



# Educational and integration problems of immigrant Turkish youth in Germany

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## Abstract

Germany, which reorganized its industry after the second world war, met a serious workforce insufficiency in the 1960s and tried to compensate this workforce deficit from developing countries. During these years there occurred big worker immigration to Germany from Turkey, which had a serious unemployment problem and an active population. The problems that could have stemmed from such an immigration movement did not receive enough and serious attention neither from Turkey, which sent the workers nor from Germany, which invited these workers. On the contrary, these workers were considered as foreign currency income by the Turkish government, and as a cheap workforce by the German government. In addition, the German government believed that these were guest workers and when the due day came they would go back to their countries. However, Turkish workers started to call their families to Germany from the 1970s on and had the purpose of staying in this country in the long term. In this country, where the third generation has been receiving education, the education and integration problems of Turkish children have always been on the agenda. They have various educational problems from pre-school education and vocational education to higher education. Furthermore, they came across with the thread from various fundamentalist religious or political organizations. In our age, as there have occurred such approaches as multiculturalism and cross-culturalism, realistic steps have to be taken in order to avoid the dangers that might stem from the integration problems of Turkish youth in Germany. In this study, such an integration problem will be discussed and some practical solutions will be put forward.

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## 1. Introduction

As it is known, Germany is known as a country which performed immense miracles in Europe especially in the social and economic fields. It's qualified as the cement of the

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European Union by the forerunner economic authorities of the world. It's a reality that Germany has an important role in the membership process of Turkey to the European Union called the integration of international supranation in the near future. Among many factors, the most important one which increases the importance of Germany in the membership of Turkey to the European Union is of being nearly 2 million Turks living in this country. Receiving better education of Turkish youth, which forms the biggest foreign group among other foreigners in Germany, will be useful especially for themselves and for Turkey and also Germany. It should be taken into account that the effective roles of many Turks in politic, economic, and social life of this country will positively influence the membership of Turkey to the European Union in the near future. Because of this reality, from politicians to education experts, almost everyone in Turkey should know and understand that there needs to be Turkish youth not only in Germany but also in other European countries in a difficult and strenuous way like European Union.

In this study, education and integration of Turkish youth living in Germany will be presented in the form of comparison, the reasons and problems will be discussed.

## **2. The brief story of immigration of Turkish workers to Germany**

After the Second World War, Germany, which developed its industry, met its need for working power from Italy through a treaty with this country in 1955. From time to time, upon the growing need for working power, similar treaties were signed with Spain and Greece in 1960 and with Turkey in 1961. Later, Portugal, Tunisia and Morocco participated in the countries which sent workers to Germany (Meier-Braun and Kilgus 1996). Almost forty years have passed since the first worker immigration to Germany. In this passing time, advantages of worker migration and the disadvantages for Turkey and Turkish people became the subject-matter for different news and writings. Many research was made upon immigration. Also, many folk songs were sung. The term 'Almanci' which is considered to depict these people, got into literature.

For today, three generations of Turkish citizens live together in Germany. Among these; the majority of the first generation coming to Germany was formed by those who left their village and hometown due to unemployment. Nowadays, the first generation workers are retired or they try to complete the required time to retire. The group named as the second group is formed by the children of the first comers. The arrival of the second generation to Germany comes across with the final days of the 1970s and the first half of 1980s. The majority of these were brought by breaking off their primary or secondary education. Without a doubt, there are people who have a good job despite difficulties. But in the literature, those living in this group are described as an unlucky group. Third generation Turks are formed by the grandchildren of the first generation.

Almost all of the people share the same opinion upon the subject that the generation which should be given special consideration is the third one because, as it is given statistically below, the majority of the third generation is formed by those who were born in Germany, grew up in Germany, and also will continue their life in Germany.

### **3. Turkish children and youth in the German education system**

In 1960s, when workers' immigration started, both Germany and Turkey did not take into account the educational needs of workers' children as a problem in the future because in these terms the dominant thought in Germany depended upon the thesis that the comers were guest workers and when the time came they would go back to their home countries. But that did not happen because of political and economic problems in Turkey. And related to these problems, due to the increasing unemployment problem, Turkish workers brought their wife and children to Germany in the middle of the 1970s. Thus the second generation settled in Germany. They also married in Germany, had children and thus the third generation occurred. Different kinds of public opinion researches made by media revealed that the Turkish immigrants were permanent in Germany.

Germany pays more attention to terms and concepts in this time used for depicting the foreigners who live in their country. In the first times and especially until the 1980s, the reason why the term "Gastarbeiter" (Guest workers) is used is to emphasize the reason that Germany is not a country like America and Canada which are immigrant countries. They used the term "Mitarbeiter" (working together) when the comers did not go back to their home country. Finally, the term "Migranten" (immigrants) was used in almost every field and even if they were no more volunteers. They accept the reality that Germany is a migration country. Weber (1997) takes migration to Germany as a historical perspective and says, comparing with the other European countries, that even if this term has been taboo for long times, international migration activities made Germany as a migration country besides the other European countries.

In the meantime, Germany had to change its descriptions and approaches about foreign workers' children because they did not think that the educational demand of workers children would reach such an important dimension. Swiss writer Max Frisch summarizes this situation through the statement "Man hat Arbeitskräfte gerufen, und es sind Menschen gekommen" (Working power was demanded and people came (Koch 1970). Shortly after these people came to Germany, they had families and children. This reality was understood day by day. Finally, they realised that they had to use the term "Migranten" (Immigrants) instead of the term "Gastarbeiter" (guest worker).

In order to understand the analyses and researches, it is wise to examine the education system of Germany. The education system of Federal Germany is made up of seven parts;

1. Pre-school education
2. Primary education
3. Secondary education (basic school(hauptschule), Training school (realschule), High school (gymnasium) Orientation class, Collective School (gesamptschule)
4. Secondary Education (High school and Vocational Education)
5. Higher Education
6. Adult Education (in school, out of the school, distance education, finishing the school out of the school)
7. Special Education

In the field of pre-school education, there are kindergartens which support the education of a child in the family from 3 years old. The starting age of primary school is generally 6. According to the average of the marks in grundschule forth class, students go to either gymnasium or realschule or hauptschule. Apart from these, gesamptschule is a kind of school which takes part in the education system and it is very hard and classic. The existence of these schools carries traces of discussion about the education system of the 1970s and 1980s. After the secondary education II, high school and high step of collective school and the ninth and tenth subject season which follows this part in terms of curriculum, there are vocational schools and the other institutions which give vocational education (distance education and vocational schools). There are many programs about adult education in Germany. Many institutions are responsible for the management of these programs. For example, Labourer and labour unions, Citizen High school, churches and town management are the forerunners of them. Adult education programs are various. It is possible to graduate out of the school and it makes possible to receive education in order to promote a job and also it makes possible to study other subjects without a diploma.

Meanwhile, in the last years, it should be pointed out that there are many hot arguments about unqualified features of the education system of Germany in public opinion. Related to this, the results of the international student evaluation programme, which are made by OECD in 32 countries, revealed the fact that the education system of Germany became impoverished. The results of the research for Germany which are conducted with giving the same tests for 25000 students from 32 countries caused the shock effect. According to the results of the research, German students obtained 25th rank in reading and understanding of the paragraph, they obtained 22nd rank in basic math education and 23rd rank natural science among 32 countries (Terhart 2002). Shortly, the school system of Germany does not well educate the children and young people who need help in terms of social practices. Turkish children and youth are in the top part of this group. After the general summary, the situation of Turkish students in the education system of Germany is given below according to the statistical data.

### 3.1. Foreign and Turkish Students in Germany between 1991 and 2001

After you have According to data revealed by the official institutions, 1.849.986 compatriots live in this country at the beginning of 2003. 53.8% of these is male and 46.2% is female. 7.334.765 foreigners live in Germany. This rate is kept in the last ten years. Turks are in the situation that they have the biggest rate in this amount. The share of Turks is 25.6% among the whole foreigners (Deutscher Bundestag 2005).

According to 2001 numbers, the numbers of foreign students receiving education in general and vocational schools in Germany are given below in Table-1

Table-1. Students receiving education in general and vocational schools

Country	Number	Rate(%)
The countries of the EU	195.000	16,90
Greece(by itself)	43.000	(3,70)
Italy (by itself)	92.000	(7,90)
Old Yugoslavia Countries	149.000	12,90
Turkey	502.000	43,40
Poland	24.000	2,20
Other Europe	78.000	6,70
Out of the European countries	207.000	17,90
TOTAL	1.155.000	100.00

As it is understood from the Table-1, from 2000 in Germany totally 1.16 million foreign students are educated in general and vocational schools. In this number, it can be clearly seen that the number of Turkish students takes important. The student whose rate is 44% means almost half of the entire foreigner population. The passing to the gymnasium to realschule is important especially in the conditions of taking qualified and higher education in Germany because gymnasium is the basic education to pass university education. Realschule is a way of going to qualified education. From 2002-2003 education-schooling year, some selected secondary education I and II rates are given in Table 2.

Table 2. From 2002-2003 education-schooling year the rate of foreign students in secondary education I and II %

Country	Hauptschule (Basic School)	Realschule (Vocational Secondary school)	Gymnasium (High school)	Integrierte Gesamtschule (Collective school)	Other
Greece (n = 17.347)	43,7	20,9	21,1	9,4	4,9
Italy (n = 35.391)	51,5	19,8	11,9	10,7	6,1
Portugal (n = 6.950)	44,2	20,6	16,2	11,8	7,2
Spain (n = 4.188)	28,3	24,2	26,6	14,0	6,9
Turkey (n = 210.273)	45,7	18,4	10,8	16,3	8,8

As it is understood from Table 2, among the four countries, the continuation rate of gymnasium and realschule are under these countries. On the contrary, as it is said above, the higher rate of gesamtschules which are introduced by the political intervention seem to be meaningful. In the official document about foreigners prepared by Federal Assembly, even though the majority of the students were born in Germany and continued the pre-school education, the serious differences between German students and foreigners in secondary education when they are compared, are emphasized. The situation of foreign students and German students from 2002-2003 schooling year is given comparatively;

Table 3. The rate of German and Foreign Students in Secondary Education I (2002-2003) (%)

	Hauptschule	Realschule	Gymnasium	Gesampt- schule	Other
Foreign Students (n = 462 755)	43,8	18,9	13,9	12,8	10,6
German Students (n = 4 882 478)	18,6	24,5	32,3	8,4	16,2

In 2002-2003 schooling year, while only 19% of German students were going to hauptschule, 44% of foreign students went to hauptschule. Again when we look at the rate in the gymnasium, while 14% of foreign students were going to the gymnasium, 32% of German students were educated in the gymnasium. In both kinds of school, there are 2,5 multiple distinctions in favour of German students. Even though there is no more distinction in realschule. There is also a distinction in favour of German students in here. When the results of table 2 and table 3 are evaluated together, it is understood that Spanish students are in the best situation among the other foreign students and also they reach the same level of German students in a few fields. Almost one-fourth of Spanish students are educated in hauptschule. This rate is very in other foreigners. Again as it is understood from Table-2, 51% of Spanish students go to gymnasium and realschule. This rate is the equivalent level with a total number of a few countries. It is the highest level in hauptschule; on the contrary, the foreign group taking part is the lowest level in the gymnasium is Turks and Italians. The going rate of Turkish and Italian students to hauptschule is above total foreign students' average given in Table 3. At the same form, the going rate of the gymnasium is lower than foreign students' average.

One of the most controversial subjects in the German education system is sonderschule which is special education toward hampered people. The aim of these school which have 9 different kinds in itself is to present the necessities of basic education and after the basic education to the students and to present the programmes which are suitable for their abilities in the frame of opportunity equality. The organisation of this education step is carried out by local administration. As it was pointed out above, from the beginning of the 1980s on there has been a growing number of discussions about this kind of school related to the growing number of foreign children. In sonderschule the complains that are in cult especially the share of Turks is high, but the certain solution is not found. Because the statistical datums reveal that foreign children and especially the Turkish children

are diverted unfavourably to these schools. Thus, when statistical datums about *sonderschule* are looked over even though the rate of the total of foreign students is 4,5%.

In the schools required special education, the group which has the highest rate with 19% is the group of those who have trouble in learning. After the general explanations above, foreigners and Turks in special education in Germany will be inspected in the example of Baden-Württemberg province because in this province *sonderschule* with 5,8% have a higher rate than the general of Germany. In the same way, while the rate of foreign students is 17% in the general of Germany especially in *forderschules* the school of students who have excuses in learning, this rate is 35% in Baden-Württemberg. The rates of foreign students in different kinds of school in Stuttgart which in the capital province of Baden-Württemberg are shown in graphic-1.

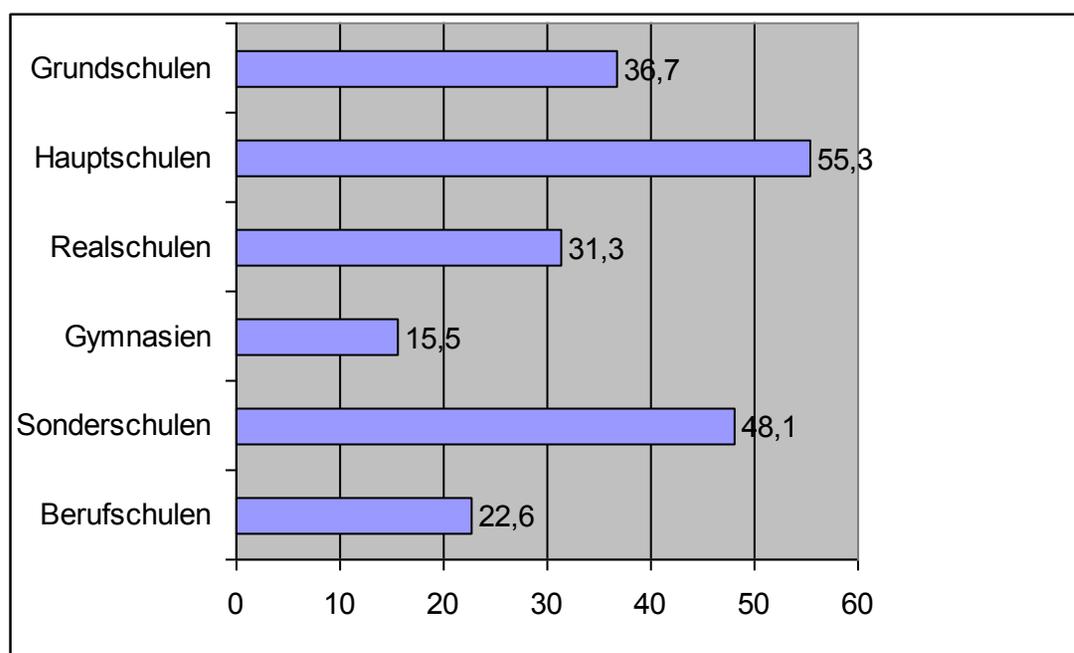


Figure 1. The rate of foreign students in different kinds of school in the centre of Stuttgart (Source: Stuttgart Nachrichten 04.05.2001(taken from:T.R Stuttgart Consulate General Education Attachéü)

Half of the foreign students in Stuttgart go to *sonderschule*. Again in this province 55,3% of the foreign students, that is more than half of the students go to *hauptschule*, the kind of school in which there is no more chance to take advanced education. The continuation rate of the *gymnasium* which prepares the students to university is only 15,5%.

The examination of the number and percentage of foreign students in Germany will provide real Picture about the situation of foreigners and Turks in the education system

of Germany. The total number of students and the number of foreign students and the rate of Turks and foreigners in total are given in Table-4.

Table 4. Dispersion of German and Foreign Students according to schools in general of Baden-Württemberg

	Total	Foreigners	Percent age	Turks	The percent age of in its total	The percentage in the foreigners
Grundschule/ Hauptschule	485.188 209.327	123.697	% 18	51.790	% 7.5	% 41.4
Realschule	223.230	15.865	% 7.6	5.470	% 2.6	% 34.1
Gymnasium	286.410	12.523	% 4.7	2.797	% 1.1	% 24
Sonderschule	51.217	13.204	%26.6	4.967	% 9.9	% 37.4
Total	1.255.372	165.289	% 13	65.024	% 5.1	% 40

In the previous stage, in addition to the comparison being made in the general of Germany in Baden-Württemberg province, when the table is inspected, Turkish students from 2,6% in realschule, 1% group in a gymnasium in the general total. These rates are low. When the numbers and rates of sonderschule are inspected, there occurs the contrary situation, the rate reaches 10%. In this province, almost 350.000 Turks live and the rate of Turks in this total population is 3,5%. If the normal dispersion was exhibited in the province, Turkish children should have been represented in the rate of 3,5% in both gymnasium and sonderschule.

By looking at the table-4 the situation of Turkish students seems to be optimistic in terms of sonderschule when we compare with the other foreign students not with German students. In the table, it is understood that 30% of the total number of students is composed of Turks. The total of Turk students who is the major subject of this situation was born in Germany and grew in here. And also the majority of their parents grew in Germany and took education in here. Whereas it should be paid attention to the situation that foreigners who immigrated to Germany after 1990s and are still new here, has an important share in the total number of foreigners in Germany.the inferences needed to examine the hypothesis or provide estimates in answer to the question.

#### 4. The problems and dilemmas in the education of Turkish children

As it is emphasized above, a right and valid model has not been found for the last ten years in the subject of the education of Turkish workers children living in Germany. Every province followed its own way to identify the political way of the education of these children. Related to schemes as to education policy, cultural autonomy of the provinces composing of federal Germany in the education of foreign students, they could not form a valid and reasonable model because of having contrary thought in immigration policy.

The responsibility of teaching in mother tongue changes according to provinces. In Bavaria, Saxony, South Rhine-Westphalia and Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate, this responsibility is in the ministry of education and culture, in other provinces, the responsibility is in the local consulate. The only province which makes education in the mother tongue as a compulsory lesson is Hesse. The new regulation of education in mother tongue in 1996 brings aims and principles which pay attention to the second and third generation. Among these, the developing of the students' mother tongue and second language, the support of two languages, etc. are found in it. In this framework, the high schools in Berlin, South Rhine-Westphalia and Hamburg and in collective schools, Turkish is presented as an equivalent with foreign language and accepted as a basic lesson in the maturity examination. In Bavaria, Turkish is taught as a second language in some vocational schools. For example, in 1980s Bavaria province collected Turkish students, coming to the first and second step, to the national classes, they performed this system in the places where Turkish people are dense. In these classes, the students took the majority of lessons as Turkish and densely German education was given. The logic of this system was being expressed to Turkish parents like that: "You would come back to your country in a certain time". "Your children were educated in such a situation that they would integrate themselves with the education given in Turkey". These statements seem reasonable to Turkish parents. The other German parents were happy from this situation because they were not satisfied with the class in which there were more Turkish students than the total of German students. There are no people coming back to Turkey. This affected the children because the children have only chance to continue an ordinary job to earn their living. In order to make a better education, they should be divided into gymnasium and Realschule according to the accomplishment in 4th class. For this, there needs to be a high average of Marks. The other dilemma which can be seen in the education of Turkish students is that Turkish parents have anxiety about losing their culture. There are children who were born in Germany and grew up here and had a good relation with German children and also took good education. But in this situation, the children are broken from their culture.

## **5. Results and Suggestions**

Half-centuries have passed since the beginning of the immigration of workers to abroad. Today, in Germany the third generation Turks are talked. The most important problem

of Turkish workers is the education of their children. There is no more difference between the education problems of the third generation and second generation children and youth. Clearly, third generation children youth have lived the problem with which their grandfather and Grandmother representing the first generation had their mother and father representing the second generation meets. In those times, the first people coming to Germany 1960s come from suburban areas. They did not know one word of German. Their adaptation to German society would take more time. Even if the first generation did not integrate, they did not seem to have a social problem. They spend their power between their house and the factory. For the second generation, generally said that they came here by leaving the primary or secondary education. They entered a completely different language and system. Their success was very difficult in Germany in which the progressive divert was made in the fourth class of primary education whereas it is impossible to say this for the third generation.

Almost all of the researches about foreigners reveal that Turks want to stay in Germany and continue their life in this country. So the third, fourth and future generations should not experience the same problems. The basic feature is “a good education” for a new generation to make accustomed them the way of life and make use of the possible features. The analyses above show that Turkish children and students are not in good situations in terms of education. It requires making use of the opportunities of this country and be equal with German children. But while it is provided, not to leave from the culture and the mother tongue is important.

In the education system of Germany, especially foreign students have disadvantages. The education system of Germany does not accomplish to educate the children and youth who are in need of social help. Compared with German and other foreigners, Turkish students are in a very unsuitable position. There is almost no opportunity for equality in the education of immigrant. These realities can be understood from the researches made by PISA. For German authorities, this research should be regarded as starting point and they should put into effect new kinds of lessons for foreign students to free from the effect of PISA because receiving qualified education for foreign students is very crucial for Germany as an industrial country.

German authorities, Ministry of Education in Turkey and parents have very important responsibilities in the education of the children to come to an important position. The instability of German authorities in the education of foreign students should be improved and stopped. The solution to the education problem of foreign students with interim measures seems impossible. The common solution can be found in the level of the province with the measure taken with the federal level.

The share of the students in gymnasium and realschule which prepare students for high education should be increased. It is very unfair to send Turkish child to sonderschule because of insufficiency of language. To educate Turkish children very well

is compulsory for Turkey and Germany which will need qualified working power in the future.

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