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and the Nation State
in Western Europe**

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Immigration, Multi-Culturalism and the Nation State in Western Europe

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Introduction

With hindsight, it can be said that in the years following World War II, the whole of Western Europe gradually became a region of immigration. In the very first instance this concerned people displaced by the war and its aftermath (redrawn borders and policies of what later distastefully became known as 'ethnic cleansing'). Subsequently, politics induced people to leave what by then had become the Eastern Block; most notably this led to migration from the German Democratic Republic to the German Federal Republic, and emigration from Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968). The arrival of such newcomers was never seen as immigration as such but rather as an anomaly, a one off phenomenon, and caused little discomfort in the countries where these people sought refuge. Moreover, these immigrants were easily absorbed in expanding labour markets. In fact, rebuilding destroyed economies induced an even larger need for labour. In the 1960s and 1970s this led to the arrival of what euphemistically were called guest workers from the countries surrounding the Mediterranean. As the word guest worker implies, this immigration was conceived to be of a temporary nature – which it turned out not to be.

After the oil-crises of the mid-1970s many guest workers lost their employment due to economic restructuring. As these were guest workers, it was generally assumed that they would subsequently return to their countries of origin. Though some did, many others stayed and were followed by their spouses and children. Marriage partners again later on followed them from the countries of origin.

After the War, colonialising states like Great Britain, France and The Netherlands were also faced with the arrival of many immigrants as a result of the process of decolonisation. Their arrival too was seen as a temporary anomaly, to be accommodated but then forgotten. However, like the settled former guest workers, family reunification and formation followed in their wake. These migration flows have meanwhile largely dried up but have been replaced by asylum seekers and refugees who, on the waves of economic globalisation, have found their way to Europe from many parts of the globe. Even a country that seemed immune to immigration - the Irish Republic - in the last couple of years witnesses the influx of many newcomers and the return of migrants who earlier left for the new world.

In short: even though de facto immigration has taken place in most Western European countries for the past four to five decades, and in considerable numbers, governments for a long time, and some until today, failed to define in proper terms what actually was happening. To be fair, the same should be said about researchers, journalists and others.

This impaired perspective in most instances has led to short term government responses, both when issues surrounding immigration and integration are concerned, to processes that by their very nature are very long term in character. Migration pressure is not easily alleviated as its causes, though manifold, often are first and foremost of a demographic nature (Van Amersfoort & Doomernik 1998).

The integration of immigrants, especially of those from less developed parts of the world, too should be thought about in terms of generations rather than legislative periods.

Of course, and especially to the welfare states of Western Europe, immigration other than in order to satisfy labour market needs by definition poses a challenge. In most instances, all legal residents of a country are granted certain basic rights - a minimum of economic security, a roof over the head, access to the educational system for minors and such. Much like an insurance system, it is no great problem if a few individuals claim for compensation without having contributed their premiums over a long period of time. If, however, their numbers are large at some point the system may not be able to shoulder the burden. Now this principle in itself would validate a policy of rejecting every form of non-economically induced immigration. However, and this explains why post-guest worker immigration did take place, economic arguments are not the only ones a liberal democratic state needs in order to maintain its legitimacy. Human rights concerns are just as important, and not without reason enshrined in international treaties like the Geneva Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights. Those treaties prevent governments from closing the doors on unsolicited immigration, even though at times attempts are made to keep the chink as small as possible. In effect, immigration has become part and parcel of the modern world and will not cease until global economic integration and equality have been reached - and even then.

The dominant discourse within some states - like Germany or Austria - has nevertheless been one of denial: "*Deutschland ist kein Einwanderungsland*" is a phrase until very recently frequently used in a country that at one stage in the 1990s even had about as many immigrants as the United States. In other countries - for instance Sweden, Britain or The Netherlands - in contrast policy makers faced the facts, albeit perhaps grudgingly. In these countries thoughts have been developed on what the presence of newcomers with markedly different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds from the native population might entail, and whether it calls for particular types of policies. Yet another type of response can be found in France. This is, or perhaps better was, a country that for more than a century considered itself to be a country of immigrants. Or perhaps better put: a nation in which it did not matter where your parents came from for all citizens were nonetheless French to the bone.

On the basis of this very broad and simplified overview, a typology of three types of immigration countries can be construed:

- immigration countries with ostrich habits;
- immigration countries who'd prefer not be so, but willing to come to grips with reality;
- immigration countries who believe in the integrating power of their culture and nation.

Others have chosen to classify these differences more elegantly. Following the example of Castles and Miller (1993:39) we can distinguish four ideal types of nationhood - a concept closely related to a State's self-perception - and thus with direct consequences for the notion of who belongs to the nation and under what conditions newcomers can become full members.

The *imperial* model views belonging to a nation "in terms of being a subject of the same power or ruler" (Ibid.). No modern liberal State fits this model but the European past has seen very clear examples in the Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Ottoman empires. Until the Nationality Act of 1981 also in Britain this type remained formally in operation (Ibid.).

The *ethnic* model, which defines membership of a nation as based upon common roots and destiny, reflected in speaking the same language, having the same culture and hence belonging to the same ethnic community. This then almost by definition excludes newcomers with other cultural traits and different roots from becoming full members. Among the main immigration countries, Germany comes closest to this type, at least until very recently. This became in clear evidence by a reluctance to grant citizenship to all those who are not born out of at least one German parent (the prevalence of the so called *jus sanguinis*, literally 'law of the blood' but perhaps better translated as 'law of descent'). If citizenship is granted through naturalisation this is preferred to be seen as the crown upon a process of (near) assimilation. At the same time, however, large numbers of immigrants arrive who are granted German citizenship the moment they cross the German border. These are the so-called *Aussiedler*, descendants of German colonists who moved to settle in the Eastern parts of Europe in earlier centuries. This illustrates the importance of the country's 'law of descent'. The current government, which entered office late 1998, while maintaining the principle of *jus sanguinis* has developed policies that are more in line with reality. Naturalisation laws have been relaxed, especially for the children of immigrants (grown up in Germany they can opt for German citizenship), and Germany is being quite revolutionary redefined as an immigration country. Even the opposition parties in parliament have embraced this principle.¹ This is not to mean Germany will receive many more immigrants than it does today but the new policies should better accommodate labour market needs, especially for the highly skilled. Nevertheless, the rhetorical change is remarkable.

In the *republican* model belonging to society is predominantly defined as belonging to a political community. Newcomers may then become full members provided they accept to live according to its political rules. Citizenship then is seen as a logical prerequisite towards integration rather than, as is the case in the ethnic model, the final result of that process. In spite of some fluctuations in its policies, France can be considered to be a good example of a State functioning according to this model. This is reflected in its *jus soli*, the 'law of the soil' which grants citizenship not only to children of French descent but also to anyone born on French territory, and by the relative ease with which foreign born immigrants can become citizens. It is further reflected in a strong belief in the assimilating capacities of the French nation and the ensuing lack of any kind of minority based rights or minority targeted policies.

The *multi-cultural* model finally, is based upon the idea that cultural differences within a society are normal. These are not by necessity problematic provided they do not hinder full participation in society's core fields, i.e. in the educational system, on the labour and housing markets, and in democratic decision making processes. To this end, equality before the law needs to be achieved as best and quickly as possible. Uncomplicated citizenship rules are one instrument to achieve this but States functioning according to this model may additionally grant many civil and political rights to foreign nationals making them in those respects almost equal to nationals. The Netherlands, for example, grants local suffrage to non-EU nationals who legally reside in the country for five years.² It furthermore has policies explicitly aiming to integrate immigrants and their descendants, whereby being integrated is defined as having equal access to society's resources and institutions. Assimilation is no policy goal, instead provisions are present to facilitate the institutionalisation of the immigrants' culture and religion.

¹ The present opposition consists, among others, of the Christian Democrats and the Liberals who, between 1982 and 1998, constituted the German government. It was this government that maintained that Germany is not a country of immigration – making this sudden change in stance rather remarkable.

² The right to vote and stand as candidate for provincial and national elections is still seen as the privilege of nationals.

One might expect each of these types of countries to have different policies when it comes to issues pertaining to the integration of newcomers, or even no policies in case a nation simply fails to perceive newcomers in need of integration. This also implies that the objective position of immigrants compared to the native population might be different as a result of those different policies. Why not put this simple hypothesis to the test? To this end we shall look at integration policies in France, Germany and The Netherlands and briefly discuss the position of immigrants in those countries. While not excluding other ethnic groups, doing so we concentrate our attention on Turkish immigrants and their descendants.³ This choice is inspired by the fact that they arrived at around the same time and for the same original reason, i.e. as industrial workers. Moreover, immigrants from Turkey are present in considerable numbers in all three countries; whereby it should be noted that the numbers are by far the largest in Germany. In the latter country, with just over two million persons, they account for about 2.5% of the country's population. France and The Netherlands are home to slightly under and above 200.000 Turkish immigrants respectively. These figures, it should be noted, are distorted by the fact that in France they pertain to non-nationals (many immigrants will have become French nationals) whereas Dutch statistics include every person born in Turkey, regardless of nationality.

Integration

Before we go on, we need to establish what we mean when we use the term integration. As Böhning (1995) noted, it can both refer to a state of being and to the process towards it. The state of being integrated we may define as a situation in which immigrants and their descendants hold a position, which is similar to natives with comparable and relevant characteristics; notably in terms of age, education, and gender. Such a definition is not necessarily embraced by all observers, but would seem a sensible one for our present purpose. The term assimilation we then reserve for a situation wherein citizens of foreign descent are not in any way 'detectable' in society other than perhaps by their surname, nor view themselves in any way as members of a group originating abroad.⁴

The process of integration should not be seen as a one way street. Like we know from our chemistry lessons in school, elements can be combined into products but those can also, by means of a catalyst, again be separated. For the social sciences we might for such a process conveniently use the label "disintegration".

Integration policies

Integration policies can be examined along two dimensions: the subjects and the fields aimed at. As to the subjects, a distinction can be made between general and targeted policies (or in Hammar's (1985) terms: direct and indirect immigrant policies). The first type of policy addresses all persons within the population with certain characteristics; e.g. being deprived or marginalised, or running the risk of becoming so. The second type of policy singles out specific categories of people; e.g. immigrants and their descendants in general or from certain countries of origin in particular.

When it comes to the fields policies may aim at the most commonly targeted field is the labour market. With the possible exception of people born rich or otherwise economically well off, being integrated in the labour market determines to a considerable extent a person's integration in most, if not all, other spheres of society. Besides the financial aspects of being economically active, work constitutes an important element in the individual's sense of purpose and structures day-to-day live. From any government's point of view, moreover, it is costly to support people who cannot take

³ Many of the data presented here are also found, and in much greater detail, in Doornik 1998.

⁴ Good examples are found in Germany where a surname ending in -ski signifies Polish roots or in the Netherlands where French names are not uncommon and descending from Huguenots resettling during the 17th century.

care of themselves; under- or unemployment means a waste of human capital; and unemployment may destabilise society's social fabric.

In addition to integration policies aimed at the labour market, governments may also try to support and encourage the integration of immigrants (or other potentially or actually marginalised persons) in other fields. As pointed out, there are more or less direct links between housing, schooling and income, and governments may assume that once the latter is taken care of, integration in other fields should be an automatic consequence. In practice this link is not mono-dimensional and, moreover, is not instantaneous. Place of residence, for example, may determine a person's access to employment and/or upward mobility. One needs only imagine a situation where large numbers of disadvantaged people are housed together in sub-urban areas with no or few industries, with no or few direct transportation links to the city centre or other parts of town where employment could be found, and, as a consequence of the general low income situation, little retail or other economic activities within the area itself. This example is not as hypothetical as it may sound⁵ but more common are situations where some kind of geographical clustering of disadvantaged persons - among whom immigrants are often disproportionately found - occurs, especially in the larger cities. This then may cause governments, be it local, provincial or national, to devise measures by which to increase the chances for proper education for second generation immigrants⁶ that might as a result of the low income, poor education and lack of language abilities of their parents otherwise remain beyond their reach. Another type of policy may be aimed at providing good quality housing as such or at trying to move poor housed people into other neighbourhoods; perhaps dispersing them, in the hope of increasing their integration.

In addition to policies that address the integration into the core fields of society, governments may also seek to intervene in the realm of religion and culture. In some States (notably those based upon the republican ideal) these aspects are left completely to the private sphere, whereas in others (those embracing the multicultural ideal) governments may perceive the need for an active (or at least facilitating) role. Examples from the Netherlands are numerous, for instance state subsidies for Islamic and Hindu public broadcasting companies and state funded Islamic and Hindu public schools. Furthermore, local and national government see religious immigrant organisations as discussion partners on an equal footing with other types of organisations.⁷

The above makes clear that integration can be measured in a whole range of areas, including those often associated with questions pertaining to mono- or multi-cultural society. Interesting as those might be it would seem doubtful if, for instance, it is always relevant whether immigrants have adopted the food preferences of their host society, its liking for particular types of music and literature or of the nationally preferred soap opera. Neither is crucial whether they support Arsenal, Ajax, FC Bayern, Olympic Marseille or Galatasaray for the UEFA-cup. Even though anthropologists may not fully agree when we discount those types of adaptation, one will agree that the well being of immigrants *and* that of the receiving society first of all depends on such key issues like employment

⁵ The suburbs around many of the main French cities, and the housing estates around the larger Scottish cities are some European examples that spring to mind.

⁶ At times a confusing and inaccurate term. The second generation may be considered to consist of people born in the country where their parents resettled and therefore are strictly speaking not immigrants. Furthermore, in many instances these children are citizens of the receiving State and not foreigners. Depending on the definition, second-generation immigrants may also be the children born abroad of the original immigrants but immigrating as minors and not on their own initiative.

⁷ Each nationality has its own advisory council to the government, in which various types of organisations (labour, religion, sports etc.) work together.

and education (see also Böhning 1996). To expand on our earlier example: Being in employment hands an individual the means by which to acquire decent housing in a desirable neighbourhood, which again determines where his or her children go to school. Whether this is a school populated with disadvantaged children, perhaps with the same ethnic background, or one with children from a diversity of backgrounds can be, though should not by definition be, crucial in determining whether a child can develop its full intellectual potential. In other words: in this field it is determined whether immigrant communities will turn into long lasting ethnic minorities who can not escape their poverty trap. For the same reason, one may want to be cautious when it comes to discussions on multiculturalism when they fail to address the core issue. Once integration into society's core fields has been completed one may doubt whether the question as to whether our societies have become multicultural holds still much interest. We may have gained a couple of new religions and a host of new tastes in food but that would be about it. This does not mean, however, that a nation's commitment to accepting diversity is not crucial. It definitely is, but not, as shall be demonstrated, in the way often thought. Catering for cultural and social diversity will more quickly and easily result in a society with a high level of social cohesion than policies explicitly aiming for cultural uniformity and assimilation.

France

Policies towards legal immigrants basically are inclusive and based upon the republican ideal of *liberté, égalité et fraternité*. For the century or so preceding the 1970s this stance was complemented with a liberal immigration regime. As to integrating newcomers, two mean strategies have until this day been employed: easy access to all political rights by an active naturalisation policy towards legally residing foreigners, and a firm believe in the assimilationist capacities of the French nation. This believe remained unchallenged until about the 1970s when the immigrant population began to change in character. Previously, immigrants had predominantly come from surrounding countries like Italy, Spain and Portugal and their integration into the labour market had posed few problems. This was different with subsequent immigration from Northern Africa, and also, though the numbers were smaller, from Turkey. The oil crises had substantially limited the need for un- and semiskilled workers, making the economic integration of those newcomers problematic. An additional 'problem' was that their religion (Islam) and other cultural properties set them aside from mainstream society more than had been the case with the Southern European immigrants, who predominantly had been Roman Catholics, like the native French population. The republican model under those circumstances was not as able to assimilate these newcomers as it had been in earlier eras.

From the viewpoint of the immigrants, the assimilationist tradition collided with their desire to retain and build upon their religion, a desire doubtlessly reinforced by their lagging economic integration. This mismatch between the expectations of the French State towards those immigrants and their own ambitions and needs, has for the past decades remained a large source of contention. Especially among young people, usually born and bred in France, dissatisfaction has become in

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