

Identity Recognition of Immigrants in European Countries

Like Wang^{1,a,*}

¹*Nanjing Foreign Language School, Nanjing, 210008, China*

a. 17826509009@163.com

**corresponding author*

Abstract: With the development of technology, nations worldwide are strengthening their interconnectedness. In this context, an increasing number of individuals, particularly those from less developed countries, exhibit a greater inclination to migrate and establish new lives in other countries. However, several obstacles hinder their smooth integration. Therefore, this paper explores factors that contribute to challenges in immigrants' recognition of identity. In this essay, the author primarily examines the substantial disparities between their traditional cultural backgrounds and the novel cultures they encounter. While endeavoring to accept and adapt to new lifestyles, some of them may experience doubts regarding their original identities. Besides, host countries invariably establish regulations and policies for immigrants that can exert both positive and negative influences on issues pertaining to personal identity recognition. This study specifically focuses on inquiries regarding immigrants' identification by reviewing relevant documents and reports while consulting official websites for data and surveys.

Keywords: Immigration, European countries, Identity recognition, Culture differences, Government policies.

1. Introduction

According to statistics released by the United Nations in 2016, as of 2015, the number of international migrants reached 244 million, an increase of 71 million (41%), compared to 2000. There were approximately 4.7 million foreign immigrants entering Europe in 2015, of which about 2.4 million came from non-EU member states and 1.4 million from EU member states. In addition, the number of illegal immigrants within the European Union has reached a considerable level. As of 2017, about 15,755 illegal immigrants landed on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, coming from Syria, Iraq, and Pakistan. Besides, according to data released by the Italian Ministry of the Interior, from January 1st to August 14th, 2017, a total of 97,293 illegal immigrants arrived in Italy by sea and land [1]. People immigrating to European countries are plagued by social identity recognition problems, which are concentrated in the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. The essay focuses on immigrants to European countries like the UK, France and Germany, specifically the troubles they are facing, in order to help immigrants better understand their identification, encourage governments to make appropriate regulations, and reduce social problem risks. This research can also provide valuable insights for other regions facing similar immigration challenges, facilitating the formulation of global strategies for managing and integrating immigrants.

2. The Social Impact of European Immigrants

2.1. Positive Impacts

Due to the relatively friendly immigration policies towards high-tech talents in many countries, many high-tech talents tend to migrate to developed countries, which can bring about technological development. For example, in Germany. In 2023, the German government's newly revised draft of the "Skilled Migration Act" further relaxed restrictions on skilled migration from various countries, especially non-EU countries, based on the "Skilled Migration Act" passed in March 2020. In this way, Germany has attracted a large number of skilled immigrants, making the country's technological development world-class [2].

2.2. Negative Effects

Due to the lack of proper guidance measures for foreign workers in many countries, a large number of foreign workers have been stranded, causing various social problems in the future. Taking Germany as an example, these social issues are mainly reflected in the following three aspects.

Firstly, the rise in unemployment rate is primarily attributed to the excessive influx of immigrants lacking necessary skills and education. As a result, a large number of unemployed immigrants rely on government assistance, thus placing a substantial burden on the government. According to Germany's Federal Statistical Office, in 2007, while the overall unemployment rate was 10.1%, immigrant unemployment reached an alarming 20.3%, more than double the national average [2]. Secondly, the crime rate has risen. The continuous increase in unemployment and the imperfect welfare system, as well as the deficiencies in the scope of social security, have made it difficult for immigrants to integrate into mainstream society. Besides, the rise of racism and xenophobia in society has greatly deepened the conflict between immigrants and local residents, leading to an increase in crime rates and social instability. For example, in 2021, BKA discovered 5047860 criminal offenses in Germany. There are 1785398 suspects. Among all registered suspects, 533483 (29.9%) were non Germans and 127489 (7.1%) were immigrants.[3]. Thirdly, immigrants have not been able to integrate into mainstream society and maintain close ties with labor exporting countries in certain aspects. In some ways, immigrants may potentially constrain independent diplomatic actions between immigration importing and exporting countries. Therefore, how to coordinate and handle immigration issues will be related to the stability and development of a country's economy, politics, and culture [4].

Moreover, the influx of immigrants has changed the ethnic and racial structure of the receiving country, highlighting the issue of national identity. The strong impact of new immigrants on the host country's culture in terms of language, culture, religious background, and living habits has caused strong concerns among the government and the public. However, the concepts of racial equality and human rights brought about by globalization, the prevalence of civil rights movements and multiculturalism, and economic interdependence have made it impossible for countries to continue to adhere to outdated immigration policies, leading to intense debates within a country about immigration policies and even endangering domestic social stability.

3. Factors Driving the Increase of Immigration in Europe

3.1. Pulling Factors

Pay scales and economic prospects have a big role in luring immigrants. Travelers frequently opt to relocate to nations with better work possibilities and comparatively developed economies and more job opportunities. Furthermore, a lot of immigrants go to high-quality education-producing nations

in the hopes of giving themselves and their family greater educational chances. For instance, a large number of Nigerian students are studying overseas because they believe that education is the quickest route to immigration. The US, Canada and the UK are regarded as premier locations despite their expensive airfares. Nigerians have received 500% more students visas from the UK government in the last two years [5]. In order to fill both professional and low-skilled jobs today's post-Brexit labor markets rely on talent from erstwhile colonies like Nigeria, India and Pakistan [6]. Other Nigerians opt for less expensive, non-English-speaking nations like Germany, Finland, and Norway because they provide part-time employment options to international students and lower tuition. Others choose less restrictive visa requirements but more accessible locations like China and Northern Cyprus, where they are not allowed to work legally [7]. These lower-tier countries act as stepping stones to the upper-tier nations. As a result, geopolitical entities experience a "tier-Itorialization" in which global trends support particular worldviews and classifications.

Immigrants' decisions may also be influenced by variables including public safety, healthcare, and social welfare. People normally desire to live in places where they can acquire higher social security and quality of life. Some places have drawn immigrants due to their abundance of natural resources. Concurrently, the region becomes more livable due to a more consistent and pleasant climate.

3.2. Pushing Factors

Political instability, conflict, internal turmoil, oppression, and various other factors can compel individuals to depart their homeland in search of a more secure and stable environment. In Nigeria, the government's increasing disregard for the educational aspirations of young people has been exacerbated by its utilization of violence. While emigrating from the country had long been an underlying desire among youth, recent years have witnessed a heightened sense of urgency to do so. A decade marked by perceived political deterioration reached its lowest point with the shocking occurrence known as the Lekki massacre on October 20th, 2020. Within Lekki, unarmed civilian protestors—predominantly comprised of young individuals—were subjected to gunfire by Nigerian Army officers. Protests erupted nationwide to condemn the brutality exhibited by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a unit within the Nigerian Police Force established in 1992 with the mandate to combat rampant armed robberies and kidnappings. Over time, however, this unit devolved into an instrument for extrajudicial violence. For numerous young people, the Lekki massacre laid bare their unbearable circumstances within Nigeria. Fueled by social media platforms such as Twitter in particular, it was through #EndSARS protests that a tipping point was reached—a moment that mobilized pent-up personal discontent accumulated over past ten years [8]. Furthermore, in the event of an economic downturn, local residents often find themselves unable to meet their basic living expenses due to insufficient income. As a result, they opt to migrate to more developed nations where they can earn a sufficient income through physical labor and other means. In Nigeria, faith in the government has been eroded not only by its actions but also by its lack thereof - failure to revive the economy, inability to control inflation (which has ranged between eight and 17 percent annually since 2010), inability to mitigate the rising cost of living, and failure to address concerns regarding the insufficiency of a regular salary (9-5) for supporting oneself and one's extended family [9]. Additionally, environmental challenges such as climate change, natural disasters, and limited resources may also contribute to individuals leaving their hometowns.

4. The Relationship between Immigration and Identity Recognition

At present, with the increasing number of immigrants, issues of identity and cultural identity are receiving more and more attention from people. Therefore, with the expansion of opportunities to interact with others, more and more immigration groups are entering the territory of existing local

forces, and the struggle between old and new groups will become increasingly common. Friendly communications will build a harmonious and equal relationship, forming mutual identity recognition, while questioning or biased communications will inevitably hinder mutual identity recognition and lead to identity questioning or even denial. So, from embedding to integration is a relational process, a process of mutual adjustment between cultural psychology and behavioral patterns, a process of historical practice, even a process of tension and tension, a process of contradiction and even conflict, a process of mutual adjustment between rejection and acceptance. Therefore, identification is a process of mutual elimination of contradictions, a process of mutual understanding and recognition, and a process of winning mutual respect and recognition [10].

Immigrants usually come from different cultural backgrounds, and cultural differences are inevitable. Immigrants may face challenges in terms of lifestyle, language, religious beliefs, and other aspects, which can have a profound impact on their identity recognition. This cultural difference can be a rich resource or an adaptive pressure. Immigrating to a new society often requires going through a certain adaptation process, accepting new social rules and values. This adaptation process often requires tremendous effort, and the degree of social acceptance has a direct impact on an individual's identity recognition. If a community cannot accept someone's identity, then that person will feel isolated and excluded. In this situation, the person may feel a conflict with their identity. Immigrants may hide their personality and cultural characteristics, and even ignore their identity, in order to better integrate into the new society. In this situation, immigrants will lose their ability to identify themselves and adapt to the expectations of the new society. If a person hides themselves for a long time, they may experience cultural conflicts, self contradictions, and feelings of frustration.

In summary, there is a complex relationship between the integration into immigrant society and identity recognition. Integration into society is a necessary condition for immigrants to achieve survival and development in a new environment, while identity recognition is a dilemma that immigrants need to face in the process of integration. Different individuals and groups will have different choices and orientations due to different cultural backgrounds and personal experiences. For immigrant groups, the key is to balance the relationship between integrating into society and preserving identity, and to find a sense of belonging in this process. This requires the efforts of immigrants themselves, as well as the understanding and support of society. Only in this way can the integration and identity recognition of immigrant society be effectively achieved.

5. Current Government Policies for Solving Immigrants' Problems

First, United Kingdom. The UK's immigrant policy has undergone significant changes since 1990. A large number of refugee applications led to the introduction of relevant acts. These acts have imposed requirements such as English Proficiency and sufficient knowledge of the UK for immigrants or refugees seeking citizenship [11]. The probationary citizenship mechanism was also introduced [12]. The discourse has shifted from emphasizing control to migration management, being selective in accepting immigrants, favoring high-tech talents and international students, while restricting immigration for those not needed for economic development. After the Brexit referendum, restrictions on EU member states' citizens were imposed. In terms of integrating existing immigrants, the UK government is primarily committed to embracing diversity, promoting equal relationships between different groups, and fostering immigrants' national identity in the UK. It promotes integration measures in culture, economy and society. For example, providing language courses and social orientation services for cultural integration, assisting minorities in employment and addressing salary issues for economic integration, and improving the living environment for social integration.

In 2018, the French government carried out a major reform of the Immigration Law, issuing a series of laws and measures centered on "integration" and developing a "personalized integration route." The starting point of this route is the Republic Integration Contract (CIR) signed by the

government and new immigrants as Party A and Party B. The purpose is to promote the integration of new immigrants and facilitate standardized management by the government. In 2019, the French government continued to implement a contract based management model for immigrants, supplementing and revising certain specific terms of integration contracts, proposing biased rules for special groups to balance equality, and formulating the 2020 Plan(Projets 2020)to make contracts more time sensitive. In addition, in 2019, the French government also formulated a republican integration route, proposing to provide more assistance to new immigrants outside the European Union [13]. This marks that France's immigration policy is not only open to immigrants of different ethnicities and groups, but also focuses on the present and looks forward to the future.

Since mid June 2018, Germany's immigration policy has continued to adjust and change under political pressure, and the corresponding changes in the policy mainly reflect these characteristics. Firstly, setting an upper limit for accepting refugees. In January 2018, the governing agreement signed by the new coalition government included for the first time a limit of 18.22 million refugees per year. At the same time, the rights of refugees who are only granted assisted asylum are restricted, and the German government has temporarily frozen their family reunification rights. Secondly, accelerating the repatriation and voluntary departure of rejected refugees. The German government is increasingly focusing on addressing the issue of illegal stay of rejected refugees, deploying police forces to strengthen mandatory repatriation efforts, and encouraging refugees to return to relatively safe countries of origin through measures such as providing resettlement allowances and one-way airfare. Besides these methods, the Germany government continue to improve the efficiency of processing asylum applications, strengthen border control, and to strive to increase the number of safe source countries.

6. Future Trends and Suggestions

The core of the dominant cultural concept in Europe revolves around the crucial issue of national identity of 'who we are'. The continuous erosion of multiculturalism and deconstructionism has made Huntington's "Who Are We" proposal in 2004 a representative problem that has puzzled European and American countries [14]. In the contemporary era where postmodernism and deconstructionism prevail, the rise of relativism and nihilism has led to a lack of positive shared values and a trend towards the disintegration of national identity. The decline of national identity in European countries is mainly due to the influence of dominant minority races, ethnic minorities, and the construction of minority identity. The impact of the continuous wave of immigration has made many Europeans feel more and more like foreigners living in their homeland, and even triggered an undercurrent of resistance to immigration. In response to the phenomenon described above, immigrant countries should enact corresponding laws to address such cultural and identity crises[15].

Immigrant groups need to adapt to new cultures in a new social environment by learning and mastering local languages, values, and social norms. Society needs to provide relevant education and training resources to help immigrants quickly integrate into the new cultural environment and establish a sense of social identity and belonging. In the study of the impact of immigration on social and cultural identity, it is also necessary to pay attention to how to promote social integration and interaction among immigrants. Society should provide opportunities for immigrants to participate equally in social life and public affairs, and strengthen communication and interaction between immigrants and local residents. For example, strengthening cultural exchange activities between immigrants and local residents, organizing multicultural celebrations, etc. Through these activities, people from different cultural backgrounds can better understand each other, deepen their sense of identity and trust, and thus establish a more harmonious community and society.

7. Conclusion

This paper cites professional articles and related data to discuss the advantages and problems brought about by immigration phenomena, including economic growth, political debates, and cultural conflicts. It highlights the sense of belonging that some immigrants find in forming small communities like China Town. The causes behind this situation are explored through a profound survey, which include culture fusion, new life style race discrimination, and specific policies. The insufficiency of countries' policies is identified through research findings, promoting governments to make their regulations and rules more reasonable and pay more attention to people who are under oppression. However, this essay acknowledges its limitations in addressing the increasing number of immigrants due to the development of technology and economy. It raises questions on how governments can effectively and economically solve this problem while preventing social issues such as riots caused by immigration. Additionally, it emphasizes the need to alleviate difficulties faced by immigrant populations related to racial discrimination, gender discrimination, cultural differences, etc. To further advance research in this field, future studies can categorize research subjects based on different regions such as Europe, North America, Asia, as well as different races such as black, white, and yellow. In addition, intersectionality can also be employed for comparative research by integrating different features together. Overall, this paper provides insights into the complex nature of immigration phenomena.

References

- [1] Dewen, Tian, Chengsong, Jiang. (2019) *The impact of immigration issues on European society*. *European Immigration Development Report: Refugee Crisis and Management*: 64-81.
- [2] Yi, Zhao. (2023) *Analysis of the Development Trends of Technological Immigration Policies in Developed Countries*. *Global Finance*, 8: 90-94.
- [3] Community news should have been known earlier. (2022) *An Undeniable Data Fact: the High Correlation Between Immigration and Crime*. https://www.sohu.com/a/615319544_121123529
- [4] Yuqing, Chen. (2013) *Opportunities and challenges brought by immigration to Germany*. *Journal of Yibin University*, 13: 96-100.
- [5] Ojoko, Israel. (2022) 'Japa': The trending time bomb we are ignoring. *The Cable*. Retrieved from <https://www.thecable.ng/japa-the-trending-time-bomb-we-are-ignoring>.
- [6] Milliken, David. (2022) *Galvanisers wanted: post-Brexit worker shortages strain UK employers*. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/galvanisers-wanted-post-brexit-worker-shortages-strain-uk-employers-2022-07-04/>.
- [7] Jingjing, Liu. (2022) *Africans in China are on the move. This is Africa*. <https://africasacountry.com/2022/06/africans-in-china-are-on-the-move>.
- [8] Jingjing Liu. (2023) *MoLab Inventory of Mobilities and Socioeconomic Changes, January 2023 Japa, or to flee or to run: Nigerian youth and the urgency of departure*.
- [9] *Nigeria Inflation Rate 1960-2022*. (2022) <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/NGA/nigeria/inflation-rate-cpi>.
- [10] Jiansheng Li. (2016) *Immigration culture and identity*. *Chinese Culture Forum*, 9:5-10.
- [11] D. Jacob and A. Rea, (2007) "The end of national models? Integration courses and citizenship trajectories in Europe", paper presented at the ELSA-conference, Montreal, 17-19.
- [12] Choudury, T. *Evoing Models of Multiculturalism in the United Kingdom*. *Inter-culturalism: Europe and Its Muslims, In Search of Sound Societal Models*. Brussels: Center for Europe and Policy Studies, 2011: 124.
- [13] *Immigration, shelter, reception, and support for French rangers*, "Do you know the Journey of Republic Integration?" <https://www.immigration.interieur.gouv.fr/info-ressources/Actualites/Communiques/> "Connaissez-vous-le-parcours-d-integration-republicaine.
- [14] Samuel P. Huntington. (2004) *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 171.
- [15] Ruud, Koopmans, Paul, Statham. (2005) *Contested Citizenship Immigration and Cultural Diversity in Europe*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.