

Transatlantic discourse on integration: citizenship and culture of naturalization

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Transatlantic Discourse on Integration: Citizenship and Culture of Naturalization

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Summary

Germany, The United Kingdom and the United States are countries with high numbers of immigration and an increasing number of migrants who obtain the citizenship of the host country. Besides controlling migration inflows strong institutions of integration are needed. Policy makers in all three countries are discussing potential instruments for a better understanding of the rights and responsibilities that come with naturalization, how basic information on the political system, the state and society can be conveyed and how a feeling of belonging to the host nation can be encouraged. These aspects are central points of a larger complex, which could be called a **culture of integration**. In the **United States** this culture of integration and naturalization has a long tradition: citizenship courses and citizenship tests are to ensure that naturalization applicants receive civic education; through "civil religion" and an almost holy significance of the American nation for the individual, a strong patriotism and a feeling of national loyalty expressed by symbols, celebrations and festival days Americans and immigrants are united beyond ethnic belonging or different religious denominations. This strong patriotism is passed on by national institutions (schools, army) and in everyday life. The significance of belonging and identifying with the United States is also expressed in very festive naturalization ceremonies. Even if organised as large-scale events the naturalization ceremonies still have collective and binding effects. Naturalization in the United States is very much seen as a step in the integration process, not as its completion. Access to American citizenship consequently is relatively easy. In the **United Kingdom** policy makers are also discussing ways of making the acquisition of citizenship more valuable. The currently applied "mail order approach" will be reformed. Naturalization ceremonies are planned to give added significance to naturalization. The wording of the current oath of allegiance will be modified to a more modern citizenship pledge. **Germany** is also rethinking its traditional approach to naturalization. With the reform of the Citizenship Law in 2000 it was made easier for immigrants to acquire the German citizenship. As part of the development of a new culture of integration, including a nation-wide integration program, the symbolic side of naturalization is promoted by introducing naturalization ceremonies. They are meant as a gesture of welcome and can be understood as an offer to identify as part of a new German nation.



Introduction

In Germany as well as in the United States and the United Kingdom there has been a lively discourse on the integration of immigrants, by political parties, trade unions, churches, the media as well as academia. In July 2001 the Independent Government Commission on Immigration appointed by the German Federal Interior Minister, Mr. Schily, presented its recommendations for a fundamental reform of the German immigration and integration law. This constituted a historic change for the discourse on immigration and integration in Germany, acknowledging the fact of immigration into Germany and concluding that immigration has become a necessity for economic as well as demographic reasons. Apart from measures to regulate migration inflows one of the report's main aspects focuses on integration policies, suggesting a nation-wide integration program. Integration courses should assist newcomers and provide orientation, integration contracts could ensure that the newcomer as well as the host society meet their integration obligations¹. But apart from the debate of the legal basis, the policies and the financial aspects of integration, the issue is part of a more **general discourse in society**. "Integration reports" are being compiled on a local level (e.g. in Frankfurt) or by the federal states.

In this discourse on integration and naturalization the question is raised how Germany as a country of immigration should deal with an increasing number of new citizens, how basic information on political system, state and society can be conveyed and how a feeling of belonging to the German nation can be encouraged. These aspects are part of a much larger complex, which could be called a **culture of integration**. Germany will have to deal with migration inflows presently as well as in the future and this calls for a system of migration control, on the one hand, but also for strong institutions of integration. A culture of integration could be defined as a complex of ideas, knowledge, values, norms, symbols, forms of organisations and practices which relate to the objective to integrate migrants. The development of a culture of integration is necessary when migration becomes a permanent element of the social structure of a society. Elements of this culture of integration are: competence of the German language as precondition for successful integration; assistance in orientation for newcomers (integration courses, integration contracts); civic education for immigrants; the meaning of citizenship and "dual citizenship" for the overall integration process; the introduction of naturalization ceremonies. Looking at these dimensions of a discourse on integration one could say that a **culture of integration and naturalization** is gradually developing in Germany.

In other European countries policy-makers are also discussing potential instruments for a better understanding of the rights and responsibilities that come with the acquisition of citizenship. In the **United Kingdom**, for example, a white paper on nationality, immigration and asylum has been published in February 2002, including policy proposals

¹ The reports recommendation resulted in the "Law Channelling and Limiting Immigration, Regulating Residency and Integration of EU-Citizens and Foreigners (**Immigration Law**)" which is still in the legislative process.



to promote the importance of British citizenship. In the **United States** in 1997 the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform called for a new commitment to the “Americanization” of immigrants: “Americanization is the process of integration by which immigrants become part of our communities and by which our communities and the nation learn from and adapt to their presence.” (p. 29). In its recommendations it suggested that the Federal Government should take an active role in helping newcomers to become self-reliant, to educate them in English language skills and in core civic values and to revisit the meaning and conferral of citizenship (p. 29).

To link the discourse on naturalization and integration in Western Europe and in America the efms organized the workshop “Transatlantic Discourse on Integration: Citizenship and Culture of Naturalization” at the Office of the Federal State of Bavaria in Berlin on 7–8 July 2003. Among the participants were administrators, German, British and American academics, jurists, representatives of local and regional commissioners for integration as well as of the Federal Commissioner for Integration, representatives of foundations and the American Embassy as well as experts in adult education. The conference was designed as a workshop and therefore only a limited number of participants was invited. To stimulate intensive discussions short input statements were presented at the beginning of the sessions and enough time for exchange and discussion was allowed for in the conference program.

In the following the main results of the workshop shall be presented.

Main Topics and Results of the Workshop

1 Naturalization in Germany, the United States and in the United Kingdom: legal basis, administrative implementation and quantitative development

The purpose of the first session was to present the legal framework as well as administrative aspects of naturalization in Germany, the U.S. and the United Kingdom as they are related to a culture of integration and naturalization. **Hans-Josef Stein**, director of the department ‘Citizenship and Naturalization Issues, Citizenship Law’ at the German Federal Ministry of the Interior opened the session by summarizing the basic changes of the citizenship law in 2000 and ensuing developments for the administrative naturalization proceedings. In accordance with the federal principles in the German constitution the federal states implement the citizenship law, which means that the local administrative bodies decide on naturalization applications and are responsible for the “culture” and duration of the administrative proceedings. The Federal Ministry of the Interior has no influence on the individual decisions themselves; it provides general guidelines for naturalization (*Allgemeine Verwaltungsrichtlinien*) which have been specified by the federal states.



With the "Law on the Reform of the Citizenship Law" (*Gesetz zur Reform des Staatsangehörigkeitsrechts*) of July 15, 1999 and the General Administrative Guidelines (*Allgemeine Verwaltungsvorschriften*) of December 13, 2000 a central political project of the red-green federal government elected in 1998 was realized. Due to a changing majority situation in the *Bundesrat* and a successful campaign of the parliamentary opposition against the planned general permission for dual citizenship, however, the bill ended up - in the words of Stein - to be a "result of a political compromise". Although the federal level tried to set standardized guidelines for the administrative implementation of the law in the federal states, many individual aspects were discussed controversially by the 16 ministries for the interior and therefore numerous regulations for the administrative implementation of the law were formulated in a relatively vague way. It was up to each individual state to translate them in concrete regulations. This way different interpretations of the law and different "cultures" of naturalization in the federal states and on the local level play a large role in the naturalization process and explain differences in naturalization practice and rates of naturalization. What makes things even more complicated is that naturalization paragraphs are still scattered across several laws². There are new exceptions in the law which allow dual citizenship, but in principle, the naturalization applicants are still required to give up their former citizenship.

According to Stein a basic modernization of the citizenship law has been realized; new aspects are the introduction of *ius soli* elements, the shortening of the required terms of residence, the required sufficient language competence and declaration of loyalty to the German constitution, the "protection clause" which denies extremist foreigners the German citizenship and the abolition of naturalization proceedings for ethnic Germans migrating to Germany who are now naturalized through the admission process to Germany.

Stein stated that in 2002 about 154,500 persons were naturalized in Germany. According to information by the Federal Statistical Office a total of 519,000 persons acquired German citizenship from 2000 to 2002. The annual average of 173,000 naturalizations is more than 50% higher compared to the three years before the reformed law. Stein pointed out that this shows that the modernization of the law has had a positive impact on the willingness to naturalize.

Following the presentation of the legal and administrative aspects from the perspective of the federal level, **Martin Jungnickel**, head of the naturalization department of the *Regierungspräsidium*³ *Darmstadt*, contributed a statement on his experiences with the reformed citizenship law. The *Regierungspräsidium Darmstadt* is the largest naturalization authority in Germany and processes about 9% of the nation-wide annual naturalization

² Other laws that include regulations relevant for naturalization are the *Grundgesetz*, the *Ausländergesetz* or the *Gesetz zur Beendigung von Diskriminierung gleichgeschlechtlicher Lebensgemeinschaften* (Note T.W./S.W). The planned Immigration Law would have completed the reform of the citizenship law: it would have united all regulations in one law text and it would have adapted the wording to modern standards (e.g. deleting words like "Reich"). The passing of this law, however, is still pending.

³ A *Regierungspräsidium* is the largest administrative unit within a federal state. The *Regierungspräsidium Darmstadt* comprises the city of Frankfurt which has the highest rate of immigrants in Germany.



applications. Mr Jungnickel criticized the fact that due to the above-mentioned vague formulations in the federal guidelines it was up to every federal state to formulate concrete regulations and up to even every town or district to interpret them for implementation. This results in considerable differences. It is possible, for example, for citizens of a EU member state to keep their old citizenship if they come from a country that also grants dual citizenship for citizens of other member states ("*Gegenseitigkeit*"). Bavaria and Baden Wurttemberg, however, decided that this is only the case if the legal basis for naturalization in the EU country in question is the same as in Germany. As this does not apply to most of the EU member states, dual citizenship is not granted in these federal states on a mutual basis. Harmonization of administrative practice should therefore be achieved as soon as possible.

Jungnickel stated that to develop a nation-wide "culture of naturalization" in Germany the administration has to adopt an integration- and customer-oriented approach to naturalization. The following measures should be applied:

- Balancing private and public interests: if applicants are eligible for naturalization, they should be treated as clients entitled to service-oriented administrative procedure. But the state's interests must also be considered. This has been successfully achieved in the case of impunity as a naturalization requirement: here, applicants who have committed only minor offences are still eligible for naturalization, but applicants who have committed serious offences cannot be naturalized. In the case of the necessary German language proficiency, however, the state has imposed very strict requirements and in the interest of the applicant more exceptions should be made, especially for the first generation of labor migrants.
- Creation of clear and long-term administrative rules and nation-wide harmonization: In the case of testing the language competence naturalization applicants are confronted with a broad variety of standardized or non-standardized written or oral tests, depending on the federal state.
- Clarifying rights and duties of persons who have received German citizenship through *ius soli* but who have to opt for one citizenship between the age of 18 - 23 ("*Optionspflichtige*"): The administrative bodies will be confronted with serious problems in implementing this regulation. If, for example, the person in question lives in the country of his or her second citizenship, German authorities have to find him or her and deliver the official request to opt for one citizenship. This will be very difficult in many countries.
- Submitted naturalization applications should be processed and decided within an appropriate period of time. Delayed processing, which at the moment could last up to 3 years (depending on the necessity of dismissal from former citizenship), should be avoided in future.
- Information campaigns can help to provide information to potential naturalization applicants.



Following the presentations on the German situation **Prof. Rey Koslowski** of Rutgers University summarized the legal framework for naturalizations and the administrative proceedings in the **United States**. In the United States, a classical country of immigration, relatively quick access to citizenship has always been part of the naturalization culture, something Prof. Koslowski experienced in his own family when his parents emigrated from Germany to the U.S. in 1951. The requirements for naturalization in the U.S. are as follows: The applicant is 18 or over; the applicant has been a permanent resident in the United States for 5 years (3 years as a permanent resident married to a U.S. citizen); the applicant must prove sufficient knowledge of the English language and sufficient knowledge about U.S. history and government (civics test). Certain applicants, because of age or disability, have different English and civics requirements; the applicant is of "good moral character"; the applicant must swear an oath of allegiance to the United States, including the promise to renounce all foreign allegiances (*"I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen."*)

Koslowski stated that exceptions from these rules are made for soldiers who have served in U.S. forces and who can be naturalized after only 3 years of residence (in times of war even these three years might be reduced). In accordance with *ius soli* children born in the U.S. are automatically American citizens.

After filling in the Naturalization Form (N 400) and getting fingerprinted, the applicant is interviewed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and takes the English and civics test. There are exceptions for elderly people: if they have been in the U.S. for more than 15 or 20 years respectively, and are older than 55 or 50 respectively, the citizenship test is carried out in their mother tongue. Taking the oath completes the naturalization process. In 2001 608,200 people became U.S. citizens and in 2002 573,700, the largest groups among them former Mexican citizens and people from Asia (China, Vietnam, Philippines). The numbers are now back to around half a million persons per year, after the exceptional year 1996 when a sharp increase to one million naturalizations occurred.

According to Prof. Koslowski naturalization in the United States is very much seen as a step in the integration process, not as its completion. Access to American citizenship consequently is relatively easy. At the same time there has been a long tradition of fear of the new citizens in the United States within the majority population. The large-scale immigration up to World War I for example led to a sharp increase in the number of naturalizations and it was feared that this might result in political instability.

Similar to the United States naturalization in the United Kingdom is also a relatively uncontroversial issue. **Dr. Simon Green** of the Institute for German Studies at the University of Birmingham pointed out that being a country with a high level of post-war immigration it has been widely accepted in society and politics that immigrants should become British citizens. The underlying legislation regulating naturalization are the British Nationality Acts of 1948 and 1981 and the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act of 2002. In 1999 2.2 million foreigners lived in the United Kingdom, among them 800,000



Irish and 400,000 Indians. However, the exact number cannot be determined as there is no registration system.

In general, the requirements for naturalization in the United Kingdom are as follows: The applicant is 18 or over; the applicant has been a resident in the United Kingdom for 5 years (3 years if married to a British citizen), of which not more than 90 days have been spent abroad within the last 12 months; the applicant has sufficient knowledge of the English language (or Welsh or Gaelic) and sufficient knowledge about life in the United Kingdom; the applicant is of good character; the applicant must swear an oath of allegiance to the Queen.

As in Germany and the United States policy-makers are also discussing potential instruments for a better understanding of the rights and responsibilities that come with naturalization. A white paper on nationality, immigration and asylum was published in February 2002, including policy proposals to promote the importance of British citizenship. The administrative measures suggested by Home Secretary David Blunkett intend **to make naturalization "more valuable"** and are - apart from the oath of allegiance - similar to the ones recommended by German administration officials:

- Speeding up the administrative process of the acquisition of British citizenship
- Preparing people for citizenship by promoting language training and education for citizenship
- Celebrating the acquisition of citizenship (see chapter 1.3)
- Reforming nationality legislation
- Modifying the wording of the oath of allegiance to a "citizenship pledge" (see chapter 1.3)

It is, however, not yet clear at the present time how these suggestions will be implemented.

2 Citizenship education and integration courses

An important aspect of the political discourse on integration and the development of a new culture of integration is the question how newcomers, migrants living in the host country and naturalization applicants can be assisted in acquiring the basic know-how for



participation in society: the language, knowledge about the political and legal system, the history of the host country and other aspects of civic education. In the following two sessions different concepts and programs for citizenship education were discussed in a comparative perspective. In addition, the question was raised in what way the host society should offer integration programs and how the acceptance of such integration courses can be ensured on the migrants' side; as an example the closing of "integration contracts" between host country and immigrant was presented.

Linking integration issues to the American discourse **Prof. Richard Alba** of the University at Albany/ State University of New York stated that in the **United States** there has always been an "**immigration policy**", but **hardly a "policy for migrants"**. People who are entering the country as labor migrants or holders of Green Cards can work and live where and how they want, there is no federal administrative body checking whether their integration is progressing. Popular movements for speeding assimilation within American society are historical phenomena, such as the "Americanization" movement during and after the First World War, a time of hysteria against foreigners, when immigrants were given crash courses not only in English language and American history, but also in American cooking and house cleaning.

According to Alba the assimilation approach in the United States today is as follows: it is believed that migrants come to the United States in order to improve their living situation and that they consequently have a strong interest in integrating successfully. It is indeed the wish of the American society to naturalize people after five years of residence and to make them equal members with full political rights; naturalization is therefore considered as supporting the integration process, not as its conclusion.

Alba argued that nowadays a strong **civil culture of patriotism** plays a decisive role in the assimilation process. Migrants and citizens are absorbed by something that could be called a "civil religion" (a term by the sociologist Robert Bellah): it describes the almost holy significance of the American nation for the individual, a strong nationalism, patriotism and national loyalty expressed by symbols, celebrations and festivals (Independence Day, Memorial Day). This strong patriotism is passed on by national institutions (schools, army) and unites Americans and immigrants beyond ethnic belonging or different religious denominations. It goes along with the dominance of the English language. It is perceived by immigrants as an **offer to identify as Americans**. Becoming an American and taking on an American identity is presented and perceived as something that is open to everyone and can be achieved by everyone, no matter what ethnic or national background one has.

In case immigrants are seeking **integration assistance**, they cannot rely on the government, but rather have to approach churches, ethnic communities or non-governmental organizations. **James Levy** of the American Embassy in Berlin pointed out that there are no special integration courses for immigrants in the United States. Children and youths are included in the general education system right from the beginning. In order to naturalize migrants have to acquire basic civic knowledge. This can be done at home by reading course books or getting the information from the internet, by there are also courses for civic education taught by NGOs, for example. Applicants for naturalization generally have to pass the citizenship test, but there are exceptions:



- *Ius soli* is deeply rooted in American history since the fourteenth amendment of the constitution (1868) and therefore a large number of new Americans acquires citizenship by birth, without naturalization proceedings.
- In the U.S. a large number of minors naturalizes who do not have to pass language or citizenship tests, as they are enrolled in the general education system. The same goes for about 20,000 foreign children adopted by American citizens every year.

According to Levy it is not difficult for labour migrants or reunited family members to pass the citizenship test. Unemployed persons or persons receiving welfare are usually supported by churches or nongovernmental organizations offering free preparation courses⁴.

Richard Wolf, researcher at the *European forum for migration studies*, presented an overview on **integration courses** and **model projects in Germany**. He discerns between two types of integration courses:

- **Integration course type I (Newcomer course):**

This type of course addresses newly immigrated persons. It is also called "Integration course for newcomers" and consists of a language as well as an orientation module, including assistance in vocational training. The emphasis in these courses, however, is primarily on language teaching. This type of course is carried out in the Netherlands, Sweden and Austria and is also planned in Germany as part of the new Immigration Law (see below). Model projects for this type of course are carried out in Hesse and Baden Wurttemberg.

- **Integration course type II (Citizenship Course):**

In contrast to the target group of the Integration course I this type of course addresses migrants who have already been living in Germany for a longer period of time and who have a certain competence of the German language. The goal of this course is to provide background information on the German society, geography, history, the political and legal system, ways of political participation as well as on the rights and duties of German citizens are provided. It is a preparation for citizenship.

In cooperation with the City of Nuremberg and financed by the Bavarian Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs, Family, Women and Health the European forum for migration studies developed and evaluated a model project for type II integration courses. 5 evening courses and 3 weekend courses were carried out between October 2001 and

⁴ More information on the naturalization process and naturalization ceremonies was provided by Mr Levy later (see chapter 1.4.)



May 2003. The experiences with this model project will be used for future course conceptions.

The "Law Channelling and Limiting Immigration, Regulating Residency and Integration of EU-Citizens and Foreigners (Immigration Law)" which was passed in 2002, stopped in fall by the German Federal Constitutional Court, re-introduced by the federal government in 2003 and which is currently being negotiated in the mediation committee of *Bundestag* and *Bundesrat*, includes **a legally binding integration course**. Participation in this course would be obligatory for foreign nationals who want to immigrate to Germany and who lack adequate German language skills. **Dr. Michael Griesbeck**, director of the department "Integration" at the Federal Office for the Recognition of Foreign Refugees in Nuremberg⁵, reported on the work of his institution regarding integration which includes some tasks performed by other federal agencies until recently. The Federal Office for the Recognition of Foreign Refugees was commissioned by the federal government to develop a nation-wide integration program. Dr. Griesbeck presented preliminary concepts for integration courses within this integration program. They will consist of two elements:

- Language instruction (600 hours, level I and II)
- Orientation course (30 hours, in German), including introduction to the German political and legal system, German culture and history.

A major problem of the planned integration courses, however, will be the foreseeable difference in the participants' educational level and language proficiency, for which appropriate didactic concepts have to be developed.

⁵ According to the new Immigration Law the Federal Office for the Recognition of Foreign Refugees in Nuremberg will be renamed to "Federal Office for Migration and Refugees" and will have new responsibilities for co-ordinating labour migration, developing a federal programme for integration and making political recommendations in migration issues.



3 Integration contracts and counselling for foreigners

Another measure that is designed to provide systematic integration assistance to migrants are integration contracts. There are two target groups: foreigners (non-Germans) and ethnic Germans (*Spätaussiedler*) migrating to or already living in Germany.

Dr. Doris Dickel and **Bernd Knopf**, both working for the **Federal Commissioner for Integration**, pointed out that with regard to *Spätaussiedler* integration programs have played a major role in the past years, but that this is not the case for foreigners: here, they are a relatively new concept and that there is hardly any concrete experience regarding their effectiveness. Integration assistance, on the other hand, could almost be called a "classical instrument of integration": counselling for foreigners (*Ausländersozialberatung*) has been established in Germany for several decades and offers assistance with regard to various integration problems, ranging from labour market and education to family counselling. Up to now it is one of the very few systematic integration measure which is co-financed by the federal level and the federal states. In the wake of the public and political discourse on the new Immigration Law there is now a consensus for the need of an integration program in Germany for all new migrants. In the planned Immigration Law the federal government as well as the federal states created the legal basis for a self-obligation to provide integration assistance for the first time in German history. There are efforts to link and coordinate existing integration measures by nongovernmental organizations and social counselling for migrants. However, the conceptual discussion of the planned integration program focuses very much on the acquisition of the German language and tends to neglect other aspects of integration, such as creating equal opportunities in all spheres of economy and society. Only attending an integration course will not have the desired effect of "completed" integration afterwards. In addition, the integration program concentrates on newcomers and does not include migrants with integration problems who have been living in Germany for a long time ("*nachholende Integration*").

Thomas Jacobs of the Academy for Adult Education (*Akademie für Erwachsenenbildung*) in Korbach and **Dr. Jörn Sommer** of the Association for Innovation Research and Consultancy Ltd (*Gesellschaft für Innovationsforschung und Beratung mbH GIB*) presented the **concept and evaluation of a model project testing integration contracts** with ethnic Germans (*Spätaussiedler*)⁶. The project was started under the responsibility of the *Bundesverwaltungsamt* and is meanwhile administered by the Federal Office for the Recognition of Foreign Refugees. The Academy for Adult Education signs a contract with recently immigrated ethnic Germans. Through this contract the Academy is committed to providing certain integration offers, for example an assessment of individual competence of the migrant, providing the services of additional educational

⁶ The model project is carried out in other places with other responsible bodies as well, the Korbach project was presented as an example.



institutions, monitoring the progress of language acquisition, cooperating with administrative bodies in seeking further qualification programs or trainee positions for vocational qualification. The migrant, on the other hand, is obliged to use these integration offers and to participate actively in the individual modules. The total term of the contract is 18 months for adults and 24 months for youths. In total, 115 participants have so far taken part in the model project. Among the 115 participants 52 are now employed on the first labour market and the number of persons who receive income support has been reduced in comparison to Spätaussiedler groups who have not signed the integration contracts.

In the ensuing discussion it was stated by Prof. Heckmann as well as Mr de Taillez that the presented integration contracts are not "real" contracts in accordance with civil law, but rather include "symbolic" obligations, without sanctions, from the host society's as well as from the migrants' side.

4 The symbolic side of naturalization

Naturalization is not only a legal process, but there is also a symbolic side to it. Opening the session on this topic **Prof. Friedrich Heckmann**, director of the *European forum for migration studies*, pointed out in his statement that a central aspect in the development of a "culture of integration" is a "**culture of naturalization**". Naturalization ceremonies could be the climax and the end of the naturalization process. What can naturalization ceremonies signify for the German society, what for the migrants? What is the meaning of ceremonies and rituals in general? According to the sociologist Emile Durkheim rituals connect people in joint solidarity. Religious and political ceremonies as well as rituals and symbols link people to joint group ideas, images and norms and consequently could create joint thinking, joint objectives and joint interests. Symbols and rituals are intended to convey meanings to those addressed. The message to the new Germans and potential applicants for citizenship is:

- Something of real significance is celebrated: full legal equality and fundamental membership rights, full political participation and protection by the state.
- The ceremonies are a sign for the openness of the German society and nation: one can become a German without being born in Germany and having German parents.
- At the same time the ceremonies encourages naturalized migrants to accept and take up their role as German citizens.
- The ceremony has also has an emotional side that could enforce feelings of new belonging: a special location, a festive program, the presence of prominent representatives of public life, music and a reception.



Symbols and gestures also address the receiving society:

- We have new citizens, the composition of the population is changing.
- These new citizens have to be respected and we as a receiving society need to contribute to their integration.

According to **Martin Jungnickel** of the *Regierungspräsidium Darmstadt*, apart from an appropriate setting for handing over the citizenship papers, **welcoming letters** could be sent by the Prime Minister of the respective federal state or another leading political figure to the new citizens. The following welcoming letter from Hesse could serve as an example:

Herzlich willkommen als neue deutsche Staatsbürger!

Zum Erwerb der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit gratuliere ich Ihnen und begrüße Sie herzlich im Kreise der deutschen Staatsbürger. Ihre Entscheidung, die Staatsangehörigkeit Ihres langjährigen Wohnsitzlandes anzunehmen, ist Ihnen möglicherweise nicht leicht gefallen, zumal dann, wenn sie mit der Aufgabe Ihrer bisherigen Staatsangehörigkeit verbunden gewesen sein sollte. Es gab viel zu überlegen – ich denke zum Beispiel an familiäre Beziehungen und gefühlsmäßige Bindungen an Ihr Herkunftsland sowie an vermögens- und erbrechtliche Fragen – und ich freue mich, dass Sie sich mit dem Erwerb der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit zu dem Land bekennen, in dem Sie Ihren Lebensmittelpunkt haben.

Unser Hessenland braucht Menschen, die bereit sind, sich eine Existenz aufzubauen, engagiert zu arbeiten und etwas leisten zu wollen; Frauen und Männer, die hier ihre private und berufliche Zukunft sehen und sich für Deutschland als ihre Heimat entschieden haben.

Ihre Einbürgerung ist kein rein formaler Akt, der sich auf die heutige Aushändigung der Einbürgerungsurkunde und in einigen Tagen auf die Ausstellung eines deutschen Personalausweises beschränkt. Die deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit verleiht Ihnen Rechte und verlangt Ihnen Pflichten ab. Beides ist wesentlich für den Erfolg von Demokratie und Rechtsstaat. Ich appelliere an Sie: Nehmen Sie an der politischen Willensbildung teil, gehen Sie wählen, werden Sie Mitglied in Vereinen, seien Sie ehrenamtlich tätig. Unsere Demokratie und unsere Bürgergesellschaft lebt von aktiven Demokraten und tatkräftigen Bürgern.

Sie gehören jetzt uneingeschränkt zu uns. Sehen Sie sich nicht lebenslang als Einwanderer und fühlen Sie sich nicht länger fremd, sofern Sie das jemals getan haben. Engagieren Sie sich, finden Sie dabei Freunde und betrachten Sie Deutschland als Ihre Heimat, als Zuhause für sich, Ihre Familie und Ihre Kinder.

Nochmals: Herzlich willkommen!

Roland Koch

Prof. Heckmann suggested that Germany is in a process of new **nation building**, a somewhat similar challenge to the one that happened after 1871, when Saxons, Prussians, Bavarians, Hannoveranians and Württemberger, for example, had to change loyalties and feelings of belonging and gradually became Germans and constituted a German nation. According to Heckmann, this new nation building refers to the integration and acculturation of immigrants. Offers for identification to the migrants and their children and a culture of naturalization which expresses such offers are important elements of this nation building process. This historical comparison was questioned by Mr de Taillez, who pointed out that today there is a different situation with a German majority and a foreign minority who is expected to integrate.



As there is no standard pattern for **naturalization ceremonies** in Germany the example of Bamberg, a medium-sized town in Bavaria with about 100 - 150 naturalizations per year, and Frankfurt am Main with about 3,500-4,000 naturalizations per year were presented. In Bamberg naturalized persons have been invited to a festive ceremony with speeches, music and a reception for four consecutive years. The names and the former nationalities of the new Germans are read out and they receive a present from the mayor. The program of the ceremony of 2003 was presented to the workshop participants:



**Einbürgerungsfeier der Stadt Bamberg
am 28. Mai 2003**

Programm

Musikstück

Eröffnung durch Oberbürgermeister Herbert Lauer

"Der Wechsel der Staatsangehörigkeit aus der Sicht von Eingebürgerten:

Ergebnisse aus der Forschung"

Tanja Wunderlich, efms, Universität Bamberg

Musikstück

Ansprache durch Oberbürgermeister Herbert Lauer

Persönliche Begrüßung der neuen Staatsbürger

Ansprache eines Vertreters der neuen Staatsbürger

Musikstück

Ausklang mit Getränken und Imbiss

Dr. Albrecht Magen, head of the department "Integration" of the municipal administration of Frankfurt, stated that due to the high number of naturalizations in **Frankfurt** the organization of **naturalization ceremonies** is much more complex. However, they are carried out three times a year with about 300-400 people. The event takes place in the late afternoon on a working day. Since 1999 all naturalized persons receive an invitation to a ceremony, approximately a third turns up. The mayor gives a speech, there is music and in the end all the participants jointly sing the German national anthem. As a present



the new Germans receive a copy of the German Basic Law or a multi-lingual copy of the famous children's book "Struwelpeter" for children. Representatives of the press are always invited as their articles - mostly on individual biographies of naturalized persons - are an important instrument to raise the awareness of the German receiving society that its composition is changing.

According to **Dr. Simon Green** naturalization ceremonies as a celebration of the acquisition of British citizenship are also **planned by the British government**. The currently applied "mail order approach" where naturalization papers are sent out to the new citizens will be reformed. There is broad consensus that those ceremonies shall be held as an integral part of the naturalization process in order to give **added significance to naturalization**, to make it "more valuable" and to provide an opportunity for the state and the local community to formally welcome its new citizens. However, the precise form of the ceremony, the program and also the financing has not been established yet. At the moment, there is only the mandatory **oath of allegiance** to the Queen, but this applies only to new citizens from countries that are not part of the Commonwealth:

"I..., [swear by Almighty God] [do solemnly and sincerely affirm] that, on becoming a [British Citizen], I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her Heirs and Successors according to law."

It is planned to modify the wording of this oath of allegiance to a more modern citizenship pledge:

"I..., [swear by Almighty God] [do solemnly and sincerely affirm] that, from this time forward, I will give my loyalty and allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, Her Heirs and Successors and to the United Kingdom. I will respect the rights and freedoms of the United Kingdom. I will uphold its democratic values. I will observe its laws faithfully and fulfil my duties and obligations as a British Citizen."

In general, Dr. Green noted that in British society there is a rather distanced relationship to the state and its institutions, based on very strong individualism. British people do not openly celebrate patriotism as it is the case in the United States. The only region where flags and symbols are commonly used to express the belonging to the British Crown is Northern Ireland, which could hardly serve as a representative example for the United Kingdom. It is therefore questionable whether a "culture of naturalization" might develop. In addition, there are practical problems: in 2001 the number of naturalizations amounted to 90,000 of which the majority took place in the London area and in the South east, which might cause logistical problems for naturalization ceremonies.

In contrast to Europe which is only starting to think about ways of making naturalization more valuable, the **United States** always had a tradition of officially and symbolically **marking the acquisition of the American citizenship**, **Mr Levy** reported. Before 1991



the oath of allegiance was sworn in court only, but since then a court, a local office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service or even large locations such as football stadiums can be chosen as venues to swear the oath of allegiance. In small ceremonies the names and former nationalities of the naturalized persons are read out, in big ceremonies the oath is jointly repeated. There is also the possibility to "Americanize" one's family name, something that has frequently been done by "old immigrants" in the past, but which is rarely done today. To illustrate the history of immigration and naturalization in the United States, Mr Levy presented historical naturalization and expatriation documents of his own family to the participants of the workshop, underlining the significance of citizenship to the history of immigration.

The question was raised in the ensuing discussion whether huge naturalizations ceremonies in football stadiums could be seen as a sign for a "degeneration" of naturalization ceremonies. The American participants contradicted and stated that those large events have the opposite effect: a large crowd jointly swearing the oath of allegiance is a very impressive sight and rather has strong collective binding effects, in the sense as suggested by Durkheim (see the beginning of this chapter).

5 The role of naturalization for the integration process: research results

According to **Prof. Richard Alba** there is hardly any research about the consequences of naturalization for the integration process in the United States. However, there is an extensive number of studies which shows that **naturalization is part of the assimilation process** of immigrants: it helps to provide access to resources and welfare benefits and it opens new opportunities. There are well-founded research results that immigrants are rather disadvantaged on the labour market after they have arrived in the United States, as they often accept jobs that are not in accordance with their level of qualification and other human capital. In the course of time, however, the immigrants are likely to improve their position on the labour market, although it is discussed controversially among researchers whether they ever achieve the same position on the labour market as non-immigrants with similar human capital. Acculturation, especially regarding the acquisition of the English language, is part of the upward mobility process. It is therefore plausible that naturalization is also in a way connected with aspects of integration, but if it is a factor that fosters integration remains questionable. There are a number of jobs that require the American citizenship, e.g. teachers at public schools, but this seems to be a rather small segment of the labor market. During the second half of the 20th century the American citizenship was abolished as required prerequisite for most professions.

Naturalization is only one part of the assimilation process. Another significant variable influencing the integration success is the spatial distribution of immigrants. Newly arriving immigrants are often living in ethnic enclaves in inner cities. In the course of time and after economic success they are moving to more upmarket neighbourhoods which are ethnically mixed.



In connection with naturalization, integration and social mobility it is necessary to mention the political integration of immigrants in the United States. And here one can note a fundamental difference between Germany and the United States: due to low naturalization barriers and *ius soli* in the United States immigrants have always been a strong political force, especially as they concentrated in certain towns and neighbourhoods. This resulted in a rapid political representation, as mayors, city councils and in the congress. Municipal administrations are autonomous in hiring staff and the representation of ethnic minorities on this level ensures that other members of the ethnic community are provided with jobs. **Social mobility** for many immigrant groups – like the Irish or Eastern European Jews – happened through **employment in public jobs** to a large part.

Dr. Andreas Wüst of the Mannheim Centre for European Social Studies (*Mannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialforschung*) presented results about integration status, political participation and **voting behaviour** of naturalized immigrants in **Germany**. His research was based on two data sources, a screening of the nation-wide *ZDF-Politbarometer* and own survey research in Heidelberg. In both cases the attention was focused on *Spätaussiedler* from the former Soviet Union and Romania on the one hand and Turks on the other. With regard to the integration status a four-dimensional index was constructed, covering structural, social, cognitive and identificative integration indicators. *Spätaussiedler* from Romania are integrated best according to this index, naturalized Turks achieve nearly the same results with the exception of their low identificative integration. In this dimension ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union catch up to their counterparts from Romania, but in all other integration dimensions they fall behind. Patterns of political participation are roughly the same among German citizens in general and naturalized people; the latter, however, show a clearly higher proportion of political apathy. Also participation in elections is approximately at the same level as for native German citizens. The preference for political parties is stable and strongly correlated with the former nationality: whilst large proportions of the *Spätaussiedler* in the *Politbarometer* supported the CDU/CSU, more than 80% of the former Turkish nationals intended to vote for the Social Democrats or the Green Party.

In the final statement of the workshop **Susanne Worbs** and **Tanja Wunderlich**, both researchers at the *European forum for migration studies*, presented the research design and illustrative results of their project "**Naturalization and integration: The subjective dimensions of the change of citizenship**". The aim of the project has been to bring in the migrants' perspective into the naturalization discourse in Germany, which is dominated by legal and political arguments from the viewpoint of the receiving society. For this purpose twenty-six naturalized migrants from sixteen countries of origin were interviewed in Bamberg, using a qualitative interview method which combined the technique of "narrative interview" with amore structured interview schedule. A broad range of topics of the naturalization process was subject of the interviews: the biographical context of the persons, their motives for a naturalization application, the decision process, their perception of the bureaucratic proceedings and the perceived effects of naturalization for everyday life.



As a result, a broad spectrum of individual "**naturalization biographies**" was found. Most people named more than one motive for their wish to become German citizens, for example "instrumental" reasons like simplification of travelling together with feelings of belonging and identification with Germany. The decision process was very short in some cases, other persons needed years before they submitted their application. Several factors influencing the length of the decision process could be identified, among them the necessity to give up the former citizenship and reactions of reference groups (family, ethnic community) to the naturalization intention. Most interviewees had positive memories regarding the contact with the German authorities, whereas especially former Turkish citizens reported negative experiences with homeland authorities. The official "act" of naturalization was quite bureaucratic and not festive for the majority of the interview partners, a disappointment for some of them. A few others had negative or ambivalent feelings with regard to their group belonging in this moment, but most were happy about their new status as German citizens. Last but not least a variety of "naturalization effects" came up in the interviews, some of them mirroring the motives for the application (e.g. the simplification of travelling mentioned above), others referring to increased political interest, increased identification with Germany or new professional opportunities. However, nearly no changes in the social environment and in cultural habits were reported. It seems generally not appropriate to consider naturalization as a biographical turning point that changes „everything“: some integration processes can be enforced by this step, others remain largely unaffected.