

Welfare State Integration of Immigrants: the Case of Germany

Friedrich Heckmann

Managing Migration and Integration: Europe and the US

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Institute at the University of Bamberg

Katharinenstraße 1

D-96052 Bamberg

fon +49-951-932020-0

fax +49-951-932020-20

efms@uni-bamberg.de

<http://www.efms.de>

Director

Prof. Dr. Friedrich Heckmann



1 Introduction

When Phil Martin recently spoke in Germany about integration in America he had some problems convincing his audience that there is no integration policy in the US. Seeing the US as a classical immigration country the audience believed that an immigration country almost **naturally would have an integration policy**. When I speak on my part to an American audience today about integration policy in Germany and will report on a national integration plan or local integration concepts this may evoke connotations of socialism European style that is a topic in the primary election campaigns in this country. You are invited to judge what kind of category is most appropriate for the policies that I will speak about.

Since low-skilled migrants is the topic of our seminar I will primarily speak about policies of integration for this group. The large majority of migrants to Germany and their descendants belong to the low-skilled and, thus, most integration policies are in fact directed towards this group. What remains as another major concern of integration policies that I will not cover is measures and ways how to deal with the new ethnic and religious diversity.

Why does Germany – in contrast to the US – have a system of integration policies? To explain that I work with the hypothesis that societies have certain basic ways of securing general macro – social, societal integration and of tackling social problems and tensions. These **modes of dealing with tensions and social problems** derive from fundamental principles and values of the social order. In the tradition of the German welfare state philosophy starting with Bismarck, contemporary Soziale Marktwirtschaft as a system of economic, social and political relations is a basic element of the social order in Germany: In Soziale Marktwirtschaft the state is a welfare state and its role is understood in an interventionist sense, i. e. to handle tensions, help provide social security, social justice and to improve opportunities for disadvantaged groups and in general to prevent social exclusion.

When a new social problem arose – immigrant integration – the problem was tackled in a way in which one is used to tackle social problems, i. e. by means of the welfare state. The consequence of this was that from the very beginning of recruitment migrants were included in the main general welfare system institutions (health insurance, unemployment insurance and pensions). Later on, after Germany accepted its status as an immigration country, systematic special integration policies were added.

In my presentation I will firstly give you an idea of contemporary integration policies in Germany at **different levels of government**, and secondly, in connection with that, will describe integration policies in **different areas** that are relevant for raising the qualification level of migrants and their descendants.

Let me start, however, with a few remarks about the consequences of the recruitment policies that started the new immigration to Germany in the 1960s and 1970s, consequences that are directly linked to our topic.

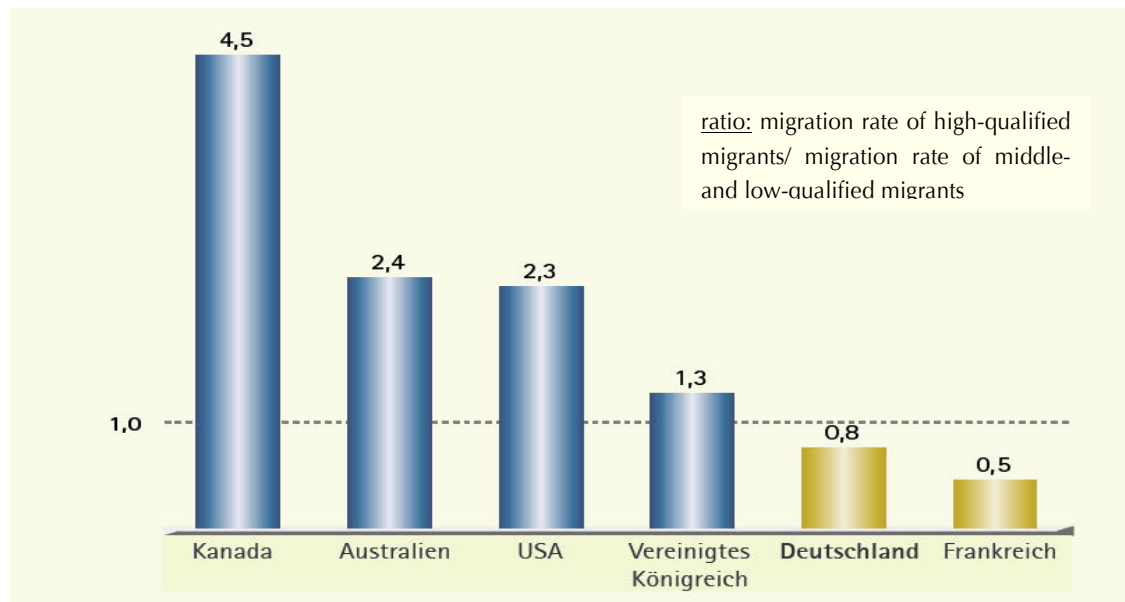
2 The consequences of guest worker recruitment policies

The present position of a majority of migrants and their descendants is connected to the causes and motives for recruiting workers from abroad in the 1960s and 1970s: migrants with rather low qualification levels were recruited for factories in positions that were unattractive demanded little training and could not be filled any more by the native workforce.



Chart 1 indicates the educational level of migrants to Germany from 1975 – 2000 in comparison to other countries of immigration.

Chart 1: Indicator for education selection of migrants, 1975-2000



IAB Kurzbericht 01/2008, <http://doku.iab.de/kurzber/2008/kb0108.pdf>, p.4, 20.02.2012

As a consequence of low educational level, of a lack of social and cultural capital of the first migrant generation, their **descendants mostly reproduced the status** of their migrated parents and grandparents. High rates of marriage migration from the country of origin further strengthened this development. All of this may be seen as a case of **path dependency** of the basic recruitment decisions in the late 1950s which led to the establishment of a system of ethnic stratification. “A path-dependent effect occurs when a previous decision, norm or rule reinforces itself, when it determines in part the subsequent development of events. Decisions taken by national states ... over time limit the range of available options at subsequent points” (Faist, Gerdes and Rieple 2004, 919). A systematic integration policy to change the path and to counteract the status reproduction process started only at the end of last century.

The structure of integration policies as they have developed into the present are made up of **four levels of government** and administration, differing in authority and resources:

- European level
- nation state level
- federal state level
- city level.

One might even add another level of policies existing within the cities, the neighbourhood level, since integration policies in cities are not targeted at the city as a whole, but often at



certain groups and neighbourhoods. But I will not go into neighbourhood policies in my discussion.

Before starting to talk about the different levels of policy a few remarks about migration in Germany for those who are not that familiar with the country: Germany has a population of 82 Mio., of which about 20% or around 16 Mio. people have a migration background; migration background refers to persons having migrated themselves or being the descendant of one or two migrant parents, including all naturalized persons.

3 The EU

Since the conference of Tampere in 1999 the EU is taking a stronger role in integration policies that affects the member states. The **directive 2003/109 EG** has established a right for third country nationals for a safe residence status which is a prerequisite for integration. In 2004 the EU council of ministers of justice and the interior in The Hague proclaimed **11 basic principles** for the integration of immigrants into the European Union. In the following years, among other policies¹, the EU has founded the so called **EU Integration Fund** for the fiscal period 2007-2013, which supports measures and projects in EU countries, many of which have high relevance for the integration of low skilled migrants. Part of the money is distributed by the EU directly, another part by the national agencies for migration and integration. In addition and for a long time before establishing the integration fund, the **EU Social Fund** has supported projects for disadvantaged groups, including migrants.

On the whole, however, despite the stronger role of the EU, integration policy is still the domain of the nation states in the Community.

4 The national level

In 2001 the Federal Government in Germany set up a commission to review the state of migration and integration. The so called Zuwanderungskommission (Commission for Migration) was made up of representatives of the most important groups in German society and declared in its final document: "There has been progress in the integration of immigrants ... but there has been **no systematic overall strategy** what has hindered the integration of immigrants. Reflecting today about the necessities of a future integration policy we should envisage an **overall national concept** for integration that serves the needs of the receiving society as much as the needs of the migrants" (Unabhängige Kommission Zuwanderung 2001, 199).

Much of what the Commission recommended has in fact been realised and the new immigration law of 2005 not only regulates migration, but includes regulations on integration as well. In fact, a **national integration plan** was devised and so called integration summits have been held in Berlin. Much of the policies recommended are about ways **to improve the level of education and qualification** of the migrant population. The national integration plan, however, is not a plan in the old socialist sense. The Federal Commissioner declared repeatedly that integration cannot be ordered and her office thus brought together representatives of the national state, the federal states, of cities' organisations with representatives of

¹ For example the directives against racism of 2000 which had to be transformed into national law.



civil society, including migrant organisations, of the large welfare organisations, the national sports' associations, of the federation of German employers' associations and of the Unions. The integration plan stipulates that the different stakeholders should declare their goals, co-ordinate their policies and commit themselves to certain actions.

The founding document of the national integration plan thus consists of an analysis of the **state of integration** in different sectors of society, a **declaration of goals** of integration policies and of **commitments** by the participating governmental representatives and by the representatives of civil society to devise and execute new integration policy measures. In the meantime four more summits have taken place and an evaluation report on the realisation of the commitments has been published. A **national monitoring system** has been installed.

As to the competences in integration policies on the national level within the federal government, the Ministry of the Interior has the lead on integration; the Ministry of Family, Seniors, Women and Youth, the Ministry for Education and Research and the Federal Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration are the other branches of the Federal Government that initiate and execute integration policies (Bundesministerium des Inneren 2011, 66 -70).

The following policies are among the most relevant programmes for **improving the skill level of migrants and their descendants**:

- **Language courses** are of two types: one is called *integration course*, the other is an *admission related pre – entry language course for spouses*. Since 2005 the Federal Government has spent about one billion Euros on obligatory integration courses for newcomers; they are mainly language courses with 900 hours of teaching and an exam, but include some civic education as well. In 2007 the Federal Government introduced a rule requiring non-EU marriage partners to have taken a language course in German in their home country to obtain a visa. The course has to be passed in Goethe Institutes or in institutes that have been certified by German authorities. The government hopes that the measure eases the integration process of the new family migrant and enable her or him to communicate with people outside the ethnic community. Critics argue that this pre – entry measure primarily is for controlling unwanted migrants. On the whole one could say that admission and admission related integration policies in Germany are designed to influence the general qualification level, to increase labour market participation and to reduce unemployment and dependency on social benefits of the migrant population mainly by improving their language skills.
- A large and complex system of **migration counselling** with thousands of counsellors in cities and to some degree in rural areas has been set up. It consists of a system for adults and a system for young immigrants. Adults are entitled to this service for a period of three years after entering the country. After that period they are supposed to address the regular services of the general population. Young people may use the services of the Jugendmigrationsdienst for personal counselling, for development of an individual integration plan, computer courses and other activities supporting their socialization.
- Several programs of the Ministry of Education and Research indirectly support the **education of immigrant children** (such as funds for training kindergarten educators



to work with migrant children and parents; educational support measures of different kind).

- The same ministry has developed programs to help migrant youth **enter the dual system of training**, even when they have poor grades or have not finished basic education.

5 The role of the federal states (Länder)

Germany has a federal system of government with a strong role of the single federal states. They receive quite a substantial part of the taxes and have their own police forces, the latter reminding of the former sovereignty they had before the foundation of the modern German nation state in 1871. Another major trace of that former sovereignty of the Länder is their almost exclusive competence in matters of education, both for pre-school and school education. Since education is the major area to improve the qualification level of the migrants' descendants the Länder have a major responsibility in the integration process. There have been certain measures to help immigrant children in school, like transition classes for newly arriving children to learn the language, but on the whole the Länder have not developed systematic educational support for the students. Only in the last decade – partly under the impression of the Pisa shock – the Länder are beginning to accept their responsibility in this area.

A major part of the Länder policy is the fostering of **language learning in Kindergarten**, language testing one year before beginning school and pre-school language classes for tens of thousands of children who showed insufficient knowledge of German. After starting school special efforts to learn the language are being continued for those who need it. Many projects are financed that address the **parents of migrant children** to increase their knowledge about the school system and to link them with the schools and teachers of their children. The means for **social work in school** have been increased and the states support projects that recruit volunteers that are ready to help immigrant children with their homework. As to other areas of activities the Länder cooperate with the Federal Agency for Work in projects to **re - qualify unemployed and to help people open up a (small) business**.

Some of the Länder presently are actively developing and expanding their activities, not the least by creating **ministries for integration** (such as North Rhine Westfalia, Rheinland – Pflalz, Baden-Württemberg, Berlin) and thus demonstrating the increased relevance given to integration policies.

6 The role of cities

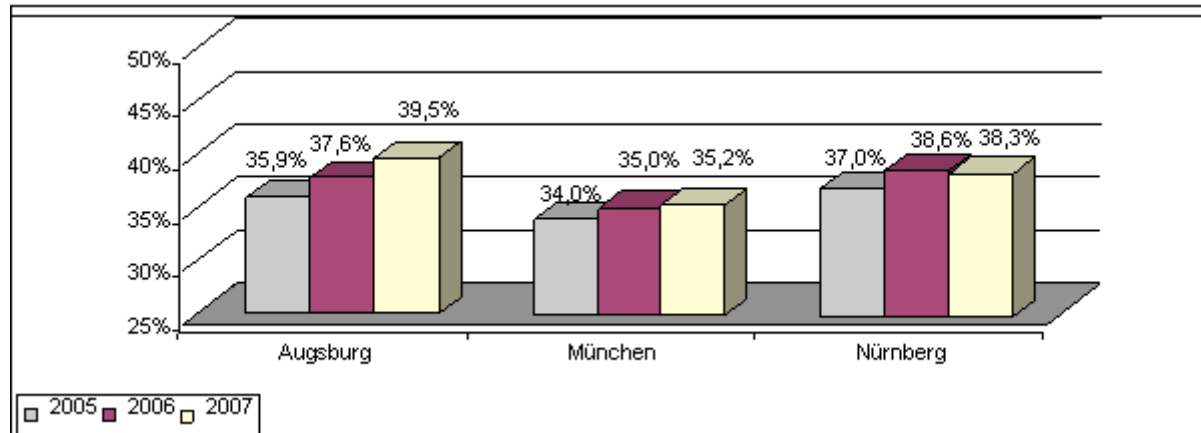
“Integration happens at the local level.” This is a frequently heard sentence these days in Germany. Many larger cities and some of medium or smaller size have a population with a migration background of 35-40%. As an illustration look at the three largest cities in the state of Bavaria where our institute is situated (Chart 2). What is important for the future: the younger the cohort the larger the share of those with a migration background.

Local policies have responded to the new challenges by making integration policies a top priority. Very often the mayor takes a leading role in advancing integration policies. Many



cities have developed or are in the process of developing **local integration programs** and a Leitbild.

Chart 2: Persons with a migration background in the three largest cities in Bavaria



Source: Lutz and Heckmann 2010

Administrative changes or innovations include the creation or strengthening of a **department for integration** and the installation of a commissioner for integration. Changes further include what is called “intercultural opening” of the administration what refers to efforts to better serve the needs of migrants and to recruit more personnel with a migration background. These are diversity policies. Redefining or creating **consultative bodies of migrants** to give them a stronger role in the local political process and to ensure their participation is another aspect of the ongoing changes. Many cities have organised campaigns for increasing naturalization.

Allow me to report about a recent project that I am involved in and that we did for a city to develop an integration concept. About two years ago I was approached by the mayor and one of his administrators of the city of Dietzenbach. This is a medium sized city of about 40.000 inhabitants not far from Frankfurt. More than 40% of the population has a migration background. The Opel – GM automaker factory in Rüsselsheim is in the vicinity of Dietzenbach, one reason for the high proportion of migrants. For a long time integration problems have been high on the agenda of council of Dietzenbach and there was and still is considerable conflict between different parties over integration policies. At the same time a great number of integration projects by the city and civil society organizations have been developed or are under way. A multi partisan committee on integration that wanted to end the political conflict over integration suggested to invite an institute to develop a concept for the development of integration policy in the city and to reach a political consensus on the topic.

The **integration concept** should not be simply devised by the institute, but should be developed in a **participatory manner**, meaning that interested citizens, migrants and non-migrants, civil society organizations including migrant organizations and representatives of the city should participate in devising the concept. After making the project known in the city public - among other by a large meeting in a citizens’ centre - working groups for different topics were formed and the groups met up to 8 times in the following months and each group developed a set of goals and measures to be realized in a particular area. Our



institute supported each of the working groups and summarized and edited the results of the work and wrote a 35 pages concept. Some of the concept has to do with how to go about cultural and religious diversity and how to reduce prejudice. Concerning the focus of my presentation – policies of integration for low-qualified migrants – I will mention some of those parts of the concept that are relevant in this respect.

I have mentioned earlier that there are already quite a few integration projects in the city, but they are not systematized and to a great extent not known enough by the possible target group. Thus the integration concept has first reported about and systematized existing measures in a particular area, and then has developed new measures and suggested that these become part of the concept. The measures of the concept are preceded by a set of goals to be reached in the particular area under discussion.

Let me illustrate this in the area of education. The working group defined the following goals for measures in the realm of education, starting with a general goal, to be followed by a set of more particular goals. Goals and measures are often formulated in a general way, but children with a migration background – the majority of children in most schools - are the main target group of the program. The overarching goal and more concrete goals have been formulated in the following way:

“2. The prime goal of the integration concept concerning education is to improve the educational opportunities of children and youth with a migration background in Dietzenbach.

2.1 Existing educational opportunities and institutions should be systematically recorded, coordinated, connected and enlarged. The (newly erected) House of Education should play a central role in the process.

2.2 Children should start attending kindergarten not later than the age of three. Kindergarten should prepare the children for school.

2.3 Schools and social work should provide individualised support for homework and the general development of children and youth.

2.4 More persons with a migration background should be employed in kindergarten and schools.

2.5 Kindergarten and school should respect the cultural heritage of children and their parents.

Examples for existing measures and programs

Program	Content of program	Organiser
City Library	Improving reading skills; mentoring for children and parents; books and media in different languages of migrants' country of origin	City of Dietzenbach
Homework support	Helping children and youth after school with their homework by social workers	City of Dietzenbach, Schools in Dietzenbach



Social work in schools

Both individual and group work

City of Dietzenbach

Recommendations for new measures:

- The city administration should have a commissioner for education, responsible for coordinating special educational programs, creating a round table for education and organising a city wide monitoring of educational progress of children. The monitoring system should particularly look for the educational progress of migrant children.
- A round table for education should consist of representatives of kindergarten, schools, institutions for adult education and voluntary associations (including religious communities of migrants) for coordinating and connecting activities. It should meet at least three times a year and be chaired by the mayor.
- Common projects between kindergarten and primary school should be developed to better prepare children for entering primary school.
- Increasingly, all-day schools should be installed" (European forum for migration studies 2011)."

These were just a few items of the new integration concept. I stop here with quoting and only mention that a systematic program for **working with parents** in educational institutions is part of the program as well. Another part is about **supporting the transition from school to vocational and professional education**, particularly into the so called dual system of qualification in Germany. Another section of the integration concept concerns **integration into the labour market, founding a business**, measures to fight prejudice and discrimination, youth work, and caring for elderly migrants.

I stop here with reporting about Dietzenbach, but should add that the majority of cities in Germany by now has such integration concepts and strive to realise the goals they have set themselves.

7 How successful is the German mode of welfare state integration?

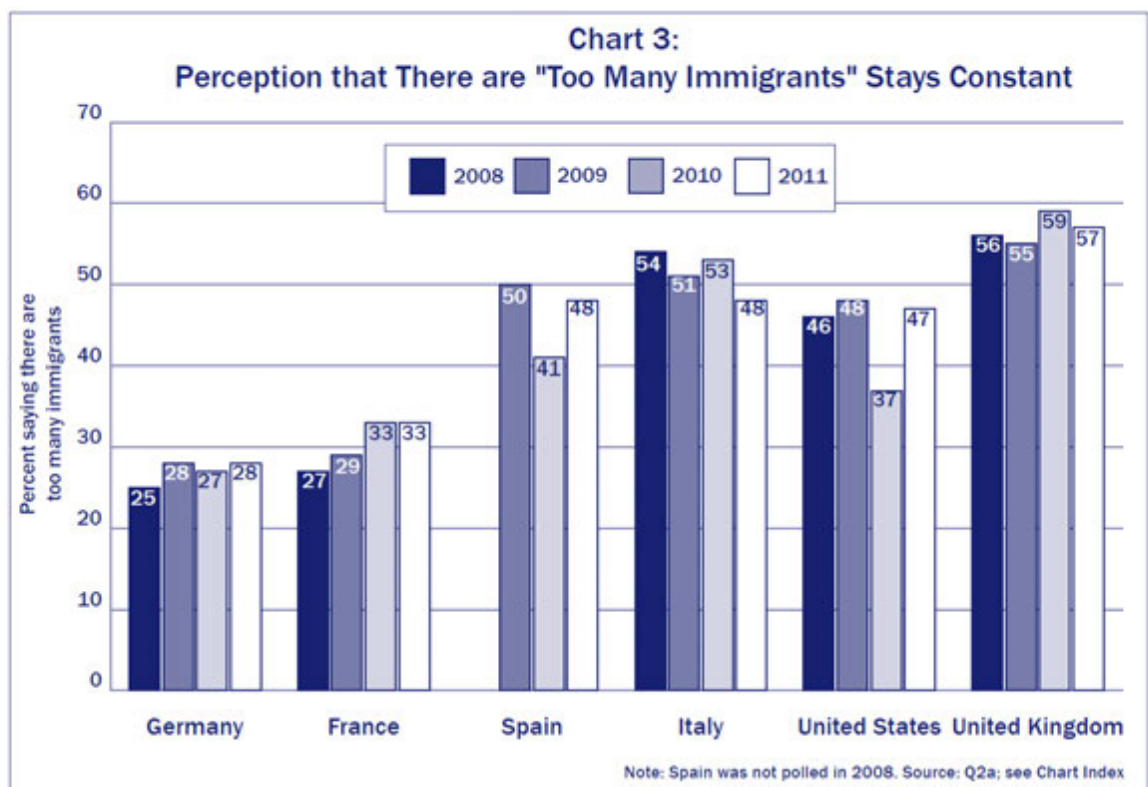
Despite an often rather pessimistic public discourse about a claimed failure of integration, despite incidents of awful neo-Nazi racist crimes, I dare say that in a comparative perspective the welfare state mode of integration in Germany seems to be rather successful. I will briefly refer to three recent studies that all seem to indicate a relative success of integration policies in Germany:

- The first is a large, methodologically sound empirical study on the state of integration in Germany commissioned and financed by a coalition of large German foundations. The study has developed and uses a so called **"integration barometer"**. The Leitmotiv of the study is that – in contrast to the often heard sentence that integration in Germany has failed – that integration has developed in a satisfactory manner, and that in some areas integration is really successful (Sachverständigenrat Deutscher Stiftungen 2010, 15).
- The second study that I want to mention is the recent report of results of the national



monitoring system set up through efforts of the national commissioner for integration (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration 2011). It uses the German microcensus which allows since 2005 to identify migration background of the respondent. Time series data are available till 2010 and show a slow but steady **improvement of indicator values**, for instance in the rate of students leaving school without any diploma. Integration is defined as the narrowing down of differences between persons without and with migration background.

- Another study and set of indicators may be seen as an indirect measure of success of an incorporation regime: the indicator does not look at the migrants and their descendants, but rather at **frustration over immigration** and integration in the native population. I refer to the Transatlantic Trends in immigration by the German Marshall Fund that polls populations in the US, UK, Italy, Spain, France and Germany.



Transatlantic Trends - Immigration, Key findings, p. 7

http://www.gmfus.org/publications_/TT/TT2011_final_web.pdf

It is certainly very difficult to untangle the many factors explaining the relative positive state of immigrant integration in Germany; the good performance of the German economy certainly is an important factor, but welfare state integration policies may also constitute a significant influence.



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