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Heckmann, Friedrich

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Arbeitspapier / working paper

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Heckmann, F. (2010). *Recent Developments of Integration Policy in Germany and Europe*. (efms paper, 2010-4). Bamberg: europäisches forum für migrationsstudien (efms) Institut an der Universität Bamberg. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-67031-8>

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efms paper 2010-4

Recent Developments of Integration Policy in Germany and Europe

Friedrich Heckmann

This paper was presented at the TEAMS (Transatlantic Exchange for Academics in Migration Studies) Workshop No. 4: "Population, Economics, Integration and Law: Implications for Immigrant Policy" in San Diego, USA, March 28-30, 2010.

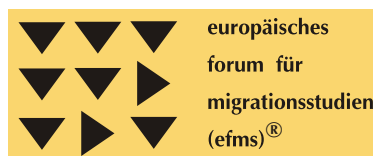




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1 Introduction

Following the tearing down of the Iron Curtain the 1990s have been a period of large scale immigration to Germany and other European countries. Immigration and immigration policies were high on the political agenda. The first decade of the **new century** has seen a decrease of immigration and a shifting of political - and I should add - research interest to integration and integration policies.

The aim of my presentation is to reconstruct major trends of new or newly defined integration policies in Germany in the first decade of the 21st century. My analysis will include a European perspective and look at European influences on the situation in Germany. I will start by identifying major general trends of integration policies, affecting different levels of government and policy. These new trends and changes are often connected with changes in the conceptualization of integration processes and policies, as will be demonstrated.

Policies will be reconstructed at the local, national and European levels of government. When discussing the national level some remarks will be made concerning the policies of the single federal states or Länder.

2 General trends

As to the **concept of integration** a continuing emphasis on the respect for the migrant origin cultures in practice is connected with an understanding of integration as a process of decreasing differences between migrants and non-migrants. The most obvious evidence for this is found in the practice of monitoring where decreasing differences regularly are interpreted as “successful integration” and persisting differences are seen as problems of integration that need to be solved. Decreasing of differences is what researchers like Richard Alba (1999) or Hartmut Esser (2004) will call assimilation

As a **policy concern** integration definitely has moved to a central position: integration in Germany is not left primarily to market and civil society processes, but is regarded as a process that can and should be steered by political intervention. Integration policy has its place in the new German immigration law of 2005. On different levels of government, a Leitbild and a plan have been constructed for steering integration policies. Under these premises, new political and administrative structures have been created, as will be demonstrated when we discuss the different levels of government and administration.

Who are the **groups** that are to be reached by the new integration policies? In the past there were different integration policies for different groups of migrants:

- ▶ former guest workers and their families
- ▶ ethnic German migrants from Eastern Europe (Spätaussiedler)



- ▶ Jewish people from the former Soviet Union for EU citizens
- ▶ refugees.

In the new century integration policies are directed towards migrants and so called **people with a migration background**, who often have been born in Germany. The new concept has been introduced because differentiation of data by citizenship has proved to be misleading when trying to understand integration processes. Since successfully integrated migrants according to new micro census data get naturalized more often than other groups, progress in integration – as for instance in education – has been concealed by the old statistics. At the same time, as in the case of Spätaussiedler, who are almost automatically naturalised, integration problems of certain groups could not be identified in the data and thus have been concealed in a similar manner. The concept of a “person with a migration background” has been preferred over the concept of “foreign born” by the Federal Office of Statistics and encompasses the following groups:

Figure 1: Concept of ‘person with a migration background’

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ persons having migrated to the Federal Republic after 1949 ▶ foreigners born in Germany ▶ naturalized Germans ▶ (Spät)aussiedler ▶ Germans with at least one immigrant parent |
|---|

In 2008 19 % (about 15,57 million people) out of a population of 82,14 million in Germany had a migration background (Statistisches Bundesamt 2010).

Another general and common trend that has developed on the different levels of government can be described as a tendency **to make integration measurable and accountable**. Indicator systems and monitoring have been and are being introduced and the evaluation of integration measures increasingly is regarded as a necessary activity in integration projects.

In terms of content and areas of the new integration policies I would first like to point out to the trend of understanding individual **integration as an education and counselling process**. This trend is visible in the following developments:

- ▶ The installation of a large number of integration courses that combine language learning with orientation to the new country
- ▶ Additional language courses for different migrant groups



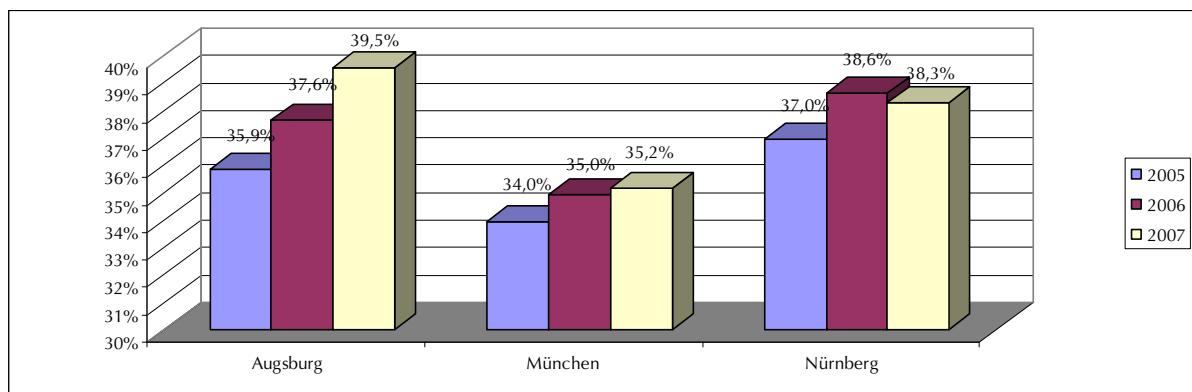
- ▶ Civic education and knowledge testing for naturalization
- ▶ A new emphasis on pre-school education with regard to the socialisation of migrant children and their parents
- ▶ Changing education in schools to adapt to the needs of migrant pupils
- ▶ Integration through individual counselling including the development of individual integration plans.

In terms of content and areas of integration policies I want to mention only one additional activity: **improving relations with Muslim communities**. I will come back to this when discussing the different levels of government.

3 The local level

“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 Bavaria where our institute is situated (Figure 2).

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

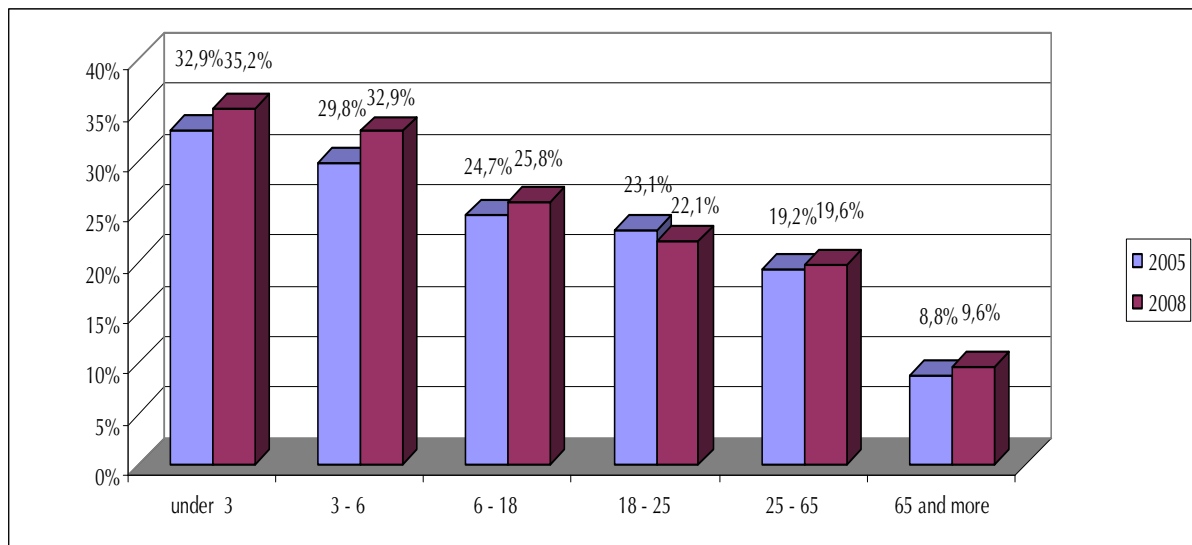


Source: Schmid/Heckmann 2009

What is important for the future: the younger the cohort the larger the share of persons with a migration background (Figure 3):



Figure 3: Persons with a migration background in different age cohorts. Proportion of all people in Bavaria.



Source: Schmid/Heckmann 2009

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. Administrative changes or innovations include the creation or strengthening of a department for integration or 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. 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.

Integration policy at the local level is nothing completely new. In fact, there is a tradition of activities and of a strong role of the large welfare organizations that began with the migration processes. Apart from suggesting new measures, coordinating existing measures is a major function of the local integration programs and Leitbilder. Our institute in 2008/2009 has helped the city of Schwäbisch Gmünd to develop such an integration concept. The city has a population of 60.000 and a 34% share of people with a migration background. We found that there were 625 concrete measures or projects, all financed and staffed, but little coordinated. The integration program that resulted from a broad political process in the city among other is full of suggestions to better coordinate the different measures, but also, to identify some that are superfluous.

In terms of content, the expansion and improvement of pre-school education is a major activity of cities, financially supported by the Länder. This is a general measure for all chil-



dren, but one that as such supports the integration of migrant children. In addition special programs for learning or improving German have been installed and kindergarden educators are trained for this new role of language teaching. Kindergardens are also told to undertake measures for better reaching the migrant parents of the children and to motivate them to participate in the life of the institution.

Other integration measures of municipalities that I only mention are efforts to improve intergroup relations and to organise naturalisation ceremonies. As to intergroup relations a special effort has been made to improve relations with Muslim communities and to foster interreligious dialogue. As to naturalisation such ceremonies with the mayor have spread around the country and are meant to increase identification with Germany.

4 The national level

On the national level the following trends can be observed in German integration policies:

- ▶ an upgrading of integration policies
- ▶ the installation of a large number of integration courses that combine language learning with orientation to the new country
- ▶ the creation of a system of national indicators of integration
- ▶ the institutionalisation of an anti-discrimination policy
- ▶ a reform of the naturalization process
- ▶ a linking of migration and integration policies
- ▶ the foundation of the “German Islam Conference”.

Upgrading of integration policies

This trend can be exemplified by the institutionalisation of integration policies within the new immigration law of 2005: §§ 43 – 45 are about installing integration courses and of a national integration plan; § 75 defines the role of the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees); §§ 92 – 94 is a legal basis for the Federal Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration. The immigration law thus gives the Federal Government a strong role in integration policies.

Integration courses are generally obligatory for new third country immigrants. Migrants who have been in Germany for a longer time and EU citizens may also take part upon their own wish or upon demand by the Labour Agency in case of employment problems. Integration courses are language courses primarily, but include an orientation unit that gives information on German history, culture and the legal system. Integration courses consist of 900



hours of language teaching and 45 hours of orientation. The Federal Government has spent around 150 million Euros annually for the courses during recent fiscal years. Table 1 has some basic data on integration courses from 2005 – 2008.

Table 1: Basic data on integration courses 2005-2008

Participants	484,322
Participants obliged by Labour Agency	39,458
Participants taking part in final test	173,312
Participants passing	115,732

Source: Bundesamt für Migration 2009

The **Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees**, originally founded for managing the asylum process only, in a very dynamic way has acquired many new responsibilities in the area of integration. The agency, among others, organizes and controls the integration courses, has a fund for integration projects, manages the German Islam Conference and distributes the EU integration fund money for projects in Germany. The agency works under the authority of the Federal Ministry of Interior Affairs. The **Federal Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration** on the other side is connected with the Office of the Chancellor since 2005. In the same year the position has also been upgraded by becoming a cabinet post.

National Indicators of Integration

The Federal Commissioner has taken an initiative to make the integration process more measurable and to establish a system of indicators for structural and cultural integration. A major step in this process has been the introduction of questions into the yearly official micro census that allow for the identification of persons with a migration background. Formerly, only citizenship could be identified. The micro census is a 1% sample of the total population. A working group of the Länder is currently analysing the 2008 micro census data and calculating results for the different federal states, following the national list of indicators. The main value of the indicator system will be to serve as time series data.

Institutionalisation of an anti-discrimination policy

Discrimination on the side of the native population can severely block or hinder integration processes. In this regard the institutionalisation of an anti-discrimination policy can be a major step to support integration processes. This policy and the passing of a law against



discrimination in 2006 is the result of EU directives against racist and other forms of discrimination which had to be transformed into German law. In this context, the Federal Government has also established an office against discrimination which is currently expanding and diversifying its activities.

Reforming the naturalisation process

The addition of an *ius soli* element into the citizenship law in 2000 has been a major element in the reform of the German citizenship law. Since then steps have been taken to make the naturalisation process more meaningful by adding elements of **civic education** to it. Citizenship education courses are offered in adult education centres, but the majority of applicants use the internet for learning the course material. A test has been devised to ensure that the candidates have actually acquired some basic knowledge about the country whose citizens they want to be. The test works with multiple choice questions and nearly all candidates pass.

Linking migration and integration policies

Marriage migration is a major factor in immigration to Germany. Second generation migrants, particularly from Turkey prefer to marry partners from the country of origin of their parents. Experts agree that this regularly slows down the integration process, particularly due to the lack of language competence in German of the new bride or spouse. In 2008 the Federal Government introduced a rule requiring marriage partners to have taken a course in German in their home country to obtain a visa. The course has to be passed in institutes that have been certified by German authorities. The government hopes that the measure eases the integration process of the new migrant and contributes to hinder the reproduction of segregated migrant communities. Critics argue that the measure primarily is for controlling unwanted immigration.

The German Islam Conference

During the CDU/CSU and SPD coalition government from 2005-2009 Minister of the Interior Wolfgang Schäuble organised the so called German Islam Conference in an attempt to define and improve relations between the state and Muslim organisations. The new minister de Maizière recently announced that he would continue the conference. The conference so far has not achieved very concrete results, but is an expression of the recognition of Islam as the third largest religion in Germany and has been a forum of exchange of opinions on topics that are important for intergroup and interreligious relations (values, religion and constitution, economy, media and Islam, security and Islamism, religious instruction in schools, training of Imams).



5 The role of 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. We have already mentioned the directives against discrimination that have relevance for the integration of immigrants, since discrimination is a major obstacle for integration. To support policies against racism and discrimination the EU has installed an institute in Vienna, which is now called The **Fundamental Rights Agency** that observes and reports on trends of acts of discrimination in the EU.

For the fiscal period 2007-2013 the EU has founded the **EU Integration Fund**, which supports measures and projects in EU countries, including research on the measures and projects. Part of the money is distributed by the EU directly, another part by the national agency for migration and integration.

6 Conclusions

Looking at integration policies in Germany in this decade we can observe the following trends which have been discussed in this paper:

- ▶ The state is taking a strong role in integration policies.
- ▶ Integration policies have moved to the centre of political attention.
- ▶ There is an attempt to make the results of integration policies measurable and accountable.
- ▶ A majority of integration measures are – in a wide sense – measures of education, teaching and counselling.
- ▶ National policies increasingly are being Europeanised.



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