

Conservative Migration-Integration Approaches. The Case of Germany

Submission for ESPAnet 2010, Stream 1
'Migrants, Ethnic Minorities and Social Policy'

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Abstract

Germany was traditionally and still is a conservative corporatist welfare regime (see Esping-Andersen 1990) with collective insider interest groups playing a major role in the outcomes of (social) policy decision making. This shape of the German welfare system is also important when it comes to evaluate the position of migrants in the economy and in the society. In what follows different historical phases of migration are investigated, including the main control measures as well as the legal, social, and economic integration of migrants. The analysis conducted in this paper highlights the importance of historical legacies and path-dependencies (see Hall and Taylor 1996; Pierson 1996) in the making of current migration policies, as the German system of social protection remains characterized by a conservative shape in migration policies which has in the idea of a 'managed migration' the main policy instrument.

One device for a thoroughly societal integration of individuals is the attainment of sufficient education and training. Compared to many other OECD-countries, the German education system can be described as socially rigid (Breen 2004). Among other disadvantaged groups, migrants have few chances to achieve a level of education that guarantees a decent overall societal integration. The main outcome of these limited educational chances is a poor labour market performance and a high poverty risk. The review of the German conservative migration-integration approach is conducted in this paper with a discussion about the limited suffrage available to migrants, as Germany is one of the few remaining European countries that still exclude non-European migrants from voting in elections. This results in the very limited political and civic participation of

migrants and, as a result, in social integration of migrants. The paper hereby provides some useful discussion in order to improve the social inclusion and integration strategies for future migration policies.