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Migrant Integration Programs: The Case of Germany

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ABSTRACT

In the last decade, European governments started introducing migrant integration programs. As positive externalities arise from migrant integration, and market failures have been witnessed when integration is not achieved, strong arguments can be made for government intervention, as it can benefit both migrants and society as a whole. Germany has had the most extensive migrant integration program in Europe, with more than a million participants since 2005. Its program focuses mainly on language acquisition, with elements of cultural, historical, and political instruction. The program caters to various special-needs groups and since its conception has made multiple improvements. This study examines this program, its origins, implementation, outcomes, and underlying assumptions, drawing lessons for other countries seeking to address migrant integration. Since official integration programs are fairly new, there exists a substantial gap of knowledge regarding their merits and outcomes. This report hopes to help fill that gap and contributes to the general knowledge of migrant integration and European policies that foster it.

Key Words: Migration, Integration, Germany, Documented Migrants

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INTRODUCTION

Migration is as old as human history. The desires for a better life, new adventures, change, or the need to escape, have driven human beings to the furthest corners of the world. Today, as much as ever, the global population is on the move. However, never before have governments made such systematic efforts to integrate the newcomers into the society, providing them with language courses, cultural trainings, and supervisors that monitor this process. Since the beginning of this century, European governments have introduced migrant integration programs aimed at easing the transition of immigrants into host societies, in order to safeguard social cohesion and guarantee national security. Within the European Union (EU), migration has been on the forefront of political, economical, and social debates, with hundreds of migrants attempting to enter European soil every single day. Additionally, with the introduction of the Schengen Area, Europeans have had more freedom than ever to move and work within the continent. EU countries are trying to accommodate the needs such movements create in various ways, some leaving it to the municipal governments, others devising policies on the federal level.

With increased cooperation between EU governments, migrant integration policies have been slowly converging in the last decades, though significant variations still remain. The political and economic weight of the EU and the importance of its member states as desirable destinations for migrants from all over the world gives the EU migration policies great weight. Within the EU, migrant integration has been seen as something necessary, yet its surrounding policies remain neglected as compared to other policy areas. This is partially the outcome of a lack of consensus on which policies are effective and essential, as policies on integration entail controversial value choices and assumptions to justify the necessary funding. The deep ambiguity of the concept of integration results from the underlying complexity of the political, social, and cultural processes. Hence, implementation of these values and processes is highly contentious.

In May 2014, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a report highlighting that the most desirable migrant destination after the United States is Germany. According to the OECD, no other country has experienced such a rapid increase as a desired international destination (Reuters 2014). The number of migrants who are planning to stay in Germany for more than a year rose by 38 percent in 2012 (*ibid.*). As a top

migrant destination, Germany has introduced a migrant integration program in 2005, which has since had more than a million participants.

This study analyzes the German integration program, which is the most extensive one in Europe. Through an examination of its origins, implementation, outcomes, and underlying assumptions, the report draws out lessons other countries can take from the German experience. The overarching research question is how has Germany addressed migrant integration through its federal program. Further questions include:

1. What is migrant integration?
2. What are the arguments behind introducing integration programs?
3. How has the European Union addressed migrant integration?
4. How does the German policy place itself within the European context?
5. What is the background of the German policy and what changes have been introduced over time?
6. What are the outcomes of the German integration program?
7. What are the assumptions underlying integration initiatives?

The analysis is divided as follows: Section I discusses migrant integration in the EU, providing a definition of what is meant by integration, why it has been pursued by governments, and a historical overview of EU integration policies, setting the stage for the German program addressed in section II. After providing the details of the background and set up of the German integration course, section III looks at the costs and benefits of the policy, as well as lessons other countries can derive from the German experience. Finally, section IV questions the underlying assumptions behind the concept of migrant integration.

The main sources used for this analysis are:

1. Reports published by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*, BAMF) and the German Ministry of the Interior;
2. The primary news sources in Germany: *Die Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Der Spiegel*, *Die Zeit*, and *Die Welt*. Their archives were searched for any news containing the word “*Integrationskurs*” published between 2001 and 2007, which mark the Süßmuth Commission report, and the second Integration Summit (*Integrationsgipfel*) that proposed changes to the existing program. The search informed the analysis of the political discourse surrounding the introduction of the policy;

3. Articles from academic journals on the theory of migrant integration;
4. Personal experience as a participant of the German integration program.

The motivation for this topic came out of my personal experience as a migrant in Germany, taking part in this integration program in 2011 in Munich. My participation gave me an in-depth understanding of the program and led to my interest in migrant integration policies. The low cost and high intensity of the course are an attractive option for those who wish to learn the language. However, seeing how some of my colleagues made use of this opportunity during the course and afterwards made me question whether it is the most effective way of integrating the newcomers. The course lays the foundations necessary to speak German, but seems to be lacking in achieving a more meaningful integration.

This research contributes to the knowledge necessary for devising effective integration policies and common guidelines within the EU. As the German integration course is the most extensive integration program in Europe, countries seeking to develop their migrant policies can replicate its successes and learn from its failures. To date, very few studies have been carried out to assess the impact of such programs. Since integration measures for migrants are fairly new, there exists a substantial knowledge gap regarding their merits and outcomes. The existing studies are predominantly commissioned by governments and are usually based on closed-end questions and statistical analysis. Additionally, they are published in local languages, which limits the possibility of informed inter-European debates. This report hopes to help fill that knowledge gap and contribute to the general understanding of migrant integration and policies that foster it.

1. MIGRANT INTEGRATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

This first section provides a definition of migrant integration, focusing on how it has been understood by the European Commission. Additionally, it examines the arguments behind policies that advocate for increased governmental initiative towards providing migrants with integration measures that focus on language acquisition. Given the positive externalities arising from migrant integration and the market failure likely to result when migrants are not given sufficient incentives to integrate, strong arguments can be made for government intervention in this area. Within the EU, an increasing number of countries are deciding to subsidize or formally encourage migrant integration. Nonetheless, a historical overview of EU integration policies shows that much remains to be done.

1.1. What Is Migrant Integration?

The concept of migrant integration has many definitions and interpretations, differing significantly by national context, leading to variations in integration policies and practices.¹ Understood in the broadest sense, migrant integration is a multi-layered, complex process of becoming part of the society. Scholars point to four main benchmarks of migrant integration: spatial concentration, language assimilation, socioeconomic status, and intermarriage (Walters and Jiménez, 2005). Apart from these characteristics, the lack of academic consensus on the definition of integration has left room for considerable variation in interpretations and policy implementation.

Sociologists have been analyzing cultural integration patterns of migrants since the late nineteenth century. In social sciences, the main theories defining integration are assimilation theory, in which diverse ethnic groups are expected to, over generations, “melt” into the mainstream culture through social and economic integration²; multiculturalism, which views societies as composed of heterogeneous groups, including the majority, with migrants preserving and shaping their identity rather than passively submitting to assimilationist forces (Glazer and Moynihan 1970; Handling 1973); and structuralism, which underlines the interplay between the differences in migrant socio-economic opportunities and their social integration,

¹In migration literature, terms “integration” and “assimilation” are frequently used interchangeably, both referring to the mode migrants become part of the host society’s social and economic life. The common understanding of the difference was summarized by Nicolas Sarkozy: “*L'intégration, c'est: 'Je t'accueille dans le creuset républicain comme tu es.' L'assimilation, c'est: 'Je te fais disparaître'*”(L'EXPRESS, 2004). However, to simplify, this paper uses only the term integration.

² Gordon, 1964 provides a typology of assimilation patterns to capture this process.

with integration of migrants being dependent on how the host society “absorbs” and gives them equal access to wealth, jobs, housing, education, and decision-making (Blau and Duncan 1967; Borocz and Portes 1989). Scholars distinguish between social (cultural) and economic integration of migrants. In sociological analysis, “integration refers to the process by which individuals become members of society and their multilevel and multiform participation within it; integration is a process relating to different forms of participation: in the neighborhood, at work, school, family” (Anthias et al. 2013, 3).

Economists, on the other hand, focus on market outcomes of migration flows, such as labor market, fiscal transfers, or the provision of public goods. Typically, economic integration of migrants has been measured by the extent of the gap between native and migrant earnings (Chiswick 1978). Thus, migrant integration from an economic point of view is evaluated in terms of migrant’s earnings and socio-economic positions relative to the native population. Integration can be seen “as blending into the host country’s society,” and acquiring “destination-specific social capital,” while specifically economic integration is the “acquisition of human capital that is specific to the host country’s labor market,” such as skills, knowledge, or productive assets (Stark and Jakubek 2013, 62). Literature of migrant economic integration distinguishes between three types of human capital: specific to the host country, specific to the country of origin, and capital that is equally productive in both. Nonetheless, as cultural attitudes of migrants significantly affect their labor market performance, increasingly migrant integration has been analyzed through multi-disciplinary integrated approaches.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), migrant integration is “the process of mutual adaptation between host society and migrant” (IOM n.d.). Thus, both groups play an active role in the process. Governments facilitate migrants’ social inclusion through granting them rights, responsibilities, and providing access to opportunities. In turn, migrants make efforts to become active members of the society, respect its values, and learn the language.

The European Commission also champions the two-way approach to integration. In its Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy, the European Commission states that integration is “a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States” (European Commission 2014). The Common Basic Principles outline integration as a respect for basic European values, contributing to the host society

through employment, basic knowledge of language, history, and institutions of the host society, educational efforts, access to institutions and public goods on an equal and non-discriminatory basis, as well as participation in the democratic processes. Additionally, the European Commission underlines the importance of a dialogue between migrants and citizens, the value of cultural and religious diversity, and the need to develop clear policy goals, indicators, and evaluation mechanisms to make integration more effective.

Ultimately, integration is about fostering a well functioning society in which members of varying backgrounds can live and work together on equal basis. As the German Federal Ministry of the Interior noted, “Integration means feeling part of a community and developing a common understanding of how to live together in society” (BMI n.d.). Today, the social and political pressures of growing migration flows fuel European debates on integration. It is therefore necessary to establish clear definitions of integration objectives and strategies of achieving them throughout Europe. How to deal with the resulting increasing cultural heterogeneity is currently one of the most important challenges in European societies.

1.2. Market Failures and the Role of the State in Promoting Migrant Integration

The debate over whether states should actively promote migrant integration depends on the perceived costs and benefits of such policies. Historically, most states did not have national strategies on integrating migrants. Yet today, in the age of welfare states and extraordinary migration volumes, states can no longer afford to be negligent. Scholars argue that the lack of integrative measures may disrupt social structures, “affect the sense of community and social solidarity which constitute founding pillars of democratic welfare state systems. This could lead to the erosion of the social consensus for redistribution and diminish the political support for universal social programmes” (Algan and Bisin et al. 2012, 2).

Hence, some favor explicit public policies encouraging or enforcing cultural integration of migrants to the social norms of natives. Others, nonetheless, argue for accommodating cultural diversity, promoting tolerance, facilitating communication across communities, and building trust. Additionally, for centuries, immigrants have succeeded without any specific integration policies. Without undermining individual capability and achievements, it remains that policies play an important role in either paving or blocking the road to integration. While ultimately integration depends on “individual commitments to characteristics typifying national citizenship,

specifically country knowledge, language proficiency [...] and social values” (Vink 2012, 42), that commitment can be strengthened or weakened through government policies.

As argued by Dustmann, “integration of migrants is not only of political importance, but it should strongly interact with their economic behavior” (1996, 37). While the extent of necessary adaptation is negotiable, the lack of long-term national strategies and policies to integrate migrants into society and economy is often cited “as one reason for social and economic exclusion” of migrants and their children (Algan and Bisin et al. 2012, F4). Apart from exclusion, lack of explicit policies result in discrimination and persisting inequality, economic disadvantages and deprivation, and an inability to transfer or attest skills between national markets.

Thus, apart from prevalent social concerns, the reason for explicit integration efforts on the part of the government is the persistent market failure connected with migrant integration: inequalities of income, lack of sufficient information regarding available services and employment, as well as the negative externalities resulting from migrant economic underperformance and need of social assistance. Insufficient language skills are also a substantial barrier to labor market integration. Immigrants typically have higher unemployment rates and lower wages compared to citizens, a situation that persists beyond the first generation, for both men and women³. In 2012, the unemployment rate for non-EU foreigners was 21.3 percent higher than for EU-citizens, in some countries reaching well above 30 percent (Teichgraber 2013). The persistence and widespread gaps in the labor market performance of immigrants compared to natives are key motivators of different types of policy interventions.

Whereas a lack of integration efforts can lead to social and economic exclusion of immigrants and their children, economic integration and success of immigrants in the labor market leads to their greater economic and fiscal contribution. It enables migrants to more effectively access resources, whether for themselves, their families, or their native societies. Integration should thus lead to equal opportunities, labor market incorporation, independency, security, and the ability to invest and contribute to the new community.

³ See Algan et al., 2010, who demonstrates that wage differences are greatest for the first generation migrants, yet they persist even with the second generation.

Additionally, the extent of integration influences migrant return behavior, which in turn influences their economic behavior in the host country (Dustman 1996). Well integrated migrants are less likely to plan to return to their native countries than those who have not integrated, which influences their willingness to invest into the host society. Stark and Jakubek (2013) show that through integration, a migrant achieves social proximity with the natives, incentivizing him or her to close income gaps that may exist by acquiring more destination-specific human capital. On the other hand, non-integrated migrants find it sufficient to acquire only a relatively limited quantity of human capital and do not measure their economic stance and rights against the native population. This can lead to a relative deprivation of migrants vis-à-vis natives.

Chiswick (1978), in one of the earliest studies on economic integration of migrants, showed that migrants have a strong incentive to acquire human capital specific to the host labor market in order to improve their relative position. A major component of such human capital is linguistic ability, which is related to the length of residence, age at migration, educational background, and the social/familial environment (Dustman 1996). Scholars have showed cross-country evidence that language fluency improves labor market performance and positively influences employment possibilities and earnings, with the opposite also holding true: lack of language proficiency leads to decreased earnings (Dustmann and Fabbri 2003; Chiswick and Miller 1995). An additional factor that may influence earnings is that lack of proficiency in the host country's language implies limited contacts with the natives. As learning a language requires interacting with the native population, it is also a means to integrating socially and becoming familiar with cultural customs. The intensity with which migrants acquire destination specific human capital determines the speed of their economic integration. Therefore, social integration can be a catalyst for economic integration, and both reinforce one another.

While higher economic integration increases productivity and earnings in the host country, the acquisition of necessary human capital is costly. Linguistic ability is acquired by investing time and other inputs, such as in standard human capital models. The cost of acquisition includes forgone earnings and the cost of inputs. The simple equilibrium is where the marginal cost of acquiring language capital equals the marginal benefit, which includes the enhanced earnings potential. The production ability differs by individual, his/her learning ability, and the stock of already acquired human capital. Investment into language acquisition depends on its potential future benefits, the cost of acquisition, and the individual efficiency in learning.

Stark and Jakubek (2013) show that in the absence of exogenously imposed integration, migrants will only acquire destination specific human capital to the point where the cost of acquisition equals the utility gain from the expected increase in their income. Therefore, migrants may fail to fully integrate over time if the gains from integrating are not greater than the cost, for example if they live in concentrated communities, have limited access to work permits, or feel discriminated against based on their origin regardless of how well integrated they are.

Hence, individual incentives and opportunity cost of various integration patterns are the determining factors of the speed of integration. They are associated with the size of the minority group, and the likely benefits resulting from integrationist efforts, which depend on the host society attitudes and institutions. Considering the positive externalities on the majority and that organic integration occurs at a significantly slower rate than it is desirable, governments may be motivated to subsidize or formally encourage migrant integration. In doing so, they increase positive externalities and prevent the negative ones. As argued by Stark and Jakubek (2013, 66),

When the government of a host country supports and subsidizes migrants' language acquisition and the learning of the history, culture, and values of the host society, it stimulates the social integration of migrants and seeks to relocate them in the social space of the host country's society [...] This intensified social integration exposes migrants to a revised structure of incentives: they are thereby encouraged to acquire human capital assets that increase their productivity and boost their earnings. In sum, migration policies that bring migrants closer to natives in social space can make them better equipped in the market place.

To promote integration, policymakers have different tools: legislation, which includes family reunification, naturalization/citizenship and anti-discrimination laws, policies on social inclusion and access to political participation, integration programs aimed at increasing the migrants' linguistic abilities, vocational trainings, employment help, as well as cultural adjustment programs. An increasingly popular policy option among EU-15 governments is an integration program that provides linguistic and cultural instruction. Mandatory language course attendance and exams are the preferred tools for enhancing integration. By incorporating migrants into social structures, bringing migrants and natives together, language acquisition increases earnings both directly, by increasing productivity, and indirectly, by motivating migrants to acquire additional tools and human capital.

Nonetheless, few governments worldwide have formal integration programs that would sponsor costly language courses to newcomers. Even when they are in place, they are inaccessible to the majority of migrants, depending on their nationality. In the last decade, Europe has been increasingly introducing such programs, though there remains considerable variation in the efforts made by the governments. As free movement of people within the EU and the abolition of internal borders are essential elements of the Union, close cooperation in developing common strategies on migration issues is indispensable.

1.3. Migrant Integration in the EU: A Brief Historical Overview

Migration into Europe accelerated after World War II. While in the 1950s and 60s Europe needed immigrants to replenish its manpower to rebuild itself, the oil crisis and economic recessions that took place in the 1970s led to increasingly restrictive migration policies that limited migration flows to family reunifications and asylum seekers. The origins of EU cooperation on migration can be traced back to the TREVI Group, established in 1975 to fight cross-border terrorism by closer cooperation between law enforcement divisions of member countries, which also monitored migration.

Beginning with the Schengen Agreement of 1985 and its implementation in 1990, member states increased their cooperation on migration issues and outlined common asylum procedures and a list of countries whose citizens required visas. The agreement was duplicated during the Dublin Convention of 1990, signed by all member states of the so-called Ad Hoc Immigration Group (AHIG), founded in 1986 to enhance EU security by putting emphasis on border controls. In 1993 the AHIG was replaced by a coordinating committee on immigration matters in the Treaty on European Union (TEU). With the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, migration matters of the EU were brought into the domain of the Third Pillar of the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) cooperation. With the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997, migration issues were moved to the First Pillar, laying the foundations for supranational and more comprehensive governance of asylum and immigration matters.

However, whereas considerable progress has been made to regulate the rules on asylum applications, reception, and status, much less has been done in the realm of migrant

integration policies. Moreover, the common migration regime of the European Union⁴ is still incomplete compared to other policy areas. Integration policies remain the primary responsibility of nation-states, though there are increasingly frequent calls for a EU-wide policy action plan.

Since 2004, the OECD countries are to base their integration policies on the Common Basic Principles for Integration: employment and labor integration, language, access to public goods, diversity, citizenship, and political participation. The policies are seen as essential for both migrants and the host society, as key to maximizing the benefits of immigration, which include strengthening EU's competitiveness, addressing demographic challenges, and filling labor shortages. As Europe faces significant demographic challenges due to its aging population, the European Commission explicitly refers to female migrants, who as mothers should be a particular target group of integration policies. However, there are very few explicit national policies that focus on migrant women; only Germany includes a specific gender lens in its integration program structure.

For the last twenty years, the EU states have been experimenting with a range of migrant integration programs that require migrants to learn the language of their host country and become familiar with its values. Otherwise, they may lose social benefits, permanent residency, or become ineligible for citizenship. These “civic integration” programs originated in the Netherlands as a response to high rates of immigrant unemployment and school dropout rates, as well as residential segregation (Joppke 2012, 2). The Netherlands introduced a Newcomer Integration Act in 1998, requiring migrants to participate in language and social orientation courses. The UK followed with an Immigration and Asylum Act of 2002, which introduced a test in English and on the life in the UK. Also Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Luxembourg, and Sweden require migrants to attend language and civic orientation courses and, in most cases, pass integration tests, in order to enter and/or become a permanent resident (For details on the EU-15 migrant integration programs see Annex I, which briefly lists the details of each program by country). Strategies regarding content, duration, and eligibility prerequisites vary, but integration into the society is seen as a necessary step in obtaining the proof of membership: citizenship.

⁴ Understood as “the entirety of formal and informal directives, regulations, practices, and conventions adopted at the level of EU institutions that regulate the movement of persons across borders and the entry and stay of non-EU nationals in the common territory” (Lavenex and Uçarer 2002, 3).

Critics of integration programs question its underlying assumptions and principles. Such policies are criticized as pursuing liberal goals with illiberal means (Joppke 2007a), paternalism, ethnocentricity, and a “one way process aimed at procuring conformity, discipline, and migration control” (Kostakopoulou 2010, 933). Apart from teaching the language or host culture, integration tests have been infamous for examining political attitudes and moral sensibilities on topics as nudism, same sex partnership, or religious conversion. For example, in the Netherlands, non-Western immigrants applying for citizenship were required not only to speak fluent Dutch, know Holland’s culture, history, and values, but also watch a film showing gay men kissing in a park and topless women emerging from the sea (Hawley 2006). De-facto forcing migrants to accept norms and a way of life promoted by the native majority undermines the idea of a “two-way process.” Nonetheless, Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands have been put forth as examples of most developed public programs aimed at integrating migrants. That is because the primary indicators of successful integration are equal opportunities in the labor market, housing, education, and use of social services (Lavenex and Uçarer 2002, 186-187). There application of a two-way understanding of integration is hardly taken into consideration.

National policies are difficult to compare, as there are significant variations in national historical experiences with immigration, the origin and composition of migrant groups, and the attitudes of the native population. Programs that may have been successful at a local level in one country may not have such success in another area of the same country, not to mention across borders. Nonetheless, considering the political and economic weight of the EU and its importance as a destination for migrants from all over the world, European governments have an important role to play in taking the leadership on migrant integration. With so many of them introducing formal integration measures in the last decade, it is crucial to discuss these programs, their failures, and successes.

Out of all EU-15 countries, Germany offers the most extensive integration course, with the longest duration, the highest benchmark for linguistic ability, and the broadest coverage. German integration course is 660-hour long, compared with 300 hours in Austria, 400 hours and France, or 150 hours in Greece (See Annex I). Since 2005, when the program began, about a million people have begun integration courses (BAMF 2014). Therefore, analyzing German efforts and methods can serve as a showcase of how a nation may opt to aid migrants in becoming an independent, successful part of the society they choose to live in.

2. GERMAN MIGRANT INTEGRATION PROGRAM

Despite the undeniable presence of migrant groups, Germany did not consider itself a country of immigration until recently. That realization was one of the main factors leading to a change of Germany's migrant policies and paved the way for extensive integration courses, details of which are discussed in this section.

2.1. German Integration Policy Background

"Wir sind kein Einwanderungsland, wir sind ein Rotationsland."

(We're not a country of immigration; we are a country of rotation)

Since the 1990s, ethnic Germans, known as *Aussiedler* and *Spätaussiedler*, who moved to Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall, have taken part in language courses aimed at easing their transition into the German society. More than 4 million of such people moved from mainly the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and, purely based on their ethnicity, were automatically granted German citizenship. Considering that many of the *Aussiedler* groups left what is now Germany decades or even centuries ago, many did not speak German nor had much connection to it. Some left long before the state of Germany existed. Nonetheless, they retained a sense of a German identity and after the fall of communism were allowed to resettle in Germany. To ease their transition, the German government offered them language courses before and after their arrival. The courses before prepared the *Aussiedler* for a "status test" they had to pass before having the right to migrate. After arrival they could participate in a state-sponsored, six-months course in German language and civic orientation. The experience of integrating the *Aussiedler* laid the foundation for the future extended migrant integration program.

Another major group of migrants in Germany, though they were not offered integration programs, were guest workers (*Gastarbeiter*). After World War II, the depleted German workforce was in need of external supplements to rebuild the nation. Migration was demand-driven and project-tied, with employers determining the number and origin of workers they needed. Bilateral treaties for manual workers were signed with Italy in 1955, Spain and Greece in 1960, Turkey in 1961, Morocco in 1963, Portugal in 1964, Tunisia in 1965, and Yugoslavia in 1968. The recruited guest workers were invited to work in Germany under temporary contracts and expected to return home afterwards. Most guest workers came from Italy, Greece, Spain, Turkey, and Yugoslavia (Algan and Bisin et al. 2012, 70), filling the German workforce deficit

and contributing to the so-called German economic miracle.

The migrants were seen as temporary “guests.” Thus, their integration was limited to transitory economic incorporation, as they were not intended to become a permanent part of the German society. When the 1973 oil crisis hit, the German government promptly changed its immigration policy and stopped recruiting low-skilled workers, limiting immigration to family reunification schemes. As Joppke (1998, 282) argued, this “allowed European states to act humanely and generously towards those once admitted, while slamming the door to everyone else.” The government eventually banned the recruitment of migrant guest workers for 30 years, until the mid-90s. In 1980s, Turkish guest workers were offered money if they returned to Turkey, though many remained and the return policy was largely ineffective.

Despite the presence of these numerous migrant groups, Germany had not considered itself as a country of immigration until the beginning of this century, even though since the 1960s about nine percent of the German population has been foreign. In 2002, the concept of having a “migrant background” was introduced. The term includes everyone who has at least one ancestor in the last two generations who is not German (Sina 2011, 143). In 2008, one fifth of Germany’s inhabitants were classified as having a “migration background,” including a third of children under the age of six (*ibid.*). Faist (1994, 68) pointed out that “the successful use of symbolic politics in upholding the fiction of a non-immigration country has had various consequences for the political discourse on the politics of immigration and integration.” The undeniable presence of migrant groups did not make Germany a country of immigration in the eyes of its society, and, as Brubaker (1992) noted, the persistence that Germany is not a country of immigration was not based on social or demographic facts, but rather a political-cultural national consensus.

The German society has been supportive of governmental efforts to restrict the number of immigrants. Polls from 1982 showed that two-thirds of German voters wanted guest workers to return to their countries of origin, while only 11 percent of those polled were for intensified integrationist efforts (Boswell and Hough 2008, 337). 1997 opinion polls showed that over 60 percent of Germans believed that “too many foreigners live in Germany” (Cooper 2012, 403). Throughout the 1990s, the mainstream right demanded that newcomers adapt to the host culture, feeding the fears of Germany losing its identity and being “taken over” by foreign cultures (Manz 2004). As Cooper (2012, 425) pointed out, “the widespread fears that large

numbers of immigrants were badly integrated into the German society and threatened the country's societal cohesion resulted in a toughening of naturalization criteria," with more prerequisites for membership.

Apart from fearing an erosion of the German culture, the usual common fear was directed against the influx of cheap labor. As the defeated party of 1998 elections, the Christian Democratic Union (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*, CDU) retreated to rather populist anti-migration calls to mobilize political support (Boswell and Hough, 2008). In 2000, CDU, then in the opposition, played into populist anti-immigration sentiments by opposing the easing of migration restrictions that would allow more foreign workers come to Germany with a controversial political campaign in North Rhine-Westphalia called "*Kinder statt Inder*"—*children instead of Indians*. Nonetheless, immigration did not become a central issue in national elections. As no party was taking a definite stand on migration issues, it left an open political space.

To assess the shortcomings of Germany's complicated legislation on foreigners and asylum seekers and to examine the state of migration in the country, in 2000, the federal government (led by a SPD-Green coalition) convened an Independent Commission on Immigration (*Unabhängige Kommission Zuwanderung*), known as the Süssmuth Commission. There was a broad political consensus that reform was needed. In July 2001, the Commission presented a report with a proposal for comprehensive migrant legislation, which was later adopted by the Parliament. The report was the basis for the 2004 Immigration Law, which replaced the nearly century-old law from 1913.

In an interview, the CDU politician and leader of the Commission, Rita Süssmuth, pointed out that Germany made the guest-worker tradition into a principle, thus seeing no need for real integration strategies, until it found itself in the middle of an unwanted situation (Das Gupta 2010). In 2006, only 14 percent of the foreign school pupils were able to get into a *Gymnasium*, required to attend university, and 41 percent of migrants ages 20-29 had no professional or vocational qualification, compared with only 12 percent of Germans (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 2006). Migrants were also twice more likely to be unemployed (Reimann 2010).

The Süssmuth Commission produced a groundbreaking report on *Structuring Migration | Fostering Integration* in which it admitted,

Germany is *de facto* a country of immigrants [...] The recognition of reality means that the topic is no longer taboo. Public discussion is becoming far more objective [...] Immigration cannot be successful unless the people [...] successfully integrate into German society [...] The urgency of the task is indisputable. The future of our country is at stake (BMI 2001, 1).

Additionally, the Commission announced that “Germany needs immigrants,” thus it also needs an integration plan (ibid., 11). The integration plan extended the already existing integration program for the ethnically German *Aussiedler* to other non-German migrants. Hence, two crucial elements laying the foundation for the integration courses were the already existing courses for ethnic-Germans and the recognition that Germany is a country of immigrants. While the temporary guest workers did not have to learn German, their descendants were now encouraged, and even obligated to speak German.

Within the German mainstream discourse, the need for integration has been taken for granted and the only thing debated was who is to pay for it (the migrant, the federal, or regional government?) and how to enforce participation (whether to impose positive or negative sanctions). The two sides of the argument have been divided along traditional lines for German politics. CDU/CSU argued for migrants to pay for the courses and punishments for noncompliance. The Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD) and the Green party charged CDU/CSU with populist motives and opted for following the recommendation of the Süssmuth Commission, arguing for positive incentives and sponsorship by the government. Compromise was reached on both issues, with government providing the majority of funds for the courses, but the migrant making a small contribution of one euro per course-hour (recently the fee was raised to 1.2 euro), though the cost could be waived if the migrant could not afford it. Promoting the integration of foreigners permanently living in Germany has hence been seen as “one of the most important tasks of home affairs policy” (BMI n.d.).

Apart from obliging migrants to participate in the integration program, the government introduced incentives and punishments for noncompliance. Those who finish the course and receive an “Integration Course Certificate” (*Zertifikat Integrationskurs*) can apply for German citizenship after seven years, instead of the regular eight years of residency. If the participants

achieve a B1 level they may also receive a reimbursement of half of the course fees they paid. On the other hand, if a person required to participate in an integration course fails to fulfill this obligation, their unemployment benefits, if they receive any, will be reduced by 30 percent (according to article 44a.3.2.1 of the Residence Act, *Aufenthaltsgesetz*). Additionally, a fine may be imposed (art. 44a.3.2.3), the migrant's residence permit may not be renewed (art. 44a.3.2.5), he/she risks a possible expulsion from the country (art. 44a.3.2.6), and neutralization may be denied (art. 44a.3.3).

In 2005, the Federal Office for the Recognition of Foreign Refugees (*Bundesamt für die Anerkennung ausländischer Flüchtlinge*) was transformed into the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), which has since been responsible for executing Germany's integration policies. Since then, BAMF, in cooperation with the Goethe Institute, has taken over the task of designing the integration course and exams, uniform throughout Germany since 2007.

According to Chapter 3 Section 43 Paragraph 2 of the Residence Act (*Bundesministerium der Justiz*):

The aim of the integration course is to successfully teach foreigners the language, the legal system, the culture and the history of Germany. Foreigners should become so familiar with the lifestyle in Germany that they can independently cope with all areas of daily life without the help or intervention of third parties.

Linguistic ability has been seen as the most important aspect of integration. Being able to speak German without the need of a third party's assistance was "re-signified as a social-justice imperative and civil right" (Gramling 2009, 132). The new policy was framed as a social-welfare initiative. Knowledge of German presented not as a compulsory state directive, but a civil right that would ensure gender equality and increase opportunities for disadvantaged foreigners. Integration was to guarantee equal opportunities in social, economic, and cultural spheres.

2.2. German Integration Program: Set Up

The new Immigration Law went into force on January 1st, 2005. Since then, Germany has been making significant efforts to encourage the foreigners within its borders to integrate by learning German, becoming familiar with the political system, history, and German values, and thus become independent members of the German society. From 2005 until the end of 2013, the integration course had 997'234 participants Germany-wide, with 117'354 participants in 2013 alone (BAMF 2014). Overall, 42.5 percent of participants were men, 57.7 percent women (ibid).

EU-citizens may participate if they wish to. To them, only the entitlement applies, there is no requirement to participate. Since the program's beginning in 2005, on average 45.7 percent of the participants have come from the EU (BAMF 2013a). They are mainly citizens of Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, and Italy (BAMF 2014). Since 2014, the main group participating in the courses comes from Poland, followed by Turkey. EU citizens take advantage of the inexpensive German course, without being forced to finish all 660 hours. According to statistics from 2011, only 44 percent of all the course participants had been obligated to take part in the course, others were there voluntarily (BAMF 2011a, 85). Hence, the majority of the non-EU participants are there out of obligation.

The rights and obligations for participating in the courses are as follows:

1. Foreigners who were German residents before 2005 may be allowed to participate in the integration courses depending on the course availability. However, the following conditions create an obligation to participate in an integration course even for those who were residents before 2005:

- Those who receive unemployment benefits may be required by the employment office to participate in the course.
- The immigration authorities can decide whether the person is in need of being integrated.

2. For those who arrived before 2005, the following conditions remove the obligation of participation:

- When the person has done or is doing an educational training (*Ausbildung*) in Germany.
- When participating in an integration course is for some reason impossible.

Foreigners who, since 2005, receive a residency permit for more than one year have the right to participate in an integration course if they are in Germany as employees, have come because of family reunification, for humanitarian reasons, or have come to Germany long-term. Those who cannot speak even simple German are obligated to take part in an integration course. The obligation does not refer to students, and those for whom participation is for some reason impossible.

Since July 1st 2012, the cost of participation is 1.20 euro per course hour, making the total cost of the 660-hour course equal to 792 euro. Those who receive unemployment benefits

or social financial assistance (*Sozialhilfe*) are exempt from the cost. Those who are in a difficult financial situation may also apply for a fee waiver. Once admitted, the newcomer has two years to complete the program. When the course is successfully finished and the B1 test passed within two years, the course-participant can be reimbursed 50 percent of the fees paid. As the German government emphasizes, newcomers are “entitled” to participate in integration schemes. At the same time, most of the non-EU migrants have no choice. The guidelines on who exactly must participate in an integration course are not fully transparent, and it is often up to the authorities to decide.

The language part ought to equip migrants with a B1 (intermediate) level of German. It can be taken on a part-time or a full-time basis, with the standard language course including 600 hours of lessons. In case of failure, a person is entitled to up to 300 extra course hours. Additionally, there is a 60-hour “orientation” course that focuses on German culture, history, politics, legal system, societal values, rights, and obligations. Through participating in an integration course, migrants are expected to prove their commitment to German society: spend a significant amount of time learning the language, becoming familiar with its culture, law, and political system. This is no small commitment. 660 hours translates into classes Monday through Friday, five hours a day, for six months.

The participants need to be present on a full-time basis and attendance is checked before each session. Any absence needs to be excused and participants are allowed to miss only a couple of days a month. The course can be taken in any participating language school, which is responsible for carrying out the entire program. The government pays for the course, but does not organize it in order to minimize bureaucratic control and involvement. The language schools test each person before assigning them to an appropriate group, and a national Evaluation Committee supervises the content and relevancy of the course materials. Apart from German language books, all migrants must purchase one of the official books for the orientation course, designed especially for the integration program.

During the course, participants of integration courses learn generic information about Germany and certain German values. Many of these values have been translated into law, and most Germans take them for granted. Some foreigners, on the other hand, need to be taught that recycling or not making noise on Sundays is not only a matter of politeness and respect, but can lead to neighbors filing complaints and even a police visit and a fine. Though on any other

day orderliness, recycling, and family time are greatly encouraged, on Sundays mowing the lawn, vacuuming, or separating glass bottles in designated neighborhood containers is forbidden, and children's noise should be kept to the minimum.

Other values transmitted to migrants during integration courses include certain family values and general tolerance. In Germany, it is against the law to hit your child, and doing so may result in the child being taken away by the child services (*Jugendamt*). Hence, it is crucial to sensitize migrants about the existence of such laws. Furthermore, participants learn that a typical German family is composed of a single parent with one child, women and men have an equal right to divorce, gender equality is an important part of German culture, adult children have the right to freely choose their lifestyle, polygamy is prohibited, and all children have an obligation to attend school. Additionally, the course includes the characteristics and values of democracy. It also instructs German history, mainly about the Third Reich (including the Germans who were killed for their opposition to Hitler, such as Munich's White Rose group or Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg), as well as the DDR and current European Union mechanisms. Whole sessions are devoted to the importance of culture in Germany, including Christian traditions and cultural events, such as opera or the Love Parade. At the end of the 660-hour course, participants take a final exam, uniform throughout Germany, which consists of reading, writing, and speaking, as well as a multiple choice exam on the orientation part. A government official comes for the oral exam. Those who pass the tests receive an "Integration Course Certificate." On each certificate the achieved level of German is indicated.

The present state of the program is an outcome of various adjustments. In 2006, a year into the program, the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) commissioned Rambøll Management with a comprehensive evaluation of the integration courses. Its January 2007 report led to various changes, strengthened by the recommendations of a Working Group commissioned to improve integration courses under the 2007 National Integration Plan (NIP). To accommodate various needs, special integration courses for women, parents, youth, and analphabets were introduced. These last up to 960 hours, 300 hours longer than regular courses. There are now also intensive, 430-hour courses available. Additionally, the maximum group size was reduced from 25 to 20 participants. 300 repetition hours were added for those who needed them, and the number of "orientation" hours was raised from 30 to 45, with an introduction of a curriculum, standardized test, and teacher qualifications. Since mid-2007, also Germans who are deemed as being in need of integration can participate. Also since then, apart from the Immigration

Authorities (*Ausländerbehörde*), social welfare services and unemployment offices (*Grundsicherungsträger*) can oblige migrants to participate. Until 2014, 61'571 people, making up 10 percent of all participants, were obligated to participate in the integration program by an unemployment office (BAMF 2014). An additional 35'842 people, 5.8 percent of all participants, were obliged by Immigration Authorities (*ibid*).

The fourth Integration Summit, which took place on November 3rd 2010, as well as expert recommendations led to further amendments to the integration course plan in 2012. The orientation was extended from 45 to 60 hours and the course fee was raised from 1 to 1.2 euro per course hour. Additionally, the relatively low salary of integration course teachers has been a topic of debate and lead BAMF to set a standard rate of teacher compensation of 20 euro per course hour (Majic 2013).

2.3. Integration Courses for Youth

One of the special types of integration courses offered are courses for youth (*Jugendintegrationskurse*), those who have not yet had their 27th birthday, and who are no longer required to attend school but aspire to continue their education or vocational training. Until 2013, 16'270 people participated in integration courses for youth, making up 1.6 percent of the total participants (BAMF 2014). 50.5 percent were men, 49.8 percent were women. The course is 960 hours long. After completing the 600-hour basic language course, the teacher decides what the group needs the most, and either continues to an advanced language course or provides a repetition of the material. This is supposed to give teachers more flexibility and an ability to accommodate varying needs.

Courses for youth have mandatory small groups, with maximum 15 participants and sometimes two teachers. Their emphasis is on education and workplace. During the course, the participants have a chance to come in direct contact with educational institutions and work places, as well as counseling services helping participants to plan their future. To help in career choices, topics also cover the job market, job profiles, requirements, and application processes, as well as general working conditions in Germany.

Additionally, the participants learn about the structure and functioning of the German education system, as well as strategies and study techniques that would enable them to be more self-reliant. In order to prepare the participants for further education and training, they

learn terminology from school subjects like mathematics, science, geography, biology, social studies, or economics, corresponding to requirements of the 9th grade.

2.4. Integration Courses for Women and Integration Courses for Parents

The integration courses for women and parents are very similar, and the statistics on both courses are aggregated. Therefore, they are described here jointly. From 2005 to 2013, women and parents courses have had 107'961 participants, making up 10.8 percent of the total integration course participants (BAMF 2014). The numbers have been relatively stable, with 12'859 (13.3 percent) participants in 2011 and 9'681 (8.2 percent) in 2012 (ibid.).

The integration courses for parents focus on the German educational system, opportunities available to children, and ways of accessing them. Furthermore, the course covers topics such as the media, nutrition, and healthcare. The course organizer helps participants become familiar with kindergartens and schools, with the courses sometimes being located there. The course also covers advisory child and youth services offered in Germany, where parents can receive counseling, as well as youth and children organizations. Learning with other parents gives the participants a chance to network and exchange experiences. The classes are composed predominantly of women. Only 14.5 percent of course participants (statistics aggregated for women's and parent's courses) are men (ibid.). The prerequisite for participation is having at least one child who is less than 18 years old. Both parent and women courses offer the possibility of childcare.

The authorities may recommend a female migrant to take part in a women's course instead of the regular integration course due to her familial circumstances. The offer is directed at women with learning difficulties, Muslims, and those who due to various reasons can or want to only participate in an all-female course (BAMF 2013c, 18). Additionally, the explicit target group are women who have little social contacts, receive no encouragement from their family to attend a regular integration course, and who, because of household demands or motherhood, are unable to spend time learning German at home. Foreign females above 16 years old with a stable long-term residence status in Germany from any country outside of Western Europe, North America, and Australia, who have not completed their education or vocational training in Germany, are eligible to participate. Women participating in the courses are on average 35 years old, 75 percent of them are married, and most have children (Schuller, et al. 2011, 106).

The crucial underlying argument for exclusively female courses is that women, as mothers and wives, play an important “multiplication role” for their families, and hence should receive particular attention. Women are seen as the ones mainly responsible for children’s education. To strengthen their ability to help their children, the integration course focuses on knowledge related to family, such as the school and health systems. In this way, women can contribute not only to their own integration process, but also that of their children. The courses focus on children’s education to strengthen the ability of parents to raise their children, especially in developing speech and language abilities (BAMF 2013b, 2).

The course takes place during school hours and when necessary offers free childcare to accommodate time restrictions and the needs of mothers. Additionally, it is close to the women’s residence, in a familiar and safe environment, such as a school. All teachers of female integration classes are women, many of whom have a migrant background themselves. The teacher, apart from formal qualifications to teach, needs to demonstrate sensitivity for the specific needs of this target group. The teacher discusses with the participants their needs and adjusts course methods accordingly. As with all integration courses, the lessons should be practical and based on everyday life. Apart from linguistic goals, among the objectives of integration courses are promoting female leadership and preventing domestic violence, thus increasing female empowerment at home and society (BAMF 2011b). Hence, the lessons also include elements of teambuilding, research, problem solving, fairness, awareness and responsibility, as well as ability to critique and speak up.

By giving women the tools to communicate with members of the host society, the program can serve to strengthen their self-confidence and support them in their daily needs, overcoming the fear of the unknown. It also informs women of their rights and shows the life of German women, with sensitization classes on domestic violence and health issues. Additionally, former participants are more likely to seek further integration opportunities. At the end of the course participants discuss job perspectives and next steps necessary to continuing integration and entering the job market (BAMF 2013c, 21).

Despite the tailored offer, a questionnaire study by Schuller et al. (2011, 89) showed that 68 percent of women’s course participants would rather attend regular integration courses. Similarly, Haug and Zerger (2006) show ambiguous results about women’s preference for a women’s-only integration course. Nonetheless, the study admits that men and women indicate

different interests regarding the desired topics and content. However, women do not explicitly express the need for specific women's integration courses. On the other hand, Muslim women presented arguments justifying the women's only courses (Schuller et al. 2011, 89).

Offering women's courses shows sensitivity to varying cultural backgrounds of migrants and enables women, who otherwise may struggle to fulfill the integration requirement, to participate. Women who are not breadwinners in the family, may be explicitly discouraged by their husbands to learn German, as that may take significant time away from their household chores. Hence, obligation to participate that is supplemented with an offer of women's only courses may be the only way to give some of these women a chance to learn German and become more active members of their new community.

2.5. Integration Courses for Analphabets

Another type of special courses is for those with writing and reading difficulties. The courses for analphabets, also called literacy courses, target people who:

1. Cannot read or write;
2. Can write or write, but not in the Latin alphabet;
3. Cannot speak or understand German.

Since the courses have been offered, starting in November 2009, 100'295 people participated them, making up 10.1 percent of the total integration course participants (BAMF 2014). There is very little data available on the participants of the literacy courses. Overall, until 2013, 43.4 percent of participants were men and 56.6 percent women (ibid.) Literacy courses last for 960 hours, with a possibility of a further expansion by 300 hours. They are composed of groups with maximum 12 participants, with childcare available. Instead of a B1 level, the hoped achievement level is A2.2. The course is composed of:

1. Learning to speak German, with 25-30 percent of the course devoted to it;
2. Learning to write, 25-30 percent of time;
3. Autonomous learning methods, 25-30 percent of the time;
4. Intercultural competence or media literacy, 5-10 percent of the time.

While the overarching goal of all integration courses is enabling migrants to live an independent, active life, as well as social integration, the literacy course adds achieving functional literacy and providing learning methods so that participants can continue learning on

their own once the course is over. The participants, as parents, should also be able to assist their children in acquiring these skills. Having separate courses for those with reading and writing difficulties enables these people to receive more attention than they would likely get in a standard integration course. It also avoids a possible stigmatization these participants may experience from other migrants in the standard course. As reading and writing are essential to participating in modern society, this special course is a necessary step towards integration.

3. COST AND BENEFITS

This section discusses the cost and benefits of German integration courses, how the success or failure of such a program can be assessed, and what lessons can be drawn out of this experience for other countries as they consider introducing or expanding such policies. Integration is a long-term process. Therefore the effects of such programs may not be as visible and obvious as the cost. As the program is relatively new, its full benefits are yet to be observed.

3.1. Cost and Outcomes

Discussing the benefits of migrant integration policies is highly political and may serve to strengthen stereotypes. The need for federal integration programs can easily be framed as: they—the migrants—would otherwise retreat to enclaves, they fail to integrate themselves therefore must be forced to learn the language, or integration policies are a way of protecting our way of life. Here, the two-way integration ideal gives way to one-way adjustment, only on the side of the migrant. “As it appears in current debates, integration assumes an end result where people become part of a given social fabric, despite the rhetoric of two-way integration and the idea of integration as a process rather than outcome embodied in EU frameworks” (Anthias et al. 2013, 3). Migrants are expected to amend their behavior and language to match the culture and values of the host society, and the effort on the part of the society is limited to ensuring that the migrants fulfill this obligation.

From an economic point of view, public programs are assessed based on whether the potential benefits outweigh potential cost. In the case of migrant integration courses, policy outcomes are difficult to monetize, as the economic valuation of such public goods and social cohesion is uncertain. Moreover, as the policy is relatively new and integration is a life-long process, the benefits will manifest overtime. Overall, the introduction of migrant integration programs seems to be motivated less by economic cost-benefit analyses, but rather by political motives, with economic rationale used to strengthen the case. Increased national security is brought as an argument for investing into reducing the barriers between newcomers and host societies. According to the German government, “Integration means living together as one society, not in separate worlds” (BMI n.d.). A common language makes participation in a democratic society undeniably easier. As integration aims at enabling migrants to become active members of a linguistically homogenous society, providing them with the tools to communicate increases the probability of their participation. Integration programs can be seen

as creating a linguistic model of civic belonging (Gramling 2009), with a vision of a multicultural society unified by a common language. The hope is that a common language will serve as a political and cultural binder. In this case the potential outcomes and benefits is a functioning multicultural society, where migrants are independent members.

The benefits of any public policy come at a cost, both explicit and opportunity cost. The direct cost of the integration program is shared between taxpayers and participants, though the former contributes financially much more than the latter. As discussed, participants are required to pay 1.2 euro per course hour, which amounts to 792 euro for the standard 660-hour course. The government pays 2.94 euro for each participant to the schools carrying out the program (Majic 2013). As language schools are responsible for executing the program, in part the transaction and bureaucratic costs are transferred to them. However, the relatively low cost per participant has led language schools to put the maximum allowed number of participants in each course groups to counter for the low fee, compromising the quality of the program.

Since the beginning, the integration program budget has been set at over 200 million euro annually. In 2005, the year the course began, the government set aside 207.8 million euro for the integration program (Grieshaber 2005). The budget in 2010 was 233 million euro (Peters 2010), and in 2013, 209 million euro (Majic 2013). An additional cost, apart from the opportunity cost of the money invested into the program, is the time participants spend in it. 660 hours spent learning German are 660 hours spent not working. This is a significant time investment and no other government requires migrants to spend this much time learning a language. Nonetheless, the courses have been popular among the migrants. In 2010, about 9'000 "volunteering participants" were on the waiting list (*Der Spiegel* 2010). The opposition criticized the insufficiency of funds devoted to the programs, which cannot meet the demand (ibid.). Despite the long course hours, however, almost half of the participants do not achieve the targeted B1 level of German. From the middle of 2009 till the middle of 2013, on average 52 percent finished the course with a B1 level, 36 percent with an A2 level, and 10 percent with a level below A2 (BAMF 2013e). Hence, despite the length of the course, the main target is still far from being achieved.

BAMF regularly monitors the progress and outcomes of the program. As previously mentioned, Rambøll Management was commissioned with conducting the first comprehensive evaluation of the program in 2006, a little over a year since the program began. One of the

recommendations of Rambøll Management was to introduce an Integration Panel that would study the medium and long-term effects of the program. The first longitudinal study of the Panel aimed at studying the effectiveness and sustainability of the program was published in 2011. About 4'000 randomly selected integration course participants were interviewed at four different times between 2007 and 2011, with the results being compared to a group of migrants who were not enrolled in this program. Apart from quantitative questions, Turkish and Russian migrants were also asked open-ended questions. The aim of the survey was to determine whether participation leads to faster integration, as well as to find out the migrants' self-perception of their integration.

The Integration Panel defined "effectiveness" of the program mainly by measuring German language proficiency achieved by participants versus those who did not participate. A major difficulty in this assessment was finding an appropriate control group, as all those who do not speak sufficient German are required to participate in the integration course. Hence, the control group is different in characteristics. "Sustainability" measured contacts with Germans and linguistic ability a year after completing the program. Additionally, questions asked about labor-market participation and emotional attachment to Germany.

The results showed that 93 percent of participants reported to have improved their German through the integration course, while for seven percent it stagnated or even deteriorated (BAMF 2011a). Those who benefited the most from the course were migrants with low levels of education, those who have resided in Germany for many years, those who came through family reunifications or as refugees, and those who did not have regular contact with the German language prior to the course (ibid).

One year after completing the course, 51 percent of the participants further improved their language skills, seven percent kept them at the same level, while for 42 percent the skills deteriorated. According to the analysis, most of the people who forgot what they have learned during the course came from East or Southeast Asia and had little contact with Germans overall (ibid.). In terms of labor-market participation, the share of full-time jobs among male participants increased from 10 to 34 percent, and the share of part-time employment among females increased from 7 to 19 percent. The Panel noted a direct correlation between increased employment and language skills. The greater the improvement in the command of German between the end of the course and the following year, the higher the probability of employment.

On the other hand, reverse causality may also play a role, with employment giving migrants more opportunities to hear and speak German on a daily basis. Unfortunately, the Panel does not address this possible effect. Moreover, the linguistic ability of the participants was not measured before they began the course. Hence, the true effect is not fully known. What is measured is the level of German after participating in the course, but not the difference the course had made.

Language proficiency is regarded as a key element of social and economic integration, bringing high economic returns (Rinne 2012, 6). Formal training is expected to accelerate the language acquisition process. Studies aggregating the contribution of all the integration programs in Germany show a positive contribution of the courses towards that goal. According to Schuller (2011, 106), 75 percent of the participants found the course to be helpful or very helpful in their linguistic ability. Emminghaus and Stern (2006, 58) report that 66.8 percent of the participants said that the language course highly helped them with social integration. Nonetheless, only 49.1 percent said the language course made a high or a very high contribution to their labor market integration.

Ideally, after the course the participants will have achieved a B1 level of German, which corresponds to lower intermediate. However, such a level is too low to be able to work and function comfortably. On the other hand, the hope is that this basic linguistic acquisition will have multiplier effects over time, both by serving as a foundation enabling migrants to continue learning and easing the communication necessary to help their children. As language proficiency is correlated with work opportunities, by increasing the linguistic ability of the migrants, their, and even their children's, lifetime productivity and earnings will increase.

Apart from evaluating language skills at the end of the program, the Integration Panel also assessed the extent of general social integration promoted by the integration course participation. At least 50 percent of the former participants reported to be using the German media, especially newspapers, magazines, and movies (BAMF 2011a). The participants who are parents of school age children pointed out that integration courses increase their ability to communicate with teachers and other parents (BAMF 2014). Additionally, course participants came in more frequent contact with Germans as compared to individuals from the control group, and 68 percent felt strongly connected to Germany (ibid.).

Additionally, by organizing a place to meet other migrants, the integration programs create a space for migrants to connect to others who may have gone through similar experiences. However, as few speak German at the beginning of the program, many cannot communicate with others due to the language barriers. In November 2013, BAMF started a nationwide project for networking migrants, for which integration courses are key. It is a chance to meet other migrants and find support from those in comparable positions, who share the same routes or roots.

Such networking may be key to women who do not work. Offering childcare and courses for women enables those who otherwise may not be able to attend regular integration courses to learn German and expand their choices. Some migrant men who attend regular integration courses think their wives do not need to learn German, as they will stay at home with the children. Encouraging women to take advantage of the German program allows them to not only contribute to their children's education, but also to become more independent members of society. Regrettably, there is little research on the professional aspirations of female family migrants in Germany and their economic integration.

Moreover, migrants enter these programs with already existing networks and do not wait for the program to start integrating, finding jobs, apartments, meeting people. Surprisingly, the program does not provide any opportunity to connect with German nationals, except for the teacher. It gives no assistance in creating networks with locals, which is a key factor of integration. Thus, after completing half a year of integration courses, a migrant may be still be isolated from the German community, despite an increased feeling of attachment to the country.

3.2. Learning from the German Experience

As the German integration course is the most extensive migrant integration program in Europe, countries seeking to develop their integration policies can learn from this example, noting its strengths and weaknesses. Admittedly, existing integration patterns significantly affect the design and the political economy of public policies in host societies, determining “how the expression of cultural differences is translated into individual behaviors and public policy” (Algan and Basin et al. 2012, 3). Hence, the German experience is not directly transplantable into other settings, which may have very different types and origins of migrants, with different needs and

societal settings. Nonetheless, there are many important experiences that can be deduced from it.

3.2.1. Classroom Composition and Teaching Material

The German integration courses are in a school-like setting, with pupils, teachers, and tests that one can fail, impeding the migrant from graduating to the next level. One of the key elements of success according to BAMF is the variety of courses it offers, catering to various educational backgrounds and learning predispositions (Schuller et al. 2011). Offering separate courses for analphabets, youth, intensive courses for those working or with higher education, etc., affects the ability of group members to maximize their utility and take full advantage of the offer according to their abilities. It also affects group dynamics, as those for whom learning may be significantly easier do not discourage and intimidate those for whom it is more difficult. Having visible inequalities within the group discourages those less fluent from speaking and may hinder their overall progress. Hence, the composition of courses is crucial.

A survey of teachers found that they preferred relatively homogenous groups in terms of their acquired level of education, which influences the learning speed, but heterogeneous in terms of mother tongue, as it forces the participants to communicate in German (BAMF 2011a). When multiple people in the group come from, for example, South America, many speak Spanish to explain things to one another, as well as communicate during the break, instead of being forced to practice in the language that is taught. Hence, encouraging schools to compose heterogeneous groups in terms of origin may speed the learning process.

Considering that participating migrants come from all over the world, they have different levels of familiarity and understanding of Western values, history, and foreign languages. Having a “one-pattern-fits-all” approach to integration overlooks the various levels of needs certain migrants might have to better understand the host culture and learn the language. Therefore, German efforts to take into account the different depth and ease of integration for different groups are highly commendable. However, an area that may require improvement is extending the tailored approach to the contents of the orientation course, as the standard integration material is uniform throughout the varying types of courses.

As nearly half of the program participants come from Europe, their level of familiarity with German history and culture is much greater than for those who have come from afar. While

most Europeans are familiar with the history of World War II, communism, and how democracy works, the 60-hours devoted to these topics may be insufficient for migrants from a radically different cultural heritage. Furthermore, the existing model of integration does not describe or explain the process the migrant goes through when arriving into a new society. The program is deficient of most of his/her experiences, which, again, will greatly vary based on the migrant group. It is thus necessary for program designers to consider the great differences in cultural backgrounds of migrants when establishing the course material.

3.2.2. Teachers and Location Choice

A crucial element of the program is the instructor, whose authority extends beyond language teaching. The instructor is indirectly a national representative, having the power to communicate what a model German does and thinks. Moreover, the instructor is the host. Some instructors assume they are doing the migrants a favor, not only by teaching them but also by contributing in taxes the finances necessary for migrant integration. They claim that, as guests, migrants should be grateful for being given the opportunity to be in Germany and accept without complaint what is offered to them. They are, after all, newcomers in the host's country. Such patronizing attitude may result in an increased sense of difference and alienation on the part of the migrant, achieving the opposite of integration. Since integration success is influenced by whether it is possible to be accepted by the host society as an equal member, teachers who underline the foreignness of migrants create a sense of an insurmountable divide. Furthermore, those who visibly favor participants who come from Europe or who have higher education, express which migrants are desirable and which are not. On the other hand, teachers that express care and concern about not only the migrant's linguistic ability but also his or her struggles in functioning in Germany, positively influence the sentiments the newcomer may have towards his/her new society.

Another lesson to be drawn out of the German experience is who the teachers are. In the German integration program, the teachers have frequently a migrant background themselves. In 2011, 36 percent of the teachers were not born in Germany, most of them coming from Russia, Poland, or Turkey (BAMF 2011a). Having a migration background allows the teachers to sympathize and connect with the migrants on a deeper level. Additionally, most teachers speak multiple languages. Only 1 percent of the teachers could not speak any other language than German (ibid.). Teaching a language is easier when one has had the experience of learning a foreign language. Nonetheless, 80 percent taught without any additional

qualifications for teaching German as a foreign language, which was allowed despite regulation that requires it, due to the shortage of teachers (ibid.). As the ability of the teachers to present the language in an accessible manner and their attitude towards migrants greatly influence the outcomes of the program both in terms of linguistic ability and a feeling of belonging, significant effort should be devoted to preparing and selecting the instructors.

Furthermore, an important element of the program is the location of the courses. The courses are offered in multiple places, usually language schools, and migrants can select where they want to attend. This not only allows them to choose the most convenient and proximate location, but also the best school based on its reputation. Hence, the participating schools have an incentive to compete with one another, offering better teachers and more convenient course hours. Additionally, going to a regular language school that other, non-participants of integration programs go to, decreases the possible stigma of being a migrant. It also creates a learning environment that feels more natural, just as any other course one would take, instead of being an institutionalized requirement.

3.2.3. Timing of Participation and Further Integration

The integration course is thought of as a basis for further integration. However, once the course is over, the migrants are left to their own devices to continue integrating: learning German, finding jobs, becoming involved in the society. Further progress is dependent on individual efforts and initiatives. These are influenced by his/her environment, opportunities, and needs. As BAMF studies showed, those migrants who had little contact with Germans after the completion of the course saw their German skills deteriorate. One year after completing the course, only about 50 percent of the participants improved their linguistic ability. Therefore, providing the migrants with greater opportunities to connect with Germans could improve the long-term outcomes of participating in such a program. Involving volunteers in the later stages of the course, when migrants should have acquired a basic ability to communicate in German, would give the course participants more opportunities to put in practice what they have learned in the classroom and create relationships that may extend well beyond the course time.

Furthermore, if the course is to lay the foundations for further integration and ease the transition into the society, it is crucial that course participation takes place as soon as possible following the migrant's arrival. As one of the goals of the integration program is easing the transition of a newly arrived migrants, their first few months in a new country is the time of

highest vulnerability, as they find strategies to engage with the labor market and society. Currently, there is a gap between the arrival and participation due to the bureaucratic process of registering for the courses and waiting for the voucher to arrive. Additionally, the vouchers are valid for two years, allowing the migrants to postpone their participation. Therefore, decreasing the time lag between arrival and participation, for example by initiating the necessary bureaucratic process before the migrant's arrival, may speed up the transition process.

As the overarching goal of the integration program is to help migrants function as fully independent members of the society and bridge the gap between newcomers and host community, language instruction is insufficient to achieve this goal. Apart from teaching basic German and creating an opportunity to meet other migrants, the program provides little assistance in a “real-life integration”: finding a job or learning how to do so, connecting with locals and migrant associations, learning how to participate in political and social life. Despite the program's claim that the integration certificate will help in finding a job, the level of German acquired at the end of it is too low for most employers. Writing resumes, practicing interviews, assistance in translating migrant qualifications into the German market, educational opportunities available to migrants, could all be incorporated into the structure of the program. Currently, no such efforts are made and migrants are left to their own devices to find out where to go and what assistance is available. Offering such services would naturally fit into the program and would make it easier for migrants as they try to navigate a foreign bureaucracy. Possibility of job assistance could also motivate migrants as they learn the language, showing the practical application of and reward for their efforts.

Regrettably, apart from the one study commissioned by BAMF, there are no regular assessments of what happened to the migrants after they completed the course. As the government does not organize these courses and leaves them up to language schools, completing the program is like completing any other language class. Some participants “fail to integrate” and have to repeat parts of the course. Those who succeed receive a certificate, which says that they have fulfilled integration requirements, and are left to their own devices to figure out what to do next.

The program is supposed to make migrants better equipped in the market place. One of the determinants of successful integration is a diminishing wage gap between migrants and host societies. More studies are necessary to determine whether there are differences in incomes

between migrants who participated in the course and those who did not. Additionally, the social-economic position of the participants vis-à-vis non-participants needs to be taken into account. Have the participants become more involved members of society? As the program is still new, with time studies measuring the achieved benchmarks of integration will become feasible.

3.2.4. Measuring Integration

One of the major concerns is how to measure the degree of migrant integration, which, apart from labor market participation, is hard to define and quantify. A key difficulty for policy makers in understanding the integration route is the endogeneity of economic outcomes and the level of achieved integration, both of which are influenced by individual motivation (Constant et al. 2009:4). Indicators of integration that measure its process and progress vary depending on a nation-state's vision of what successful integration means. Among the most common indicators are labor market participation, language proficiency, socio-economic status, level of participation in public discourse and civil society, as well as cultural and religious practices.

Dustmann (1996) points to four factors determining the integration of individuals into a new society: knowledge about the social structure; habituation, a process of changes in tastes and habits; exposure, the extent to which migrants interact with the new environment; and constraints, whether coming from migrants' ideology or religious barriers, or the host society itself. Similarly to many of the integration programs offered in Europe, there is little available information on the program's impact considering these benchmarks. Evaluations are usually based on self-reported levels of satisfaction, test scores, and the number of completion certificates issued by BAMF. There is no before-and-after analysis. Additionally, while the multiple choice exam at the end of the program may be a fair assessment of the participant's level of German language and limited factual historical knowledge, the evaluation is not constructed in a way that would assess the actual course's contribution to obtaining that knowledge. Thus, the true effects of this scheme are unclear. Evaluating the programs based on the contribution they make to individual lives will help societies respond more adequately to the needs of its new members.

As integration is a political tool that is relatively new in Europe, much remains to be done in order to set definite criteria for evaluating the success of such programs. The first study to analyze the formal integration programs in Sweden, by Andersson Joona and Nekby (2012), found that they had significant positive effects on the probability of getting a regular job and an

even larger effect on the probability of participating in other training programs. Another study by Hayfron (2001) looking at immigrants in Norway from Pakistan, Chile, and Morocco, found that speaking Norwegian was key to finding employment, though there was no significant effect of improved language proficiency on wage earnings. On the other hand, Büchel and Frick (2005) found that country specific institutions fostering migrant integration have a significant impact on the migrant's ability to improve his/her economic situation. Considering such varied findings, more studies are needed to determine the key elements that are instrumental in the outcomes of integration programs. Clear, comparable information on EU integration policies is missing and information is difficult to acquire. Severe lack of available data to evaluate the impact of these programs is a major problem for policymakers.

Ultimately, determining whether an integration program has achieved its objective requires a clear definition of what it means to be integrated and having benchmarks according to which the level of integration achieved can be measured. This presupposes a certain amount of cultural consensus, as there is no culturally neutral ground for integration. "It is a question of having the power to define the basis for integration and determine the rules of the game in which the newcomers are suppose to be included while simultaneously providing for social change" (Lavenex and Uçarer 2002, 188). Yet cultural consensus is largely absent when it comes to migration, while at the same time few efforts are made to question the underlying assumption of such policies.

4. RETHINKING MIGRANT INTEGRATION

The deep ambiguity of the concept of integration gives governments flexibility in devising policies that are supposed to foster it. All integration policies entail a set of values and beliefs about what integration is and how to achieve it. This section addresses some of these assumptions. When migrant integration extends beyond linguistic acquisition, as it necessarily does, it presupposes a standard to be integrated towards, a type of a national identity. Therefore, a crucial debate accompanying integration measures is which standards migrants should live up to, who is to decide, and what is the benchmark against which integration can be measured.

4.1 Assumptions Behind Migrant Integration

The discussion on migrant integration entails a complex set of values and presuppositions, on national, societal, and individual levels. From the national point of view, the end goal of integration is citizenship, “only awarded to those who have made a conscious choice for their new country and can fulfill high integration requirements” (Vink 2012, 62). Migrants who want to become citizens must have resided in Germany for at least seven years, demonstrate language proficiency in an interview, and pass the integration course’s orientation test. This conditionality is seen as an incentive to integrate. Additionally, “many Germans appear to have believed that foreigners wishing to truly belong to the country as German citizens should demonstrate a commitment to the country by first renouncing their foreign citizenship” (Cooper 2012, 383). This exclusivity of German identity is evident by the persisting policies going against dual citizenship. Therefore, integration entails identifying oneself with the respective country, with exclusivity being ideal. Integrating into one society is renouncing another, which can lead to international and personal conflicts of interests.

For example, the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has repeatedly spoken to Turkish citizens residing in Germany against assimilation, openly criticizing Germany’s integration politics. Asked about the obligatory German courses for newcomers, Erdoğan responded that those who see the ability to speak German as the most important requirement violate human rights (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 2011). Forced integration can also be criticized as institutionalized racism, as it is not directed at all migrants, but only for those who have ‘a special need of being integrated’. BAMF has the power to decide whether someone has that need, which can be interpreted as deficiency in some persons or cultures.

Immigrants can be patronized by insisting that their cultural identity is what counts when positioning in society, and by viewing individuals as belonging to fixed and homogeneous groups. Central citizenship dimensions like gender, class, age, and multiple group membership are easily ignored in this model, in which there is also the danger of ethnifying social conflicts (Lavenex and Uçarer 2002, 189).

The obligation to integrate creates a bureaucratic category of different or/and deficient migrants, based on their ethnicity and legal status. Some cases of BAMF forcing people to participate in the program after over decades of their residency in Germany have even been brought to court.

On the other hand, from the perspective of host societies, migrant's refusal or failure to integrate can be perceived as a threat to the generally accepted values and norms. "Integration is said to hinge on formalizing the idea of associative membership within the political space of the nation which, by defining boundaries and the lines of in/out between citizens and foreigners, establishes the shape and unity of a modern nation-state" (Favell 2001, 45). Integration is seen as safeguarding social cohesion. Minarets in Switzerland or headscarves in France are assumed to be a threat to an established way of life, an integration failure. As many of the migrants in Europe arrive 'uninvited,' and the general electorate is usually hostile to large-scale migration, integration programs serve to calm down the fears of migrants changing the conventional way of life. The domestic pressures are the most important factor behind integration policies, dictating the rhetoric used in introducing them.

Is pluralism and respect for diversity at odds or incompatible with integrationist efforts? Germany has been promoting an inclusive vision of its society through multiple campaigns, which coincided with the introduction of the integration program. The 2006 and 2007 campaigns called "*Du bist Deutschland*" (you are Germany) showed that all persons: whether of African, Asian, Middle Eastern, or European origin belonged to Germany. However, they all spoke German. That is the one non-negotiable element of what it means to be a German and German politicians have repeatedly reiterated it. Gramling (2009, 130) argued that,

an ideal of cosmopolitan linguistic unity has superseded the multiculturalism debates of 1990s Germany, leading to various forms of performative monolingualism in social policy and every day life. The threshold of belonging—indeed a civic presence or 'being there' in Germany—had implicitly shifted from ethnic heritage to linguistic practice.

Thus, the main assumed nonnegotiable aspect of integration is the ability to speak the host society's language.

Through integration programs, governments are advancing their economic and political interests, while also satisfying the society's desire to protect its identity and financial interests. Since no state is obliged to actively integrate migrants, if it chooses to do so, it is out of its self-interest. Germany needs immigrants for economic and demographic reasons. As Germany offers extensive social benefits to its residents, one of the common arguments for integration measures is the need to ensure that migrants are independent and thus do not require financial assistance. The temporary investment into their integration should pay off in terms of social benefits avoided, both for migrants and their children. Therefore, the central goal of the integration program is to help migrants become a contributor to German society through having better working opportunities. By teaching migrants German, their chances of finding employment and benefitting the economy increase substantially. Thus, they become contributors towards the fiscal system, not a burden. Nevertheless, little research has been done to determine the overall change these courses make in the lives of the participants.

Moreover, the crucial underlying assumption of this expensive program is that the participating migrants will stay in Germany. All integrationist efforts are based on a certain understanding of modern society and the nature of migration today. Currently, they are based on the old-time notion that migration takes place between a country of origin and destination, with the destination becoming a place of permanent residency. As Portes et al. (1999, 228) argued, "immigration literature has generally assumed that, once newcomers arrive, they settle in the host society and undergo a gradual but inevitable process of assimilation." Yet, the existence of integration courses suggests that integration is not regarded as inevitable, justifying the governmental efforts to expedite and actualize it.

While integration cannot be regarded as an inevitable process, it also cannot be assumed that the current destination is a final point on a migrant's path. As nearly 50 percent of the participants come from the European Union, it is reasonable to assume that many will not settle in Germany permanently. Regrettably, there is no information publicly available on the whereabouts of the past program participants, some of whom left Germany shortly after the course ended. The government does not make sufficient efforts to follow-up with participants to see what use they have made of the program. Any integration efforts need to take into account the nature of migration today and whether those who have graduated from the integration program remain in Germany. Otherwise, German taxpayers may find themselves subsidizing

language courses for the rest of Europe. As Europeans are automatically granted residency rights, it is easy for them to take full advantage of such programs without the intention of staying in Germany long-term.

Furthermore, increasing mobility of migrants needs to be taken into account when devising integration programs. Unlike in the past, when people could not easily maintain relationships across borders, today an increasing number of households are spread across various nations. Migrants remain tied to their home countries, while at the same time becoming incorporated into their host countries. Increasingly, their life takes place across borders, not limited to one community or city or country. The majority of migrants “seem to maintain several identities that link them simultaneously to more than one nation” (Basch et al. 1994, 11). Moreover, “whereas, previously, economic success and social status depended exclusively on rapid acculturation and entrance into mainstream circles of the host society, at present they depend (at least for some) on cultivating strong social networks across national borders” (Portes et al. 1999, 229). Hence, policies discouraging such ties and interactions will meet with resistance and likely fail over time.

Finally, another fundamental notion behind such programs is that there is a known “path” to integration, with existing set of core norms one needs to adopt to achieve it (Joppke 2007b). Therefore, there must be a benchmark against which the extent of achieved integration is measured. Is integration considered successful when the newcomers become similar to the host society at large? When they vote, eat, work, and act like the majority? How can a benchmark be set? What marks the minimal level of integration that is satisfactory to a society? Is it only when the migrants acquire a basic intermediary language level? Integration policies presuppose a certain amount of cultural consensus and depend on how a nation sees itself.

Hence, the debate over integration goes into the heart of what it means to be German, British, Swedish, or even just European. It assumes that “Germanness” not only exists, but can also be taught, made semi-permanent. As someone decides which cultural values and norms will be taught to migrants, integration programs are a state effort to proliferate national identities. It is an attempt to make *them*, the migrants, become more like *us*, the host society. Hence, there is an underlying assumption of a uniqueness of a group identity and a requirement of confirming to it in order to earn a right to belong.

4.2. What Does It Mean To Be German?

“Solange die Deutschen sich mit ihrer nationalen Identität so schwertun, so lange ist es schwer, anderen zu sagen, sie sollen Deutsche werden.”

(As long as Germans struggle with their national identity, it is difficult to tell others they should become German)

Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble (2006)

When migrant integration extends beyond linguistic acquisition, as it always does, it presupposes a standard to be integrated towards, a type of a national identity. The debate over what constitutes “German-ness” and whether a *Leitkultur* (a leading culture) exists has been particularly heated and controversial, splitting the country “right down the middle” (Hawley 2006). It assumes cultural norms that are accepted by a majority and should be respected, if not adapted, by the newcomers. Yet what is the national consensus on what constitutes a German identity?

In 2008, one fifth of Germany’s residents, including 30 percent of children below 6 years old, were classified as having a “migration background,” which means having at least one non-German ancestor in the last two generations (Sina 2011, 143). This proves Germany’s heterogeneity as a society. The oxymoronic phrase “*unsere ausländische Mitbürger*” – “*our foreign fellow citizens*,” exemplifies the conflict between the desire to include those who are not ethnically German into the German society, though at the same time underlining that they are different. The rising number of migrants and the presence of the culturally different, though ethnically German, *Aussiedler* has led Germany to discuss what constitute its own identity. While for many nations and ethnicities a core part of distinct identity is the language, German is not exclusive to Germany, impelling Germans to seek for other sources of their distinctiveness.

Friedrich Merz, parliamentary leader of CDU, introduced the term *Leitkultur* into the political discourse in 2000. Many criticize it for its chauvinistic implications, as the notion suggests that there is an identifiable spectrum of German cultural values and norms, and those who want to reside in Germany ought to adhere to them (Manz 2004). However, this collective identity is not inheritable by blood, but rather a result of socialization (hence, even the ethnically German *Aussiedler* need to “integrate”).

To see what is promoted as a common national culture one can look at what is taught during integration courses and examined at citizenship tests. Before the standardization of integration programs in 2005, German states designed their own tests. Baden Wurttemberg, for example, introduced a test with questions that asked: how would you feel if your son were homosexual (Hawley 2006). Hessen, aside from asking about the size of the German population or the names of federal states and their capitals, asked: “One of the most famous works by the German painter Caspar David Friedrich shows a landscape on the Baltic island of Rügen. What is the painting's central motif?” or: “What was the German scientist Otto Hahn the first to do in 1938?” (*Der Spiegel* 2006). Nowadays, participants of integration are tested on more generic information, though still inevitably containing certain German values. Currently, some of the 250 questions asked during the integration course exams are: “Who wrote the text of the German anthem?” or “You are invited to a job interview in Germany at 9:00 AM. What is the latest time you should arrive?” (BAMF n.d.).

Movies such as BBC's *Make Me a German* attempt to capture the essence of “Germanness” by finding a family that fits the description of an “average, typical German.” The cliché Thomas and Sabine Müller, the most common German names, have two children, drink 0.27 liters of beer a day, eat 1.1 kilograms of pork a week, work hard and are orderly, recycle, quiet on Sundays, think about the environment, and never attend to private matters at work. The movie also reveals an “average German” attitude towards immigrants, who are seen as uneducated, unable to speak German, and generally “a problem.” On the other hand, the movie shows that the average German exists only in theory, and it is nearly impossible to find a family that would fit all the standards.

The tradition of nationhood inevitably influences the German immigration and citizenship policies, despite little consensus of what German nationhood entails. Who embodies Germanness? Is there such a thing as a German cultural foundation on collectively held convictions? If not, what are migrants being integrated towards? If yes, how can it be reconciled with the reality of a multicultural society? Who gets to choose the generic norms of appropriate behavior transmitted to newcomers? Not surprisingly, the only German characteristic that has been officially agreed upon is language.

Europe needs migrants and cannot afford slamming the door at newcomers. A growing number of foreigners are forcing Germany and other European nations to come to terms with

their increasingly multicultural societies. As the existence of a state hinges on individual members, the goal of integration is to make newcomers into members. Many voice concern over the inevitable change that this may lead to. Melting of cultures brings out new categories and breaks down the old ones, so that entire cultures are transformed and the end is difficult to predict or define. Two-way integration entails change. If migrants are to integrate, the host societies cannot remain the same. Its new members will inevitably transform them. Once the newcomers become members they will have the power to shape the state. Triadafilopoulos (2012) calls it a migrant-membership dilemma: how to advance economic and political interests, at the same time satisfying the society's desire to protect its identity and material interests. Therefore, the antagonism of reconciling cultural pluralism and maintaining national identity is a significant challenge. More debates are necessary in order to decide how such dilemmas should be expressed in the design of integration courses.

CONCLUSION

The process of integrating migrants and the rising pressures of migration are one of the main challenges that Europeans are confronted with in this century. With persistent wage and educational gaps between migrants and host societies, and increasing reliance on migrants for economical and demographical reasons, there is mounting pressure to successfully incorporate newcomers. The question of integration arises out of a concern for social order and cohesion; security concerns make it politically justifiable to introduce expensive measures to ensure that migrants respect national values and cultures. Previously, EU countries focused their integration programs on those migrants who wished to become citizens. However, with restrictive policies that deny millions of life-long residents the right to citizenship, integration is now increasingly encompassing all migrants. How will Europe responsibly address the needs of those it admits to its soil? No response should be taken for granted, and existing policies must be scrutinized for effectiveness, with increasing convergence of integration policies within the EU. There is still a long way to go before this becomes a reality. By looking at existing strategies, policy makers can learn from best practices already in place.

Germany offers the most extensive migrant integration program in the EU, which is available to a broad range of newcomers, including EU citizens. Germans have addressed the integration challenge through the introduction of a nation-wide integration program that focuses on language acquisition, as well as elements of cultural, historical, and political instruction. The program caters to various special-needs groups and since its conception has made various adjustments to improve its design. Nonetheless, the effects of the program have not been fully satisfactory, with only half of the participants achieving the desired language level. Furthermore, little remains known about the effects the program has on long-term economic and social incorporation of the participants, their increased activeness in the public arena, and the convergence of their living standards in comparison to native citizens. More studies are needed to assess the program and develop adjustments necessary to increase its effectiveness.

Governments are increasingly choosing language instruction as the primary tool for integrating newcomers, without a public discussion on whether that is the most effective method. Integration courses, as they are currently designed, are only one possible mode of integration. As argued in this report, they are not a sufficient one, as they omit connecting migrants directly with the host society and provide little assistance in entering the labor market. Such top-down approaches to integration, with participation requirements backed by penalties

for non-compliance, should be balanced with more interactive processes, where migrants can put into practice what they are required to learn during the course and see their efforts pay off. Language is a political and cultural binder. However, to acquire qualifications necessary to benefit the host society, further measures besides basic language acquisition are needed. As migrants are expected to integrate, the two-way understanding of migrant integration reminds us that the host society must also make efforts to play an active part in this integration.

While integration measures emphasize the way the migrant adjusts to behavioral expectations and roles of the majority society, today's value of cultural diversity implicitly points to the need for mutual adjustment. Integration is a two-way process, dependent on the willingness and ability of the migrant to learn the language and become a part of the society, but also on the society's willingness to welcome the newcomer as a member, not a "guest." It is a process that takes place on a daily basis, and not something that can be taught in the classroom during a course. The migrant commitment to integration is influenced by policies that either strengthen or weaken it, and by the feasibility of success. When a society alienates migrants despite their integrative efforts, their incentives to adapt to the host society's norms and language lessen. Thus, apart from policies that encourage integration, the society must create an atmosphere in which it is possible to belong, no matter what ethnic, cultural, or religious background one has. This is a crucial aspect to two-way integration. Otherwise, integration is reduced to a one-sided adaptation on the part of the migrant, without allowing him or her to shape and take ownership of the surrounding political and social environment.

The objective of integration is not "transforming culture affinities or assimilationist uniformity, but promoting functional, individual autonomy" (Vink, 2012:42). It is about giving people the necessary tools to lead independent, wholesome lives, and giving them the space necessary to use these tools. It's a society-wide project. Therefore, more social groups should be involved in it, taking note that the state or society into which migrants are supposed to integrate is constantly evolving. Integration requires exercising a far-reaching vision, as it is a long-term process and investment. However, offering assistance in the face of persisting inequalities and disadvantages migrants face has long-term benefits that affect not only migrants, but also the society at large and future generations.

ANNEX I

The table is a compilation of EU-15 migrant integration programs based on official information provided on governmental websites listed below as well as IOM (n.d.b.)

Country	Formal Integration Program?	Mandatory?	Program Details	Websites	Other Information
Austria	Yes, Austria offers German courses administered by ÖIF.	Yes, but only for Module 1 and only for non-EU*.	The course is composed of 300 lesson-hours, 45 min each. It costs 750 euro. The Integration Agreement is comprised of two sequential Modules. Only Module 1 (A2 German level) is mandatory after certain residence titles have been granted. Module 2 (B1) is not mandatory, but is required for obtaining a long-term residence title, as well as citizenship. For certain family members the government refunds 50% of the costs of classes up to €750 if such classes were successfully completed within 18 months of the start of the compliance obligation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. www.integration.at 2. www.migration.gv.at/en/ 3. http://www.integration.sfonds.at 4. https://www.help.gv.at 	The Secretary for Integration was founded in 2011. Its purpose is to provide in-depth German language skills, in particular reading and writing skills.
Belgium	Yes and No: There is no national program, it's a regional responsibility. Flanders have a civic integration program. Wallonia has no specific integration policy targeting immigrants.	In Flanders, yes, for non EU newcomers resident in Flanders and for ministers of religion in a local church recognized by the Flemish authorities.	In Flanders: Civic integration is intended for foreigners aged 18 and more who come to Flanders or Brussels to reside there for a long period. The target group of the civic integration policy also includes Belgians who were not born in Belgium and at least one of whose parents was not born in Belgium. There is a primary civic integration programme, which consists of a social orientation course, basic Dutch as a second language course, career orientation, and programme counseling, and a secondary civic integration programme, starting work or further education. The primary civic integration programme is organised by the welcome office. The programme followed by a person integrating is established in his civic integration contract. A standard social orientation course involves 60 teaching periods. Course participants can take the lessons in their own language or in a contact language. The Dutch course involves 240 or 120 teaching hours (if someone is a "fast learner") or 90 hours (for those enrolling at university). For the illiterate or very low-skilled migrants, there is a 600-hour programme.	http://www.inburgering.be	In Flanders: Persons integrating who have a civic integration obligation and fail to comply with this obligation, as well as persons integrating who are entitled to integrate and fail to comply with the terms of their civic integration contract, can be subject to an administrative fine. The system of administrative fines does not apply in the Brussels Capital Region.
Denmark	Yes, Danish courses are the responsibility of local governments.	Yes, for non-EU.	Based on the Act No. 375 of 28 May 2003 on Danish courses for adult aliens, etc. An introduction programme includes a Danish course, free of charge. The course must have a duration of at least 20 hours. The introduction programme must begin no later than one month after the local council has taken over responsibility for an alien and its duration may not exceed 3 years. Danish courses comprise of learning the Danish language and Danish culture and society. There are 3 types of courses, depending on one's educational backgrounds. The courses may include traineeships with private or public enterprises.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. http://www.nyidanmark.dk 2. http://ams.dk/Fagomrader-Temaer/Administration/~media/AMS/Dokumenter/Integrationserklaringer/integrationserklaring_engelskpdf.ashx 	As of October 3, 2011, the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs is closed and its tasks were transferred to other Ministries. In order to be granted for a permanent residence permit, a newcomer must submit a signed Declaration of integration and active citizenship in Danish society, promising to be integrated and become active citizen in the Danish society.

Country	Formal Integration Program?	Mandatory?	Program Details	Websites	Other Information
Finland	No organized courses but migrants have the right to take part in an individual integration plan if they need to. They receive specific integration assistance.		Eligible migrants and their families are entitled to integration services, such as the initial assessment (alkukartoitus), integration plan (kotoutumissuunnitelma) and integration training (kotoutumiskoulutus).	http://www.infopankki.fi/en/living-in-finland/as-an-immigrant-in-finland/integration-into-finland	Integration measures are available to labor migrants, asylum seekers and their family members who have a residence permit.
France	Yes. France has a compulsory integration contract which encompasses optional language courses.	Yes, for non-EU.	Since January 2007, France has compulsory integration contracts, which oblige migrants to participate in all a civic training (1 day session with translation offered) and language sessions, if necessary. The contract is foreseen for one year, renewable twice. In the event of failure to respect the commitments under the contract, a Prefect may terminate it and refuse to issue or renew the first residence permit. The course teaches about the French institutions and the values of the Republic, (gender equality, secularism, compulsory and free access to education) and the political and administrative organization in France. The information session about life in France, adapted to the needs of the migrant, lasts 1 hour (within the OFII) or 6 hours (session with a body chosen by the OFII). This session informs newly arrived migrants of the formalities of everyday life. Language learning: during the individual meeting, the interviewer assesses oral and written proficiency in French. If the new migrant's level is judged sufficient, a certificate of exemption from language learning (AMDFL) is granted on the same day. This document certifies their satisfactory level of French language proficiency. If the new migrant's level is judged insufficient, he/she is referred to a language course of 400 hours maximum. After this course, beneficiaries take an exam for the Diploma of introduction to French (DILF).	http://www.ofii.fr	
Germany	Yes.	Yes, for non-EU.	An integration course consisting of 2 parts: language + "orientation" (history, politics, culture). Between 430 (intensive course) up to 1260 hours, with 660 hours being the norm. There are various courses for women, youth, analphabets, and parents.	www.bamf.de	Program exists since 2005.
Greece	Yes.	No.	The right of long term residence presupposes fluency in Greek language and knowledge of Greek history and culture. The requirement of knowledge of Greek language and culture is fulfilled upon the completion of a 150 hours course on Greek language and a 25 hours course on Greek history and culture, organised by the General Secretariat of Adult Education (Ministry of Education). The courses are provided twice a year. The Institute for Continuing Adult Education of the General Secretariat for Life Long Learning is responsible for the organization of the courses.	http://www.ermis.gov.gr	In order to be eligible for the free Greek lessons provided by IDEKE, EU citizens only need to show their passport. Non-EU citizens will need a letter from their employer confirming that they have work in Greece as well as a valid residence permit.
Ireland	No.		There is no legislation specifically relating to immigrant integration in Ireland.	http://www.integration.ie	

Country	Formal Integration Program?	Mandatory?	Program Details	Websites	Other Information
Italy	Italy has a compulsory integration agreement requiring migrants to learn Italian and offering them assistance.		Under the agreement the Italian authorities are committed to provide language and civic education session to allow foreigners to acquire adequate knowledge of Italian and of the fundamental principles of the Republic, the organisation and functioning of public institutions, as well as civic lifestyle in Italy. The foreigner is committed to meet his/her civic obligations and to fulfill his/her duties under the Charter of values of citizenship and integration adopted by the Italian government in 2007. A credit-based approach is used. The Integration Agreement lasts two years. If your permit of stay lasts one year, one month before your departure you are required to show the documents regarding your civic obligations. A newcomer is required to attend a free training and information session on civic education lasting from 5 to 10 hours organised by the Prefettura-Sportello unico per l'immigrazione. Other credits can be obtained by attending Italian language courses, educational qualifications, registering with the National Health Services, signing a lease contract, etc.	1. http://www.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/22/0184_Accordo_brochureINGLESE.pdf 2. http://www.welcomeoffice.fvg.it/common/are-you-a-non-eueea-citizen/researcher/entry-and-residence-procedures/integration-agreement.aspx 3. www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.interno.it	
Luxembourg	Yes, under an integration contract.	Yes	The language training course enables the migrant to reach at least Basic User Level A.1.1 in one or more of the three administrative languages of Luxembourg – i.e. Luxembourgish, French, or German. The migrant has the choice between different course providers but has to pay for the course. The citizenship training course aims to provide insight on integration and on the basic conditions of a harmonious cohabitation in a plural Luxembourg as well as on the history and customs of Luxembourg and its political organisation. Courses are organised jointly by the OLAI and the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training in partnership with the communes and Lycées. Organised twice a year, an orientation day takes place during a half day at the weekend.	http://www.olai.public.lu	The integration policy applies to all foreigners, that is, to European Union citizens as well as to third-country nationals. The main measures aimed at foreigners are the National Action Plan for Integration and Against Discrimination and the Welcome and Integration Contract (CAI).
Netherlands	As of January 2013, no, but immigrants must take exams.		Newcomers whose integration obligation dates from 1 January 2013 are responsible for their own integration procedure. They must arrange for their language classes, civic integration training and exam, and must pay for it themselves. People who are unable to do so are entitled to a loan. Newcomers to the Netherlands can meet the civic integration requirement in a variety of ways. The first option is to take the civic integration exam. They must pass this within 3 years. Candidates who fail must repeat the exam until they pass. The other options are to take the state examinations in Dutch as a second language (NT2) or take a course of vocational or professional education.	http://www.government.nl/issues/integration/integration-procedure-in-the-netherlands	

Country	Formal Integration Program?	Mandatory?	Program Details	Websites	Other Information
Portugal	Yes.		"Portuguese for All" programme provides 150 class-hours in basic Portuguese and technical Portuguese for the immigrant population, up to A2 level.	1. http://www.acidi.gov.pt/_cfn/4d346c9b80687/live/Consulte+a+versao+da+Plano+2010-2013+em+Inglês 2. http://www.iefp.pt/formacao/ModalidadesFormacao/ProgramaPortugalAcolhe/Paginas/ProgramaPortuguesparaTodos.aspx	
Spain	No.				
Sweden	Individually designed introduction programs.		They depend on the municipality and include language, culture, and introduction to the labor market. The municipality plans and carries out an individualized orientation program together with the individual and other relevant parties, based on a municipal orientation program. The municipality is responsible for the individual receiving the support needed in order to make the orientation program successful. The orientation program normally lasts for a maximum of two years.	http://www.informationsverige.se/	
UK	No, but it offers citizenship courses.		Migrants have to prove a minimum B1 level and knowledge on life in the UK in order to get citizenship.		

*non-EU also includes Switzerland

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