

THE IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION POLICY IN FRANCE

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Abstract: *Our research on the integration process is based on two important aspects underlined by Mohand Khellil in the integration process: the legal aspect and the aspect based on citizenship (Khellil, 2005, p. 24).*

Regarding the legal aspect of integration we can say that this refers to the status of an immigrant arrived in a different country. This aspect includes all the legal issues that an immigrant should face with, starting from the migration regime to which he is submitted, up to the acquisition of nationality considered to be the highest legal level of integration. In view of the importance of legal aspect, our first approach-at the macro level-concerning the immigration process, will focus on the analysis of laws which include the immigration process in France. Through this approach we will realize, at the same time, a description of what Massey considers to be the measures that should be taken when receiving an immigrant (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, & Taylor, 1993).

Alongside the laws which regularize immigration process, each country dispose of an integration policy or a model of immigrating integration. In this context after describing the main models of integration we will describe the characteristics of the integration model in France. In other terms, our approach at macro level will continue with an approach regarding integration policy in France.

Keywords: *integration, immigrants, policy.*

Integration model in France

Regarding its history and characteristics each country concerned about immigration process has developed customized integration models which are different for each country. Integration policy in Germany is based, for example, on a ethnic concept while in France is based on a political concept (Rea & Tripier, 2003, p. 96). The model of integration in France and in Grande Bretagne is different; the first one encourages the republican integration while the second one is based on communitarianism.

According to history ,France was formed by the combination of many populations which tried to ‘consolidate the national integration, but also to realize a political integration after the Revolution in 1789[...]. In fact, the ‘integration model in France’ focus on the role of the state’. (Boucher, 2000, p. 40). So, the political desideratum and the political integration purpose is to establish a collective and uniform identity in order to express the idea of ‘French nation’.

Consequently, the integration policy in France is considered a state policy focus on persons and not on community. This 'French model' interfere with the 'multicultural models'. Fighting against the fragmentation of nations and against the division of political society, a person who is settling down in France has to abandon his values and the values of its community and to close with the fundamental values that belong to France' (Boucher, 2000, p. 42).

Despite its differences, integration policies have permanent objectives for a long term. This includes policies aimed to support, encourage and guard immigrants in order to serve the national republican project. It is a long term process that concern both immigrants and his family. In the immigration process, the immigrants have to learn the social rules and to socialize according to the French society. Because this is a long term process-the new life of this person and, more often the life of his first and second descendent generation-the integration includes an encouragement policy in which the relative elements in order to regroup family represent-along with people that organize teaching of French, the school house of children and the professionalization of young people-the most important illustrations. (Boucher, 2000, p. 42) .

Additionally, in the model of French integration the transition process from immigrant to citizen comes true, preferentially, by the acquisition of French nationality. The acquisition of the nationality or not is going to implement according to the 'check of the non-existence at the applicant of a fault of assimilation where the practical criteria are the misunderstanding of language and the marital status against the law and order: at the very least'.

In the same approach of the republican project, three imperatives, nonnegotiable should be respected: the secularism, the founding principle of the republican order, the equality between women and men and finally the equality of chances for all. In fact, these imperatives guarantee religious neutrality, school access and consequently the access to the republic values. Besides, by excluding the French practices of 'positive discrimination' and the quotas of immigration, there we could talk about a kind of implicit recognition of the equality of chances regarding employment or education, while the principles of republic are respected: 'equality'.

In this context, a 'good citizen' is the one who maintain the civil peace by respecting the laws and the right of people and by forgetting his religious and ethnical particularity, even social class. The national identity is not a biological fact, but political one. A person is considered French by the practice of language, by learning a culture and by the desire to participate in the economic and political life (Schnapper, 1994, p. 63) .For Schnapper the cultural differences are identified ,but separated from politics because it are re-sent in the private area .

Because of the fact that it stigmatizes the public identity of immigrants and descendants, the French model of integration was criticized (Khellil, 2005;

Wieviorka, 1996; Lapeyronnie, 1993). For Michel Wieviorka the French model 'illustrates a general tendency, an historic exhaustion of the labor movement and a social state crisis, which place the culture in front of the sociological analysis regarding social change' (Rea & Tripier, 2003, p. 100) .

In the same train of ideas, Didier Lapeyronnie (Lapeyronnie, 1993) believe that the integrative strength of the national society is running down and there occurs an economical dualism. The dualism produces unemployment and exclusion. The cultural fragmentation produces a diversification of behaviors and standards but also an extension of particularities. The end of the national society entails a dissociation between economy and culture: 'the persons and social groups are less and less identified by what they are doing and by the relation which they maintain between them through institutions ;they tend to be identified by what they are, by their culture, inheritance and are encouraged to be different from other groups'. (Lapeyronnie, 1993, p. 97). To show the advantage of such a type of model that encourages the difference in contrast with the republic model, Lapeyronnie uses the example of '*ethnic business*' to show that the difference constitutes a resource.

The analyses of Wieviorka and Lapeyronnie allowed to put in perspective the French model of integration. Beyond their differences, Schnapper and Lapeyronnie share the report on the decrease of the strength of national institution integration. Also, they share the same ideas with Khellil who underlines that the acquisition of French nationality do not point out the final act of integration process. The acquisition of nationality opens the access to the citizenship but not the access to a legitimate national membership. To highlight this aspect Khellil recommends us to be interested in the notion of citizenship, not only as an exercise in civil right but as a social behavior required by the life in a community (Khellil, 2005).

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