

# „Arrival City“ Offenbach am Main.

## Challenges for Urban Development and Integration Policies

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### I. Immigration and the Role of Cities

Immigration has become a key issue of politics and debates in European countries and as well in Germany. The country is starting to realize, that immigration will be a factor shaping its future. There is also a growing sense, that Germany needs a realistic approach, avoiding the traps of a misled multiculturalism as well as the anachronism of a closed concept of national identity.

Cities are societal subsystems, which are crucial for the success of any integration policy (IOM 2016). At least in Germany and Europe they are the predominant target of existing migration flows. They are social systems historically shaped by immigration over centuries and, as Heitmeyer (1998) has put it, “integration machines”.

A few years ago, the bestseller "Arrival City" by the Canadian journalist Doug Saunders (2011) gave this issue a catchy label opening various theoretical and practical perspectives. In his regard migration is one most important drivers of economic and social development of cities, although the patterns of coping with migration and capitalizing on the opportunities, which immigration flows are opening up, vary significantly among cities and urban agglomerations worldwide.

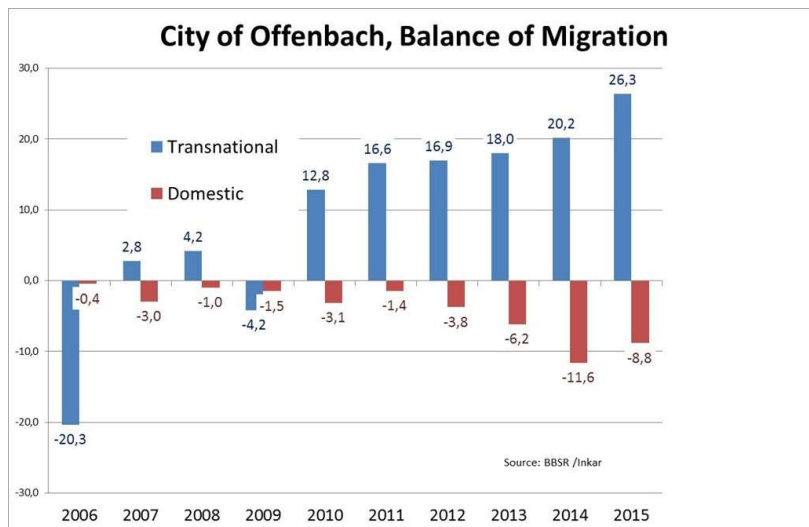
Nearly every aspect of the urban system, governance, regulations, market regimes, built environment, structure and dynamics of neighborhoods, education, and – not the least - attitudes towards diversity matter with regard to the emergence of arrival cities. Saunders does not leave out controversial issues of urban development, such as spatial and cultural segregation, which in his eyes are not obstacles to, but rather catalysts of the integration of immigrants into host societies.

Whatever one may think of the specific findings of Saunders, he has very impressively set the focus on the indispensability of the potential of cities for a productive structuring of migration processes and has given a stimulus to rethink the management of migration in an urban context.

## II. Offenbach am Main – Arrival City

Offenbach am Main, currently just over 136,000 inhabitants, fast growing and one of the core cities of the metropolis Frankfurt/Rhine-Main as well as one of the 30 "swarm cities" of Germany (Recking et al. 2016), embodies what Doug Saunders called the "arrival city" in an ideal-typical way. In Germany, Offenbach is the city with the biggest ethnic diversity, the highest proportion of foreigners (currently approx. 36 percent) and the highest proportion of citizens with a migration background (over 60 percent).

The city has a positive external balance (transnational) and a negative internal (domestic) balance of immigrant (non-German) population movements, which turns out to be a changing but in principle stable pattern over time – a very clear indicator for a territory of arrivals.

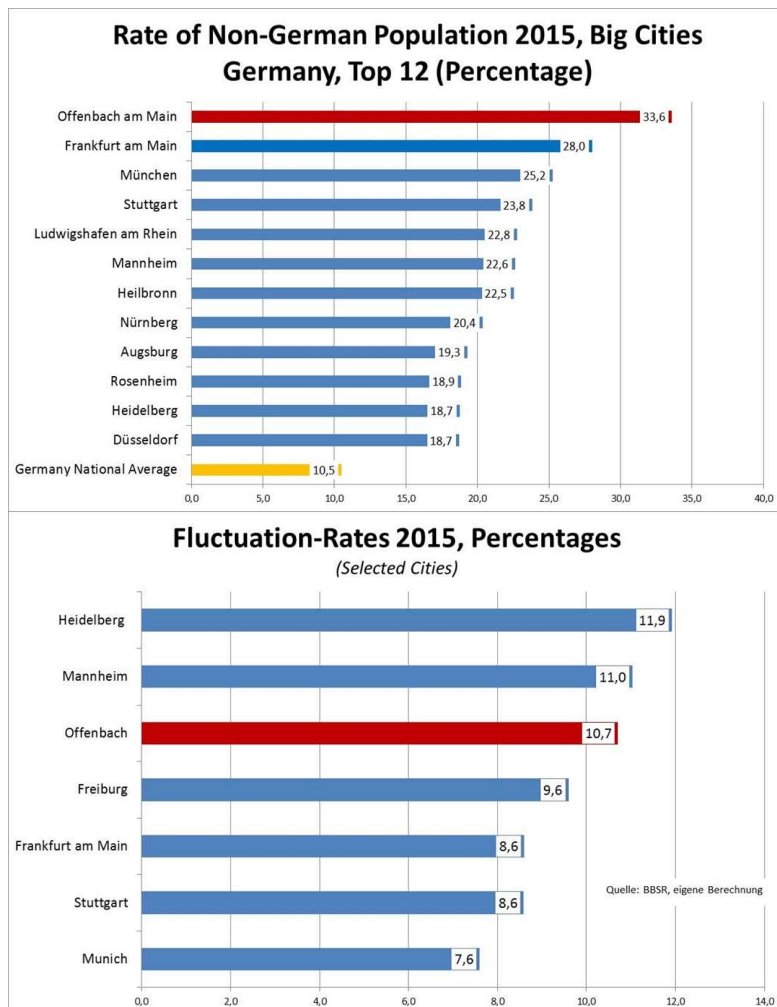


*Movements of non-German population, source: Federal Institute for Urban and Regional Research (BBSR).*

Further characteristics of Offenbach are a high population turnover (at 11 percent per year one of the highest rates in Germany), high population density, structural density in the inner city area with a close proximity of residential and commercial areas, and a high density of social problems, which can be measured as the rate of recipients of basic protection benefits (SGB II<sup>1</sup>) among the entire population. This rate stands at 16 percent, which puts Offenbach into the upper quintile in the ranking of German cities. The unemployment rate is also above average. According to the most recent data it stands at 8,8% (national average 5%)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> SGB II stands for Sozialgesetzbuch II (book II of social law).

<sup>2</sup> Source for all data referring to the city of Offenbach: Stadt Offenbach am Main, Amt für Arbeitsförderung, Statistik und Integration. <http://www.offenbach.de/rathaus/stadtinfo/offenbach-in-zahlen/statistikveroeffentlichung.php> ; comparative data for cities on a national level see the database INKAR of BBSR, the national institute for regional and urban research for 2015 – [www.inkar.de](http://www.inkar.de)



Source for both graphs: BBSR, INKAR database ([www.inkar.de](http://www.inkar.de))

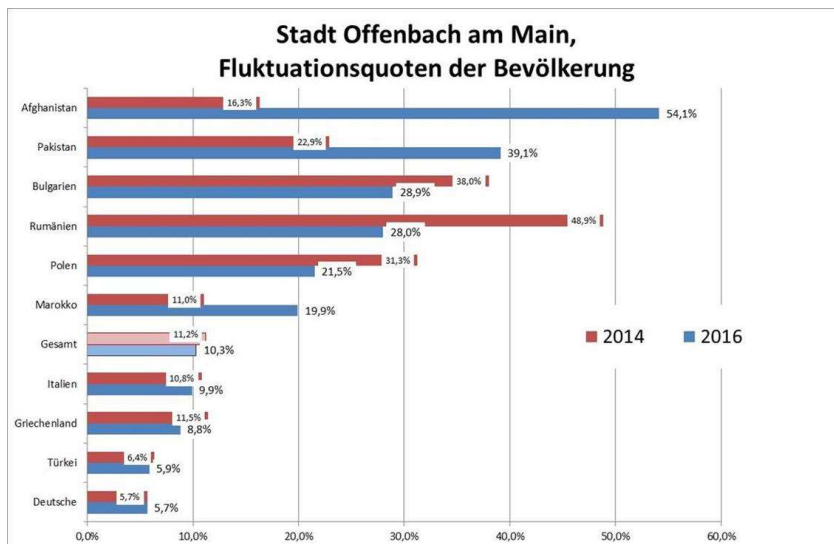
Two perspectives are important for the assessment of Offenbach's situation. Firstly, Offenbach is interlinked very closely with the Frankfurt/Rhine-Main region, the most international urban agglomeration in Germany with the highest proportion of migrants within the population. Taken together, the cities of Frankfurt and Offenbach are, so to speak, the "inner city of the region" in which immigration processes are concentrated.

On the other hand, the inner city districts within Offenbach once again show particularly high migration rates of up to 80% of the population.

The statistically measurable segregation, i.e. the unequal spatial distribution, is 21.1% for the foreign population as a whole, but significantly higher for individual population groups such as Bulgarians, Romanians and Greeks (40, 28 and 30%). For the Turks, the largest single group of non-Germans, the segregation index<sup>3</sup> shows a clearly below-average value of just over 11%.

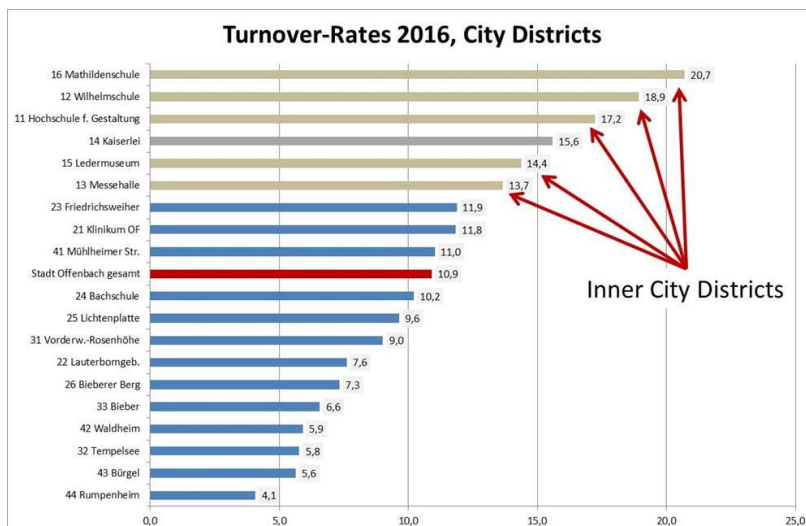
<sup>3</sup> The segregation-index is measure of the unevenness of a distribution of a certain feature among a basic population. Index=0 would indicate a completely even distribution, index=1 a completely uneven distribution, where all individuals with feature A are occupying space/category 1 and all individuals with feature 2 occupy space/category 2.

If you take a closer look at the fluctuation of the population, you can see that the turnover rate among non-Germans in 2016 at a good 18% is more than three times higher than among Germans, where it was 5.7% . If you take a closer look, considerable differences are to observe also among non-Germans - a range from over 50% among Afghans, for example, to under 6% among Turks. Turnover rates also vary quite strongly over time. As a rule, the group of the last wave of immigration shows the highest percentage of movement. With the establishment in the population structure, the fluctuation decreases.



*Fluctuation rates of selected nationalities. Source: population update of the city of Offenbach*

If one looks at the fluctuation in the inner-city spatial differentiation, it is not surprising that the inner-city districts show particularly high turnover rates between 13 and over 20 percent.



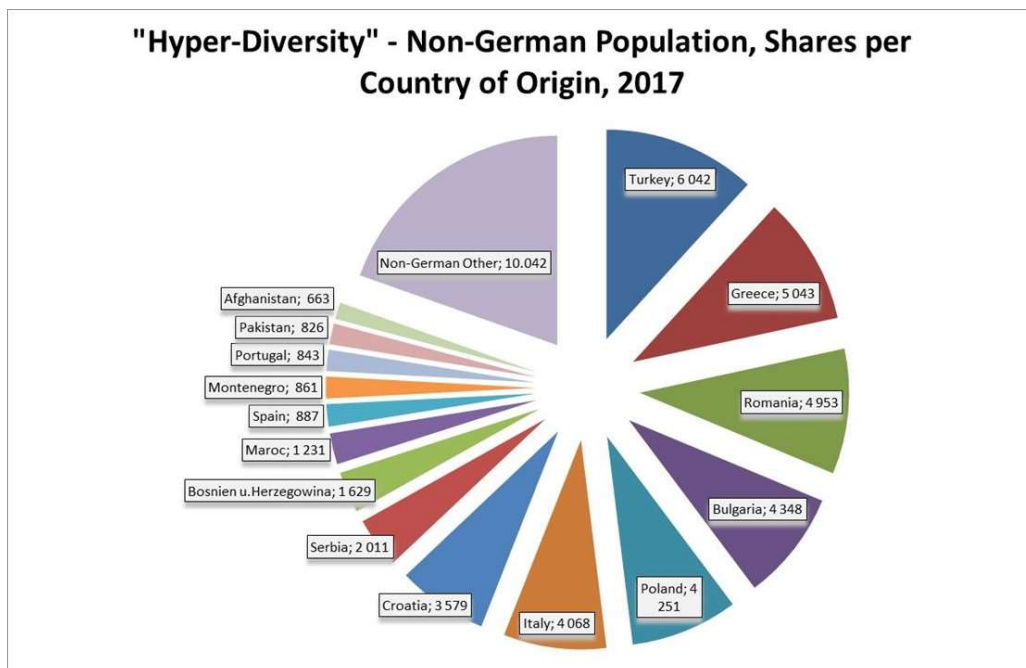
*Source: Population update of the city of Offenbach*

High fluctuation rates reduce the potential for social cohesion and the development of bonds to a city or a district among its citizens. It can be expected to be a restricting element for the social development of a territory as the target groups of social interventions are not stable. Further on there is a trade-off for the development of trust and cooperative relations among citizens, which, in general need time to mature on the one hand and fluctuation on the other.

Offenbach has to carry particular burdens with regard to social policy and social protection responsibilities, which is reflected in a chronically strained financial situation with high budget deficits and a high level of debt.

Nevertheless, the city is considered a positive reference model for a (reasonably) successful cohabitation of its citizens in cultural diversity and for successful integration (Bither et al. 2016, Schulze-Böing 2018; Schmal et al. 2016).

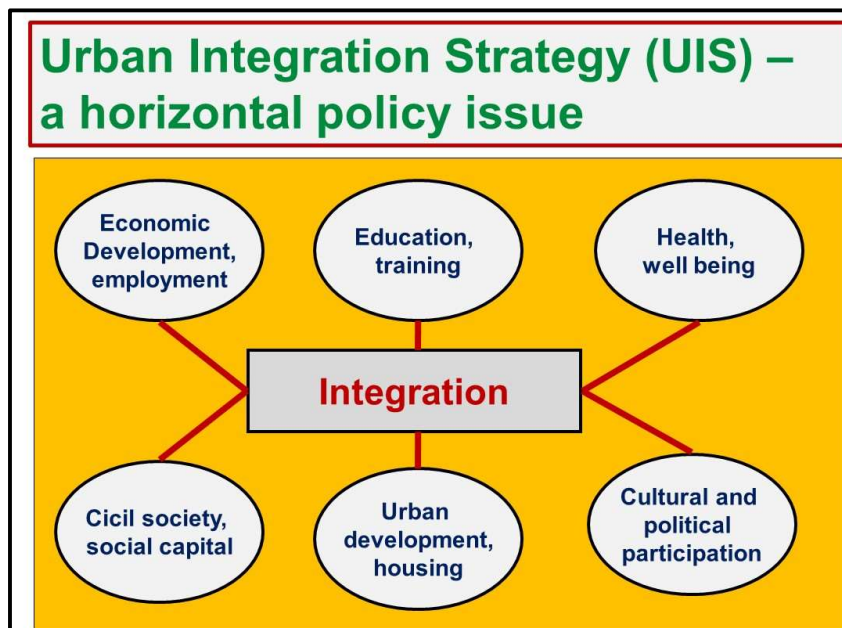
The fact that the immigrant population in Offenbach is spread over a relatively large number of nationalities and ethnic groups, as illustrated in the graph below, may be a favourable factor with regard to integration. There is no large concentration of individual ethnic groups. This may counteract the formation of closed milieus and make it clear to the arriving people that a command of the German language, for example, also brings great advantages in everyday life.



Source: Population update of the city of Offenbach

### III. Municipal Integration Policies – Strategy and Practice

It is important that integration policy in a city of this kind is a cross cutting issue across all policy areas. There is hardly a municipal task, hardly a department, that does not have to deal with integration-related issues of some sort. Particularly important policy areas are, of course, work, education, housing and living together in the neighbourhoods.



Source: the author

In a holistic municipal strategy, integration is therefore in the focus of very different fields of action, both explicitly and implicitly. With respect to integration, good governance should always be sensitive to diversity and capable of dealing with it properly. There will always be a need to balance targeted policies against the principle of inclusive services and policies for all citizens. The rule should be, that targeted policies are implemented as much as necessary (but not more). On the other hand, mainstreamed quality services for all citizens should be the standard as much as possible. Overly targeted policies always carry the risk of fragmenting urban systems even more. Strategies of inclusion should be aware of this.

Good municipal services take into account the special living conditions of immigrants and other groups, make use of intercultural competence and take account of the diversity of the population through the personal composition of the administration. In a city characterised by diversity, the administration should reflect this diversity in a certain way: For instance, the training and recruitment of people with a migration background for administrative functions could be a good way to achieve this.

A balanced social development strategy is also a strategy for integration. So to speak, an integration policy that only takes care of immigrants would miss the point. Integration has to be seen as part of the social development of the city in all its forms and fields of action. A social development strategy should of course address the most important fields of action, urban development, education, living together, work, occupation and economy in a coordinated, integrated manner.



## Integration - Strategic Policy Areas

	Education	Urban Development	Social Cohesion	Employment
<b>Policies and fields of action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic planning</li> <li>• Counselling</li> <li>• Early intervention (language training at child age)</li> <li>• Social work at schools</li> <li>• Outreach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limiting segregation</li> <li>• Re-balancing social structure</li> <li>• Shaping urban density</li> <li>• Encouraging and supporting immigrant careers and social mobility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbourhood management</li> <li>• Making migrant communities part of civil society</li> <li>• New formats of communication</li> <li>• Keep an eye on peace and order</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local jobcenter</li> <li>• Supporting entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Skills strategy</li> <li>• Management of school-to-work-transitions</li> </ul>

Source: the author

Each of these "pillars" of integration policy in the city of Offenbach is grounded in a specific concept of development policy developed over many years. Worth mentioning here in particular are:

- The "Educational Strategy" concept: With the help of federal funding programmes such as "Lernende Regionen" (Regions of Learning) a concept of integrating the various critical areas of education into one coherent framework alongside critical transitions in the education system were developed and implemented. This includes an ongoing coordination of the relevant educational actors in the city and a continuous monitoring of educational outcomes.
- The strategies of social urban development and neighbourhood development with the programmes of the "Social City Programme" (German: Programm Soziale Stadt), neighbourhood management and the housing policy guidelines of the city of Offenbach.
- More than ten years ago, an initial concept for integration in the city of Offenbach had been approved by the City Council with a focus on securing the coexisting different cultures in a peaceful and constructive way. This concept has been relaunched in 2014. However, living together is not only a "soft" issue of communication and dialogue. Specific emphasis is also put on a consistent policy to promote public order, security and the rule of law. There is a very consistent approach against the abuse of social benefits, irregular work and exploitation in the housing market, combined with effective cooperation between the authorities beyond the boundaries of local government.
- The promotion of civil society organisations in the area of the migrant population (so-called "migrant self-organisation") is another focus of this work area.
- It goes without saying that successful social integration has a great deal to do with integration into the labour market. The city of Offenbach municipalised the local job centre for this purpose in 2012 and set it up as part of an overarching social development policy.

The city is mobilizing the economic potential of immigrants by providing differentiated start-up support<sup>4</sup>.

All these strategic fields of action are based on effective networks, both within the city government as well with authorities and actors external to it, including third sector and civil society organisations. These networks have been established in all thematic areas relevant for integration. These include the chambers of commerce and crafts, employer's associations, trade unions, schools, employment agencies, the police, but also civil society organisations such as self-organisations of immigrant communities such as churches, mosque associations, cultural associations and the like.

Accountability of municipal policies is another key element. The City of Offenbach has set up a number of continuous reporting formats (social development, education, integration) which assess developments and evaluate outcomes of city policies (Schulze-Boeing 2017).

#### IV. Neighbourhood Development – a Key Element of Integration Policies

The emergence of diverse and even “hyperdiverse”<sup>5</sup> neighbourhoods in the process of immigration is a challenge for urban development processes. As the place of residence very often turns out to be a predictor of educational achievements of children, employment opportunities, and life-chances in general, it is a main purpose of urban policies to tackle social inequities in the spatial dimension, contain the unwelcome consequences of social segregation and protect neighbourhoods with social problems from further decline.

*The national programme “Soziale Stadt” (the Social City Programme) in Germany is an instrument in support of local strategies for the improvement of deprived neighbourhoods. It has a multidisciplinary approach, linking traditional urban development instruments with social, economic, and cultural development. Diversity and integration policies are also key areas to be involved in the implementation of the programme.*

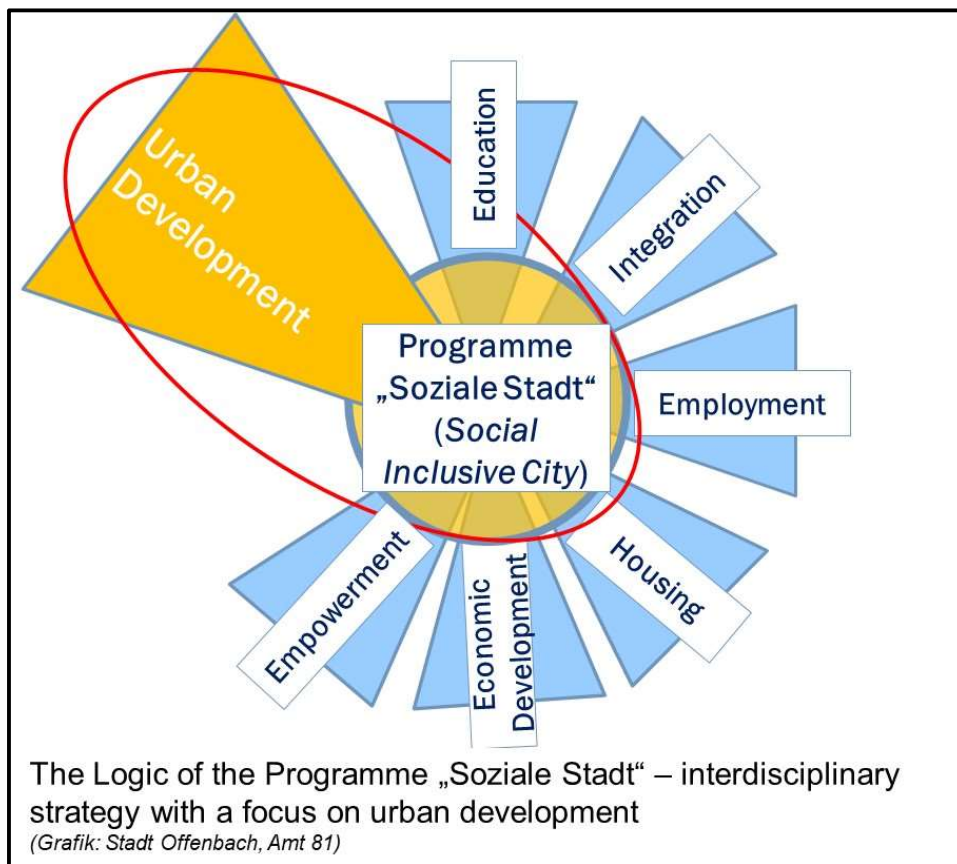
*The programme is funded by the central state, the federal states and municipalities in equal shares, allowing for some flexibility within the regional states. It was launched in 1999 as an experimental programme and is now well established in national policies of urban development. Meanwhile it has become part of the building code of Germany (Baugesetzbuch).*

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<sup>4</sup> Offenbach is one of the cities with the highest rate of entrepreneurs among its working population. See Schulze-Boeing (2018) and [www.gruenderstadt-offenbach.de](http://www.gruenderstadt-offenbach.de)

<sup>5</sup> The concept of „hyperdiversity“ is referring to the fact, that there is a multitude of diversities to be dealt with in a social and particularly in an urban context – ethnicity, social status, gender, habitus, life-styles etc. These particularities are overlapping. They create a multidimensional space of diversity, which makes it even more difficult for policies to address the related issues. The concept of “milieus” (see the article of Hallenberg in this volume) is a tool to analyse multi-diverse social realities. It may also turn out as an instrument to shape policies on the local level, which fit better into urban realities than concepts relying on highly aggregate social categories. See Tasan-Kok et al. (2017).





Source: the author

In 2002, the City of Offenbach began setting up a neighbourhood management system in the planning area of the "Social City Programme". This involved the eastern inner city, a district with special development needs, a special concentration of social problems and a high proportion of immigrants. This neighbourhood management proved so successful that it was subsequently introduced in other districts independently of the "Social City Programme. Meanwhile, there are four neighbourhood offices and four neighbourhood management districts. The neighbourhood offices are designed as small centres for services, e.g. migration counselling, outreach activities by the job centre or learning groups for disadvantaged young people and activities by resident groups. The aim is to take up concrete social concerns, but also to promote "bridging social capital" in the neighbourhood. The aim of neighbourhood management is to activate residents. Its methodology is based on the concept of the co-production of social goods. With a relatively small budget, a great deal has been achieved for the neighbourhoods and for integration. Social space-related measures have therefore become central building blocks of the city's integration strategy.

The long-term evaluation of the city's neighbourhood strategy shows that in almost all measurable dimensions the desired effects have so far been achieved at least in part (e. g. improve the infrastructure, reduction of poverty, rebalance the social structure of the district, and raising the image of the neighbourhood). The SGB II rate in the inner city and in the neighbourhoods of the "Social City Programme" has fallen much more sharply than in the city as a whole. There are indicators, that the population-mix has improved and is now more resilient towards economic

downturns. The segregation rate is declining, as is the number of registered crimes<sup>6</sup>. The district's image has improved significantly (Schulze-Böing 2018).

## V. Urban Integration Strategies – what is left to do?

The positive effects, but also the problems and challenges of immigration are concentrated in the cities. This is especially true in the "arrival cities" Doug Saunders has in mind, cities with a high proportion of immigrants, with high fluctuation, with educational backlogs, unemployment, poverty and a need for social action.

Cities are (and always have been!) places of arrival, hubs of mobility, places of diversity, but also laboratories for social experiments, arenas of conflict resolution and the negotiation of interests. It is in the nature of things that these processes do not run smoothly, without conflicts and burdens. If they want to meet the challenges of immigration, cities must invest in housing, education, employment, the development of neighbourhoods particularly affected by immigration, social work and infrastructure. This is a basic requirement for securing social peace in an urban context despite high immigration pressure. Especially when resources are scarce, as is often the case in cities with high poverty rates, high population turnover and high demand for social transfers.

The functionality of cities and districts of arrival cannot simply be assumed. It needs targeted support:

- Precautions to protect them from excessive overload, e.g. by creating opportunities to control the influx of immigrants, at least for a certain period after their arrival.
- In order to prevent the disintegration of arrival cities, effective mechanisms of financial redistribution are necessary to compensate for specific burdens related with immigration.
- Programmes such as "Social City Programme" in the area of urban and neighbourhood development can contribute to strengthening arrival districts in cities, eliminating urban planning deficits and promoting the social and economic development of these districts.
- After all, arrival cities need particularly good municipal management with a strong capability of building and managing networks and with an integrated view on the problems related with diversity.
- However, it is also the task of the arrival cities to ensure a balance between arrival processes and a stable population by means of a suitable urban development policy. This includes attractive the prevention of segregation and the fostering of mixed neighbourhoods, both ethnically and socially. Further on it should be a purpose of urban policies to prevent closed milieus, which may be threat not only for a peaceful living together in an urban context, but also for the freedom and life-perspectives of the individuals subordinated to these milieus.

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<sup>6</sup> According to Helbig/Jähnen (2018) the City of Offenbach shows the strongest decline in social segregation between 2005 and 2014 among 74 major cities which deliver comparative data on inner-city urban development for a data base of the Federal Institute of Urban and Territorial Research BBSR (Innerstädtische Raumbeobachtung). In 2014 Offenbach has the lowest degree of social segregation among these cities. See Helbig/Jähnen (2018, 30-31)

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