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Coordination Practices in Federal Government: The Case of Integration Policy in Austria

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Abstract

Integration policy can be defined as a "wicked problem". This is particularly true in Austria, where integration policy is a politically cross-sectoral issue that concerns the responsibilities of various actors (e.g. different ministries) on various levels (e.g. federal, provincial, local). Based on a single-case study this paper examines the process that led to the development of the integration governance model in Austria between 2008 and 2013 and the associated implications. The most significant results were that vertical and horizontal coordination have been the main focus from the very beginning; that the creation of two new integration bodies and their interaction with the newly established State Secretariat for Integration has been particularly significant with regard to policy design and implementation; and that this new governance model is unique in the Austrian context.

Introduction

Some of the most pressing challenges for public administrations occur when their organisational structures and processes are confronted with "wicked" problems (Rittel and Webber, 1973), "which are complex and […] characterised by competing or conflicting options for solutions" (Bason, 2010, p. 10), or which cannot be identified at all as the problem itself is subject to controversies (Roberts, 2000; Scholten, 2011). As such, they are generally considered complex, open-ended and intractable and involve a multitude of actors whose responsibility is dispersed across organisational boundaries (APSC, 2007; Head, 2008).

Bearing in mind these general characteristics, integration policy – i.e. policy directed at the integration or settlement of migrants – can be considered a "wicked" problem (Scholten, 2011): There are different approaches as to what integration policy should primarily deal with (economic, socio-cultural or political-legal aspects); solutions are therefore anything but clear; the problem is socially complex and mirrors major societal transformations, and most importantly, there is a myriad of stakeholders involved. This is particularly evident in the case of Austria, where integration policy is considered a "politically cross-sectoral issue" (ECI, 2012, p. 11), which typically concerns the responsibilities of various actors (e.g. different ministries) on various levels (e.g. federal, provincial, local). This stems both from the constitutional framework and the consequent division of responsibilities in Austria (Janko, 2011) as well as from the multiplicity of aspects that are considered crucial to the successful integration of migrants into society, e.g. language acquisition[1], education, employment, and the commitment to common values as the foundation for social cohesion (BMI, 2010).

Building upon these observations, this paper sets out to examine the development of the recently established integration governance model in Austria. Particular attention will be given to the institutional framework and the respective processes of policy formulation, rather than to policy outcomes. This stems from three considerations: Firstly, there already exists rich literature on integration policymaking and outcomes, particularly EU and

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[1] A specific example shall illustrate the case: One of the most controversial aspects of migrant integration pertains to the role and timing of acquiring the host country's official language (Hollomey, Wöger, and Kraler, 2011). In its most recent immigration policy reform in 2011, the Austrian government introduced pre-entry language tests as it believes basic language and communication skills are the foundation for a successful integration process in the host country. However, the introduction of this measure was criticised by some members of the opposition, some state and local governments, NGOs and some linguists from local universities. As this example illustrates, the problem definition itself is contested (language skills are critical for successful integration vs. language skills are one of many aspects) as are the solutions (pre-entry language training and tests vs. criticism of "coercive measures").

government funded projects like IMISCOE[2], PROSINT[3], SOM[4], WIKAN[5] as well as the work by Penninx (2007) and other migration and integration scholars (e.g. Biffl, 2014; Fassmann and Reeger, 2008; Kraler, 2011; Zincone, Penninx, and Borkert, 2011). Regardless of the recent increase in integration research there is still a lack of scholarly investigation into "how immigration and integration policies are created, operationalized and implemented" (Borkert and Penninx, 2011, p. 10), which is precisely the focus of our paper.

Secondly, currently available literature (e.g. IMISCOE, PROSINT, SOM) does not take into account the most recent changes of the migration and integration policy system in Austria. While the major reforms entering into force in July 2011 constitute the end of contemporary analyses, they will serve as the starting point for our paper. In fact, we will focus on the major changes introduced during the XXIV legislative period in Austria (2008 – 2013).

Finally, we chose a process rather than outcome-oriented focus because we acknowledge the relatively short timeframe since the introduction of the integration governance model in 2010/11 and the limited number of policy initiatives that could be implemented in this short period of time.

Placing the policy process rather than outcomes at the centre of investigation provides another advantage. It allows us to concentrate on the emergence and institutionalisation of coordination practices in federal integration policymaking in Austria. Not only can we investigate the establishment of an integration governance model but also the coordinative procedures associated with this new model. This is a particularly promising frame as coordination has been identified as a strategy to address wicked problems (Head, 2008; Roberts, 2000) and there is indeed a multitude of actors, who started to coordinate their joint actions in Austrian integration policy practice.

These considerations are inherent in our research questions: How did the new Austrian integration governance model evolve? How were coordination efforts taken into account given the existing multi-level and multi-actor environment? What unique characteristics does this governance model have in an Austrian context?

Before turning to the case of Austria, literature pertaining to coordination approaches in government shall be briefly reviewed.

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[2] http://www.imiscoe.org/

[3] http://research.icmpd.org/1428.html

[4] http://www.som-project.eu/

[5] http://research.icmpd.org/1606.html

Coordination approaches in government

Not only are wicked problems characterised by complexity, uncertainty and disagreement in terms of the actual problem, but also with regard to the causes and possible solutions (Head, 2008). Consequently, it is impossible to identify a best practice approach for dealing with wicked problems due to the absence of one specific "root cause" (Head, 2008). While public management research has unveiled a variety of possible strategies to address wicked problems, coordination and collaboration among stakeholders is one of the more commonly recommended strategies (APSC 2007; Head, 2008; Mandell, 2001; Roberts, 2000). The following section shall provide an overview of different coordination approaches in government.

The coordination of government activities has been a recurring theme both in research and public administration for years (Peters, 1998; Pollitt, 2003; Six, 2004), particularly because the need for more coherent policies has gained significance (Christensen and Lægreid, 2008). Consequently, different definitions and perspectives with regard to coordination practices evolved in the course of time. In very general terms, coordination occurs "whenever two or more policy actors pursue a common outcome and work together to produce it" (Bevir, 2009, pp. 56-57). This implies that "otherwise disparate activities or events" (Thompson, Frances, Levacic, and Mitchell, 1991, p. 3) are brought into a relationship and ideally result in "minimal redundancy, incoherence and lacunae" (Peters, 1998, p. 296).

Bearing in mind the multitude of actors involved in integration policy at various levels of government in Austria, a suitable way to analyse coordination practices is to distinguish between the horizontal and vertical dimension thereof (Ansell, 2000; Matheson, 2000; Pollitt, 2003). The vertical dimension refers to coordination within central government, which can either be directed upwards, e.g. to international organisations, or downwards, e.g. to state or local levels of government (Christensen and Lægreid, 2008; Pollitt, 2003). Conversely, the horizontal dimension describes the coordination between organisations on the same level (e.g. different ministries on the federal level).

It has been argued that coordination "functions better vertically" (Peters, 2006, p. 116) as it reflects both the nature of government and the "vertical structuring of the public sector" (Peters, 2006, p. 116). Moreover, vertical coordination has improved due to reforms associated with New Public Management, which generally focus on performance management, structural devolution and "single-purpose" organisations (Christensen and Lægreid, 2007; Peters, 2006). On the other hand, however, New Public Management reforms have led to disintegration and fragmentation in the public sector

(Christensen and Lægreid, 2007); only post-NPM reforms have shifted the focus back towards horizontal coordination again (Christensen and Lægreid, 2008). Consequently they became known as "joined-up government" – a concept firstly introduced by the Blair government in 1997 – or as "whole-of-government", even though the terminology varies in other country contexts (Christensen and Lægreid, 2007; Iredale, 2001; Pollitt, 2003). Notwithstanding these efforts, Peters (2006, p. 115) concludes that there is still a pressing need for governments around the world to "manage more effectively the horizontal as well as the vertical direction". This diagnosis shall be the starting point for our investigation of the development of the integration governance model in Austria.

For the purpose of this paper, a taxonomy of coordination forms employed in multi-level systems proposed by Christensen and Lægreid (2008) can be useful to analyse the development of the Austrian integration governance model. The authors do not only distinguish between vertical and horizontal coordination, but include an internal and external dimension to their framework (Christensen and Lægreid, 2008). In addition to the vertical and horizontal dimensions described before, the internal dimension refers to coordination within the central government, while external coordination takes place between central government (e.g. ministries) and organisations outside the government (e.g. NGOs, private sector).

These four categories combined result in a taxonomy of coordination forms (Christensen and Lægreid, 2008), which is presented in Table 1:

Table 1: Taxonomy of coordination forms

	Horizontal coordination	**Vertical coordination**
Internal coordination	Coordination between different ministries, agencies or policy sectors	Coordination between parent ministry and subordinate agencies and bodies in the same sector
External coordination	Coordination with civil society organisations/private sector interest organisations	Coordination (a) upwards to international organisations or, (b) downwards to local government

Source: Christensen and Lægreid (2008, p. 102)

The vertical internal dimension refers to coordination between political and administrative leaders and the subordinate units in their own sector or policy area, while horizontal internal coordination takes place on the same level between various ministries in central government (Christensen and Lægreid, 2008). Conversely, the vertical external dimension primarily describes upwards coordination with international organisations (e.g. European Union) or downwards coordination with regional or local authorities (Christensen and

Lægreid, 2008). Finally, horizontal external coordination takes place with civil society or private sector organisations (Christensen and Lægreid, 2008).

Another level of analysis refers to coordination strategies at the horizontal and vertical level. In other words, actors striving to achieve coordinated action operate in different organisational environments and need to adapt their coordination strategies and processes accordingly. As Matheson (2000, p. 45) observed, the "vertical axis comprises relations of command and obedience whereas the horizontal axis comprises relationships of persuasion, negotiation and bargaining". It may therefore be argued that the vertical dimension generally employs hierarchy-type mechanisms of coordination through vertical chains of command, whilst the horizontal dimension rather relies on network-based modes of coordination favouring mutual adjustment over command (Ansell, 2000; Christensen and Lægreid, 2008).

In summary, the reviewed literature indicates that coordination has been an ongoing issue - not only in the context of wicked policy problems - and that there is still potential for a more detailed understanding of the underlying processes. This is particularly evident in studies of integration policymaking, which only recently started directing their attention away from specific policies and their outcomes towards "the political process through which such policies come into existence and how their implementation is steered" (Borkert and Penninx, 2011, p. 10). Consequently, there is still a lack of research into coordination efforts between different institutions at different levels of government, the process of (re)distributing competencies as well as establishing new governance models in the area of integration policy (Zincone and Caponio, 2006).

Bearing in mind these considerations, our research questions address precisely the issues evolving around the coordination of policy in practice and the development of governance models through which these coordination efforts are institutionalised. As already outlined, we are particularly interested how the Austrian integration governance model evolved; how coordination efforts were taken into account given the existing multi-level and multi-actor environment; and what unique characteristics this governance model has in an Austrian context. Therefore, the taxonomy developed by Christensen and Lægreid (2008) will serve as a starting point for the further analysis of the newly established integration governance model in Austria.

Method

In order to analyse the recent emergence of the Austrian integration governance model, its unique characteristics and to investigate how coordination efforts were taken into account in this context, a single-case

study approach was chosen. This method is particularly suitable in the context of this research, as "the case study is a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 534). Even though case studies can be employed to generate or test a theory, our aim is to provide an in-depth investigation and holistic study of the unique case of the development of the Austrian integration governance model (Eisenhardt, 1989; Tellis, 1997; Yin, 2009). In other words, we will focus on building knowledge about the uniqueness of our case rather than on building theory (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). A single-case study approach is also "ideal for revelatory cases where an observer may have access to a phenomenon that was previously inaccessible" (Tellis, 1997). This is certainly applicable in the context of our case study, as the Austrian integration governance model and the respective government reports only recently came into existence. Moreover, one of the authors has been part of the analysed process and can contribute to an in-depth understanding thereof.

Our case study is based on the analysis of secondary and publicly available data. This includes government documents and reports, parliamentary documents, reports by the Austrian Bureau of Statistics (Statistik Austria) as well as reports of relevant research commissioned by the government.

Context for the case: A historical perspective on immigration and integration policy in Austria

In order to fully understand the dynamics that led to the emergence of the integration governance model in Austria, it is necessary to provide some context. While Austria has experienced multiple waves of immigration in the past decades, some effects of past immigration policies and the lack of an integration policy only became visible in the course of time. As this has been the starting point for public debate and corresponding policy initiatives, a brief overview of immigration patterns shall be presented.

After Austria gained independence in 1955, it experienced four major waves of immigration (Bauer, 2008; Fassmann and Reeger, 2008; Kraler, 2011; Lebhart and Marik-Lebeck, 2007; Statistik Austria, 2009), the first of which was thousands of refugees from neighbouring Hungary and former Czechoslovakia in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1956/57 approximately 180,000 refugees came to Austria in the aftermath of the Hungarian uprising, of which 20,000 stayed permanently (Bauer, 2008). Similarly, the Prague Spring in 1968 caused 160,000 citizens of what was Czechoslovakia to leave their home and seek asylum in neighbouring Austria. While most of these refugees continued their journey or returned home, approximately 12,000 decided to stay permanently (Bauer, 2008).

Apart from these uncontrollable migration flows caused by political instability in neighbouring countries, Austria's booming economy combined with its labour shortages in the early 1960s led to a change in migration policy and consequently to the second wave of immigration. For the first time, bilateral labour recruitment agreements were signed with Turkey in 1964 and Yugoslavia 1966, following the example of other European countries like Switzerland or Germany (Borkert and Bosswick, 2011; Fassmann and Reeger, 2008). As a consequence of this policy, approximately 265,000 foreign citizens immigrated between 1961 and 1974, the majority between 1969 and 1974 (Münz, Zuser, and Kytir, 2003). However, the labourers who were actively recruited in the 1960s were only supposed to meet the domestic labour market's demand in the short term. In fact, this stream of immigration was intended to be temporary and rotational in nature (Borkert and Bosswick, 2011; Kraler, 2011). Accordingly, the term "guest worker" (Gastarbeiter) has commonly been used both in Germany and Austria to refer to this group of migrants, thus highlighting the short-term nature of the workplace relationship and how long the workers were actually welcome in the country. 1974 marked a year of change, when due to stronger competition on the domestic job market (caused by the 1973 oil crisis, Austrian citizens returning from working overseas and baby-boom cohorts entering the labour market) a ban on recruitment of foreign workers entered into force (Bauer, 2008; Fassmann and Reeger, 2008). Subsequently, the number of migrant workers dropped by 40 per cent between 1974 and 1984 (Bauer, 2008), however the number of foreign citizens remained unexpectedly stable (Lebhart and Marik-Lebeck, 2007). To the surprise of most policymakers and the public the so-called "guest workers" did not act like guests at all. Instead of going back to their home countries after the 1974 recruitment ban was issued, many of the foreign labourers decided to bring their families and stay in Austria for good (Kraler, 2011) because they feared the loss of the right to live and work in Austria if they left (Fassmann and Reeger, 2008; Münz et al., 2003). Again, the Austrian policy response and the unexpected outcomes were similar to the situation in Germany (Borkert and Bosswick, 2011). However, as there was no settlement or integration policy in place to support the newly arrived and generally less skilled, the effects of this inaction can still be observed today with first and second generation "guest worker" migrant groups exhibiting worse educational outcomes and higher unemployment rates (Statistik Austria and BMI 2010, 2011; 2012). Therefore, this is one of the main target groups of contemporary integration initiatives.

The third and largest wave of immigration was an effect of the fall of the Iron Curtain between 1989 and 1991 on the one hand and the war in Yugoslavia in the early 1990s on the other hand (Borkert and Bosswick, 2011; Fassmann and Reeger, 2008; Statistik Austria, 2009). In the aftermath of these events the

number of foreign citizens rose from 387,000 in 1989 to 690,000 in 1993, thus almost doubling within four years (Bauer, 2008).

After Austria's accession to the European Union (EU) in 1995 and the EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007, the fourth and most recent wave of immigration relates to EU-nationals and particularly to German citizens who are now the biggest migrant group in Austria (Statistik Austria and BMI, 2012).

The corresponding statistics also illustrate these developments (Statistik Austria and BMI, 2012): While foreign nationals accounted for 1.4 per cent of the total population in Austria in 1961 (approximately 100,000), the number rose to almost 9 per cent in 2000 and 11.5 per cent in 2012, i.e. more than 970,000. When also taking into account the second generation of migrants, or more precisely the population "with a migrant background"[6], this group accounts for 18.9% (or more than 1.5 million) of the total population.

Defining a new national integration strategy in Austria

Despite Austria's long tradition of immigration migrant integration has not been on the government's agenda for a long time. Though individual measures directed at the integration of migrants were previously introduced in individual municipalities as well as at the federal level from the 1990s (Hollomey et al., 2011; Kraler, 2011), it took until 2008 for a coordinated federal integration policy to evolve.

The reasons for this development are manifold. As guest worker migration was designed to be temporary, "for a long time immigration was overlooked or regarded as a[n] outlier that was not really relevant" (Fassmann and Reeger, 2008, p. 34). Only slowly did policymakers come to the realization that the second generation already started growing up in Austria. The concentration of second generation migrants in urban areas and parts of Vienna in particular led to new challenges in the educational system, e.g. high concentration of non-German native speakers with language difficulties in kindergartens and schools or lower educational and labour market outcomes (see e.g. Statistik Austria and BMI, 2010, 2011; 2012). The failure of the guest worker model along with its now visible long-term impacts was one of the factors that led to

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[6] There is no common agreement how a "migrant background" is defined. At the federal level in Austria (Ministry of the Interior, Statistics Austria) the definition proposed by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was adopted. According to UNECE (2006) the population with a migrant background refers to persons whose both parents were born abroad, irrespective of their nationality. Some entities (e.g. the City of Vienna, the German Federal Statistical Office) define a migrant background as at least *one* parent born abroad. In this article, the UNECE's definition of migrant background will be used.

major changes in migration and integration policymaking in Austria (Fassmann and Reeger, 2008).

Another reason can be found in the politicisation of the issue in the beginning of the 1990s. The fall of the Iron Curtain and the Balkan wars led to an unexpected but significant increase in immigration with migrant numbers almost doubling between 1989 and 1993 (Bauer, 2008). The public was not prepared for this sudden increase of both labour migrants from the ex-Soviet area and refugees from Yugoslavia. It was these circumstances the FPÖ, Jörg Haider's populist right-wing Freedom Party, capitalised on (Fassmann and Reeger, 2008). Subsequently, the FPÖ's "Austria First" plebiscite in favour of immigration restrictions and a new constitutional provision that Austria is not a country of immigration in 1993 "helped make migration a key issue in political debates" (Kraler, 2011, p. 31). As a response politically active pro-immigrant NGOs emerged, which started openly commenting on immigration policy and also organised the biggest demonstration in Austrian history (the "sea of lights") to articulate their opposition to the FPÖ's plebiscite (Fassmann and Reeger, 2008; Kraler, 2011).

1999 brought major changes to the Austrian political system when the FPÖ won 26.9% of the votes in the federal election and formed a coalition with the conservative People's Party ÖVP. After decades of a grand coalition between Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the People's Party ÖVP the political landscape changed considerably. According to an analysis of voter motivation and behaviour one in two FPÖ voters supported this party because of the FPÖ's anti-immigration and anti-foreigner programmes (Plasser, Ulram, and Sommer, 1999). Consequently, apart from the FPÖ's opposition to the way the grand coalition governed the country and their call for political change, the anti-migration programme was one of the most important motives for FPÖ voters when casting their ballot. As the second strongest party the FPÖ formed a coalition with the conservative party in 2000 and remained in power until 2006.

Even though individual integration measures were introduced in the migration law reforms in the 1990s and early 2000s[7] only 2008 constituted a major watershed in terms of integration policy. For the first time the Austrian federal government (i.e. the newly elected Social Democrat – People's Party coalition) agreed on the formulation, adoption and later on the implementation of the National Action Plan for Integration (NAP.I) as the new national integration strategy (see Bundeskanzleramt, 2008; BMI, 2010). For the first time integration policy became subject to a systematic and coordinated policy

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[7] For a detailed analysis of immigration policy reform during that time and the emerging migration – integration nexus, please refer to Fassmann and Reeger (2008), Hollomey et al. (2011) or Kraler (2011).

planning and implementation process (Brünner, Kienl, Kupfer, and Wojtarowicz, 2011). For the first time, the foundation for a new integration governance model was laid.

The process that led to the development of this new integration governance model was not easy, as the government was confronted with a multi-actor and multi-level environment. The challenge therefore was to develop a broadly accepted national integration strategy (the NAP.I) and to create a governance model that would not undermine the existing structures, but at the same time provide an institutional framework capable of truly facilitating the integration process. Accordingly, the primary concern was to coordinate and channel the actions of the actors involved, vertically and horizontally as well as internally and externally.

The first step with regard to the development of new national integration strategy was to find a "project manager" who would coordinate the formulation and implementation of the NAP.I. Eventually this task was assigned to the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) in 2008. Yet, this decision was not uncontested due to the fact that the MOI is also responsible for internal security. Many of the critics would have preferred the task to be assigned to a new Ministry for Integration or at least to an Integration State Secretary, in order to prevent the alleged perception of integration as a security issue (see for instance Die Grünen, 2010; Haslinger, 2011; Hollomey, Wöger and Kraler, 2011). However, within the government agreement was reached for the MOI to coordinate the development and implementation of the National Action Plan for Integration, the new national integration strategy. This may have been influenced by the understanding that integration is a "politically cross-sectoral issue" (ECI, 2012, p. 11) and that someone simply *has to* coordinate and foster the process. Moreover, integration is causally linked to migration, which has been within the responsibility of the MOI as the most important actor in Austrian immigration policy for the past decades (Hollomey et al., 2011).

According to the government programme for the XXIV. legislative period (2008 – 2013) the MOI's task with regard to integration was to develop a "National Action Plan for Integration, which structures the nationwide cooperation with regard to successful integration initiatives and optimises its implementation (…) in cooperation with all involved ministries, provinces and municipalities as well as other interested organisations of the civil society" (Bundeskanzleramt, 2008, p. 107, translated from German by the authors). While the envisioned outcome was clear, the exact method was not. In order to comply with the government programme and establish the broadest possible acceptance, the MOI decided to include all relevant stakeholders in a comprehensive (and lengthy) consultation process at the end of which the National Action Plan for Integration (BMI, 2010) would be defined.

A steering group uniting 34 representatives of all relevant ministries, all nine provinces, the Association of Municipalities (Gemeindebund), the Association of Cities and Towns (Städtebund), the Austrian social partnership organisations (Chamber of Labour, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Trade Unions, Federation of Industries, Chamber of Agriculture) as well as five major NGOs (i.a. Caritas and Red Cross) and the Austrian Integration Fund was appointed in order to ensure that all stakeholders were kept in the loop and could make contributions towards the formulation of the NAP.I in early 2009 (BMI, 2010). Moreover, external specialists were invited to share their expertise in two rounds of thematic workshops (BMI, 2010; Hollomey et al., 2011). Residents with and without a migrant background as well as members of migrant organisations were also given the opportunity to share their views (BMI, 2010). According to the taxonomy of Christensen and Lægreid (2008) this approach can be defined as facilitating horizontal internal as well as horizontal external coordination.

After more than a year of dialogue and consultations, the actual text of the National Action Plan for Integration was completed and formally adopted by a decision of the Council of Ministers on 19 January 2010. It now forms the backbone of integration policy in Austria as it defines challenges, principles and goals in seven so-called "fields of action" (BMI, 2010): Language and education, work and employment, rule of law and values, health and social issues, intercultural dialogue, sport and leisure and living and the regional dimension of integration.

As part of this process, the MOI moreover commissioned the development of a set of 25 "integration indicators" (Fassmann, 2010) which have been compiled and published on an annual basis ever since 2010 (Statistik Austria and BMI 2010; 2011, 2012).

Developing a governance model for the implementation of the new integration strategy

As the government's goal was not only to introduce a new integration strategy (the NAP.I), but also to implement it at the federal level, the creation of an adequate institutional framework became an evident necessity.

Again, coordination was the primary concern due to the cross-sectoral nature of integration policy and the already existing yet very fragmented structures. Therefore, the coordination of integration policies in general and the implementation of the National Action Plan for Integration in particular remained within the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior, which in

early 2010 began planning an institutional framework for the implementation of the NAP.I – at an administrative, consultative and collaborative level.

Hence, a new Department for Integration was created within the MOI on the administrative level in January 2011 and "upgraded" to a Directorate-General for Integration, the highest organisational unit in terms of ministry hierarchy, in June 2013. Notably, the establishment of two new integration bodies – the independent Expert Council for Integration and the Advisory Committee on Integration – makes this governance model unique in the Austrian context.

At the consultative level, the Expert Council, consisting of 15 independent experts, who were selected by the Minister of the Interior based on their scientific expertise and practical experience, was instituted at the MOI shortly after the adoption of the National Action Plan for Integration. Its primary mandate was and is to make recommendations with regard to the practical implementation of the very general goals defined in the National Action Plan for Integration. According to the chairman of this body "the development of policy should not be restricted to party secretariats [or] targeted lobbying […] but guided by a permanent, technically qualified committee, not beholden to directives or parties" (ECI, 2012, p. 11). In line with the taxonomy of Christensen and Lægreid (2008) the installation of the Expert Council is an exemplar of horizontal external coordination.

On the collaborative level, an Advisory Committee on Integration was established and legally enshrined in section 18 of the Settlement and Residence Act (Niederlassungs- und Aufenthaltsgesetz, NAG), uniting the members of the former "steering group of the National Action Plan for Integration" (ministries, provinces, municipalities, organisations of the social partnership, NGOs and the Austrian Integration Fund as chairing body) in order to promote "cross-discipline networking, coordination, conformity and knowledge transfer among all active players" (ECI, 2012, p. 11). The recommendations made by the Expert Council for Integration can only be implemented by the stakeholders united in this committee. Therefore, both horizontal internal and external dimensions of coordination are vital to this integration body.

At the political level, the Minister of the Interior was responsible for integration policy, however in April 2011 this responsibility was formally assigned to a newly inaugurated State Secretary for Integration[8], who also

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[8] According to art. 78 of the Austrian Federal Constitution Act (B-VG) State Secretaries are appointed and dismissed the same way as Federal Ministers. They can be attached to a Federal Minister "for assistance in the conduct of business and to deputize for them in Parliament" (art. 78(2) B-VG). Moreover, the Federal Minister can "with his consent likewise entrust the State Secretary with the conduct of certain functions" in the fulfilment of which he "is also subordinate to the Federal Minister and bound by his instructions" (art. 78(3) B-VG).

fulfils his duties within the Ministry of the Interior. This was an initially unplanned[9], yet remarkable step: For the first time in the history of the Republic of Austria integration policy became important enough to create a new State Secretariat (Hofmann and Reichel, 2012; Rosenberger, Gruber, and Peintiger, 2012). Bearing in mind the criticism which was associated with the initial responsibility of the Minister of the Interior for integration policy (e.g. Die Grünen, 2010; Haslinger, 2011; Hollomey et al., 2011), the creation of the State Secretariat for Integration may have been a way of addressing this critique. Regardless of the motives for its establishment, the State Secretariat has become one of the main pillars of the new integration governance model in Austria, as it made integration policy at the federal level "audible and visible for the first time" (Rosenberger et al., 2012, p. 2). From a coordination perspective (Christensen and Lægreid, 2008), the establishment of a State Secretariat for Integration changed the way policies were coordinated vertically and internally within the MOI, as the Department for Integration was no longer solely reporting to the Minister's but also to the State Secretary's office. Moreover, the State Secretariat took over the former role of the MOI with regard to coordinating integration policy at the horizontal internal and external level (collaboration with the Expert Council and the Advisory Committee).

Implementing the new national integration strategy

The creation of the new integration governance model was the prerequisite for the actual implementation of the measures proposed in the National Action Plan for Integration. Therefore, when the Expert Council took up its work it first started identifying specific recommendations for the practical implementation of the NAP.I, which it was supposed to provide to the State Secretary for Integration and the government as a whole. The first step was to analyse the more than 60 broadly defined measures outlined in the NAP.I with regard to "feasibility, socio-political priority and anticipated impacts on the necessary process of social integration" (ECI, 2012, p. 12). The second step involved a priorization of these measures. Finally, in July 2011 the Expert Council presented its "20-Point-Programme" (ECI, 2011) with 20 concrete recommendations or political guidelines on how the State Secretary and other relevant stakeholders could practically implement (or rather start implementing) the National Action Plan for Integration.

Nevertheless, though not formally being members of the government, State Secretaries are usually perceived as "junior ministers" who are in charge of a certain policy area. This is certainly true for the current State Secretary Sebastian Kurz who is perceived as the responsible politician for integration.

[9] The State Secretariat for Integration was created when the government was restructured after Vice Chancellor and Minister of Finance Josef Pröll resigned in April 2011.

One example shall illustrate the process: The NAP.I defined "promoting the integration of persons with a migrant background on the labour market" (BMI, 2010, p. 22, translated from German by the author) as a very general goal. In a following step, the Expert Council recommended the introduction of an "effective system governing recognition and validation of competencies and skills formally or informally attained in the EU, in third countries or in Austria" (ECI, 2012, p. 25) as a necessary and specific measure. This recommendation was driven by the idea that having their qualifications formally validated would help migrants find jobs that match their actual skills. After these recommendations were officially presented, the State Secretariat and all other relevant stakeholders (i.e. in the Advisory Committee) could start implementing the now specific suggestions. Consultation and coordination was still imperative, as many measures required the joint action of many actors. Implementing a system for recognising and validating foreign qualifications, for instance, took the coordinated action of the State Secretariat for Integration, the Ministry of Science and Research, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Chamber of Commerce, the provinces – just to name a few. Therefore, the collaborative aspect imminent in the work of the Advisory Committee for Integration is so important.

The evaluation of the proposed measures partly took place during its formulation by the Expert Council. As integration policy is a "politically cross-sectoral issue" (ECI, 2012, p. 11) and involves a myriad of actors chances for the actual implementation of the recommended measures are considerably higher, if the stakeholders are "in the loop" from the very beginning. Therefore, the Expert Council informed the Advisory Committee about its "general focal points" (ECI, 2012, p. 11) from the very beginning. Even though this is an important prerequisite for successful coordination efforts, the way all relevant actors are included from the very beginning reflects the Austrian political culture of corporatism and consensus (Tálos and Stromberger, 2004).

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper examined the development of the new integration governance model in Austria with particular focus on coordination practices and procedures in federal government.

Migration and integration have gained importance across the European Union both in policy practice and in research: On the one hand, 93 per cent of governments in Europe have some policy in place to foster the integration of non-nationals (UN 2013). On the other hand, a rich body of (mostly EU and government funded) literature analysing the contents and outcomes of the associated policymaking processes evolved in recent years (eg. Hofmann and

Reichel, 2012; Hollomey et al., 2011; Zincone et al., 2011). When examining the Austrian case against this background, it can be argued that "unlike other Western European countries [migration and integration] policy at the national level in Austria has been highly coordinated" (Kraler, 2011, p. 49). This is a very interesting finding, particularly when bearing in mind that integration policy can be considered a "wicked" policy problem, which generally calls for collaboration as resolution strategy (Roberts 2000, Head 2008).

As has been discussed in the previous sections, the coordinated interaction of the Ministry of the Interior, the State Secretariat for Integration, the Expert Council and the Advisory Committee is at the core of the Austrian integration governance model and characterised by the following aspects:

Firstly, "National Action Plans" (NAPs) as the result of comprehensive dialogue and consultation processes are neither new nor uncommon in Austria. Apart from the National Action Plan for Integration there is e.g. a NAP for renewable energy, a NAP for the rights of children, a NAP for the equal treatment of women and men on the labour market. What makes the National Action Plan for Integration unique is the governance model that was created for its implementation. While it is not uncommon to have a comprehensive consultation process for the development of action plans, the so-called NAP.I steering group was institutionalised in the form of the Advisory Committee on Integration, and subsequently legally enshrined in the Settlement and Residence Act (Niederlassungs- und Aufenthaltsgesetz NAG). The institutionalisation of an independent Expert Council as driving force behind the actual implementation of the NAP.I is equally noteworthy, as is the establishment of a State Secretariat for Integration. These new bodies mark a major change in the institutional landscape in Austria and are precisely what makes this new governance model unique and particularly interesting in terms of integration policy design and implementation.

Secondly, the coordination of integration policies has been the main focus at the federal level from the very beginning. With regard to the taxonomy proposed by Christensen and Lægreid (2008) all levels of coordination – both horizontal and vertical as well as internal and external – have been taken into account in the newly established institutional framework. This was a means to address the challenge of creating a governance model that would not undermine the existing structures, yet provide an effective institutional framework. On the administrative level, the Department for Integration in the Ministry of the Interior has been involved in vertical internal coordination with the State Secretariat for Integration and in horizontal internal and external coordination with the Advisory Committee and the Expert Council. At the collaborative level, the Advisory Committee caters for horizontal internal coordination (between ministries, between provinces) and for horizontal external coordination (with interest groups, NGOs and the Expert Council). It

can therefore be argued that horizontal coordination has been at the heart of the integration governance model in Austria.

Thirdly, within this governance model the strong coordinative role of the Ministry of the Interior (and later of the State Secretariat for Integration) was initially contested. However, it reflects a more general European trend to allocate integration competencies in Ministries of the Interior (Borkert and Bosswick, 2011; ECI 2012). Moreover, this institutional allocation has "helped achieve overall consistency and coherence" by organising immigration and integration policy under one roof (Kraler, 2011, p. 49). Similarly, placing coordination at the centre of the policy process and designing consultation "as an ongoing process rather than a one-off event" (Head, 2008, p. 114) can be regarded as the implementation of a strategy critical for addressing wicked policy problems with a myriad of involved actors (Roberts, 2000).

Fourthly, apart from its coordinative significance, the Advisory Committee (and its interaction with the Expert Council) mirrors the Austrian corporatist political system and a political culture driven by consensus (Tálos and Stromberger, 2004). In this system it is a common strategy to keep all relevant stakeholders and interest groups "in the loop" from the very beginning of any policy initiative. Traditionally, the Austrian corporatist structure includes employees' associations (Chamber of Labour, Federation of Trade Unions) as well as employers' associations (Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Industries), which work together with the government in relevant policy areas. In the case of the Advisory Committee, however, a more inclusive approach was chosen with regard to membership. Thus, on top of the traditional actors (federal ministries, provinces, employers' and employees' associations) the Association of Cities and Towns (Städtebund) has been a member as well as the Association of Municipalities (Gemeindebund) and organisations of the civil society (NGOs).

Fifthly, the Expert Council for Integration adds to the uniqueness of the integration governance model in Austria. This body makes recommendations to the State Secretary with regard to the practical implementation of the National Action Plan for Integration, while the State Secretary in turn is committed towards implementing or coordinating the implementation of these recommendations together with the respective stakeholders. This model exceeds the normal inclusion of experts[10]. As Rosenberger et al. (2012, pp. 5-6; translated from German by the authors) conclude "significantly more importance is placed on scholarly and practical expertise than in other areas of government".

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[10] See e.g. Scholten's (2011) analysis of the emergence of the Dutch research-policy nexus.

Finally, "this fairly uncommon new form of quality-oriented policy development has hitherto proven its worth" (ECI, 2012, p. 11) even though this governance model has only recently come into existence. Bearing in mind the short period of time since the creation of this model, a considerable amount of new initiatives has already been implemented.[11] As the chairman of the Expert Council concluded: "Austria has, in terms of integration policy, found direction and the signs of the time favour the further development of proactive migration and integration policies" (ECI, 2012, p. 59). This could also serve as a starting point for further research: As more time passes, integration policy outcomes will become more tangible and allow for a more thorough long-term analysis. While we do not have any doubts that the integration governance model is unique in the Austrian context and has already produced noteworthy initiatives, it would be interesting to examine whether the current institutional framework and the prevailing focus on horizontal coordination has had an impact on policy outcomes at all.

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[11] For a detailed outline of the most important integration measures implemented in Austria, please refer to the report of the Expert Council (ECI, 2012, pp. 57-59 in particular) and to the compilation of integration initiatives implemented by members of the Advisory Committee (BMI, 2012; only available in German).

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