



HOW THE GERMAN EDUCATION SYSTEM MIGHT BETTER SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE OF MIGRANT ORIGIN

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Abstract:

This paper extensively identifies gaps in the structures and systems in education and welfare frames and discourses which put people of Turkish origin at a disadvantage or as unequally treated compared to other sub-groups in Germany. This paper addresses a deepening analysis of the lack of necessary structures and systems. It considers discourses of inclusion that impede fundamental rights of these young people to make them full citizens of Germany and so empower them to full use of their agency. German politicians and society heavily discuss “integrating” Turkish youth to “German society” without discussing what are the available structures, systems and opportunities and what kinds of limitations and burdens these youth have that limit the extent to which they can be part of German society.

Keywords: education, migrant origin, girls, inequity

1. Introduction

People with a migration background constitute 23% in Germany’s overall population (2017). The proportions are higher in children and adolescents (the share for under 6 years old is 38%; 6 to 10 years old is 37%, for age 10 to 15 years is 34% and 15 to 20 year is 30% in overall population) (German Education Report, 2018). Inequity is still one of the main problems for providing equal opportunities of the German School education system (German Federal Statistic, 2018; German Education Report, 2018 and German Children Report, 2018). Compared to other economically developed counties (OECD, 2018) or EU neighbor countries, in Germany children’s school performance is shaped powerfully by social origin (German Education Report, 2018). In Germany, 51% of children with a migration background report personally experiencing disadvantages in their daily life (Andresen et al., 2017).

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Education is the key to creating equal societies where young people can enjoy higher levels of wellbeing, which also sustains stability and wealth of nations. From this perspective Walk (2008, p.1) discusses education has a central role to play in avoiding the waste of the available potential of youth from migrant origins. Schooling provides the possibilities and determines life chances for socially vulnerable youth by providing them opportunities for active agency. Turkish youths' integration to Germany and their achievement in the school system and labor market are blistering public and political discourse in Germany.

The status of the Turkish population in Germany has been a contentious topic for many years. Much of this debate stems from at least three factors: Germany's sense that the Turkish population is not fully "integrated" into German society, Germany's sense that it is not a country of immigrants, and the subtle and not so subtle negotiations between German society and the Turkish community about "integration (Verdugo & Mueller, 2009). Many researchers believe that the disadvantages confronting migrant groups are tied to the status of people in these groups as immigrants (Clauss & Nauck, 2010). Poorer socioeconomic conditions among foreign-born families may be at least as important. Lower average incomes mean that families of immigrant origin face many of the same disadvantages as poor native born families. Thus the selective placement of children with migration background in less demanding and less promising educational tracks may also be conditioned by the shortage in social and cultural resources among the parents of these children. People with migration background experience disadvantage even after they become "German citizens", which could be explained by the structural inequalities German society is re-producing and the lack of necessary fundamental rights.

Luthra (2010) explains the disadvantage situation among different migrant groups in Germany as: "Taken together, then, these indicators suggest a clear hierarchy among the foreign born in Germany, with "Aussiedler" having a more positive governmental and social reception, and a more highly educated and less impoverished community than "guest worker" origin groups. They are followed by Greeks, Iberians, and former Yugoslavians, who have a negative government reception and weakly negative societal reception, along with disadvantaged aggregate socioeconomic characteristics. Finally, Turkish origin immigrants display an extreme form of interlocking disadvantage that separates them from the other guest workers.

Re-structuring welfare and education reform policies for sub-groups in German society would be one part of discussion that should lead by legal and political changes. Academia is part of the discussion; how social and educational science in Germany respond to contemporary issues in Germany to lead reforms, inclusion, exclusion, expanding opportunities, policy making for youth in education and welfare discussion? Crul and Mollenkopf (2012) discuss these questions as part of their comparative study with Turkish origin second generation migrants in Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, Paris, Stockholm, and Vienna. They were compared with Dominican second generation youngsters in New York and their Mexican second generation peers in Los Angeles, the two largest cities in the United States. On both sides of Atlantic, the parents' low levels

of education, income, and host language ability, together with religious differences in Western Europe make their children candidates for forming an ethnic underclass in the sense of being a marginalized, isolated or separate group from the large society.

The school system of Germany severely disadvantages and punishes children whose parents unable to provide effective support (Crul et al., 2012). Second generation Turks in the Austrian and German cities are the negative outliers. The highly stratified German-speaking school system systematically sorts many of the youngsters into poor jobs or the dead-end labor market and does not allow for many second chances. Those who received their schooling in the comprehensive systems of the United States (both cities) and Europe (France and Sweden) all have similar and higher proportions of successful young people. Comprehensive (less tracked) school systems seem to allow many children of disadvantaged immigrant backgrounds to enter college and universities and to find second-chance routes when the main one are not open for them (Crul & Mollenkopf, 2012b). This recent comparative research on two sides of Atlantic reveals once more the structural and systemic inequality and injustice caused by the lack of necessary system and structures which is acute in Germany.

Regarding the correlation between gender ratios, migration background and school achievements the surveys suggest that gender differences are similar with migrant and non-migrant students, but that male and female migrant students perform worse than their non-migrant peers. Generally, boys are more likely to repeat a class than girls, but boys and girls with a migration background have to repeat a class more frequently than their peers without a migration background (German Educational Report, 2018), which is also a case with participants in this research. Migrant children have been falsely classified as having learning-disabilities simply because of their sub-standard German language skills (Kornmann, 2006; Hovestadt, 2003). Some academics infer that students are not primarily disadvantaged because of being migrants, but rather because of their socially disadvantaged position (Kristen, 2006), which often coincides with a 'migration background'. On the other hand there are also inherent mechanisms in the school system contributing to discrimination against migrant children.

I would argue that before reforming existing structures systems and structures in education and welfare, focusing on language acquisition and Islamic values would narrow the discussion for finding solutions to contemporary challenges in Germany. I would argue that in order to generate fundamental rights for citizens to be active agents, there should be primary discussions of structures and how these define limitations. For instance, "institutional discrimination" as a structural inequality is studied widely in German literature by Anne Broden & Paul Mecheril; Mechtild Gomolla & Frank-Olaf Radtke. Given the conditions of the system, such an action may even be seen to be rational—a typical example of the "institutional discrimination" against migrant children (Gomolla and Radtke, 2002). The "institutional discrimination" of migrant children is promoted by the functional logic of the selective German system (Aurnheimer, 2005). Often teachers would regard the wishes of Turkish parents to send their children to a Gymnasium as unrealistic- hence preconditioning their failure and

educators would then latently not feel responsibility for their migrant pupils (Edumigrom, 2008). Linking German literature on discussion of institutional discrimination with OECD migrant education policy proposals, I would suggest analyzing current structures and their limitations before claiming “language learning” and “Islamic values” are limiting the discussion of vulnerability.

Boss and colleagues (2003) also highlights how children from a migration background are affected by institutional discrimination. Children and youth with a migration background are disproportionately affected by selection mechanisms. Social selection at the transition from primary to secondary school has been touched on above. However, children of foreign origin have fewer chances of being recommended for the Gymnasium than do non-immigrant origin “German” children, even when they share the same academic achievement level and social status. Streaming school children appears to have a particularly negative effect on children from poor families, migrant children and children with disabilities. Learning deficits and educational disadvantages may develop because of related disturbances resulting from the structural difference between family and school milieus. Overall, it becomes evident that the German school system must develop more inclusive structures to support the development of students who are from low socioeconomic or immigrant backgrounds

Overall, empirical surveys do not provide sufficient answers to whether migrant students are primarily disadvantaged because of their migration background or rather because of their socioeconomic position. However, migrant origin school students are disproportionately affected by discrimination as both categories often coincide. The most startling reason for this considerable discrimination against students with a migration history can be found within the multi-track school system – with its elements of highly selective streaming after grade 4 (or 6 in Berlin) and the lack of permeability and upward mobility – as already pointed out above. Mechanisms inherent to the school system contribute to discrimination against migrant children (Gomolla and Radtke, 2002). Schiffauer et al. (2004) revealed the existence of a ‘hidden curriculum’, which subtly and selectively guides educational practices, defines ‘normality’ and codifies migrant students as the ‘other’ – for example, when even well-meaning educators only refer to them as ‘experts’ on their parents’ home country. Based on a negative model of national identity, the aim of German ‘civil enculturation’ is to teach pupils to think and feel democratically and to create a citizenry that acts according to internalized principles. This concept contradicts the legal position that many migrants find themselves in, a contradiction teachers observed in this study apparently did not realize.

Also other comparative studies emphasize how the German education system disadvantages youth from Turkish origin children in Germany. Coupled with the later start and lower average contact hours, Turkish students in Germany thus have comparatively little time to pull themselves out of their disadvantaged starting position. Moreover, because of the early selection, more students end up in lower qualifying streams (especially Hauptschule, which is the lowest track of secondary education (Crul & Schneider, 2009).

In Germany school education should be also considering such aspects of vulnerability to support these children in formal, in co-operation with non-formal and informal education collaboration. Future research, combining both quantitative (e.g., surveys and test scores) and qualitative (e.g., ethnography and interviews) data can shed more light on the varying 'effects of home and school resources/structures on academic outcomes of immigrant students in Europe (Song, 2011). Such studies could provide needed information to formulate informed policy decisions as to where and how to allocate limited state and local resources to more effectively meet the needs of the immigrant children of disadvantaged backgrounds in the European school system as well as to understand role of school education and how to re-structure education systems for serving such children.

Up to now empirical school research in Germany has not examined what might further enhance the achievement of migrant children. No study has systematically evaluated factors like class size, team teaching, teaching methods or language instruction on the academic achievement of this group of students. Given this absence of evaluation of pedagogical practices, what kind of political measures seem likely to enhance the educational attainment of immigrant children? As the socio-economic background of parents can hardly be changed overnight, these measures should concentrate on changing public institutions as well as the school– parent relationship (Söhn, J., Özcan, V., 2006).

2. German Society for Migrant Origin Youth

After September 11th 2001, Islam became politicized in the Western World. Religious prejudice against Islam became a dominant discourse also in Germany. Muslims have been seen in Germany as very oppressive towards their daughters, which can play a role in teachers' recommendations for their school career (Karakasoglu and Boss-Nunning, 2005). Crul and Mollenkopf (2012) claim that European debate has thus misconstrued the actual state of affairs. Its image that large majority of Muslim youth are strongly religious and hold radical Islamic views does not resemble reality. Instead, this attitude pushes them out of society even as they advocate a modern Islam or even do not identify with or practice Islam. Minority students are vulnerability to identity threat in academic settings. So-called "dual identity threat" is likely to arise when the majority group denies, questions, or rejects the double membership claims of the second generation as fellow citizens (Berry et al. 2006; Ellemers et al., 2002). Also research shows that ethnic minority students with a strong sense of ethnic identity were more vulnerable to identity threat (Cole, Matheson, and Anisman, 2007).

Current comparative studies between Europe and the United States (Crul & Mollenkopf, 2012) reveal similar findings as Karakasoglu and Boss-Nunning (2005). *"The large groups of people from "immigrant backgrounds" face dramatic marginalization in the communities where they live and to which many of them were born; vocal groups of Europe's large Muslim community have made repeated public appeals against the intensifying Islamophobia that rules out earlier attempts at peaceful and trustful cohabitation according to*

multiculturalist principles and politics” (EduMigrom Final Report 2011). Tense relationship between the majority and the dominantly Muslim ethnic minorities that one learns about day after day from the media. The tensions certainly have multiple sources. First, up until very recently, Germans’ self-perception as being open and tolerant toward ethnic minorities has been coupled with their tacit expectation toward immigrants to return home and thus allow their “hosts” to maintain ethnic and cultural homogeneity in their country (2011, p. 17).

Also Diehm (2010) argues that Turkish identity is associated with being Muslim after September 11th in Germany, which might be thought to imply that young people of Turkish origin encounter more difficulties than before in the public sphere. EduMigrom report (2011) highlighted the Muslim students and their parents often experienced unfair treatment and discrimination due to their faith and traditions. Schools and teachers tended to refuse to tolerate the display of religious symbols or the observance of Islam behavioral rules and habits. Several Muslim girls gave account of disputes at school because of wearing their headscarves.

The many problems that re-migrant or repatriate children experience upon their integration or re-integration into the society to which they supposedly belong clearly shows that language is not the decisive factor concerning integration or lack of it. There are many other obstacles to integration – a major one being the interaction between migrant children and teachers who experience diversity and difference as a threat to their own social and cultural values and convictions (Knörr, 2009). Other research shows that related to both education and integration is the lack of embeddedness of immigrants (e.g., the Turkish community) in other aspects of German society. The labor market, social institutions, and the polity should also be open to immigrants if Germany truly wants to “integrate” them. In addition, it will make the work of educating and socializing immigrants much easier. The social context is crucial and if students are able to see that education has economic, social, and political rewards, education can truly be an integrating institution. Therefore, education is an integrating factor, but it is also important that groups of individuals be fully embedded in other parts of society (Verdugo and Mueller, 2009).

One reason for these problems is that integration in Germany seems to mean that Turks should shed their Turkish cultural links and become German, as German political discourses around migration relate to assimilating Turks. Second, German social structure is exclusionary (Turks face many barriers, formal and informal, to their full participation in many of Germany’s major social institutions). Under these conditions, integration has run into many barriers, and the educational system is not able to realize one of its major functions (socializing youth toward integration) as well as to collaborate with welfare institutes to become more functional, autonomous and accountable. Bowskill et al. (2007) defines the meaning of integration particularly; integration and the acculturative moral order were often structured and elaborated in socio-spatial terms. Heckmann (2003) defines integration as a general and formal concept; maybe a) forming a new structure out of single elements, or b) ‘improving’

relations within a structure and c) adding single elements or partial structures to an existing structure and joining these to an interconnected “whole”.

Integration refers both to the process of connecting the elements and to the resulting degree of interconnectedness within the ‘whole’. Integration means the acquisition of rights and immigrants ‘and their descendants’ access to position and status in core institutions of the receiving society (Heckmann, 2003). It is evident that German society and politicians are insisting that people from other backgrounds should be becoming part of existing structures which may not fulfilling migrant populations’ acceptations and needs. What is problematic is that people from Muslim background and Turkish background may not like to integrate to Germany thus it is not they don’t want to become part of Germany on these terms. The lack of structures such as those which facilitate immigration in Canada make integration difficult in Germany.

Schneider et al., (2012) claims that the real problem in Europe is more likely to be the mainstream’s lack of imagination about how people can hold multiple forms of belonging. Despite these continental blinders, however, members of the second generation on both sides of the Atlantic are facing, and largely surmounting, the challenges to their full membership in line with a well-documented bi-dimensional approach of ethnic and national cultures and identities in acculturation research (Berry et al. 2006). Specifically, dual identity claims are at odds with an ethnic representation of national identity, which excludes ethnic minorities as outsiders who do not belong to the nation (Meeus et al., 2010). Baysu et al. (2011) argue that the same level of perceived identity threat may have differential consequences for minority school success depending on the adaptive value of different identity strategies in specific intergroup contexts. Baysu et al. (2011) distinguish between “separated” (i.e., mainly ethnic), “assimilated” (i.e., mainly national), and “dual” (i.e., both ethnic and national) identity strategies, as compared to a residual category of those who are weakly committed to both identities. Berry et al. (2006) labelled a fourth category, which refers to those who are weakly committed to both ethnic and national cultures and identities, “marginalization.” Yet its meaning is ambiguous, since those who are at the periphery of both identities may as well consider themselves as unique individuals, as world citizens, or as belonging to some other social category that is not ethnic or national (Bourhis et al., 1997).

Considering identity as “the inclusion of immigrant origin youth” is not provided for in the German concept of the nation, and no terminology exist either to express internal diversity: there are Germans and others, the non-Germans (Mannitz, 2004). The adolescents from ethnic minorities are engaged in continuous negotiations of identities which implied the need to maneuver carefully between the competitive demands and pressures exerted on them, both inside and outside the school context. According to a research on children with migration background in the US (Suarez-Orozco, C. & Suarez-Orozco, M., 2001, p.118), individuals gravitating toward an ethnic-flight style of adaptation tend to cultivate links with the majority group while consciously (and unconsciously) distancing themselves from their co-ethnics. At the opposite end of the spectrum, individuals engaging in what we term adversarial styles

of adaptation actively resist the norms, values and expectations of the dominant group. Process of transculturation, these individuals endeavor to create hybrid identities and cultural formations that transform the “old” ethnic culture and “new” majority culture in creative ways.

Another aspect to discuss with regard to the inequality of Turkish origin youth would be how teachers in Germany are prepared to deal with cultural and religious diversity in teaching and learning in everyday school practices. In one study (Mannitz, 2005) many teachers expressed the views that “oriental pupils in particular” posed great difficulties because of their “completely different” upbringing and culture. In the same vein, these students’ knowledge of other languages was not seen as any asset or useful skill but rather as a handicap that hindered their participation, social integration, and individual chances for success in German society. It is evident that hyper-plural German society needs a new education system which is embedded in everyday curriculum, ethos and practices as well in teacher education to be able create a good society for more justice, equity and equality. This could be achieved through research in academia to enhance intellectual knowledge and discussing and re-structuring these issues legally and politically.

3. German Citizenship and Identity

In my doctoral work with girls from a Turkish background in Germany, I found that participants discussed belonging, citizenship and plural identity as manifestations of their potential for their “good life” in Germany. I argue that the main issue in Germany should not be discussed from the perspective of integrating young people of immigrant origin people. I suggest that the lag of immigrants in education as a result in labor market, participation to social and political sphere of public life should be discussed from the perspective of citizenship, identity, belonging and role of welfare for providing fundamental rights for inclusion in Germany (Güner, 2019) A broader discourse on the social reality of Germany and the patterns of construction of diversity, cultural differences, memory and German identity would, however, not only allow those who were or are immigrants to identify with the nation, but also helps Germans to understand their own identity as far more diverse and culturally different as frequently asserted by their collective memory. The boundaries of Germanness cannot be blurred or shifted as easily as is the case, for example, with Britishness (Knörr, 2004). Bowskill et al. (2007) claims that Socialization is fundamental for identity formation. In spite of consistent attempts to uphold integration as ‘the moral good’, what we see in practice is the reproduction of a hierarchical insider/outsider structure which prescribes conformity and, in doing so, frequently diminishes the acculturation responsibilities of the non-Muslim mainstream. While non-Muslim value systems are privileged, the rights of Muslims to assert their own identities are marginalized implicitly.

In the 1990s, policy makers recognized the need to modernize Germany’s nationality law (Abali, 2009). Germany’s citizenship law was not based on the ground

of “*ius soli*-birth right citizenship by territory” and dual citizenship which may be excluding fundamental rights of people of immigrant origin who have been living and contributing to Germany for many decades. The new nationality law which was introduced in 2000 did not permit dual citizenship but introduced the “optional model” of temporary dual citizenship for children to choose which citizenship to remain between the ages 18 to 23. The new citizenship law January 2000 suggested that children who have one parent living in Germany under permanent residency could obtain German citizenship from birth, meaning that Germany’s citizenship law changed to “*Ius Soli*”.

Reforms in integration policies are also shaping policy change in citizenship as a result welfare support. Summarizing integration reforms in Germany since 2000, it starts with 2000 citizenship law where *ius soli*, law granting birthright citizenship is introduced. It means children of immigrants who have permanent residence permit are granted citizenship from birth. A limited option of dual citizenship was introduced for third country national minorities. Dual citizenship is valid until the age of 23; later years only one citizenship is valid. Also the 2000 law enabled people who have been residing in Germany at least eight years and passed a German language examination can obtain German citizenship. Later in 2005 integration law was extended to support international students, asylum seekers, investors, high skilled immigrants and persecution by non-state actors and for gender-specific reasons become grounds for asylum in Germany. Later in 2007 reform of the law on the transposition of European Union (EU) Directives and labor law was introduced. The reform legislation 2007 introduces a new procedure to determine the nationality status of a person by application or in the case of a particular public interest (Hailbronner, 2012). The 2009 Meseberg Cabinet decisions and labor laws were mainly concerning academics and investors. Since 2009 there have not been major changes in German citizenship laws. Süßmuth and Morehouse (2009) analyse reforms as; encouraged and much needed public debate on Germany as a country of continuing immigration and changed the climate of discussion about integration, focusing on the positive outcomes that can be expected and the benefit that migrants can offer society.

I argue that providing fundamental rights such as citizenship and dual identity would improve belonging and integration in Germany. Integration or living together would require two sided integration. Non-migrant population will accept that the new Germany after WW II has been built with people from immigrant origin and contemporary Germany has people from diverse backgrounds. On the other side migrant origin people will show visible interest in participating in and contributing significantly to Germany and Europe politically, socially, culturally and economically. Improving citizenship laws in the coming years will enhance the identity and belonging of citizens who are third and fourth generation immigrants. Germany’s collective identity as a country of immigrants is still fledgling and fragile, despite its decades-long experience with immigration (Süßmuss & Morehouse, 2009).

Multicultural policies often combined with inclusive naturalization, anti-discrimination, and equal opportunity policies which in many fields of integration do

have positive effects (Koopmans, 2013). Emphasizing communalities instead differences in the society and accepting that Germany is a country with diverse backgrounds would provide better cohesion to close the gap between advantage non-immigrant population and disadvantage immigrant population. Easy access to citizenship would be one main motive for immigrants to feel that they belong to Germany and as a result seek ways to build an identity. German inequality in education could be discussed from the perspective of systems and structures which built the societies in Europe. The public sector, including schools and the welfare system, had not previously been confronted with the changing needs of an increasing diverse population (Abali, 2009). Out of the thirty-two industrialized countries in the study, Germany scored far below the OECD average. When compared to other countries, it scored especially poorly in the performance of children from lower social and migrant backgrounds (Hagemann, 2012). As a result discussion on new welfare support for children and youth emerged after the PISA shock when the test result revealed a gap between non-migrant and migrant origin children in German education system.

In contrast to many countries, the German welfare state traditionally does not include the education system, although education system is a central factor in combatting social inequalities (Augustin-Dittmann, 2010). The German post WW II welfare state can be characterized as a conservative welfare state, as it was built on principles of social integration and stability, not redistribution between classes, or the alleviation of poverty. This approach was largely rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church with the principle of subsidiarity at its core. Based on this philosophy, the smallest viable entities of society are responsible for their members (Seeleib-Kaiser, 2008). Augustin-Dittmann (2010) discusses that the establishment of all day schools in the recent past entails a double de-familialization in the conservative German welfare state and therefore changes it profoundly. All-day school provision may be a balance between education policy and social policies.

Germany's most important welfare investment in recent years has been all day schooling. The program is financed by "Zukunft Bildung und Betreuung" (IZZB)-Future of Education and Care- Traditional German education system offered teaching from early morning to afternoon. The Federal Minister of Education and Research, Edelgard Bulmahn, took the occasion to attach the ideal of all-day schools to the problem of shocking PISA results. According to German system, schools have been places for teaching and learning. Schools have never been considered as places for extra-curricular activities for nurturing children holistically. The number of schools offering all day school provision has been extended between 2003 and 2009. A major goal of all day school provision is to narrow the achievement gap which is result of social background influence on children's school success.

Organizing all day schools has been in accordance with political will in response educational challenges which became political issue after the PISA results. Development of all day schools has be a major element in the German political agenda. All day schools are response to the educational challenge that Germany faces especially with the effect of social background on the school achievement. Holtappels (2005)

hypothesizes that all day schooling would provide “social integration” especially for those who are coming from disadvantaged backgrounds especially immigrant families. All day schools offer support for children and youth at risk (e.g. homework classes, social activities such as sports or arts as well as remedial classes). All these hypothesis built a foundation to shift a balance between youth, family, education and social policies. Different forms of all day schools are distinguished by student level of obligation. In schools with “open-all-day” programs, participation is voluntary and students choose to participate individually (Fischer & Klieme, 2013). Augustin-Dittmann (2010) concludes that where all-day schools are a generally accepted model in Germany they will change the conservative structure of the German welfare state.

Some private providers of all-day schools offer afternoon programs according to the conceptual frame of the all-day schooling (Hagemann, 2012). In addition, parents have to pay for lunch and for afternoon care. This new type of so-called all-day school, known as “open schools”, merely adds a very inadequate afternoon care program to the traditional half-day school, a far cry from what advocates of all-day education had hoped for. In short, thus far, new policy has done very little to help parents who work all day, nor has it improved- as it was supposed to- the education of children from disadvantage social and migrant backgrounds. However, if these are “open schools” with voluntary “all-day offerings” the new policy will have not have solved the problem. With the rise of the idea of a modern nation-state, Germany’s trouble with otherness did not fade. The idea of the nation did not overlap with a historically grown state that would embrace all of its citizens. Rather, national identity hinged solely on cultural commonalities, such as shared history, language and tradition. These cultural criteria defined the German people as Volk. Inclusion and exclusion were now defined by compatibility with age concepts and large varieties of German culture, leaving room for the interpretation of “self” and “other” (Wilhelm, 2013).

I argue that ‘being an outsider’ or experiencing inequality is caused by how institutions restrict and limit chances of the migrant origin youth. Limiting migrant origin youth’s success to language, culture, child rearing and family’s attitude towards education is a common rhetoric in Germany. Most European countries share the strategy of delegating these challenges to the educational system, whose tasks include improving language skills and competencies of migrant children and preventing dropouts that worsen future unemployment (Reinders, 2012). I claim that schools should be places that decrease inequality, combat xenophobia and strengthen intercultural understanding to ensure an open-minded society, where everybody feel part of a the country. The ethnicization of minorities is especially harmful for adolescents caught in structural discrimination at the lowest rung of the socioeconomic stratification system. Born into this context, they are not only deprived for structural reasons of social class and limited opportunities for better education, but they are confronted with stereotypes, defamed, and stigmatized. This is the most important reason that public discourse defaming Muslims and devaluing their family of origin is a danger to the lives of these young people (Wilpert, 2013).

As participants responded there is a lack of their culture and knowledge is presented in the schools. Integration of cultural items from emigration countries again is something that the individual school can only partly do on its own, it has to be supported by a political will and decreed by directives of authorities that are responsible for education systems. Howard (2008) highlights Germany as a place that is not particularly hospitable to immigrants. Despite the large numbers of foreigners who capitalized upon Germany's generous asylum and immigration policies in the 1990s and continue to live there today, many immigrants would prefer – if they had a choice – to live elsewhere.

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