European Integration and Education Policies: Germany and Sweden in “Migrant Integration Policy Index” and “Integrating Immigrant Children into Schools in Europe”

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Abstract

Many European nations have shared the vision for their immigrants’ integration and have conducted surveys to analyze the status and to find future political directions. This is because the proportion of immigrant background children has grown up to two to nine percent of the total population, and such nations have tried to make all immigrants have as equal rights as all European Union citizens. One of the valuable surveys for policy analysis on the integration of immigrants is the “Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX)” which has been mainly led by British Council with support from the EU. MIPEX consists of six indicators based on 140 policy statements and laws and provides comparable and reliable data. Sweden's score in MIPEX is the highest in the participating 28 nations, while Germany is in the middle.

Education is one of the crucial issues for their integration. Eurydice, the information network on education in Europe, summarized the situation across nations/regions of education for the integration of immigrant children into schools. The report, titled “Integrating Immigrant Children into Schools in Europe” provides information about education policies and practices concerning immigrant children and intercultural education. The report shows that all the European nations ensure the right to education for all children and support immigrant families. It also clarified that the evaluation for education practice on intercultural approaches are taken in limited places. For class level practice, Germany separates immigrant children from the natives while Sweden puts them all together in classroom.

This commentary note introduces two reports about the MIPEX in 2007 and the education for integration in 2003 and mainly describes the situation in Germany and Sweden with each country's backgrounds. The findings from the field study which the author conducted in 2008 are also introduced at the end as the limitation of comprehension of the above reports. The author recognizes the indicators and comparison should be carefully referred to local-level contexts in Sweden widening the “integration” concept and Germany having more participation of the natives in practice.