may be interpreted as a justification for more than verbal encroachments on this circle by a person who is politically associated with a nationalistic conception of the world. Therefore it should be the goal of political education to eliminate this difference and to bring into focus an equal multi-ethnic citizen's society. This certainly includes the undisputed question whether it can be the goal of political education to couple these with a certain conception of society. This is clearly affirmed here in order to strengthen the democratic political culture and to contribute to the continuity of democratic development.

The aim should be to care for all legal residents in Germany to be equally treated with regard to the entrance into the job market, the working conditions and pays, the achievements of social security, as well as the possibilities of political participation. A first step should be that all existing different regulations for Germans and foreigners are examined in light of removing them. Moreover, with each act of legislation, it should be examined whether different regulations for Germans and foreigners are factually justified. Each regulation linked to the nationality has to be examined in order to judge in each case whether it is reasonable and fundamentally as well as socio-politically justified. The goal should be a society, in which the permanently living humans have the same rights and obligations, independent of their nationality. Political education can and must contribute its part.

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The djo-Deutsche Jugend in Europa (djo-German youth in Europe) is an all-party and interdenominational youth federation, which stands up for a united, democratic Europe, in which the separating character of borders is overcome. Within the scope of its youth work, it promotes the cultural activity of young immigrants as a means of identity foundation and assistance for integration. Within the international youth and cultural work, the djo-German youth in Europe organizes exchanges and meetings, which aim at reconciliation and communication in particular with the middle east -, eastern- and south eastern-European countries. Further, their work focuses on the engagement of the worldwide proscription of expulsion and the commitment for the social, political and cultural rights of refugees and expellees.

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