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Theme: "Is diversity a threat or an opportunity?"

When talking about multicultural cities, Berlin certainly is a good example. Only a few years after the Second World War, Germany had a labour shortage because many people, soldiers as well as civilians had died in World War II. Germany was forced to look for immigrant workers all over Europe. In 1955 Germany had an agreement with Italy, and later also with Turkey, Yugoslavia and other countries, that their citizens could immigrate to Germany in order to work here. That was the beginning of the country becoming culturally diverse. Nowadays 14 % of the Berlin population are immigrants*. Therefore the question arises: is diversity (resulting from the high percentage of immigrants) a threat or an opportunity?

First of all, Berlin is a big city and also famous for its "multi-kulti" (German slang for multicultural environment). When we think about cultural diversity it mostly has a negative connotation. But I hold the opinion, that living in a multicultural city can also have a lot of advantages. Mainly because you can learn a lot about other cultures and languages. In addition to that the city becomes more international. This is an important point; because world cities have in common that they all are international; and to me Berlin is a world city. Another point is that in Germany (and also in Berlin) we have a lot of factories and industrial areas, which would not exist without the help of immigrant workers. Our whole existence (languages, food, buildings) profits from the engagement and ideas of people from around the world. We all like Chinese food and Italian Pizza for dinner, we like to visit places like synagogues and churches. We could not do this without being part of a diverse city, country and also world.

Unfortunately, a lot of people, even political parties, claim that immigrants are a threat for our "peaceful" life.

Cultural diversity can also be seen as a threat to society, whenever certain "culture groups" separate from others and live in their own subculture without participating in the city's life. As a result there can be a problem regarding the integration of those groups. On the one hand, it can happen that these places become "no-go areas" For example, a lot of districts in Berlin like the Wedding and Kreuzberg house a very high number of immigrants (still growing), maybe because they were pushed away from other districts where they were not accepted. This distrust of 'the other' may cause aggression and encourage cultural groups to "stick together". In turn this can lead to a vicious circle, because the second and third generation born in these "ghettos" may experience difficulty learning the main language and find it difficult to integrate .

To conclude, I would say that there are a lot more opportunities than threats living in a diverse city like Berlin. Young people especially benefit from such opportunities. They get to know other cultures and learn to speak different languages. Because of diversity, they also have

great chances to visit other countries and feel welcome there. Additionally, I think that people having strong prejudices may be because they are not well informed or have not yet profited from this diversity.