
IDENTITY AND (MUSLIM) INTEGRATION IN GERMANY

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Executive Summary

Germany is already a diverse country, and will become increasingly so over time. One-fifth of the population is comprised of immigrants and their children, and in many of Germany's largest cities, a majority of children under the age of 6 have a so-called migration background. However, while Germany has become a country of immigration in recent decades, a dominant perception in media and public discourse is that of a homogenous German society in which those with a migration background cannot fully belong. Muslims in particular have become a focus of public hostility, despite comprising just 5 percent of the population. German public opinion contains some of the strongest anti-Muslim sentiments in Western Europe.¹

German politicians began to perceive hostility toward Muslims as a concrete threat to social cohesion around 2006, recognizing that this mood had to be monitored and controlled in order to achieve a rapprochement. This marked a paradigmatic shift in politics — also affecting the academic community and security agencies — as the government sought to create a national framework for dialogue between the German state and Muslims living in Germany. Yet such top-down initiatives have not translated into a bottom-up process that reconciles Germany's national identity with its contemporary demographics. Instead, it stands in stark contrast to the negative feelings that are predominant in Germany regarding integration of “the Muslims.” At the same time, however, the evidence shows that over the last two decades Muslims in Germany have become more economically and educationally successful and more integrated into social and cultural life than is commonly assumed.

Germany is already a diverse country, and will become increasingly so over time.

Moving forward, there is a need to tackle the negative stereotypes of Muslims in the public sphere and to support a new national narrative on identity that reflects the reality of a plural Germany. To this end, the government must continue to combat racist attitudes and movements; robustly enforce anti-discrimination; promote more equal representation of ethnic minorities in politics, business, and public services; and continue initiatives that seek to improve dialogue between state institutions and Muslim communities.

I. Introduction

This report explores how international immigration influences national identity in Germany and the reciprocal influence that German national identity has on immigrants. Although one-fifth of Germany's inhabitants are immigrants or the children of immigrants, German politics and public discourse have long ignored the implications of the nation's changing population. Meanwhile, German public opinion includes some of the deepest anti-Muslim sentiments in Europe. Perceptions of Muslims as backward, fanatical, intolerant, and a threat to Germany's national security and national identity are

¹ Andreas Zick, Beate Küpper, and Andreas Hövermann, *Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination: A European Report* (Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2011), 63, <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/do/07908-20110311.pdf>.



commonplace.² Much of this was evident in the debates over Thilo Sarrazin's controversial depiction of Muslims in his best-selling 2010 book, *Deutschland schafft sich ab* ("Germany Does Away with Itself").³

This report provides an overview of the demographics, trends, and current debates and linkages concerning national identity and immigration in Germany, and concludes by presenting recommendations for policymakers. These recommendations are focused on how German policymakers should challenge the stereotypes of Muslims that pervade the media and public discourse, and how to tackle structural factors that lead to unequal outcomes for immigrants and their descendants.

II. Germany as a Recent Country of Immigration

A. Demographic Overview

Over recent decades, transnational migration has become a self-evident characteristic of German society. One-fifth of Germany's 82 million inhabitants have a so-called migration background,⁴ including one-third of children under the age of 6.⁵ (See Figure 1.) It is interesting though, that only 5 percent of all migrants or persons with a migration background live in the eastern German states; however, anti-immigrant sentiments and xenophobia are the highest there.⁶

German politics and public discourse have long ignored the implications of the nation's changing population.

At the national level, one-third of the estimated 16 million people with a migration background living in Germany did not immigrate, but were born in Germany. In some federal states those labeled as "Germans with a migration background" make up more than 35 percent of all children under the age of 10.

2 Ibid, 61; Detlef Pollack, "Wahrnehmung und Akzeptanz religiöser Vielfalt" (study by the Religion and Politics Excellence Cluster, Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster, 2011), 6, www.uni-muenster.de/imperia/md/content/religion_und_politik/aktuelles/2010/12_2010/studie_wahrnehmung_und_akzeptanz_religioeser_vielfalt.pdf; Wilhelm Heitmeyer, *Deutsche Zustände* Vol. 10 (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2011), 38.

3 Thilo Sarrazin, *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2010).

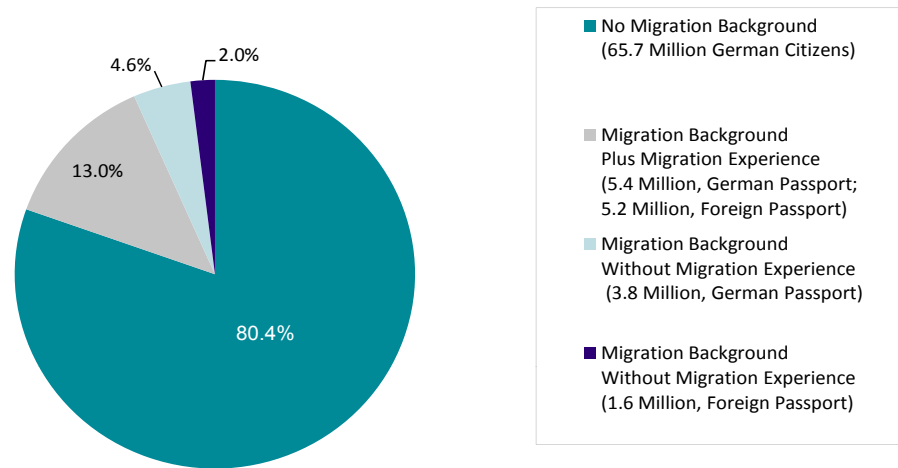
4 This term includes foreigners living in Germany, people who acquired German citizenship, repatriates of "German origin" and their children, children born to foreigners (who acquired citizenship at birth), and children whose father or mother migrated. Generation is an additional factor; the label "migration background" is officially lost after the third generation. See Statistisches Bundesamt, *Statistical Yearbook 2010 for the Federal Republic of Germany* including international tables (Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2010), 33.

5 The estimates in this section are taken from Sonja Haug, Stephanie Müssig, and Anja Sticks, *Muslim Life in Germany* (Nuremberg: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2009), www.euro-islam.info/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/muslim_life_in_germany_long.pdf.

6 Allensbach Archives, "IfD-Umfrage 10061," September 2010; Pollack, "Wahrnehmung und Akzeptanz religiöser Vielfalt." The archives contain data from the 1950s to the present, allowing a tracking of public views on immigration and integration over a lengthy period of time.



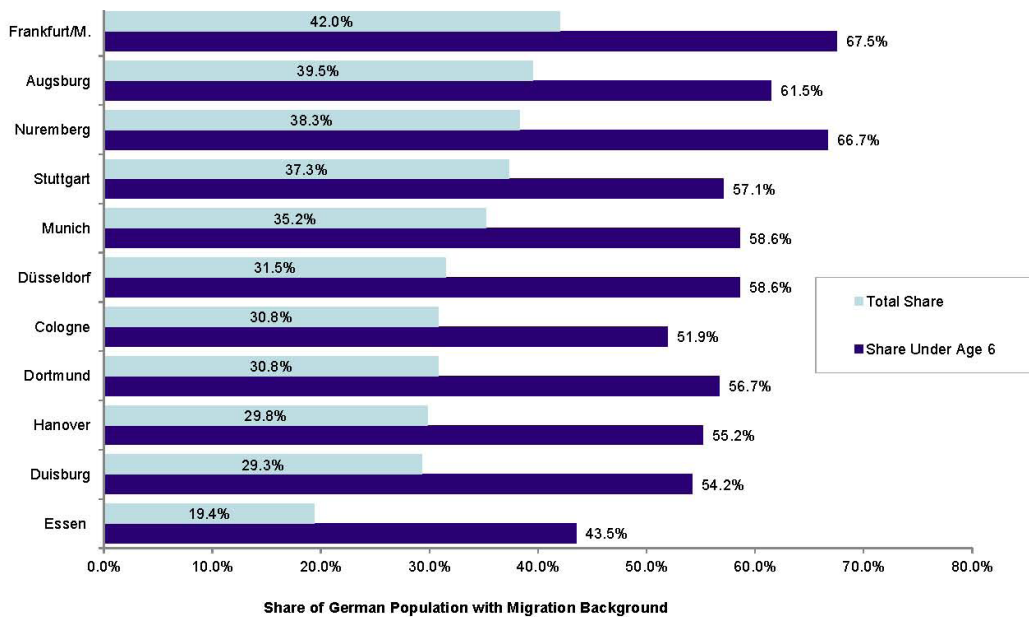
Figure 1. German Population by Migration Background, 2011



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, *Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit: Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund — Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2011* (Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2011).

As seen in Figure 2, in some metropolitan areas such as Frankfurt, Augsburg, or Nuremberg, over 60 percent of all children who started school in 2011 had a migration background.

Figure 2. Share of German Population with Migration Background in Select Large Cities, 2007

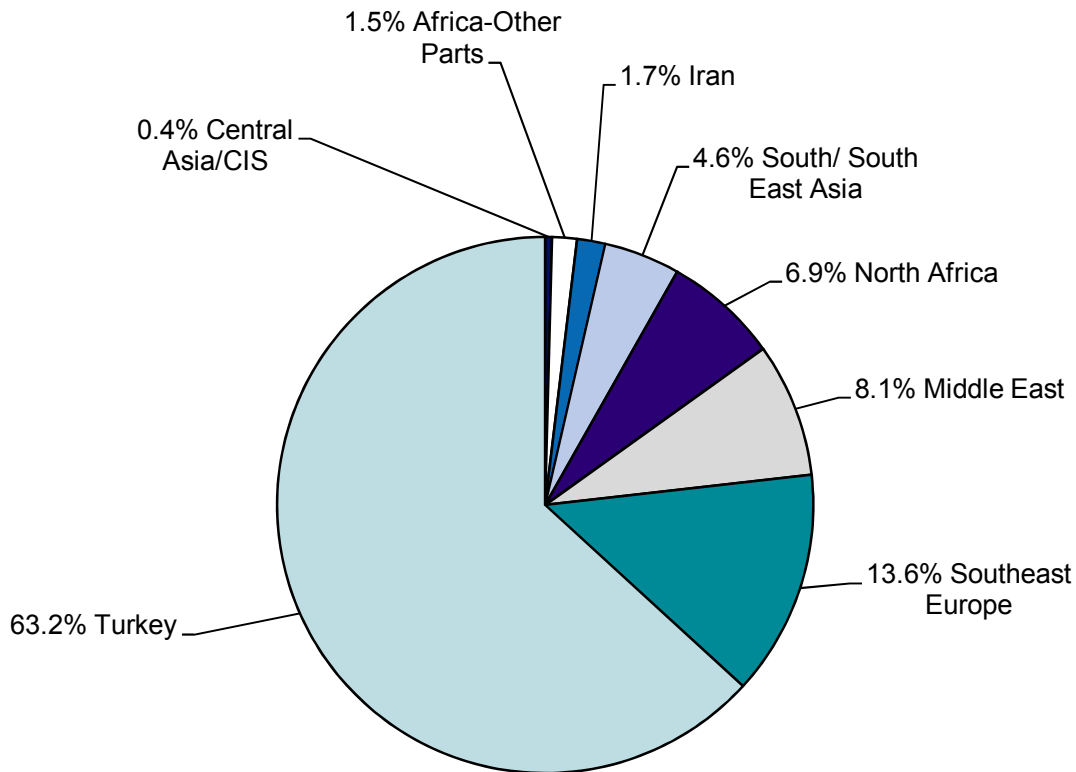


Source: DGB Bildungswerk Bund, "Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund Anteil der Bevölkerung mit Migration Hinterland," *Forum Migration Newsletter* 10/2010, 2010, www.migration-online.de/data/publikationen_datei_1285751517.pdf.

Of the 10.6 million people who have immigrated to Germany since 1950, 70.6 percent are from other European countries, including 32.3 percent from European Union (EU) Member States; a further

16.4 percent originate from Asia or Oceania.⁷ Only one-quarter of German residents with a migration background are Muslim, of which the largest group is of Turkish origin (2.9 million). People of Arab origin, so often overrepresented in negative news coverage concerning migration, number around 400,000 — less than 1 percent of the German population.

Figure 3. Muslims in Germany by Region of Origin, 2008 (percent)



Source: Sonja Haug, Stephanie Müssig, and Anja Stichs, *Muslim Life in Germany* (Nuremberg: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2009), www.euro-islam.info/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/muslim_life_in_germany_long.pdf.

According to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, there are about 4.2 million Muslims living in Germany, comprising about 5 percent of the country's population.⁸ In absolute numbers, Germany ranks second in the European Union, after France, in Muslim population size. Germany ranks fifth in size of the Muslim population as a share of total population, after France, Belgium, Austria, and the Netherlands.⁹

B. Perceptions of Germany's Plural Society Today

Where migration is linked to settlement, it leads to changes in the structure of the population. These

⁷ Gunter Brückner, "Pressemitteilung Nr. 248," (news release, Statistisches Bundesamt, July 14, 2010), www.destatis.de/jet-speed/portal/cms/Sites/destatis/Internet/DE/Presse/pm/2010/07/PD10248122.templateId=renderPrint.psml.

⁸ Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, *The Future of the Global Muslim Population – Projection for 2010-2030* (Washington, DC: Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2011), www.pewforum.org/The-Future-of-the-Global-Muslim-Population.aspx.

⁹ Ibid.



changes are not only demographic and social, but also reshape the fundamental identities and narratives of a country.¹⁰ However, while Germany has become a country of immigration in recent decades, the emotional public discourse often presents German society as a homogenous one, in which those with a migration background cannot fully belong. A considerable number of Germans experience postmodernity in their day-to-day life, in which anything seems to go — whether by claiming patchwork identities,¹¹ being exposed to mobile and flexible work and life concepts,¹² or practicing new partnership models beyond the heterosexual nuclear family. And, still, there are large numbers of voters who long for the more homogenous and “clear” Germany that, in their perception, existed before a recruitment agreement with Turkey in 1961 began the inflow of foreign workers.

*The emotional public discourse often presents
German society as a homogenous one, in which those with a
migration background cannot fully belong.*

To this day, racism and negative conduct toward people perceived to be “strangers” are still pervasive in Germany. A long-term study measuring group-focused enmity, carried out yearly by the University of Bielefeld over a ten-year period, provides empirical evidence that there is an “ideology of inequality” underlying these prejudices,¹³ continuing the classic social conflict that Norbert Elias called the crisis of the established versus the outsiders.¹⁴ More than one-third of Germans (30.8 percent) think that “people who have always lived here should have more rights than those who have moved here later.” Nearly half (47.1 percent) agrees with the sentence: “There are too many foreigners living in Germany.” A clear majority (54.1 percent) believes that “someone who is new someplace should be content with less in the beginning.”¹⁵

Despite the fact that plurality has become the norm for most adolescents and many adults living in Germany, a rising insecurity concerning national identity can be observed among those aware that the country has in fact become diverse through immigration.

C. Perceptions of Muslims

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent proclamation by the United States of a “global war on terror,” the image of Muslims as terrorists, archaic warriors, or anachronistic religious believers has trickled into the German national *Diskurs-Raum* (public dialogue).

This was especially evident throughout the 2010-2011 debates led by the Bundesbank’s executive board member and former Berlin state finance minister, Thilo Sarrazin. His controversial book *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (“Germany Does Away with Itself”)¹⁶ argues that Muslims are less intelligent because of their cultural ties, prefer to live off the state rather than work, and have too many children (while well-

10 Ruud Koopmans, Paul Statham, Marco Giugni, and Florence Pass, *Contested Citizenship: Immigration and Cultural Diversity in Europe* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

11 Heiner Keupp, *Identitätskonstruktionen: Das Patchwork der Identitäten in der Spätmoderne* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 2008).

12 Ulrich Beck, *Risikogesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1986).

13 Heitmeyer, *Deutsche Zustände* Vol. 10.

14 Norbert Elias and John L. Scotson, *Etablierte und Außenseiter* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1994).

15 Heitmeyer, *Deutsche Zustände* Vol. 10.

16 Sarrazin, *Deutschland schafft sich ab*.



educated native Germans are having too few).¹⁷ The book was the best-selling book in Germany in 2010 and has sold more than 1 million copies.¹⁸

Common attributes and associations linked to Muslims in Germany include terms such as *fanatic*, *backwards*, *intolerant*, and *undemocratic*, as found in a study by the German Institute for Human Rights.¹⁹ According to the study, 21.4 percent of Germans think that “Muslim immigration to Germany should be stopped.” When asked whether “Muslim culture fits into our Western world,” three-quarters of respondents answered negatively.²⁰ Islam and being Muslim are perceived as in stark contrast to being German. After 9/11 “Muslims” have been largely perceived as a security threat,²¹ leading to alienation and estrangement.

A recent study conducted by the Social Democratic Party-affiliated Friedrich Ebert Foundation entitled *Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination: A European Report* analyzed anti-democratic attitudes in eight European countries.²² It concluded that “Europeans are largely united in their rejection of Muslims and Islam. The significantly most widespread anti-Muslim attitudes are found in Germany, Hungary, Italy and Poland, closely followed by France, Great Britain and the Netherlands.”²³ Almost *half* of all Germans said that there are too many Muslims living in the country — even though they make up only 5 percent of the population, that they are too demanding, and that their religion is intolerant.²⁴

A comparative study conducted by the University of Münster in 2010 researching “Perception and Acceptance of Religious Diversity” found that Germans have a worse perception of adherents of non-Christian religions than publics in other European countries such as Denmark, France, the Netherlands, or Portugal.²⁵ When asked: “How is your personal attitude towards the members of the following religious groups?” 62.2 percent of surveyed Germans living in the former East German states and 57.7 percent living in the former West German states answered “negative” or “extremely negative” concerning Islam. By comparison, the “negative” or “extremely negative” sentiment was 35.6 percent in Denmark, 36.7 percent in France, 35.9 percent in the Netherlands, and 33.5 percent in Portugal. Germans also answered significantly more negatively than other nationalities when asked about Hinduism, Buddhism, or Judaism. When the same study referred to positive attributions, nearly one-third of Dutch respondents (32.6 percent) associated Islam with peace and 44.9 percent with solidarity, while in Germany attributions of peace and solidarity with Islam were given by only 6.6 percent (former East German states) and 8.1 percent (former West German states) of the German population. Among Danish respondents 25.9 percent associated Islam with peace and 37.6 percent with solidarity; among French respondents it was 13.6 percent and 31.9 percent; and among Portuguese respondents, 19.8 percent and 27.4 percent.²⁶

These biased attitudes are sometimes expressed violently or aggressively. There have been several attacks on mosques, people perceived to be Muslim have been threatened, Muslim organizations receive daily hate mails, and anti-Muslim Internet blogs are increasingly popular.²⁷

17 Ali Aslan, *New Approaches to Muslim Engagement — A View from Germany* (Washington, DC: German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2011), www.gmfus.org/galleries/ct_publication_attachments/Aslan_MuslimIntegration_Feb11.pdf.

18 For a critical analysis of Sarrazin’s central assumptions see Naika Foroutan, Korinna Schäfer, Coskun Canan, and Benjamin Schwarze, *Sarrazin’s Thesen auf dem Prüfstand — Ein empirischer Gegenentwurf zu Thilo Sarrazin’s Thesen zu Muslimen in Deutschland* (Berlin: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2010).

19 Heiner Bielefeldt, *Das Islambild in Deutschland — Zum öffentlichen Umgang mit der Angst vor dem Islam* (Berlin: Deutsches Institut für Menschenrechte, 2008), www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Publikationen/Essay/essay_no_7_das_islambild_in_deutschland.pdf.

20 Ibid, 5-7.

21 Jocelyne Cesari, “The Securitisation of Islam in Europe” (Challenge Research Paper, No. 14, Centre for European Policy Studies, April 2009), www.ceps.eu/node/1648.

22 Zick, Küpper, and Hövermann, *Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination*.

23 Ibid, 63.

24 Ibid, 61: 46.1 percent respond “There are too many Muslims in Germany,” 54.1 percent “Muslims are too demanding,” and 52.2 percent “Islam is a religion of intolerance.”

25 Pollack, *Wahrnehmung und Akzeptanz religiöser Vielfalt*, 5.

26 Ibid, 6.

27 Relating to hate mails: Dorothea Jung, “Politically Incorrect — Allianz der Islamhasser,” *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* 11 (2010): 13-16; relating to attacks on Berlin mosques: Jill Petzinger, “Arson and Integration: Have Berlin Mosques



Moreover, on a social and economic level, people of Muslim background are less likely to be hired; if their name is recognizably non-German, they may not even get a job interview.²⁸ They have a harder time finding an apartment for the same reasons, and students with a migration background are less likely to receive teacher recommendations for higher-education opportunities.²⁹

D. Policies on Migration and Integration

Politicians and policymakers began to address such threats to social cohesion around 2006. They realized that not only Islamic fundamentalism, but also rising anti-Muslim racism had to be monitored and controlled in order to achieve a rapprochement. This was a paradigmatic shift in politics, as well as for the academic community and security agencies. The latter, especially, shifted from only looking at Muslims as a security risk and adjusted many of their programs, particularly concerning prevention of expressions of bias and bigotry.³⁰ The former Interior minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, established the *Deutsche Islamkonferenz* (German Islam Conference) in 2006 in order to create a national framework for dialogue between the German state and Muslims living in Germany.³¹ He opened the conference by stating that “Islam is a part of Germany and Europe. It is part of our past and of our future. Muslims are welcome in Germany.”³²

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Parallel to this significant symbolic act, German Chancellor Angela Merkel initiated an integration summit to explore new concepts on how to deal with diversity in a changing Germany.³³ The Ministry of the Interior for the first time ordered a nationwide representative study on Muslims in Germany.³⁴ This was followed up by many studies covering a wide range of topics relating to Muslim life in Germany.³⁵

This shift in policy is also linked to the fact that the German economy increasingly demands high-skilled workers from abroad; creating a more welcoming climate for foreign workers is therefore in the economic and national interest. It is only slowly, however, that this realization is trickling down into the general population.

Become a Target?” *SPIEGEL-Online*, December 29, 2010, www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,736337,00.html; relating to anti-Muslim networks: Mark Townsend, “Far-right anti-Muslim network on rise globally as Breivik trial opens,” *Guardian*, April, 14, 2012, www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/apr/14/breivik-trial-norway-mass-murderer.

28 Leo Kaas and Christine Manger, “Ethnic Discrimination in Germany’s Labour Market: A Field Experiment” (IZA Discussion Paper 4741, February 2010), <http://ftp.iza.org/dp4741.pdf>.

29 Hendrik Jürges and Kerstin Schneider, *Age at School Entry and Teacher’s Recommendations for Secondary School Track Choice in Germany* (University of Mannheim and University of Wuppertal, 2006), www.vwl.uni-freiburg.de/iwipol/faculty_seminar/age_at_school_entry.pdf.

30 Helmut Kury, “Präventionskonzepte,” in *Auf der Suche nach der neuen Sicherheit*, eds. Hans-Jürgen Lange, Peter H. Ohly, and Jo Reichertz (Wiesbaden: Vs Verlag, 2008), 21-47.

31 Federal Ministry of the Interior, “Deutsche Islam Konferenz am 27” (press release, Berlin, September 19, 2006), www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de/cdn_117/nn_1864812/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/DIK/060927-pres-semitteilung-01-06-bmi.html.

32 Wolfgang Schäuble, “Deutsche Islam Konferenz — Perspektiven für eine gemeinsame Zukunft,” (remarks to the conference, September 28, 2006), http://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/2006/09/bm_bt_regierungserklaerung_zur_islam-konferenz.html.

33 Bundesregierung (German federal government), *Erster Integrationsgipfel* (Berlin: Bundesregierung, 2006), www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Artikel/IB/Artikel/Nationaler_20Integrationsplan/2006-07-14-erster-integrationsgipfel.html.

34 Haug, Müssig, and Stichs, *Muslim Life in Germany*.

35 For more information on studies concerning Muslims see Projekt HEYMAT, “Links,” www.heyamat.hu-berlin.de/links.



E. The Reality of Muslim Integration

Reviewing the structural, cultural, and social integration quantified in academic studies of the past six years makes clear that the integration of “Muslims” in Germany is far better than often assumed.³⁶

- More than 50 percent of Muslims are members of a German association; a mere 4 percent are only members of an association affiliated with their country/culture of origin.
- Ninety-five percent of all Muslim boys and girls take part in coed sports and swimming classes at school (even as media reports might lead the public to believe that most Muslim parents are keeping their girls separate).
- Eighty percent of Muslim immigrants make a living from income as employees or being self-employed.
- Thirty-four percent receive the *Abitur* or *Fachabitur* (the diploma qualifying pupils for university admission), 22.3 percent finish intermediate secondary school (*Realschule*), and 28.8 percent finish secondary general school (*Hauptschule*). Collectively, this means that 85.2 percent achieve a school qualification needed to enter Germany’s diversified job market.
- Only 1 percent of Muslims in Germany can be considered part of the Islamist milieu.

Businesses owned by the foreign born have become an important component of the German economy over the past 15 years.

Similar successes can be seen in economic integration. Businesses owned by the foreign born have become an important component of the German economy over the past 15 years. The Board of Trade noted that self-employment rates among Muslim immigrants in Germany have constantly risen over the past 20 years, proving they are increasing productivity in establishing new jobs with new employees. Considering the Turkish population alone — the largest single Muslim immigrant group — one can observe an increase in self-employment rates of more than 200 percent since 1991.³⁷

III. National Identity and Immigration

Social scientists posit that for the self to be defined there must be a contradicting “other” established.³⁸ In the German context, this “other” has for quite a while — beginning with the Iranian Islamic revolution in

36 Numbers taken from Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, *Muslim Life in Germany* (Berlin: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2009), www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de/cln_117/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/DIK/Downloads/WissenschaftPublikationen/MLD-Vollversion-eng-dik.templateId=raw,property=publicationFile.pdf/MLD-Vollversion-eng-dik.pdf; Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution), *Yearly Report* (Berlin: Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2010), http://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/publikationen/verfassungsschutzbericht/vsbericht_2010/.

37 Institut für Mittelstandsforschung der Universität Mannheim, *Die Bedeutung der ethnischen Ökonomie in Deutschland* (Mannheim: Universität Mannheim, 2005), www.bmwi.de/BMWi/Redaktion/PDF/C-D/die-bedeutung-der-ethnischen-oekonomie-fuer-deutschland-kurzfassung,property=pdf,bereich=bmwi,sprache=de,rwb=true.pdf.

38 Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, “The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior,” in *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, 2nd edition, eds. Steven Worchel and William G. Austin (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1986), 7-24.



1979 and surely after 9/11 — been the figure of “the Muslim.” The idea of “other” has always been one of an antithesis. When in the late 1960s Germans defined themselves as hard-working, proper, and punctual, the figure of the immigrant — who at the time was a southern European guest worker from Italy, Spain, Greece, or Turkey — was considered unambitious, lazy, and always late.³⁹ Now that the idea of being German is more embedded into a larger European identity, being German is associated with tolerance, democracy, and enlightenment, while the opposing figure of the Muslim is described as intolerant, anti-democratic, and unenlightened.⁴⁰ There are several reasons for the current anti-Muslim climate, grounded both in historical and contemporary developments.

The process of excluding Muslims and immigrants from the society-building process by positioning them outside the narrative of German identity — and thus out of the normalization procedure of plural societies — has to do with the fact that German politics has long denied the evolution of Germany into a country of immigration.⁴¹ It has thus failed to develop a concept for the transformation not only of the political but also of the public debate. The negative perception of “foreigners” — in recent debates synonymous with Muslims⁴² — goes hand in hand with challenges to Germany’s changing national identity. The unanswered questions surrounding national identity between the end of World War II and German reunification in 1990 — as well as the challenge of uniting two very different Germanys — together with the subcutaneous continuity of an ethnic idea of Germanness have resulted in the making of an essential stranger, the Muslim. This process of othering is not unique to Germany, and is observable within most EU countries⁴³ where Islam seems to be the counterfoil to what European identity is perceived to represent.⁴⁴

Germany as a post-National Socialist country. In the decades after 1945 the idea of being German was associated mainly with World War II brutalization and shame — not only outside but also inside the country. Even though the idea of guilt and responsibility was not internalized in the first decades after the war and Nazi ideology lived on in German institutions into the 1950s, there was a growing awareness and question about the propriety of formulating a concept of national identity. Thus talking or thinking about the question of a German identity was to a certain extent locked out of the national consciousness and mainly articulated within the trauma of the Holocaust.⁴⁵

Pervasiveness of a blood-and-soil concept of German identity. The *ius sanguinis* (citizenship derived through descent) basis of German citizenship law was partially changed into *ius soli* (citizenship derived from birth in the territory) in 2000. Since then it has formally become easier to be naturalized — but only on the official level. Concerning the emotional sentiments of belonging, things have very much remained the same. The idea that “Germanness” founded on the idea of blood and soil — based in 19th-century romanticism that reached its peak during National Socialism — remains held on to by a large part of the population. Being German is still linked to specific phenotypes. The general self-perception of a highly homogenous, ethnically based nation and the non-definable *Leitkultur* is established as a border of nonverbal norms to be passed. As a consequence, people who have lived in Germany for 50 years or were born on German soil to migrant parents are still not unconditionally accepted as “normal” members of society, leading to constant feelings of non-belonging.

German reunification. In the 1980s, with the reunification of the two Germanys, national identity was reborn: one nation, one Germany. But in reality these reunited parts were very different from each

39 Mark Terkessidis, *Die Banalität des Rassismus. Migranten zweiter Generation entwickeln eine neue Perspektive* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2004), 98.

40 Iman Attia, *Die “westliche Kultur” und ihr Anderes. Zur Dekonstruktion von Orientalismus und antimuslimischem Rassismus* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2009), 43.

41 Dietrich Thränhardt, “Germany — an Undeclared Immigration Country,” in *Europe — a New Immigration Continent: Policies and Politics since 1945 in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Dietrich Thränhardt (Hamburg: LIT Verlag, 1992), 167–94.

42 Riem Spielhaus, *Wer ist hier Muslim?* (Würzburg: Ergon-Verlag, 2011), 54.

43 Zick, Küpper, and Hövermann, *Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination*.

44 Nilüfer Göle, *Anverwandlungen. Der Islam in Europa zwischen Kopftuchverbot und Extremismus* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2008), 9. (French original, *L'Islam et l'Europe* [Paris: Éditions Galaade, 2005]).

45 Bernhard Giesen, “The Trauma of the Perpetrators: The Holocaust as the Traumatic Reference of German National Identity,” in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, eds. Jeffrey Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 112–55.

other in terms of norms and values.⁴⁶ Forty years of different socialization processes, of hostility and antagonism could not be reconciled without a connecting unit. There were two different Germanys uniting, thus the need for a “docking station.” This search for a national connector may explain the tremendous need to differentiate the “other” in Germany, a country that has long struggled with its identity-building process. In reality the cohesion and storytelling of these two distinct Germanys could only have started with a social identity theory which upgraded the peer group, thus creating and downgrading the out-group. This might explain the atmosphere of xenophobia and the rise in German nationalism at the beginning of the 1990s, which ended with the pogroms of Hoyerswerda, Solingen, and Mölln, where migrants were attacked or burned in their houses while Germans stood outside without helping them.⁴⁷

Generational influence. The generation born between 1925 and 1955 was socialized in a Germany that was homogenous like never before, a Germany deeply influenced by National Socialist ideas. This generation now includes many decisionmakers and statesmen (in their mid-50s to 80s). Several polls indicate that it is chiefly members of this generation who bought Thilo Sarrazin’s book.⁴⁸ Wilhelm Heitmeyer states that it is mainly this age group, irrespective of party preferences, that scores highest in polls on group-focused enmity, especially when it comes to religious and cultural discrimination.⁴⁹

Failure of European identity. During the 1970s, when the young generation yearned to emancipate itself from its parents’ war-ridden past, the idea of being German changed in some parts of society. Participants and supporters of the 1968 European protest movements saw themselves as members of a freedom-loving generation; their dislike for borders opened up room for a new identity beyond exclusive national identities, one of European collective identity.⁵⁰ The strength of this European identity, however, has wavered amid fracturing emotional solidarity sparked by the recession and particularly the euro crisis that the European Union has confronted since 2007. Faced with shrinking economic growth and rising unemployment, a debt crisis that influences political elections, and other challenges, this generation doesn’t seem to have the power to clearly draw new visions for a new Germany as they have done before. Instead even within this liberal and traditionally open-minded group, anti-Muslim sentiment can be observed, argued mainly through post-liberal motives (such as opposing Muslims because “they” are against women, homosexuals, or Jews).

Debates on national security issues. It is no accident that a rise in racism against Muslims has been observed since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Concerns about Muslim fundamentalism and national security issues too often fed into nationalist and anti-Muslim discourse. With fears of a “clash of civilizations” already expressed by some going back to the 1990, German residents of a Muslim migration background were looked upon with mistrust that only grew after 9/11. Shortly after the attacks, the former Interior minister, Otto Schily, initiated the computer-assisted profiling of Muslim students, which had the effect of implicitly asking Muslims to publicly distance themselves from the terrorist acts and terrorism itself. This and other acts tested Muslims’ loyalty toward Germany and fostered the “Muslimization” of the security debate in Germany. And even though over the past decade politically motivated violence, particularly from the right, has been much more pronounced than Islamist violence, to this day the Interior minister, Hans-Peter Friedrich, conceives of Islamic terrorism as the biggest threat to Germany.⁵¹

46 Jane Kramer, *The Politics of Memory: Looking for Germany in the New Germany* (New York: Random House, 1996).

47 Panikos Panayi, “Racial Violence in the New Germany 1990–93,” *Contemporary European History* 3, no. 3 (1994): 265–88.

48 Tobias Kniebe, “Wer hat Angst vorm fremden Mann?,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, January 8, 2011, www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/thilo-sarrazin-und-seine-leser-wer-hat-angst-vorm-fremden-mann-1.1043753.

49 Heitmeyer, *Deutsche Zustände*, 13; Zick, Küpper, and Hövermann, *Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination*, 90.

50 Jürgen Habermas, “Geschichtsbewußtsein und postnationale Identität. Die Westorientierung der Bundesrepublik,” in *Eine Art Schadensabwicklung*, ed Jürgen Habermas (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1987), 161–79.

51 Federal Ministry of the Interior, “Verfassungsschutzbericht 2010: Bundesinnenminister Dr. Friedrich stellt Ergebnisse vor” (news release, Berlin, July 1, 2011), www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/2011/mitMarginalspalte/07/vsb2010.html.



Economic crisis. As earlier mentioned studies have shown, anti-Muslim attitudes are linked to a general increase in prejudice and social exclusion taking place in a climate of increased competition, fear of unemployment, and a reduction in social services.⁵² Such fears, spurred by global financial crisis, have led to rising nationalist sentiment and right-wing populism and especially to anti-Muslim sentiment in a number of European countries.⁵³

IV. Recommendations for New Inclusive Narratives

A. Contents

The recent *Transatlantic Trends* study, in which 78 percent of Germans identified Germany as a country of immigration, gives reason for hope.⁵⁴ Another opinion poll from the German Council on Migration and Integration (Sachverständigenrat für Migration Integration, or SVR) shows an increasing pragmatic attitude among nonimmigrant Germans who believe that a peaceful coexistence between people with and without migration backgrounds is possible.⁵⁵ Though the reasons for this potential shift in attitudes are not yet clear, they may have to do with an increased realization that the German economy requires more workers than the country produces. Such attitudes, however, are not yet strong enough; they need to become part of a general discourse and a new narrative of collective identity.

From “Kulturnation” to “Nation of Immigrants” via “Verfassungspatriotismus.” To this day, Germany perceives itself as a *Kulturnation*, with an essential German culture that is inherently linked to language. As *Transatlantic Trends* shows, Germans perceive knowledge of the language as the most important precondition to obtaining citizenship — much more than other European nations.⁵⁶ Even talking with an accent somehow singles you out. Instead of such a homogenous and exclusionist concept of national identity, the idea of a *Verfassungspatriotismus* (patriotism to the constitution) should again be strengthened. This idea was established exactly because there was a need for defining a basis of citizenship through the law and constitution and not through diffuse moments of mythical or ancestral belonging.⁵⁷ The constitution (*Verfassung*) offers a set of norms and values that is much more tangible and real than the oft-proclaimed idea of a *Leitkultur* meant to guide immigrants toward German integration. It can serve as a base on which all Germans can rely — be they immigrants or ethnic Germans. Having this shared base makes the idea of perceiving Germany as it really is today seem less of a threat: a country of immigration no longer has to be viewed as a country without stable ground.

From hybrid selves to hybrid society. Hybrid identities and multiple places of belonging are commonplace for (post-)migrants.⁵⁸ Theirs is an increasingly hybrid, post-national, self-empowered, and self-confident identity, through which they perceive themselves as active members of German society and

52 Interestingly enough, Thilo Sarrazin was not only known for his anti-Muslim attitudes but also for prejudice against welfare recipients — it is no coincidence that these attitudes of exclusion go hand in hand. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, “Einfach ‘nen dicken Pulli anziehen,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, July 29, 2008, www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/finanzsenator-sarrazin-einfach-nen-dicken-pulli-anziehen-1.574212.

53 Zick, Küpper, and Hövermann, *Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination*.

54 German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMFUS), *Transatlantic Trends — Topline Data 2010* (Washington, DC: GMFUS, 2011), 28, http://trends.gmfus.org/files/archived/immigration/doc/TTI2010_English_Key.pdf

55 Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen für Integration und Migration, “Umfrage: Sarrazin-Debatte trübt Zuversicht bei Zuwanderern in Deutschland. SVR sieht, Eigentor” (news release, January 10, 2011), www.svr-migration.de/?page_id=2633.

56 GMFUS, *Transatlantic Trends*, 27.

57 Dolf Sternberger, “Verfassungspatriotismus. Rede bei der 25-Jahr-Feier der ‘Akademie für Politische Bildung’ (1982),” in *Verfassungspatriotismus. Schriften Bd. X*, ed. Dolf Sternberger (Frankfurt a.M.: Insel Verlag, 1990), 17-31.

58 Naika Foroutan, “Neue Deutsche, Postmigranten und Bindungs-Identitäten. Wer gehört zum neuen Deutschland?” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* (2010): 46-7.



for whom integration is no longer a category of achievement. In fact, they do not feel like outsiders having to be integrated somewhere themselves.⁵⁹ The challenge is how to transport these hybrid constitutions of heterogeneous narratives from the intrapersonal level to the narrative of a *society*. The pluralist narratives of identity and belonging that already exist for many German citizens — be they ethnic Germans or hyphenated ones⁶⁰ — can serve as a starting point to build a societal German identity marked by hybridity and plurality.⁶¹

From national to postnational. Despite difficulties in strengthening the development of a European identity, this project as a utopian vision still gains power: It presents a glimpse of a collective identity that goes beyond the national level and dangerous exclusionist implications. Instead, it opens the way for again thinking beyond this form of collective identification and trying to think up a new “post-national constellation” in a postmodern world.⁶²

From “old Germanness” to “New Germany.” Finally, Germany needs a strong multicultural narrative similar to the founding myth of the United States as a nation of immigrants. This myth, though present from the earliest days of the United States, did not turn into a narrative of social cohesion until the social upheaval of the 1960s.⁶³ Certainly, a similar process in Germany would have to take into account the country’s specific national history. One element of that narrative could focus on the decades after World War II, when Germany underwent an “economic miracle.” During this period the economic prosperity of swaths of society was secured by foreign “guest” workers working hand in hand with post-war Germans. This can be a bonding narrative: *Auferstanden aus Ruinen* — hand in hand we built this country and hand in hand we tell our children how we did it. Challenging homogenous concepts of national identity and pointing out Germany’s diverse past and present — and making clear that homogeneity was only a fiction of National Socialism — can help strengthen a perception of New Germany as a heterogeneous, plural society.

B. Implications for Policymakers

The shift in the national narrative on identity and its new formulation must be strengthened by policymakers and educators working at all levels of society, whether through media, schools and universities, or public discourse.

More concretely, there is a need to tackle stereotypical communication and representation of Muslims in a Germany that is much more plural than public opinion suggests. This leads to the following recommendations for policymakers:

- **Review school books.** Break stereotypical depictions of migrants, Muslims, and people of color and point out their contributions to Germany’s past and present.⁶⁴
- **Diversify collective symbols.** Whether through the national anthem, government agencies, or advertising campaigns, expressions of diversity can help shape a new understanding of what society can look like.
- **Develop media guides for how to represent Muslims.** Stereotypical portraits, specifically

59 Liljeberg Research International/ INFO GmbH, “Deutsch-Türkische Wertewelte” (news release, November 19, 2009), <http://www.infogmbh.de/wertewelten/Wertewelten-2009-Pressemitteilung.pdf>.

60 Riem Spielhaus, *Wer ist hier Muslim?: Die Entwicklung eines islamischen Bewusstseins in Deutschland zwischen Selbstidentifikation und Fremdzuschreibung* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2011).

61 Wolfgang Kraus, “The Narrative Negotiation of Identity and Belonging,” *Narrative Inquiry* 16, no. 1 (2006): 103-11.

62 Jürgen Habermas, *Die postnationale Konstellation. Politische Essays* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1998).

63 Donna Gabaccia, *Immigration and American Diversity – A Social and Cultural History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2002).

64 Georg-Eckert-Institut, *Keine Chance auf Zugehörigkeit? Schulbücher europäischer Länder halten Islam und modernes Europa getrennt* (Braunschwig: Georg-Eckert-Institut, 2011), www.gei.de/fileadmin/bilder/pdf/Presse_interviews/Islamstudie_2011.pdf.



of Muslims, in the media reinforce existing imagery. Sensitizing journalists and other media figures to challenge these pictures will be a positive step in changing public opinion of immigrants and Muslims.

- **Communicate academic findings concerning positive integration achievements.** As described above, there have been many positive developments concerning integration in Germany over the past half century. This success needs to be communicated to the public to embed it in the collective memory.
- **Communicate that the skills and potential of people with a migration background are valuable as well as necessary resources for the entire country.** Germany's position as a leading global exporter and political player is dependent on its international image. It needs to communicate its *de facto* heterogeneity and get rid of its outdated (and fictional) homogenous image.

Beyond this, there are several problems that government and security agencies need to address in their day-to-day work:

- **Challenge racism and xenophobia.** Government programs such as *Vielfalt tut gut. Jugend für Vielfalt, Toleranz und Demokratie* ("Diversity is good for us. Youth for Diversity, Tolerance and Democracy")⁶⁵ or the more recent *Toleranz fördern — Kompetenz stärken* ("Advance Tolerance — Improve your Skills")⁶⁶ have done a good job of challenging racism on a local level, taking into account specific communal needs and situations. These are positive examples of educational programs that need to be continued and strengthened.
- **Monitor the rise of right-wing populist parties** such as the National Democratic Party (NPD) or newer groups such as Pro Deutschland or Die Freiheit and, where applicable, take legal action. Right-wing populist Internet blogs must be exposed and their hate speech analyzed just like that of radical Islamist websites and blogs.
- **Enforce equal employment initiatives** and consider the introduction of affirmative action, with the intent of making people with a migration background more visible in corporations, the media, and public office. This would also help in creating role models for young people. This step should also include long-term support for programs such as the *Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz* (General Equal Treatment Act), which allows people to go to court on the grounds of racially based discrimination. Currently, just 2 percent to 3 percent of government and public service employees have a migration background.⁶⁷ Similarly, only about 3 percent of journalists in public media⁶⁸ and 4.5 percent of teachers come from a migrant background, compared to 35 percent of the entire student population.⁶⁹
- **Continue the Deutsche Islamkonferenz.** The *Deutsche Islamkonferenz* has been a major step in a sponsored dialogue between German state institutions and members of Muslim communities. Despite inevitable difficulties, this institution has proven relevant and productive, and should be continued.

⁶⁵ For further information on "VIELFALT TUT GUT. Jugend für Vielfalt, Toleranz und Demokratie," see the program's website, www.vielfalt-tut-gut.de.

⁶⁶ For more on "Toleranz fördern – Kompetenz stärken," see the program's website, www.toleranz-foerdern-kompetenz-staerken.de/.

⁶⁷ These numbers are taken from a data analysis of public service/government employees in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. In other states an even smaller quota is to be expected. See Ministeriums für Arbeit, Integration und Soziales des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, "Mehr Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund in den öffentlichen Dienst," www.integration.nrw.de/Meldungen/pm2011/Mehr_Menschen_mit_Migrationshintergrund_in_den_oeffentlichen_Dienst/index.php.

⁶⁸ See Neue deutsche Medienmacher, "Willkommen bei den Neuen deutschen Medienmachern!," www.neuemedienmacher.de/.

⁶⁹ DGB Bildungswerk Bund, "Zunehmende segregative Erscheinungen," *Forum Migration Newsletter* 7/2010, www.migration-online.de/data/publikationen_datei_1277900145.pdf.



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Dr. Foroutan currently also heads a project entitled “The Young Islam Conference” (JIK). A mixture of lectures, workshops, and a simulation game enable around 50 students to get to know the “German Islam Conference,” the most important forum between the German state and Muslims living in Germany. This project is being conducted in cooperation with the Mercator Foundation and with support from the Federal Ministry of the Interior.

In the past, she has taught seminars at the universities of Berlin and Göttingen in different disciplines, including international relations, political systems, political theory, and politics of identity.

She wrote her dissertation on intercultural dialogues between the West and the Islamic world. Her current work focuses on nation-states transforming into countries of immigration as well as their migration and integration policies, with a particular focus on people with a Muslim background as agents of change and on politics of identity around the topic of hybridity.

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