Multicultural Education in Europe and its Implications for Korea

Sang Hwan Seong

*Seoul National University**

Abstract

This research investigates how the multicultural traditions and education policies of Europe have been evolving and discusses what they imply and suggest for the Korean society which is rapidly changing into a multicultural society. In this endeavor, the present author reviews the multicultural histories and policies of some representative western countries and discusses their differences. Special discussion will be given to the policy changing case of Germany, in which ethnocentric principles have been giving way to policies based on broader multicultural perspectives. The critical overview of the German multicultural education policy evolution will shed light on the future policy development of multicultural education in Korea.

Key words: multicultural education, educational policy for multiculture, Europe, Germany, France, multiculturalism in Korea

I. Introduction

This paper examines the multicultural or multi-ethnic traditions and education policies of Europe and discusses their implications for the Korean society. After critically evaluating the developments of multicultural traditions and education policies of Europe, particularly focusing on Germany, the present author will provide some critical suggestions regarding the current situations of multiculturalism in Korea.[1] In this endeavor we

will also consider the recent polls conducted by Korea Society Opinion Institute(KSOI) and EBS (Educational Broadcasting System).

Ⅱ. Multiculturalism as a worldwide phenomenon and European situations

Recently, Korea is rapidly becoming a multicultural country. As of last June, the number of foreigners residing in Korea surpassed 1.1 million. What is most notable about the growth of foreign population in Korea is that with the increase of marriage-based immigrants and the influx of migrant workers, the number of multicultural families is increasing rapidly. Now that multicultural families are on the rise, Korean society enters the stage in which it must acknowledge and embrace various conflicts and cultural differences.

The current influx of marriage-based immigrants from East and Southeast Asian countries into Korea is attributable to its unique demographic structure and the unbalanced social structure between urban and rural areas of the country. In Korea, the continued influx of migrant workers and marriage-based immigrants is increasing the number of multicultural or multi-ethnic families and giving rise to related problems, which have implications for future policy development.

Multiculturalism is considered as a worldwide phenomenon. We can list the characteristics of the global community that is rapidly becoming a multicultural society. Thanks to the


Center for Multicultural Education
- Contact E-mail:sseong@snu.ac.kr
1) The term "multiculture' is employed widely in various contexts these days. Korean society has been known as a culturally and ethnically homogeneous society and the use of the term "muliculturalism" in Korea reflects the change or transition into a new society that the multi-ethnic migrants are joined to create and to redefine. At the same time the term can be roughly equated with the current Korean government-based coinage "damunhwa(多文化)". However, the term 'multiculturalism' used in this research does not necessarily denote the specific policy making directions such as 'assimilation' or 'integration'.

development of information technology, spatio-temporal distances between countries are getting shorter, and now even regions that were not blessed by scientific development can also enjoy its benefits. However, the most significant change is 'the increased global human migration' as a result of the globalization of capital and labor markets. The main routes of this recent migration have been from Asian or African regions to North America or Western Europe. Currently, as the labor markets of European countries have become more vibrant with the integration of Europe, migration is occurring actively among these countries as well. This is particularly the case in Western Europe where population is aging and there are a shortage of skilled workers in high value-added industries. Furthermore, a recent report from Welt-Online (11.02. 2008) indicates that Germany will need in 13 years 4,5 million more workers in order to maintain its current economic size and growth. As the following graph provided by the German Institute for Economic Research (*Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung*) shows, the retired population of Germany in 2030 will be 35.8% compared to the corresponding figure of 23.5% in 2000 (cf. Focus Migration, Kurzdossier Nr. 2 April. 2005).
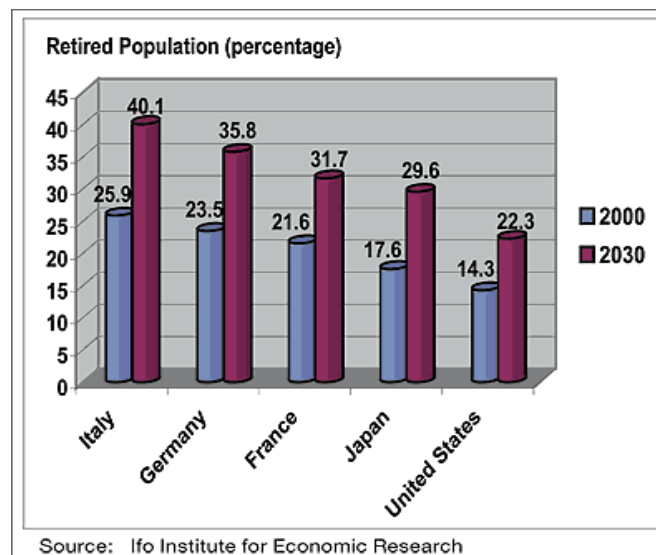
This means that while Germany is suffering from a high unemployment rate at the moment, the country will need more labor migration in the long run. It is observed that the numbers of economically active members of the population will decrease continuously by 2040 and that this will negatively affect the country's economic growth. In the graph we notice that the proportion of economically non-active population in Germany will be second to Italy. According to this projection, it appears that Germany will depend massively on labor force from other countries.

Yet, this is not a simple matter because it is impossible for such a large foreign workforce to move, and complex political and socio-cultural factors should also be considered. It is sometimes suggested that one needs to change the structures of the domestic labor markets such as encouraging the 'later retirement' or promoting the 'participation rates' (cf. Focus Migration, Kurzdossier Nr. 2 April. 2005).

Related to the current labor market change in Europe is the issue of illegal migration. It is often reported in the European media [e.g., *Deutsche Welle*] that "boat people" are trying to illegally migrate from North Africa to Western Europe by crossing the Mediterranean, and Italy and Spain are especially having trouble with them. Many unfortunate incidents are occurring on the Mediterranean. Furthermore, conflicts and tensions are intensifying between religious or ethnic groups in North America and Western Europe due to Islamic terrorism, so the issue of security is always being raised, even when discussing the migration of workers. Even if it is just normal workers, their migration is accompanied by a movement of different religions and value systems so it sometimes causes severe cultural conflicts and clashes in the accepting countries. Main examples of such countries in Western Europe are Britain, France and Germany.

In the case of Germany, out of its total population of 83 million, 7.3 million are foreign residents who account for almost 10 percent of the whole population. Turkish workers and their families constitute the largest share of these foreigners, and

migrant workers from various European countries have been arriving in Germany since the 1950s and 60s. Currently we are witnessing the third generation of these guest workers mostly from the developing regions.

The research on the migration tradition in European countries shows that the respective countries followed different paths for integrating the migrants. These different traditions also had to do with the heterogeneous characteristics of state- and nation-building processes in Europe. According to Brubaker (1992), France and Germany were entangled for two centuries in a fateful position at the center of 'state- and nation-establishing' in Europe. Both countries have been developing elaboratively even opposing models of 'nationhood and national self-understanding'. Brubaker explains that French tradition defines the nation as being conceived in connection with the institutional and territorial frame of the state. The French political understanding of nationhood which was already essential in the *ancien régime* was reinforced by the "Revolutionary and Republican definitions of nationhood and citizenship". It should be also noted that while French nationhood is constituted by political unity, it is centrally expressed in the striving for cultural unity. Political inclusion has given rise to cultural assimilation, for regional cultural minorities and immigrants alike (cf. Brubaker 1992).

Given the French tradition of political and cultural unity, Germany delivers us a completely different picture of 'nationhood and culture'. In Brubaker's terms, we can interpret the French understanding of nationhood as being state-centered and assimilationist, whereas the German understanding can be translated into a notion of being *Volk*-centered and differentialist. In the case of Germany, it is further observed that the development of national feeling precedes the nation-state, hence the German concept of the *Nation* cannot be equated with the political one. If we assume that the *Volk*-centered national feeling naturally and crucially affects the way people behave and think, it is not surprising to see that the German concept of the *Nation* was not linked to the abstract idea of citizenship. The intentional

avoidance of the German term 'Nation' after the Nazi-era can be also explained against this historical background. Thus, Brubaker claims that "this prepolitical German nation, this nation in search of a state, was conceived not as the bearer of universal political values, but as an organic cultural, linguistic, or racial community-as an irreducibly particular *Volksgemeinschaft*" (1992: 1). On this understanding, nationhood is an ethnocultural, not a political fact. It should be also noted that in contrast to France or Britain, (western) Germany was long split into numerous principalities and kingdoms and has only existed as a nation state since 1871. Germany experienced a continuous liberal democracy since 1949, passing, before then, through autocratic, democratic and Nazi phases. The migration phenomena and multiculturalism of Germany should be understood in this broad European historical context.

To be exact, Germany's history of the influx of migrant workers dates back to the 19th century, and these migrant workers can also include the seasonal workers from the former Eastern bloc and the 3 million forced laborers of the Nazi era.

The Federal Republic of Germany has also experienced a mass influx of Germans from eastern Europe since the end of the Second World War. These are essentially ethnic German refugees, who, unlike the imported labor supplies, have generally integrated into German society much more quickly (cf. Panayi 2000). These newcomers could enter the country as a result of German ideas of nationality based on the concept of *jus sanguinis* rather than *jus solis* (Bade 1990).

However, the influx of migrant workers that can be related to Korea's phenomenon of multiculturalism first occurred with the "miracle of the Rhine." After World War Ⅱ, a large workforce from the former Eastern bloc, the Near East and Africa flowed into Western European Countries, and as for Germany, nurses, nurse's aides and mine workers from Korea also started to arrive in the early 1960s and form a unique Korean immigrant community which has a population of about 35 thousand today. In addition to the traditional immigration countries in North America or the New World, it is necessary to

take a close look at Europe's history of multiculturalism and its related educational policies to prepare Korea to become a multicultural society in the future. In Western Europe, only countries that had many colonies have been taking liberal immigration policies, whereas others have invited migrant workers because of labor shortages and therefore have a history of foreign migration inflows partially similar to Korea.

Ⅲ. Educational policies for multiculture in Germany

Before discussing the multiculture and educational policies in Germany let us look at the overall situations of multiculture and minority languages in Europe.

In the 1970s, minority languages were given more attention in sociolinguistic research when, in a reaction to the previous centralizing tendencies, "regionalization was not only supported at the political level, but also by social movements that began to demand rights for minorities" (de Cilla and Busch 2006: 581).

We also need to recall that since the 1990s the end of the Cold War has prepared a new approach to borders in the European states and that the process of European integration and globalization has generated 'new minority-majority configurations' along with language policy issues. Since that time, the development of non-territorial languages, such as Romany, received a particular attention in terms of speaker rights. Other minority languages include regional languages or dialects that can function as lingua francas in cross-border situations (Löffler 1994: 69). Major standard languages cannot usually perform such functions, whereas mutually intelligible regional dialects and vernaculars can take them over on both sides of the border. These minority languages are therefore seen as undergoing a process of revival (Raasch, 2002: 205).

Given the European context, the present author intends to provide some overview of multicultural education policies that have been adopted and evolving in Germany (cf. Gogolin et al 2003). This will surely give us some insights for coping with the

problems that Korean society is experiencing at the moment. Multiculturalism in Korea and in Germany shares some similarities. It began as a countermeasure to discriminatory, nationalistic discourse and physical attacks on migrants.

In the case of Germany, a multicultural education was not implemented from the start. It has traditionally maintained a nationality law based on single ethnicity. However, many migrant or guest workers who have been employed on temporary contracts increasingly prolonged their stays and even invited their families from the home countries. As they eventually did not return to their native countries, Germany naturally made transition to a multicultural society and reformed its policy accordingly. For example, German government has been changing immigration laws and policies since late 1990s during the reign of the former *Bundeskanzler Gerhardt Schröder*.

Language education, in particular, was a crucial part in this policy. According to de Cilla and Busch (2006) the interest in migrant languages began in the domain of language in education when it became obvious that 'migration could not be considered a temporary phenomenon'. Early research within the multicultural paradigm was argued to be mainly concerned with language acquisition and bi- or multilingual education. For the most part, migration and mobility are no longer interpreted as temporary phenomena but as a consequence of the process of globalization (de Cilla and Busch 2006).

The characteristic of language education for children of migrant families until the 1990s was that it was integrated into the school system that use only German, but at the same time, aimed at maintaining the children's "ability to adapt" when they return to their native lands, and protecting their "cultural identity" (Gogolin et al. 2003). The tools for carrying out this "dual strategy" were "German as a second language courses (preparation courses/special courses)" and "supplementary native language classes." However, the German government's policy has been changing and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research later encouraged "multicultural education at schools." With the passage of time, the possibility of these

children going back to their own countries was no longer taken into consideration. Instead, each of these multicultural children was viewed as national human resource with bilingual or even multilingual skills, and "native language classes" were opened to support them. In other words, a new perspective that the language skills of migrant children should be utilized for all children has taken root (e.g. the concept of a "language class for all" in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia). In this case, the "Development of a European language Portfolio (Europäische Portfolio für Sprachen)" can be seen as an example. Yet, in implementing policies supporting multilingual skills, the abilities of teachers and the qualities of teaching materials are rising as major issues. Especially when it comes to practical elementary school subjects like history and social studies, developing multicultural curricula and revising syllabuses also play an important role (cf. Gogolin et al. 2003).

It is also observed that research interest in the multilingualism has shifted in recent years and focuses more on (hybrid) youth codes, and on languages in cultural expression and in the media (cf. de Cillia and Busch 2006). Although it is claimed that linguistic diversity should be considered a resource, migrant languages are quite often victimized as low-status languages in most cases, and their speakers are not vested with due linguistic rights. We also witness the varying degree of importance among the minority languages.

Such changes and states of multicultural and multilingual policies in European countries bring us to the question about what Korea's multicultural education policy should be like in the future.

Ⅳ. Multiculturalism as a new phenomenon in Korea : a special case

Many Asian countries are also experiencing the multi-cultural phenomenon arising from labor force movement. Among others, Taiwan and Singapore are witnessing active movement of labor
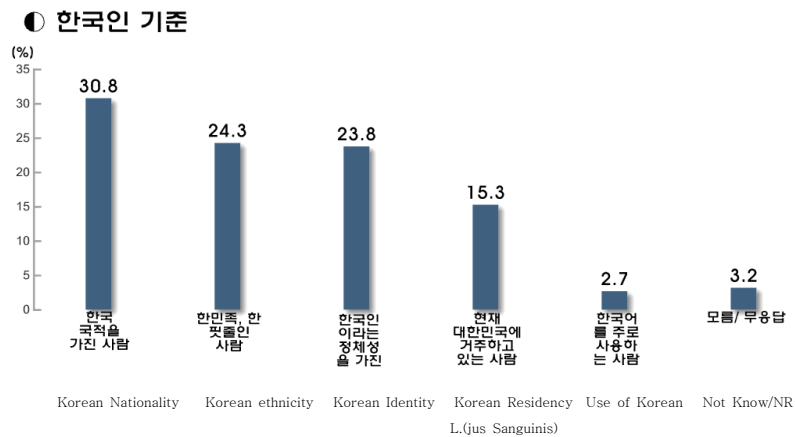
forces, which is thought to be closely interlinked with the complex geopolitical developments of their Southeast Asian neighbors. However, the current influx of marriage-based immigrants from East and Southeast Asian countries into Korea can be only explained in terms of its unique demographic structure and the unbalanced social structure between urban and rural areas of the country. In terms of Korea, there are some good reasons to believe that the government has been de facto conniving at the influx of migrant workers and marriage-based immigrants. It is sometimes claimed that the labor migrants can contribute to solving the labor shortages in some specific industries and that marriage-based migration can solve the social problems stemming from the unbalanced demographic structure in Korean rural areas. In any case, the foreign migration into Korea is increasing the number of multicultural families and giving rise to related problems, which have implications for future policy development. While the multi-cultural policies of the European and North American countries provide meaningful model cases for Korea, the present author believes that one needs to take a critical look at the feasibility and significance of those policies before applying them directly to Korean society.

There is no question that Korea's rapid transition into and its future as a multicultural society pose great challenges for the Korean people and require both material and time investment for the society to adapt itself to multiculturalism. To adapt to the future society that is approaching at a rapid pace, Korea needs to make nationwide efforts to establish the infrastructure required to support a multicultural society. The infrastructure should cover a wide range of social services, including education, medical services, welfare, and legal support. In addition to that, Korea needs to build an organic cooperation network that connects the central government to educational and training institutions, local bodies related to multiculturalism, and multicultural centers. Korea, a country that has a long history of homogeneity, can find it particularly difficult to adapt to a multicultural society of the future. Unfortunately, Korea is not actually showing great improvement in transforming itself into a

multicultural society.[2] The integration of Korea into the global picture gave rise to the multicultural phenomenon we are experiencing today, which advanced countries have already gone through. The increase in the number of multicultural families has brought demographic changes to Korean society, which in turn are revealing some serious problems regarding the public education system.

According to a poll recently conducted by the EBS education channel (May 2008) and a survey on public perception toward multiculturalism conducted by the Center for Multicultural Education of Seoul National University, a significant number of Korean citizens consider the increase of migrant workers and multicultural families as a factor that can weaken the national identity. The following table from the EBS poll (2008, 05) which was conducted by Korea Society Opinion Institute (KSOI) for the ethnic Koreans nationwide, shows Korean people's perspectives about the criteria for being Korean.

Table 1: Criteria for being Korean

◐ 한국인 기준

(%)

30.8	24.3	23.8	15.3	2.7	3.2
한국 국적을 가진 사람	한민족, 한 핏줄인 사람	한국인 이라는 정체성 을 가진	현재 대한민국에 거주하고 있는 사람	한국어 를 주로 사용하 는 사람	모름/ 무응답
Korean Nationality	Korean ethnicity	Korean Identity	Korean Residency L.(jus Sanguinis)	Use of Korean	Not Know/NR

---

2) Fortunately, the Korean Ministry of Health, Welfare and Family laid the foundation for multicultural policies in Korea. Act on Multicultural Family Support is put into force from Sep. 2008. This initiative will provide a basis for stronger cooperation between government, municipalities and NGOs.

As one can see in the above table 1, 24.3% of the Korean people take 'Korean ethnicity' to be the determining factor for being Korean, while 30.8% opt for 'Korean nationality' to be the major criterion for being Korean. Furthermore, more educated people tend to interpret 'Korean nationality to be more decisive for being Korean. Given the outcome of the poll for the multicultural perception in Korea, there is certainly a need for multicultural education for the public. To prepare ourselves for the future, we need to incorporate the value of multiculturalism into public education curricula from the primary school level, so that the society as a whole can nurture tolerance for different cultures based on the value of multiculturalism.

On top of that, more careful consideration is crucial for supporting with the education of the children of multicultural families. Most of those children are having difficulties studying in Korean schools because of their lack of learning abilities and language skills. Also, they tend to feel less proud of their foreign-born parents, who rarely speak fluent Korean, and are more likely to get bullied by their peers. The problem can get even worse to the point where they refuse to approve of their foreign-born parents, who are definitely a part of their own identities. Consider the following table 2 again from the EBS poll conducted by KSOI (2008.05):

Table 2. Poll for the marriage-based immigrants

	Difficulties with educating children		Difficulties with married couple	
1	language barriers	43.2	financial difficulties	25.0
2	financial difficulties for private education etc.	15.4	difficulties with children's education	23.6
3	bullying	3.9	reliability toward husband	19.0
4	resistance from children	3.3	conflicts with parents-in law	8.7
5	other factors	7.4	other factors	15.1

Table 3. Poll for the marriage-based immigrants (graph):
Criteria for difficulties with children

◐ 자녀교육의 가장 큰 문제점

| Language Barrier | financial difficulties with private education | bullying | resistance from children | other factors | Not know /No Response | No child |
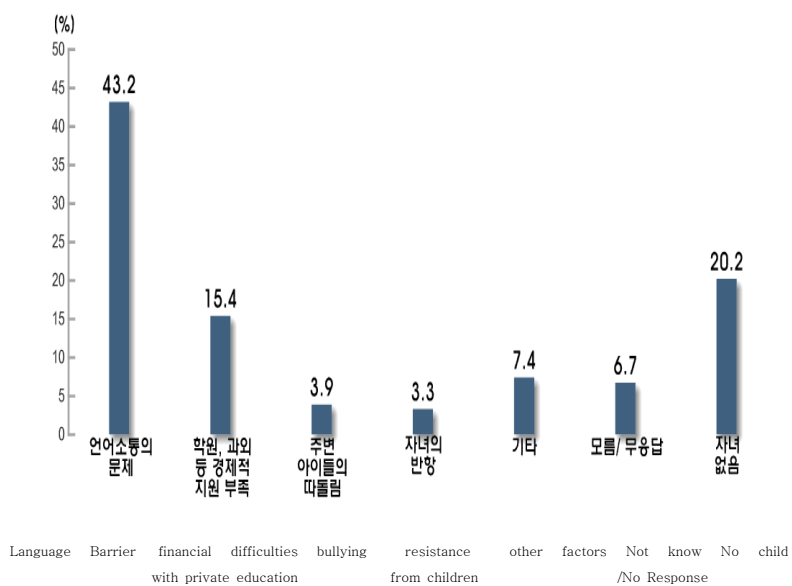
From the results shown in Tables 2 and 3, we can observe that the marriage-based immigrants have severe communication difficulties with their children at home. This can have further ramifications for the immigrants such as difficulties helping with children's homeworks and communicating with school teachers and so on.

To resolve these problems, Korea needs to strengthen related education programs including a pre-school education program, an after-school Korean language class, a student- counseling program, and an education program on multi- culturalism for children of multicultural families. We also need to develop a proactive, future-oriented education program on civic culture for Korean parents, which can help them overcome their

socio-cultural bias against multicultural families.

The current status of multicultural families in Korea paints a grim picture for the country's future. As of now, more than half of the families with immigrant brides are living with incomes lower than the minimum cost of living, which can decrease the opportunities for their children to receive better education including private educational assistances. This can, in turn, give rise to structural class conflicts in the future. The inheritance of poverty is certainly a serious concern for Korean society, which is becoming a globalized, multicultural society. Korea needs to take a proactive approach to support the build-up of education capabilities of parents of multicultural families through establishing the infrastructure for a multicultural society. Through these measures, Korea can facilitate the integration process in a multicultural society of the future.

The failure of children from multicultural or multiethnic families to adapt themselves to Korean society from their school years can result in serious social problems, such as structural unemployment and social exclusion. While their assimilation into Korean culture is important, providing institutional support to encourage them to preserve their own language and culture and help them have a well-balanced understanding of both cultures is equally crucial. A balanced understanding of both cultures will help those children develop their character and find their own identities, and thereby grow into responsible members of Korean society.

Finally, all of this will provide Korea with an opportunity to enhance its national competitiveness and nurture cultural diversity within its society. It is hoped that the Korean government will make the full use of this opportunity by implementing proactive measures including a system to support education of the multicultural families and a future-oriented, comprehensive support system based on a well-designed network for these families.

Ⅴ. Concluding Remarks

The present author investigated how the multicultural traditions and education policies of some representative European countries have been changing and discussed what they can imply and suggest for the Korean society which is rapidly evolving into a multicultural society. In this endeavor, the present author reviewed the multicultural historical backgrounds and different policies of some representative western countries with a focus on Germany. We examined the policy changing cases of Germany, in which ethnocentric tradition and principle have been giving way to policies based broader multicultural perspectives. We found out that until recently Germany has long denied its status as immigrant nation despite the significant proportion of foreign population. It is also important to see that Germany finally gave up the ethnically oriented immigration law and policies with respect to integration policy. This change had obviously further ramifications for the multicultural education policies in Germany. As we have seen, the Korean society is experiencing tough challenges with respect to multicultural phenomena. In this regard, the critical overview of the German multicultural education policy evolution sheds light on how the future policy development of multicultural education in Korea should be directed.

References

Bade, K. J. (ed.) (1990) *Neue Heimat im Westen: Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge, Aussiedler*. Münster: Westfälischer Heimatbund.

Brubaker, R. (1992) *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

de Cillia, R & Busch, B. (2006). Language Policies: Policies on Language in Europe. Brown (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Elsevier.

Gogolin/Neumann/Roth. (2003). Förderung von Kindern und Jugendlichen mit Migrations hintergrund. Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungs-förderung. Materialien zur Bildungsplanung und zur Forschungsförderung, Heft 107. Gutachten von Prof. Dr. Ingrid Gogolin, Prof. Dr. Ursula Neumann, Prof. Dr. Hans-Joachim Roth, Universität Hamburg.

Löffler, H. (1994). *Germanistische Soziolinguistik*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag.

Panayi, P. (2000). *Ethnic Minorities in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany: Jews, Gypsies, Poles, Turks and Others*. London: Longman.

Panayi, P. (2004). 'The Evolution of Multiculturalism in Britain and Germany: An Historical Survey'. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* Vol. 25, No. 5&6, 466-480.

Raasch, A. (2002). 'Grenzregionen und die Mehrsprachigkeit.' In: Kelz, H (ed.) *Die sprachliche Zukunft Europas. Mehrsprachigkeit und Sprachenpolitik*. Baden-Baden: Nomos. 193-209.

Relevant Website

Die Welt -Online
http://www.welt.de/welt_print/article1423373/Deutschland_braucht_Millionen_Arbeitskraefte.html
Focus Migration, Kurzdossier Nr. 2 April. 2005
http://www.focus-migration.de/index.php?id=1197&L=1