**Immigrants: Education, Economics, and Politics**

Greater levels of globalization facilitate the movement of individuals across national boundaries, bringing immigration to the forefront of societal conversations regarding education, economics, and politics. Immigration adds an issue of complexity to transnational and national issues. The process of migration entails more than just a movement of individuals, but a diffusion of language, religion, social values, foods, political beliefs, and economic systems.

Increased numbers of immigrants from a variety of nations has transformed Berlin into global city with new residents. Berlin’s culture, therefore, has changed in response to this influx. One such example is the prevalence of Turkish food and specialty shops to connect immigrants to their home countries. Another is the surge in artistic output from the children of immigrants, who express their frustration at being considered ‘outsiders’ in the only country that they have known.

Regarding education in Germany, immigrant students face an education system that does not specifically address their unique needs. For example, immigrant students face challenges with German proficiency, and oftentimes teachers are not adequately trained to teach these students.

Due to the divisive structure of the German education system, immigrant students are disproportionately placed into lower track schools. In these schools, immigrant students face slimmer career opportunities and teaching instruction that does not specifically address the needs of these students.

One economic aspect of this research proposal seeks to understand how ethnic/immigrant identity affects choice of college major, an important determinant of future career choice, social status, and life course. Identity, traditionally excluded from economic analysis, is inextricably tied to understanding individuals’ preferences, their willingness to sacrifice economic well-being for social inclusion, and the existence of externalities.

Another economic aspect of this research proposal is to look at the unemployment rate for Turkish immigrants in comparison with that for the local Germans. Even though the government provides job-training programs for school leavers, participation of Turks in the job-training program is lower than that of German youths, which might lead to fewer and less paid career choices for immigrants in the future.

Germany, and other European Union nations, have a unique policies towards immigrants due to their connection to a regional organization. German immigration laws and therefore affected by both EU and German policy, and must consider the regional relations of Europe. This research projects hopes to examine if, and how, the relationships with the European affects immigration policy in Germany. These policies then shape

GROUP BACKGROUND

The events of the second half of the twentieth century set the the tone for Germany’s future path. From the rubble of WWII, Germany rebuilt itself economically, politically, and socially. Immigrants played key parts in the re-imaging of Germany. Economically, immigrants filled the demand for labor, in short supply after demographic loss due to the war and the effects of the Berlin Wall. Politically, immigrants presented a new challenge for the nation-state: how to deal with ethnically non-German individuals trying to carve out new lives for themselves in Germany. In education, the children of immigrants complicate traditional notions of education by virtue of the differences they bring to the classroom: different languages, ethnicities, religions, and values.

Our group research project focuses on immigrants and the role that they play in German society. Individually, we examine different aspects of the immigrant experience in Germany: education, economics, and politics. Further examination of immigrants and their relationship to these three pillars of society is fundamental for understanding the place of immigrants in a nation-state as a whole. A case study of Germany is particularly relevant as historically, Germany’s attitude towards immigration was that it was not a country of immigrants, despite its status as one of the top immigration destinations. Furthermore, the German state, much like other European nations, is comprised of an ‘ethnic core,’ making it a nation-state with regards to how its policies, traditions, and culture are historically the product of a particular form of German nationalism. This contrasts, for the most part, with countries like the United States, which is not a nation-state in the sense that a dominant ethnicity is tied to political, social, and economic life.

Individual

**Lindsey**

**Background:**

The European Union began in response to the actions of Germany during World War II. The goal of the organizations is to ensure stability and decrease the chance of war between countries. What began as an economic organization, the EU now encompasses charters and institutions that examine a whole range of social and political issues, including immigration. The EU has a broad range of member states, each with different relationships with minorities and immigrants. Some have more robust infrastructures to deal with new residents in their nations and others are unprepared to account for the new minorities brought by immigration. While they all have different histories and laws around immigration, the increased role and importance of global and regional organizations forces these countries to consider not only the immigration laws of their sovereign countries, but also those of the organizations they participate in. This creates an interesting dynamic and sharing of information between a state and regional level that may affect laws and relationships created with immigrants.

As of 2012, the European Union had over 3.4 million immigrants, with 1.7 immigrants coming to the EU in 2012 alone. The huge increase of immigrants (that subsequently doubled the immigrant population in the EU) is reflective of increasing immigrant lines and new populations European nations are faced with everyday. Additionally, 14 of the main EU member states had much higher levels of immigration than emigration, creating more issues surrounding population growth. In addition, Germany reported the largest numbers of immigrants that any other nation states, with over 590,000 immigrants crossing its borders in 2012 alone.

As stated above, immigration continues to dominate the political arena, especially as more and more migrants travel to European countries in search of new economic, political and social opportunities. The issue of immigration is therefore a very important topic to analyze and understand as the world continues to face higher levels of immigration based on the increase of globalization and environmental and political refugees. In addition to the individuals issues each country faces in regards to these immigrants, it is important to examine this issues from the very macro-level of regional organization, to understand the best way to change policies around immigrants.

**Question:**

Germany is one of six founding members of the European Union, in addition to France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg. Germany now has the largest population in EU, with 15.9% of the EU population living within German borders. In addition to the substantial population numbers in within Germany, Germany is also considered the economic powerhouse of the EU. Although the EU was originally created in the wake of WWII to help European countries rebuild from the infrastructural and economic hardships brought on indirectly by German actions, Germany is now one of the strongest economic and political leaders in the EU. Although there is some criticism of Germany for not taking a stronger role as a leader in the EU, there may also be some hesitation to stand strong stances in Europe due to Germany’s turbulent past. For my research, I want to examine the relationships between Germany and the EU and how these relationships may affect legislation around immigration. I also will consider the perceived relationship between the EU and Germany throughout the German public (perhaps focusing on those of school age) and whether or not they view this relationship as affecting the processes and laws around immigration.

I have already learned a lot about the history of the European Union and Germany’s involvement in its formation. Germany is a very interesting member of the EU because they are one of the main reasons for its creation, and now is one of the most influential members of the organization. For example, Germany is arguably the economic powerhouse of the EU. Also, many politicians in Germany and much more interested in staying a part of the EU compared to other nations due to their position of power and the benefits they receive from membership. I want to further explore the position of Germany in the EU and discover if the general public expresses the same sentiment about Germany’s relationships in the EU.

**Cultural Sensitivity:**

I have many biases that may affect my research from many different parts of my life. For starters, I will have to understand the bias that comes from my childhood in the United States. I grew up in a stable, middle-class household of American citizens. My parents are both very open minded and supportive, and I may have to check how casual and open I am with people who may not be used to that. In addition, I am from a majority group, as a white woman, and therefore may not be able to relate to the stories and backgrounds of some immigrants. Additional, by growing up in a household of citizens, I have never had to deal with the pressures and struggles that come from migrating to a new nation.

I have had many opportunities due to my family that I may not have received otherwise. One of those opportunities is my education. However, due to the good education I am receiving, I may have a bias based on my academic background and previous exposure to these issues. I have spent a lot of my academic career studying issues in the realm of international relations, and through my pervious studies I have gained some perspective on the issues that are facing Germany and their immigrant population today. I hope that I can go into this new form of research with an open mind and that I can readjust my understandings of issues in Germany based on the new information I receive.

**Daily Schedule**

People: Dr. Timo Lochocki – Professor of Social Science. He is teaching two classes this summer focusing on the economic crisis of the European Union and the reactions to it both internally and externally, and a course focus on the history and current challenges of the EU, especially in regards to the line between supranational integration and national sovereignty. I hope to understand further the critiques of the EU in the German context

Places: Humbolt University, potentially also going to talk to people outside of academia

Equipment: Tape recorder, digital camera, logbook

Info I’ll Gather: Hopefully get notes from interviews, as well as some observations of how people respond to the questions

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**Betty**

**Background:**

At the beginning of the 20th century, migration from Turkey to Germany was largely due to the economic and political connection between the Ottoman and German empires. The second phase of migration was because of German companies’ large request of cheaper labor in heavy industries. During that period, Turkish immigrants rose to a peak of 617,531 people. Even though the recruitment policy was abolished later that century, the number of Turkish people was still rising at a fast rate because of the family reunion and Turkish children born in Germany (Worbs, 2003).

The large influx of foreign labor in Germany was believed to have great impact on local labor market including rising unemployment rate and decreasing wage for local Germans. However, the study by Pischke and Velling proves that the assumption is actually affected by many variables like participation rate of foreign workers and the class variation of different workers. So there is no direct evidence to prove that foreign labor has any negative impact on the local labor market (Pischke& Velling, 1997). By comparison, the immigrants are put in a much more inferior position in a new social context due to their disadvantages in education and language skills (Kogan, 2004). If these are the factors that prevent guest-worker immigrants from integrating into the society, ethnic discrimination definitely plays a large role in the job attainment for the second-generation immigrants.

It is important that the local and global communities understand what kind of employment situation Turkish immigrants are facing right now, since they are the largest immigration group in Germany. Having a job opportunity is the only way to ensure a stable living standard. If this basic right is violated simply because of their immigration identity, it will be unfair for Turkish youths who get the same education and speak the same language as the local German youths. So, in this research project, I will investigate whether the immigration identity prevents them from getting equal job opportunities as local Germans and how does this affect immigrants’ living standard.

**Question:**

My question is that how does the Turkish immigrant’s identity affect their acceptance in the job training system and their future career choices?

Racial inequality still plays a large role in German labor market. Even though second generations in Germany get the same education and speak the same language as their peers, they still don’t have the same job opportunities as the local youths. One aspect of the disparity can be shown in the dual system in Germany. A dual system has two parts, the first part is the apprenticeships in a company and second part is vocational education at a vocational school (Faist,1993). This job-training program helps students get fully prepared for future careers. However, participation of Turks in the job-training program is 2 times lower than that of German youths, and the unemployment rate among Turkish youths is 2 times higher than that of local German youths (Faist, 1993). So, the ethnic inequality still prevents immigrants from getting the same work opportunities as the local Germans. Moreover, even though Turkish youths can get into the job-training program, their career choices in the future might be limited. According to the study, most of the Turkish immigrants have the “traditional” occupations like auto mechanic, electrician, painter, hairdresser and doctor’s receptionist, but they don’t have easy access to IT sector (Worbs, 2003).

The discussion of employment situation in Germany is related to my major, but this topic is not only restricted to the Economics perspective. Unlike the common factors that affect people’s opportunity of getting a job, including education background, interpersonal skills and work experience, immigrants are also affected by their identity. In the United States, racial discrimination still exists in the workforce even with the enforcement of law. So, identity is an inevitable consideration when discussing employment situation in multiracial countries.

**Cultural Sensitivity:**

As a Chinese student studying in America, my perspective is usually a mixture of Chinese culture and American culture. In China, there is not much racial issue, so that people won’t get discriminated against in the workforce or have disparity in access to getting jobs. The only factors that will affect Chinese getting a job are their education level and interpersonal relations. So, this topic is exciting for me since I have never experienced the racial inequality in my country.

However, as an international student in America, I do experienced or heard many stories about racial disparity in getting a job. Due to various policies, it is really hard for international students to find a job in the U.S. There are strict restrictions of hiring international students, especially for certain job types like doctors, nurses and lawyers. Even though America is a culturally diverse country, it still has certain stereotypes towards race. For example, people always assume that all Asians are good at engineers and computers so that they should be working in related areas like IT or industrial companies. Just like the Turkish immigrants in Germany, most of them have the “traditional” occupations like auto mechanic, electrician, painter, hairdresser and doctor’s receptionist, but they don’t have easy access to IT sector (Worbs, 2003). This unequal distribution of workers in the labor market can also reflect racial inequality.

 **Daily Schedule:**

Berlin:

Week1:

People: Meet with professors or students in the Economics Department at Humboldt University.

Place: Humboldt University

Equipment: Phone, pen, notebook.

Information: I will mainly ask about their opinion of the unemployment situation in Germany, especially for immigrants. I will ask about whether their University is doing any research related to my topic so that we probably can discuss more about that.

Week 2:

People: Meet with students in the dual education system.

Place: A vocational school called OSZ IMT (address: Haarlemer Straße 23-27

12359 Berlin)

Equipment: Phone, pen, notebook.

Information: I will interview the stuff and students in that school. I will ask the stuff members about the participation of local German students and Turkish students in their school.

Week 3:

People: Meet with students who are doing vocational training in the companies.

Place: Private companies in the dual education system. (Need to check whether this is possible)

Equipment: Phone, pen, notebook.

Information: Interview with the students and employers in the company.

Jena:

People: Professors and students in Jena University

Place: Jena University

Equipment: Phone, pen, notebook

Information: Interview with the students and professors.

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**Reem-- “Identity Economics: College Major and Identity”**

Germany is a land of immigrants, but for decades it has shunned that classification. Germany is a “reluctant land of immigration,” yet one of the top destinations for immigrants. The *menschen mit Migrationshintergrund* (people with a migratory background—immigrants) make up around twenty percent of Germany’s population, including vie million “native born” second and third generation individuals. Around one-fourth of these foreign national residents are of Turkish origin. Fifty-five percent are from Central and Eastern Europe (Kim 2009).

The history of modern immigration to Germany is that of wartime adjustment. Between 1945 and 1949, 11.6 million refugees arrived in Germany. Between 1949 and 1961, 3.5 million individuals crossed the East/West border to settle in Western Germany. By the time the Berlin Wall went up in 1961, West Germany was faced with a scarcity of labor in certain sectors of the economy. Labor recruitment agreements were signed with various nations, starting with Italy in 1955 and continuing with Greece, Spain, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia and Yugoslavia between 1960 and 1968. Fourteen million migrants came into West Germany between 1961 and 1973, 11 million of whom eventually left; by 1989, the number of foreign residents in the Federal Republic of Germany had risen to almost 4.9 million individuals (Card 2007).

Initially, that these immigrants would reside permanently in Germany was not taken into account. However, by the mid-1970s, many immigrants began to stay in Germany after their labor contracts ended. German politicians began offering Turkish guest workers 10,000 marks as an incentive to go home, but the number of takers on this offer was disappointing (Steinborn 2011). The immigration law, unchanged since 1913, was finally formed in 2000. The *jus soli* concept of citizenship was extended to the children of immigrants born in Germany. The sojourn time for adult foreigners was decreased from fifteen to seven years, but a language test was added. Furthermore, a green card initiative to make employment of high-qualified foreign IT skilled workers was added (Card 2007).

Immigrants have contributed immensely to Germany’s ‘miracle’ economic growth post-WWII. Immigrants have a high net contribution the pension system, and although they also place a burden on this system, the longer they stay in Germany, the less of a burden they place (due to years’ worth of paying into the system). Economic analysis estimates that the miracle economic growth of the 1960s and the 1970s would not have been possible at the same pace as without guest workers. The GNP in 1992, for instance, was 6% higher with the contribution of immigrants, and the GNP growth rate with immigrants was 3.5% (versus 2.0% without immigrants). In addition, immigrants create jobs. 1.4 million immigrants were employed in 1992, and 90,000 jobs were created. The unemployment rate would have been 0.2% higher in 1992 without immigration (Card 2007, Kerr 2008).

Despite their positive impact on the economy, immigrants have been criticized in Germany for many of the same reason they are criticized in the United States. Some concerns include the burden immigrants place on the pension system due to their higher population growth rate. Other concerns include immigrants ‘taking’ native German’s jobs and depressing wages. Based on data from 1975 to 1997, a ten percent increase in the share of immigrants in the workforce lowered wages by less than one percent and did not increase unemployment. In addition, it may not be true that immigrants are substitutes for German workers due to immigrants’ lower education and experience levels (Bonin 2005). Nearly half of foreign migrant workers are employed in labor-intensive and low-wage industries—jobs that native Germans may not desire because they have higher education levels that allow them to secure high-paying, high-skill jobs (Kim 2008).

Immigration is a reality for individuals who live in developed countries, as much as it is a reality for individuals who migrate from less developed nations. Even in nations that embrace multiculturalism, such as the United States, anti-immigrant sentiment exists. While this sentiment may not be in the form of explicit racial epithets or discriminatory language, it is often shrouded in false economic and social arguments. In Germany, the language used to discuss immigration is quite distinct in that it clearly demarcates between ethnic Germans and ‘aliens.’ For instance, *auslandiche Mitburger* refers to ‘foreign co-citizens’ and *Jugend mit Migrationshintergrund* is the term for ‘youth of migrant background.’ German citizens ‘of foreign descent’ are referred to as *Deutsche auslandisher Herkunft.* These vocabulary terms “protects the cultural integrity of German national identity while ‘claiming’ to allow various ethnic groups full citizen rights” (Baban 2006). This ‘us vs. them’ language is also prevalent in the United States, emphasizing that immigration is still a contested issue in the so-called ‘mixed salad.’

**Question:**

Choosing a college major is an important decision that has long-term impacts on an individual, especially with regards to career trajectory and future income. This decision is therefore an economic one: each major must be scrutinized through a cost-benefit analysis. There are a variety of factors that influence a student’s decision to major in a particular subject. These may include projected future earnings, degree of prestige, personal interests, academic strengths, and the desired amount of time spent in higher education. Other factors, related to identity, may also explain student’s choice of major—ethnic identity, gender, and citizenship status. The field of identity economics is still newly burgeoning, and I aim to align my research topic within this sub field.

I will investigate the impact of ethnic and immigrant identity on college students’ choice of major in Germany. I am primarily interested in how ethnic identity and immigrant status affects student decisions; however, college major is inextricably tied to other factors, such as gender and socioeconomic background.

Identity “explains behavior that seems detrimental to economic success,” as identity creates externalities, affects payoffs, changes preferences, and contains “consequences for economic well-being” (Casey 2010). Identity can be viewed as both an externality (for both the individuals and third parties), as well as a choice that may or may not be proscribed—individuals who have no physical characteristics outside of the norm may be able to construct their own identities, while individuals who are marked outsiders may have their identities predefined by society (Akerlof 2000). Theories of ethnic identity and its relation to economics posit that ethnic identity can be thought of as a bipolar linear model, where “strong ethnic identity implies a weak sense of majority,” and “the more an individual commits to and feels for one country, the less he/she commits to and feels for the other country” (Casey 2010 , Constant 2008). In addition, identity may force individuals to “trade off economic gain for social reassurance” (Pendakur).

Identity is clearly related to economic outcomes, yet identity is rarely discussed in traditional economic textbooks. Evidence from Germany and the United States demonstrates that ethnic identity can impact economic outcome, even for generations after the initial immigrant cohort. In the United States, for instance, the children of better-educated immigrants tend to be better educated, earn higher wages, and are more likely to marry outside of their father’s ethnic group (Card 2007). One poignant example of this trend is the gap in achievement between the children of East Asian and Latin American immigrants: the former group tends to be well-educated and have positions in high-paying STEM-fields, while the latter group tends to cluster in low-wage, unskilled labor.

In Germany, there are marked differences in the economic outcomes of the initial immigrant cohort, the first generation, and the second generation. In the initial immigrant/first generation group, no significant relationship exists between possessing a strong German identity and economic outcome. For females in this group, however, a stronger German identity correlates to slightly higher employment prospects. In the second generation, the only statistically significant relationship exists between males, a strong ethnic identity, and employment: higher levels of ethnic identity correlate to higher employment prospects. This could be attributed to second-generation males drawing upon ethnicity-based networks for career prospects, especially given that self-employment and entrepreneurship among ethnic minorities in Germany is on the rise (Casey 2010, Volker 1976). Ethnic minorities need not be viewed as a monolithic entity: economic prospects vary between different ethnic groups. In Germany, for instance, second-generation male Greeks and Yugoslavs find their economic outcomes to be a significant improvement from previous generations, while second-generation male Italians, Central/Eastern Europeans, and Turks find that their economic outcomes are worsening. For women, only second-generation Yugoslavs and Greeks find their economic outcomes improving (Algan 2000).

College major fits in with the general topic of identity in that the choice of a major can represent a radical departure from the norm or solidify expectations. A college major may signal that an individual is attempting to break free of the conventional, or may be a continuation of a pattern that is entrenched in a family’s history. In terms of ethnic identity, choosing a prestigious college major, one with a high expected rate of return, may be a mechanism for integration or even assimilation. Due to xenophobia and an ethnically-based definition of nationalism, Germans with ‘hyphenated identities’ may be “better assimilated than their parents [but] less well-integrated” (Shaeffer 2014). A college major that is viewed as contributing to society may help with integration efforts. In the United States, for instance, Asians are statistically overrepresented in engineering and science fields, while immigrants tend to choose business and technical fields, emphasizing how minorities may choose college majors based on the subjective notion of what constitutes contributing to society (Ma 2009).

College majors also impact identity in that a college major “affects placement on the social ladder and movement along the social ladder” (Woniak 2008). Students from socioeconomically disadvantaged families may favor majors that are relatively risk-averse, such as those in STEM, because they tend to have a high rate of return and may help them move up the social ladder. Students from socioeconomically well-off families may also be pressured by parents’ expectations to take a relatively risk averse course as well, to avoid “downward mobility”. However, an interesting trend is that of students from socioeconomically well-off families choosing to major in the liberal arts/humanities, possibly because they can choose to enter fields with significantly less expected earnings. (Ma 2009). Socioeconomic status, when combined with ethnicity, may present a more robust picture of ethnic minorities’ choice of college major, since ethnic minorities in Germany typically have higher unemployment rates and lower salaries (Kim 2008).

Ethnic identity and socioeconomic status are not the only factors that go into making a decision about college major. Expected earnings are a key factor, more statistically significant for men than women; perceived probability of success is another, lesser discussed determinant. Students who major in the liberal arts or education perceive their probability of success in science fields to be less than it actually is statistically. For females, the perceived probability of success in education is greatest (Montmarquette 2002). Gender is another important factor. Male concentration in technical fields is greater than female concentration by a factor of three while females lead in life, health, the social sciences, and education (Ma 2009).

To my knowledge, a study that investigates all these factors simultaneously does not exist; I will attempt to collect data that will allow me to look into how all of these factors affect students’ college major decisions.

**Cultural Sensitivity:**

My biggest bias coming into this project is that I come from a very open personal and family culture where anything can be discussed openly, which is something that is not true for the United States as a whole and most likely not Germany. Issues relating to identity and culture are still difficult to talk about freely, and I will be trying to get opinions that are honest as possible. This is why my survey responses will be anonymous, and interviewee’s names will be changed and opinions will never be able to be traced back to a single individual.

My other biases include my position as a minority majoring in economics. As a woman, and an Arab-American, I am in the minority in my major, which presents unique challenges. In society as a whole, I am more inclined to believe that my minority status creates complex challenges, as well. Therefore, I am more sympathetic to the issues and struggles of minorities, which is a bias that I need to keep in check as I am interviewing and surveying non-minorities as well.

I hypothesize that ethnic and immigrant identity is tied to choice of college major in that the children of immigrants choose majors that are considered ‘prestigious’ or ‘valuable’ by society in order to better integrate and to demonstrate that they are committed to contributing to society. I believe that this trend will be apparent in both the children of immigrants to the United States and Germany.

**Daily Schedule:**

*Before Departure—Seattle:*

-Research reading: Already complete (have read around 30 sources related to topic; see reference section)

-Week nine/ten: interview 5-6 students and pass out a survey to at least 30

*Berlin:*

-Wednesday, June 17: Talk to professors, students at Humboldt, assess best way to go about interviewing/surveying

-Action plan: interview/survey students on days when we have class at Humboldt, on one of the free days if necessary

-Can also interview students we meet in hostel from other universities in Germany and/or high school ‘seniors’ (final two years of Gymnasium)

-Key people: professors in economics departments, Career Center

 -Make sure to survey/interview students in a variety of departments

Equipment: Notebook, pens, copies of survey, iPhone (to record interviews if necessary), printer, computer

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**KARINNE:**

BACKGROUND

In 2001, after receiving results from the 2000 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Germany learned that its students scored near the bottom of the list of industrialized nations.

Known as the “PISA shock”, the results highlighted many flaws within the German education system. More specifically, students of migrant backgrounds performed among the worst in the world. Various scholars and educators credit this to the tripartite structure of the German education system, which tracks students into three levels of secondary school: Gymnasium, for high performing students, Realschule, for intermediate level students, and Hauptschule, for the lowest performing students. Student tracking continually places ethnically non-German students into Hauptschule, where they face limited educational opportunities as students and career opportunities as adults (Open Society Justice Initiative, 2013).

Berlin was one city that decided to alter its system in order to improve the education of at-risk students. Beginning in the 2010-2011 school year, the Senate of Berlin eliminated the two lower levels forming a combined school, Sekundarschule (Andell, 17-18). Under the change, students in either school are supposed to have access to higher education. While the PISA scores in Germany have improved since 2000, immigrant students still perform at much lower levels than their native-German counterparts in Berlin. Discrimination still exists for students of migrant backgrounds.

Berlin is one of many cities across the world facing issues regarding migration and demographic restructuring due to globalization. Education is a key aspect when addressing the perpetuating cycle of low-performing immigrant students and high levels of unemployment within the immigrant community. It is important to examine how at-risk students’ needs are being addressed during school in order to broaden their opportunities in society.

However, from my research, education tends to be a divisive issue among policymakers and even everyday citizens in Germany. Whether or not the tracking system provides an equal opportunity for students, regardless of their racial, socio-economic background is at the center of my research.

QUESTION

How has the streamlining of Berlin’s tripartite education system to combine Hauptschule and Realschule into Sekundarschule affected the upward mobility of migrant students, and how does this new system compare to Berlin’s previous tripartite system?

Background: Beginning in the 2010-2011 school year, the Senate of Berlin eliminated the two lower levels of its tripartite secondary schooling system (Realschule and Hauptschule), forming Sekundarschule (Open Society Foundations [OSF], 2013). Under the change, students in either Gymnasium (the highest level of secondary schooling) or Sekundarschule could take the Arbitur, the entrance exam into higher education; however, Sekundarschule also offered a certificate for students seeking vocational training instead of attending a university (OSF, 2013). In addition to this change, policymakers required that Gymnasium schools could only handpick 65-70 percent of its students, while the rest had to be picked through a lottery-based system, no matter how well the student performed in primary school (OSF, 2013). Overall, Berlin sought to increase the chances of a student previously at-risk; therefore, seeking to boost the academic standing of the country as a whole. While the PISA scores in Germany have improved since 2000, immigrant students in Berlin still perform at much lower levels than their native-German counterparts.

Relevance: I chose this research question because I have a strong interest in education and education systems. Last quarter, I took Frances McCue’s “Teaching to Transgress” course and in it I learned about the structure of education systems across the world. Because our program’s theme touches on immigration and German identity, I decided to look into immigration’s role in the current state of German education and more specifically Berlin’s education. When I learned that Berlin very recently altered its system, I decided to center my research on this change and explore the education of marginalized students. So far, I have learned that on a superficial level, it seems as though students of migrant backgrounds now have greater opportunities to move upward in their education; however, reports show a contrary report, indicating that ethnically non-German students are still facing discrimination within their education.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Having grown up and received an American education, where schooling is roughly the same for every student (elementary, middle and high school), I have a negative bias towards Germany’s tracking system. My assumption made about Gymnasium is that it serves to benefit high-performing, middle to upper class students, while students of migrant backgrounds are shafted a top-tier education because they simply cannot compete. They might not have the language proficiency or live in an area with quality teachers; for that, they suffer. I also find myself biased when I consider the age at which German students are tracked. As a fourth, fifth, or sixth grader, I find it hard to grasp that a student’s educational path is locked in. Children at that age are still developing their skills and knowledge. A student who might not grasp certain subjects in fourth grade does not necessarily mean they will not in 10th grade.

Another bias I have relates to higher education. I make my assumptions about Gymnasium and Sekundarschule with the idea that the best, top-tier path for a student is to attend a university. I was raised in a culture where this was encouraged and accepted. To not attend college was looked down upon. However, not every student will thrive in the university setting. While it can improve an individual’s opportunities in the job sector, forcing every student to identify with this belief could be sorely interpreted.

I also recognize that I have not experienced immigration and the challenges associated with it firsthand. I am a white, middle class American citizen who has not experienced racial discrimination in the school setting. Therefore, I approach this topic from an outsider’s perspective, as I am unfamiliar with the intricacies of the Berlin school system and the life of an immigrant living and working in Berlin.

Although I am unfamiliar with my topic of study, I can sympathize with minority groups, having worked in San Diego and Tanzania with minority groups and cultures.

DAILY SCHEDULE

**Seattle-**

I plan to gather and compile my preliminary research into my research proposal. I plan to research in depth about the structure of Berlin’s education system and keep myself updated on the latest news regarding education and education politics.

**Berlin**-

*Week 1:*

In the first week, I plan to meet with a Humboldt education professor such as Prof. Dr. Matthias Jerusalem from Humboldt who is the Managing Director of the Education Studies department as well as a professor knowledgeable in immigration (will email Manuela for contacts). I plan to discuss the education system in Berlin in light of the recent reforms. I will ask questions like: What did the PISA shock look like in Berlin/how did people react? Why do you think students performed so low? How does Gymnasium serve students versus Sekundarschule? What are your opinions about the current state of education in Berlin? What are some emerging changes? How are immigrant students treated? What kinds of needs do immigrant students in Berlin have? From there, I will further develop my research questions and work with Manuela to create a survey for students.

*Week 2:*

I plan to make classroom visits during this week and hopefully talk to teachers about the switch from a tripartite system to a bipartite system. How do they feel? Has it helped or hurt immigrant students? I also plan to survey students about their opinions towards the two different schooling paths and how they view themselves in regards to these paths. I hope to visit schools with large majorities of students with migrant backgrounds and discuss with teachers their specific needs.

*Week 3:*

I will meet again with the professors at Humboldt to further clarify any things I have learned and results from the survey; maybe do one more classroom visit. I will also approach Berliners and ask randomly their opinions on the education system and what their education looked like. Most of this week I anticipate working on my research and compiling all that I’ve learned.

The equipment I think I will need is: voice recorder for interviews, survey materials, printer, computer, and other writing/recording materials.

**Jena-**

*Week 4*

In Jena I would like to make another classroom visit and meet with university students to discuss their education paths. This week will also be a work week, compiling and analyzing and writing.

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**Anna- “Teacher Preparation for Language Minority Students”**

**Background**

Teaching is a highly respected profession in Germany. This may be because German citizens recognize the extensive training that teachers receive before ever entering a classroom. While there are different requirements for teachers depending on what age and content area they will teach (primary, lower secondary, higher secondary, vocation, mentally/physically disabled students), there are two main phases of teacher education in Germany. First, a future teacher receives a university degree. It is required that future teachers study at least two subjects areas as well as educational theory and psychology. The second phase of teacher education consists of two years of practical training in Germany’s schools. To be certified, teachers need to pass both written and oral examinations as well as write a thesis at the end of their program. However despite this extensive training, many believe that Germany’s teachers are not prepared to teach Germany’s growing population of language minority students.

Seven percent of Germany’s population are non-native German speakers. The most popular minority language is Turkish which is spoken by 1.8 million German residents. When these language minority students begin school at the age of six, few resources exist for them. Language minority students are disproportionately placed into Germany’s lowest track schools. Consequently, only 3.3% of language minority students educated in Germany attend university. The German education system is clearly failing language minority students.

**Question**

How are German primary school teachers trained to teach language minority students? What methods of instruction are used in German primary school classrooms to teach language minority students? Are Germany’s language minority students being served in German primary schools?

I hope to investigate these questions while in Berlin this summer. I think the topic is incredibly relevant and important considering the increasing number of language minority children in Berlin’s primary schools.

**Cultural Sensitivity**

It is important to note that I grew up and have spent my entire life in the United States which has no official language and where over three hundred languages are spoken by citizens across the country. In my hometown of Seattle, Washington, it is absolutely normal to sit on a public bus and hear Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and many other languages spoken. Furthermore, due to my cultural upbringing, I do not view speakers of other languages as any less American than if they were speaking English.

I also attended a very diverse middle school where diversity was highly valued and celebrated. As a consequence I see diversity as an asset and something that we should seek rather than subdue. Furthermore in my middle school and high school ESL classes were offered to language minority students so I view it as normal to have supports or pull-out classes for language minority students.

As someone interested in teaching elementary school in low-income and diverse settings, I also may be biased in the fact that I think these students need and deserve great resources including well trained, culturally competent teachers. I have taken several classes at UW including “Teaching the Bilingual/Bicultural Student” and “Teaching English Language Learners” that have helped inform the way I think about the education of minorities and that have made me partial to bilingual education programs that help language minority students master not only the dominant language but their home language, too.

**Daily Schedule**

Pre-Departure:

Before departing for Berlin, I will gather further background information on teacher education programs in Berlin. I will reach out to Teacher Educators at Humboldt University and Freie University to schedule one-on-one interviews during Weeks 1-3. I will also ask if I can survey classes of future teachers regarding their feelings about their preparation to teach language minority students. I will also reach out to school administrators/teachers at various Berlin schools to schedule one-on-one interviews during Weeks 1-3. I would really like to visit the Aziz Nesin Grundschule in Kreuzberg as this school offers a German-Turkish bilingual program. I would also like to interview teachers at nearby schools in Kreuzberg that do not offer this formal program such as the Reinhardswald Grundschule, Burgermeister-Herz Grundschule, Lemgo Grundschule, Hunsruck Grundschule, Heinrich Zille Grundschule, and City Grundschule. I think that my research will be most accurate if I am able to talk with a large number of teachers that serve language minority students.

Week 1:

 I will begin conducting interviews of professors at Humboldt and Freie Universities, education students at Humboldt and Freie Universities, and teachers at various Kreuzberg schools.

Week 2:

 I will continue conducting interviews of professors at Humboldt and Freie Universities, education students at Humboldt and Freie Universities, and teachers at various Kreuzberg schools.

Week 3:

 I will compile the data I have collected and look for trends within the data.

Week 4:

 I will summarize my data and make generalizations given what I have observed. I will prepare my presentation which will include my recommendations for Berlin’s teacher preparation programs to better serve language minority students.

People:

* Professors of Education at Humboldt University
* Professors of Education at Freie University
* Students of Education at Humboldt University
* Students of Education at Freie University
* Teachers at various elementary schools located in Kreuzberg

Places:

* Humboldt University School of Education
* Freie University School of Education
* Aziz Nesin Grundschule
* Reinhardswald Grundschule
* Burgermeister-Herz Grundschule
* Lemgo Grundschule
* Hunsruck Grundschule
* Heinrich Zille Grundschule
* City Grundschule

Necessary Equipment:

* Tape Recorder for One-on-One Interviews
* Surveys (Requires access to printer)

Information I plan to gather:

* From Teacher Educators-
	+ How are teachers trained in your program to teach language minority students?
	+ Are there any diversity or cultural competency courses required?
	+ Are there education students in your program from immigrant backgrounds?
	+ Do you think language minority students are being served by Germany’s schools and German teachers?
* From Education students-
	+ Do you feel prepared to teach language minority students? Why or why not?
	+ How could you be better prepared to teach language minority students?
	+ What challenges do you see teaching language minority students?
	+ Do you think language minority students are being served by Germany’s schools and German teachers?
* From Current Teachers-
	+ Do you teach language minority students?
	+ Do you feel you received adequate training to teach language minority students?
	+ Do you think language minority students are being served by Germany’s schools and German teachers?

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