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Research interests: care and migration, integration of refugees into rural areas, social work and refugees, migration ethics and intercultural philosophy

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### **Integration, cultural differences and democratic rights**

Cultural differences are often seen as a threat to integration processes of refugees. In media discourses very often culture is understood as religion and mostly muslim religion. In this paper I first want to present what do we know about culturally relevant attitudes in recent refugees communities in Germany. To present this I refer to recent studies by the Sachverständigenrat der Deutschen Stiftungen , the IAB and Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge on recent refugee immigration. Secondly I define integration as participation and parity of chances and then I will question the notion of difficult cultural differences from the position of a critique of methodological nationalism (Glick Schiller). This leads to the question: How can we conceive of cultural issues without falling into the trap of stereotyping and of reducing heterogeneous life worlds to simplifying analyses? And to what extent do "cultural questions" matter? I will turn to two fields that are relevant to the communal level: First I will discuss barriers to the access to services in the social and health field that can at least partially be explained by cultural differences. My argument will be to reduce these barriers is a matter of justice and thus a basic right. Furthermore I will argue for "the right to difference" as a human right referring to the conception of protection of minorities from a human rights perspective according to Heiner Bielefeldt and Seyla Benhabib. Bielefeldt argues for example for the freedom of religion that is a basic right in the German constitution. From Benhabib I will take up the idea that rights to cultural or religious differences can only refer to individual citizens and not to cultural groups. Finally, I will refer to the relevance of these conceptions to the level of municipalities.