

# **Immigrant Integration and Multilevel Governance: EXPLORING THE ISSUES**

**24. February 2012**

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## **Role of City Governments in Federal Systems in effective immigrant integration**

**Case study: Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg**  
**Birte Steller, director, Hamburg Welcome Center**

### Overview:

1. Historical context and conditions of success
2. Hamburg's advantages:
  - Germany's second largest city
  - combines federal district and local affairs
3. Hamburg's proven practice of welcoming immigrants
4. Conclusion



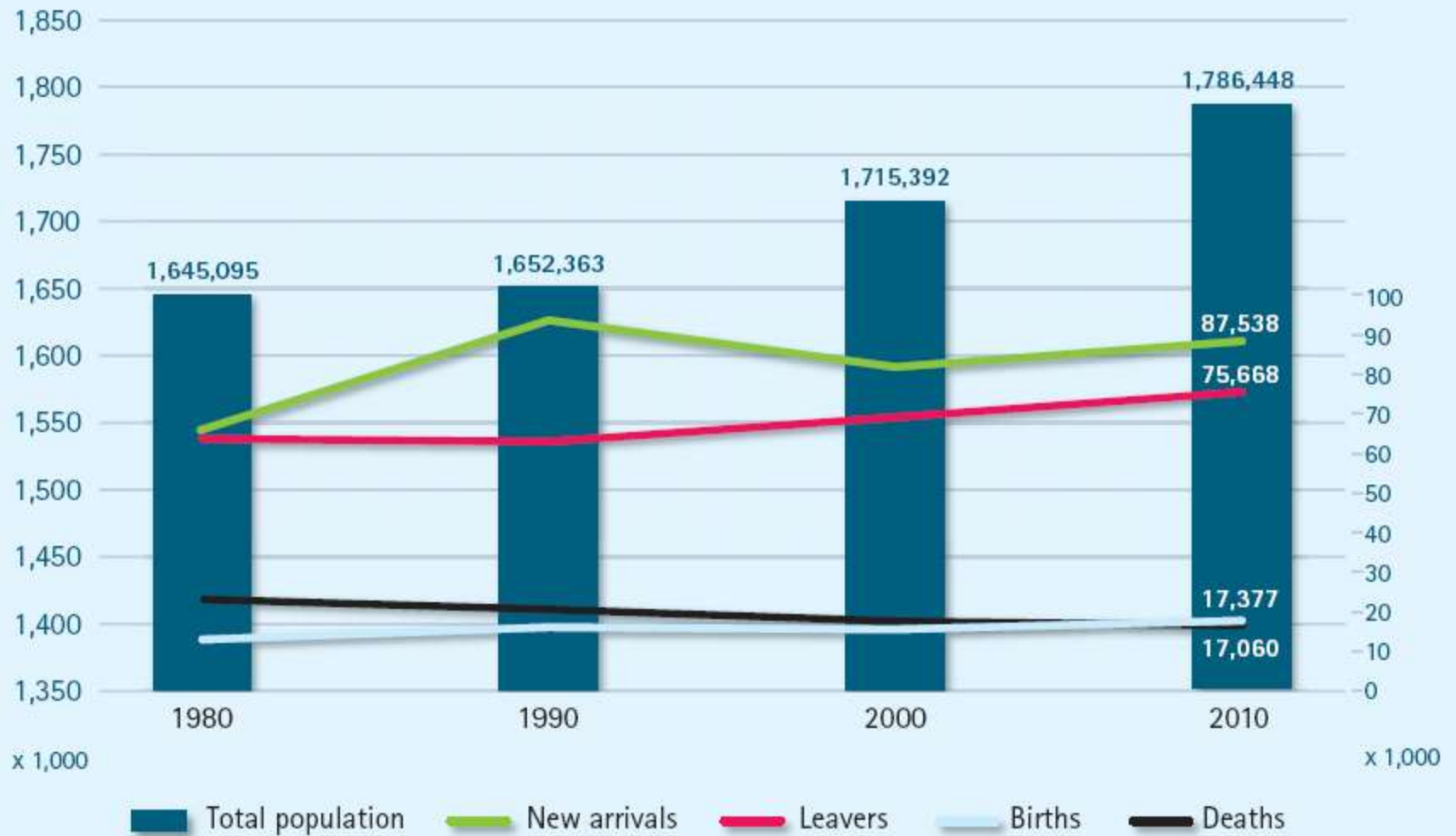
# **1. Historical context and conditions of success**

## **a. Historical context**

- **Hamburg was a flourishing Hanseatic city when Amsterdam had just been founded and New York and Tokyo did not even exist.**
- **1376: home to 84 Dutch merchants, 35 from Great Britain. The Hamburg Senate permitted immigration of Dutch Protestants as well as Spanish and Portuguese Jews.**
- **Hamburg has a thousand year old tradition of globalisation.**
- **Present: Every year more than 80.000 newcomers, about 25 % from abroad .**

(Source: Wolfgang Michalski, Capitalising on change in a globalising world, Murmann 2010, 2011)

## Population trends in Hamburg 1980 to 2010



# **1. Historical context and conditions of success**

## **b. Conditions of success from a policy point of view**

**Hamburg has always pursued policies of openness not only with regard to trade and investment but also with respect to migration.**

(Michalski, 22)

**other conditons for successful globalisation:**

- to avoid participation in war and social conflicts**
- to allow economic and social strutures to adjust flexibly to changing market conditions**
- to adopt a forward-looking approach towards development**
- to be wary of inflation and volatile exchange rates**

(Michalski, 22)

**2a.**

**Hamburg is Germany's second largest city;  
1.8 mill. inhabitants**

**(and, because of the harbour, a hub of foreign trade)**

**2b.**

**“Stadtstaat” / City Federal District**  
**- federal and local affairs in one hand**

### **3. Hamburg “nice” or: Hamburgian Welcome Practice**

#### **a. System of “Triple Step Integration”**

##### **Step one**

##### **- Pre-Integration:**

**Contact via homepage [www.welcome.hamburg.de](http://www.welcome.hamburg.de)  
or email: [info@welcome.hamburg.de](mailto:info@welcome.hamburg.de)**

##### **Step two**

##### **- Face-to-face greeting in the Hamburg Welcome Center**

##### **Step three**

##### **- Individual and ongoing appreciation**



### **3. Step one and step two: Hamburg's proven welcome practice**

#### **b. Hamburg Welcome Center goals**

##### **(1) Daily routine regarding people coming in**

- to offer an arrival free of bureaucratic barriers
- to offer a personal, welcoming atmosphere

##### **(2) Background leadership activities regarding the existing society**

- to enhance Hamburg's openness by shaping the common public view of the existing society, policies and administration:

**Immigrants are a benefit and potential to our city and our society**

## **c. Daily HWC routine beyond foreign and register affairs (I)**

- to get fast, individualized advice
- to get information about special challenges
- to understand the infrastructure of the city
- to get an idea of how the administration works
- to learn how health insurance, tax registration, etc. work
- to get information about accommodations, language courses, child care, sports, culture and community
- (bilingual by email, by telephone, and personal advice)

## **c. Daily HWC routine (II)**

### *Special Service:*

- residence permit and registration service for business, creative, athletic and academic persons

### *General service*

- advice in Hamburg for all Newcomers
- information about living and working
- personal and individual advisory services
- bilingual assistance
- offerings for leisure activities and cultural events - particularly for families

#### **d. General background leadership activities (I)**

- to facilitate immigration regulations, e.g. for high qualified persons
- to optimize the processing of immigrants' applications
- to explain and clarify the proceedings  
also bilingual virtual at the website  
[www.welcome.hamburg.de](http://www.welcome.hamburg.de)  
to give the opportunity to inform from abroad

## **d. Measures (I)**

- Communicating the practice, experience and challenges of the newcomer system to the Hamburg Ministry of Interior  
Trying to influence the German legal system with this administrative feedback

## **Issues**

- legal barriers and long and non-transparency in terms of **visa proceedings**
- optimizing the **German laws** regarding:
  - getting a job from abroad
  - getting a job in dual career,
  - changing the target of career,
  - getting a job after finishing studies,
  - deciding spontaneously to stay here for professional or academic reasons

## **d. Special background activities (II)**

**The Hamburg Welcome Center works as a platform for co-operation, strategic alliances and stakeholder networking: „Welcome to Hamburg“**

- *corporations, labour offices, NGOs, consulates, firms, universities, foundations, (international) organisations, communities, relocators, other cities and local institutions*
- encouragement of integration and intercultural dialogue
- forum for cultural and social events with an international approach
- local, national und international positioning of Hamburg as an „open city“
- extension of media communication through *Social Media*  
*(Hamburg Welcome Portal & Facebook)*

#### **4. Conclusion:**

##### **Question 1.**

**Are there greater opportunities for innovation and collaboration at the local level ?**

**Yes!**

#### **4. Conclusion (2):**

##### **Question 2.**

**Is the potential for learning from others being fully exploited?**

**No!**

**The HWC cooperates in particular with the network of OPEN Cities, and Cities of migration and learns from the cities of Toronto, Madrid, Barcelona, Amsterdam and Copenhagen**



## **4. Conclusion (3)**

### **Question 3.**

**Are the immigrant integration programs of big city governments under-resourced? From my very personal point of view:**

**Yes!**



**Thank you for your attention**



**[www.welcome.hamburg.de](http://www.welcome.hamburg.de)**

**Mail to: [info@welcome.hamburg.de](mailto:info@welcome.hamburg.de)**

**[www.facebook.com/HamburgWelcomeCenter](https://www.facebook.com/HamburgWelcomeCenter)**