



## JOURNAL À PLUSIEURS VOIX

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# The Lure of Integration

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**I**n the second half of this century virtually all countries in Northern and Western Europe have become countries of immigration. Immigrants have come for a variety of reasons and from many different parts of the world. At the outset, the main incentives for immigration were the decolonisation process and the demand for unskilled manual workers in European industry. Later, during the mid-1970's, these initial causes lost their importance. New immigrants, however, did continue to arrive, often as family members of those who had come before, as political refugees or in search of asylum, or as students or skilled professionals from Third World countries. Immigrant communities already present in Western Europe have also been growing rapidly as a result of their specific demographic features: their many young people and relatively high birth rates.

At present, the total immigrant population of Europe north of the Alps and the Pyrenees and west of what used to be known as the Iron Curtain is estimated at 20 million. This corresponds to about 8 per cent of the combined populations of the countries concerned. It is in fact higher than the respective toll in the United States, reputed to be the traditional immigration country, where not more than 6 per cent of the legally resident population is foreign born. And Europeans at times seem to have more difficulty in coping with this new fact than Americans.

Not only the reasons for immigration, but also the point of origin of the major flows, have been changing during the 1950-1990 period. In the 1950's and 1960's, immigration was still largely an intra-European affair: under the so-called "guest worker" system, southern Europe was providing large numbers of migrant workers to the north. This was meant to be only temporary. It is a well known fact, however, that some immigrants settled in the countries north of the Alps and Pyrenees, either as a deliberate choice or by constantly postponing their return.

The United Kingdom was the only major European country with very little labour immigration from southern Europe: most of the extra workers it needed came from its former colonies in the Caribbeans and the Indian subcontinent. Also to the other north-

European countries, however, the flow gradually took on a stronger non-European character. As northern European economies continued to need more migrant workers than a fast developing southern Europe could provide, new sources had to be tapped. These were found in Turkey, North Africa and also much farther away, for example in the Philippines. The trend regarding refugees has been similar. While in the 1950's and 60's most refugees in Western Europe still originated from the eastern half of the continent, their origins began to shift to the Third World in the early 1970's.

Generally speaking, the gradual change in European immigration patterns has implied a growth not only in geographical, but also in cultural distance between the immigrants and the native population of the host countries. Furthermore, immigrants from farther away tend to stay longer than those who came from countries closer in proximity.

A relationship may also be observed here with the prospects for development in the countries of origin. In southern Europe it has been quite substantial. Economic development in southern Europe has indeed gained momentum, and to such an extent that, not only it does not have any longer a surplus of labour, but it is instead itself becoming an area of immigration, attracting workers from a variety of countries at the opposite side of the Mediterranean and well beyond. There are, therefore, many similarities between the situation in the northern tier of Europe during the 1950's and the current situation in the southern one, and it can be said that all West European governments are faced with the problem of defining an immigration policy. At present, the number of immigrants in Italy is estimated at over one million and has been growing rapidly; similar trends are reported from Spain and Greece. Many of these immigrants do not possess the proper documents and find employment in the relatively large informal sectors of those countries.

A useful distinction between immigration policy and immigrant policy has been made by the Swedish scholar Tomas Hammar.<sup>2</sup> *Immigration policy* in Hammar's terminology includes the regulation of flows of immigration and control of aliens (sometimes referred to as "admissions" or "aliens policy"), as well as those policy measures that relate to the conditions provided to resident immigrants. *Immigrant policy* refers exclusively to measures of the latter type. At first glance immigrant policy may seem to be a synonym for *integration policy*, but governments do not always aim unequivocally at promoting integration of their resident immigrants. Therefore the concept of "immigrant policy" is broader than that of "integration policy."

It is perhaps trivial, but the first basic requirement for setting up an integration policy is the *presence of immigrants*. This is not a truism, however, since it is not always clear who is an immigrant and who is not. What to do, for instance, with those people who at the very moment of their first arrival in a particular country already possess the passport of that country? Are they citizens, are they immigrants or are they both? The two concepts are not always as mutually exclusive as one might think, as is most clearly illustrated by the British case.

For many years the vast majority of immigrants entering the United Kingdom were British passport holders from former colonies, now members of the Commonwealth. Most of these people had never been to Britain before. Initially, the authorities were not inclined to set up any form of immigrant policy, arguing that it would be discriminatory to distinguish between British subjects born in the country and subjects who had arrived from elsewhere. Thus, formally, the concept of citizenship took precedence over the immigrant status of the people concerned, although the British authorities have never denied that these people actually were immigrants.

Because of a different political and imperial tradition the refused to make any difference has, however, been the attitude of the French government vis à vis their immigrants from French overseas departments and territories. It is for these historical reasons that French passport holders from French Islands in the Caribbean are not considered immigrants by the French authorities, whereas in the Netherlands Dutch passport holders from neighbouring Dutch Islands in that same Caribbean are subject to an immigrant policy.

The situation in the (pre-reunification) Federal Republic of Germany is again different. For several decades the country had been confronted with large numbers of Germans arriving from the East. Contrary to the cases just mentioned, these immigrants were German in an ethnic sense and they were given a West German passports upon arrival. Yet at the same time, they were also treated as immigrants and a full-fledged integration policy was developed on their behalf. As a result of the recent events in Central and Eastern Europe and the subsequent growth of westward emigration, the basis of this policy is increasingly being put under pressure.

Another category of people who cannot be considered immigrants, but who are not always citizens either, is the so-called second generation: children of immigrants, born in the country where their parents have settled. Depending on national legislation, some of these children keep their parents' citizenship, whereas others become citizens of the country of residence. In legal terms their position may be different from that of their parents, but from a sociological point of view, strong similarities can be observed, and in this sense policies to promote the immigrants' integration are often extended to the non-immigrant second generation.

The fact that every European state has its own way of defining the concept of "immigrant" makes it difficult not only to draw precise comparisons of the immigrant situation in different countries and to assess total numbers of immigrants living in Europe, but also to achieve a harmonisation of immigration policies at a European level.

A second requirement for the development of an integration policy is *acknowledgment* by the authorities of the immigrants' presence. This may seem like yet another trivial requirement, but a substantial number of immigrants living in



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Europe are not recognised as such by the authorities of the countries concerned, and are not given *any rights at all*. This situation is still different from one in which the immigrants' presence is acknowledged, and the immigrants are given not the *same rights as citizens*, but some rights the latter do enjoy. In the context where no rights are accorded, the term "illegal" or "undocumented" immigrant is often used, in contrast to



*The black man's burden*

the immigrant "legally" present and in possession of the proper documents. This distinction is not always as simple as it may seem. In most countries in Western Europe it has been found that many "illegal" immigrants at one stage or another were "legal". They may have joined members of their family for some time and may have overstayed the length of their visa. Quite often immigrants themselves are unaware of their precise status.

Moreover, one should not automatically conclude that "illegal" immigrants are always undesirable. From a legal viewpoint, perhaps they should not be present, but in terms of the economy they may perform some very crucial functions. It is precisely because they are needed that public authorities often connive at their presence. However, under these circumstances it is highly unlikely that the host country is inclined to develop any form of integration policy on their behalf.

Distinctions between immigrants are not always as clear as they may seem at first glance. In all European countries a wide variety of legal status exists among immigrants, ranging from full citizenship via many different types of residence permits with a more or less permanent character to the very temporary visa, issued for one specific purpose. Practices vary considerably from one country to another, depending inter alia on the immigrant's country of origin, on his or her residence record in the country concerned, or on his or her family ties with an immigrant already living in that country. Immigration has led to a growing discrepancy between the concepts of "residence" on the one hand and "citizenship" on the other, and to a situation of more rather than less heterogeneity in the distribution of civil rights among the populations of European countries. One might even say that the trend towards achieving greater equality that has characterised Europe for some centuries, is threatened to be reversed as a result of immigration.

### Here to stay

A third basic requirement for an integration policy is the recognition of the *permanent character* of the immigrants' presence. Simply acknowledging that the immigrants are there is by no means sufficient, as may be proved by the case of those European countries that have pursued an active guest-worker policy. These policies were based on the idea that immigrants would only stay on a temporary basis. This may still legitimatise certain forms of public intervention (e.i. in housing or social work), but almost by definition such intervention can never be aimed at the immigrants' integration. The eventual policy aim is repatriation. Hence the difference between "immigrant policy" and "integration policy".

During the 1960's and 1970's most countries in Western Europe gradually began to recognise that contrary to earlier beliefs, many of their immigrants would stay on. For many immigrants, who themselves had also thought that they would go back one day, the prospect of their remaining permanently was hard to accept. And the gradual process of postponing and eventually abandoning repatriation plans can have a painful toll.

These new circumstances required a different approach from the authorities. Policies aiming at temporary forms of accommodation or at promoting repatriation, pursued by many European governments in the 1970's, had to be abandoned and replaced by integration policies. This shift was not always easy: for some governments it was at

least as difficult as for the immigrants themselves to accept the permanent character of immigration as a fact. The Federal Republic of Germany still does not formally consider itself to be a country of immigration, notwithstanding the presence of 4.5 million foreigners on German soil. This is not to say that the German immigrant policy does not aim at integration, but any measure taken in this respect tends to be ambiguous and, for that matter, potentially less effective.

The recognition of the permanent character of the immigrants' presence and of the need for some form of integration policy often went hand in hand with the introduction of stricter rules for immigration. Attempts made in this respect, however, did not always produce the results governments expected. Immigration to Europe has continued, not only to the north, but increasingly also to the south, partly due to the fact that some of the major factors influencing immigration are beyond the control of individual countries. Of course, the main factor is the wide development gap between the Third World and the West. And as long as this gap persists, people from developing countries will continue to be attracted by the opportunities of the Western world, even though by Western standards such opportunities may be extremely limited for individual immigrants.

Countries of destination themselves tend to be rather ambivalent about enforcing strict immigration policies. In open democracies that do not want to become police states, such policies are not so easy to implement. And as already mentioned, the economies of these countries need a pool of temporary labour that can be disposed of easily if it is no longer needed. If such a reserve cannot be created by legal means—as the guest-worker system meant to do—it tends to develop illegally. The permeability of borders in Europe facilitates the process.

All three requirements just discussed are closely related to the immigrants' presence, and therefore they are, of course, essential for the development of an integration policy. Before such a policy can be set up, however, more conditions will have to be fulfilled. These conditions refer to the social and political situation in the host countries themselves.

First, there should be a political will to set up an integration policy. The wish to do so may depend on factors like the number of immigrants living in that country and their social situation. If the latter is not perceived as problematic, there is little need to consider immigrants as a specific target group for government policy. Of course, the definition of what is "problematic" may vary from one country to another, even if objectively speaking, the situation may be the same. This is why some countries in Europe decided much sooner than others for an integration policy. In many cases the decision to set up such a policy, or to intensify measures that already existed, was taken after violent expressions of inter-ethnic tension or after electoral gains of anti-immigrant parties. Obviously, this is not the ideal starting point for a policy to promote immigrant integration.



The decision to act as well as the nature of the instruments deployed also depend on the overall ability of the public authorities to pursue any policy of that kind. If a government has little or no control of a certain sector of society, it is highly unlikely that an integration policy will focus on that sector. This explains, for instance, why the Swiss authorities have never used social work as an instrument in their immigrant policy, as opposed to Sweden and the Netherlands. Public influence on social work is simply much stronger in the latter two countries than in Switzerland. This also explains why the French authorities attach great importance to the educational system as a channel towards integration, whereas in the Netherlands housing has been given a comparable role. For obvious reasons there is a tendency among public authorities to concentrate integration efforts on those sectors where their influence is strongest. Thus, the political system and the political traditions of a country influence its choice of instruments.

Another relevant factor that plays a role here is the way in which responsibilities are distributed over the different levels of government. This also varies from one country to another. Education, for instance, is a national matter in France, a regional matter in Germany, Belgium and Switzerland, an (almost) local matter in Britain (although this has changed recently) and a semi-private matter in the Netherlands. No wonder that the role education plays in integration policies differs significantly from one country to another.

### **Citizens vs. residents**

Once a country has defined itself an immigration country and once the public authorities have recognised that an effort has to be made to promote integration, different approaches may be pursued. The basic question is whether regular policy instruments should be extended to immigrants in their application, or whether a specific integration policy should be developed. A rather mild form of the latter involves the introduction or adaptation of specific pieces of legislation in order to cope better with the immigrant situation. Specific integration policies, however, may also involve the creation of more far-reaching instruments to promote integration.

Looking back upon the past few decades, it should be noted that nearly all countries in Western Europe have started along the first line. No specific policy was thought to be needed: certain rights applying to citizens were extended to non-citizens. The most essential right in this context is the entitlement to security of residence. The residential status is usually linked to the length of stay: the longer an immigrant has been living in a country, the more secure his or her status will be. By formal admission, an immigrant is usually given access to education, housing, the labour market, the health care system and other important facilities. Obtaining a more stable residential status implies, among many other things, that a non-citizen no longer can be forced to leave the country in the event that he or she becomes unemployed. There are considerable differences between European countries in the number of years that a foreign resident

has to wait before he or she qualifies for a more permanent status. Sweden, for instance, usually applies a three-year period, whereas the corresponding period in Switzerland covers no less than twelve years. The length of this waiting period may also vary according to the citizenship of the person concerned. Furthermore, additional requirements—e.i. in the field of housing or income—are much stricter in some countries than in others. This variety in rules and regulations has produced a situation in which the percentage of immigrants with a secure residential status varies considerably from one country to another. Just over half of all Turks in Germany possess a secure residential status as opposed to almost 90 per cent of all Turks in the Netherlands.

Obtaining a secure residential status is important for a non-citizen, but it does not automatically bring all the other rights that come with citizenship. Certain rights automatically apply to all residents, irrespective of citizenship, provided—in the case of non-citizens—that they are legal residents. One may think here of the right to education, housing and health care.

In other cases, however, an explicit political decision is required to extend existing rights to foreign immigrants. Being entitled to social security benefits, for instance, may involve an adaptation of the law. Such adaptations often stem from bilateral agreements between the country of origin and the host country. In some European countries, non-European religions with many followers among immigrant communities have been formally recognised by the state, which implies that they qualify for certain facilities funded with public money. Public recognition of Islam has been a cornerstone of integration policy in Belgium, for instance, whereas in other countries the state does not interfere with religious affairs in any way whatsoever.

### **Voting rights**

Another right worth mentioning in this context is freedom of association. In France, for instance, foreign immigrants did not possess this right until 1981. Other countries have been extending the right to vote and to be elected to foreign immigrants with a certain residence status. Until now, this has been the case in the Scandinavian countries, Ireland and the Netherlands, but only for local elections. For some time now the matter has been hotly debated in the West Germany, France and Belgium. Extending voting rights to non-citizens is generally seen as an act of great symbolic value. The Netherlands has also extended the right to enter the civil service to resident non-citizens.

Some countries have been more reluctant than others in extending rights to non-citizens. Public authorities sometimes argue that granting more rights to non-citizens will narrow the gap in legal status between non-citizens and citizens. As a consequence, non-citizens might be less inclined to opt for naturalisation. When one compares different European countries however, it becomes clear immediately that



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there is a positive rather than a negative relationship between the strength of the legal status of non-citizens, their possibilities to participate in political life and the toll of naturalisation. Particularly common in Scandinavian countries, where resident non-citizens have also been given many facilities for participation in decision making processes, naturalisations are much rarer in Germany and Switzerland, countries not known to be generous in extending rights to non-citizens.

One step further than the mere extension of existing rights to immigrants is the adaptation of legislation or even the introduction of new legislation with a view to promoting immigrant chances for integration. This may be seen as part of what has been referred to here as a specific integration policy. By now, for instance, many countries in Western Europe have changed some of their laws in order to accommodate certain practices and rites common in non-European religions, particularly in Islam and Hinduism (rules regarding the slaughtering of animals and legislation concerning funerals).

The adaptation of legislation may go well beyond the cultural domain. Confronted with growing numbers of immigrants, most countries have changed their naturalisation laws, though not always with the intention of making it easier for foreigners to acquire citizenship. Finally, many countries have also reinforced their legislation regarding the discrimination on the basis of racial or ethnic origin. It is only too well known that many immigrants are the victims of discrimination for these reasons. Combating these forms of discrimination, for instance in housing, in education or in the workplace, is not an easy affair, as discrimination may be hard to prove in individual cases.

During the past 25 years in the United Kingdom a series of laws regarding "race relations" has made the combating of discrimination and the promotion of inter-racial

harmony a cornerstone of integration policy for immigrants. In this respect there are similarities between the British approach and the situation in the United States. Elsewhere in Europe the immigration issue is generally defined not in terms of "race", but rather in terms of "citizenship" (as in France, Germany and Switzerland), or in terms of "cultural pluralism" (as in the Netherlands and in most Scandinavian countries, which in this respect follow the Canadian model, recently adopted by Australia, as well). Britain and Sweden have gone further than other countries in introducing anti-discrimination legislation and in setting up institutional provisions to promote racial equality.

### **On the margins**

Thus, European countries have been adapting and extending different pieces of legislation in order to cope with a newly developing immigrant situation, and such alterations have not always been implemented with great enthusiasm. Some reluctance may be observed in all countries, although not always to the same degree.

At the same time, however, it can be concluded that while granting more rights to immigrants may be a necessary condition to promote their integration, it is not always sufficient. Many immigrants still occupy marginal positions: they often take the least attractive jobs, their unemployment rates are nearly always above average, their housing conditions are poor and school achievements often remain below a minimum which would be necessary to achieve some form of social mobility in the second generation. Although this does not apply to all immigrants, it is clear that in many cases immigrants still live on the margins of society.

There are various reasons for this. First, the granting of more rights does not always mean that immigrants use these rights effectively. This may be a result of a language barrier: immigrants do not always speak the language of the country where they actually live, even if they have been living there for many years. Of course, this makes it more difficult to become familiarised with the institutions and the habits of that country. In addition, many immigrants, particularly those of the first generation, are uncertain about their return plans. In some cases this may impede the integration process. In a certain way, this calls to mind the chicken-and-the-egg question, since the lack of opportunities for integration may reinforce the return myth.

Another important reason why a strong legal position is not a guarantee against marginalisation may be found in the immigrants' educational level. Most immigrants in Western Europe are poorly educated, which is in contrast to the situation of many non-European immigration countries, including the United States. The particular situation in Europe can be explained as the outcome of a deliberate recruitment policy that aimed at filling labour shortages at the bottom end of the labour market. Since then, many of these unskilled immigrants have settled for good, while at the same time much of the unskilled work has disappeared.

By no means should the lack of integration be explained only by pointing at certain characteristics of the immigrant population. Most societies show just as much of an inability in accommodating immigrants on equal footing, even if sufficient rights have been granted to them. Important reasons for this are insufficient opportunities for work at an adequate skill level, as just mentioned, and for decent housing. In cases where resources are already scarce, the outcome of the distribution process is of particular importance. There is strong evidence, based on a variety of research, that such distribution processes tend to favour the local population at the expense of immigrants, even in cases where their rights may be equal on paper.

### **Structural discrimination**

This may be an effect of deliberate discrimination of the type already discussed, directed against individual immigrants on the basis of race or ethnic origin. In recent years, however, there has been a growing awareness of another type of discrimination, which is sometimes referred to as "structural discrimination" or "institutional racism". This form of discrimination is neither deliberate nor directed against individual people, but in its effects it may be just as harmful to successful integration.

Structural discrimination refers to the idea that all major institutions in a society are governed, either formally or informally, by certain habits, rules and regulations that are derived from the dominant culture in that particular society. The more one is familiar with these rules and regulations, the easier it will be to gain access to those institutions. One may think here of the labour market in particular: interviews and entrance tests for jobs may seem "neutral" at first glance, but in reality they are not. The same is the case for school examinations. It is often impossible, and perhaps sometimes undesirable, to avoid any form of cultural "bias" in such tests. However, an increased awareness among people in charge of these forms of selection of the extra difficulties that immigrants with a different cultural background have to overcome, will improve their chances considerably.

Another example of the structurally weaker position of immigrants is offered by the well known "last in, first out" principle, often used in hiring and firing procedures. Almost by definition, immigrants are relative newcomers in the labour market either because they have only recently arrived or because they are over-represented among the younger generations. This implies that the immigrant's position within individual companies is structurally weaker and more insecure, without any direct discrimination whatsoever.

A similar phenomenon may be observed in the housing market: as latecomers, immigrants are often given the least attractive dwellings in the least attractive areas. As such, this need not always be seen as discriminatory, since newcomers are supposed to join the queue at the end anyway. The result, however, may be a tendency towards ethnic segregation in more delapidated urban areas. This phenomenon is more



acute in the United States than in most of Europe, where public authorities have a greater say in distribution procedures. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of coinciding ethnic, geographical and socio-economic cleavages has become very pronounced in Europe as well, even in cities with a strong public commitment against discrimination.

The recognition of structural discrimination as a barrier to integration has been slow to come. Various arguments and excuses for keeping necessary adaptations to a minimum have been put forward. As seen in the United Kingdom, it was long considered discriminatory by the authorities to distinguish between white (indigenous) and black (immigrant) Britons. The idea was that government policy would apply equally to all Britons, irrespective of race or ethnic origin. Only when it had become clear that equal treatment did not always lead to equal positions, did the authorities feel the need to promote racial equality by gradually introducing various pieces of legislation and other measures specifically directed at the immigrant communities.

In France, it was thought for a long time that existing social institutions would be sufficiently flexible to accommodate immigrants. This had been the case with earlier immigrants, such as those who had come from Poland or Italy during the first half of the century. In using this argument, however, it was overlooked too easily not only that the cultural difference between the French and the recent immigrants was greater than before, but also that the impact of public policy on life had grown considerably in the meantime. The social consequences of immigration simply cannot be neglected any longer by public authorities in Western welfare states, as the countries in southern Europe are about to discover.

Another argument for not developing an integration policy may be inspired by the wish to keep immigrants in a marginal position. Of course, public authorities in Western Europe would never express such a policy aim in explicit terms, but it has been observed that the attitude of a good number of governments vis à vis certain categories of immigrants cannot be explained otherwise. This is obviously the case for the growing numbers of illegal immigrants in Europe. Other examples may be found in the treatment of seasonal workers by various countries, including Switzerland, and of seekers of asylum practically all over Europe. In such cases it is usually assumed that the immigrants concerned will stay only temporarily, so that there is no need for integration. Reality, however, is sometimes different as the immigrants concerned often assume the buffer role in the labour market that in earlier days used to be reserved for the "guest workers" from Mediterranean countries (who were also expected to stay temporarily). The main difference between the "guest workers" of earlier decades and the present-day "temporary" migrant workers is that the former held a much stronger legal position than the latter.

As the nations of Western Europe come to be familiar with large-scale immigration, they have also acknowledged that the legal approach, which includes the extension of regular policy instruments to immigrants, does not always lead to their successful

integration. Sooner or later these countries have opted for some form of a specific immigrant policy in addition to "regular" policy measures. The instruments and the scope of such specific policies differ considerably from one country to another. Some countries, for instance Sweden and the Netherlands, emphasise the right of immigrant communities to retain and develop their cultural identity. Others, like France and Switzerland, are much more assimilationist in their approach.

### **Roads to integration**

In essence two major aspects may be distinguished in any specific immigrant policy. One aspect is that such a policy aims at providing the immigrants with the "tools" that will enable them to integrate more successfully than by making use of "ordinary" policy instruments. The other aspect is to open up those major institutions in society that are insufficiently accessible to immigrants.

The first aspect tends to be recognised more readily than the latter. In most cases, a specific immigrant policy has started with fairly obvious measures like the organisation of language classes, of special "welcoming classes" and other forms of special monitoring for immigrant pupils in schools. As the second immigrant generation was growing up and as its limited chances were being recognised, special vocational training courses were organised for them.

The opting for such instruments implies that the immigrants' lingering integration is first of all defined as a problem of lacking qualifications *at their side*. Quite often, this is indeed the case. The average level of schooling among the major immigrant communities in Europe is low, whereas labour market demands mainly tend to be at higher skill levels. Much research indicates, however, that immigrants with better qualifications also have difficulty in finding jobs. Unemployment levels usually go down as qualifications rise, also among immigrants, but a difference with non-immigrant levels persists.

Institutional discrimination has been identified as a major cause of this discrepancy. As the awareness of this phenomenon has been growing, immigrant policies in some countries have begun to incorporate instruments that aim at improving institutional accessibility for immigrants. In education, school curricula have been adapted to allow for different forms of multi-cultural education. By doing so, schools hope to be able to deal with an increasingly multi-ethnic public in a better way. The extent to which this has actually occurred depends not only on the number of immigrant pupils but also on ideologies regarding the role of education as well as the degree of pluralism that the educational system in a particular country will tolerate.

Other measures that come under this second aspect of specific integration policies have been taken in housing. Distribution systems, for instance, have been screened for

their discriminatory effects and in some cases quotas have been defined and allotted to immigrants, especially in the case of political refugees. Quota systems have also been used in order to prevent ethnic segregation in cities and to promote the immigrants' dispersion. This can be seen as a way of deliberately redressing the "natural" outcome of institutionally discriminatory distribution processes in housing. The aim here is to promote integration through dispersed housing. Policies of forced dispersal, however, are by no means undisputed, since they clash with the principle of freedom of settlement and may prevent the formation, or break up, of local immigrant communities.

### **Equal opportunities**

There is little doubt that the most prominent measures of this type are to be found in the field of labour. In market economies this field has been dominated traditionally by the interplay of supply and demand, of workers and employers and their organisations. Any public intervention on behalf of "weaker" categories in the labour market, whether women, disabled or immigrants, is looked upon with suspicion. In spite of this, attempts have been made in various European countries—mainly at the local level—to overcome the detrimental effects that institutional discrimination in the labour market may have on immigrants.

Britain was the first to copy certain elements of American "affirmative action" policies by introducing the idea of "equal opportunity" in employment. In other countries, including Germany, special efforts have been made to attract more second generation immigrants as apprentices. In the Netherlands, efforts are being made to employ more immigrants in the public service, and there are also plans to copy the Canadian "Employment Equity Act," which forces employers to report publicly about their efforts on behalf of "weaker" categories in the labour market. In Canada, this act is linked to the idea of "contract compliance," which means that public authorities commission specific tasks only to employers with a good record for hiring employees from among specific minority groups.

These instruments are among the most far-reaching in integration policies, even though their effectiveness may still be limited, particularly in the short or medium run. One should bear in mind that the influence of public authorities on integration processes is limited—many other factors also play a role—plus the fact that such process usually take time, and public authorities prefer taking measures that produce quick results. Nevertheless, that all immigrant countries have opted for specific measures indicates how persistent marginalisation processes among immigrants can be, and how difficult these are to adjust.

Developing an integration policy implies taking risks, not only in the sense that short-term successes cannot be guaranteed, but also because of a possible backlash effect among the native population. There is the temptation among some people to think that



immigrants are favoured at the expense of locals, particularly of those members of the local population who are in a deprived position themselves. Such impressions, whether right or wrong (and usually they are wrong) may serve as a substantial breeding ground for right-wing political parties. All over Europe—in particular in France, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark and Flanders—such parties have been gaining support lately by playing the anti-immigrant card.

Here, public authorities are clearly caught in a crossfire: if they give in to such backlash effects, marginalisation among immigrants may persist or even worsen, and inter-ethnic tensions will mount. If they resist and decide for an immigrant policy, they may expect racist reactions and, perhaps, a rise of right-wing political movements. Needless to say, extremely careful manoeuvring is required.

What is sometimes considered to be a way out of this painful dilemma is the development of an overall policy to overcome social deprivation for both immigrants



*Bird seller*

*and* non-immigrants. The British Inner City Policy, launched in the late 1960's, was clearly meant as such. Other countries have also embarked on programmes of urban renewal, assuming that all inhabitants, the immigrants as well as the native population, would take advantage of it. However, as research findings show, the risk here is that the effects of such overall policies tend to be more positive for local people than for immigrants. Immigrants tend to under-utilise the instruments deployed in the context of such a policy. The reason for this will not come as a surprise: such policies, based as they are on concepts and habits stemming from the dominant society, tend to be structurally discriminatory towards immigrants with a different cultural background. Here again, tension becomes manifest between promoting integration and recognising cultural differences.

Until now the role of public authorities in promoting integration has been addressed, but briefly the attitudes in the various European countries regarding the cultural aspects of immigration should be discussed. How has the growing cultural diversity



A. G.

*Match seller*

that stems from immigration been perceived in Europe and how has it been handled by the authorities? Here again, different reactions may be observed.

### **The cultural dimension**

Some consider immigration, in particular from outside Europe, as a threat to Europe's cultural heritage. Non-Europeans—a term often used as a synonym for Moslems—supposedly have very different views on such vital issues as the relationship between state and religion, man and woman, parents and children, democracy and repression, good and evil. Being tolerant towards the immigrants' views might be seen as a first step towards surrendering Europe's cultural and political heritage. Supporters of the notion of incompatible cultures point to the Rushdie affair, which in early 1989 provoked fierce reactions not only in the United Kingdom but all over Western Europe. Later the same year, another such "affair" broke out in France over the wearing at school of the so-called Islamic veil. Large-scale immigration, according to this view, has brought together the incompatible.

One may come across such perceptions in every European country. In fact, in most countries immigrant policies started out on the basis of assumptions that are highly generalising, if not overtly prejudiced, about immigrant cultures, and that may be qualified as strongly nationalist. Supporters of such views usually recommend two "solutions". One is to stop further immigration and to promote repatriation. As already seen, this is very difficult to achieve in a world that is becoming smaller and more open all the time. Most European countries now try to keep their borders as impermeable as they can, but immigration still continues. Promoting repatriation has hardly ever produced the expected results.

The second "solution" is assimilation, which would imply the complete disappearance of immigrant cultures. This might occur in specific cases and only after several generations. As a general rule, however, unequivocal policies of assimilation do not work, for they do not comply with the concept of democracy as it is currently interpreted in Europe, now including Central Europe. Most immigration countries in Western Europe have gradually discovered this, and have been introducing certain pluralist elements in their policies. The recognition of religious practices and teaching in the immigrant's native language at schools or facilities for immigrant organisations may serve as examples of this pluralist trend. Generally, nationalist policies of either type give way to great insecurity among immigrant communities, and by impeding the integration process, may lead to the immigrants' isolation.

An alternative approach is not based on the idea of incompatibility of cultures but rather on their equality. Immigration has led to the development of multi-cultural societies and these societies should offer possibilities for peaceful co-existence to all communities, thus enabling everyone to arrange their own lives in line with their own traditions. In some people's view this would require the creation of a number of



separate provisions and institutions that cater exclusively to different immigrant groups. Certain traces of such ideas of cultural pluralism may be found in all European countries, but in the Netherlands and Sweden in particular they have long played a more prominent role in public policy than elsewhere.

A disadvantage of this approach is that immigrant communities are often unable to support such an infrastructure on their own and have to turn to the state or to other powerful financial supporters, including the respective countries of origin. This may open the door to undesired forms of political influence from other states, and it may also keep immigrants too dependent on the benevolence of the subsidizing authorities in the host country. Finally, the existence of specific institutions and provisions for immigrant communities may serve as a ready excuse for existing institutions not to open themselves up to members of those communities and their specific needs. Thus, too much pluralism may also lead to immigrants' isolation and hamper the integration process.

The problem with the nationalist as well as the pluralist view is that both do not take sufficient account of the dynamic character of culture. Cultures always tend to adjust to changing circumstances; adjustment, however, is not the same as assimilation. International immigration has traditionally been a very important incentive to cultural change, comparable to other incentives like great discoveries, technological innovation, increasing prosperity, revolution and even war.

Immigration brings together bearers of different cultures and the subsequent contacts generate new impulses in all directions. This can only happen if different groups involved actually do have sufficient opportunities to get in touch with each other. If such opportunities fail because immigrants remain in the ghettos or, sociologically speaking, on the margins of society—either as a result of an inadequate integration policy or out of their own will—the dynamics of culture will stagnate. Immigrant cultures then might not get sufficient new impulses, and immigrants would be thrown into each other's company and fall back on old certainties. This might result in cultural "fossilisation" and also have a radicalising effect.

### **An ideal multi-cultural society**

If immigrants do have sufficient chances to participate in their new society, spontaneous contacts between members of different groups may develop as they meet as fellow workers, classmates or neighbours. There is evidence, however, that this does not necessarily lead to more mutual understanding. Under certain circumstances, inter-ethnic contact may generate competition and therefore act as a source for greater tension. If fear of such tension serves as an argument for depriving immigrants of opportunities for integration, the alternative of a marginalised ethnic underclass may emerge, which eventually will lead to even more problems.

In an ideal, theoretical multi-cultural society, creating better opportunities for immigrants requires them to *adjust* to some extent, but not to *assimilate*. On these matters,<sup>3</sup> one can distinguish between public and private spheres in society, and also in multi-cultural society. Functioning in the public sphere requires certain standard skills and abilities, from immigrants as well as non-immigrants. Immigrants are usually most willing to obtain these skills, provided they are given a chance to do so. Operating successfully in the public sphere is a condition rather than a constraint to the further development of immigrant cultures in the private sphere. One should not underestimate the average immigrant's ability to function in two cultural systems at the same time, one public and one private. For the native population, considerable differences may exist and persist just as well between what are often called the outside and the inside world. So why should immigrants be asked to behave differently from non-immigrants?

This approach may serve as a sound basis for public policy. It is pragmatic, but it is not really visionary. It would require one step further, based on the prospect of a rapidly internationalising world: a world in which inter-cultural contacts are the rule rather than the exception, at the group level as well as at the individual level. Such a world can only function if differences in opportunity between countries and, within countries, between groups of people and between individuals, become smaller rather than larger. It may seem idealistic, but if it does not head in this direction, Europe in the next century might be in for some serious trouble.

## References

<sup>1</sup> - The number of comparative studies on European policies for immigrants is fairly limited. There are several studies that compare the policies of only two countries (see for instance: Gary P. Freeman, *Immigrant Labor and Racial Conflict in Industrial Societies; The French and British Experience 1945-1975*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979; Hans-Joachim Hoofmann-Nowotny and Karl-Otto Hondrich (eds), *Ausländer in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in der Schweiz; Segregation and Integration: Eine vergleichende Untersuchung*, Frankfurt: Campus, 1982; Carl-Ulrik Schierup, "Immigrants and the Nordic Welfare States," in Han Entzinger and Jack Carter (eds), *New Immigration in Western Democracies*, Greenwich CT: JAI, 1989). Others may include more countries, but should be characterised as rather loose collections of conference papers (Ronald E. Krane, *International Labor Migration in Europe*, New York: Praeger, 1979; also Daniel Kubat, *The Politics of Immigration Policies*, New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1979).

While such studies may be of interest for documentation purposes, their comparative value is limited. More recent studies tend to focus on one single aspect of the immigrant situation at a European level, e. g. studies on education, labour, repatriation, immigrant associations, legal aspects or political participation. On education, see the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, *Immigrants' Children at School*; Paris: OECD, 1987; Lotty Eldering and Jo Kloprogge, *Different Cultures Same School; Ethnic Minority Children in Europe*, Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger, 1989. On labour: René Kahn, *Migrants et travail en Europe*, Maastricht: Presses Interuniversitaires Européennes, 1989. On repatriation: Helko Körner and Ursula Mehrländer (eds), *Die 'neue' Ausländerpolitik in Europa; Erfahrungen in den Aufnahme- und Entsendeländern*, Bonn: Neue Gesellschaft, 1986. On immigrant associations: John Rex, Danièle Joly and Czarina Wilpert (eds), *Immigrant Associations in Europe*, Aldershot: Gower, 1987. On legal aspects: Eric-Jean Thomas, *Immigrant Workers in Europe: Their Legal Status*, Paris: Unesco, 1982. On political participation: Zig Layton-Henry (ed.), *The Political Challenge of Migration for West European States*, London: Sage, 1989. There are also some useful works that mainly provide statistical data, such as OECD, *Continuous Reporting System on Migration (SOPEMI)*, Paris, (annual reports from 1974 onwards).

The most interesting comparative studies are those that focus on government policy, and that base their assessment of the situation in different European countries on one and the same analytical framework. Rather much has been written, for instance, on "guest worker" policies in a comparative perspective. The "classic" study on this subject is: Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, *Immigrant Workers*

## Han Entzinger

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and *Class Structure in Western Europe*, London: Oxford University Press, 1973. Also important are W.R. Böhning, *The Migration of Workers in the United Kingdom and the European Community*, London: Oxford University Press, 1972; Charles P. Kindleberger, *Migration, Growth and Development*, Paris: OECD, 1979; and Wolf-Dieter Just and Annette Groth, *Wanderarbeiter in der EG; ein Vergleich ihrer rechtlichen und sozialen Situation in den wichtigsten Aufnahmeländern*, Mainz/München: Grünewald/Kaiser, 1985.

During the past decade, given the change in the nature of immigration, the emphasis on research and analysis has shifted somewhat towards more general forms of analysis of public policy concerning immigration and the the situation of immigrants in Europe. See Stephen Castles, *Here for Good; Western Europe's New Ethnic Minorities*, London: Pluto, 1984; H. B. Entzinger, *Het minderhedenbeleid: Dilemmas's voor de overheid in Nederland en zes andere immigratielelanden in Europa*, Meppel: Boom, 1984; Rosemarie Rogers (ed.), *Guests Come to Stay; The Effects of European Labor Migration on Sending and Receiving Countries*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1985; Robin Cohen, *The New Helots; Migrants in the International Division of Labor*, Aldershot: Gower, 1987; Hans-Joachim Hoffman-Nowotny, "Social Integration and Cultural Pluralism; Structural and Cultural Problems of Immigration in European Industrial Countries," in William Alonso (ed.), *Population in an Interacting World*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987; William Rogers Brubaker (ed.), *Immigration and the Politics of Citizenship in Europe and North America*, Lanham MD: University Press of America, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> - Tomas Hammar (ed.), *European Immigration Policy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

<sup>3</sup> - John Rex, *The Concept of a Multi-cultural Society*, Coventry: University of Warwick, 1985.