



Many Gods, One State: Religious Diversity and Participation in Germany as an Immigration Country

2016 Annual Report with Integration Barometer

Summary of the 2016 Integration Barometer

Without a doubt, the dominant issue in migration policy since the publication of the last SVR's Integration Barometer in 2014 has been the debate about European refugee migration. In the wake of high-level policies, the mood was mostly characterised by a willingness to help; the overall image of a new Germany presenting itself as open was hardly tarnished by fears and defensive attitudes. During this period (March to August 2015), the surveys were conducted for the 2016 Integration Barometer which captures people's perception of coexistence in the immigration society with its core component, the integration climate index. This was the first time the data was collected nationwide. This measurement of the integration climate focuses on how the immigration society is 'functioning' in various central areas (community, labour market, social ties and education). Integration in these areas is a continuous and long-term process; for Germany, this process still largely lies ahead with the recently arrived refugees following the initial focus on reception and providing food and shelter. In this respect, the Integration Barometer provides insight into the basic state of integration in Germany as an immigration country. The SVR already published initial perceptions about the current influx of refugees from the 2016 Integration Barometer. With a view to the general integration climate, the result of the 2016 Integration Barometer is unambiguous: it is largely viewed as friendly by people with and without a migration background throughout Germany. The fourth edition of the Integration Barometer therefore also shows that the mutual process of integration has a stable foundation.

(1) The integration climate in Germany continues to be friendly; all respondents once again rated the state of integration to be "good". The differences between the groups of origin in their average rating of the integration climate can largely be attributed to the different sociodemographic compositions of these groups.



(2) Social contact and experiences of discrimination show strongest correlation to perception of coexistence. The data provides evidence of a correlation that was already shown in the past: the more people with and without a migration history interact socially, the better their perception of the integration climate is. This was found to be true among respondents with and without a migration background. Inter-ethnic contact on both sides therefore breaks down prejudices and leads to more optimism about coexistence in the immigration society. Experiences with discrimination, on the other hand, cloud perceptions of the integration climate; this effect is also significant in all groups of origin and much stronger than, e.g. the correlation, also in evidence, between education and the perception of the integration climate.

(3) In the 2016 Integration Barometer, social ties were once again given the most positive rating in all four sub-areas of the integration climate. Respondents are most pessimistic when it comes to education; this is mainly reflected in the generally negative perceptions of the performance of schools with high numbers of migrants. This scepticism also results in a relatively low willingness to send one's own children to these schools.

(4) Most respondents, regardless of origin, view participation in the labour market as by far the most important criterion for becoming part of German society. Participation in society is thus much less commonly associated than could be assumed with exclusive criteria such as being born in Germany, having German ancestors or belonging to a Christian denomination.

(5) Attitudes about Islam ambivalent. Respondents hardly had any personal misgivings about institutional equality, e.g. by providing Islamic religious classes. Most also accept a stronger structural presence of Islam: the majority of those surveyed would be open to a mosque being built in their neighbourhood. There are, however, considerable differences in opinions about the more abstract question of whether Islam is part of Germany between groups of origin. Respondents, particularly those without a migration background, are undecided, while some groups of immigrants (and particularly respondents with a Turkish migration background) mostly answered 'yes'.



(6) Integration is seen as a task shared by everyone. As was already shown in the Expert Council's 2012 Integration Barometer, most of those surveyed still today consider the integration of immigrants to be a shared responsibility between the state, the native population and immigrants. What is different, however, is the intensity with which responsibility is ascribed: all groups think that the primary responsibility lies with the immigrants themselves; immigrants and the native population are in agreement here.