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Immigration and Cultural Integration in Germany and the United States: A Comparison

1. Introduction

In the mid-1800s a stream of immigrants from Germany reached the United States. The reasons for this emigration from Germany were economic and social problems and a civil war in some of the German states after the failure of the first democratic revolution in 1848, which forced women and men to look for new opportunities overseas. One of the places in the United States many German immigrants went to was Cincinnati, Ohio. Like today, transnational social spaces emerged¹: earlier emigrants encouraged relatives and friends from abroad to settle in their neighborhood. In one borough of Cincinnati – called Over-the Rhine – Germans were the most numerous immigrant group, giving the area a distinct identity with beer gardens, German language theatre, German food stores. In 1840 nearly half of the residents in this borough were from various German states such as Prussia, Bavaria, or Saxony. It seemed to many people who crossed a canal separating this borough from the rest of the town that they were crossing the Rhine river into Germany, which is how this borough got its name. Today we would call this a typical Ghetto situation: migrants living separated from the native population, speaking their own language and preserving their traditional culture.



The former Lion Brewery in Over-The Rhine, Cincinnati, Ohio: a typical German Enterprise.

(From: The Cincinnati Historical Society, The Bicentennial Guide to Greater Cincinnati: A Portrait of Two Hundred Years, Cincinnati 1989.)

¹ Pries, L., (1998): Transnationale Soziale Räume. Theoretisch-empirische Skizze am Beispiel der Arbeitswanderungen Mexiko – USA, in: Beck, U., Perspektiven der Weltgesellschaft, Frankfurt a.M. p. 55 – 86.

This large and predominantly German-born community worried especially native-born Cincinnatians of English ancestry who started to blame the German immigrants for nearly every misfortune that happened in the city: from epidemics to unemployment. The worsening economic situation of the residents was said to be caused by the new immigrants because they were accepting lower wages than were usual before their arrival. In 1855 the conflict resulted in an attempt of a nativist group to invade the Over-the-Rhine settlement. But the Germans defended their borough, constructed barricades and met the invaders with gun fire. The battle went on for two days with many people wounded and several killed.

Only 80 years earlier in the same region several battles between native Americans and British settlers and American troops had occurred. In one of these more than 200 white soldiers were killed. By the middle of the 1800s the native population had vanished – not only because of continuing military attacks, but most of them had died because of diseases – unknown to them before the first European settlers appeared.

A hundred years later the national institutional Guard patrolled the streets of Cincinnati because the integration of the African American community had failed. Between 1967 and 1970 a series of riots and firebombings damaged many commercial and administrative buildings.



The National Guard patrolling in Cincinnati during the 1967 rioting.

(From: The Cincinnati Historical Society, The Bicentennial Guide to Greater Cincinnati: A Portrait of Two Hundred Years, Cincinnati 1989.)

I started with this 300-year migration and integration history of Cincinnati for two reasons: (1) it shows not only that migration processes took place also in past centuries and that problems between immigrants and residents seems to be as old as migration itself, (2) it also illustrates the fact that more than a hundred years ago Germans were a major group of immigrants to the United States, suffering from the same problems migrants face today in all parts of the world.

There is another reason why I started with Cincinnati: Munich in Bavaria and Cincinnati are twin cities and last year I was invited by the “Leaders” program of the Federal U.S. government to study migration and cultural integration programs in this area and in San Diego, California. My paper will refer to the experiences I made in the U.S., visiting many of the organizations in which migration and integration work is being done. I will compare this with the results of research I have done in Munich about the situation of migrants in the capital of Bavaria. I am especially interested in the question whether there is a best practice guide for social work with migrants and whether local activities are at all able to handle problems introduced by global processes. In other words: can local organizations of social security successfully react to problems set by supranational developments?

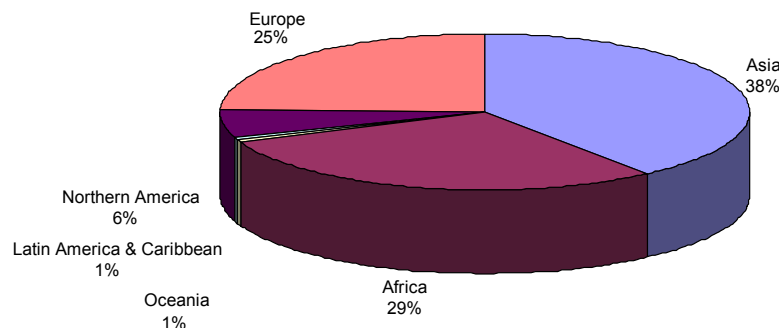
2. Immigration to the U.S. and Germany

At the beginning of the 1980s more than 77 million people world-wide were living outside their countries of origin. By 1990 the number had increased to 80 million, by 1992 it had gone up to 100 million, and today more than 150 million people have emigrated from their original home countries. Nearly one third of all emigrants are refugees and asylum seekers, but the large majority are working migrants looking for jobs and better living conditions.²

2.1. Refugees

A refugee is a person looking for protection on the grounds that he or she fears persecution in his or her homeland. Prominent reasons for refugees to emigrate are wars and political persecution. Asia (38 percent) and Africa (29 percent) are where most refugees of today can be found, as the following graphic demonstrates:

Figure 1: World refugee population 1997 by region of asylum residence

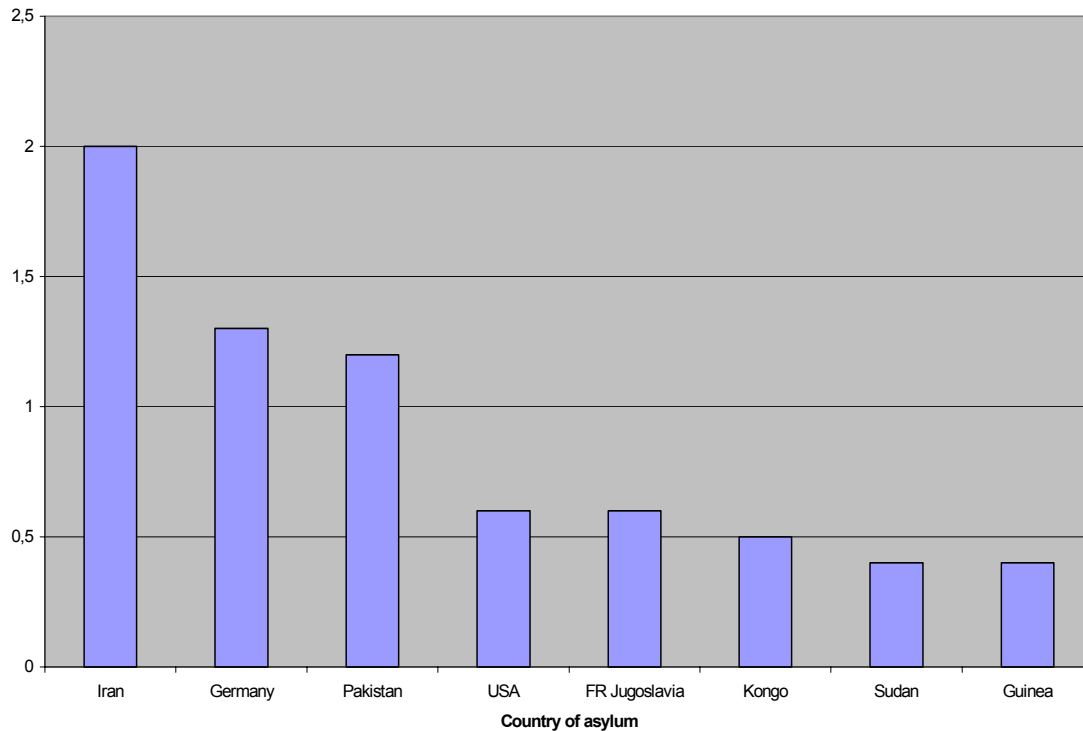


Data Source: UNHCR: 1998

While Europe (25 percent) also has a considerable number of refugees, North America (6 percent), Latin America (1 percent) and Oceania (1 percent) accepted only a small number of the world's refugees. A comparison of the number of refugees in 1997 with regard to countries of asylum shows that Iran was the destination of most immigrants (2.0 million). In Germany (1.3 million) and Pakistan (1.2 million) more refugees were to be found than in the U.S. (0.6 million). This is illustrated by the following graphic:

² Treibel, A. (1990): Migration in modernen Gesellschaften. Soziale Folgen von Einwanderung und Gastarbeit, München.

Figure 2: Refugees in 1997



Data Source: UNHCR Statistical Overview 1997 1998

2.2. Asylum seekers

An asylum seeker or asylee is a person who has already entered another country for fear of persecution because of political, ethnic or religious reason.

The following graphic shows for six countries (United States, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, and Poland) that during the last 10 years most asylum applicants were living in Germany and the U.S. From 1990 to 1993 – after the breakdown of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe – most asylees came to Germany. From 1994 to 1996 the U.S. accepted the largest number. In 1997 Germany again had the highest number of applications (150.000), 25.000 more than the U.S. Throughout these ten years, in the other countries the number of asylum application remained below 10.000 p.a. with one exception: only in 1991 did Italy have about 25.000 asylum applicants.

Figure 3: Annual number of asylum applications in Finland, Germany, Italy, Poland, Hungary, and the United States, 1988 - 1997



Data Source: UNHCR Statistical Overview 1997: 1998

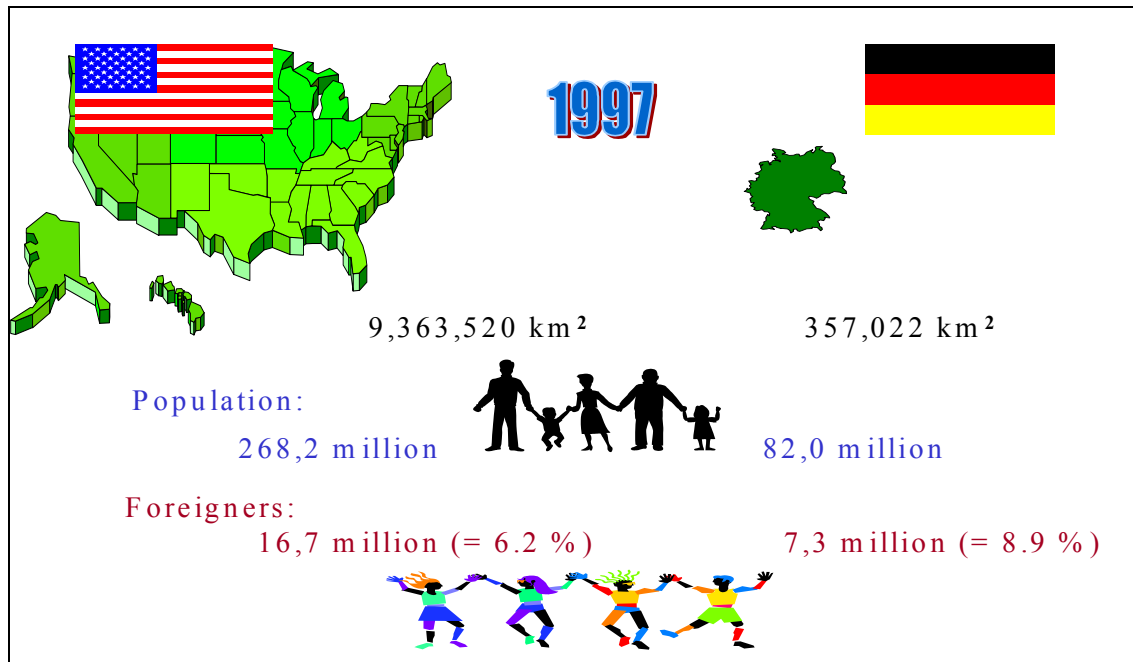
2.3. Immigration to the United States and Germany

As mentioned above refugees and asylees are only one part of the global migration. For a well-rounded picture one also has to look at work migration and especially in Germany repatriations have to be considered.

If we look at all kinds of migration today, Germany and the United States are among the countries with the highest influx of migrants from all over the world.

The next graphic illustrates the situation in both countries:

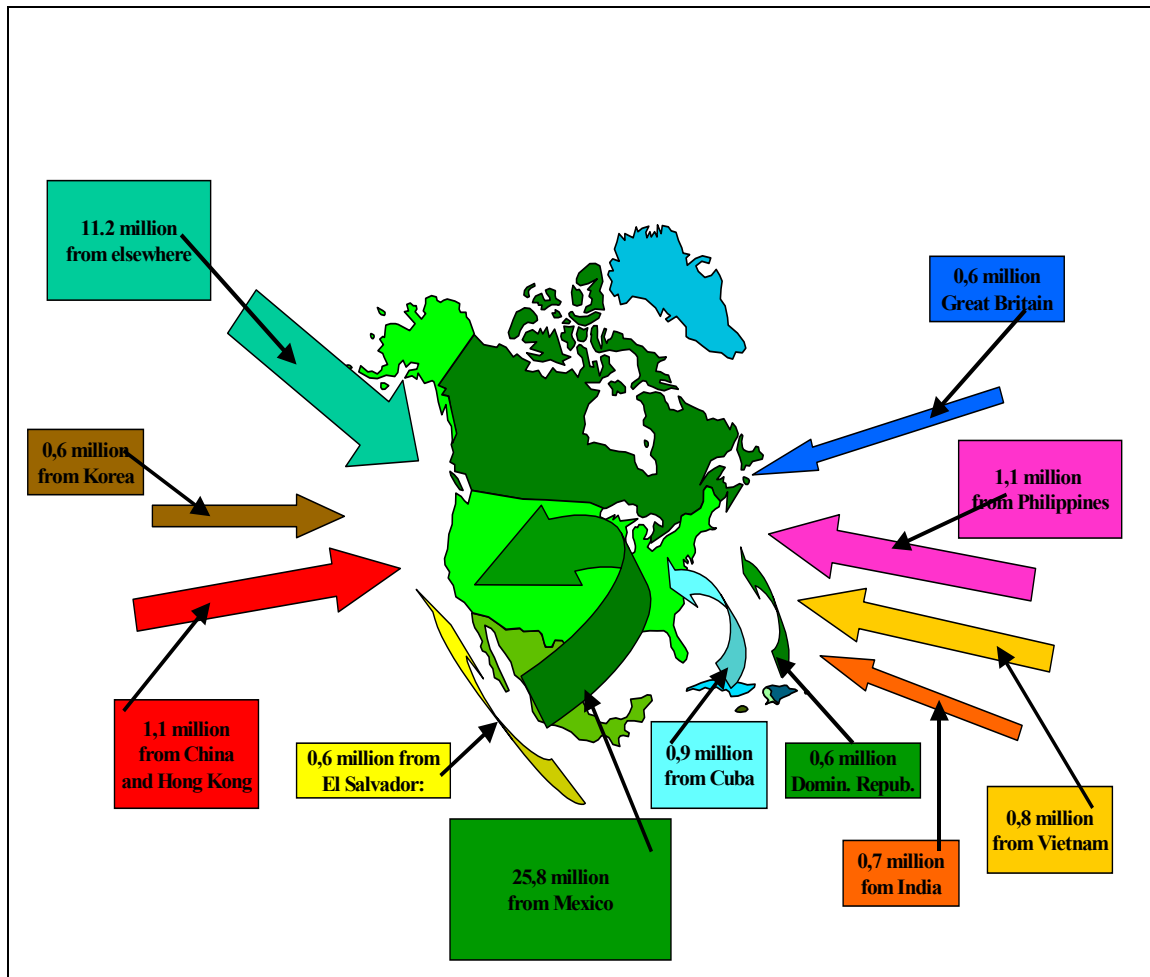
Figure 4: Size, population, and foreigners in the United States and Germany, 1997



The chart demonstrates that Germany has only 4 % of the size and 30 % of the population of the United States. 7.3 million foreigners are living in Germany (=8.9 percent of the population, compared with 16.7 million in the U.S. (= 6.2 percent of the population).

In the U.S. until the 1960s more than 80 percent of immigrants came from Europe. Today more than 80 percent come from Latin America and Asia. The following graphic illustrates the migration streams to the U.S. 20.78 million immigrants from Mexico, 1.13 million from the Philippines and nearly the same number from China and Hong Kong (1.11 million) had migrated to the U.S. by March 1997. Cuba (0.91 million), Vietnam (0.77 million), India (0.75 million), the Dominican Republic (0.63 million), El Salvador (0.61 million), Great Britain (0.61 million) and Korea (0.59 million) are the countries from which most immigrants came to the U.S. From all other countries of the world 11.66 million people took their residence in the “land of the free”.

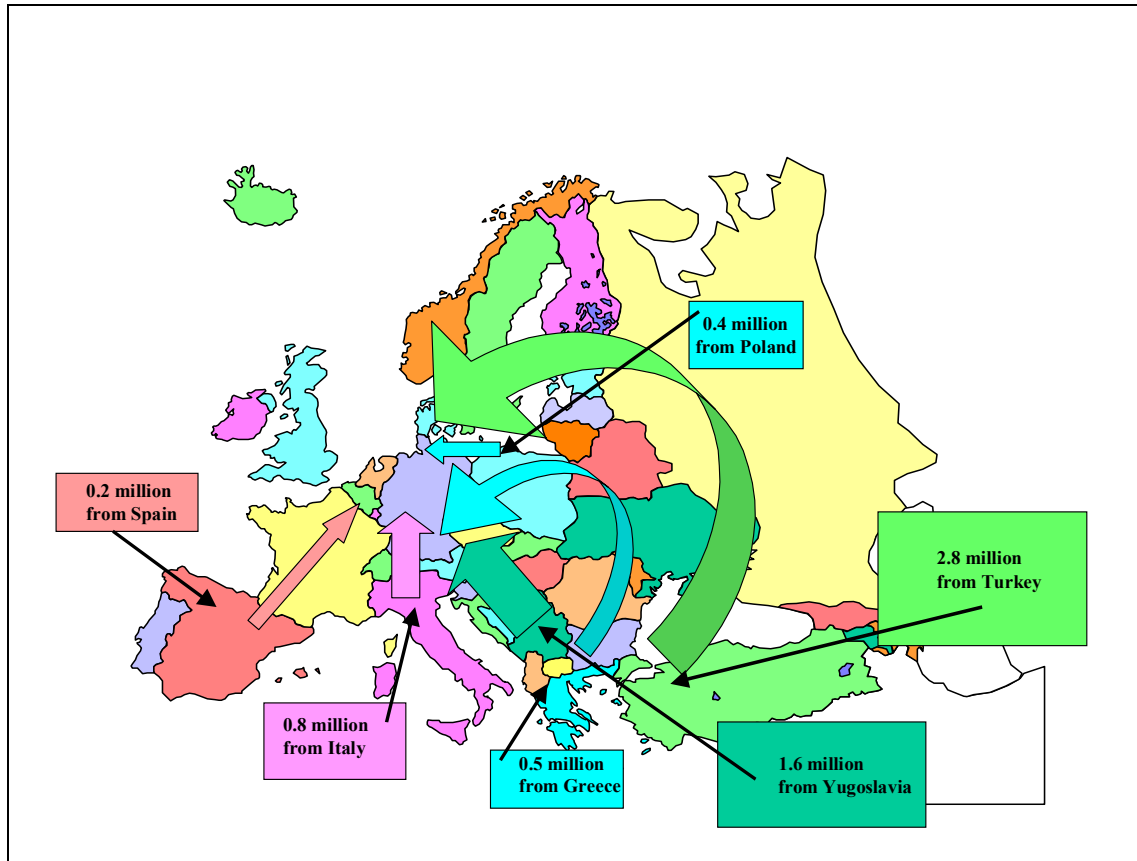
Figure 5: Migration to the United States



The migration to Germany went through four different phases:

After 1945 there was an influx of refugees from former areas of German settlement. From 1960 until 1972 “guest” workers from Italy, Spain, Yugoslavia, and especially Turkey came to the Federal Republic. The breakdown of the communist regimes and the war in Yugoslavia led to a strong influx of refugees and asylum applicants, additionally, after 1986 repatriated people of German ancestry came from Poland, Romania, and the Ex-Soviet Union.

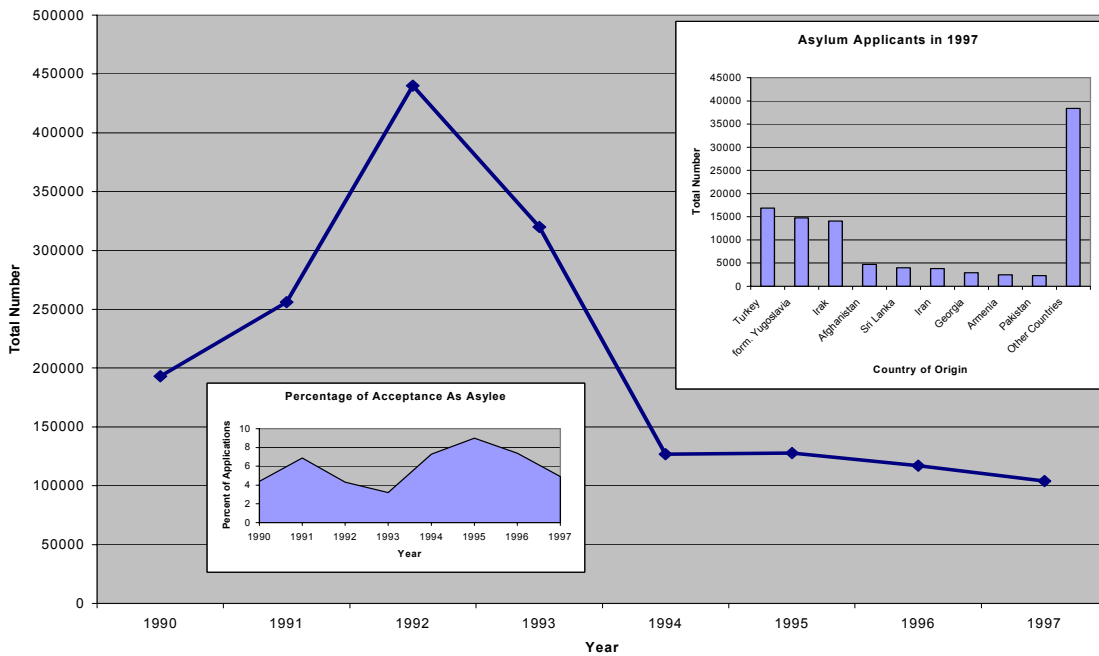
Figure 6: Migration of “guest” workers to Germany



2.8 million people came from Turkey, 1.6 million from Yugoslavia, 0.8 million from Italy, 0.5 million from Greece, 0.4 million from Poland, and 0.2 million from Spain.

The following table illustrates the development of asylum applicants in Germany. Until 1992 the number of asylees was increasing. At that time a new asylum law went into effect, which led to a significant reduction in the number of applications. Most asylum seekers in 1997 came from Turkey, former Yugoslavia and Iraq.

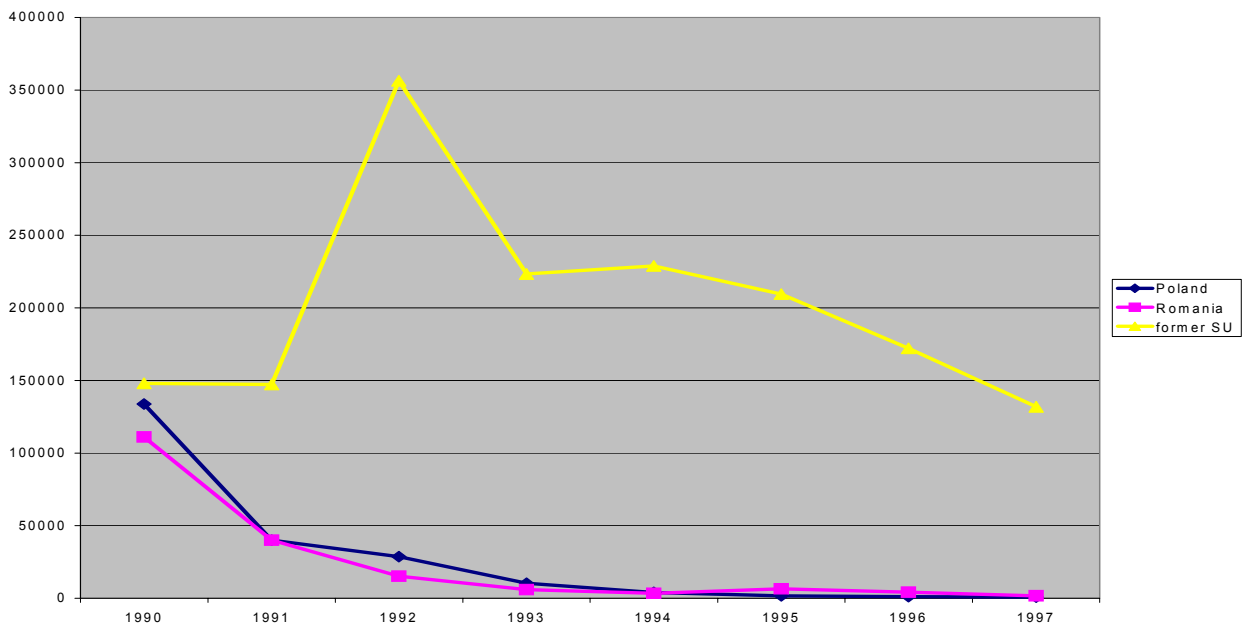
Figure 7: Asylum applicants in Germany, 1990 - 1997



Data Source: Bundesinnenministerium 1998

Repatriates came especially from the Ex-Soviet Union to Germany. They are classified as German citizen because of they are of German ancestry.

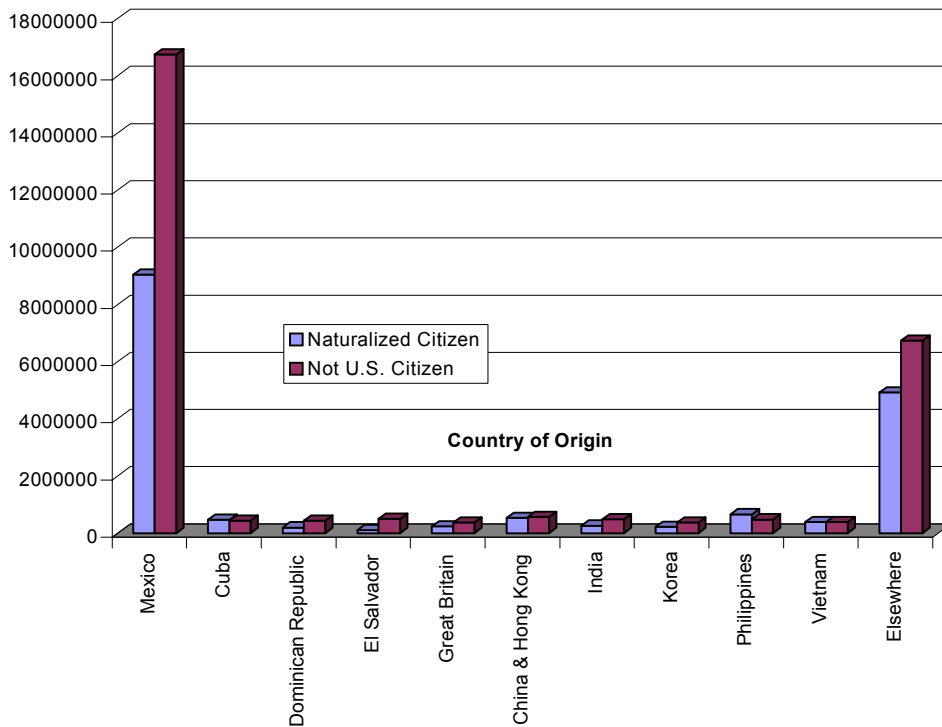
Figure 8: Repatriated people in Germany, 1990 - 1997



Data Source: Harenberg Lexikon der Gegenwart 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999

If one compares the status of foreigners in the U.S. and in Germany a first difference is that the number of naturalized citizens is much higher in America than it is in Germany. The next chart shows that 35 percent of immigrants to the U.S. have already acquired a citizenship status, while 65 percent have a status of lawful permanent residents (LPR).

Figure 9: Foreign born persons in the U.S., by citizenship status, 1997



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1997

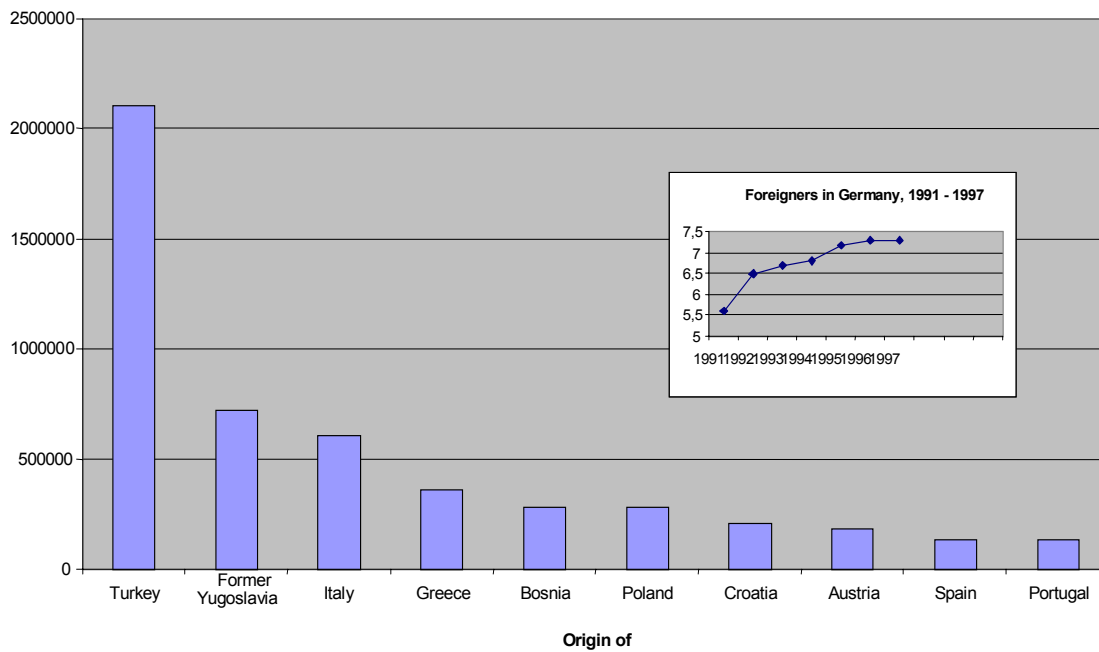
Over 25 million foreign-born persons were living in the U.S. in March 1997; this is a quota of 9.6 percent of the total population of 268 million. 35 percent of them (over 9 million people) were naturalized citizens, 65 percent were not U.S. citizens (= 16,736 million, 6.2 percent of all citizens). 18.4 percent had arrived before 1970, 19.1 percent between 1970 and 1979, 33.2 percent between 1980 and 1989, and 29.2 percent since 1990. The overall total for immigrants other than refugees is thought to be 675,000 a year. The number of illegal aliens living in the U.S. is estimated at another 3 million who have entered the country illegally during the past 10 years. These people are called “undocumented immigrants,” they live in the United States without the permission of the U.S. government.

The largest ethnic group in the U.S. is of Mexican origin: more than 7 million people crossed the southern boarder of the U.S. (=27.2 percent of all foreign-born people in the U.S.). About a third of them are naturalized citizens. 39 percent of those people who immigrated before 1970 have a citizen status, but only 5.8 percent of those who have come to the U.S. since 1990. The immigration reform passed in 1990 emphasizes help to reunify families: therefore sixty percent of all new immigrants are spouses, children, parents or siblings of citizens or

legal permanent residents. Immigrants from Asia and Latin America benefited most from the new regulation.

In Germany the largest ethnic group comes from Turkey as can be seen in the next chart:

Figure 10: Foreigners in Germany, 1997



Data Source: Bundesinnenministerium, December 1997

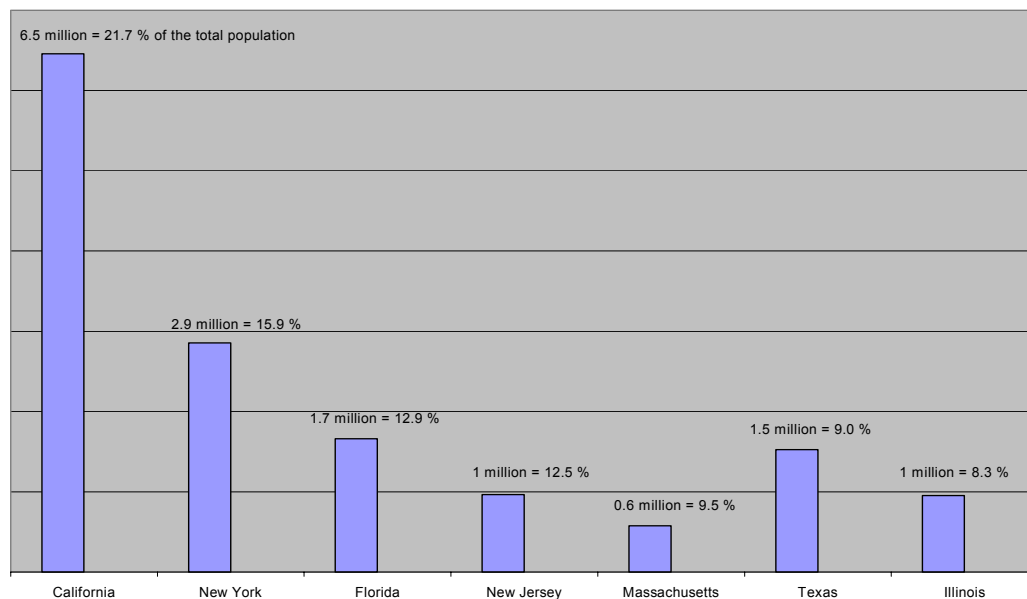
More than 2 million persons of Turkish ancestry (= 29 percent of the foreign population) live in Germany, 0.7 million from Ex-Yugoslavia (=10 percent), 0.6 million from Italy (= 8 percent) and 0.3 million from Greece (= 5 percent) followed by ethnic groups from Bosnia (0.3 million), Poland (0.3 million), Croatia (0.2 million), Austria (0.2 million), Spain (0.1 million), and Portugal (0.1 million). The graph also demonstrates that there was a remarkable increase of foreigners living in Germany by more than 30 percent between 1991 and 1995 from 5.5 million to 7.2 million, but after 1995 there is only a slow increase up to 7.3 million foreigners.

9 percent of the inhabitants (7.3 million people) and 6.7 percent of households had no German citizenship in 1997. 25 percent of aliens had lived in Germany for more than 10 years without being citizens of the Federal Republic.

In both countries the general influx of foreigners has led to an unequal geographical concentration.

Most aliens live in metropolitan areas (e.g. 93 percent in the U.S.), but there is also a differentiation between the individual states in the U.S. and the “Länder” in Germany, which can be seen on the next two charts:

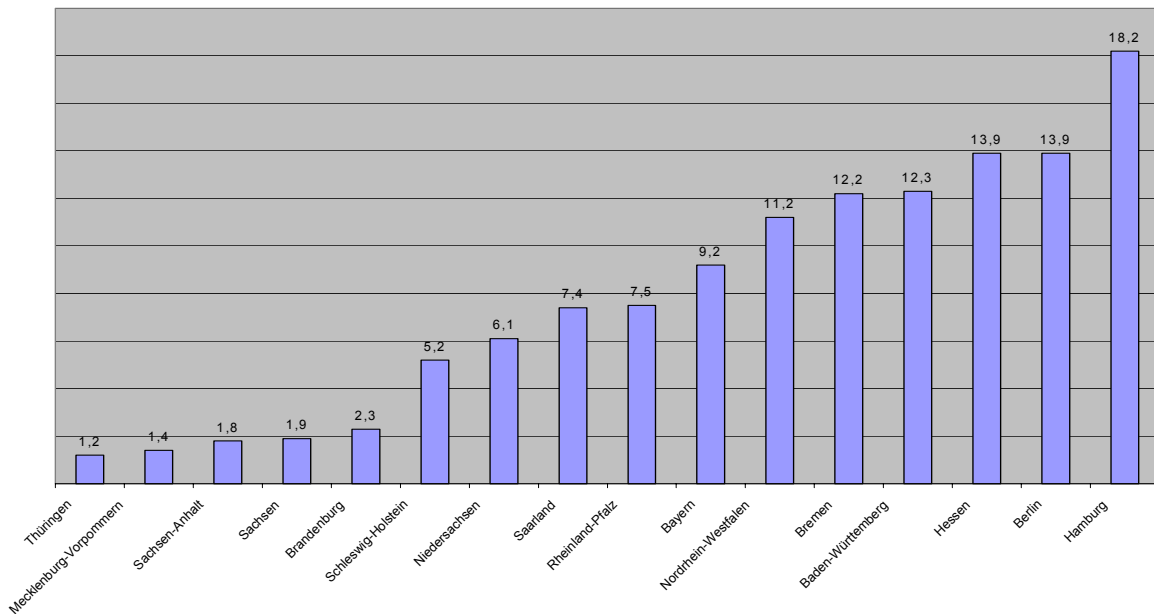
Figure 11: Number and quota of foreigners in various states of the U.S., 1997



Data Source: immigrationforum, 1998

21.7 percent of the population of California are foreign-born; most of them come from Mexico and other Hispanic countries. Also 15.9 percent of the New York population, 12.9 percent in Florida, 12.5 percent in New Jersey, 9.5 percent in Massachusetts, 9 percent in Texas and 8.3 percent of the population in Illinois are immigrants.

Figure 12: Quota of foreigners in the “Bundesländer”, Germany, 1997



Data Source: Globus1998

Most aliens live in the metropolitan areas of Hamburg (18.2 percent of the population) and Berlin (13.9 percent). In the old “Länder” in general the alien density is much higher than in the new “Länder,” which all have less than 5 percent of foreigners in the population.

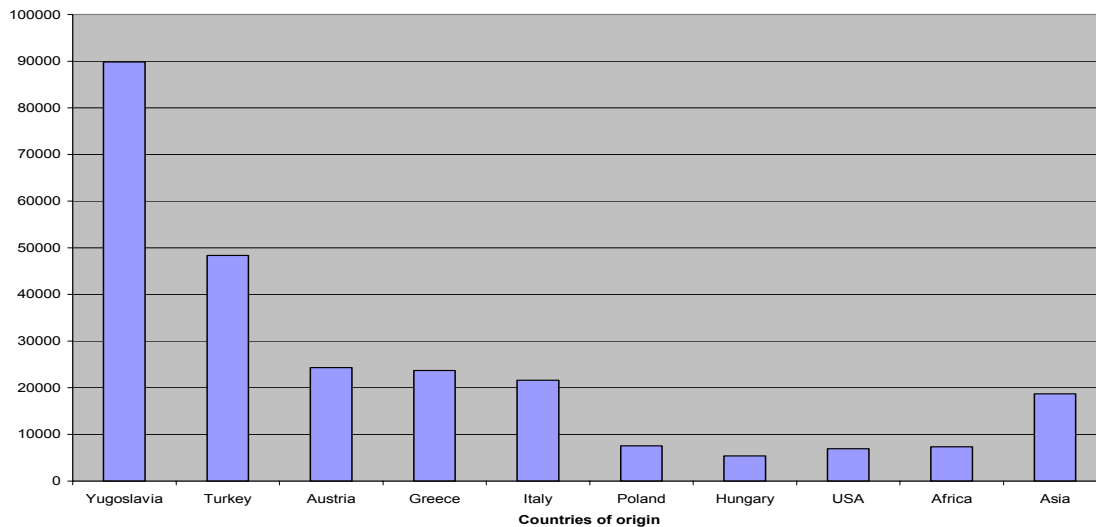
3. The situation in Cincinnati and Munich

It must be mentioned that there are some statistical difficulties for the comparison of these two cities. The reason for these difficulties is that Cincinnati is situated on the northern side of the Ohio River, which separates the states of Ohio and Kentucky. Cincinnati itself belongs to Ohio and is part of Hamilton county which includes only the metropolitan area of Cincinnati in Ohio and is situated at the south-west corner of the state of Ohio at the border to Indiana. So the region belongs to three states. The city of Cincinnati has a population of 364,040, Hamilton county of 851,599, and the Greater Cincinnati area, including the suburbs in all three states is estimated to have had a population of 1,950,269 in 1997.

In 1997 Munich had a population of 1,322,000, the “Landkreis” (district) which surrounds Munich has an additional population of 281,724. Of the registered aliens living in the city of Munich 286,087 did not have German citizenship (= 21.7 percent of the total population).

The following chart shows the origin of the aliens living in Munich:

Figure 13: Aliens in Munich 1997

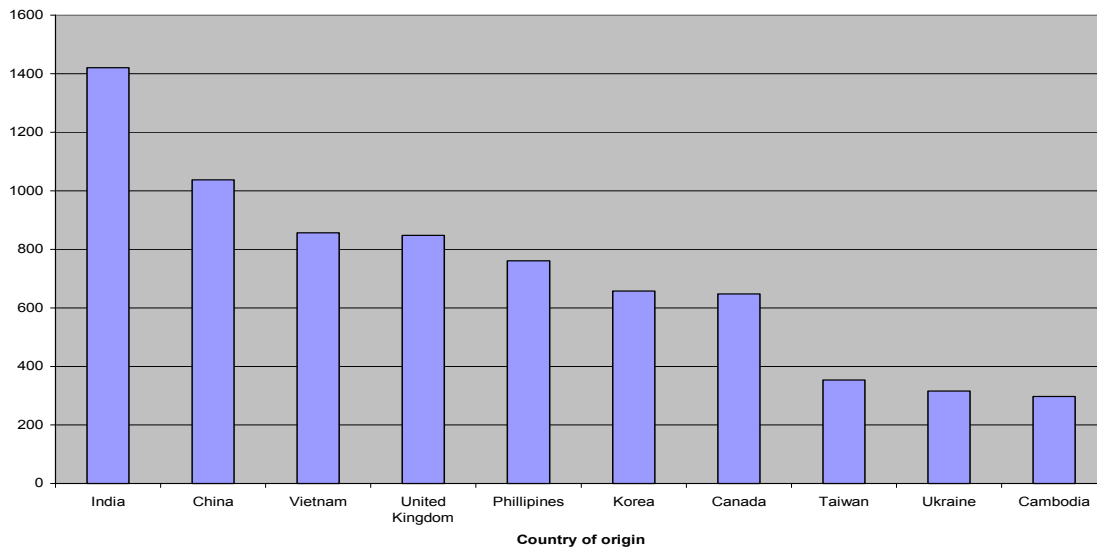


Data Source: Statistisches Amt der Landeshauptstadt München 1998

Most aliens living in Munich in 1997 come from Ex-Yugoslavia (89,780), the second largest group is the Turkish population (48,385); Austrian (24,330), Greek (23,683), and Italian (21,559) citizens are way behind these two dominant groups. Other countries, amongst them Poland (7,502), Hungary (5,360), the U.S. (6,887) do not account for major ethnic groups in the capital of Bavaria. In 1986 about 180,000 foreigners were living in Munich; since that time the number has increased to more than 280,000 in 1997 – an increase of more than 50 percent. The reason for this development is that especially the war in Ex-Yugoslavia led to a strong influx of war refugees to the Munich area, since a high proportion of Yugoslavian workers had traditionally characterized this region. This explains the extraordinary number of aliens from this country.

It can be said that in Cincinnati immigration was not as considerable a factor as in Munich: from 1985 to 1996 only 11,800 immigrants came to the Greater Cincinnati area, as illustrated in the next chart:

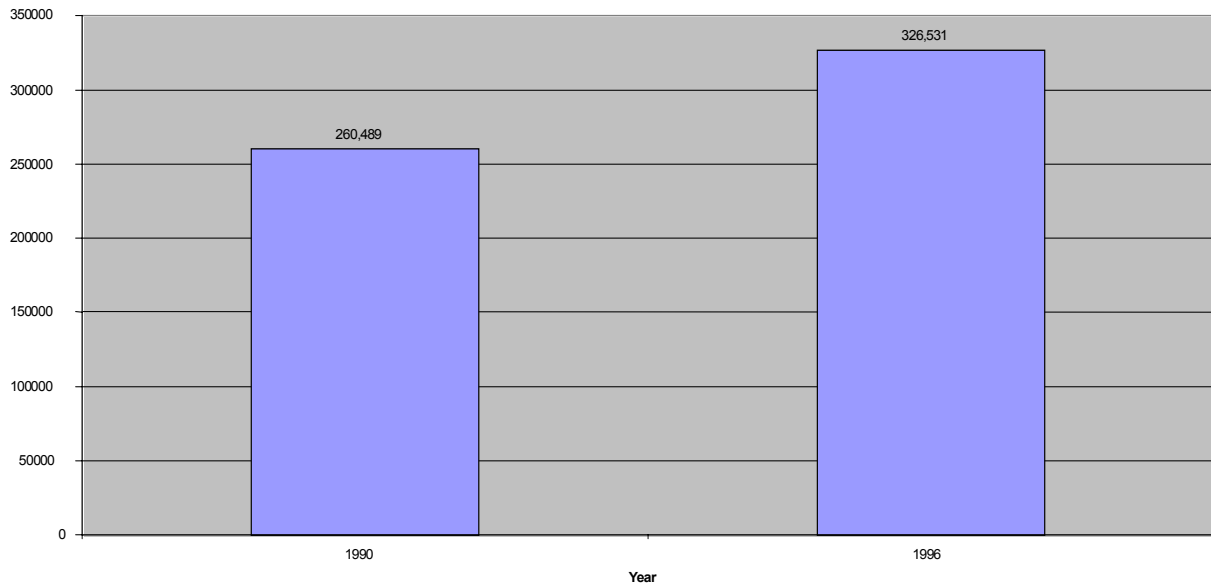
Figure 14: Immigrants to Greater Cincinnati, 1985 - 1996



Data Source: U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1998

The largest number of immigrants came from India (1,421), China (1,038), Vietnam (857), and the United Kingdom (848), from the Philippines (761), Korea (685), Canada (648), Taiwan (354), Ukraine (316) and Cambodia (297). In total 11,800 immigrants came to the Cincinnati area: less than 12 percent of the number of foreigners who came to Munich in the same period. Only in all three states combined - Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky – is the number of immigrants in that same period similar to the one in Munich, which is illustrated by the group of Hispanics coming to the Tristate in the next chart:

Figure 15: Hispanics in the Tristate (Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky), 1990 – 1996



Data Source: Cincinnati Enquirer, May 11, 1998

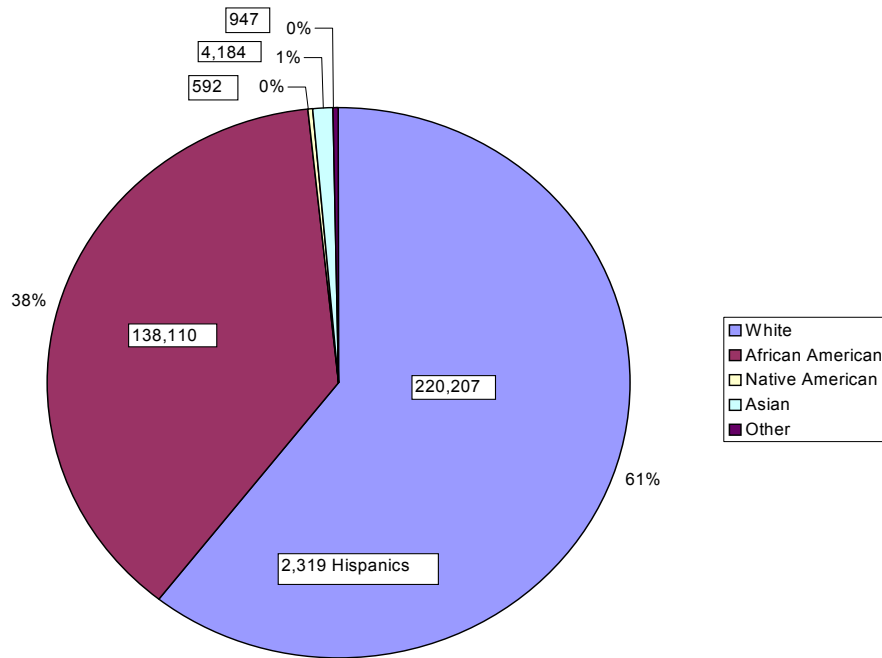
From 1990 to 1996 in all three states combined the number of people of Hispanic origin increased from 260,489 to 326,531 people (25 percent). These people came from Mexico (41 %), from Puerto Rico (35 %) and Cuba (24 %).

4. Problems of social and cultural integration in Cincinnati and Munich

4.1. Poverty, unemployment and educational level

Counting only the number of immigrants, it seems that compared to Munich the problem of ethnic integration in the Cincinnati area should be less predominant. But the next chart will explain that racial differentiation causes problems of similar a scope in Cincinnati as the integration of immigrant groups does in Munich.

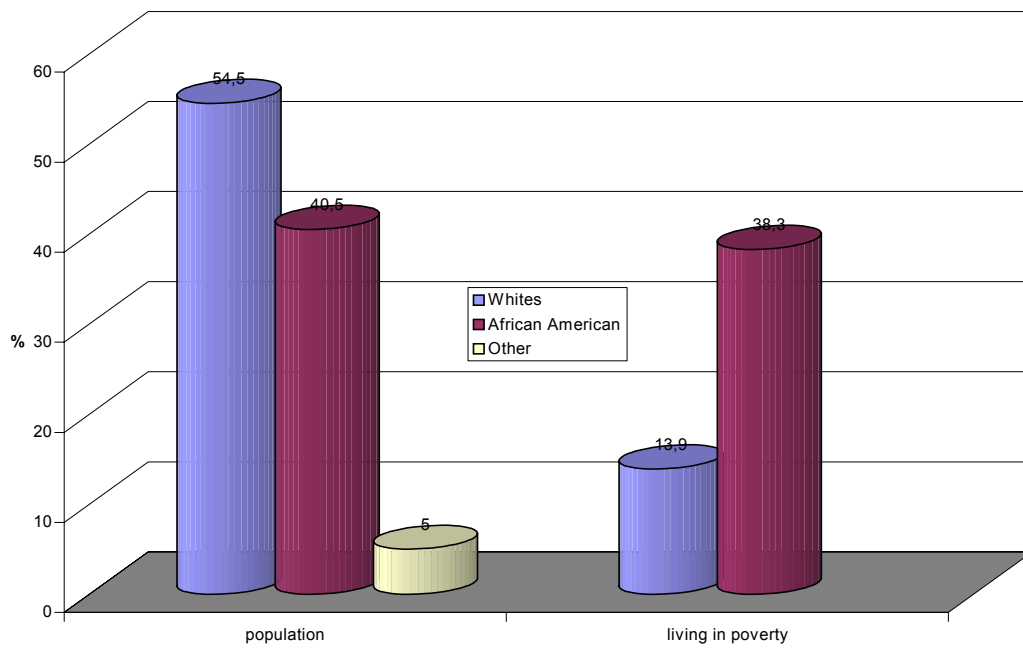
Figure 16: Population by ethnic group, Cincinnati, 1990



Data Source: US Census Data 1990

61 percent (= 220,207) of the total population of 364,040 in 1990 were white, among them 2,319 people of Hispanic origin, while 38 percent (=138,110) were African American, only 1 percent (=4,184) were Asians, while less than 1 percent were either Native American (=592) or belonged to another ethnic group (=947). Social problems of integration in Cincinnati are to a considerable measure problems involving the black community. This is illustrated by the following chart:

Figure 17: Ethnic mix and poverty in Cincinnati, 1997



Data Source: Cincinnati Inquirer, May 11, 1998

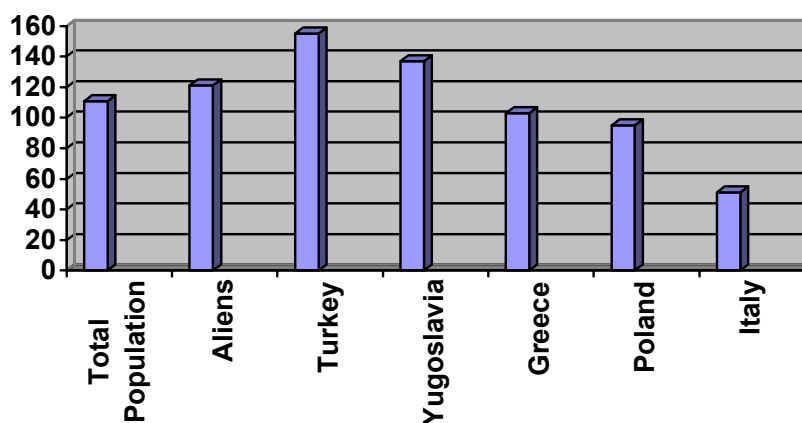
The size of Cincinnati's population has not changed between 1990 and 1997. But the percentage of African Americans increased from 38 to 41. The challenge has brought more people of black skin color into the city, while more whites left the city boundaries. A concentration of African Americans in some of the boroughs took place during this time. Researchers speak of "patterns of resegregation," not only in Cincinnati but all over the Tri-state.³ 38 percent of people living in poverty are black, while only about 13 percent are white. It seems quite interesting that people from other ethnic groups are hardly to be found among the poor. There is a special group among the poor whites which is labeled "Appalachians". This is a group of intra-American migrants coming from the Appalachian mountains. They left their homes because of lacking job opportunities and bad living conditions. Associated with poverty are higher rates of unemployment, a lower educational level and a higher rate of public assistance in the black community and the among the poor whites. Black students concentrate in financially troubled urban schools, with standardized test scores generally showing them lagging far behind their white counterparts.⁴

³ McEnaney, M., L. Allen and B. Paynter (1997) Housing 1 – Streets where we live, Akron, Ohio.

⁴ Paynter, B. (1997), Series finds great divide between blacks, whites, Knight Rider Real, Akron, Ohio.

In Munich a similar situation can be seen among various immigrant groups. The poverty density is much higher in households of immigrant groups than it is in German households, as the next chart shows:

Figure 18: Poverty density in Munich by nationality groups, 1995.



Data Source: Sozialreferat der Landeshauptstadt München, 1997

The average poverty density⁵ in Munich is 111, while households of aliens have a poverty density of 121. Especially affected are households of the Turkish and the Yugoslavian population: out of 1,000 an average of 155 Turkish households and 137 Yugoslavian households are poor, but only 103 Greek, 95 Polish and 51 Italian households are significantly below the average income level.⁶ In short, one may argue that the African Americans in Cincinnati and the people coming from Turkey and Yugoslavia in Munich are in a similar position. In both cases not immigration seems to be the problem but poverty, which is concentrated among certain ethnic groups. In Cincinnati there are hardly any immigrants who live below the poverty level; in Munich immigrants from other countries than the two mentioned above are normally above the average income level. In 1996 public financial assistance in Munich was paid to 54,085 persons, of whom 26,069 were foreigners (48.2 percent). In September 1998, 6.1 percent of unemployment was registered for the city of Munich, the unemployment rate for foreigners was 11 percent, nearly five percent higher than

⁵ Poor households among 1000 households (1 person household with less than 1,117 DM per month, 669 DM per person in other households)

⁶ Forschungsgruppe Kammerer, (1997), Lebenssituation ausländischer Bürger in München. Ergebnisse einer repräsentativen Befragung, München.

in the German population. Only 10 percent of students in upper-level high schools come from foreign families compared to 90 percent of Germans, but 60 percent remain in the lowest category of secondary schools, where only 40 percent German students share their classrooms.⁷

More than 50 percent of foreign workers in Munich have low-skilled jobs, an additional 22 percent are skilled workers, but only about 20 percent of the German employees work in similar positions. Among foreign workers, especially people of Turkish, Yugoslavian and Greek origin occupy lower positions, while employees from Poland and Italy have reached a better occupational position. Most foreigners coming from other countries – like Austria and the U.S. – work as specialists for international companies and can thus not be compared to the majority of foreigners in Munich. A study on changes in the work force structure in Germany demonstrates that foreign workers played a catalyzing function in recent years: occupying low-skilled and low-paid personal service jobs, they made it possible to improve qualifications without creating any structural problems of adjustment.⁸ Booming zones in the U.S. like Silicon Valley and Sun Valley seem to be based on the same principle.

4.2. Segregation

As mentioned above, in the Cincinnati area resegregation is seen as worsening the relationship especially between the white and the black community. The city of Akron, Ohio for example had 31,000 more black residents in 1990 than it had had in 1950, but the white population had dropped by 86,000. In 1990 the city was 25 percent black, up from just 9 percent in 1950. Another striking example is Maple Valley, Ohio. In 1950 this urban area was more than 90 percent white, today it is 75 percent black. In Cincinnati one can see fairly easily if one is passing through white or black parts of town. For example Over-the-Rhine – the original German borough, has changed dramatically in term of inhabitants: it became one of the poorest boroughs of the inner city, with a large majority of African Americans and Appalachians.

In Munich the process of segregation between different ethnic groups seems not to be as dramatic as it is in the Cincinnati area. There is one borough (Schwanthalerhöhe) where more than 40 percent of the population are not of German origin, in another borough

⁷ Data Source: Bayrisches Landesamt für Statistik, Schulstatistik, Schuljahr 1994/95.

(Luwigsvorstadt – Isarvorstadt) more than a third of the population are aliens, in 4 other boroughs more than 25 percent, and in 8 more boroughs more than 20 percent of the inhabitants are not German.⁹ But the percentage of foreigners is even higher in the younger generation. As foreign students more often attend schools of a lower educational level, the concentration of ethnic minority groups increases in these classes. In one of the boroughs where the number of foreigners is only 1 percent above the average rate, for example, I found in one of my own studies that in one of the schools 52 percent of the students were not of German origin.¹⁰ The same was found in another school in the same borough with a majority of 57 percent of non-German students.¹¹



Over-The-Rhine today: A majority of African Americans and Appalachians live here.

(Picture by the author)

In this school and in two other schools where German students constitute a majority of about 60 percent we found that contacts between the different national groups are rare and that peer groups are mainly formed within the same ethnic group.¹² In another study among non-German students I found that 70 percent responded that they do not or only rarely have German friends.¹³

In another study which I conducted back in the 1980s, I found two factors which provoked processes of segregation: with the change of job opportunities in Munich there was a remarkable increase in accusing especially the Turkish population of taking German jobs. This led to an ethnic reaction on the Turkish side: exactly at the time of our research we found

⁸ Greca, R., Die Grenzen rationalen Handelns in sozialen Organisationen, München 1990.

⁹ Landeshauptstadt München, Sozialreferat, Soziale Leistungen in Zahlen 1996, München 1997, p.12.

¹⁰ Erhebung zum Bedarf an Freizeit- und Betreuungsangeboten der SchülerInnen in der Hauptschule am Gerhart-Hauptmann-Ring, München 1998.

¹¹ Einschätzungen der Schüler und Schülerinnen der Hauptschule Am Echardinger Grünstreifen zur dortigen Schulsozialarbeit, München 1998.

¹² Die Einstellung der Schüler und Schülerinnen der Guardinischule zur Schulsozialarbeit, München 1997. Umfrage bezüglich der Schulsozialarbeit (SSA) an der Hauptschule an der Bernaystraße, München 1997.

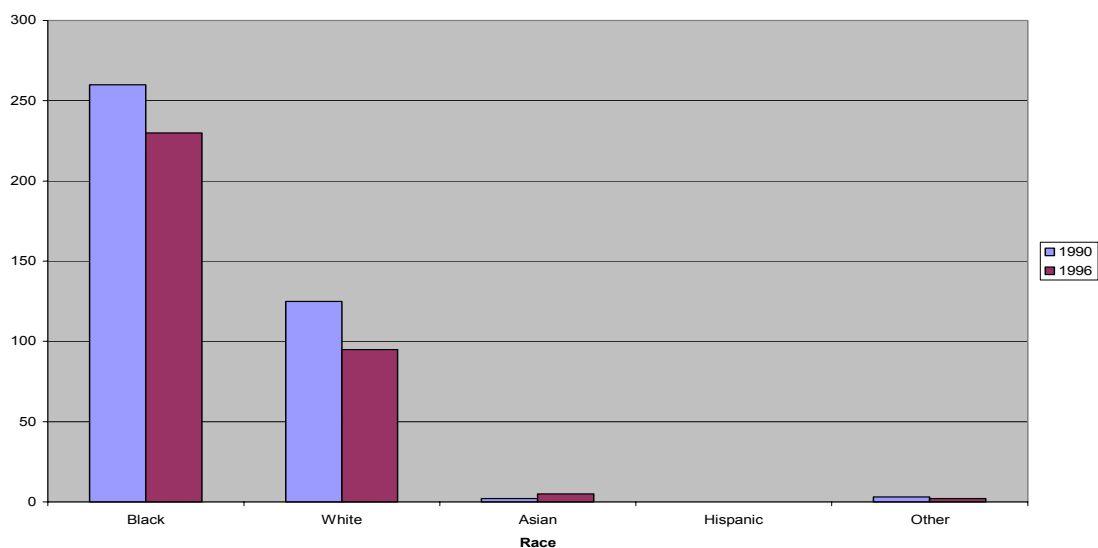
¹³ Integration von ausländischen Jugendlichen, München 1998.

that more and more Turkish juveniles entered specific ethnic groups of their own, defending themselves against German prejudice. Another interesting finding was that the part of the German population which interacted with foreign groups were not typical for the German population. Thus their efforts sometime had unwanted results: because average Germans did not like those Germans engaged in social activities for foreigners, the split between the German and the foreign population grew by means of these activities.¹⁴ A recent study on repatriated people from the Ex-Soviet Union in Ingolstadt shows that we can really speak of a typical ghetto situation for these people: they live concentrated in only a few parts of the town, interact among themselves, youths associate only with members of their own ethnic groups, communicating in Russian – hardly capable of speaking German.

4.3. Crime rates

Crime rates seem to be higher in certain groups of the population than in others. Research in Hamilton County, Ohio shows that, for example juvenile delinquency court cases are found more often among the black population than in any other group. The next chart illustrates this fact:

Figure 19: Juvenile delinquency court cases, Hamilton county, 1990 – 1996



Data Source: Hamilton County 1998

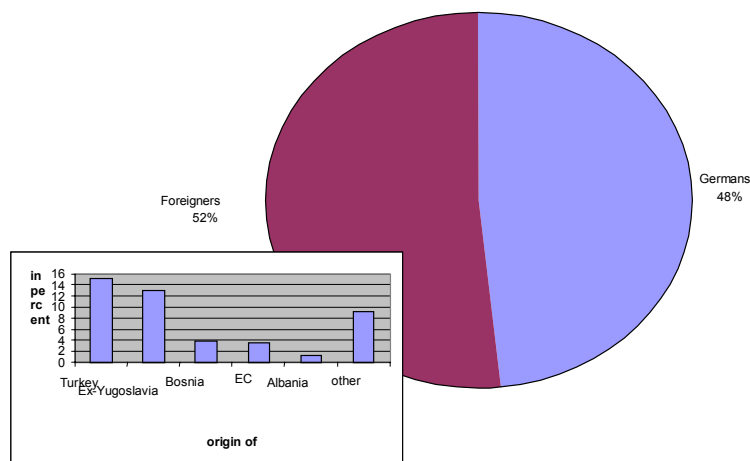
¹⁴ Greca, R./Luthe, H.O., Freunde mit fremder Sprache. Ein Forschungsprojekt zum planmäßigen Abbau von Vorurteilen und zur Integration von Ausländern und Deutschen im Wohnbereich. München 1984.

Juvenile court cases are more frequent among black youths than among whites. Only few cases were registered among Asian, no cases among Hispanic adolescents. The comparison between 1990 and 1996 indicates a decrease of cases, which can be taken as an indicator of successful preventive social work in this field.

In Germany an increase of juvenile delinquency could be observed in recent years. In 1996 more juveniles were sentenced than the year before (up 8.9 percentage points).¹⁵ Foreigners were especially involved in drug-related offenses (1996: 62 percent of all cases).¹⁶

Juvenile court assistance in Munich was given in 1996 more often to alien youths than to Germans, as is demonstrated in the next chart:

Figure 20: Juvenile delinquency court cases, Munich, 1996



Data Source: Sozialreferat der Landeshauptstadt München 1997

2,496 cases for youth court assistance were registered in Munich in 1996, in 48 percent of them German juveniles, in 52 percent foreign juveniles had to stand trial. Among the foreign group, 15.2 percent were of Turkish, 12.9 percent of Yugoslavian origin. The others came from Bosnia (3.9 percent), EC countries (3.4 percent), Croatia (2.5 percent), Albania (1.2 percent) and other countries (9.2 percent).

¹⁵ Data Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 27. Oktober 1997.

¹⁶ Data Source: Bundesregierung 1998

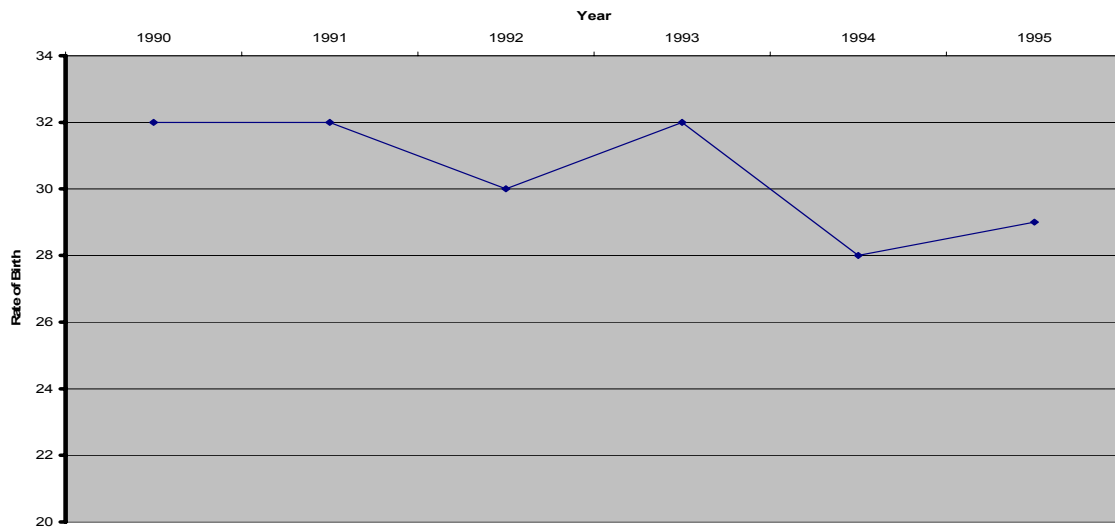
Obviously it is not possible to relate crime simply to ethnicity. Much more evidence is given for a connection between poverty and criminal behavior. But this won't explain all phenomena. Other special aspects have to be considered: non-resident foreigners are responsible for criminal offenses in Germany, too. This shows congruency with ancient and modern types of war economy. In the U.S. criminal behavior is not related to legal immigrants. In Germany resident juvenile groups are either second- or third-generation residents of the Federal Republic – e.g. among the Turkish population - or they are Germans by citizenship but are not integrated into German culture – e.g. repatriated adolescents. If there is a theory which is able to explain both cases, this could be either the traditional structural chances theory, which explains crimes as consequences of missing opportunities among certain social groups to achieve the desired goals by legal means, or it could be the theory that recent challenges in the western capitalist societies have incited flexible people all over the world to migrate, leaving them without social roots.¹⁷

4.4. Single teenage mothers

For a long time it seemed to be a third-world phenomenon that unmarried teens get pregnant. Ten years ago it was discovered in the U.S. that the number of infants born by single teenage mothers increased. Especially within the poor communities with a majority of African American girls this had to be considered as a problematic development. The attention paid to this situation and social pedagogic intervention seem to show positive results, as is indicated in the next chart.

¹⁷ Sennett, R., (1998), *Der flexible Mensch. Die Kultur des modernen Kapitalismus*, Frankfurt a.M.

Figure 21: Rate of birth to unmarried teens, Hamilton County, 1980 – 1986



Data Source: Hamilton County 1998

The percentage of single teenage mothers dropped from 32 birth in 1990 to 29 in 1995. In Cincinnati the ratio of married–couple families with children to female householders with children was 3 : 1 in 1990. In the black community the relationship was 1 : 2.3.

In Munich, the proportion of foreign teens who were single female heads of families in foster homes and other institutions was also high. The data show an increase of cases among non-German females, in some institutions the percentage of non-German single female heads of family has increased to more than 80 percent.¹⁸

4.5. Illegal aliens

Illegal aliens looking for job opportunities are found in both regions regularly. In the Cincinnati area most illegals are of Hispanic origin. In Munich aliens from Eastern Europe as well as from the south-east European and African states are found; in both countries illegal work contracts are the main reason for prosecution.¹⁹

¹⁸ Data Source: Landeshauptstadt München, Sozialreferat 1997.

¹⁹ Van Sant, R., Sturmon, S. (1997), Feds plan more raids on illegals, The Kentucky Post, 09-04-97.

5. Best practice

The comparison demonstrates that the same developments in migration can be seen in both countries. Global economic, political and social developments are the reason for increasing migration all over the world. Although both governments try to limit the influx of migrants, until today it is obvious that the efforts have had only a limited success. Regional activities aimed at finding solutions for regional problems seem to be so far effective only some of the time. But it seems to me that the comparison has shown that regional agencies do have opportunities of finding solutions to the problems.

Comparing the activities in both countries in dealing with the question of immigration and cultural integration, it seems not easy to find out which practices are the best. The reason for this is that interventions seldom take place in laboratory situations. Consequently, the factors which guarantee success or which lead to failure cannot be isolated easily. Also the standards for evaluating the practices are not easy to determine: moral standards cannot be harmonized with economic or political standards. Finally: the success of intervention can often be seen only after long periods of time; what seems to be an achievement at first can finally turn out to be responsible for a numerous unintended negative side effects.

Therefore the following list is not complete and it is very subjective.

5.1. Business activities

In the U.S I found the most impressive business activities for cultural integration. Big German enterprises, too, have often supported their foreign workers and have led political discussions about integration measures. BMW in Munich started already in the 1970s with the concept of a learning factory to improve the language skills of its foreign workers. But in my view this lags far behind the “diversity” concept I found in supra-nationally, nationally and regionally operating firms in the U.S. One example is Procter&Gamble, which has its world headquarters in Cincinnati. Some years ago the top management institutionalized a monitoring group supervising efforts at guaranteeing equal opportunities for employees of all ethnic groups. Diversity is an enterprise policy practiced widely in the U.S. and throughout the world. The executive board of P&G sees its international success as connected to its national efforts to let people of different ethnic backgrounds work on all levels of the hierarchy.

Diversity management is a concept I, too, found in many regionally operating profit and non-profit organizations. This recently developed approach points out that the different capacities held by people of different cultural origins improve not only the atmosphere within a company but also make it more competitive.

5.2. Legal status

The legal status of immigrants is much better in the U.S. but the economic and social level of people living already in the U.S. or in Germany is better in the Federal Republic. The advantage for legal immigrants in the U.S. is a clear regulation on their possibility to become American citizens. For example, children of people having a legally granted status in the U.S. get U.S. citizenship by birth. People who come to the U.S. as legal immigrants at least have a clear idea of what they have to do in order to become naturalized citizens. This will help them to have a clear orientation for their efforts at self-integration. In Germany the newly elected government is about to change the traditional “blood right” of citizenship and improve the legal status of immigrants. But as to the problems of integrating the African-American community in the U.S. and the problems we face in Germany with repatriated people, one must say that changing the legal procedures does not automatically improve social integration of minority groups. On the contrary: the status of illegal immigrants is poor in both countries.

5.3. Political concepts

I found that the concept of multiculturalism in Germany and the salad bowl concept in the U.S. are not as similar as it looks at first glance. The salad bowl concept has evolved in a country with two centuries of experiences in solving problems of integration resulting from migration within the U.S. A lot of social problems at the end of the last century, for example, were solved by “going west”. The concept of multiculturalism in Germany is a middle-class concept of well-educated citizens and I wonder if this can really be made prominent throughout the population and in all classes of the Federal Republic.

5.4. Helping hand

Most concepts of integration in the U.S. are guided by the idea that people are responsible for their own lives. In Germany, integration concepts often stress the helping aspect, making

organizations or the administration responsible for integration or for the failure of integration. Based on my work with foreigners in Germany and my experiences with immigrant workers in the U.S., I personally prefer the responsibility concept because it gives people more pride and empowers them more than the often ideology-driven helping hand of social workers who try to solve their own problems through their clients.

5.5. Administrations and organizations

Institutional help is offered in both countries. The communities and welfare organizations in Germany have arranged a kind of division of labor in caring for different ethnic groups. Neighborhood groups take care of immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers. It seems to me that the social and physical status of migrants is better in Germany, e.g. with regard to health care, than it is in the U.S. Persecution of illegal aliens is severe in both countries. The work of private welfare organizations in the U.S. is as dedicated as I have encountered it in Germany. One difference results from the bureaucratic structures in the German administrative system, which is sometimes less flexible in responding to problematic cases especially on lower levels of the hierarchy. In the U.S. I have found the best practice among self-organized neighborhoods. The various ethnic groups are very active. In Greater Cincinnati the Hispanics, the Chinese, the Asian Indians, or the Jewish community care for and feel responsible for their clients. This is one of the reasons why the crime rate in these groups is remarkably low. Also the strength and creativity of neighborhoods fighting for their rights seems to me to be ahead of the German groups I know (except for those groups pursuing environmental aims). A good example is the Peaslee neighborhood center in Over-The-Rhine in Cincinnati. In this center black and white people have developed together numerous activities to defend their borough, to improve their living situation and to care for a better future for their children. Most impressive to me is the strategy to raise money so as to buy and reconstruct houses in their neighborhood in order to prevent the buyout of real estate by financial speculators.



Peeslee neighborhood center in Over-The-Rhine, Cincinnati
(Picture by the author)

5.6. Best practice

A first excellent example for working with migrants is the REGSAM project (regionalizing social work) in Munich. On the borough level, various organizations providing medical, social work, and educational institutions collaborate here with volunteer groups in order to improve the living conditions of migrant in concrete areas.

Another example for successful immigration and cultural integration I found in the U.S.: it is carried out by the Jewish communities for immigrants from the Ex-Soviet Union. This example of an optimal practice seems to me to have various aspects, which could be transferred to other countries, too.

With the arrival of an immigrant family there is a family from the community which will be responsible for the integration process over the next three years. The sponsor family will contribute some of its own money to support the newcomers for the first month of their stay in the U.S.

The Jewish community signs an official contract with the immigrants in their native language about the program of the next two years, spelling out the responsibility of the community and the duties of the migrants. The community monitors the integration process permanently: a regular report is discussed with the sponsor family and the migrants concerning the progress, e.g. in language training, skills improvement, knowledge of American every-day life, etc. After two years – or in special cases after three years – it is expected that the migrants have become responsible members of the community and that they can care for themselves as integrated citizens of the U.S.