Chapter 3
Education of Ethnic Minorities and Migrants in Austria

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Introduction

In the 19th century, the multiethnic state of the Austrian Empire and its successor, the Austrian-Hungarian dual monarchy, led to interrelations between different national and cultural groups. For centuries, several ethnic minority groups have lived in border regions in eastern and southern Austria, as well as in the capital city, Vienna. However, present-day Austrian society's ethnic and linguistic diversity is due mostly to immigration of foreign workers in the second half of the 20th century. From a total population of more than 8 million, 1 out of 8 people living in Austria today are foreign born (Münz et al., 2003).

In recent years, students with an immigrant background (first- and second-generation immigrants) have posed a big challenge to the Austrian school system. In this predominantly German-speaking and Roman Catholic country, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity in classrooms has become a reality in many schools, particularly in urban areas. Different educational policies, measures, and practices have been implemented to help educate the diverse student population. Still, compared to the majority population, students with an immigrant background tend to underachieve in education, a trend that also has been reflected in previous PISA study results (OECD, 2004).

This chapter will discuss current developments in the education of migrants and national ethnic minorities as well as intercultural learning in the Austrian educational system. Results will be situated within the wider context of the European Union, which Austria joined in 1995.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Austria

Austria has six officially recognized national autochthonous minorities (Volksgruppen): Slovenes, Croats, Hungarians, Roma, Czechs, and Slovaks. These minorities have lived in certain regions of the country for centuries and became

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officially recognized in Austria between the 1970s and 1990s. (Roma were the last to be recognized in 1993.) However, throughout the 20th century, politics regarding minority rights of the various groups have been rather inconsistent and controversial. Domestic and foreign politics have had a greater influence on accompanying developments than language and civil rights per se (Baumgartner, 1995).

Because official statistical data do not distinguish among groups according to ethnicity, there is no reliable data about the size of these minority groups. Self-estimates of group size by minority representatives and official data on the dispersal of minority language use vary. In spite of these variations in census data, it appears that none of these groups exceeds 50,000 people (Council of Europe, 2003; Statistics Austria, 2001), which amounts to a rather small percentage, given the total population of more than 8 million people.

Austria was a country of emigration in the postwar period. This began to change slowly in the 1960s, when labor shortages led to bilateral agreements with Spain, Turkey, and Yugoslavia encouraging immigration of foreign laborers. The assumption that the so-called "guest workers" would stay in Austria only for a short period of time and be followed by new labor migrants in a "rotation system" proved to be erroneous. Interests of both employers and migrants themselves worked against this idea (Münz et al., 2003). Instead, longer-term employment and residency has led to a gradual immigration of family members and an ongoing increase of these populations in Austria. As will be discussed, the assumed repatriation of migrants carried a different set of goals with respect to schooling than the educational strategies developed later, when it became clear that most migrants would stay in Austria permanently.

In addition to labor migration, other events in the second half of the 20th century affected the demographic situation. Austria accepted refugees from communist countries during political crises in Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland in 1981–82 (Münz et al., 2003). In the 1990s, wars in former Yugoslavia brought refugees from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo, which sharply increased the number of foreigners living in Austria. In addition, asylum-seekers and refugees from a variety of other countries (Eastern Europe, the former republics of the Soviet Union, the Middle East, and Africa) came to Austria. Thus, over time, Austria had become a country of immigrants. In the early 1990s, the government tightened its immigration policy as a response to these increases in immigration and to accompanying political pressures from right-wing parties. New laws replaced the guest worker policies with a yearly quota system for new residence permits, which in the following years reduced net immigration continuously, as shown in Fig. 3.1 (National Contact Point Austria within the European Migration Network, 2004).

The 2001 census shows that 12.5% of the Austrian population was born abroad. Among all groups that migrated to Austria, the largest are labor migrants, predominantly from countries outside of the European Union. In 2005, 9.6% of the population (788,699 persons) had foreign citizenship. Citizens from the states of former Yugoslavia (39.3%) and Turkey (14.8%) make up the largest proportions of this population. More than one-third of the population of foreign citizens lives in the capital city, Vienna. While the group of labor migrants initially consisted mainly of male adults, the number of women and children with an immigrant background has

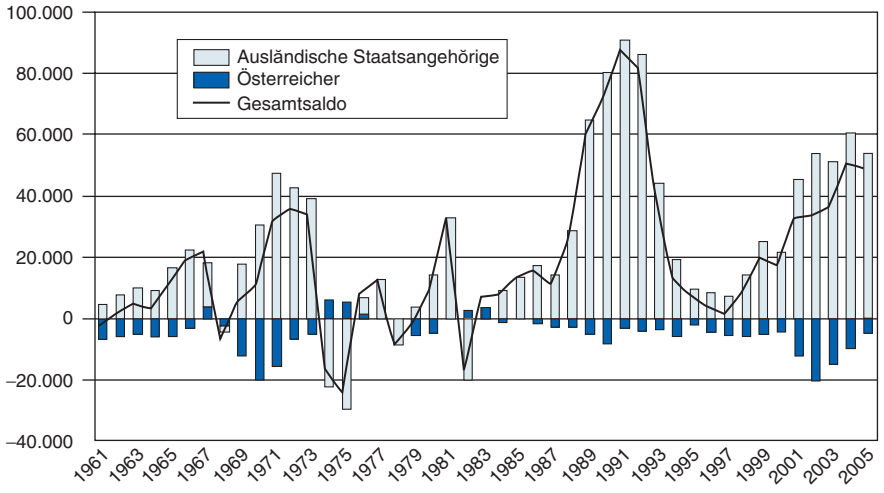

Fig. 3.1 Migration balance (credit balance after immigration and emigration), 1961–2005

increased sharply, due either to family reunification or births after immigration to Austria. Including descendants of migrants born in Austria who still hold a foreign citizenship, as well as naturalized aliens, the total population with an immigrant background now exceeds 15% (Statistics Austria, 2001, 2006b).

Most Austrians are Roman Catholics. The number of members of other religious denominations is comparatively small. However, migration from Turkey as well as from Bosnia and Herzegovina over the years led to an increase of Muslims in Austria. According to the Census 2001, 4.2% of the population or 338,998 residents were Muslim (Statistics Austria, 2001).

Until recently, the Austrian public, for the most part, has found it difficult to accept that the country has become increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse. Despite the fact that several autochthonous national minority groups have lived in the country for centuries and that immigration in the second half of the 20th century has greatly affected the country's ethnic composition, Austria is seen neither as a multicultural nation nor as a country of immigrants. Immigrants, still are largely regarded as foreigners rather than as fellow citizens, even though most members of the second and third generations are born in the country and frequently regard Austria as their homeland.

Minority Schooling and Bilingual Education: National Autochthonous Minorities

Autochthonous minorities have special rights in Austria, many of which date to Article 7 of the 1955 State Treaty of Vienna. Constitutional rights and bilateral agreements eventually led in 1976 to the Ethnic Minorities Act that promotes the

language and culture, continued existence, and protection of these minorities. Under these laws, members of the Slovene, Croat, and Hungarian minorities are entitled to instruction in their minority languages or to bilingual education in elementary schools. In some provinces they also are entitled to a certain number of secondary schools in which the minority language, as well as German, are the languages of instruction. Various activities supported by government policies for ethnic groups further promote minority languages.

The provinces of Carinthia and Burgenland adopted Minority Schools Acts (in 1959 and 1994, respectively) that grant autochthonous minorities specific language rights in regard to elementary and secondary education. In Burgenland, instruction in the Croatian language was offered in 31 public primary schools and instruction in Hungarian in 16 public primary schools in the 2002–03 school year. In Carinthia, Slovenian was taught in 83 bilingual primary schools in 1998–99. Croatian, Hungarian, and Slovenian are taught in some schools at the secondary level, including a higher bilingual academic secondary school in Burgenland with German-Croatian or German-Hungarian instruction and a higher bilingual academic secondary school in Carinthia with German-Slovenian instruction (NFP Austria, 2004). Members of the Czech and Slovak minorities have no legal entitlement to bilingual education; these languages are mainly subject to Article 68(1) of the 1919 State Treaty of St. Germain. However, some schools in Vienna offer instruction in the Czech and Slovak languages, such as the European Middle School programs (EMS).

The proportion of students who attend bilingual schools or minority language classes, particularly in Carinthia, is rising. However, according to teachers' observations, minority language proficiency of Slovenian students who enter school has declined. It is regarded as a positive development, however, that the number of Austrian German native speakers who attend bilingual schools that offer instruction in minority languages is increasing (NFP Austria, 2004).

Austria lacks studies of the educational achievement of autochthonous national minorities. A government report from 2000 states that there are no basic differences between educational levels attained by the Croatian population and the rest of the population in the province of Burgenland (Council of Europe, 2000). This report does not mention how educational success of other autochthonous groups compares with that of the general population, but it is generally assumed that all groups except for Roma achieve adequate results.

The total population of Roma in Austria ranges between 25,000 and 30,000 people. About one-third belongs to the officially recognized national minority group, consisting of Burgenland-Roma, Sinti, and Lovara. The other two-thirds belong to recent Roma migrant groups (Kalderas, Gurbet, and Arlije) from eastern and southern European countries. Until recently, members of the Roma minority benefited least in regard to minority schooling. Romani, which is still spoken by many Roma students, initially was not a literary language. Following recent attempts to codify the language and to develop teaching methods for the language varieties spoken by the Austrian Roma, one primary school in Burgenland now offers courses in Romani. Two Roma native speakers also offer first-language instruction in a few Viennese schools.

Research on the educational situation of the Austrian Roma suggests that most group members rarely continue beyond compulsory schooling. For a long time, Roma children frequently received their education in special-needs schools rather than in regular schools. The educational achievements of autochthonous Roma have somewhat improved more recently, mostly due to after-school learning projects offered by Roma associations (Samer, 2001). Little is known about the educational situation of Roma migrants, a circumstance that prompts the author of this chapter to conduct research in this area.

Migrant Minority Education

The cultural, linguistic, and religious background of Austria's school population has become increasingly diverse in recent decades. Today, students from more than 160 countries attend Austrian schools. Education statistics distinguish the student population according to citizenship and first language, but not according to ethnicity. There is data distinguishing Austrian and foreign citizens ("aliens"), EU citizens and Non-EU ("third country") citizens, and various nationality groups. Migrants or their descendants who have attained Austrian citizenship are listed as Austrians. This constitutes a problem if one wants to obtain information on school enrollment and scholastic achievement of all students with an immigrant background. Another category used in the data collection is "pupils with a first language other than German." These statistics do not account for students with an immigrant background who consider German to be their first language.

In the 2002–03 school year, almost 1.2 million students attended Austrian schools. Of those, 9.5% (113,138 students) held foreign citizenship; most were third country nationals (BMBWK, 2004b). As shown in Table 3.1, the largest proportion were from Turkey (26.4%), followed by Serbia and Montenegro (18%) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (17.7%).

In the 2004–05 school year, 157,370 students or 12.7% of the total school population spoke a first language other than German (BMBWK, 2006b; Statistics Austria, 2006a). In Vienna, 70,437 students (31.4%) spoke a first language other than German. In the first 9 years of mandatory schooling, the proportion of all

Table 3.1 Austrian students according to national citizenship, 2002–03

Origination	Number of students	Percentage of total student population
Austrian citizens	1,078,184	90.5
Foreign citizens	113,138	9.5
Citizens of selected countries		
Turkey	29,875	26.4
Serbia and Montenegro	20,849	18.0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	20,005	17.7
Total	1,191,322	100

Table 3.2 Students with a first language other than German, 2004–05

	Austria		Vienna	
Population	Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
All schools	157,370	12.7	70,437	31.4
General mandatory schooling (9 years)	111,561	16.7	47,535	45.9

Students belonging to Austria's autochthonous minorities and those who exceed 6 years of schooling in Austria are not included in these statistics.

students with a first language other than German is even higher: 16.7% of all students in Austria and 45.9% of all Viennese students do not speak German as their first language (Table 3.2).

Educational and Language Programs for Migrant Students

German is the primary language of instruction in Austrian schools. Students with a first language other than German are offered German as a second language as well as first-language instruction. Multilingualism in schools is also fostered by providing foreign language instruction. However, for the most part, foreign languages taught in schools to all children are not the languages of migrants or autochthonous minorities. English is most frequently taught as a modern foreign language, as well as French, Italian, and Spanish at different educational levels.

Students with a first language other than German attend the same classes as native-speaker students. Two main language provisions foster their schooling and integration. Since 1992–93, German as a second language (*Deutsch für Schüler mit nicht-deutscher Muttersprache*) and first-language instruction (*Muttersprachlicher Unterricht*) are offered at the level of compulsory schooling up to 9th grade. Starting in September 2006, German as a second language also could be chosen as a "nonbinding" elective course in upper secondary schools. Since the 2004–05 school year, first-language instruction has been part of the curriculum at the upper secondary level as well (BMBWK, 2006c).

Students who enter schools with little knowledge of German may be regarded as "irregular students" for the first 12 months; unlike regular students, they will not be graded during this period. This policy can be extended for an additional 12 months in exceptional cases. Subsequently, these students will be graded but may continue to take German as a second language as well as first-language classes (BMBWK, 2006c).

German as a Second Language

At the level of general compulsory schooling, German as a second language may be offered in lessons parallel to standard instruction, in integrative settings (team

teaching), or as separate additional classes in the afternoon. In general, German as a second language instruction is offered to all students with a first language other than German throughout the first 6 years of schooling. German as a second language lessons must not exceed 12 hours per week for irregular students, 5 hours for regular students at primary and special schools, and 6 hours for regular students at general secondary schools and prevocational schools. At academic secondary schools, these classes may be offered as electives (BMBWK, 2004a). Even though second language instruction is meant to foster students' language acquisition sufficiently, budget cutbacks for personnel currently allow most schools to offer no more than 2–3 hours of language instruction per week (NFP Austria, 2004).

First-Language Instruction

First languages other than German may be taught in schools as elective subjects. This instruction can take place either in separate classes, generally held in the afternoon, or integrated into the regular schedule in the form of team teaching with a native language teacher working alongside a subject teacher. While the integrated model is widely practiced in Vienna, afternoon provision generally is preferred in other provinces of the country. First-language instruction is offered in 2–6 lessons a week (Eurydice, 2006).

In the 2005–06 school year, 314 native language teachers instructed 26,019 students in 17 different languages. About half of these first-language classes for students with an immigrant background took place in Vienna. Students with Turkish as first language (45.7%) and students with Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian as first language (42.9%) constitute the largest groups among students with a first language other than German (BMBWK, 2006a). To some extent, students' first languages (primarily English) also are taught as foreign languages in secondary schools. However, since the 2000–01 school year, the two most commonly spoken languages of immigrants in Austria (such as Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and Turkish) are offered as foreign languages at some general secondary schools as well. Serbo-Croatian also has been added to the curriculum of academic secondary schools (Eurydice, 2006; BMBWK, 2004a).

If a student's first language is not German, the School Education Act also offers the option of a "language exchange" (*Sprachentausch*). This implies that German is considered to be the student's first foreign language. The student's first language is graded according to the same standards as the official language of instruction (German). However, this may apply only in cases in which the curriculum offers mandatory foreign language instruction in addition to classes in the student's native language (BMBWK, 2006c). Overall, neither the teaching of immigrants' first languages in foreign language classes nor the practice of "language exchange" is widespread in the Austrian school system.

"Intercultural Learning" as an Educational Principle

Similar to several other European countries that faced a high proportion of labor migration during the 1970s, Austria met the increase in diversity in its schools mostly with educational measures aimed at students with an immigrant background. At first, this comprised a dual approach: preserving students' original language and culture to allow repatriation at any given time while offering measures to learn the host country's language. Once it became clear that it was unlikely that many migrants would return to their home countries, compensatory measures and an assimilatory approach ("pedagogy for foreigners") took over (Portera, 2005). "It was only in the '80s that theoretical considerations and practical intervention strategies with respect to intercultural pedagogy slowly began to form" (Portera, 2005, p. 1). The most crucial aspect of this reconsideration was the fact that intercultural education was meant to target all students rather than just minority students and migrants. An intensified process of European Union integration fostered this development and heightened awareness that students must be better prepared to live in a world characterized by intercultural relations and globalization rather than to live in a homogeneous nation-state.

In the early 1990s, Austria introduced the educational principle "intercultural learning" at general compulsory schools and academic secondary schools. Rather than teaching a specific subject on intercultural issues, intercultural learning takes the form of an interdisciplinary principle applied to all subjects taught at school. Intercultural learning is meant to foster mutual understanding between students of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It not only implies learning about other cultures but also intends to provide a learning environment in which cultural values can be experienced and shaped by all students in a concerted effort. Intercultural learning should enable students to value diversity and to counter racism and ethno- and Eurocentrism.

The implementation of the goals that underlie intercultural learning, however, is lacking in many ways in daily school practice. While it is rather common for schools to develop special projects with an emphasis on intercultural learning (95 intercultural projects are currently listed in a database provided by the Ministry of Education), there is no systematic implementation of this educational approach on a broader scale. A recent research study showed that whether intercultural learning becomes an integral part of teaching depends highly on individual teachers' interests and efforts (Fillitz, 2003). Many teachers still lack knowledge of the principles and goals underlying intercultural education or do not know how to implement them in their daily teaching.

Teacher training institutions offer little or no training in intercultural education, and Austrian universities do not systematically prepare educators in this field. In order to provide better guidelines for teachers, the Ministry of Education commissioned the author and one of his colleagues to write a handbook on intercultural learning and its application. This handbook is scheduled to be published and distributed to Austrian schools in 2008. Aside from guiding teachers who want to integrate intercultural approaches in their teaching, this handbook illustrates that

curricular guidelines do address many intercultural issues, while schoolbooks, in general, do not include intercultural perspectives and fail to represent the culture and language of ethnic minorities and students with an immigrant background (Luciak & Binder, forthcoming).

Educational Success of Migrant Students

As previously stated, Austria does not collect data on the school population that distinguishes groups by ethnic background. Data on citizenship and students' first language are the main categories in data collections that allow, though imprecisely, the distinguishing between students with and without an immigrant background. An assessment of the educational success of students with an immigrant background is further hampered by the fact that only data on student enrollment – not data on student achievement – is published. Given the lack of relevant data that could more precisely clarify the educational attainment of students with an immigrant background, conclusions will be drawn in this analysis from two different sets of data: student enrollment and test results from the OECD's international assessment of student achievements (PISA, 2003, 2006).

Student Enrollment and Choice of Schools

Data on student enrollment indicates which school-types minority students attend as well as the length of their schooling. Primary school is the most common type of school for all children in the first 4 years of their education (aside from special-needs schools). After that period, most students attend either general secondary schools or academic secondary schools. Students attending general secondary schools for 4 years may finish their mandatory schooling either with a prevocational year or, provided that they have adequate grades, continue in intermediate or upper secondary schools. Intermediate secondary schools are vocationally oriented and do not qualify students for university entry. Upper secondary schools can be either academically or vocationally oriented and do qualify students for university entry (Fig. 3.2).

Thus, it can be considered a significant indicator of lower academic achievement if students attend general secondary or special-needs schools and do not go beyond the 9 years of mandatory schooling. In contrast, higher academic achievement can be assumed if students attend higher secondary schooling and finish with a university entry exam (*Matura*).

School statistics on enrollment show that students with a first language other than German made up 12.7% of the total school population in the 2004–05 school year. Table 3.3 shows that the highest proportion of these students in any school type can be found in special education (24%). Of the entire school population of all

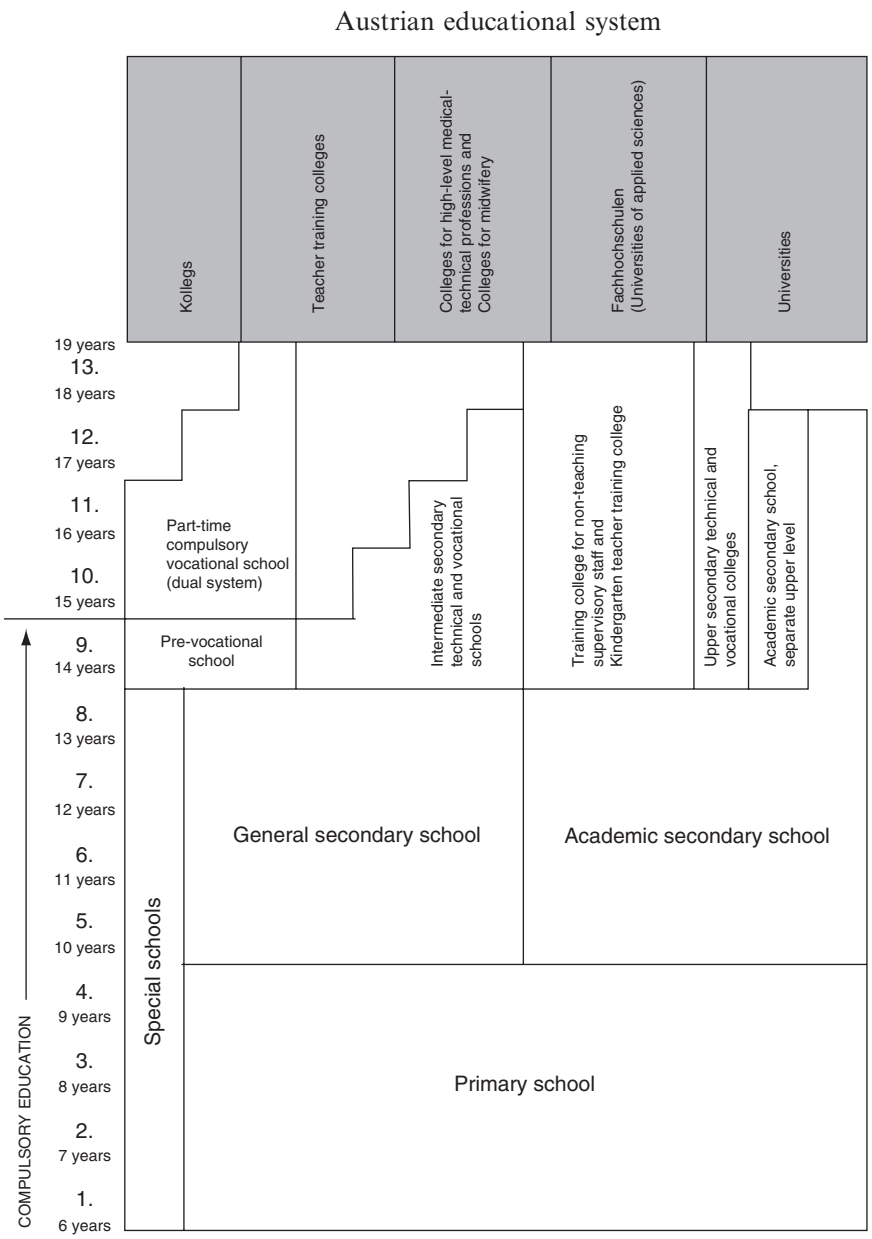

Fig. 3.2 Austrian educational system. (From Development of Education in Austria 2000–2003 by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (BMBWK, 2004a), Vienna, p. 5)

Table 3.3 Percentage of students with a first language other than German in different school types, 2004–05

Type of school	Total number of students including German first-language students	Total number of students with first language other than German	Percentage of students with first language other than German
Primary schools	364,900	63,468	17.4
General secondary schools	269,418	40,722	15.1
Prevocational school	21,769	4,176	19.2
Special needs schools	13,301	3,195	24.0
Lower academic secondary	116,283	11,978	10.3
Higher academic secondary	81,135	7,837	9.7
Higher vocational sec. schools	132,060	11,105	8.4
Other[a]	242,180	14,889	6.1
All schools	124,1046	157,370	12.7

[a]For example, intermediate secondary schools, training colleges, etc.

German native speakers, only 0.9% attended special-needs schools in 2004–05, compared to 2% of all students with a first language other than German. These figures clearly indicate that students with a first language other than German are overrepresented in special-needs schools and classes (BMBWK, 2006b; Statistics Austria, 2006a).

In schools that are less academically challenging, such as general secondary schools and prevocational schools, the proportions of students with a first language other than German also are higher compared to the proportions of these students in academically more challenging schools, such as higher academic secondary schools and higher vocational schools. In general secondary schools, 15.1% of students speak a first language other than German; in prevocational schools, the percentage is 19.2%. But the percentage of students with a first language other than German is only 9.7% in higher academic secondary schools and 8.4% in higher vocational schools (BMBWK, 2006b; Statistics Austria, 2006a).

Likewise, a comparison between German-native speakers and students with a first language other than German in grades 5–8 (Table 3.4) shows that students with a first language other than German are less likely to attend academically more challenging schools and thus have fewer opportunities to enter higher education and in the long run higher qualified jobs. While 21.1% of all German native speakers in this age group attend general secondary schools and 9.6% attend the more challenging academic secondary schools, the respective numbers of students with a first language other than German are higher in general secondary schools (25.9%) and lower in academic secondary schools (7.6%; BMBWK, 2006b; Statistics Austria, 2006a).

Students with an immigrant background face disparities and disadvantages that have not ceased over the years despite the fact that many of these students have lived in Austria all their lives. The rigid two-track system requires parents and

Table 3.4 Distribution of German native speakers and of students with a first language other than German across school types, 2004–05

Type of school	German native speakers (%)	Students with first language other than German (%)	All students (%)
Primary schools (grades 1–4)	27.8	40.3	29.4
General secondary schools (grades 5–8)	21.1	25.9	21.7
Prevocational school (grade 9)	1.6	2.6	1.7
Special-needs schools (grades 1–8)	0.9	2.0	1.1
Lower academic secondary (grades 5–8)	9.6	7.6	9.4
Higher academic secondary (grades 9–12)	6.8	5.0	6.5
Higher vocational schools (grades 9–12)	11.2	7.0	10.6
Other[a]	21.0	9.5	19.5
All schools	100	100	100

[a]For example, intermediate secondary schools, training colleges, etc.

teachers to make a crucial educational decision for students at the age of 10. This decision highly correlates with the parents' background, income, and social status, which works against migrants' educational and future vocational opportunities. The migrants' often short educational careers and, in particular, their overrepresentation in special-needs schools have been criticized repeatedly in reports to the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (Luciak, 2004a; NFP Austria, 2004) and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI, 2005).

Special-education schools target students with disabilities. For the most part, these schools offer special-needs education for students with learning disabilities. While it can be assumed that disabilities are not that much more prevalent in the immigrant than in the native population, overrepresentation of immigrants in special education indicates wrongful assignment of minorities based on the students' language and sociocultural differences, rather than on learning disabilities. This is in spite of the fact that Austrian school legislation explicitly states that lack of competence in the language of instruction does not justify a determination of special educational needs (BMBWK, 2006c). Furthermore, studies have shown that underperforming students with an immigrant background benefit more in learning progress and social integration from regular classes than special classes (Kronig et al., 2000).

Furthermore, legal regulations provide for the possibility of integrated teaching of students with special educational needs in primary schools and lower secondary schools. "The decision whether students will be educated in a special needs school or in a conventional school rests with the parents of the child or other persons vested with the right of education" (BMBWK, 2006d). This decision presupposes a certain amount of parental knowledge and understanding of the different options of schooling, which puts immigrant parents at a disadvantage.

Results of the PISA Study

Similar conclusions can be drawn from data received by the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2003, 2006). The PISA studies tested 15-year-old students in 41 countries in mathematics, reading comprehension, science, and problem-solving skills. A special analysis published in the report "Where immigrant students succeed" focused on 17 territories with large immigrant populations (OECD, 2006a). These data show that students with an immigrant background in Austria achieve much lower test results compared with their native counterparts. For example, more than a third of children with an immigrant background in Austria, "who have spent their entire schooling in the host country, perform below the baseline PISA benchmark for mathematics performance" (OECD, 2006b). Commenting on a similar situation in several OECD countries, it is pointed out that "at the same time, immigrant children express equal, if not more, motivation to learn mathematics than their native counterparts and very positive general attitudes towards school" (OECD, 2006b). In countries like Austria with a highly tracked education system, students with an immigrant background perform substantially less well compared with students in other countries that have a less differentiated school system (OECD, 2006b).

Following are some of the most important findings on the educational situation of students with an immigrant background in Austria from the OECD report:

- Comparing the native-born and foreign-born populations age 15 years and older by highest level of education attained, "immigrants show substantially lower levels of education, with much higher proportions not having attained upper secondary level education" (OECD, 2006a, p. 23).
- Austria is below the OECD average for first- and for second-generation students in performance on the mathematics and reading scales. It belongs to those countries where second-generation students "have the lowest mean performance in reading and mathematical literacy" (OECD, 2006a, pp. 37–39). There is a wide gap in performance between native students and immigrants.
- At least 10% of second-generation students in mathematics and reading are below level 1 on the respective proficiency scales. "These students are unable to answer at least 50% of questions at the lowest proficiency level and can be considered at serious risk of not having the reading and mathematics literacy skills necessary to help them tackle real-life situations, to continue learning and to enter successfully into the work force" (OECD, 2006a, p. 54)
- There are "trends in performance differences between males and females in reading, with native, second-generation and first-generation females generally outperforming corresponding males" (OECD, 2006a, p. 54). However, "the gender differences are larger for second-generation students than for native students" (OECD, 2006a, p. 54).
- Among the most common immigrant groups, students from former Yugoslavia and from Turkey show statistically significant lower scores than native students on the mathematics scale. "Both groups perform consistently below the OECD

average…. The gap in performance between Turkish students and native students is exceptionally large… (OECD, 2006a, pp. 52–53)".

By accounting for factors such as the structure of the school system, parents' level of education, socioeconomic situation, and language used at home, as well as students' instrumental motivation and self-efficacy, the study provides background information that helps to contextualize the educational attainment of students with an immigrant background. Some of the most relevant findings from the study are:

- Countries like Austria that have large disparities between immigrant and native students "tend to have greater differentiation in their school systems with 15-year-olds attending four or more school types or distinct educational programmes" (OECD, 2006a, p. 54).
- "…[T]he parents of first-generation students and of second-generation students have generally completed fewer years of formal schooling than the parents of native students. … Interestingly, the gap tends to be smaller for [parents of] first-generation students than for [parents of] second-generation students. This could reflect interruptions in school careers as a result of immigration" as well as "changes in the composition of the immigrant groups" (OECD, 2006a, pp. 60–62).
- In general, "immigrant students have lower levels of economic, social and cultural status than native students…" (OECD, 2006a, p. 63). Still, after accounting for parental education (in years of schooling) and parents' occupational status, there are statistically significant differences in mathematics performance between native students and both first-generation and second-generation students (OECD, 2006a).
- The performance disadvantage is larger for both second-generation and first-generation students who do not speak the language of instruction at home than for immigrant students who do speak the language of instruction at home. This "pattern does not necessarily imply that immigrant families should be encouraged to abandon their native languages" (OECD, 2006a, p. 48). In fact, "immigrant students in some countries perform at similar levels as native students when they do not speak the language of instruction at home. Large disadvantages associated with the language spoken at home may suggest that students do not have sufficient opportunities to learn the language of instruction… [S]trengthening the language support measures available within the school systems" needs to be considered (OECD, 2006a, pp. 69–70).
- "[T]he school environment for immigrant students compared to native students is less favorable in terms of school or disciplinary climate" (OECD, 2006a, p. 78). In other words, immigrant students more frequently atttend schools with disadvantaged school populations.
- In general, "individuals with higher levels of instrumental motivation (motivation related to external factors) tend to show higher levels of performance. … Although first-generation and second-generation students show equivalent or higher instrumental motivation in each country," in Austria (and Luxembourg) they "demonstrate the lowest levels of instrumental motivation among the countries in this report" (OECD, 2006a, pp. 91–92).

- "Second-generation students report lower levels of self-efficacy than their native peers in Austria, …" (OECD, 2006a, p. 101).

It is well known that parents or private tutors quite frequently help Austrian school children accomplish their homework assignments and study for tests. Taking private lessons with tutors is particularly widespread at the secondary level. Austrian parents spend about 140 million euros a year for these private lessons (Arbeiterkammer, 2006). These factors have to be considered to better understand the educational opportunities of students with an immigrant background. Immigrant students whose parents have reached only lower educational levels and who might not be fully competent in the language of instruction – and, as a consequence of their socioeconomic situation, do not have spare money to pay for private tutoring – are at a great disadvantage in a school system that heavily relies on educational support from outside sources.

Upward Mobility of Migrants: The Social and Economic Context

A recent study of educational and occupational careers of second-generation migrants in Austria targeted 16- to 26-year-olds who were either born in Austria or came to the country before age 4, but whose parents were born abroad. All had spent their entire educational careers in Austria. The study was based on 1,000 interviews and included a control group of 400 individuals without an immigrant background (Weiss, 2006).

The parents of 46% of second-generation youths had a Turkish background; 36% came from the former Yugoslavia (Weiss, 2006). The study showed that, compared to Austrian natives without an immigrant background, youth with an immigrant background are highly underrepresented in higher education. Social background – the parents of most youth of the second generation belong to the working class – rather than cultural background or language used at home was shown to be the most relevant factor influencing their educational attainment (Weiss, 2006). Their parents' social mobility is often hampered by their low vocational mobility due to legal restrictions, by a long-enduring "foreigner" status, and by ethnic segregation in residential housing (Weiss, 2006).

According to labor market statistics from September 2006, 72% of migrants with a foreign citizenship were blue-collar workers; only 36% of Austrian nationals were blue-collar workers. Yet only 12% of a total of 3.3 million employees held foreign citizenship (*Der Standard Online*, 2006, August 12). Of the fathers of the second-generation youth in the Weiss study, 60% were nonskilled workers. Only one-third of their offspring also were nonskilled workers; the remaining two thirds obtained vocational training. However, manifestations of unequal treatment in the job market – such as longer transition periods from school to work, lower participation rates in in-service trainings in companies, and higher unemployment risks – work against the upward mobility of second-generation youths. Given these

structural disadvantages, the study's author concludes that second-generation youths will only slowly be able to match their Austrian peers without an immigrant background (*Der Standard*, 2006, June 11).

Another report on the social mobility of the second-generation concludes that the majority of descendants of migrants from Turkey and the former Yugoslavia are at a great disadvantage in education and the labor market in what the author terms "ethnic segmentation" (Herzog-Punzenberger, 2003, p. 47). Upward mobility to middle-class status is more likely to occur for Eastern European immigrants who are generally better educated and do not belong to the groups considered to be guest workers. However, the majority of descendants of guest workers who came to Austria in the late 1960s and 1970s run the risk of staying in low-qualified positions in the employment sector (Herzog-Punzenberger, 2003).

Conclusions

Austria's society underwent considerable changes through immigration of foreign workers and refugees in the second half of the last century. Other central European countries, such as Germany and Switzerland, or Scandinavian countries such as Sweden and Denmark faced similar situations. This differs from immigration patterns in European countries with a colonial past, such as the United Kingdom or the Netherlands, which experienced immigration and diversity for a longer period of time, and differs also from southern European countries such as Italy, Spain, and Greece, which have been confronted with more recent immigration. The situation in Austria also differs from that in Eastern European countries where immigration plays a marginal role. The analysis of similarities and differences between minority groups in the "old" and the "new" EU Member States shows that the educational situation of ethnic minority groups depends in many ways on minority group status in the respective country, which is influenced by each groups' historical relationship with the dominant society as well as by political and demographic developments (Luciak, 2004a, b, 2006; Luciak & Binder, 2005).

In Austria, recent demographic changes have posed the biggest challenge to the school system. The necessity for adequate educational reforms becomes more and more apparent because students with an immigrant background frequently underachieve in education, although many of them have spent their entire school careers in Austria. The awareness of the need for changes in the education system also has been triggered by results of recent PISA studies. Overall, students in Austria showed only average results; compared with other countries, parents' socioeconomic background can be regarded as a much more decisive factor for school performance.

It has been pointed out above that early differentiation in school tracks with differing academic demands constitutes a drawback for students from disadvantaged social backgrounds. Therefore, plans to introduce a common school for all children for the first 8 years of schooling are well founded. Currently, the Ministry of

Education is considering implementing a common school at the lower secondary level as a continuation of the 4 years of common primary school. However, this is still a point of heated discussion within the current coalition government.

It should be taken into account, however, that students' individual socioeconomic circumstances are much less predictive of performance than the average economic, social, and cultural status of the entire student population in a given school. The overall variation in student performance between schools is much higher compared to the within-school variance (OECD, 2004). "In Austria, the effect of a school's average economic, social and cultural status on student performance is very substantial" (OECD, 2004, p. 196).

In light of residential segregation in urban areas with high socioeconomic variability between districts, it is unlikely that positive effects of supposed social heterogeneity in a common school for all children will affect education outcomes in areas highly populated by residents of low socioeconomic status. Thus, students with an immigrant background who predominantly live in those districts are less likely to benefit from common schools as long as residential segregation persists.

Another current consideration, a compulsory kindergarten year at age 5, has received high acceptance by the general public. In part it is assumed that this will benefit students with an immigrant background who lack language competency in German (BildungOnline, 2006). While a restructuring of the school system is required, other measures to foster the education of disadvantaged students have to be introduced as well.

As discussed earlier, teacher training has to be improved in regard to the instruction of culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. Also, incentives should be provided to increase the proportion of teachers with an immigration background. Furthermore, resources for language programs and for teachers of second- and first-language instruction have to be increased to improve the achievement levels of students with an immigrant background.

Overrepresentation of migrant students in special education must be counteracted. This phenomenon, which also has been described in Germany (Kornmann & Klingele, 1996; Merz-Atalik, 2001; Powell & Wagner, 2002) and Switzerland (Kronig et al., 2000; Lanfranchi & Jenny, 2005),should be regarded as an indication that schools are not yet adequately prepared to educate a diverse student body. The reasons minority students are assigned to special-needs education must be studied and policies should be enacted to prevent unjustified assignment to these schools and classes.

The implementation of intercultural learning in all schools and in all subjects could benefit all students. It is unlikely that intercultural learning will alleviate disparities in achievement between students with and without an immigrant background to a great degree. However, intercultural learning could contribute to more positive views of cultural and linguistic diversity among students and teachers and ensure that students of all backgrounds are represented in the curriculum, thus creating a more tolerant and positive learning environment for all students.

The effects of demographic changes, globalization, and European Union integration constitute a big challenge for Austrian education. Majority and minority

students alike must be prepared to live in an increasingly diverse society. It is in the hands of the forthcoming generation to create a world in which people feel more at ease with diversity and which ensures equal opportunities for all.

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