

# EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS: AUSTRIA

## Migrant children and communities in a transforming Europe



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The project Migrant Children and Communities in a Transforming Europe (MiCreate) aims to stimulate inclusion of diverse groups of migrant children by adopting child-centered approach to migrant children integration on educational and policy level.

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## 1. Introduction

This report highlights the relationship between members of the educational community and migrant children, gaps in their knowledge, their perceptions, approach towards the integration of migrant children in Austria.

It also refers to principles of child-centered education in managing diversity and practices applied to promote cultural diversity in schools in Austria.

The results are a compilation and crossing of 15 interviews with school representatives, one or two focus groups with members of the school community (key stakeholders, including principals, teachers, etc.), six in-depth interviews with some of the focus groups informants and analysis of the school's existing visual displays, curriculum and teaching materials.

## 2. Methodological approach

First, we identified 15 schools in Vienna and in a first meeting we informed the school principals about our research project and our forthcoming fieldwork research at their schools. Second, we conducted a total of 15 qualitative interviews with school principals on the topic of the integration of migrant children at Austrian schools. Third, we selected six schools for carrying out a more in-depth analysis. For this, mostly with the help of the school principals, we scheduled five in-depth interview appointments and one or two focus groups (each with 5-6 interviewees) with teachers of each school. Since, in most of the time, we faced difficulties in scheduling two focus groups with the teachers due to their time constraints, we had to conduct one focus group. But when conducting only one focus group, we did cover both blocs of questions, including those of the second focus group. In these interviews we asked the school representatives to discuss and elaborate on topics of migrant children's integration as well as of cultural and religious diversity, and to evaluate the policies addressing the challenges related to migrant children's integration at their schools. Our interviews were in-depth and (semi-)structured. Fourth, in order to conduct our analysis of the visual displays of the schools and the teaching materials on the question of the representation of cultural plurality and cultural integration, we did observe the school landscape and asked the teachers that we interviewed to show us their teaching materials and to elaborate on the curriculum.

In terms of categorization of 'migrant' and 'local' pupils, in our interviews with the school representatives we faced difficulties and were confronted with confusion on the part of the interviewees regarding the question who did count as a 'migrant' and a 'local' pupil. In dominant public debates in Austria also children who were born and raised in Austria are considered as 'migrant children' or 'children with migration backgrounds', whereas 'local children' are considered as those whose 'ethnic' ancestors originated from Austria. This racialized approach to citizenship is rooted in the Austrian Nationality Law that is based on the principle of *ius sanguinis* ("right of blood") which means acquisition of citizenship by

descent of the parents. This is why we had to elaborate on and discuss these categorizations with the school representatives each time in the very beginning of our interviews. We contacted our potential informants via Email and via phone calls and conducted the interviews face-to-face at the schools. All interviews were audio recorded, anonymized, and analyzed according to the template provided by the work package lead, University of Barcelona, in line with our research design and questions.

## 2.1. School sample

Our sample composed of stakeholders from the school community of 15 schools of which we selected six schools for in-depth analysis. We conducted a thorough online research to identify and select schools for conducting our fieldwork. After facing some difficulties in accessing schools for our fieldwork activities we also contacted in particular the schools that were in a partnership agreement with the University of Vienna in order to facilitate our access to the field. We selected mostly schools in Vienna of which the six schools for in-depth analysis were located in Vienna which hosts the biggest number of migrants and people with migrant families in the country. Further criteria of selection were the neighborhoods and districts in Vienna. We did select neighborhoods that were characterized by a high number of migrants but also those that were dominantly inhabited by Austrians. Moreover, Austria is characterized by a 'two-track' education system, in which pupils can choose between the *Allgemein Bildende Höhere Schulen* (General Secondary School) which represents the academic secondary school, short *AHS*, or *Neue Mittelschule* (New Middle School), short *NMS*, that is a lower 'practical' secondary school. Against this background, for our sample we did cover a balanced number of both types of schools. Furthermore, we also did conduct our interviews with schools that were from socio-economically advantaged areas as well as with those that were characterized as so-called *Brennpunktschulen* (hotspot schools). These schools were defined as schools in socio-economically disadvantaged areas consisting of pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged families who were mostly migrant children or migrant families background. Our research activities were also constrained by the schools acceptance for working with us and the time constraints of school representatives.

Table A. Schools and community characteristics.

School	Typology (public/charter/private)	School type (AHS/NMS)	Location (City, small village, countryside...)	Number of total students	Migration rate	Languages	Religions
S1	Private	NMS	City	-	-	-	-
S2	Public	NMS	City	310	287		catholic, Islam, orthodox, Coptic
S3	Public	NMS	City	320	110 (Austrian Citizenship)	Arabic, German, Polish, Serbian, Serbo-Croatian, Croatian, Romanian,	without confession, catholic, protestant, Buddhist, Islamic, Jehovah's Witnesses,

						Turkish, Bosnian, Dari, Farsi, Russian, Albanian, Macedonian, Chinese, English, Yoruba, Chechen, other African languages, Urdu, Slovak, Hungarian, Syrian, Bulgarian	Church of the Seventh-day Adventists, Russian Orth, Serbian Orth, Romanian Orthodox, other African or Asian religions
S4	Public	AHS	City	626	80%	BKS, Spanish, French, Turkish, Arabic, Farsi, Albanian, Aramaic, English, Hungarian, Urdu	Islam. rom. cath. serb. orth., etc.
S5	Public	AHS	City	505	330	Turkish, Arabic, Vietnamese, Bengali, Romanian, Bosnian, Russian, Serbian, Albanian, Chechen, Slovak, Persian, Chinese, Tagalog, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Hindi, Urdu, Dari, French, Polish, Hungarian, Pashto, Kurdish, Bulgarian	Islam, Catholic, Protestant
S6	Public	AHS	City	-	-		
S7	Public	AHS	City	749	75%	more than 20 most common: BKS, Turkish, Arabic, Polish, Romanian,	islamic, catholic, serbian orthodox, protestant, alevi, free church

						Albanian, Russian	
S8	Public	NMS	City	-	-		
S9	Public	AHS	City	-	-		
S10	Public	AHS	City	-	-		
S11	Public	NMS	City	-			
S12	Public	AHS	City	-	-		
S13	Public	AHS	City	544	160	English, French, Spanish, Serbian, Hungarian, Italian	buddist, bulgarian- orthodox, protestant, greek- orthodox, hindu, muslim, israelite, coptic- orthodox, without confession, pentecostal (Pfingstkirche), catholic, rumanian- orthodox, russian- orthodox, serbian- orthodox
S14	Public	NMS	City	232	202	Afrikaans, Albanian, Arabic, BKS, Chinese, Dari, English, Georgian, Kurdish, Macedonian, Mongolian, Persian (Farsi), Philippines, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian, Slovakian, Smalish, Spanish, Chechen, Turkish, Hungarian	Alevi, Protestant, Muslim, Orthodox, catholic, sikh, others
S15	Public	NMS	Countryside	360	-	-	-

Source: Own elaboration

## 2.2. Participants

Table B. Participants in focus groups and interviewees.

School name	Interviews (indicate role)	Focus group 1 or Focus Group including both issues (indicate role)	Focus group 2 (indicate role)
Schiller Schule (S1)	Flora (Head of School) (I4) Fritz (teacher) (S1_1) Susi (teacher) (S1_2) Ingo (teacher) (S1_3) Hugo (teacher) (S1_4) Sarah (teacher) (S1_5) Tina (teacher) (S1_6)	Fritz (teacher) (S1_F1) Susi (teacher) (S1_F1) Ingo (teacher) (S1_F1) Hugo (teacher) (S1_F1)	Fritz (teacher) (S1_F1) Susi (teacher) (S1_F1) Ingo (teacher) (S1_F1) Hugo (teacher) (S1_F1)
Diltheyschule (S2)	Miriam (Head of School) (I13) Mary (teacher) (S2_1) Brigitte (teacher) (S2_2) Pelin (teacher) (S2_3) Oliver (teacher) (S2_4) Ahmad (teacher) (S2_5)	Mary (teacher) (S2_F1) Brigitte (teacher) (S2_F1) Pelin (teacher) (S2_F1)	-
Hannah Arendt Schule (S3)	Sabine (Head of School) (I11) Ursula (teacher) (S3_1) Mara (teacher) (S3_2) Judit (teacher) (S3_3) Maralisa (teacher) (S3_4) Jochen (teacher) (S3_5)	Ursula (teacher) (S3_F1) Mara (teacher) (S3_F1) Judit (teacher) (S3_F1) Maralisa (teacher) (S3_F1) Jochen (teacher) (S3_F1)	-
Leibniz Schule (S4)	Ralf (Head of School) (I2) Otto (teacher) (S4_1) Bettina (teacher) (S4_2) Kim (teacher) (S4_3) Claire (teacher) (S4_4) Ramona (teacher) (S4_5)	Kim (teacher) (S4_F1) Claire (teacher) (S4_F1) Annalisa (teacher) (S4_F1)	-
Humboldt Schule (S5)	Evelyn (Head of School) (I14) Romeo (teacher) (S5_1) Zara (teacher) (S5_2) Mathilde (teacher) (S5_3) Zeynep (teacher) (S5_4) Robert (teacher) (S5_5)	Romeo (teacher) (S5_F1) Zara (teacher) (S5_F1) Mathilde (teacher) (S5_F1) Zeynep (teacher) (S5_F1)	-
Einstein Schule (S6)	Paul (Head of School) (I15) Sabrina (teacher) (S6_1) Levin (teacher) (S6_2) Hubert (teacher) (S6_3) Lisa (teacher) (S6_4) Margit (teacher) (S6_5)	Geraldine (teacher) (S6_F1) Levin (teacher) (S6_F1) Lisa (teacher) (S6_F1) Erika (teacher) (S6_F1) Ester (teacher) (S6_F1)	-
Gutenberg Schule (S7)	Linda (Head of school) (I5)	-	-
Marie Curie Schule (S8)	Richard (Head of school) (I6)	-	-
Blocksberg Schule (S9)	Anton (Head of School) (I7)	-	-
Rosa Parks Schule (S10)	Hugo (Head of School) (I8)	-	-
King Schule (S11)	Charlotte (Head of School) (I10)	-	-
Oranien Schule (S12)	Hannes (Head of School) (I12)	-	-
Helene Lange Schule (S13)	Franz (Head of School) (I1)	-	-
Sophie Scholl Schule (S14)	Amelie (Head of School) (I3)	-	-
Rosa Luxemburg (S15)	Doris (Head of School) (I9)	-	-

### 2.3. Analysed teaching materials

Table C. Analysed teaching materials.

School	Typology/name of the material	Description	Who brought/created	Relevance for the project
S1	Poster	Located in the school hallway  Purpose: Getting to know each other, elaborating common interests (i.e. hobbies), demonstrating the school diversity (i.e. different mother tongues)	Made by pupils	Diversity Inclusion Well-being
S1	Poster	Located in the entrance hall  Poster says: "Diversity of religions and cultures is our wealth"  Purpose: Making the principles of the school permanently visible for everybody who enters the school	Made by school principals	Inter-ethnic conflicts Inclusion Well-being Diversity
S2	We could not find any	-	-	-
S3	We could not find any	-	-	-
S4	Reading Book	Found in the school library  Purpose: Reflects the realities and the stories of migrant youth	Educational experts	Diversity Inclusion
S4	Reading Book	Found in the school library  Fairy tales in different languages (i.e. Turkish)  Purpose: Stimulation of the integration process of migrant children	Educational experts	Diversity Inclusion
S4	Poster	Found at the staircase  Certificates for pupils who have	Made by school principals	Diversity Inclusion Well-being

		<p>carried out a project on migration/inclusion</p> <p>Purpose: Stimulation of the integration process of migrant children</p>		
S4	Poster	<p>Found at the entrance hall</p> <p>"Hello" in different languages</p> <p>Purpose: Demonstrating the school diversity (i.e. different mother tongues)</p>	Made by school principals	<p>Inter-ethnic conflicts</p> <p>Inclusion</p> <p>Well-being</p> <p>Diversity</p>
S5	Art Project	<p>Found at the staircase</p> <p>Words like "respect", "inclusion", "cohesion" sewn onto jeans</p> <p>Purpose: Promotion of togetherness among the pupils</p>	Made by pupils	<p>Diversity</p> <p>Inclusion</p> <p>Well-being</p>
S6	Reading Book	<p>Found in the school library</p> <p>Purpose: Teaching French</p>	Educational experts	<p>Diversity</p> <p>Inclusion</p>
S6	Reading Book	<p>Found in the school library</p> <p>Purpose: Ethics Education</p>	Educational experts	Diversity
S6	Reading Book	<p>Found in the school library</p> <p>Purpose: Ethics Education</p>	Educational experts	<p>Diversity</p> <p>Inclusion</p>
S6	Reading Book	<p>Found in the school library</p> <p>Purpose: Ethics Education</p>	Educational experts	Diversity

Source: Own elaboration.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. How schools approach to integration

#### 3.1.1. Knowledge, perceptions and attitudes about integration of migrant children

Overall, we witnessed that migration and integration represented fiercely contested debates but also sensitive topics for the teachers to talk about (S1\_3). Our interviews suggest that education and schools have become a highly contested battlefield of party politics and public discussions in the ongoing processes of demarcation in the context of migration and integration. We also observed that recent public discussions on schools are hotly debated in conjunction with questions regarding 'costs' and 'benefits' of migrants, 'failed' integration ('Ghettoization') and in particular, the recently 'Islamization' (Wiesinger 2020) and the diminishing or reduction of the level of learning success of schools due to a high number of migrant children.

In our interviews we could observe two different notions of integration explained by the teachers. The minority of our interviewees defended an assimilation model of integration, whereas the majority of the interviewed teachers defined integration as a co-existence, 'two-way process' and mutual understanding, respect and appreciation by distinguishing that from assimilation. The interviewees also pointed to the difference of integration in society and in schools by underlining the contrasting realities of both since their schools consisted predominantly of migrant children that was not the case for the Austrian society.

With the help of the interviews we recognized that teachers conceptualized German language proficiency as a central pillar of integration of migrant children (I8, I6, I12). However, many interviewed teachers also underlined that German skills are the base for integration but not sufficient. On the one hand, we could observe that the majority of our interviewees perceived good German skills as a way of making sure that migrant children were able to participate in the school system (i.e. daily routines and rules, bureaucratic processes, legal system) and follow and understand the instructions in classes (i.e. text comprehension, teaching goals). On the other hand, we could notice that only a few teachers described the proficiency of German skills as part of a 'cultural integration' defined in terms of assimilation. Following this line of argumentation, Susi explained that migrant children had to acquire "proper German language skills" and adapt to the "Austrian identity and values" for their integration. For her "understanding the rules of daily life and following the house rules in schools" such as "punctuality" or "behaving in public transportation" were some of the indicators for measuring integration. She emphasized in particular that migrant children were lacking in respecting gender equality and demanded male students to respect and accept female teachers' authorities. For this Susi claimed "we as Austrians cannot tolerate anything" by referring to male students who according to her reproduced misogynous ideologies in discussions on religion and gender relations as well as in the daily life routines at the school. That is why Richard also demands in this cases to "assess if these are compatible with our Austrian values and laws" (I6). This position was also taken by Sabine and Miriam, two other

NMS principals in highly diverse districts (I11, I13). These elaboration on integration reflects the dominant discourses and current integration policies in Austria. (see report on policies). In doing so, the teachers defending a assimilationism model of integration reinforced the dualistic distinction of "us" as Austrian and "them" as migrants, even though if they have been born and raised in Austria, by demanding a one-sided adaption in which migrant children have to adapt to the dominant society and are supposed to give up their "original" identities. These interviews showed also how the teachers reproduced specific homogenous images on the religious and gender identities of migrant children by constructing migrant male students with specific masculinities that support sexist and homophobic ideologies. In this regard, Hubert reinforced these images by giving examples of what integration meant to him such as "shaking hands with women even if you are a Muslim man" (S6\_3). Hugo emphasized that "statistical numbers of citizenship or place of birth represent an incomplete picture on the realities" in terms of feeling of belonging that is why he suggests to look at the self-definitions of migrant children (S1\_4).

In contrast, the majority of our interviewees, expressed their doubts and criticism on integration as assimilationism and emphasized the differentiation of integration from assimilation (S2\_3) and underlined instead mutual recognition, respect, appreciation, feeling of belonging and acceptance as well as participation as key pillars of integration. In this regard, Richard stressed "to focus on common and shared experiences and not to single out differences" (I6). Brigitte expresses her understanding of integration as being able to "cope with the school system and sticking to a common catalogue of rules" (S2\_2). Fritz addressed this with having the knowledge of being able to "cope with bureaucracy and legal system" (S1\_1).

We could observe in our interviews that for many school principals 'successful integration' as an abstract idea would manifest itself in migrant children's feeling of belonging to society regardless of their origin, language, religion or the way they look (I6, I11, I12). For the school principals this meant that migrant children in a context of 'successful integration' would not be exposed to discriminations because of their backgrounds and think of "having worse opportunities in getting a job because they look different or are having a different religion" (I6). Furthermore, he demands for 'successful integration' that the "city government and institutions need to accept them the way they are" (ibid.). In this sense, the school principals understand integration as a two-way-process and as a process of self-worth: If migrants are accepted, they also participate in the society (ibid.). Therefore, according to this interview partner integration is, on the one hand, a question of willingness to participate but, on the other hand, also about offering and granting opportunities for participation (ibid.). In this regard, Miriam expressed her view on integration as connected with political participation. However, since the fact that right to vote is linked to possessing the Austrian citizenship represents a core problem for pupils from migrant families. Many children are born in Austria, but do not possess the Austrian citizenship because of the restrictive regulation of the Austrian Nationality Law (I13). Miriam also emphasized that she believes if somebody is being pushed away by society because of skin color or religion, they would "have to organize with others who share this experience too" (ibid.) since "if I keep telling someone that they are a migrant, a foreigner, then they will withdraw into their community." (ibid.). Miriam's

elaboration indicates that migrant children's experiences of exclusions would result in or reinforce so-called 'Ghettoization' or the production of 'parallel societies'. Many teachers and school principals underlined that recognition and appreciation is crucial for the migrant children's integration because that would promote their feeling of belonging, inclusion and active participation (I6, I10).

### *3.1.2. Knowledge, perceptions and attitudes about migration*

In Austria discourses on the school and education system are intrinsically linked to debates on migration and integration as well as on 'culture war in classrooms' (Wiesinger 2020) and 'the impacts of Islam'. In these discourses migrants are rather perceived and constructed as a part of social, economic and political problems. These discourses reproduce a predominantly "negative" image on migration that is "measured" and discussed in terms of costs (i.e. unemployment, criminality, 'Islamization' etc.) and benefits (i.e. economic contributions of highly skilled migrants etc.). We could observe that also in our interviews the school representatives reproduced or/and referred to the negative connotation of migration in Austria.

Our interviewees pointed to a "two-track" or "two-tier system" of schools, referring to the different types of schools *AHS* and *NMS*, in which the *NMS* were described as schools "full of migrant children" (I1). In this regard, it became evident throughout the interviewees that specifically in the *NMS* schools it is "nothing particular to deal with the stigma of being a 'migrant'" (S1\_2) or any discrimination experiences "since almost every pupil is a migrant" (ibid.). This shows that the intersection of the social categories of migration and ethnicity, socio-economic background, and space in terms of specific neighborhoods such as socio-economically disadvantaged areas decisive for educational im/mobility of migrant and local children. We could observe that in the very beginning of our interviews, many school representatives emphasized their perspective of primarily perceiving and treating all pupils regardless of their ethnic, socio-economic, gender, religious backgrounds as "children and pupils" (I6, I10) and underlined that to be recognized as children and pupils is also what children want to (ibid.)

We could also observe that in most of the interviews discussions on migration in Austria were characterized by a hierarchization of "guest workers" as well as their descendants, mainly from Turkey, as showing "still integration deficits" and refugees as "being able to integrate faster" (S1\_4). In this regard, Susi emphasized that children who were born and/or raised in Austria "still stick to their or parent's countries of origin" that she frames as the main obstacle for integration. She traces this back to the guest-worker context in which "both the guest workers and the Austrian state presumed that they would leave and stay only temporarily in Austria" (S1\_2). This represents according to her the reason why integration of guest workers and their descendants have failed and "the consequences last until nowadays" that are reinforced by currently "only focusing on the integration of refugees" which results in missing integration measures for so-called pupils of the second and third generation. In this regard, Doris pointed out that she recognized a difference in the motivation of migrant parents

depending on the reason why the parents left their country of origin. Therefore, she explained that "Hungarian parents" are often "very motivated" because they left Hungary to get a better education for their children. In contrast to that,, she highlighted that "Turkish parents", even if they are "wealthy", do not care about their children's education. In her opinion, "this is caused by the circumstance that Turkish people might have a lower priority on education" (I9). In explaining that, they reproduced the image of the predominant Other as Turkish migrants in Austria. Their elaborations on migration reflect a differentiation and ethnic hierarchization among migrant communities along social categories of class, religion and socio-economic background. In that sense, the teachers mobilized notions of 'non-/Europeanness' and 'Orientalism' for categorizing migrant children's integration and learning success, rather than tracing inequalities back to socio-economic deprivations and other structural exclusions.

### 3.2. How diversity in a migratory context affects school

Since Vienna has the policy of *Wohnortnähe* (schools have to take children who are living in the area) the socio-demographics of the area are reflected in the composition of school students (I5, I6, I8, I9). For instance, Franz pointed out that he has less migrant children in his school due to the fact that the district in which the school is located is a wealth district (I1, I12). In contrast to that, a lot of principals described their school, which is located in districts with a high number of migrants, as diverse and a mixture of migrants and working class families or families with lower incomes (I6, I8). Most of them have more than 50% of pupils who have German not as mother tongue, independent whether *NMS* or *AHS* (I5, I8, I10, I11). The high diversity correlates with the district or area in which the school is placed. Due to that some interview partners - *AHS* principles of mostly high diverse neighbourhoods - described diversity as "normality" for the children (I7, I8) as well as for themselves. Besides, the school staff displayed diversity as something mainly positive and an enrichment for the school community (I7). They also mentioned that due to the fact that migration and diversity is part of the students everyday life there is no racism or discrimination towards migrant or refugee children (I7, I11). In opposition to that the principal Hannes, who is working in an *AHS* with very low diversity and very high incomes as the neighbourhood is a wealthy are, elaborated that there is no racism in his school because his pupils "never had the chance to make bad experiences with migrants" (I12). This assumption shows his point of view that racism develops from making 'bad' personal experiences with foreigners. However, regarding diversity that seems to be normal for the children, Kim, an *AHS* teacher at a very diverse school, emphasized that her children describe the school mainly negative. She highlighted that the children have low self-confidence because they have the opinion that their chances of success are limited due to the school's reputation. The reputation is in relation to the district where the school is located, which is characterized by superdiversity. Here again it becomes clear that not every *AHS* can be classified as an elite school for the simple reason of being an *AHS*. Instead it seems to be that the reputation of a specific *AHS* depends on its location/district. Kim pointed out that regardless of how much effort the teachers invest in the school/pupils, the school remains a *Brennpunktschule* solely because of the district's reputation and the composition of the pupils (often a high number of migrants) (S4\_4).

However, how a school is being affected by diversity is also dependent on the school type. The Educational System in Austria is based on the differentiation between the two types of secondary schools: *AHS* and *NMS*. Whether pupils are attending *AHS* or *NMS* is determined by the grades the children get in *Volksschule* (Elementary School) by the age of 10. What was often criticized in the interviews was the fact that the grades in *Volksschule* strongly depend on the engagement of the parents and how actively they are supporting their children. This means that the educational standards of the caregiver as well as the monetary and time frames families have, shape the educational path that students will follow. Since activities in supporting the children means communicating with teachers and principals as well as helping them with homework and studying, is strongly connected with speaking German, the educational trajectories of pupils are predetermined by socio-economic standards as well as migration background. This means pupils who receive a lot of support from their parents or grow up in well-educated families they are more likely attending *AHS* after *Volksschule* than children from less educated, less sophisticated and often migrant families. While *AHS* and other *AHS*-like schools follow the path to graduation in order to go to university afterwards, *NMS* ends after 4 years. Charlotte, *NMS* principal, said for example that "a marginal percentage goes to another Secondary School" after leaving *NMS*. A lot of them attend *Polytechnische Schule* (Polytechnic School) just for the time until they are 15 (I10). Apart from that *AHS*-pupils follow the path to graduation in order to go to university afterwards. Thus this system divides children at a very young age by socio-economic parameters what effects, not only the lives of the children but also the schools in a broader sense: Therefore, especially *NMS* have to deal with topics that arise from a body of students who come from educationally disadvantaged families.

In this regard *NMS* have to deal with issues like developing their own teaching materials due to a lack of basic German skills (S3\_2). Further *NMS* teachers and principals emphasized that their pupils often have to take over responsibilities from their parents, because their parents need them e.g. for translation (I10). Sometimes they also made the experience that migrant children stay away from school because they have to support their parents in everyday life (I10). Further one teacher stressed that if there are urgent matters coming up at school it is difficult to address the migrant parents, e.g. when dealing with health issues in school (S3\_2). Apart from this some teachers like Jochen pointed out that there are - especially muslim - children or at least their parents who do not accept certain subjects like sex education, biology and so on in class (S3\_5).

Since the amount of diversity is dependent on the place where the school is located and the school type, the school principals as well as the teachers therefore mentioned different experiences with diversity during the interviews. It could be examined that especially *NMS* that are located in district that are superdiverse, are considered as *Brennpunktschulen*. Therefore, the amount of migrant pupils as well as their socio-economic background which is related with the amount of support the migrant parents are able to provide, are the main characteristics of a *Brennpunktschule*. Ralf highlighted that "a *Brennpunktschule* is a school with too many children with migration experiences" and "too many children that have a lower social-economic background". In his opinion, "a class with too many migrant children from

poor families leads to nationalism and cultural habits that we don't want to have in my school" (I10).

However, in relation to that mostly all of the interview partners pointed out that the question whether children are receiving support at home or whether the children are able to follow an academic path or not, does not depend on the circumstance that these children are from migrant families, but much more on their socio-economic position and their parents level of education (I10, I11, I12). In contrast to that, Doris pointed out that the family's support is the most important indicator for the success of the children (I9). However, it should be highlighted that parents who have a higher level of education and a better socio-economic position are often able to mobilize more support for their children - but this does not mean that parents who have not attended higher education and have not a very good socio-economic position cannot be supportive for their children.

In sum the trajectories of the children are dependent on the intersection of the stigma as being a migrant and the socio-economic background of the children. The intersection of these two 'categories' are demonstrated firstly on the district where the children are living and secondly on the school type they are attending. However, also the school district as well as the school type determine the trajectories of the children. Therefore, we could examine a reciprocity between 'migration' and 'socio-economic background' and 'school type' and 'district'.

### 3.3. Resources and mediators for the integration

#### 3.3.1. School reception policies

Regarding the school reception policy towards teachers, all interviewed school principals explained that the teacher recruitment in Austria is standardized and regulated by the *Bildungsdirektion* (Department of Education) of the responsible federal state (in our case Vienna and Burgenland). The *Bildungsdirektion* provides a platform where teachers can apply for their admission. After the *Bildungsdirektion* has examined and selected qualified teachers, school principals have the opportunity to participate in the selection of teachers by the law of the *Schulautonomie* (School autonomy), which was ratified 2017. Even though the coordination of the application process by the *Bildungsdirektion* relieves the schools of some of the work, Linda pointed out that "school autonomy does not mean that each school principal is free to make his or her own decisions" (I5). During the application process, teachers have the opportunity to indicate preferences regarding which school they would like to work at. These preferences are usually based on the distance to the place of their residence and/or the contractual conditions (i.e. part-time or full-time) (I1-I15). However, Doris also pointed out that not only the reception policy is problematic, but also the dismissal policy. She highlighted that she has no *Schulautonomie* in either the reception process nor in the dismissal process of teachers. Therefore, she criticized that she has hardly any possibility to dismiss a teacher who, for instance, behaves in a racist manner. Regarding the reception policy, she mentioned that especially in the *NMS*, she needs teachers who have strong

personalities and can cope with a classroom that is characterized by cultural diversity and pluralism. But due to the lack of autonomy and the regulation of teacher reception policy at federal or provincial level, she often gets teachers who have no social competence and are often not open-minded towards migrant children "it is very difficult to get them out of school" (I9). The interviews with school principals emphasize that the standardized reception policy does not allow school principals to act according to the specific needs of their schools and pupils. With regard to integration, our respondents emphasized that, especially in a school with pupils characterized by cultural diversity, they need more *Schulautonomie* in order to be able to hire teachers with a specific personality and with the skills that are needed in order to promote and support the integration process of migrant children. According to our interviews with school principals, due to the fact that this autonomy de facto does not exist, schools with many migrant children are often confronted with racist behavior by teachers towards migrant pupils. This is why the school principals underline their small scope of agency by explaining that they have little opportunity to change the behavior of these teachers or to exclude them from school.

In addition to the admission policy towards teachers, the admission policy towards children is also standardized. Children with good grades can attend *AHS*, while children with lower grades must attend the *NMS*. However, for acceptance at a particular school not only the grades are important, but also where the children live and whether siblings are already attending the same school. If the children receive a negative notification (i.e. they are not allowed to attend the *AHS*) they have the possibility to attend a *Aufnahmetest* at an *AHS*. The requirements for the test are that the children have a positive certificate and that the school still has free places at the school. If the pupils pass an *Aufnahmetest* at one of the *AHS*, they can attend the school at which they passed the entrance test (I1-I15).

Besides the general reception policies for pupils as well as for teachers which are standardized, our interviewees described the policy of categorizing migrant children as so-called '*außerordentliche SchülerInnen*' (extraordinary pupils), also called *a.o.-pupils* as a problematic practice (I6). If a student gets the *a.o.-status* it means that their teachers believed that they are not familiar enough with the German language to follow the content of the classes. If the migrant children received this status they were not graded until their language skills were assessed as good enough to participate in class as regular students. A pupil could remain in the *a.o.-status* for a maximum of two years. In order to support those children in particular, schools are receiving additional funding. Beyond the *a.o.-policy* but also in addition to the 'special treatment' of migrant children, there is a second common procedure, that is the so-called MIKA-D-Test (measuring instrument for competence analysis - German) (I10, I11). This test is a mandatory procedure measuring the integration process by testing the German skills of newly arrived migrant children and *a.o.-pupils* and those who are attending *Deutschförderklassen* and *Deutschförderkurse* (I11, I13). Those two integration policies, which are the most common and best known policies in the school practices, display how integration is intrinsically linked with German skills also in the policymakers understanding of integration that affects the school landscape. These policies describe that integration is understood as linguistic integration prior to social and other forms of integration.

With regard to the integration policies the school principals were mostly informed about (integration) policies and emphasized the lack of effective policies that are able to stimulate and promote the integration process of migrant children and the youth (I2, I3). Besides the *Deutschförderklassen*, there are, for instance, the *Deutsch als Zweitsprache* (German as a second language) courses. Furthermore, there are also integration ambassadors - that function as role models - funded by the *Österreichischer Integrationsfond* (Austrian Integration Fund) and coordinated by the initiative *Zusammen Österreich* (Together Austria). In this regard, Linda pointed out that "this action is very important because the role models could talk about their origins and destinies and show that they were able to achieve their goals regardless of their migration experiences" (I5).

In contrast to the school principals, all teachers throughout the interviews expressed their lack of knowledge on integration projects and noted that they were uninformed about any integration programmes. In addition, they expressed their assumption that there are no specific integration programmes for migrant children at schools in Austria. However, among our interviewed teachers there is also a common tendency to question the efficiency and success of Austria's policies in matters related to integration.

### 3.3.2. Practices addressing migrant children's integration

Our interviews suggested that the actions taken to facilitate the integration of migrant children were limited mainly to cultural and religious activities such as celebrating various religious festivals (i.e. Ramadan), performing theater plays in which pupils represent "their cultures" (S1\_3) or common cooking across "different cultures" and festivals offering "different cultural cuisines" (I7, I14) and "cooking in different languages, where a cookbook is written and is taken into account that we have a colorful diversity here." (I6) Anton, another school principal, emphasized that in his school there are several ways of making the school's diversity visible such as the school choir sang in different languages (I7, I14).

One school principal underlined the project *Sag's Multi* (Say it Multi) which is a speech competition on multilingualism organized by the economic association *Verein Wirtschaft für Integration* (association economy for integration) (I7). The teachers framed these activities as providing space for migrant children to show and present "their cultures and religions" which, in turn, would promote their feeling of being accepted and of being included into the school community. Our interviewees also elaborated on "many bottom-up projects funded by the school themselves, for instance writing workshops" (I5).

Many teachers underlined the role of *Kompetenzorientiertes, eigenverantwortliches Lernen* (Competence-oriented, independent learning), short *KOEL*- hours, implemented in their school *Schiller Schule*, in which students are provided with the infrastructure and space (classroom, desks, learning material etc.), and a professional supervision by teachers to conduct their homework and other tasks outside of regular classes. However, the teachers noted that *KOEL*-hours do not represent an explicit integration programme but did meet the needs of many migrant children who are described as having socio-economically

disadvantaged family backgrounds in which “they probably do not have a desk, not an own room or share their room with many siblings or grandparents” (S1\_3). But in other schools we observed that afternoon care for pupils were not provided for free but parents had to pay for this kind of projects.

In the *Schiller Schule*, the teachers underlined the peer mediation as a project that could support the integration of migrant children. In this peer mediations pupils had the space to talk about problems among each other and to solve their conflicts (S1\_F1).

School representatives of *Dilteyschule* emphasized the role of the *NMS*-talks for integration of migrant children. In these *NMS*-talks teachers with migration or refugee backgrounds could share their experiences of exclusions, migration and refugee, or discuss issues that were a matter of discussion in class (i.e. questions of the relationship between God and evolution theory as a Muslim) (S2\_5). This was helpful because migrant children could discuss with teachers who were considered being from the “same kind of cultures or religions” that promoted a better mutual understanding.

The teachers criticized in the interviews that practices addressing migrant children’s integration were mainly left to the school’s but in particular to the teacher’s individual willingness and resources. This in turn represented a pressure and frustration for teachers who are due to the lack of resources and support to cope with the workload and heterogeneity of classes overstrained and overworked (I5, I8). Richard, a school principal of a *NMS*, explained his concern of the lack of financial resources for projects and actions addressing integration of migrant children (I6, I7). That leads to a situation in which the school is not able to fund projects to improve children’s integration which means that if the school carries out activities they have to be funded by another institution (ibid.).

In terms of assessment and evaluation of migrant children, Mary, a teacher, underlined the problem of grading migrant children. She explained that individual teaching is allowed at schools, meaning to adjust to the needs of migrant pupils who had language difficulties to follow the content of classes or whose level of learning were considered as “weak” (S2\_1). But individual or adapted grading of migrant children with specific needs were prohibited that she interpreted as rather hindering integration of migrant children. Richard emphasized that he believes that teachers always take the individual situation of every child in consideration when grading them (I6). He stressed that the main focus is on “making them fit for everyday life” (ibid.). Anton pointed out that more individuality and the possibility to differentiate between various performance levels within the same school class could be helpful (I7). In contrast to Hannes argued that “having to map different performance levels is de facto not feasible” (I12) and would be an unreasonable demand towards teachers (ibid.).

Regarding the question if and how children’s initiatives are taken into account in the day-to-day running of the school, we observed a predominant lack of child-centered approaches in daily routines of schools. Some teachers and schools shared a few initiatives that tried to include children’s initiatives such as Linda pointed out that she and her school staff had made an attempt to socially include the children by introducing *Klassenstunde* (classroom lesson). In theses *Klassenstunde* the children had the opportunity to talk about their individual

problems and/or conflicts with their peers. Unfortunately, she had to stop this initiative due to lack of resources (I5). In another school, *Schiller Schule*, one teacher organized peer mediation in which pupils across various classes and ages could voluntarily join and solve any conflicts among classmates. The pupils could attend a short training as mediators. In these peer mediation meetings, the pupils could apply the skills acquired in the training and for that they, for instance, simulated existing conflicts which were treated in an anonymous way and developed and worked on solutions with their peers.

### 3.3.3. Teaching material resources

In *Leibniz Schule*, the use of posters and photos that address integration and migration is quite obvious. At the entrance of the school there is a large poster with the word 'Hello' in different languages (e.g. Pashtun, Dari, Arabic), which highlights the super-diversity of the pupils and visitors (e.g. parents). Besides, there are also many certificates that have been awarded to pupils who have carried out creative projects on migration and integration topics (e.g. a theater play, book reading). In the school library there are many books in different languages and also many books that deal with the life of young people with migration experiences.

In *Hannah Arendt Schule* the teachers emphasized that they have created their own teaching materials so that the many children who do not speak good German are able to follow the lessons. Judith explained that she uses more pictures than words on the teaching materials so that the children can follow the lessons (S3\_3).

In *Hannah Arendt Schule* is a textbook for Ethical Education used which deals with topics surrounding diversity and inclusion. For example one issue explains the different ways of wearing a headscarf as a Muslim woman with the title "Being a woman in Islam". Further they contextualize the headscarf in its historical context, pointing out that some clothing rules are way beyond what is written in Quran. Also it says that "as a Muslim woman you can also live unveiled." It seems as the authors tried to teach three things on this page: First to inform the students about the ways how to wear a headscarf with the purpose of producing knowledge in order to minimize stigmata. Second to make clear that there can be diversity in how to display the Quran and that there is no wrong and right but the personal willpower whether to wear a headscarf or not. And third to also give pupils the option to think about wearing a headscarf as option but no obligatory issue that comes along with being a Muslim.

In the same textbook was also a page dealing with "discrimination" found. It was pointed out that discrimination can be aimed at LGBT people, people with certain religious beliefs or happen because of age, disability, gender or country of origin. Further it was connected with the Olympic Games as an example for discrimination starting in 1912 until the Olympic Winter Games in Sotschi, Russia. Also the gender pay gap is described as another example. What can be mentioned is the authors tried to stress discriminatory behavior as a historic and complex phenomena and to educate the pupils what kinds of shapes it can have. From this perspective one could say that the textbook has an intersectional approach in the way that the authors connected the issue with a lot of different aspects of discrimination.

A French textbook in *Hannah Arendt Schule* tries to draw a diverse picture of kids "from Strasbourg"/kids who speak French. In order to make this relatable there are children introducing themselves with a diverse range of names. That is something a lot of teachers emphasized when talking about inclusive teaching materials: That something that has changed in school books over the last years were the names of the individuals mentioned.

*Schiller Schule* focuses strongly on underlining that diversity is something to be proud of, something positive and can be an enriching factor for schools. This approach gets visible when entering the school, because there are sentences like "Diversity of religions and cultures is our wealth" written on walls and windows. Since the school is a private catholic school but registers pupils with different religious beliefs they focus on diversity of religions but also appreciate different 'cultures' among the students. On the hallway in front of the classrooms the schools approach towards different 'cultures' as connecting rather than dividing aspect of communities gets visible: Every class designed a poster dealing with categories that construct their identities. It displays the 'cultural' and religious diversities, gender, age, number of siblings (family background), districts where they live with their families, their hobbies, their mother tongue, their countries of origin as well as their favorite social media platform.

#### *3.3.4. Training and accompaniment*

All persons interviewed, school principals and various teachers, emphasized that there are trainings that help them to develop, however that these trainings are often not in related to migration or integration (I5, I9). It also became obvious that the use of training courses depends mainly on the individual motivation of each teacher. Even if a school principal can decide to make a training course obligatory for a particular teacher, it is again clear that the individual motivation on the part of the school principal is necessary when it comes to forcing teachers to undergo further training. However, many teachers have also mentioned that they should receive supervision in order to improve their skills (S4\_4, S4\_F1). Besides, almost all teacher mentioned that social workers would be very helpful regarding the high number of migrant students in their schools (S3\_1-S3\_4, S4\_1-S4\_5, S5\_1). Most admit that they are frustrated and don't know how to behave in a super-divers classroom and would therefore need more support. However, they pointed out that the support/ solidarity among teachers, as well as the experience they gain each day, has helped them to develop skills that help them to deal more professionally and efficiently with the problems of each individual pupil, but especially those of migrant pupils (S4). The school principal, Doris, however, pointed out that in her opinion training courses are not efficient, "attitudes will not change quickly, they cannot change so quickly even with further training, especially if the teacher does not want to do something about it himself/herself" (I9).

### 3.4. Obstacles, difficulties and weaknesses

In the interviewee's elaborations on the difficulties when trying to promote the integration of migrant children, we could determine mainly six areas of problems as following: (1) lack of German language skills of migrant children and their families, (2) lack of involvement or interest of migrant parents/families, (3) lack of resources for infrastructure and personnel, (4) the two-school system of *AHS* and *NMS* as reproducing or/and exacerbating social inequalities, (5) insufficient training of teachers and (6) lack of a holistic approach to integration of migrant children as well as (7) ethnicizing of structural problems.

#### 1. Lack of German language skills

German language proficiency was viewed as the most crucial prerequisite for a successful integration in schools and in Austrian society (I5). In addition, also shared values and norms were emphasized as necessary for a successful integration (S1\_2-S1\_6, S1\_F1, S1\_F2, S2\_1-S2\_5, S2\_F1, S5\_1-S5\_5, F5\_1).

However, any interviewed teachers and school principals considered the *Deutschförderklassen* (Remedial German classes) as counterproductive to separate migrant children from the regular classes and their local peers as this prevents exchange between pupils and thus, the inclusion of migrant children into the class community and consequently, they fail to catch up with the content of regular classes (S1\_2-S1\_6, S1\_F1, S2\_1-S2\_5, S2\_F1, S5\_1-S5\_5, F5\_1, I6). That is why many interviewed teachers expressed their concern regarding the effects of remedial German classes as supporting a parallel system that produces segregation rather than inclusion. Furthermore, Linda mentioned that with regard to integration and migration in the school context, the discussion about the *Deutschförderklassen* dominates the discourse on integration, which in her opinion is misleading and fails to address the problems.

#### 2. Lack of involvement or interest of parents and the role of family background

Among our interviewees, the significance of parent's active involvement in their children's everyday school life was emphasized for the integration process of migrant children in schools. They saw major gaps in migrant parents' and families' knowledge and understanding of the Austrian school system and the everyday life routines at schools. The teachers underlined in particular the lack of German skills of migrant parents/families that made the mutual understanding between teachers and parents/families difficult (S2\_1-S2\_5, I7, I8). We could also observe that the interviewees emphasized the educational background of the parents as relevant for migrant children's integration, in particular "uneducated" or educationally disadvantaged parents were seen as a potential obstacle for the integration of migrant children. However, most of our interviewees stressed that it is rather the parent's motivation and interest for education that is more relevant for the process of integration of their children rather than their - formal - educational background (S1\_1-S1\_6).

Some interviewees said that it depends on the "origin" and their "religious belief" of the parents regarding their approach to school and the education of their children (I8, I11, I10). According to some teachers, parents, for example, were not willing to approve their children's participation in biology classes and sex education because of "their values" (S3\_F1). We could observe in our interviews that many teachers and principals displayed a specific gendered and ethnicized image of the question which family members were responsible for the academic outcomes and learnings success of the migrant children. Moreover, our interviews predominantly reproduced mothers as being in charge of the education of migrant children by emphasizing the professional and educational background as well as the language skills of the mothers as responsible for the learning success of migrant children.

### 3. Lack of resources

Many interviewed teachers emphasized the scarcity of resources to support migrant children's integration at their schools (S1\_1-S1\_6, S2\_1-S2\_5, S5\_1-S5\_5).

Linda, who was a school principal, criticized the distribution of financial resources, which did not take into account various challenges such as the increasing diversity and plurality in schools. She stressed that "I will not receive more resources on the basis of the proof that more than 80% of my children are not German speaking children". In relation to that, the school principal emphasized that although she did not like terms such as *Brennpunktschule*, she was willing to use this term in order to obtain more resources for her school (I5). Doris, another principal, also pointed out that with the increasing of diversity in schools parallel resources are increasingly reduced every year (I9). In this context, one teacher criticized the distribution of resources by district. She said it was unfair that newly built schools in "developed areas" were given more resources than her school in a "workers and migrant district" (I12).

Our interviewees expressed the need for more space and more as well as bigger classrooms (S3\_1, S4\_1, S4\_3, S4\_5). In this regard, Otto explained that the school he worked for was built many years ago, when there were only a quarter of the children attending the school compared to the current number of pupils nowadays (S4\_1). Therefore each child had less space in the school as before. Since most of our schools were located in Vienna and therefore, surrounded by streets with (heavy) traffic, the children only had the school building as an opportunity to get rid of accumulated energy. However, since the school did not offer much space, a teacher emphasized that the children already had health issues due to the lack of exercise (S4\_4). Additionally, many teachers criticized that the school did not offer a room where the children could sit together and exchange ideas (S4\_5, I14).

The majority of our interviewees criticized the size of classes, meaning the high number of pupils in one class as hindering integration of migrant children since the teachers were not able to take into account the specific needs, such as the different levels of learning and language skills of migrant children due to the big number of pupils (I7, S4\_F1). The high number of pupils in one class was the case in particular in schools characterized by a high number of "migrant children" (I11, I12, I14, S4\_1). In addition to this, the majority of our

interviewed teachers criticized that they had too few teachers which would be helpful for team teaching - two teachers teaching in one class - that was described as a way for dealing with a class shaped by diversity. Our teachers also stressed that they were not able to teach "their subjects" or that they had to adjust to the migrant children's level of learning that posed an obstacle for them to teach and follow their teaching goals and resulted in "very low teaching level". Many teachers complained that they felt overwhelmed and overstrained in terms of coping with the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of their pupils and in dealing with refugee children and their specific psychological needs (I6, I9, I12, I14). In this regard, our interviewees emphasized that there is high demand for more psychologists, social workers, health personal and counselling teachers in their schools in order to meet the specific needs of migrant and in particular of refugee children (ibid.). Many interviewees, such as Evelyn, a school principal, also underlined that their teaching resources and infrastructure such as a projector or other teaching items were missing for teaching (I14).

#### 4. Two-school system of *AHS* and *NMS*

All our interviews challenged and criticized the highly differentiated school system in Austria (I2). Many teachers emphasized their perspective that this "two-track-system" would reproduce or exacerbate social inequalities, that would in particular affect migrant and refugee children. They underlined that the pupil's educational trajectories depended on which school they were admitted to. Since the *NMS* is the school type in which children from disadvantaged socio-economic and migrant/refugee family backgrounds are overrepresented, the *NMS*-pupils dominantly do not follow academic educational paths. In contrast, pupils of *AHS* predominantly choose tertiary education.

*AHS* have a better reputation and *NMS* are often stigmatized as 'less demanding schools' and called *Restschulen* (school for "remaining" children, who do not or could not attend the *AHS*) since *NMS* have to take pupils who have been "disposed" by *AHS*. But the division of *NMS* and *AHS* effects teacher's preferences regarding in which school type to work at. In particular young teachers preferred to work at the *AHS* and did not want to work at *NMS* (I13, S3\_2-S3\_3). In this regard the interview partners also emphasized that in 2016 there has been a change in teacher training. Since then all secondary teachers have the same training, that leads to the situation that a lot of teachers want to be *AHS* teachers but do not find employment and have to work as *NMS* teacher. In this regard we could observe a difference between generations: *NMS* teachers who finished their education before 2016 are often more passionate in doing their job because they themselves chose to be a *NMS* teacher, meaning that they chose to deal with all the difficulties that come along with socio-economic disadvantaged pupils and their families as well as the "bad" stigmatization of *NMS* in society (S3\_2). According to the school principal Miriam "a system has been implemented in which the *NMS* is the loser" (I13).

It became visible during our research that this division had not only a socio-economic effect but also shaped gender relations among the school personnel. In the sample of 15 schools, we conducted 8 interviews with *NMS* principals, 7 of them were female, 1 male. The other interviews were conducted with *AHS* principals, 6 of them were male, 1 female. One

explanation for this could be that *NMS* have less prestige and there is also more need for social and emotional labor during the lessons which is why there are more women in leading positions. In addition, many female *NMS* principals mentioned that the work of their teachers is emotionally demanding (I13).

In this context, the differences in financing both school types were also strongly discussed in the interviews. Since the *AHS* is financed by the federal government and receives money per child, whereas the *NMS* is financed by the provincial government and receives money from the *Gemeinden* (municipalities), the *AHS* principals had to make sure that enough children are admitted so that they receive enough money (S4\_1, S4\_4). With regard to that, Claire emphasized that the male *AHS* principal she works for only focused on the amount of children in order to receive as much funding as possible. She expressed her wish to have a school principal who understands the teacher's concerns (S4\_4). In contrast to that, *NMS* teachers felt well understood and supported by their mainly female principals (S3\_1-S3\_4).

Furthermore, teachers also pointed out that even if the children had to fulfill preconditions in order to be able to attend the *AHS*, the assessment of the teachers become milder every year due to highly diverse student bodies in some *Volksschulen* (primary schools). The teacher of the *AHS Leibnizschule* therefore pointed out that teachers in such diverse *Volksschulen* need to grade according to diligence and not according to ability. If they fail to do so, hardly any child in 'migrant' and working class districts in Vienna would be granted the *AHS* permit, as some of them hardly speak German (S4). Here it becomes clear that also the *AHS* schools, which are often considered as elite schools and not as *Restschulen*, 'need' to accept the fact of the increasing number of 'migrant' children and therefore also *AHS* teachers who are not used to this diversity and who have not learned to deal with pluralism and diversity in their education often feel overstrained in the *AHS* (S4\_F1). In addition, the teachers pointed out that the *NMS* and *AHS* "functions much better in the rural areas, only in Vienna it is a problem" (S1\_3). With this argument, our interviewees stressed the urban-rural divide that they linked to migration which is more concentrated in urban contexts as Vienna.

## 5. Insufficient training of teachers

The interviewees also emphasized that teachers lack social skills and intercultural competencies such as knowledge on how to cope with group dynamics, in particular in a context of ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious diversity. They also stressed that many teachers lack skills such as empathy towards migrant and refugee pupils. We also observed in the interviews that teachers criticized the education of the teachers at the university level by criticizing that due to the reduction of the practical part of their education (i.e. working as teachers in schools while they were studying) they could not be well prepared for working as teachers later on, in particular in the highly diverse *NMS* schools with their specific challenges.

## 6. Lack of a holistic approach to integration

Many of our interviewees criticized the focus of integration policies on only one aspect such language and culture, while ignoring other structural structures. In this regard, they pointed to the lack of social mixing in their schools and neighborhoods. One school principal claimed in that regard that "there is no problem with migrant children as long as the school is not consisting of nearly 100% of migrants" (I5, I8). In this context they also pointed out that it depended on the district or neighborhood how many migrant pupils they had (I8). With regard to that Hugo an *AHS* school principal from a highly diverse district explained that there was "poor mixing" in Vienna. He emphasized that many districts and areas in Vienna were divided along socio-economic lines, which often correlates with people with migration backgrounds. In that sense, a school principal criticized that there were other schools that try to avoid kids with "foreign" surnames (I8). However, Linda pointed out that it is not only the housing policy but also parents in particular who pose an obstacle to social mixing since they were against a social mixing in schools because they want their children to be as close as possible to where they live (I5).

Some of our interviewees emphasized that inefficient housing and social policies were a crucial obstacle for the integration of migrant children. Since "wrong" housing policies so-called "Ghettoization" in which migrants "do not have the need to talk in German in their daily actions" (I7).

## 7. Ethnicizing of structural problems

When discussing difficulties and obstacles in terms of integration of migrant children, some of our teachers and school principals underlined the existence of "different values" among the pupils, blaming mainly Muslim and male children to have values that were not compatible with "Austrian" values. Some teachers underlined that they were concerned of talking about sensitive issues like sex education, religion or evolution theory in class because they faced intercultural challenges (S3\_5, S3\_F1). In this sense Jochen explained that he had to "struggle" with pupils who in this case "start to argue with you that what you teach them is nonsense" (S3\_F1). In a focus group that we conducted a female teacher emphasized that there were male children from Muslim background who had difficulties in respecting women as authorized person and educator. She said: "Particularly in the Islamic faith one notices that if the father has passed away, then the son with 10 or 11 years is suddenly head of the family. And then you realize that as a woman you are nothing worth to him" (ibid.) Another teacher added in the same line of argumentation: "Many times they come back from the mosque so heated up that they do not eat *Semmeln* (Austrian bread rolls) anymore on a hiking day, because suddenly that is Haram (ibid.)." In addition, some teachers hierarchized alongside ethnicized categories migrant children by claiming that "Turkish or ex-Yugoslavian pupils are not willing to integrate" (S1\_2) or "pupils from the Balkans do not fully integrate, with Turks I do not see this problem" (S1\_5). This argumentation shows how the interviewees put the responsibility of structural problems on the shoulders of children by ethnicizing problems.

### 3.5. Possibilities for doing it better

In the interviewee's elaborations on their suggestion for the facilitation of the integration of migrant children, we could observe mainly six areas of problems as following: (1) abolishment of the *Deutschförderklassen*, (2) more financial resources for school personnel, and infrastructure, (3) better training of teachers and employing teachers with migration/refugee backgrounds as role models, (4) a holistic approach to integration of migrant children.

#### 1. Abolishment of the *Deutschförderklassen*

The majority of our interviewed teachers criticized the effects of the *Deutschförderklassen* that were considered as resulting in segregation of migrant pupils from the local pupils. (I6, S6\_1). In this regard, Linda highlighted that it would be more efficient if the government would fund bottom-up projects that have already been running for many years and are successful, such as her project "Team teaching in German" (I5).

In discussing the role of *Deutschförderklassen* some teachers also explained that children do not need to "proper" language skills to communicate and interact with their peers. Many teachers therefore suggested that instead of focusing on remedial German classes for integrating migrant children, policies should focus on expanding sport activities and extracurricular activities such as excursions or playing soccer that would foster the integration of migrant children by also improving the German skills, their feeling of belonging and support them in becoming an active part of the class community. Some teachers also emphasized that this is crucial for migrant children to experience, for example, that Austrian children have similar challenges and thus focus more on the common or shared experiences instead of the separating experiences.

Many teachers underlined their perspective that integration and acquiring German skills had to start in an early stage of children's education, thus starting in kindergarten.

#### 2. More financial resources

Linda stressed that a social index would be very helpful in order to facilitate the integration process of migrant children, but also to help for a better development of her school in general. With a social index there would be a social redistribution of the education budget that would meet the needs of schools characterized by ethnic, linguistic and religious as well as socio-economic diversity. This would mean that . schools with a high proportion of migrant children would receive more money (I5).

The teachers expressed the need of expanding public budget for school personnel, recruiting social workers and psychologists and in particular for expanding the number of classes and thus reducing the number of pupils in classes in order to relieve the teacher's workload. But this would also facilitate individual teaching methods that offer teachers to adapt to migrant and refugee children's needs, i.e. different learning levels or language skills. In this regard, teachers also stressed that extracurricular activities and sports would help to promote

integration of migrant children. Many teachers emphasized their need of psychologists at their schools in particular for refugee children who have experienced conflicts and war in their home countries, but also counseling for male students in order to cope with "aggressivity" (S2\_5). Teachers also stressed that long-term and local children with migration family backgrounds did need support for their integration by school personnel.

In this regard, many of our interviewed teachers and principals suggested for a better educational success of migrant children to implement a qualified afternoon care for the pupils (S1\_3, I11). That would include lunch, breaks spent outside with sports and play time, support for doing homework and further explanations related to the daily running of the school if needed (ibid.). Since Austria does not have free afternoon care for children in their schools, parents have to pay if they want or need their kids to attend afternoon care. This makes it harder for families with lower incomes or more children to give their kids the opportunity to attend afternoon care. This shows how socio-economic deprivations hinders social and educational upward mobility.

Many interviewed teachers do not consider *KOEL* classes as explicit integration policy aimed at only migrant children. Whereas many teachers note that *KOEL* classes or any kind of afternoon care as supportive for the integration of migrant children (S1\_4). According to the teachers the *KOEL* classes offer for all children - including local and migrant children - a space and environment in which they are allowed to do their homework and have space to clarify any unclear issues concerning their homework or school related issues with the support of teachers outside of regular classes. The teachers note that given the fact that migrant children at their schools tend to have more socio-economic weaker backgrounds compared to Austrian children, the *KOEL* classes specifically support the integration of migrant children because these classes offer "a room, a desk and time and support" (ibid.) that they probably do not have at their homes due to socio-economic deprivation. Consequently, teachers propose to expand classes in which children have more time and space for doing their homework or clarify uncertain questions that they cannot do or solve during the regular classes.

### 3. Training of teachers and teachers with migration background as role models

Some interviewees also underlined that it is also important to start in teachers' training at the university to include in their training skills and knowledge of group dynamics, intercultural competences and awareness,. They did complain about the cutting of praxis experiences in the teachers training (teachers in training had to work as teachers in schools). Many interviewees emphasized that teachers would be eager to promote integration of migrant children but are often overwhelmed with the increasingly heterogeneity at schools, with grading migrant children (S3\_2-S3\_3, S4\_1-S4\_5). In addition to that, our interviewed teachers underlined that a more selective process in the question of who would be "allowed to become a teacher" would help schools in dealing with diversity. Since "everyone can become a teacher in Austria" regardless of their social skills (S5\_1, F5\_1, I14).

Many teachers suggested to employ more teachers with migration or asylum backgrounds who would represent role models for migrant pupils (I14). This would help migrant children

to feel encouraged and would show that social and educational upward mobility is also possible with a migration background (I14). In addition, teachers also emphasized the need of teachers with multilingual skills and speaking the mother tongue of migrant children in order to support the integration of migrant children by improving their understanding of the everyday school life and facilitating the process of becoming a part of the school community of migrant children.

#### 4. Holistic approach to integration and integration as a long-term process

The interviewees suggested a need for a holistic public policy approach to integration of migrant children that considers all aspects of social life and various policy areas as interrelated.

The interviewed teachers suggested to include macro policies (i.e. education, housing, social-welfare policies) for integration of migrant children. Many conceptualized the question of migrant children's integration as a macrosocial and holistic task across the entire society, The teachers agree that integration is a long-term process that requires long-term and holistic policies. For effective policy development and implementation, the teachers suggest to tackle housing policies and create equal socio-economic opportunities as crucial factors for the integration of migrants into society.

All interviewees emphasized the scarcity of resources. The interviewed teachers stated that the question of developing and implementing good policies for supporting the integration of migrant children, is tied to resources and the 'good will' of politicians.

We could observe that our interviewees did express their doubt that the scientific results of our current project would be taken into account of EU-policy makers as well as on the national level.

#### 4. Other issues

When being asked, if the interviewees are noticing racist behavior towards migrant pupils a lot of them explained that there is fighting, arguing, even mobbing sometimes but it has unlikely a racist motive. Many principals as well as teachers pointed out that those kinds of conflicts are normal for this age or emphasized that such incidents are the exception. No interview partner criticized racism as a problem neither in their school nor in society (I6, I7, I8, I11). This approach shows how structural issues are individualized, even normalized as innocent behavior of children as well as their parents. There is no perspective on the stigmatization because of 'cultural' differences or 'race' as a predominant category when dealing with 'migrant' children and refugees. Some of our interviewees claimed that conflicts from "other countries and cultures" are imported to Austria which she also feels in her school. One school principal stressed that depending on the political situation in the home countries or/and globally affects the interactions of pupils (I10). This point of view shows an

ethnicization of conflicts and also labelling them as 'foreign' issues. We believe that our research in the context of WP 5-8 can show us another insight in migrant children's experiences of racism.

## 5. Conclusions and discussion

One key conclusion we draw from our analysis is that migration and integration are a highly contested battlefield in contemporary Austrian politics as well as in schools. Migrants are conceptualized predominantly as part of social, economic and political problems in a context of negative media portrayals of migrants as economic, cultural and political risk factors.

We could observe in our interviewees that predominantly German skills but also 'cultural integration' are believed to be the main pillar for the migrant children's integration. In this regard, the dominant perspective of our interviewees hold migrant parents and families as responsible for the 'failure' of the integration process of migrant children. This shows a privatization of the integration process by putting the responsibility for 'failure' of the integration of migrant pupils on the shoulders of migrant families. However, our interviews also show that our interviewed teachers, predominantly in contrast to the school principals, emphasized that coexistence as well as mutual respect as crucial for integration.

Our interviews pointed to, and this is our second finding, that the lack of financial resources for infrastructure as well as for school personnel were a key obstacle in migrant children's integration in schools.

We also could observe, which represents our third finding, that the 'two-track' or a 'two-class producing' school system of *AHS* and *NMS* paired with a bad housing policy in Austria exacerbates and perpetuates social and economic inequalities of migrant children by determining children's later educational im/mobility. This signals that the intersection of social categories of socio-economic background, migration and ethnicity, religion as well as gender is decisive in order to examine the integration process of migrant children.

Our fourth finding shows that many teachers in contrast to the interviewed school principals suggested a holistic approach to migrant children's integration that includes socio-economic equal opportunities, housing policies based on a social mixing, and equal access to education regardless of class, ethnicity, gender and religion. This supports the argument for a child-centred and intersectional approach for analysing the process migrant and refugee children's integration.

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