



## 2 Literature review

### 2.1 The Challenges for Migrant Origin Pupils in the German Education System

Children of immigrants have been challenged in the German education system. The data obtained during this research project revealed that children of immigrants encountered various difficulties during their school education. In addition, children of immigrants have been subject to various disadvantages and unequal treatment in their school education. For example, studies have shown that migrant children tend to be classified as having learning disabilities simply because of their sub-standard German language skills (Kornmann, 2006; Hovestadt, 2003). Some academics infer that students are not primarily disadvantaged because of their migrant origin, but rather because of their socially disadvantaged position (Kristen, 2006), which often coincides with a 'migration background'.

The 2015 PISA results revealed that equity has improved in Germany since the 2006 PISA results. Students' socioeconomic status became less of a reliable predictor of achievement in Germany. The number of resilient pupils who beat the socio-economic odds against them increased (OECD 2016). Despite the increase in the skills of young people with low socio-economic status, further efforts are still needed to reduce the linkage between social background and achievement. In addition, research in Germany does not provide sufficient answers on whether pupils of migrant origin are primarily disadvantaged because of their migration background or because of their socioeconomic situation. Regardless of these questions, pupils of migrant origin are disadvantaged in school education.

The main reason for this considerable discrimination against pupils with a migration background can be found within the multi-track school system – with its highly selective streaming after grade 4 (or 6 in Berlin). Mechanisms inherent to the school system contribute to discrimination against migrant children (Gomolla and Radtke, 2000). There are also social inequalities in the transition from primary school (Grundschule) to lower secondary school (Realschule) that children of immigrants are subject to.

Children of foreign origin have fewer chances of being recommended for the Gymnasium than German children, even when they share the same academic achievement level and social status (Bos *et al.*, 2007). The children and youth of migrant families have a high rate of repeating a class or attending a special education (Auernheimer, 2005).

## 2.2 Identity and Identity Threat

Pupils of immigrant origin are not only deprived via structural means, such as social class and limited opportunities for a good school education, but are also confronted with stereotypes, defamation, and stigmatization.

A collective group identity of ‘foreigners’ was developed on the basis of an exclusionary classification from the dominant German discourse, *Ausländer* (foreign), which clearly defines the position of immigrant origin people within German society. An understanding of what it means to be German would open up new perspectives in regard to the German society (Wilhelm, 2013, p. 26). Minority pupils are disadvantaged as they are considered an identity threat in academic settings. This so-called dual identity threat is likely to arise when the majority group denies, questions, or rejects the double membership claims of the second generation as fellow citizens (Berry *et al.*, 2006). Also, research shows that ethnic minority students with a strong sense of ethnic identity were more vulnerable to identity threat (Cole *et al.*, 2007).

An analysis of the literature in Europe on how school education shapes the identity of children and youth showed that European schools were one of the main sources of emphasizing Eurocentric cultural domination. This might marginalize the identity of ethnic minority pupils in school education and in various spheres of life. Schneider *et al.* (2012, p. 232) claim that the real problem in Europe is more likely to be the mainstream’s lack of imagination on how people can hold multiple forms of belonging. The adaptive value of a dual identity strategy thus depends crucially on the intergroup context, particularly in the acceptance of cultural diversity by the majority group (Baysu *et al.*, 2011, p.123).

Specifically, dual identity claims are at odds with an ethnic representation of national identity, which excludes ethnic minorities as outsiders who do not belong to the nation (Meeus *et al.*, 2010). Baysu *et al.*, (2011, p.128) argue that the same level of perceived identity threat may have differential consequences for a minority’s school success depending on the adaptive value of different identity strategies in specific intergroup contexts. Berry *et al.* (2006) labeled a category, which refers to those who are weakly committed to both ethnic and national cultures and identities, which may ‘marginalize’ children and youth from the immigrant origin.

According to the results of a study in Europe, religion is shown to be an important element of Turkish identity in countries where they are most stigmatized (Herzog-Punzenberger, B., & Schnell, P., 2012, p. 203). The second generation sits between forces that often pull them in different directions: their immigrant parents, their wider family and community networks, their friends, their schools, and the wider society into which they were born or moved as a child (Schneider & Crul,

2012, p. 206). Considering that the participants of this research are young, Turkish, Muslim women, it is important to highlight that being Muslim is the most important reason why public discourse defaming Muslims and devaluing their family of origin is a danger to the lives of these young people (Wilpert, 2013, p. 122).

The European debate has thus misconstrued the actual state of affairs. Its image of a large majority of Muslim youths, who are strongly religious and hold radical Islamic views, does not resemble reality. Instead, this attitude pushes them out of society (Crul & Mollenkopf, 2012, p. 253). Europe uses religion, citizenship, and ethnic origin to draw social boundaries, without creating a race, which remains a taboo term (Tran *et al.*, 2012, p. 161). Baysu *et al.* (2011, p. 128) highlighted that both social identity theory and stereotype threat research have associated a dual identity strategy with increased vulnerability to identity threat, which is relevant to the results of this research. From another angle, identity threat to marginalized identities reveals that when integration is for 'the moral good', what happens in practice is the reproduction of a hierarchical insider/outsider structure. This prescribes conformity and frequently diminishes the acculturation responsibilities of the non-Muslim mainstream (Bowskill *et al.*, 2007, p. 807).

## 2.3 Citizenship

In Germany, the idea that citizenship and ethnic belonging can legitimately exist side-by-side is not yet commonly understood in the context of the dominant political discourse (Wilpert, 2013). Germany's citizenship was based on nationality which means that it depended on the heritage or origin of the individual. According to Article 116 of the German Constitution, the category of 'Germans' does not only consist of German citizens but also of people of German ethnicity who do not live in Germany and are not citizens (Koppmans, 1999). Dual citizenship is valid until the age of 23. Also, in 2000, the law defined that people who have been residing in Germany for at least eight years, and have passed the German language examination, could obtain German citizenship.

Later in 2007, a law on the transposition of the European Union (EU) Directives and labor laws was introduced as a reform. The reform legislation of 2007 introduces a new administrative procedure for the determination of the nationality status of a person, by application or in the case of a particular public interest (Heilbronn, 2012). Süßmuth and Morehouse (2009, p. 267) interpreted the reforms as an encouraged and much needed public debate on Germany as a country of continuing immigration. They claimed it changed the climate of the discussion about integration, focusing on the positive outcomes that can be expected and the benefits that migrants can offer the society. Finally, in 2014,

the citizenship law opened a pathway for young people who were born in Germany to obtain a dual citizenship.

Multicultural policies, often combined with inclusive citizenship rights, anti-discrimination, and equal opportunity policies, did have positive effects in many fields of integration (Koopmans, 2013, p. 164). Since the concept of hybridity does not quite exist in mainstream German culture, people of immigrant origin are confronted in public as foreigners, and positioned as outsiders or citizens of their parents' country of origin with which they are not familiar. Germany's collective identity as a country of immigrants is still fledgling and fragile, despite its decades-long experience with immigration (Süssmuss & Morehouse, 2009, p. 275). The issue of citizenship is central to all other debates about membership, belonging and integration of immigrants and their children.

## **2.4 Contemporary School Education Reforms for Disadvantaged Pupils**

The public sector, including schools and the welfare system, had not previously been confronted with the changing needs of an increasingly diverse population (Abalı, 2009, p. 30). When compared to other industrialized countries, Germany scored especially poorly on the performance of children from lower social and migrant backgrounds (Hagemann, 2012, p. 292).

In recent years, one of the investments in German welfare has been the 'All Day Schooling' program. This program was financed by "Zukunft Bildung und Betreuung" (IZZB) Future of Education and Care. The traditional German education system offered early morning to afternoon teaching. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research introduced the provision of all-day schooling to address the problem observed in the PISA results.

The All Day Schools offer afternoon programs according to the conceptual framework of the All Day Schooling program, created by private providers (Hagemann, 2012, p. 293). The German school system considered schools only as places for teaching and learning. Schools have never been considered as places for extra-curricular activities or for nurturing children holistically. The number of schools providing all-day schooling expanded between 2003 and 2009. The main idea of providing all-day schooling is to narrow the achievement gap, which occurs as a result of social background influencing children's school success. In addition, parents have to pay for lunch and activities. According to the results of this research, this new type of all-day schooling has contributed a partial solution to the provision of equal opportunities in school education.