

# **NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION**

## **Rethinking Citizenship Education in European Migration Societies Political Strategies - Social Changes - Educational Concepts**

### **Conference Paper**

**Introduction to workshop 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> round:  
Religious Identities and Civic Education**

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**[www.bpb.de/nece](http://www.bpb.de/nece)**

IPP's main aim is to stimulate public and political participation and to raise public interest for political issues. I am involved in projects around political participation of migrants and women. Political participation of migrants is seen as an important part of integration: migrants take responsibility for their local, regional or national government in the country they live. IPP is organising trainings, conferences, supporting migrants to go and vote, to stand for candidate, supporting migrant politicians. After each election IPP counts all migrants and women who got a seat and publishes the results. IPP wants to establish contacts in other countries to share information and experiences in this field.

Our projects around political participation of women are mainly taking place abroad, with financial support of our Ministry of Foreign Affairs: in Slovak Republic (2000-2003) in Turkey (2003-2006) and most likely we will start such a project in Ukraine in 2008. In all cases we cooperate with women organisations in those countries.

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This workshop is about migration, religious identity, public sphere, in European countries.

After about 20 years of migration we noticed that 'guest workers' did not go back. In the 80's family reunion started. Spouses and children came to our countries, by that migrants became more visible in the public arena. Through family reunion and the perspective of a long stay in the western countries the needs of migrants, mainly from Turkey and North Africa, mainly Muslims, changed. By that also public awareness of having a different ethnic minority with a different religion came up. Lots of religious and ethnic related discussions started.

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There was a need for houses: migrant areas arised, in quarters with cheap houses, mixed populations in already complicated areas.

A need for schools: will the migrant children go to public schools, to Christian schools, to new Islamic schools? (own) language issues, religion issues arised, white and black schools appeared.

A need for mosques. (up till then Muslims prayed in old schools, old factories or other buildings): new mosques, for whom (a mosque for all, or for different Islamic trends, for different ethnic groups) who provides the money for it (the muslims themselves, but they were mostly poor, the state (but that might be against separation of church and state), foreign money, f.i. Saudi Arabia , that means also influence from abroad),

A need for imams: who decides about the imam (from abroad? From host country (capability?), which language to use, Arabic (Muslim language), of ethnic group, or of host country?) .

A need for Islamic cemeteries: part of common cemetery, separated cemetery, for all Muslims, only for ethnic group, for Islamic trend?

A need for halal food, slaughter-houses.

A need for ethnic organisations, for women centres, cultural groups.

In order to deal with all these issues there should be contacts and negotiations between government and Islamic groups. Islamic councils were established. Issues: Who represents whom? What about separation of church and state? What is a religion issue, what a cultural one?

Other points came to the floor:

Integration or assimilation (with or without own identity)

Obtaining host country nationality, keeping original nationality, being allowed to have double nationality?

Representation in politics and public sphere, Islamic parties, ethnic parties, integrating in existing parties of host country?

By becoming a bigger group and becoming more visible and active in the public sphere new discussions started:

Islam as a minority religion in western countries with western values:

- Open society

- Christianity, secularism

- Democracy

- Pluralism

- Separation church-state

- Equality between men and women

- Homosexuals

- Freedom of religion, freedom from religion

How different can you be? How tolerant can you be?

Multiculturalism or Leitkultur

Radicalisation, spread of orthodox religion, separate society, Parallelgesellschaft.

Political participation on local, regional and national level

First Islamic migrants in national governments (Sweden, Netherlands, other countries??)

Migrant elite with good education, good jobs.

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So lots of points to discuss. In this workshop we will get 4 presentations, each dealing with experience in some of the above mentioned issues. I hope we have a good and positive exchange of ideas and experience.

Thank you.