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MUSLIM MINORITIES IN GERMANY: THE HISTORY OF LABOUR MIGRATION AND THE STATE OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The article considers the issue of Muslim migration to Germany. A brief history of labour migration in the post-war period is given. The author discusses the existing cultural contradictions between Muslim migrants and the host Europeans. The author analyzes efforts of the German Federal Government aimed at the dialogue of cultures and integration of Muslim migrants.

Key words: *migration to Germany, Muslim minority, host society, cultural contradictions, integration programs and processes.*

The analysis of the migration history to Germany demonstrates that migrants with different starting opportunities and cultural resources arrived in Germany at different times. On this basis, it was expected that the dynamics of successful integration would be driven by their cultural background. Low integration or even the observed segregation of foreigners finds explanation in the history of the labour migration to Germany during the years from 1955 to 1973¹.

Germany at that time experienced an acute shortage of labor. In that time period, a total of 14 million “guest workers” from Italy, Yugoslavia, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey arrived in Germany². The dominating concept in the host country was that the workers arriving in Germany occupy a niche in the labour market in which employees with low level and quality of professional qualification were in demand. These people were supposed to leave Germany in rotation after a certain time. Despite the illusory nature of such concept, no one attempted to regulate integration processes, nor did anyone tried to monitor the processes of visible demographic changes through the use of tools controlling labour migration.

¹ Brinkmann Heinz Ulrich. Soziodemografische Zusammensetzung der Migrationsbevölkerung / In: Heinz Ulrich Brinkmann, Martina Sauer (Hrsg.): Einwanderungsgesellschaft Deutschland. Entwicklung und Stand der Integration. – Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2016. – S. 106.

² Bendel Petra, Borkowski Andrea. Entwicklung der Integrationspolitik / In: Heinz Ulrich Brinkmann, Martina Sauer (Hrsg.). Einwanderungsgesellschaft Deutschland. Entwicklung und Stand der Integration. – Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2016. – S. 100.

Based on the then understanding that Germany was not a country of traditional immigration, the development of an integration concept was not considered necessary. An end in the recruitment and reception of labour migrants in 1973 opened up previously unaccounted consequences: migrant workers remained in Germany and the process of family reunification had begun. Integration was the subject of political debate, however, without repercussions for the continued immigration.

This background to the current integration problems explains why certain ethnic groups have insufficient resources and weak starting points for successful integration. This in turn explains the low language and educational indicators, the level of education, the difficult access to the labour market and, as a consequence, the low participation in the social processes in Germany.

Only in the last 15 years has the integration of migrants and their families been brought to the center of public debate. Since the beginning of 2000, there has been a clear trend in the migration and integration paradigm of Germany. With the understanding of the immigration attractiveness of Germany, including at the political level, the prerequisites for a system integration policy are formed. The integration of immigrants not only into the labour market but also into the social processes of the host society is becoming an integral part of a broad political concept.

As of 2014, 16.4 million people with a so-called migration history lived in Germany. They constituted 20.3% of the total population of Germany. Most of them, 9.2 million were German citizens and 7.2 million were foreigners. A fourth of them were Muslims, half of whom were German citizens¹.

Today, the topics of Islam and Muslims in Germany are of particular relevance and importance. After the attacks in Paris in November 2015, the relationship between the Muslim community and the state once again became a topic of contentious debate in many European countries. Against the background of the current migration of refugees to Germany and Europe, the content of the discussions is reduced to the question of how the state should behave towards refugees of the Muslim faith and how the successful integration of Muslim migrants should be carried out.

In fact, such thematic debates lack the religious knowledge. The content of Muslim religion remains blank for their participants. Therefore, Islam as a religion plays almost no role in the debate about Muslims. Such Muslim-free “labeling of Islam” actually discusses issues of exclusively integration and migration content, as well as security issues. Religion is more of a contour that allows the discussion of Islam in a structure in which violence, extremism, crime, the suppression of women’s rights, the lack of democracy and “parallel” societies are

¹ Foroutan Naika. Religiöses Kapital als Element muslimischer Identitätsperformanzen / In: Peter Antes, Rauf Ceylan (Hrsg.): *Muslimen in Deutschland. Historische Bestandsaufnahme, aktuelle Entwicklungen und zukünftige Forschungsfragen*. – Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2017. – S. 266.

perceived as attributes of Muslim identity. Thus, the issue of the need for the integration of migrants of the Muslim faith is constantly singled out from the subtext of the discussions.

The mass media play a special role in shaping the culture of discussions on the above topic. In the late 90's, the media, the scientific community and German politicians were united in considering Islam is a "brake" to the integration of migrants. During the 1970s, the phase of the employment-based immigration from Turkey to Germany, Islam was not a subject of public attention. Only after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 did Islam move to the top of the security agenda¹. At the same time, Islam is increasingly associated with such categories as terrorism, war and armed conflict. Since that time, there has been a steady public interest in Islam, which is always supported by media attention. The content of discussions about Islam, which are conducted in Germany, is considered mainly in connection with the religiosity of Muslims and the notorious disintegration.

Is Islam integrated into the host society? Is it (also) part of Germany? Does Islam belong to Germany or not? These and similar issues are raised and addressed almost daily by civil society and political leadership, either in the affirmative or in the negative. At the same time, it is extremely important to urgently resolve another question: is social integration possible at all, taking into account the religious disposition of migrants? And whether it is necessary? There is a gap in the knowledge regarding religiously-motivated behavior and lifestyle of Muslims in Germany. Knowledge about the Muslim religion must make the debates more objective and replace the guesswork.

In this regard, it is necessary to mention the politician and publicist Thilo Sarrafin, whose book "Germany is self-destructing: how the fate of the country was put at stake" has gained great popularity against the backdrop of growing Islamophobia in German society. In his book, Sarrafin, based on the results of his own pseudoscientific research, substantiates the genetic inability of migrants of Muslim origin in Germany to personal growth and questions the possibility of their successful integration into German society and peaceful coexistence of East and West civilizations. In his work, Thilo Sarrafin calls migrants of Arab and Turkish origin "reproducers of wrapped heads"². Although most of the hypotheses presented in his book have not been scientifically confirmed, the results of the sociological studies conducted in 2014 showed that up to 80% of respondents agreed with the conclusions given in Sarrafin's book about the existing insurmountable

¹ El-Menouar Yasemin. Islam und Sozialkapital. Beispiele muslimischer Gruppierungen in Deutschland / In: Klaus Spenlen. Gehört Islam zu Deutschland? – Düsseldorf: Düsseldorf university press, 2013. – S. 370.

² El-Menouar Yasemin. Muslimische Religiosität: Probleme oder Ressource? / In: Peter Antes, Rauf Ceylan (Hrsg.). Muslime in Deutschland. Historische Bestandaufnahme, aktuelle Entwicklungen und zukünftige Forschungsfragen. – Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2017. – S. 238.

cultural distance between Muslims and residents of Germany that can be explained by Muslim origin of the migrants¹.

In September 2006, Federal Minister of the Interior Wolfgang Schäuble, acting within the framework of the so-called “Integration consensus” in force at the time of the “Grand coalition,” convened the German Islamic conference to create conditions for determining the policy of relations between representatives of German Islam, society and politics. Prior to that, in June 2006, the National Integration Summit was held at the initiative of the Federal Chancellor of Germany. While the Summit discusses issues aimed at the integration of all immigrants, the specificity of the Islamic conference is the creation of conditions for the functioning of the forum, which discusses and resolves issues of relations between the society and Muslims living in Germany.

The convening of the first stage of the German Islamic conference, the leitmotif of which is “Muslims of Germany are German Muslims”, was aimed at improving the conditions of religious, legal and socio-political integration of Muslims in Germany. At the same time, the process of formation of the Conference participants reflected the uncertainty of the situation. Among its participants, who were selected and agreed upon by the Federal Government, were among others consistent critics of Islam. This reflected on the quality and fruitfulness of the certain discussions². Subsequently, a number of studies on Islamic topics were carried out in Germany in a short period of time. At the same time, the studies themselves have come to different and partly contradictory results and conclusions. The analysis of the results of all studies conducted with the financial support of the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs shows that the political paradigm of the head of the agency each time determined the direction and affected the results of research.

Responding to the call to join the discussion on regarding the existence of a social and political crisis in the integration of Muslim migrants into the German society, we can agree with certain criticisms. In particular, with the fact that Sarracin was right, although in his book he has deliberately exaggerated the problem of isolation of the migrant community within the German-speaking society and the lack of mutual desire to overcome such isolation, or at least to reduce it. However, Sarracin placed the responsibility for the integration failures on one side, while integration is a process of mutual transformation, the success of which depends on the quality of mutual information exchange and the definition by the political elite of the priorities for joint coexistence and interaction.

Despite the fact that the scientific community of Germany consistently conducts observations and studies of religiously-motivated behavior of migrants of

¹ Ebd. – S. 230.

² Busch Reinhard, Goltz Gabriel. Die Deutsche Islam Konferenz – Ein Übergangsformat für die Kommunikation zwischen Staat und Muslimen in Deutschland / In: Hendrik Meyer, Klaus Schubert (Hrsg.). Politik und Islam. – Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaftler, 2011. – S. 29.

Muslim religion, the mutual influence of the religiosity and the integration process has not been sufficiently studied. German researchers, among them Yasmine El Menouar, Foroutan Naika and Haji Khalil Usludjan believe that such relationship is multi-layered and cannot be uniquely appreciated by a plus sign or a minus sign.¹ In support of this, we can observe both positive and negative examples of the behavior of migrants of the Muslim faith in the conditions of the European democracies. These examples clearly show that, depending on the conditions and the environment, religious capital can be seen as both a brake and a catalyst for the successful integration. Therefore, in the context of modern transnational challenges and threats, the issue of integration of a Muslim into the European society becomes not only social, but also political. Under what conditions is the qualitative integration of Muslim migrants possible? How does the religious disposition affect it? What political and scientific efforts should be made for this purpose? Answers to these and other questions can be obtained in the course of fundamental and large-scale research, the need for which is obvious. The results of such studies, which will help to gain a broad understanding of the importance of a religious resource for the integration of Muslim migrants in a foreign cultural society, will be useful to a wide range of consumers, including representatives of the political elite and civil society, as well as other religious groups in modern Germany.

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