

Social Integration

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Social integration is an overall concept for underlining a necessary relation between society and the individual.

It points to the cohesion in social systems, its values and rules, and also to the developmental process of the individual. Therefore social integration is often used in different ways. On the one hand social integration is seen as a necessary process for making social system functioning. But on the other hand it could also be seen as a sort of suppression of the individual to obey to societal and political values, demands or "necessities". Especially for ethnic minorities in Western societies, social integration becomes a cultural challenge. Also it could be seen as a developmental process in which the individual learns to know the society. When children's and young people's development is focused, social integration is seen as a result of socialisation. Social integration therefore could be seen as a necessary step to be able to influence both society and ones own life.

The process of social integration have become a new challenge in late modern societies. In a developing society social integration rather becomes a process then an end. This attacks traditional authoritarian values, rules and structures. Social integration becomes an open process of finding new forms of development and therefore negotiation and dialog have become political popular concepts in the discussion of social integration. A special challenge to social integration in late modern society is to find a balance between late modern individualisation, which point to autonomy and freedom for individual choices, and late modern social integration, which as an open process should develop new but also binding rules and structures. (SM)

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