INTEC: Integration and Naturalisation tests: the new way of citizenship

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Organisation

Comparative research in nine member states:
6 funded by European Integration Fund:
   UK, Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Latvia,
DK funded by Danish human rights & Centre for Migration law
2 at their own expense: Hungary and France

330 interviews:
206 with migrants
46 language teachers
41 public officials
37 immigrant organisations
Effects of Integration and Naturalisation Tests

Comparison between 9 MS of:
- political debate and policy development
- organisation and level of the national tests
- Perception of the tests by immigrants and professionals
- Effects of the tests by statistical data
- Effects of the tests by interviews and evaluations

Purpose: answering the question: do the tests promote integration? Do they have other (un)intended effects? (To what extent) is this policy to be recommended?
Tests for Three stages of residence: nov 2010

Admission:
• Since 2006 onward applied in 3 MS (NL, Ger, Fr)
• & planned in 3 MS (Austria, DK, VK) (now applied)

Permanent residence right:
• Since 2002 onward applied in 7 MS (except Belgium and Hungary)

Naturalisation:
• 1993 Hungary & 1999 Latvia,
• Since 2002 onward 5 MS uniformed tests
Admission tests Spouses Differences

- Level: from A1 minus (Fr, DK, NL) to A1 (Ger, Austria, UK)
- Language (Ger, UK, Austria) or language & society (NL, DK, Fr)
- Oral (NL, DK, UK) or written (Ger, Austria, Fr)
- Certificate (Ger, UK), examination (NL, DK, Fr)

- Offer language courses (Ger and Fr)
- offer education material (NL, DK)
- No offer (UK, Austria)

- Consequences of failure: more education (Fr) or
- no admission (NL, Ger, Austria, DK, UK)
Differences and similarities

Target groups:

All: no spouses of EU/EEA citizens

NI: no spouses from Turkish citizens (EC/Turkey treaty)

Germany and Netherlands: no third country nationals from ‘western’ countries (US, Canada, South Korea, Japan etc)

United Kingdom: no third country nationals from ‘majority English speaking country’

Costs:

France: free, DK €400, Germany €610, UK £644, NL €1440

Exemptions, all: sufficient language knowledge

Or physical or mental impediment
Purpose of the test

- All: promote integration
- NL: get by after arrival, more deliberate choice, own responsibility, selection on motivation and perseverance
  Prevent 2d generation Turkish and Moroccan marry abroad
- Germany: combat forced marriages, independent from family-in-law, protection social welfare state
- UK: employment prospects, combat forced marriages.
- DK: responsibility migrant, proof of motivation, foretaste
- Austria: one of the more restrictive measures
Effects of the tests: statistical data

• First year: Drop NL: 40 %, Germany and France: 25 %. After this year gradual raise of applications

• NL: most reduction Turkish and Moroccan (more marriages in NL), lower educated, elderly persons, family reunification. Less applications, high pass rate (90%), language level hardly improved (comparison figures)

• Germany: more reduction Turkey, Kosovo, Russia, Thailand. After 6 months more recovery visas issued, but lower pass rate (68%): higher number of retakes. Attending course of Goethe institute promotes the chance to pass
Effects and perceptions: interviews

- Stress for the preparation, time and money
- Part of respondents felt offended, obligation not necessary
- (post)war countries: no embassy, no facilities (courses or internet, electricity), unsafe circumstances

- Illiterates, low educated and elderly persons face most difficulties
- Language level hardly improved (said teachers/ migrants)
- Courses: better informed/more realistic expectations
- Good quality courses influence pass rate
- Dutch education material: too limited number of languages
Integration improved? Tests, figures, interviews

- Language: only slight improvement listening skills
- Learning language after arrival much more effective

- Integration: too early to conclude, other factors determinant

Harming integration:
- stress, delay and separation
- Dark number of non-applicants: permanent separation, migrating illegally to EU, or via other MS.

- Good education can lead to more deliberate choice, social contacts and more motivation for further language study
Does it serve other purposes?

Combat of forced marriages: no evidence found. All respondents highly doubted this; no statistics available on forced marriages.

Less independency of family-in-law: no evidence found. Social pressure is higher, language improvement too low; other factors crucial.

No selection on motivation or perseverance, but on education and age.

Reduction of family reunification: partly yes, partly delay.
Integration test for permanent residence rights

- Passing integration test condition for permanent residence:
  - Austria A2 since 2005
  - Denmark B1 since 2002 (2011 active citizenship test)
  - France A1.1. (below A1) since 2007
  - Germany B1 since 2005
  - Latvia A2 since 2006
  - Netherlands A2 since 2010 (since 2007 financial sanctions)
  - UK B1 since 2007 (or 1 higher level while attending course)
  - No renewal temporary permit: possible in Ger, Austria and Latvia (rarely applied), Netherlands in future
  - Financial sanctions: Austria, Flanders, Dk, Ger, NI
Political arguments

- DK (1999) and NL (1998): obligatory attendance language courses. 2001/2002: DK: more emphasis responsibility migrants, NL: obliged effort is too permissive, obliged result at higher level is necessary.
- Germany: Dutch and Danish example, participation and more independence women

Overall: failed integration, low social-economic participation, social segregation (riots in UK)
Second wave: make migrants familiar with national history, culture, values and principles of liberal democracy
Hidden aim: select well integrated, set natives at ease
National differences

- Obligation to attend courses: France (if this is determined in the welcoming contract), Flemish region of Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Netherlands (municipalities can oblige).
- Latvia and United Kingdom: no public courses provided

Costs:
- France, Flanders and Denmark free
- Germany and Austria: immigrants pay (Ger about 645 euro, Austria 750 to 2500 euro), partly reimbursed if the test is passed within two years.
- Netherlands: in current practice: no costs, in future: no public courses offered, possibility of loan for private course.
Effects of integration tests: statistics

- Pass rates vary widely:
  - France 90 %, NI 79 %, UK and Latvia 74%, Ger 90%

- But not all took a test, pass rate is not representative. In future: lower pass rates?
- Austria 81,000 obliged (until June 2009), 7,480 refunded
- Netherlands 127,000 obliged from 2007, 24,000 took the test end 2009.
- UK, Netherlands and Germany: Nationality effect: best pass rates for immigrants from developed or western countries.
- Background: young and high educated higher pass rates
Effects on security of residence

Denmark: Number of applications for permanent residence:
   - drop annually from 12,000 to 5,500
   - drop of rejected applications from 20 to 40%
   - Refugees from 20% to 50% rejections
   - From 2010: more strict requirements

Netherlands: since Jan 2010 decline in number of applications
   - passrate: younger than 35: 85%, older: 60%

Germany and Austria: since 2010 obligation to pass
Austria: since 2006 46,000 received a temporary permit:
   - In 2010 only 9,200 had fulfilled obligation
Effects and perceptions: interviews

• Groups who face the most difficulties:
  • Refugees (traumatised or low educated)
  • illiterate, other alphabet, low educated
  • Old migrants, and living in MS longtime (NI and Flanders)

• Exemptions too strict: only proven and permanent physical and mental impedement
  • limited recognition sufficient language knowledge

• Risk of non renewal creates fear and frustrates integration:
  • Less security, but also less possibilities on a temporary permit
Effects and perception: interviews

• Education is appreciated, participants are motivated.
• A large part takes courses without obligation
• Organisation courses is too rigid (level, times)
• Teachers: attendance would be less without obligation for: women from closed communities, elderly, but also migrants with jobs or young children (hard to organise)
• Migrants appreciated language the most (helps promotion)
• Societal knowledge: difficult or subjective (values, norms)

• Teachers : level too low for labour market (even B1)
• But too high for elderly and ‘oldcomers’
Conclusions

• State responsibility regarding education is crucial for improving language level
• State responsibility regarding access to labour market and rights and non discrimination crucial for integration
• Raising levels raised and strengthening requirements not based on evaluations and facts: political preference
• Connection between knowledge level and residence rights:
  • Shift responsibility significantly more to migrants
  • Increase of stress and delay of family reunification;
  • Paradox: the most vulnerable migrants in a weaker residence right with less integration chances
Recommendation

• Ensure state support regarding language education
• Organise the education more flexible (evening courses, obligation for employer to be flexible)
• Reconsider the connection between a residence right and a knowledge level, as exclusion hampers integration
• No obligation for elderly migrants to attend education, but a proper offer
• For now: monitor effectiveness and side effects of the tests
• Research on ‘dark numbers’, migrants refrained from admission, becoming illegal after refusal renewal permit, or refraining from permanent right.
• Research on best practices effective integration policy