



Education for Migrant Education - Integration into Migration: European and North American Comparisons. Toronto, Canada: Institute of European Studies at the University of Toronto, the Georg Eckert Institute (Braunschweig) as well as the Network Migration in Europe, 22.09.2006-23.09.2006.

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Published on H-Soz-u-Kult (November, 2006)

Education for Migrant Education - Integration into Migration: European and North American Comparisons

The conference "Education for Migrant Education - Integration into Migration: European and North American Comparisons" organised by the Institute of European Studies at the University of Toronto, the Georg Eckert Institute (Braunschweig) as well as the Network Migration in Europe brought together a variety of experts in the field of migration research. A broad concept of "education" attracted researchers focusing on fields as diverse as discursive and textual analysis, adult education, educational achievement, refugee children as well as "transnational students". The contributions can be grouped according to three main foci: 1. discursive and textual analysis; 2. inclusion and achievement; 3. neglected groups.

Discursive and textual analysis

A series of papers examined the discursive and textual structure of educational discourses. Rainer Ohliger (Network Migration in Europe) and Richard Traummüller (Humboldt University Berlin) presented their research on history teaching in Germany. They have studied how much migration history is taught in German schools and have surveyed what the pupils and teachers knew about this topic as well as what their views on further inclusion of such a topic were. One of the main angles of the presentation was that migration history could be used as an important building block in a new narrative of German history which is more inclusive than today's narrative.

How today's German narrative is structured was illustrated by Hanna Schissler's (Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research) presentation. She stressed the role of textbooks as "normalisers of knowledge". Since school textbooks by definition convey canonical knowledge and cannot be up to date as far as research is concerned, they have an inherent conservative tendency. She showed in her analysis how there are mainly two themes in German textbooks in relation to immigration. One is the discourse about "our foreign co-citizens" ("unsere ausländischen Mitbürger"), the other is about tolerance as a social skill. A symbolic representation of one of the main tenets of her paper was an image showing a migrant pupil sitting between two chairs. Her paper was a strong plea to make use of textbooks in order to examine a given society's approaches to social issues.

Cristina Allemand-Ghionda (University of Cologne) spoke about how migration and diversity were discussed in policy documents. She stressed that while the educational policy of some states (such as Italy's for example) resembled the philosophy of European institutions on cultural and language diversity, here as well as in other countries with different policy traditions (such as Germany) migrant children's achievement lags behind that of the ethnic German children. She poignantly asked if a positive and respectful attitude towards diversity was enough in relation to equal opportunities

and achievement. Daniel Schugurensky and Jorge Ginieniewicz (both University of Toronto) analysed citizenship education in Canada, focusing on Latin American immigrants. Their question was whether enough was being done in Canadian citizenship courses in order to foster and prepare for political participation. As it was established that the levels of political participation decreased after coming to Canada, Schugurensky and Ginieniewicz looked at whether learning about politics in Canada was structured in a way to prepare the immigrants for a successful participation in the future. Their result was rather negative, stressing that multiple choice questions in citizenship exams were not enough.

Other papers centred on aspects such as the visual representation of migration in the public sphere. Jerome Krase (City University of New York) showed how public spaces and the cityscape changed and have been appropriated by migrants as well as how this can be used in the teaching on migration and integration. Maryan Koehler (University of Durham) presented an analysis of the Dutch discourse on integration. Koehler was of the opinion that values and morals in the general and educational discourses were largely defined in opposition to Islam and did not stand on their own firm ground. She also examined a DVD-set, called 'A look at the Netherlands', which is distributed to potential newcomers. Here certain aspects of Dutch democratic culture and tolerance are depicted in a very graphic way. Koehler asked, if this does not actually scare rather than prepare.

Inclusion and Achievement

A second focal point of the presentations at this conference was the relationship between education, inclusion and achievement. Sabine Mannitz (Peace Research Institute Frankfurt) reported how immigrant pupils in Germany suffer from stigmatisation as a group by society as well as from fatalism and pessimism regarding their own prospects. Carola Burkert (Federal Institute of Labor, Berlin) examined the success of the German in-firm vocational training and Janina Schön (Social Science Research Centre Berlin) analysed how ethnic German resettlers (Aussiedler) were integrated into the educational system. Schön's conclusion was that those immigrants did quite well, not only because they identified with Germany and were largely viewed by German society as 'Germans', but also because of a series of inclusionary measures which were applied to them. Schön advised to extend those successful measures to other migrant groups as well.

Merve Gijsberts (Social and Cultural Planning Of-

fice of the Netherlands, The Hague) examined the success of the Dutch school system and in particular the system of special financing in regard to migrant pupils. Here, a system is in place which awards schools more funding for pupils with immigrant background as well as for those with less educated parents. According to Gijsberts's analysis, this system has been successful so far, especially regarding schools with very high migrant percentages. She was of the opinion that here special competences were developed to teach such a student population.

Shamit Saggar (University of Sussex) discussed the British context and came to the conclusion that there were three kinds of 'ethnic penalties' from which migrants suffered in relation to education and success on the job market: 1. discrimination; 2. schooling; 3. circumstantial factors. The latter included such factors as access to all-day Kindergarten and schooling facilities. Almuth Wietholz (University of Oxford) focussed on aspects of educational systems that compared pre-school facilities in the UK and Germany. The presentation ended in the strong plea for the implementation of outreach programmes and all-day care facilities in Germany as well.

Neglected Groups

Other analyses focused on groups which had been neglected so far in research on migration and education. The paper by Edmund Hamann (University of Nebraska) and Juan Sanchez (Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León) presented the case of Mexican-American 'transnational students', who started their schooling in the USA and continued in the Mexican system. There, the approximately 400.000 students are not recognised as a special group with different needs and abilities. Other neglected groups were refugee children as focused upon by Elizabeth Quintero (New York University) and J. Lynn McBrien (University of South Florida). McBrien stressed that refugees are not recognised as a separate group in the education system of the USA. Most of the teachers she interviewed were not even able to define what a refugee was. Another paper, by Anu Hirsiaho (University of Jyväskylä) stressed the importance of adult literacy education, which for example in Finland is neglected.

In general, the question on integration was overshadowed by global security concerns. In this respect Canada was a fitting setting for this conference. As Phil Triadaphilopoulos (University of Toronto) stated in his opening remarks, earlier Canada defined itself in opposition to Europe concerning its immigration experience: Whereas integration was haphazard in Western

Europe, Canada could be proud of an exceptionally successful record of integration. However, with plans for terrorist attacks uncovered in the Greater Toronto Area, this oppositional view started to be questioned. Dorothy Elaine Pressman (Clingendael Centre for Strategic Studies) looked at the relationship between integration and security. The question that remained unanswered was what the relationship between integration and radicalisation really is.

Through the diversity of the participants' research designs and foci, one was able to get a good impression of the broader field. While there was at times not much of a common thread between the different papers, the conference succeeded in creating an awareness of an array of questions that need to be asked in future research. Social scientists researching on Germany complained that because of the lack of detailed census data, many problems are left unaccounted for and unexplained. The automatic relation between the level of integration of migrant groups and their radicalisation was seriously questioned as was the overall success of educational and integra-

tional policies in relation to the achievement of migrants in the educational systems as well as in the job market. While the curricula, the textbooks and in a broader sense the narrative of the Self were not included in most research designs, there was also a call for intensive curriculum work and a re-negotiation of society which accounts for the changed composition of society and of its classrooms. When identity and migration experience were stressed as important factors by some researchers, others as well as some teachers claimed that class was more important than race or migration experience.

Issues such as achievement and security clearly dominated the research designs represented here. Inclusion was mainly seen from the paradigm of equal opportunities not from the imagined communal perspective. Does such a focus suggest a shift of paradigms? One participant (Phil Triadaphilopoulos) stressed indeed that by having focused too much on loyalty-related issues, the skills needed for a functioning plural, liberal democratic society have been neglected.

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Citation: Verena Radkau Garcia. Review of , *Education for Migrant Education - Integration into Migration: European and North American Comparisons*. H-Soz-u-Kult, H-Net Reviews. November, 2006.

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