

ԵՐԵՎԱՆԻ ՊԵՏԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՄԱԼՍԱՐԱՆ
ԱՐԵՎԵԼԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՖԱԿՈՒԼՏԵՏ

ԱՐԵՎԵԼԱԳԻՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՀԱՐՑԵՐ

*Նվիրվում է ԵՊՀ արևելագիտության ֆակուլտետի
հիմնադրման 50-ամյակին*

№ 15

ԵՐԵՎԱՆ
ԵՊՀ ՀՐԱՏԱՐԱԿՉՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
2019

ЕРЕВАНСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ
ФАКУЛЬТЕТ ВОСТОКОВЕДЕНИЯ

ВОПРОСЫ ВОСТОКОВЕДЕНИЯ

*Посвящается 50-летию основания факультета востоковедения
ЕГУ*

№ 15

Ереван
Издательство ЕГУ
2019

YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

JOURNAL OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

*Dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the faculty
of Oriental Studies of YSU*

№ 15

YEREVAN
YSU PRESS
2019

**Հրատարակվում է Երևանի պետական համալսարանի
արևելագիտության ֆակուլտետի
գիտական խորհրդի որոշմամբ**

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պատմություն, Երևան, 2018, էջ 364.....141-144

Gevorg Sahakyan¹

“VICTORY HAS A THOUSAND FATHERS, BUT DEFEAT IS AN ORPHAN”: WHO IS TO BE BLAMED FOR TURKS’ DISINTEGRATION IN GERMANY?

Keywords: *narrative, minority, integration, Germany, Turks*

Introduction

This narrative policy analysis (NPA) examines the complexity, polarization and uncertainty around educational system in Germany, in regard with minority integration. The sphere of education integration is an area of high importance as educational achievements lead to employment, which is considered integral component of integration (Council of the European Union 2004). The NPA elaborates on the case of Germany as the country demonstrates one of the worst records referring inequality in educational attainment between the natives and the minorities (Program for International Student Assessment 2000). The specific targets are Turks, as they are the biggest and most resilient minority group to integrate in Germany (Crul and Vermeulen 2003; Deutsche Welle 2009).

In order to demonstrate the educational integration challenges Turks face in Germany, it is significant to delve into the discussion of a broader context, such as the general level of disintegration. A considerable amount of literature has tried to shed light on this case, and the analysis offers contradictory findings about the responsible of the disintegration. On one hand, the Republic of Germany is claimed to be the party responsible for the lack of Turkish integration. On the other hand, the minority group itself is blamed.

In support for this first notion, some scholars argue that the integration of Turks in Germany is shaped by the country, rather than by the Turks themselves (Zolberg and Woon 1999). This argument is backed by the

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contradiction between successfully integrated Turks in the United States and their disintegrated compatriots in Germany. This is mainly attributed to the constructionist approach in the USA towards minorities, which perceives ethnicity as an adaptable phenomenon (Rudolph 2006) in contrast to Germany where “Germanness” is a matter of blood (White 2005; Anil 2007; Kılıc and Menjivar 2013). In other words, the disintegration of Turks in Germany is determined by the primordial approach where the importance of ethnic revival is emphasized (Roedger 1991).

Oppositely, the historical background of Turkish migration coupled with some academic literature support the second notion that minorities determine disintegration. Historically, the first major stream of Turks arrived to Germany as part of “*Gastarbeiter*” program. These people were low-skilled labor migrants recruited from the lowest socio-economic strata. The influx continued even after the abolition of the guest-worker initiative in 1974 due to the oil crisis (Schnapper 1994), and they did not return to their home country as it was envisaged by the agreement. After the refusal to repatriate, the social exclusion of Turks began and this situation did not even change after the emergence of the next generations. The literature provides explanation to it by arguing that the children are aspired to reach their parents’ class level (Boudon 1974; Heath Rethon and Kilpi 2008). Thus, the fact that Turks are the least integrated in Germany may be linked to the specific characteristics of the very minority group.

Similar polarized views, along with other contradictory interpretations, can be observed in the subsequent narratives in regard with education attainment of Turks. In particular, the analysis refers to educational system in Germany, which starts at primary schools, followed by the transition to secondary schools. The secondary education in its turn is three-tiered, *Gymnasium* (higher-track), *Realschule* (medium-track) and *Hauptstchule* (lower-track). The track that the children are to be enrolled depends on their grades and recommendations of teachers. Here is the place when the institutional discrimination towards minorities can be expressed (Surig and Wilmes 2014). According to the statistics provided

by PISA (2000) second-generation migrants, particularly Turks, greatly underperform the natives.

Hence, driven from the complexity, uncertainty and the nature of polarized views around the integration through education, this NPA analyzes German state document by Federal Ministry of the Interior (2014), afterwards, the paper juxtaposes the contradicting narratives on the same issue provided by Open Society Foundations (2013). In the section that follows, the mentioned narratives are compared, and the meta-narrative is presented which is derived from the juxtaposition. Finally, the potential for change in the sphere of education is introduced with referring to the meta-narrative.

Narrative I: Germany

The German state narrative (2014) provides a brief historical background about the migration to Germany by stating that the phenomenon has a very long history and immigrants' desire to settle in Germany has a large range of a spectrum. Given the multi-diverse nature of the German population, the authorities offer equal integration measures for all migrants, including long-term residents with migration background. So, several educational policies in this regard are implemented such as support programs for young children with migration background offered by the Ministry of Education. In particular, government tries to ameliorate the educational situation of migrants. Additionally, the ministry funds research targeting language diagnostics and promotion on equal bases. The authorities promote extracurricular educational activities for children with disadvantaged backgrounds. Moreover, for the implementation of some program the government has funded several hundred million of euro.

As regards the difference of educational attainment, the government accepts that minority students are far less successful than the natives are. Particularly, about three times more migrant children are enrolled in Hauptschule (the lowest-track) than natives. Oppositely immigrants are less successful in entering Gymnasium (the highest-track), which enables to continue education in universities. In addition, school dropouts are twice as many among immigrants. However, the document suggests that after

PISA (2000) report, the migrant pupils have significantly improved their positions. Thus, a positive trend is provided. For example, if in PISA 2000 reports the difference of 75 points between the natives and immigrants, in report 2012 the difference decreased to 53 points. Finally, the document presents a major difference between nationalities in terms of educational attainment by elaborating on the cases of Russian and Polish performing much better than other groups.

Thus, the character of “hero” can be applied to German authorities, who accept the problematic situation around educational attainment of minorities and initiate several programs to improve it. The fettle around identifying the “victims” is more complicated. At first, immigrant groups might seem the “victims” negatively affected by the inequality. However, the further analysis of the text implicitly entails that if some minorities (i.e. Russian and Polish) significantly outperform other groups, than the underperformers are to be blamed for the inequality (i.e. Turks as the most underperforming group). In this case, the latter can be also considered as “villains”, as they are not “innocent” victims and are the cause of the policy problem (Stone 2002). It can be summarized, that the moral of this narrative analysis, is that German authority do not avoid accepting the problem, moreover they initiate several programs to improve the situation. Hence, a positive trend in terms of decreasing the inequality in educational attainment between Germans and migrants is ascribed to the continuous efforts by the authorities.

Narrative II: OSF

An alternative narrative is provided by Open Society Foundation (2013). The report starts with an epigraph showing that children of different racial and ethnic backgrounds in Germany have quite varied educational experiences and opportunities, which is a violation of federal and international law. In particular it is argued that immigrant children are identified as “foreigners” and as a result of the discrimination at schools they face limited life and career possibilities.

The story starts with the introduction of PISA (2000) report that nearly a decade ago shocked the country famous for having outstanding educational system, by great inequality rates in education between the natives and migrant children. The alarmist publication illustrates that the latter show one of the worst results of educational attainment in the world. Minorities are overrepresented in the lowest-track (Hauptschule), and have significantly less opportunity to continue their education in Gymnasium (higher-track).

The report by OSF claims that letting alone some promising steps implemented by German authorities (such as combining Realschule and Hauptschule into Sekundaschule in Berlin), notwithstanding there is an overall denial of serious and continuing discrimination in the specific field. Notably, the report specifies that children with foreign origin (mostly Turks) face salient inequality in the schools, high levels of discrimination, racism, unfair grading, elements of stigmatization and segregated classrooms mostly composed of migrants.

Moreover, instead of recognizing and fighting the root causes of inequality, German people try to find a scapegoat to blame all the failures on. The underachievement is explained by causes of low socio-economic conditions, indifference and low education achievements of migrant parents, which is why their children are not aspired to succeed. Finally, the document calls to adhere the Article 2 of European Convention of Human Rights, which disallows discrimination in education. Thus, they demand to stop the practice of students' segregations by separating classrooms based on ethnic characteristics.

Hence, the "heroes" in this narrative are PISA report (2000) by OSCE that broke the stereotype of excellent educational system in Germany, and OSF, which also underlines the current problems and urges for necessary changes. The "villains" are the German authorities and representatives of educational bodies who continuously deny but are to blame for the above-mentioned problems. The "victims" are foreign origin pupils, mostly Turks, who are the main negatively affected party. Finally, the moral of this narrative is that if the much-needed educational policies are not

implemented, the continuing discrimination will entail limited life and career opportunities for children of migrant background. Thus, first the German side has to accept the presence of discrimination and then initiate immediate actions.

Meta-narrative and comparison

Given the fact that the above-mentioned narratives have two antithetical settings, it is not surprising that they have opposing plots, characters and morals. Nevertheless, meta-narrative is also present in the stories. Both parties unanimously assert that inequality in educational system is an area of immense concern and both seek to improve the situation. Particularly, the documents are referring to the PISA 2000 report that pioneered in unpacking the truth behind “excellent” educational system in Germany. The parties agree on the disproportionate allocation of immigrants at schools. And from this part on, the polarizations of the narratives occur.

The state document claims that after the problem was diagnosed, the government initiated several steps to decrease the gap between the natives and the minorities. The mentioned initiatives have quite large range of a spectrum, from project implementations to allocation of some hundred million euros for ameliorating the lack of equality in education. As a result, the authorities guaranteed a positive trend in decreasing inequality, which was manifested in the PISA 2012 report. Whereas, the alternative narrative states that since 2000 PISA report nothing has changed significantly and consequently children of immigrants continue witnessing institutional racism in face of stigmatization, discrimination, unfair grading and so on. Here, it is worth mentioning that German side completely ignores the presence of discrimination. In contrast, OSF evaluates the phenomenon as one of the root causes of the inequality.

In the same way, the first narrative argues that the inequality in educational attainment depends on specific nationalities, as some of them, for instance Russians and Polish have fairly good records. Oppositely, the OSF report claims that level of inequality is determined by the society in

which the immigrants have settled. This discourse can be linked to the literature mentioned in the first section of the NPA. Similarly, the identified characters also vary among the documents. In the state document, the authorities are presented as “heroes” that accepted the problem and have mobilized their efforts to change the situation for the better. The situation over identifying the “victims” is rather difficult. To be considered as such, the affected group should be “innocent” (Stone 2002), however, given the context that underperforming minorities, such as Turks, are the ones to be blamed for their harsh conditions. They may also be identified as “villains”. In contrast to this, OSF report has different characters. Notably, they are the “heroes” for highlighting the root causes of the issue. The “villain” is the German society for discriminating the minorities. And the latter are the “victims” who as a result of institutional racism have unequal life and career opportunities.

Finally, the two narratives have contrasting morals. In the report by the ministry of Interior the moral is in facing the problem and overcoming it. Which entailed positive developments in terms of betterment of minority conditions. Contrary, in the OSF report the moral is in recognizing the current levels of discrimination and consequently solving them, which will finally lead to the objective present in meta- narrative in face of decreasing the levels of inequality.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, both parties agree that there is a vivid inequality in German educational establishments. Yet another meta-narrative present in the texts is the willingness to decrease the gap of educational attainment between the natives and the immigrants. Accordingly, the German authorities and OSF seek to see children of migrant background shifting from “bright” to “blurred” boundaries (see Alba 2005). Here, it is pertinent to note that the policies mentioned by the parties, which will enable to reach the presented outcome are contradictory. German authorities highlight the positive trend in terms of reaching “blurred” boundaries as a result of previously mentioned projects, which decreases the inequality

between the natives and minorities. However, German government refrains from mentioning specifically Turks in regard with minority education issues. In contrary, the latter are abundantly represented in OSF report, which claims that the situation will not change for better as long as the presence of racism and discrimination is denied. In addition, they call for the rejection of segregated classrooms based on ethnic characteristics, as an example of possible policy change.

Hence, by summarizing the possibility of change in the policy area, it can be claimed that boundaries between the minorities and the natives in educational establishments are “bright” and there is a high possibility that they will not become “blurred”. This suggestion is conditioned by the primordial approach towards ethnicities in German society. Another argument is attributed to the fact that the German side denies the presence of racism and forms of discriminations, which is the major cause of having unequal educational attainment between the natives and the children of foreign origin, as OSF reports it.

And, if the status quo in the educational system maintains, or if the boundaries are still labeled as “bright”, Turks living in Germany will not have the same life and career opportunities as the natives have. Eventually the inequality in education will entail an underclass formation. Thus, the lack of possible educational policies meant to curb inequality and discrimination will persist the applicability of downward assimilation concept (see Portes and Zhou 1993). That is to say, the offspring of first-generation labor migrants, not like their predecessors who were recruited as guest workers, will encounter some major problems in terms of labor-market integration. Consequently, Turks and other ethnic minorities will continue being disintegrated.

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**«ՀԱՂԹԱՆԱԿՆ ՈՒՆԻ ՀԱՉԱՐ ՀԱՅՐ, ԲԱՅՅ ՊԱՐՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ
ՈՐԲ Է»։ Ո՛Վ Է ՄԵՂԱՎՈՐ ԳԵՐՄԱՆԻԱՅՈՒՄ ԹՈՒՐԹԵՐԻ
ԱՊԱԻՆՏԵԳՐՄԱՆ ՀԱՐՅՈՒՄ**

**Գևորգ Սահակյան
(Ամփոփում)**

Սույն հոդվածը միտված է լույս սփռել Գերմանիայում բնակվող թուրք միգրանտների ինտեգրման խնդրին: Մասնավորապես, ուսումնասիրությունը թիրախավորում է կրթական ոլորտը, ինչը կարևորագույն նշանակություն ունի, քանի որ ուսումնական առաջադիմությունն է մեծապես ենթադրում աշխատաշուկա մուտք

գործելու կարողությունը, որն էլ ինտեգրման հիմնական բաղադրիչներից է: Մի կողմից Գերմանիան արձանագրում է ամենավատթար ցուցանիշներից մեկը տեղացիների և փոքրամասնությունների միջև եղած կրթական ձեռքբերումների անհավասարության հարցում, մյուս կողմից էլ՝ թուրքական գաղթօջախները համարվում են ամենից վատ ինտեգրված փոքրամասնությունը, որոնք նաև ամենամեծ ներկայացվածությունն ունեն Գերմանիայում: Վերջիններիս ունեցած խնդրի բացատրությունը ակադեմիական գրականության մեջ իրարամերժ կերպով է ներկայացվում: Հետազոտողների մի մասը պնդում է, որ ստեղծված իրավիճակի պատասխանատուն ընդունող երկրի կրթական քաղաքականությունն է, քանի որ նույն ժողովուրդը բավականին լավ է ինտեգրված ԱՄՆ-ի հասարակության մեջ, իսկ մյուս թևն էլ մեղադրում է հենց թուրքերին՝ մատնանշելով ներգաղթյալների առաջին հոսքի ցածր կրթական մակարդակը, ինչն էլ շարունակում է արտացոլվել հաջորդ սերունդների շրջանում, քանի որ ժառանգները հակված են զբաղեցնել նույն սոցիալական դիրքը, որն ունեն նրանց ծնողները: Այսպիսով, դեկավարվելով խնդրի կարևորությամբ և պատճառների հակասականությամբ, տվյալ հոդվածը ուսումնասիրում է իրարամերժ աղբյուրների բովանդակությունը՝ օգտագործելով նարատիվի քաղաքականության վերլուծության գործիքը (Narrative policy analysis), որի միջոցով վեր կհանվեն հակասող աղբյուրների միջև եղած խոսույթի տարբերությունները: