

Advancing Multiculturalism, Post 7/7

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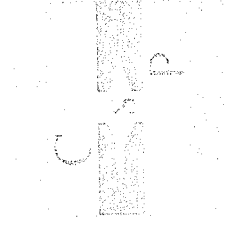
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CHAPTER SIX

MULTICULTURALISM IN GERMANY –
FROM INTEGRATION POLICIES
TO THE “ISLAM FORUM”

FRANK ECKARDT

Multiculturalism has never reached the status of state policy in Germany. It was always regarded as a critical concept, although powerful sections of society have been favouring this term in order to encourage the integration of ethnically diverse groups (Neubert, 2006). Up to the 1990s, the major public debates have been dominated by concepts of integration which were linked to immigration policy. Although Germany has been the main destination for immigrants in Europe for decades, the general attitude of state policies until today has been that Germany is not an “immigration country”. The concept of multiculturalism has been seen as an attempt to criticise the official refusal to accept the fact that Germany has become increasingly a country of people with different cultural backgrounds (Ackermann and Müller, 2002). Green politicians and social movements, in particular, have used the term to promote a more cosmopolitan way of life. During the rule of the coalition of Social Democrats and the Green Party (1998-2005), the reform of some key elements of German nationhood and immigration law was high on the agenda.

Today, however, the situation has changed and the main political focus has shifted towards Islam. As an effect of terrorist attacks elsewhere, Germany has narrowed the debate on integration, multiculturalism and Islam down to the concern with violence and fundamentalism. It became obvious that Islam was visible in many cities provoking resistance and conflict, especially when the building of a new mosque was on the local agenda. Nevertheless, there are important differences between German cities and here the influence of politics and local actors is crucial. In many cases, the key actors across all fields of the local community reacted positively and initiated closer links with Muslim groups. These new

groups were often given the name "Islam Forum". When it became clear in the summer of 2006 that serious terrorist attacks on regional trains had not been successful in killing dozens of civilians, the Federal Minister for Internal Affairs took over the idea of an "Islam Forum" for the whole of Germany.

While it is too early to analyse this new process which is designed to take three years, this paper will attempt to provide an overview of the main developments of multiculturalism in Germany. After focusing on some of the main aspects of the particularities of the German situation regarding ethnic diversity, the background of the intellectual debate on the North American approach towards integration will be examined. It will lead to conclusions concerning the Green party reactions, firstly at the level of their local engagement in the city of Frankfurt and later on in their participation within the Schröder government. Finally, an estimation of the recent developments following the reforms initiated by the Red-Green government will be underlined, paying particular attention to the varying scenarios from the local policies dealing with ethnic diversity.

The Multicultural Realities

Germany can be regarded as being most affected by massive immigration in Europe. Eurostat evidence indicates that nearly 10.5 million people have entered Germany between 1991 and 2000 (against 3.4 million in Great Britain). Germany accommodated almost 3.5 million newly arrived individuals (that is to say as much as the total population of Berlin) during the last ten years. Since the 1990s Germany has witnessed a cultural diversification generated by flows of immigrant populations, which has challenged the existing policies deriving from the "guest worker" policies of the 1960s. While the Turkish community remains the largest immigrant group, migrants from all parts of the world are increasingly present in all sectors of contemporary urban German life. Like many countries in Europe now, immigration to Germany has now taken a more flexible character since it has become culturally diversified.

However, even now official discourse, expressed in juridical principles, does not recognise the effective existence of the migratory phenomenon (Meier-Braun, 2002). This attitude was especially reinforced by the official end to recruiting guest workers in 1973. The economic restructuring of major parts of German industry has been characterised by an increase in the productivity of firms with the result that fewer jobs for

unqualified workers were generated. The halt to guest worker recruitment had two results. The Turkish male guest workers decided to stay and reunite with their families by letting the wife and children settle down in wealthier Germany. This is not to say that the ties with Turkey were abandoned. On the contrary, a significant number of Turks and Kurds correspond to the prototype of a transnational community with economic, social, political and cultural ties in both Germany and Turkey (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003). This situation feeds the simplified representation of some German media sources which stigmatise this transnational way of life in terms of "parallel societies" (Nowak, 2006; Finkelstein, 2006), where migrants "withdraw" into their ethnic enclaves, thus contributing to their own social segregation. Although the effects of the development of these transnational communities on inter-ethnic integration are not known, this pessimistic representation has not been proven scientifically (Salentin, 2004).

The Official Neglect of Multiculturalism

In spite of its failure in handling immigration, Germany has set up a very intense policy of integration. In comparison with other European States where the integration of foreigners comprises also an important cultural dimension, German integration is organised within the framework of the welfare state, in particular (Heckmann, 2004). Social integration through the social security system is very important in Germany, because there are no cultural and linguistic links with the majority of immigrants, especially Turks. In general, immigrants have good access to the education system, the labour market and social assistance. Nevertheless, the proportion of ethnic minorities among the unemployed and the beneficiaries of social support remains higher than the German average. The main reason for this inequality is the different starting point for entering the labour market since most immigrants' skills provided them with limited career opportunities. The precarious position of ethnic minorities does not involve, up to now, significant residential segregation compared with other European countries.

The main reason for the official refusal to acknowledge that Germany is *de facto* an immigration country lies in the often expressed assumption that any official recognition of this fact would only reinforce migratory dynamics. This doctrine indicated as the "policy of dissuasion" resulted in the hardening of all juridical and social conditions which could be seen as encouraging foreigners to come to Germany. However, it has to be

underlined that this policy was always accompanied by a larger debate on how to integrate ethnic minorities. For decades the controversy was more or less deadlocked by the often antagonistic style of the discussion where foreigners were told to "assimilate" to the German lifestyle or were seen as "integrated", i.e. as already part of German society. Until the nineties the general attitude was often dominated by party politics and moral references. In general, more conservative political actors have tended to support assimilation whereas progressive protagonists advocated integration.

The legislation on political asylum got tougher during the 1990s. Constitutional changes (the euphemistic "asylum compromise") have tried to reduce the rate of immigration by excluding certain groups from having a general right to apply for political asylum. Churches and human right organisations such as "Pro Asyl" do not share the official view that the effect of these changes has been positive. At the present time it remains unclear whether the decline in the number of immigrants is due to the new laws or to the absence of reasons justifying political exile (for example, because of the end of the war in the Balkans).

Reflection on citizenship

The definition of German nationality had hitherto remained a problem because the horrors of National Socialism prevented the German nation from dealing with it politically. To understand this socio-psychological blockage it is necessary to look more closely at the definition of German citizenship, which derives from the principle of *ius sanguinis* or rights based on blood ties established during Kaiser William II rule in opposition to *ius soli* or rights based on birth within a particular territory as in France. *Ius sanguinis* does not give voting rights to immigrants and their descendants and also does allow for people "belonging" to two different countries and dual nationality. This is why immigrants, especially Turks, are unable to receive German nationality, as they would have to relinquish their Turkish passports and all associated rights. This approach towards citizenship has been criticised by the Turkish community as unfair on the grounds that it has favoured those immigrants who can claim blood ties with Germany. This is true for large parts of those populations perceived as part of the national community but which have been separated geographically from Germany after World War II. After 1989 and German reunification communities in Central and Eastern Europe applied and obtained German nationality through proving that their family had been German in the years before. Since 1990 this group - the so-called

"Aussiedler" - represents the majority of the immigrant population (approximately 2.3 million between 1990 and 2002).

Learning from Frankfurt

In general, a national policy of integration concerning immigration did not exist before the initiatives of the Schröder government. This task, in fact, has been entrusted to the cities which chose very different approaches according to local political cultures shaped by their economic situation or the predominance of a political party. Because it hosted the most foreigners in Germany, Frankfurt has been a natural place to examine multicultural society in its local form. It has, moreover, been a city with a progressive attitude towards ethnic minorities. Frankfurt's economy is closely connected to international networks making it an economic giant - 9 % of the total German GDP is produced here.

However, if one analyses the prevailing situation during the years after 1960, the integration of immigrants was sometimes problematic. The city, controlled then by the Social Democrats, chose a policy of urban renewal politics which was strongly opposed by those affected by the policy. At the same time, many social movements started to be emerge leading to a new political party - the "Greens" - which made Frankfurt a laboratory for their alternative policies. The "Häuserkampf" or radical protest movement against land speculation attracted many militants who formed the "Green" movement later - for example, Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Joschka Fischer, who later became Foreign Minister. The ecologists were the first to approach the topic of integration and to introduce the question of ethnic minority participation in the local authority arena. While certain cities located in old East Germany were confronted with racist attacks from 1990, the Greens in Frankfurt have sought the support of other political parties to set up a broad coalition to encourage ethnic minority integration (Winter, 2000).

The social policy of integrating Frankfurt was doubly innovative. The "Office of Multicultural Affairs" (AMKA) is a trans-sectoral unit whose objective is to make integration the principal subject of the municipal administration. Even after the change of the mayor, the new executive did not change the main objective of the AMKA or abolish this unit (Stadt Frankfurt, 2003). Political participation is one of the keystones of multiculturalism in Frankfurt and this participation primarily involves the activities of "mediation" between the municipality and the migrant communities. This "mediation" worked out well following the terrorist

attacks on New York on September 11, 2001. The AMKA launched a programme entitled "the religions of the world in Frankfurt", in which 132 religious organisations of immigrants took part. The purpose of this exercise was to make the cultural needs of these communities better known and to foster support for them. The prevention of intercultural conflict is also central to the municipality's policy of integration.

The positive results of the Frankfurt example have encouraged leaders within the Green party to promote "multiculturalism" on a national scale. However, some critics point to the fact that AMKA places too much emphasis on communication and mediation. Difficulties of access to the labour market and the fight against socio-space segregation are not so pressing compared with other German cities and are not part of the work of AMKA (Hennig, 1997).

Multiculturalism as pragmatism

The installation of a federal policy of immigration corresponds to a concern shared by the ecologists since their early days in Frankfurt. The "red-green" coalition thus worked out a policy that allowed the evolution of the idea of German citizenship. At the same time, deep concern about social segregation had been expressed especially by the federal government composed, since the elections of 1998, of Social Democrats and ecologists who developed particular programmes such as the "social city". Given the sensitivity of public opinion, the reform of the immigration laws took much longer than was originally envisaged. After the work of two concurrent commissions of experts (the commissions Müller and Süßmuth) and at the end of six years of negotiations, a juridical concept was born, supporting immigration of highly qualified people and fostering integration in general. The relationship between immigration and integration, such as the law considers it, is in fact the most important point of the law. For the first time, the right to integration is recognized to immigrants (with supportive courses for language, political and legal rights, civilization and German history). In certain cases, the participation in these courses falls obligatory and within the competence of the municipalities. Each city is responsible for the implementation of these courses which are the subject of a tightened evaluation on behalf of the federal government. On the basis of expertises and above all a commission led by the former president of the Parliament, Rita Süßmuth (CDU), the issue of multiculturalism was linked the demographic change for the first time. Several experts have in this direction argued for a more intensive integration and immigration policy

(Minister of Interior Department, 2001).

The debate on "dual nationalities" paid particular attention to the more recent reality of the migratory phenomenon in Germany. Since the beginning of the 1980s other types of migratory flows within the European Union came to be added to the "traditional" ones which are regarded as more or less controllable. Indeed, the nationals of the European Union, who represent 25 % of the annual immigrants in Germany, now have the right of mobility and this right is only lightly regulated. Seasonal workers from Ireland, Portugal, Poland and certain Central European countries constitute another large migratory flow. Many Eastern European migrants do not remain for a long time in Germany but come back and forth seeking employment opportunities. These migrants constitute an important source of low-wage labour force for many sectors of the economy. In the construction industry these migratory dynamics generate xenophobic reactions against foreign employees. Certain sectors, hospitals for example, would not be able to function without these contractual workers. Taxi drivers, cleaning personnel, prostitutes, distributors of newspapers, domestic or agricultural workers are positions dominated by these migrants, who live in poor conditions and are often at the edge of legality. In Frankfurt, for example, an estimated 10,000 immigrants have not obtained legal status (Karpf, 1997).

Focussing on Islam

In 1961 only about 15,000 Muslims lived in Germany. Forty years later the number has risen to over 3.2 million, of whom more than one and a half million possess German nationality. Labelled as "immigrant workers" in the 1960s, Muslims became the second largest religious group in Germany (Aydin 2002). However, the institutional embedding of Islam in German society has not developed. Up to the 1990s, Muslims mostly derived from Turkey and to a smaller measure from Yugoslavia. In the 1990s, Germany became also a place for larger groups of Asiatic, Arab and African Muslims. However, the Turkish community still represents the most important part of Islamic religion in Germany since 75% of all Muslims are Turks. For this reason, Islam in Germany is influenced very strongly by social and political changes in Turkey. The re-Islamising of the Turkish republic towards the end of the 1990s, in particular, intensified debates in Germany about such customs as the veiling of women. Debates like these appeared much earlier in France and The Netherlands but the secularism of the Turkish republic had muted them in Germany. However,

the trend to more fundamentalist beliefs and towards Islam in general among Turkish youth changed this situation (Heitmeyer, Mueller, Schroeder, 1997).

The development of the Turkish "immigrant workers" and their specific social position still shapes the contours of Islamic life in Germany. These immigrants came to the country from 1963 as young men. They lived, to a large extent, isolated from the German population and hoped to remain in these alien surroundings only for a certain period of time. When immigration was officially halted in 1973, these men were more or less confronted with the choice either to return to their family in Turkey or let their families come over to Germany. Usually they decided on the latter. Then in the 1980s another demand arose for Islamic institutions, because now many "guest workers" had to fulfil their needs in hitherto unknown areas of German life, e.g. graveyards, old people's homes and hospitals. A multilayered and widespread Islamic infrastructure and culture developed, especially within the Turkish Muslim community which now consists of mosque communities, schools and institutions for pre-school educational activities, newspapers and local, television and radio programmes. Communication also operates intensively over the internet.

The "Turkish-Islamic Union of the Institute for Religion" (DITIB) represents more than 700 local Turkish-Muslim communities including parents' or sport associations. The DITIB was created in 1982 and pursues a secular approach towards the question of the separation of religion and politics. Its establishment was initiated as a reaction to the increasing fundamentalism of Turkish Muslims in Germany. The DITIB maintains close contacts to the Turkish consulate and arranges for the payment of the Imams in Germany by the Turkish state. The "Islamic Community Milli Görüs" (IGMG) forms the second largest federation of Turkish Muslims in Germany and is organised European-wide from its main office in Cologne. The IGMG feels responsible for many religious, cultural and social activities of the Turkish Muslims, including pilgrimage to Mecca and funerals in Turkey, and maintains its own academy and an Islamic boarding school. Due to some links to a more radical Islam in the past, the IGMG is under permanent observation by the German secret service which classified it as being partly anti-Semitic and after 11 September 2001 public debate led to calls for its prohibition (Zehetmayer, 2005).

Debating in times of terror

After the terrorist attacks in New York and later in Madrid and London, the question of the integration of Islam was strongly interlinked with security concerns. Although the central Muslim associations had clearly kept their distance from terrorism after September 11, their representatives became victims of hostility and threats. However, violent attacks on Islamic institutions and persons remained few and far between because Germany did not participate actively in the war in Iraq and the German population had not developed an image of Islam as an enemy (Gast, 2002). The relatively peaceful environment, which Muslim communities enjoyed, was not affected by the fact that the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York were planned in Hamburg and these terrorists had lived undisturbed within the city.

Despite the relatively calm reaction of the German population, many observers noted a worsening of the general attitude towards Muslims. A suspicion developed which associated all Islamic behaviour in one or the other way with terror. The term "fundamentalism" became widely used as a stigma. (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, 2003). The repressive measures planned in these laws had long been politically debated but now they were hurriedly pushed through legislative institutions. In particular, the fear of further "sleepers" planning future terrorist attacks was deep and extensive interrogations of Islamic students were used as a method to search for more "sleepers". Universities were even requested to deliver lists with the names of Islamic students to the police.

Intensive police examination of Islamic student lifestyle was introduced through checking the use of credit cards, travel behaviour and the living costs of those being interrogated. The answers were counter-checked in interviews with employers, loan corporations and other contacts. As an information filter only the words "Muslim" and "financially independent" were entered but the police investigation was unsuccessful, particularly since only about 200 of 4,000 companies contacted took part in this procedure. Police activities and interference exceeded all past investigations in German democratic history; roughly more than 10,000 Muslims were interviewed and supervised but not one suspect was established.

The police search for sleepers was accompanied by a continuous debate in the media about the relationship of Islam and violence. As commentators of these media debates show (Hafez, 2002), already before the terrorist attacks a selective perception of Islam in the German mass media had been established. The focus resided on "political" Islam and as a result Islam was presented as an ideology rather than as a religion. The German mass media focussed on Islamic fundamentalists and largely ignored the secular and reform-orientated tendencies in Islam. More than half of all reports on Islam were connected with the issue of "violence", whereas violence-free forms of Islam were seldom mentioned. Besides, fundamentalism, violence and Islam are represented in a way, which ignored the broader societal and cultural context. Nevertheless, the German media should not be understood as an "agitator" against Islam. Differentiated reports in newspapers and television are to be found throughout but these reports have failed to make an impact since Islam is increasingly seen more negatively by the public at large.

The negative attitude against Muslims does not necessarily reflect a general attitude of xenophobia or racism. On the contrary, many Germans develop their critical opinions or prejudices even though they have a rather liberal and cosmopolitan view about foreigners. For this reason, the researcher Wilhelm Heitmeyer (2002) believes that "Islamophobia" has to be regarded as distinctive from racism and xenophobia. Heitmeyer (2002) suggests seeing the hostility towards Islam as a form of "heterophobia", which is more comparable with the hate against homeless people and other socially disadvantaged groups. Hostile attitudes against strangers are decreasing in Germany and the research by the Bielefeld Institute for Conflict Research, which is led by Heitmeyer, found that the terrorist attacks or their media representation were not directly responsible for increasing Islamophobia. Extensive inquiries suggest that the phenomenon of Islamophobia is generated by the awareness of social change, which can be described as an increase in uncertainty and anomie. While xenophobia and racism are closely associated with the underclass of society, Islamophobia appeared more often in the attitudes of people, who are members of established social groups and seek to defend their position against newcomers (Endrikat *et al.*, 2002).

Identity policies

For the second generation of Turkish immigrants the difficulty in defining one's own identity became increasingly difficult. They are confronted with the necessity of building up hybrid constructions of their social and mental life, drawing on elements of both societies and keeping them in stable equilibrium (Dayioğlu-Yuecel, 2005). These processes are shaped by socialisation in both German institutions and Turkish culture and are accompanied by many multi-layered mechanisms of exclusion (Aksu, 2004; Kaymakci, 2003). The criticism that German policies do not address the needs of these young Turkish people has been increasing and striking descriptions of the life of some Muslim families in Germany and their return to traditionalism is now regarded as the failure of German multiculturalism (Inci, 2005). In particular, the practice of forced marriages led to a feminist criticism, which has also been used to express more general judgements about Islam (Ayse, 2005; Kelek, 2005). Also the phenomenon of "honour killing" where a woman is killed by its family because she had a relationship with a German man was cited as proof of the failure of a whole sub-population to integrate itself into the German society.

Within this public debate the link with Islam was made neither for the forced weddings nor the "honour killings". The vast majority of Turkish Muslim families, as empirical studies prove, are not based on forced weddings and while the Turks would like to marry Germans, these opportunities are often not available (Straßburger, 2003). As regards the number of the "honour killings", the Federal Criminal Investigation Office undertook a statistical survey which revealed that during the last ten years about 30 criminal offences came within this category. The integration of Turkish Muslims is, however, grounded in relative social peace and problems like those in France with Algerians or in the Netherlands with Moroccans cannot be found. Within some areas, particularly in cultural areas, an increasing acceptance and interest in the "different other" prevails. This can be seen in the increasing contribution by German Turkish writers, directors, actors, moderators, politicians and also businessmen, who do not deny their double identity and thus represent good role models for young Muslims.

Islam in German cities

The normalisation of Muslim and Turkish life in German society can be observed particularly in larger cities. Muslim infrastructure and the

Turkish "uncle economics", i.e., small shops for fruit and vegetables, travel agencies, cafés etc also appear to non-Muslims as natural in many urban quarters. German cities are still characterised by a relatively low degree of social and ethnic segregation. Although news reports now and then talk about "ghettos" (Korbmacher, 2006), the precarious concentration of certain socially less favoured groups still does not legitimise such a dramatic term.

In the general debates about the failures of multiculturalism, the Berlin areas of Kreuzberg and Neu-Köln in particular were often described as ghettos but empirical research has pointed out that these statements are exaggerated (Gesemann, 2001). As a result these localities suffer from a mystified "multiculturalism" (Krautschik, 1991; Lang, 1998). While people appreciate spending an evening in places like Kreuzberg nobody really wants to live there and they can be seen as "zones of transition": everybody who can afford it, except for some gentrifiers and urban pioneers, wants to leave. This antagonistic attitude towards multicultural areas might be a good description of the general way Germans look at places labelled like this. Almost every second German would not like to live near a mosque where the *azan* (call for prayers) is broadcast. Those interviewed saw these Islamic buildings as representing a secret power from other countries like Egypt (Heitmeyer, 2003, 229).

The political approach of cities towards Islam is closely linked with local policies concerning immigrants in general. German cities have a certain room to manoeuvre, although the national policy defines the most important preconditions of integration politics and pays little attention to local circumstances. Given a general autonomy for cities, laid down in the Federal Constitution (Art. 28, 2), a division of labour within the regional and federal state has been established. Nowadays, the decision-making power has shifted more in favour of the central government. A major complaint, therefore, is that the burden is shifting to the local level where support for less favoured groups is at stake. Local integration policies suffer from this, because they are mainly linked to general local social policies. Many cities operate a politics of integration but integration is not labelled as such in order to avoid provoking a debate about giving preference to immigrants. However, as a substantial proportion of poor people come from migrant backgrounds it was clear for all political actors that improving local policies to fight poverty always meant helping immigrants in particular. Initiatives such as the social passport, child care

or special education for women have been important areas of local integration policy.

Only in the 1990s have explicit local policies for integration been formulated. Many politicians realised that the challenges of multiculturalism and Islam could no longer be adequately addressed by "hidden" approaches. Frankfurt and later on other large cities such as Stuttgart, Munich and Berlin adopted a positive attitude towards multiculturalism and have developed a pro-active policy towards Muslim communities. It is however important to stress that this political approach was also justified by the need to cope with globalisation, because a cosmopolitan environment has been regarded as crucial for cities which depend on exports and host a large international workforce. The situation in East German cities is different, since relatively few Muslims live there. Although some East German cities such as Dresden formulated positive integration politics, the political agenda is still very defensive about encouraging acceptance of foreigners (Eckardt, 2006).

Most mosques in Germany are situated in former warehouses, supermarkets, business properties and re-designed living and working places. Most Germans do not see the approximately 2,000 mosques "in the backyard". The growing number of mosques and the desire of Muslims to have a representative (Friday) mosque are crucial expressions of feeling at home in Germany. There are many practical problems, however. The financial and legal problems are paramount and have to be solved in order to allow these mosques to exist. In many neighbourhoods, the lack of adequate parking often prevents a local solution. Frequent motor traffic, connected with the regular use of the mosque, is also the most important concern for non-Muslim neighbours. Consequently, town planning authorities often encourage Muslim communities to build the mosques outside densely populated areas. This results in the high visibility of mosques on the outskirts of the city which provokes complaints once again. A classic example is provided by the mosque in a small town called Marl, which was built very close to the motorway and is now a local landmark. This mosque's visibility with its classical design, consisting of dome and minaret, is the cornerstone of many local conflicts between the Muslim communities and the local citizenry. In particular, the height of the minaret (compared with the church towers) is seen as a symbol of ranking between the religions. Moreover, apart from the psychological reasons leading to the hostility towards the mosque's visibility material motives play a role. Homeowners fear that any depreciation of the

surrounding real estates and subsequent house prices will mean financial losses for them.

The *azan* is particularly controversial in many cities. In Duisburg, where the first conflict arose in the late 1980s, an Evangelist minister led a campaign against the application of the Muslim community for the broadcasting of *azan*. As a result of this campaign many cities have banned such broadcasts. In Dortmund, for instance, the Muezzin may call the believers only before each Friday prayer, while in Dillenburg this allowance was extended to three times each day. In many cities, a noise protection limit (70 decibels) was specified. The mosques are in a weak position legally compared to the Christian bells, since they are not recognised as a religious community. Until now, official conventions are not present between the Federal Republic of Germany and Muslim communities, unlike the Catholic and Evangelist churches and the Jewish community.

The Federal "Islam Forum" has an official objective to sign contracts with Muslim organisations in the same way as with other religions. Already there is a legal interpretation, which many urban planning directors are using to allow the *azan* and which refers to the liberty to worship enshrined in the German constitution. This liberty is seen as more important than the regulations about noise pollution. In many German cities the process of building a new mosque has been successfully realised through the cooperation of many important local actors, such as representatives from the Muslim communities, participants of Christian-Islamic dialogue forums, different social associations, politicians, city planners and a liberally tuned local public. These "roundtable" negotiations have led to the building of the mosque in Mannheim (2,500 prayer places), the new central mosque in Frankfurt (3,000 prayer places) and the "mosque of the martyr" at the Columbiadamm in Berlin (5,000 prayer places). In Gladbeck there were even attempts to establish a joint Christian-Muslim prayer centre. The examples in the next section will show that the local integration of Islam depends on the political and public will to support the Muslim community. While the non-Muslim population has concerns about this process, it does not need to be expressed as racism or xenophobia as long as political interests are carefully aware of those sentiments.

Managing local Islam Cologne

Cologne is well-known for its cosmopolitan attitude and sense of pride, openness to the world and general liberal mindedness (Yildiz, 2002). It is a stronghold of the Social Democrats and so far few outbreaks of right-wing extremism have occurred. The cosmopolitan atmosphere of Cologne has not changed, but the populist 'right-wing' political party "Pro Cologne" still gained the support of 5% of the voters at the last general election to the city council, although this party is led by well-known former neo-Nazis. In 2001 all political parties of the city council decided that Cologne should have a representative mosque and an intensive search for a suitable place and organisational platform for the project followed. Finally, a location in the "Ehrenfeld" quarter was found and the DITIB, which has already its national centre in Cologne, agreed to take up the role of the leading institution, with the support of nine other Muslim organisations, to build and maintain the mosque in the future.

In various ways 80% of the 100,000 Muslims are linked to a member of the DITIB or an organisation associated with the DITIB. The organisers started their planning for the mosque by bringing together all the relevant actors, the neighbourhood and the wider public. As a first step an architectural competition was announced and its jury was composed of representatives from different associations, town planners, a Christian expert on church buildings and politicians from different parties. A proposal from the most well-known church architect of Germany was finally selected. "Pro Cologne" tried to organise resistance against the building of the mosque and even though all the political parties in Cologne took a clear position, the spark struck fires in the population. Meetings in churches, which were intended to create more understanding about the Muslims' needs, took place under substantial police protection. Anonymous murder threats to Muslim-friendly politicians became an aspect of their everyday life (Frankfurt Rundschau, 18.May 2006).

"Pro Cologne" channelled the overall suspicion against Islam by focussing on security and argued, without any proof, that this large mosque would be a hiding place for terrorists. With a signature list, the right-wing extremists achieved the support of 3.000 citizens and gained a temporary suspension of the project by submitting official complaints about the mosque's proximity to the airport, for example. However, it is still unlikely that a prayer house for 1.200 believers will be stopped by this campaign due to the local consensus of all political parties and social and

religious actors. The local state government of North Rhine-Westphalia and the European Union have both assured their financial support for this new mosque.

Politics of conflict: Berlin

Approximately 200,000 Muslims, the majority being of Turkish descent, live in the German capital (Jonker/Kapghan, 1999). A clear concentration of Turkish Muslims can be found in the western part of the city, while relatively few Muslims still live in the eastern neighbourhoods. In the west Muslim organisations have been established and have built up their networks among the citizenry and within local Berlin politics. The more recent Muslim migrants, mostly non-Turkish, are finding it difficult to enter existing social and political structures. In 2005 the Senate of Berlin initiated an "Islam Forum" to foster the political and social integration of all Muslim groups. The Ahmadiyya community, originating from Pakistan, experienced difficulties as the first Muslim community in the east of Berlin (and in fact in of the whole of East Germany) to build a small mosque for approximately 400 believers. The community had first tried to find a building site in four other quarters of Berlin and failed to do so because of land prices. Finally, in Pankow an old industrial site was found and in 2007 a mosque with a 12 metres high minaret will be built there. The building permit was given by the local mayor who belongs to the left wing party, the PDS (the former Party of Democratic Socialism). He reviewed this project only under aspects of building legislation and expressed his respect to the fundamental freedom of religion worship for the applicants.

Contrary to the already existing 70 mosques in the western part of Berlin, the project in Pankow produced substantial public and political unrest. One meeting organised to inform people about the building of the mosque had to be called off for safety reasons by the police. Instead of the expected 350 visitors more than 1,200 citizens and right-wing activists turned up. The representatives of the local political groups and the Muslim community were threatened and the purpose of the meeting, which was to create greater civic understanding for the mosque, failed. As a result of these events the issue became a political "hot item" for all Berlin and even the national German media got involved. A citizens' campaign against the building of mosques was founded, which dissociated itself from protests organised at the same time by the right-wing party NPD (National Party of Germany). This party organised skinhead demonstrations, distributed

leaflets and engaged in other activities which "warned" about "alienation" and argued openly in a racist manner (Bassermann, 2006). The citizens' campaign, however, justified its protest by stating that no Muslims were living in Pankow and therefore a mosque should be built where the believers were housed. Members of this organisation and the Imam of this religious community tried to engage in dialogue but the rather vague fears of the Pankow population have not calmed down. The Muslims remained too strange and the general reservations against them too strong. However, the call for a referendum by the citizens' campaign was rejected by the mayor of Pankow as not in accord with the German constitution. (Der Tagesspiegel, 23.Mai.2006).

The controversy in Pankow started to become a really "big issue", when the CDU candidate for the mayoral elections, Friedbert Pflüger, expressed his opposition to the building of the mosque. According to his view, the Ahmadiyyas were a non-accepted Muslim sect and compared them with the Jehovah Witnesses. Police reports, however, confirmed that this Muslim group were not supporting violence nor was it a threat to Berlin's democratic constitution in any other respects. Pflüger was apparently encouraged by a fellow CDU politician who had close links with "Milli Görüs" whose problematic relationship with democracy has been noted earlier in this chapter. Pflüger was seen as a political candidate, who was positioning himself against the popular Social Democratic mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit. In eastern Berlin the CDU has hardly any voters and this is why Pflügers' statement can be understood as tactical rhetoric within his political election campaign. Politicians, who openly support foreigners and Muslims in eastern Berlin, live under permanent threat through anonymous telephone or mobile calls and provocation by right-wing extremists. After the serious assault on a PDS politician in eastern Berlin, the debate in Germany focussed on whether there already existed so-called "No Go Areas" (places without foreigners, leftists, West Germans). In any case some quarters are terrorised by the presence of right-wing extremist violence and the building of the mosque in Pankow will have to take place under permanent police protection.

Conclusion

Multiculturalism has been transformed from a political ideology that was meant to argue against "colour-blind" nationalism to recognition of ethnic diversity. While this process was rather late in comparison with the other European countries which experienced large scale immigration, the

integration of “guest workers” was handled by the German welfare state effectively. Major social unrest and riots have not occurred and a growing acceptance is visible in the surveys over the decades. Nevertheless, the legal and political recognition, especially with regard to the definition of citizenship, remains a critical point in the German debate about its multicultural realities, while the social integration in the welfare state no longer works as well as it has in the past.

With terrorism and Germany’s joining the United States in the “war on terrorism” (albeit only in Afghanistan and not in Iraq), this process has become more difficult and the many negative aspects of multiculturalism have led to it becoming generally less acceptable as a term. In the years since 9/11, the focus has shifted from multiculturalism to debating Islam with the result that the debate has narrowed and now neglects large parts of the immigrant society who are not Muslim. The controversy over mosques in German cities cannot be regarded, however, only as a sign of hostility against strangers and racism. These elements are, to some extent, present and examples cited in this chapter show that the political and social framing of these controversies could lead to new manifestations of xenophobia. Yet the founding of “Islam Forum” in many cities has brought actors together who were willing to solve problems in a pragmatic way (Miksch, 2005). Whether the same result can be achieved for the whole Germany remains to be seen. The initiative of the Federal government is any case different from an approach which has, until now, linked Islam and terror. It has to be said that the political intention to build bridges to Islam in Germany can be seriously damaged by the overall security concerns and new terrorist attacks.

Moreover, other important social actors, such as the Christian churches who are often the main protagonist against the “Islam Forum” on the local level, can have a crucial role in these debates. As the experiences from the local level indicate, politicians do not usually play an integrative role, since they must strive for a general political agreement within the broader population. The local protests against the building of mosques often express a more general discontent with regard to many topics that concern multicultural society such as female emancipation, freedom of religion, secularisation, individualisation, family policies, social and cultural inequality. The answers of right-wing extremism are, for the vast majority not seen as helpful and are rejected. From a positive viewpoint the citizens’ campaigns against the building of mosques can be seen as channels where these fears can be discussed and dissolved. At the same time they do offer

an opportunity to ventilate right-wing extremist and xenophobic views. Which way the pendulum swings continues to depend on social and political actors.