

## Two Models of Integration of Immigrants: Germany and France

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### ABSTRACT

Since the second half of the twentieth century, the immigration of foreign populations has reached a significant volume in most Western countries. Massive and continuous, it led to a process of deep transformation of the nature and composition of the population in numerous countries of the Northern Hemisphere. While migration flows in earlier periods were primarily directed towards countries of the traditional immigration type, such as the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and in Europe France, they gradually expanded to all developed countries, so we can no longer speak of classic south-north migration movements.

In relation to other European countries, France and Germany will lead in two different ways: France as the first European country to open up to mass immigration, and Germany in terms of the number of foreigners. Their models of integration of foreigners are, however, significantly different.

**KEYWORDS:** immigration, integration, Germany, France

Received: 12/12/2022

Revised : 28/12/2022

Accepted: 29/12/2022

**Introductory considerations.** France reached out to foreign labour already in the second half of the 19th century, so some researchers (Noiriel, 1992) think that constant immigration over more than a century has changed the composition of the French population more than it was the case in the USA and that process is far from finished. Ogden and White (1989) note three migration periods in France: at the turn of the century, between the two world wars and after 1945. They show similarities but also differences. Each immigration was significantly more numerous than the previous one, and each subsequent one brought workers from greater geographical and cultural distances than the previous one. Germany, for its part, gathers the largest number of immigrants in Europe.

France and Germany are two countries of immigration that throughout history have built two very different systems – first of all in the very concept of the nation, with all the consequences that this can have in relation to immigrants. The French model refers to universalism and the enlightenment mission. On the other side, the German ethnic model of the nation refers to biological and ancestral ties in order to determine who is German. The French adopted *jus soli* (with certain limitations), and the Germans *jus sanguinis* as a concept for acquiring citizenship.

At the same time, with the increase in the number of migrants and the diversity of their countries of origin, the structure of immigration also changed substantially. Thus, the OECD (1987) states that modern migrations in Europe were first economic migrations of men who came alone in the 50s and 60s of the last century. Then there was a phase of family reunions in the 70s and 80s, leading to the transformation from temporary labour migration to permanent settlement, or sedentarization, as Silverman (1992) called it). Weil's analysis shows that, in the case of France, this evolution was probably decided and orchestrated by the state authorities in order to assimilate and definitively settle immigration (Weil, 1991).

It is clear that movements of such a scale had very significant consequences in the cultural, social and economic life of the receiving countries and that immigration issues were often discussed with an excess of emotion and passion, due to the connection they have with the personal and collective identity of both migrants and their hosts. .

Pierre Tap (Tap, 1999) believes that immigrants, faced with a depressed Western society, devoid of energy, with an identity deficit, will undoubtedly affirm their cultural identity in it, through various individual and collective strategies. Classic theories, which see the receiving society as static, into which immigrants integrate or not, are being changed in the sense that now more attention is being paid to the interaction between the society of the receiving country and the immigrants. The prevailing concept is the one that represents the majority (society of the receiving country) as static and immobile, against which stand the (immigration) minorities, who are forced to fit in, or, on the contrary, to be the bearers of revolt (delinquency, return to the previous identity model, etc.) . However, extensive research has shown that minorities can change the opinions, beliefs, norms and attitudes of the majority (Mugny et Perez, 1987).

In such a perspective, mass immigration is considered one of the strongest causes of cultural anomie in the societies of the receiving countries. Immigrants generally have, thanks to stronger friendship and family networks and help within their migrant communities, greater internal cohesion than is the case with members of the majority (the society of the host country), which is mainly characterized by individualism, loneliness and micro-family models.

Todd (1994) says that the French, according to the Jacobin model, accept as French all those who have adopted, in addition to the French language, several values that define a common base. But this social contract, which is based on the common minimum, introduces social relations that are of weak intensity, with minimal convergence of opinions, attitudes and common values.

Hall and Hall (1990) noted that the French were not very open to mixing. They concluded that it takes much more time to create and maintain relationships in France than in countries such as Germany or the USA. The French live in closed circles, difficult to enter, and their society, more than in other countries, functions with class divisions.

Weinberg (Weinberg, 1961) believes that for the mental health of immigrants, as well as for society as a whole, educating natives is just as important as educating immigrants.

Of course, immigrants also undergo disintegration under the influence of the cultural model of the receiving country. Thus, Todd (1994) says that the expression "disintegration in the French way" would correspond more to the process of adaptation of the population arriving from Algeria to France, than integration.

### **French and German models of integration of foreigners – historical basis**

Analyzing the differences between the French and German models of integration of foreigners, Demorgon (1999) believes that the roots of these differences come from the fact that throughout history France was more under the influence of Rome and the Catholic Church, that is, external and centralized authorities, than was the case with Germany states, often in opposition to Rome. Differences regarding the creation of social ties in their areas arose from this. While in France they are created in the shadow of Catholicism, with a pretension towards universalization, in Germany these connections are created relying more on local specificities and local communities. At the threshold of the first millennium, there are two main cultural currents: in the south, the Roman Empire, surrounded by walls, and in the north, societies of communities that create leagues by association. These communities were not Romanized and were not converted to Christianity, and this type of organization will play a significant role in the genesis of German culture, unlike the French one.

These different orientations – on the one hand, maintaining the diversity of numerous smaller societal units, and on the other, unifying the population and territories will have significant cultural consequences.

In Germany, the closeness of social partners, including those who have the main roles in decision-making, closeness to the surrounding nature, will influence the regulation of society, laws and government

organized between social actors who are close and known to each other. There will be a certain overlap between the self and the group to which one belongs: authority based on relationships between familiar and close circles is more easily internalized.

In France, however, the Roman and then the Catholic administration was implanted early on, after which the modes of government alternated, all of which have the same essence – they are external, vertical, centralized, and remoted. The solidarity of the group will be more tested due to the constant division between, on the one hand, the feeling of loyalty to that external authority and the feeling of belonging to a close group, which may also have its own specific interests, different from the interests of the central, external and distant authority.

After the acceptance of Christianity in the territories of Germany, a noticeable contradiction was established between, on the one hand, the diversity of smaller communities and, on the other, belonging to Catholicism. The reform introduces a real cultural revolution while strengthening the already existing community diversity. The fundamental difference compared to Catholicism is that all activities: religious, political and economic were given equal importance and respect, so, on the territory of future Germany, the political, economic and religious segments were jointly organized into one practical and relatively coherent system, which maintained the diversity of social individuals. At certain moments, the political unification of all those entities was sought in the periphery – in Austria or Prussia – societies that had strongly expressed components of royalist and imperial culture (Demorgen, 1999).

The situation in France seemed simpler: to the extent that the creation and future of the nation were controlled by central, unifying authorities, royal and then republican, their power extended over all territories and inhabitants. During the kingdom, the central government was supported by the church, i.e. Catholicism. Church authority was not allowed to be in contradiction with the royal authority – it was not allowed for the French church to turn to the pope against the king.

This control of the church became stronger with the Republic, to the extent that there was a separation of the church from the state and the introduction of the principle of laicity. In the concept of laicity, one should also see the intention of the state to control the population. The school, through teachers who oppose the priests, is a place where children learn “standardized” France, in the French language, and no longer in the dialects of their regions. The French bourgeois revolution was preceded by a process of national assimilation that was carried out by the monarchy for several centuries. The revolution ended this process, destroying local and territorial governments, to make the civil union of the nation. From the moment when the people through elections become the basic factor of political life, uniformity was necessary. Likewise, the introduction of general military service was a way for the state to introduce national values and respect for law and order. In such a context, what could be called the “French model of immigration” began to develop (Noiriel, 1992).

All this represents a set of elements that create new social bonds, which are increasingly moving away from the influence of communal culture, which they try to replace with the kingdom, the nation, human rights, and laicity. This type of centralized control also applies to the economy, both in the kingdom

and in the republic, because there is a fear that economic activities, if not controlled by the centre, can follow their own logic and stray from national plans.

As far as Germany is concerned, despite the later historical changes that led to national unification, the existing organization of social relations, which was based on biological connections, did not lose its importance. Hence, it is difficult to accept the possibility that foreigners, who do not share that basic, biological connection, can be part of the German nation.

### **Immigration as a tool of state policies in France**

Immigration, above all, contributes to the increase in the number of the population of the country of immigration, that is, to the regulation of demographic issues. Thus, Le Bras (1999), speaking about the state ideologies that determined the demographic policy in France, shows that, depending on the historical circumstances, they oscillate between populism and nativism, and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between one and the other. The state's interest in "its" population starts from the period of absolute monarchy and leads to Colbertism and its expression of "political arithmetic" (Jean-Baptiste Colbert, State Secretary during the reign of Louis XIV in the 17<sup>th</sup> century). Dealing with the demographic issue becomes especially relevant after the defeat of France in the war with the German states, led by Prussia, in 1870. The defeat, instead of being explained by insufficiently developed military techniques and the incompetence of the supreme staff, was justified by differences in the birth rate.

The fear of depopulation led in that period to nativism, i.e. a policy according to which all births were welcome, whether they were children of marriage or illegitimacy. The connection between the birth rate and the nation is especially established with the republican regime: for many French people, who were deprived of the living symbol of their country, in the form of the king and emperor, "the French population became the representation of France" (Le Bras, 1987). The health of the population is taken into account, as once the health of the monarch, so the royal health bulletins were replaced by the demographic situation since the fertility of the population was considered an expression of health.

"From 1870 to 1940, demography became the favourite explanation for all our shortcomings, the number imposed itself as the only criterion of power" (Le Bras, 1991). To fill the barracks and later the factories, it was deemed necessary to have a large number of people at their disposal, whose salaries do not cost much and who obey orders.

Historians who have studied the causes of the demographic explosion in most European countries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century have highlighted the role of the industrial revolution in this phenomenon: the severing of relations with the countryside of rural populations moving to cities, leaving behind traditional ties and abandoning themselves, with ubiquitous misery, oblivion in the present, resistance to considering projects concerning the future, which is also manifested through the absence of birth control. (Noiriel, 1992). The isolated case of France, which from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had a decline in the birth rate and population, unlike most other European countries, was explained by the historian Mark Bloch (Bloch, 1931) as a consequence of the existence of small rural estates and the characteristics of the inheritance system, which, again, in their basis have a historical alliance between the

absolute monarchy and the peasantry, against the feudal lords. So it can be said that state power was at the root of this declining birth rate and demographic decline in France. The existing system affected voluntary restrictions on the number of births and influenced the fact that there was no mass exodus from the countryside to the city in the era of the industrial revolution. This, again, led to an unequal distribution of the labour force and to a lack of workers needed for industrial production.

Although employers, then and in later periods, followed economic reasons for hiring immigrants, they are still inspired by reasons of political demography, according to which France needs people to remain, or become again, a great power. Thus, they worked to bring in young families, of reproductive age, whose children will be raised in French society and according to its model (Weil, 1991). In this regard, debates have arisen about whether immigration should be limited by a quota system, as the Americans did, or leave the possibility of a global inflow of immigrants. This second model, under the guise of "republican egalitarianism", won. Thus, France, not limiting itself to targeted immigration, opened the door to mass immigration from its former colonies and low-wage countries. The Gaullist tradition of strong relations with African countries, especially with Algeria, also played a significant role in "filling" France with immigrants from the South.

In the seventies of the 20th century, the policy of permanent settlement and assimilation led to a large number of migrant families' reunions. When in 1979 the President of the Republic tried to activate the policy of returning immigrants, there was spectacular opposition which led to the abandonment of this project.

Weil (1988) concluded that for one century the French authorities favoured an integration policy that granted the right to a long-term residence. The same applies to acquiring French citizenship – according to Weil, naturalization was easily achievable (Weil, 1991), and Todd (Todd, 1994) believes that it was almost automatic.

France also determined its immigration policy in relation to its "best enemies". The awareness of one's own identity develops in relation to the Other, and for France, the relation to Germany and Algeria was of particular importance in the construction of national identity. From the beginning of the 19th century, France and Germany affirmed their identities through opposition to each other. However, the nationalisms of the two countries have worn out over time, and thanks to significant mutual work on getting to know each other and getting closer, instead of opposition, they turned to joint projects, which underline the complementarity of the two national identities, instead of their antagonism. Their role as founders of the European Union contributed to the creation of the myth of reconciliation, which represents one of the few examples of a complete transformation of relations on the international scene.

On the other hand, in the same period, there was another entity according to which France built its national identity – Algeria. Modern France was also built in relation to this complementary enemy, so that some of its values, including "national-universalism", were constructed and sharpened in relation to a society that was colonized and subjugated, experienced at the same time as geographically close, but

very different in terms of customs, habits and mentalities, treated sometimes as irreparably different, and sometimes as suitable for modernization, civilizing and assimilation (Henry, 1982; Henry, 1994).

With the colonization of Tunisia and Morocco, this vision encompassed the whole of North Africa but was somewhat less intense than when it came to Franco-Algerian relations. France's relations with its Algerian colony influenced the creation of an image of itself and the other, as well as the stereotypes attached to both sides (Henry, 1999). Thus, the doctrine of assimilation, which is claimed to still be the basis of the French immigration model, directly emerged from the vocabulary and experience of French-Algerian colonial relations. This colonial compromise represents a legal "bridging" of the disagreement between the principle of the natural equality of all people, inherited from the French bourgeois revolution, and the factual inequality of the colonized population. Assimilation, namely, provides the possibility for future equality: it transforms the principle of equality into a process of identification. Arab natives, in whatever country they are, are under French protection. But full enjoyment of the rights of a French citizen is incompatible with keeping the Muslim faith.

However, it was necessary to fill the ranks of the French army, opposite the German enemy, by bringing in soldiers from Africa. A new interpretation of colonization appeared: it represented a meeting, a meeting of civilizations, the ideal of which is symbiosis: African, but French at the same time (Delavignette, 1931).

Since the First World War, the population of the colonial metropolis witnessed the appearance of more massive military migrations of men from the South. Their appearance was not perceived as a threat to French society. However, the tone changes when, from the 1920s onwards, economic immigration from North Africa is progressively formed. The new influx of these immigrants was initiated by the state. In that period, immigration originating from the colonies still seems more reliable than certain European immigrations, which are treated as a "Trojan horse" of Germany, or as "foreign". Unlike them, immigration from North Africa remains close and easier to manage, because it is controlled: return to the colony is guaranteed in most cases.

The Second World War again brings a large number of immigrants from the colonies, who are again looked at through positive optics. The Vichy government avoids racist discourses aimed at them, and De Gaulle hopes that they will bring France back into the war.

Only after the Second World War, the issue of immigration from North Africa acquired a new dimension: on the one hand, it developed and became known and close, but on the other hand, the ties between France and its former colonies weakened and broke. Immediately after liberation, De Gaulle attributed the troubles of France during the war to demography, so the decrees from 1945 favoured the permanent settlement of foreigners, regardless of ethnic origin. Thus, an increasing number of low-skilled immigrants is developing, assigned to work in factories in unskilled jobs (Weil, 1991).

The problem was intensified by the active participation in the national liberation anti-colonial movements of immigrants from North Africa who lived on the soil of France, especially in the case of the



war in Algeria. In the end, this problem will reach its peak with the declaration of independence and the massive return to the metropolis of European migrants who settled in North Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In this new, negative representation of migrants, classic elements meet and intertwine: fear of massive immigration, the threat of "French chromosomes", the relationship between the ageing population and the young and fertile population, economic competition with previously settled migrants and others. But what is the dominant reason for such a bad image is the feeling of the illegitimacy of the presence of workers from North Africa on the territory of the former metropolis, once they sought and received secession from France. This negative attitude affects Algerians above all: they are increasingly reduced to the identity of "Arabs", although, at the same time, there is a continuous process of their integration into French society.

Another reason for the drastic change in attitude towards emigration from North Africa is the successful and continuous process of construction of Franco-German relations. Since they ceased to be a necessary support for France in its rivalry with Germany, the North Africans were returned to the identity of "citizens outside the EU". Thus, at the same time as the process of decolonization, the process of building the European Union progressively deepened the gap between the two countries (Henry, 1999).

### **French assimilationism and German marginalism**

Immigration is, above all others, a demographic category that leads to an increase in the number of inhabitants of a given country. However, of course, it is not only about quantitative changes, because each of these movements also brings a series of qualitative changes, both for the local population and for migrants.

For a long time, the French observed the immigration process, without taking any special measures to regulate it, neither quantitatively nor qualitatively. The native French, following republican politics and official discourses, could live from the monumental conception of their society (Bastienier, 1999). They experienced their country as an admirable monument, imposing, complete and almost unchanging. In others, this monument could only cause admiration and the desire to belong to it, to fit into it, without changing it. Because of this attitude, the thinking did not go in the direction of possible changes in society and the socio-cultural model of France that immigration could cause. Conversely, immigration acted as a confirmation of the special qualities of the French model and its appeal. Of course, there were problems and conflicts in that process, but they were considered only as second-rate outbursts, accidental and transitory, of a social system that would, in the end, establish its balance.

In such a perspective of the existing social model as built and without the need for change, integration was reduced to assimilation. The French machine, already highly standardizing for the domestic population, had no reason not to do the same for immigrants.

This concept, however, has become problematic on many levels. Economic and cultural transnationalism, which is changing all national societies in the process of globalization, has shaken the



stability and immutability of French cultural postulates. Immigrants are no longer perceived as a number that will fit into a perfect social model but as a danger to the survival of that same model. Certainly, the problem of adapting to new conditions does not apply only to immigrants but implies the reintegration of the entire society into new transnational relations. Immigrants are now even more perceived as new rivals in the constantly changing economic space. And as far as the cultural sphere is concerned, they are just one more element of the growing confusion that reigns in connection with national identity. The presence of immigrants is experienced as an invasion of the poor South on the North, which was once rich and powerful, but today is no longer able to even control its borders. A new type of chauvinism is being born, which Habermas (Pourtois, 1992) calls welfare chauvinism, which implies that people will love their country and be loyal to it only if it provides them with more than the minimum that cannot be refused to anyone. To reconstruct the affected identity, many countries turn to neo-nationalism, adopting a series of protectionist measures that exclude foreigners from the privileges granted to domestic citizens (Noiriel, 1992).

"The French Republic is paradoxical. Since the Revolution, she has placed the equality of citizens' rights at the heart of her values. It has, for more than a century, a unique experience with immigration in Europe. However, in spite of that, faced with cultural differences, it first tries to forget, even to violate its own principles, before deciding to apply them, but under the worst conditions" (Weil, 2005).

Due to the repulsive attitude of the majority who felt threatened, certain minorities turned to gather in their ethnic communities, and even to religious fundamentalism. The French model, which for centuries was based on a strong, centralized nation-state, began to lose its lustre. Parallel to the process of globalization, there is talk of the end of national societies and the nation-state. The difference between socio-economic and socio-cultural belonging to a society is underlined. There were periods in France in which these two aspects overlapped to such an extent that it was almost impossible to distinguish them, but today this is no longer the case (Bastienier, 1999).

On the other hand, the German model of nationality, which is based on the "right of blood", and which introduced immigration after France, showed good capacities for absorbing immigrants.

In both countries, intercultural differences originate from the domain of the unconscious in social relations and are linked to problems in the economy and education. Human groups that were geographically and culturally distant in earlier periods are now in direct contact, interact with each other and influence each other and create, to a certain extent, a new intercultural space.

According to Kordes (Kordes, 1999), French assimilationism is a priori inclusive, but at the same time, it is also exclusionary, because it is based on latent intolerance, since it accepts only its identity core and rejects all other cultures as marginal.

Conversely, German marginalism seems a priori exclusionary, because it does not allow migrants to acquire German citizenship, but, on the other hand, it is relatively tolerant, because it allows members of other cultures to differ from the majority model and to organize according to their own.

**Conclusion.** The French system of integration of foreigners can be characterised as a state-organized assimilationism, and the German one as a multicultural coexistence of local communities.

An important question that arises is whether it is the state's job to shape the cultural identity of "its" society or does society itself has the freedom to define its own identity. The German and French models provide different answers to the appearance.

The transformations underway in several countries are challenging the idea of models representing a rigid mould in which integration policies are defined. But despite these respective developments, integration methods continue to vary depending on the State.

Countries of immigration must find a consensus that goes beyond the ethnic-centralist model and enables integration for those who want it. Their population and authorities must get used to the presence of foreigners from different parts of the world, to changes in cultural identity; they must develop a tolerant approach towards different habits and lifestyles and enable the integration of different elements, which European countries of immigration have been applying in recent decades. Thus, the transformation and ultimately the disappearance of the ethnocultural communities of the receiving countries are irreversibly inscribed in pro-migration programs (Thränhardt, 1996).

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