

Self-, Other- and Meta-Images, and Multiculturalism

Self-, Other- and Meta-Images

Something seems strange to us when it contradicts normality expectations, when it is not plausible, when it "makes no sense" (to us) and when routine actions are no longer possible "in the usual way".

Self-, other-, and meta-images are mutually dependent. Judgments, opinions and attitudes towards others are therefore neither "objective" nor unchangeable, but are always formulated in relation to the person making the judgment.

The use of **stereotypes and prejudices** cannot be avoided, especially in intercultural contexts, because a correspondingly differentiated view of the world cannot be achieved. On the one hand, the spectrum of our possibilities to gain experience is necessarily limited, on the other hand, everyday communication, in order to function at all, will always depend on reducing complexity and using "simple" images for orientation purposes.

Successful **integration**, or better: networking, only works on the basis of the recognition of heterogeneity. Striving for homogeneity - from whatever side - provokes dangers of identity surrender.

Multiculturalism

The spectrum within which the term "multiculturalism" is used in public is broad and essentially characterised by the degree of interculturalisation that takes place or is permitted between the individual lifeworlds. The greater the density of interaction, the more pronounced the interculturality of the respective "multiculturalism".

Integration should not be carried out by the receiving culture, but is conceivable as a mutual process of negotiating margins of acceptance, in which coexistence is created in this way. The negotiation itself is a synergetic process, which should accordingly be moderated rather than controlled.

Mutual respect for the autonomy of the partners prevents demands for homogeneity and consensus, which ultimately cannot be met by any of the participants. The goal should be to realise a "unity in the face of diversity" in the sense of accepting a pluralistic, permanently evolving world of values.

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