

Tucci, Ingrid

Article

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Dr. Ingrid Tucci, Research Associate of the Longitudinal Socio-Economic Panel Study (SOEP) at DIW Berlin

FIVE QUESTIONS TO INGRID TUCCI

»At Least in Germany People Get a Second Chance«

1. Dr. Tucci, you have compared the careers of second-generation migrants in France and Germany. Which nationalities did you take into consideration for your comparison? In Germany, we focused mainly on the children of migrants from Turkey and various Arab countries. In France, we were particularly interested in second-generation migrants from Sub-Saharan countries, in other words, countries south of the Sahel, and descendants of North African migrants.
2. In which country do second-generation migrants have better educational opportunities? Overall, we see that an academic path is much more accessible to them in France. There are more migrant children who take their school-leaving exam there. The situation is different in Germany. Here second-generation migrants find it considerably more difficult to get a good education and qualifications. So the education system in France seems to be more conducive to migrants managing to get into higher education. However, there is a typical educational trajectory there that ends with children leaving school early, and second-generation migrants are overrepresented here. Then it is very difficult for them to re-enter the school system. In Germany, on the other hand, it is easier to get a second chance of getting a proper education.
3. Where do second-generation migrants have better access to the labor market? There is a tendency for second-generation migrants in both countries to end up in more precarious forms of employment. What we observe in France, unlike in Germany, is a typical course of unemployment. In France, 18 to 25-year-olds in particular are constantly alternating between unemployment and precarious work. In Germany, there is a better transition into the labor market. This is probably because of vocational training, which is valued higher in Germany. In France, on the other hand, vocational training is considerably undervalued. Consequently, young people in France who are sent on vocational training courses are often frustrated and even see this path as a form of punishment. In Germany, on the other hand, the dual system of vocational education and training is a good alternative to university studies.
4. In what areas could the two countries learn from each other? For example, France could learn from Germany with regard to improving the status of vocational training. This also includes the possibility of getting a second chance for those who don't do so well at school first time round. Conversely, the free early education for children in France could serve as a good model for Germany too. In France, all children go to pre-school at the age of three, which is particularly important for second-generation migrants. In addition, all French children follow the same educational pathway up until the age of 15. In Germany, they follow different trajectories at an earlier age, which may be one reason why the children of migrants in particular don't manage to take their school-leaving exams as often.
5. What did you learn from the interviews with young people? On the one hand, we discovered that social networks play an important role, especially if young adults receive help from a teacher, mentor or family friend in the course of their education. This increases their motivation and belief in their own abilities. On the other hand, we observe that it has a very positive effect if young people growing up in deprived areas also have experiences outside their "neighborhood," and get to know another world.



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