The Benefits and Limits of Pragmatism: Immigrant Integration Policy and Social Cohesion in Germany

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Under the Christian Democratic Union (CDU)/Social Democratic Party (SPD) Grand Coalition of 2005 to 2009, Germany officially (if belatedly) accepted its de facto status as an “immigration country,” introduced integration courses, organized Integration Summits and implemented a National Integration Plan. The Minister of the Interior also hosted a series of Islam Conferences aimed at “integrating” Islam into German society. These moves came after several decades of federal government inaction and repeated declarations that, contrary to the facts on the ground, Germany was “not an immigration country.”

Whereas immigration and citizenship policy had long been areas of intense partisan strife, the advances made by the Grand Coalition spoke to a new cross-party consensus founded on a self-described pragmatism. Undoubtedly, this pragmatic turn was driven in part by the exigencies of coalition government – some middle ground had to be found if the government was to act at all. Yet the CDU/Christian Social Union

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We argue that CDU/CSU-SPD coalition’s embrace of pragmatism in the area of integration policy reflected growing concern among politicians of the centre Left and Right for “social cohesion.” Integration policy was seized upon as a means of guarding against the emergence of an angry, socially isolated and threatening immigrant underclass. We also argue that this shared concern was both a powerful catalyst for policy development and, at the same time, a drag on progress. On the one hand, integration policy initiatives have introduced tools for improving immigrants’ and ethnic minorities’ prospects in terms of educational and labour market outcomes, principally through integration courses that stress German language learning. Progress on this front has been impressive, with a bevy of programs introduced at the federal, state and municipal levels. On the other hand, policymakers’ preoccupation with “problem” groups, above all undereducated, unemployed and potentially threatening young men and putatively embattled immigrant women, and frequent denunciations of multiculturalism, have tended to limit the warmth of welcome extended to immigrants and ethnic minorities. Disagreement among political parties as to what kind of immigration country Germany should become has also stalled progress in key areas, most notably citizenship policy. The end result has been a policy orientation geared towards prophylaxis rather than nation-building.

2 The CSU is the CDU’s Bavarian-based sister party. The two parties work together at the federal level in a common Bundestag parliamentary group (Fraktion).
We begin with a brief overview of Germany’s immigration-driven diversity and go on to provide an overview of Germany’s post-WWII immigration history, highlighting the peculiar nature of integration policy during a period of what was to be only temporary “guest worker” recruitment. To the degree that it was pursued at all, the integration of foreign workers was limited to their inclusion into Germany’s post-WWII system of social rights. This form of “temporary integration” (Integration auf Zeit) was challenged after the recruitment stop of November 1973, when it became clear that millions of foreign workers had in fact settled in Germany and were being joined by their spouses and children. As we point out, the politicization of migration policy and breakdown of cross-party political consensus in the late-1980s and 90s radically limited the introduction of more robust integration policies needed to deal with this new reality. This stalemate was only broken by the 1998 election and consequent formation of an SPD-Green coalition government, which introduced a significant reform to Germany’s citizenship policy in 1999 and, in 2004, passed a Migration Law (Zuwanderungsgesetz) which did little to facilitate immigration but did make integration policy a federal government priority for the first time.

Next we develop our claim that German policymakers see integration policy as prophylactic in nature and a means of guarding against the erosion of social cohesion. Its potential use as a nation-building tool has been neither acknowledged nor developed. From here, we outline the integration policy framework introduced by the Grand Coalition government after it assumed office in 2005. Key in this regard was a series of National Integration Summits that led to the introduction of a National Integration Plan, the principal aim of which was to clarify the aims of integration policy and assist in
coordinating the work of the federal, state and local governments. A recurring German Islam Conference was also established in an effort to integrate Germany’s large Muslim community into the Federal Republic’s elaborate system of church-state relations.

We then examine what we refer to as the limits of pragmatism. Specifically, we note that the pursuit of integration related goals have tended to single out particular target groups and, in so doing, provoked suspicion among immigrants as to the “real” aims of integration policy. The Grand Coalition government’s reluctance to repair flaws that limit the integrative potential of Germany’s 1999 citizenship law has sent similar signals. Doubts have also been expressed as to the degree to which immigrant groups’ positions are taken into account in policymaking, despite frequent declarations that integration is a “two-way street.”

The chapter’s concluding section briefly surveys integration policy debates and trends since the 2009 election and establishment of the current CDU/CSU-Free Democratic Party (FDP) coalition government. While the CDU/CSU has at times lapsed back to the shrill, non-pragmatic discourse of the past – as evidenced by Chancellor Angela Merkel’s much publicized rejection of multiculturalism in October 2010 – the structures put in place between 2005 and 2009 have persisted, providing mechanisms for further, potentially more substantive, consultations between the federal government and groups representing ethnic and religious minorities in the future. Even more importantly, in our view, state and municipal governments in Germany have seized the opportunities made available by Germany’s new integration policy apparatus to develop far-reaching projects that draw on the authority and expertise of immigrant communities in the
formulation and delivery of integration programs. We believe such programs may still provide a promising route toward the building of an inclusive society in Germany.

**Immigration and Ethno-religious Diversity in Germany: A Brief Overview**

Germany is Europe’s principal immigration country, with a foreign population of 7.1 million constituting 8.8 per cent of its total population of 81.8 million (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2011, 100). The percentage of Germany’s population with a “migration background” – i.e. individuals who are immigrants or are the second or third-generation descendents of immigrants – is 19.6 per cent (16 million) (Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland 2010).3 Given very low fertility rates dating back to the mid-1960s, population growth in Germany has been driven exclusively by immigration. As of 2008, 34.4 per cent of children under the age of five have a migration background, as do 32.7 per cent of children under 10 and 27.3 per cent of the population under the age of 35 (Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung 2010, 2). That being said, at present levels, immigration will not do much to slow Germany’s precipitous demographic decline (Klusmeyer and Papademetriou 2009, 238-243). Still, annual admissions are significant, ranging from 361,562 in 2006, to 394,596 in 2008 and 475,840 in 2010 (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2011, 75).

Migrants from Turkey make up 24.1 per cent of Germany’s foreign population.

We use the term “foreign,” rather than “foreign born,” because some 33 per cent of

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3 This category, in use since 2005 Micro Census, captures the effects of broader migration movements since 1949 and includes “foreigners born abroad, foreigners born in Germany, (Spät-)Aussiedler [ethnic German repatriates], naturalised citizens who have themselves immigrated, as well as their children who have no personal, direct experience of immigration” (Özcan 2007).
Turkish citizens in Germany were actually born in the Federal Republic. Italians constitute the next largest group at 7.7 per cent, followed by Poles at 6.2 per cent, and Greeks at 4.1 per cent (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2011, 104). Citizens of European Union (EU) states other than Greece and Italy account for 17.5 per cent of Germany’s foreign population.

Sources of migration have shifted of late. Whereas Turks, Italians, Greeks and citizens of the former Yugoslav Republic made up the bulk of flows from the late 1950s through the 1990s, most recent migrants come from countries in Eastern and Central Europe. Migrants from Poland constituted the largest group entering Germany in 2010 at 12.9 per cent or 61,537, followed by Romanians at 44,603, and Bulgarians at 24,491 (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2011, 76). Migrants from Turkey and the United States constituted the largest cohorts of non-EU, “Third Country Nationals,” in 2010 at 19,354 and 15,571 respectively.

The vast majority of individuals with a migration background reside in the former West Germany (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2009, 8), with particularly high concentration in large urban centres. Some 40 per cent of Stuttgart’s population is made up of individuals with a migration background, while the shares for Frankfurt am Main and Nuremberg stand at 39.5 and 37 per cent respectively (Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland 2007). Munich, Berlin, Hamburg and other cities boast similarly high figures. Immigrants have transformed German cities’ demographic complexion and influenced trends and tastes in cuisine the arts and city life more generally. They have also placed demands on core institutions, particularly schools, where students with a migration background often constitute a majority of pupils. This trend will persist well
into the future: The proportion of children under five is 67 per cent in Nuremberg, 65 per cent in Frankfurt am Main and 64 per cent in Düsseldorf and Stuttgart (Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland 2007).

Immigration has altered Germany’s religious landscape. While Catholics and Protestants are still dominant, with each boasting some 26 million adherents, Islam has emerged as the Federal Republic’s third largest religion, with some 4 million believers. A recent study found that 63 per cent of Germany’s Muslims hail from Turkey. Another 14 per cent have roots in Albania, Bosnia and Bulgaria, and 8 and 7 per cent come from the Middle East and North Africa respectively (Federal Ministry of the Interior 2009, 2).

As regards denominational affiliation, some 74 per cent of Germany’s Muslims are Sunni, with Alevi making up 13 per cent and Shiites 7 per cent. The same study found that 36 per cent of Germany’s Muslim’s described themselves as “very religious,” with another “50 per cent claim[ing] to be rather religious.” Muslims from Turkey and countries in Africa reported the highest degree of religiosity. Conversely, only 10 per cent of Muslims of Iranian descent, almost all of them Shiites, regarded themselves as very religious, with about a third claiming to have no religious faith at all.

**Contextualizing Germany’s Integration “Turn”**

While there is no gainsaying the importance of immigration for Germany’s postwar development, until very recently (and for some to this very day) the Federal Republic was a “reluctant” immigration country (Martin 1998). Indeed, for much of the 1970s, 80s and 90s, conservative politicians insisted that Germany was “not an immigration country” (Joppke 1999; Murray 1994). This paradoxical position had much to do with the nature
of postwar migration to Germany.4 From 1955 to 1973, Germany was Europe’s largest
“labour importing country.” Temporary foreign workers – euphemistically referred to as
“guest workers” (Gastarbeiter) – were recruited en masse from Italy, Spain, Greece,
Turkey and the former Yugoslavia to help fuel Germany’s postwar “economic miracle”
(Schönwälder 2001; Hunn 2005). The scale of postwar labor migration in Germany was
staggering: on the eve of the “recruitment stop” of November 1973, Germany was host to
some 2.6 million foreigners.

The growth of Germany’s immigrant population was due to a fundamental
inconsistency in Germany’s guest worker system; simply put, temporary foreign workers
were not compelled to “rotate out” by the state. This was due to two reasons. First,
employers were loath to continually retrain new cohorts of foreign employees for work in
unappealing sectors such as mining and construction, and therefore pressured
governments to relax policies on rotation. Second, German governments wished to
distance themselves from Germany’s singularly horrific wartime experience and cultivate
the Federal Republic’s identity as a modern, European liberal democracy. They were
therefore quite willing to reject occasional calls for the introduction of “forced rotation”
from more conservative political circles (Triadafilopoulos and Schönwälder 2006; Chin
2007, 47). As a result, the so-called guest workers became long-time residents.

Officials’ concerns regarding the size of Germany’s foreign born population and
worsening economic conditions, punctuated by the 1973 “oil shock,” led to a re-
evaluation of Germany’s labour migration policy. Yet, the halting of guest worker

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4 All references to “Germany” refer exclusively to the former West Germany and, post-1990, the united
Federal Republic of Germany.
recruitment in November 1973 did not lead to a diminution of Germany’s foreign population. On the contrary, while millions of temporary foreign workers did return to their countries of origin, many opted to remain in Germany and were joined by their spouses and minor children through family reunification (Castles 1985). Their residency rights were reinforced by court decisions in the late 1980s (Joppke 1999). Moreover, the recruitment stop only applied to non-European Economic Community (EEC) migrants; Italians and other citizens of EEC member states enjoyed a right of labour mobility. Thus, by 1983, the total number of foreigners in Germany had climbed to 4.5 million, or 7.4 per cent of the total population (Katzenstein 1987, 231).

The growth of Germany’s foreign population in the 1980s and 90s was also driven by increases in flows of asylum-seekers and ethnic German repatriates (Spätaussiedler) from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The admission of both categories of migrants increased massively in the late-1980s and early-90s, as a result of the loosening of restrictions to exit among former Communist regimes and the violent break-up of the former Yugoslavia. Between 1988 and 1993, Germany received an astounding 1,434,360 applications for asylum (Herbert 2001, 263). During the same period, hundreds of thousands of ethnic German repatriates were also admitted.

Until the early-1990s, flows of asylum-seekers and ethnic German repatriates were largely uncontrolled. Ethnic German repatriates enjoyed constitutionally guaranteed access to the Federal Republic and automatic citizenship and settlement assistance upon entry (Münz and Ulrich 1997; Fahrmeir 2007). Similarly, Article 16(2) of the Basic Law granted asylum-seekers “persecuted on political grounds” a right to make a refugee claim in the Federal Republic. These points of access were narrowed in 1993 through the so-
called “asylum compromise,” which amended the Basic Law to restrict asylum-seekers’ rights while also placing controls on ethnic Germans’ admission to Germany (Green 2005). Nevertheless, immigration had left its mark; by 1993 Germany’s foreign population had reached 6.9 million or 8.5 per cent of the total population.

While refugees and especially ethnic German repatriates enjoyed some settlement assistance (including but not limited to financial supports, housing assistance and, in the case of repatriates, language training), Germany had no “integration policy” to speak of for the millions of temporary foreign workers who had become de facto immigrants. Temporary foreign workers did enjoy social rights on par with native Germans and were also allowed to join and actively participate in labour unions (Soysal 1994; Laschet 2007). Labour migrants’ access to social benefits and other forms of basic settlement assistance including, for example, translation services, advice regarding residency policies, housing and accessing public services, was mediated by non-governmental welfare organizations run by the Catholic and Protestant churches (Caritas and Diakonisches Werk, respectively) and the labour movement (Arbeiterwohlfahrt – AWO), and financed by the federal, state (Länder), and local governments (Bosswick and Bronnenmeyer 2001).

Although migrants were able to send their children to public schools, there was little thought given to revising educational systems to meet foreign students’ distinctive needs; indeed, in some states (notably Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg) foreign students were typically streamed into the lowest rungs of Germany’s stratified educational system, with many dumped into isolated “special needs” schools for physically and mentally impaired pupils. Similarly, language training and other forms of settlement assistance
were narrowly defined and provided on a largely ad hoc basis, with little to no systematic governmental oversight or support.

While Germany’s policy of temporary integration arguably made some sense during the period of foreign worker recruitment, its weaknesses became ever more apparent as the postwar “economic miracle” ground to a halt in the late-1970s and 1980s. Some farsighted officials, such as the first Federal Commissioner for the Integration of Foreign Workers and their Families, Heinz Kühn, recognized looming challenges and argued for a coherent, long-term strategy to facilitate migrants’ integration into German society (Chin 2007, 104; Meir-Braun 1988). In particular, Kühn noted that much more needed to be done to assist migrant youth, particularly as regarded education and vocational training. Given Germany’s federal structure, this would require much more coordination among the federal and state governments.

Kühn’s recommendations went largely unheeded, as the political consensus that had anchored migration policy during the recruitment phase crumbled. Economic decline led to growing antipathy toward “foreigners,” which was skilfully exploited by the CDU/CSU in its efforts to unseat Helmut Schmidt’s SPD-FDP coalition government (Faist 1994; Thränhradt 1988). When Helmut Kohl succeeded in this endeavour in 1982, talk of a future-oriented and better coordinated integration policy gave way to renewed efforts to “encourage” former guest workers and their spouses and German-born children to return “home.”

Matters did not improve in the early to mid-1990s. Strongly opposing positions on immigration and integration policy among Germany’s political parties led to a policy stalemate (Green 2004; Klusmeyer and Papademetriou 2009; Ingram and
Triadafilopoulos 2010). While left-of-centre parties, such as the SPD and Greens, demanded that Germany recognize its de facto status as an immigration country and improve the rights and status of its foreign population, the CDU/CSU continued to insist that Germany was “not an immigration country.” Consequently, a system meant to serve the needs of temporarily settled foreign workers persisted, despite profound changes in the nature and consequences of immigration. German policymakers’ failure to reform the Federal Republic’s archaic citizenship law, which relied exclusively on *jus sanguinis* (the principle of descent) and put up high barriers to potential naturalization candidates, ensured that millions of long settled immigrants and their children would officially remain foreigners.

Some progress on naturalization was achieved through the passage of the 1990 *Foreigners Act*, which reduced residency and other requirements for immigrant youth (Green 2004). A more decisive break occurred in 1998, as the SPD and Greens’ formed a new coalition government. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder’s cabinet acknowledged that Germany had been transformed by immigration and pledged to modernize the Federal Republic’s citizenship law. It introduced a far-ranging proposal in 1999 that would have allowed for dual nationality and granted citizenship to children born in Germany through the principle of territory (*jus soli*). Opposition from the CDU/CSU was channelled into a populist signature drive against dual citizenship, which coincided with a state election in Hessen (Klärner 2000; Cooper 2002). The CDU’s victory in Hessen and consequent loss of the SPD’s majority in the German Upper House (*Bundesrat*) forced the government to qualify its citizenship law by rejecting the original bill’s straightforward toleration of dual citizenship in cases of naturalization. The new law’s *jus soli* provision was also
weakened through the introduction of a stipulation (the so-called *Optionsmodell*) whereby children of legally resident immigrants born in Germany would be granted German nationality but would have to choose between it and their parents’ nationality between the ages of 18 and 23.

The Red-Green coalition also introduced an immigration law (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*) in 2001, which drew on the recommendations of a non-partisan expert commission on immigration policy (Federal Ministry of Interior 2001). The Commission recommended moving toward a “managed” immigration system that favoured skilled workers and improved integration outcomes by highlighting the importance of language. Drawing on the experiences of traditional immigration countries, such as Australia, Canada and the United States, the Commission also recommended that citizenship be simplified and seen as a necessary complement to immigrant admissions (Klusmeyer and Papademetriou 2009, 246-250). Here, again, the CDU/CSU opposition fought the proposal tenaciously, compelling the government to drop the more sweeping elements of its plan, including the regulation of non-EU immigrant admissions through a Canadian-style “points system” that evaluated applicants according to their education, training and likely contribution to Germany’s economy (Schmidtke 2004). A significantly revised bill was finally passed in July 2004, under the title *Act to Control and Restrict Immigration and Regulate the Residence and Integration of EU Citizens and Foreigners*, and came into effect on 1 January 2005.

The law rebranded the *Residence Act* (*Aufenthaltsgesetz*) upon its implementation set itself to effectively regulating migration, simplifying residency policies and pursuing
a more coherent approach to integration. Under Section 43 of the Residence Act, the federal government pledged to support the integration of legally resident foreigners. The Act also called for the introduction of “integration courses” to impart “adequate knowledge of the [German] language” and information regarding Germany’s “legal system, culture and history.” The integration courses would be coordinated and delivered through the new Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge – BAMF), in conjunction with civil society organizations and state and local governments.

Section 45 of the Residence Act called for the federal government to develop additional integration measures organized by the federal and state governments, particularly as regarded the provision of civic education and “migration-specific counselling services.” The Act envisioned the development of a nationwide integration plan that identified and systematized existing integration measures carried out by all levels of government and non-governmental organizations. In short, the haphazard approach to settlement and integration that emerged out of the guest worker period was to be carefully evaluated and reformed, with an eye to better coordinating the work of the federal, state and municipal governments and civil society organizations. In keeping with the German tradition of federalism (Oeter 2006), the federal government would (belatedly) take the lead in policy formulation, while recognizing the states’ and

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5 As its appellation suggests, the new law did not do much to facilitate immigration. While some new measures were introduced, they were rather narrow in scope. For instance, a new Immigrant Entrepreneur class required that prospective immigrants invest 1 million Euro in Germany and create at least 100 jobs. Not surprisingly, the number of immigrants meeting this requirement has been very low. More recently, the requirements for investment and job creation have been halved.
municipalities’ role in implementing new policies (such as those concerning integration courses).

The *Residence Act* defined immigrant integration as an area of active concern for the federal government. Integration’s prominence would only increase after the 2005 election which saw the Red-Green coalition replaced by a “Grand Coalition” joining the SPD and new Chancellor Angela Merkel’s CDU/CSU. The formation of a Grand Coalition government allowed for a more “pragmatic” approach to integration policy. The purposeful downplaying of ideological differences between the CSU/CSU and SPD and consequent search for consensus positions helped build on the momentum generated by the passing of the 2005 law.

Interest in advancing a more systematic approach to integration policy was heightened by important events, including the 9-11 attacks and Madrid and London bombings, which focused attention on radicalized immigrant youth – so-called “home grown terrorists,” and the riots in Paris’ suburbs in 2005, which heightened fears of anarchic violence perpetrated by unemployed and angry young immigrant men.6 Germany’s poor results in the 2000 and 2003 rounds of the OECD’s Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and persistently high unemployment rates among second-generation youth also provoked agreement on the need for concerted action.7 The 2006 Micro Census’ revelation that close to half of the residents of

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6 The importance of these events was underscored by interviews with German politicians and public officials conducted by Triadafilopoulos in 2008 and 2009.

7 Unemployment rates for foreigners are about twice as high as those of native Germans. The discrepancy is even worse for younger (18-35) foreigners. Similarly, graduation rates are much lower for foreign born youth. As Simon Green (2005) has rightly noted, “[t]aken as a whole…non-national residents represent a
Germany’s large cities had a “migration background” was also important in this regard. Finally, debates over the place of Islam in Germany, punctuated by highly publicized incidents of so-called “honour killing” and tense arguments over the zoning of Mosques and the right of Muslim women to wear the hijab while working in the public service, lent a gendered dimension to discussions of immigration, immigrant integration and social cohesion (Korteweg and Yurdakul 2009; Rostock and Berghahn 2008).

Developments at the EU level were also important. While authority over decisions regarding immigrant admissions, integration and citizenship remain within the hands of EU member states, a series of EU level initiatives, including the Hague Program (2004), the Common Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy (2005), the Common Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (2005) and the EU Commission’s Policy Plan on Legal Migration, have played an important role in raising the status of integration policy on governmental agendas and steering member states’ approaches in a roughly similar trajectory (Mushaben 2010, 156; Klusmeyer and Papademetriou 2009, 275-277).

Framing Integration and Social Cohesion Conceptually

According to the website of the Federal Ministry of Interior,
Integration of foreigners living in Germany is an important means to ensure that all people in Germany can live together in harmony. Integration means feeling part of a community and developing a common understanding of how one should live together in society. Integration can work only as a two-way process. It requires acceptance by the majority population and the willingness of immigrants to learn and respect the rules of the host country and to seek take responsibility for their own integration.8

This anodyne “two-way street” definition is given more weight in political discourse. There is general agreement among German policymakers that the aim of integration is social cohesion (sozialer Zusammenhalt), understood as the capacity of society to withstand, and ultimately sublate, social conflicts based on class, identity and other differences (Glatzer, Hallein-Benze and Weckemann 2010, 41-42). The crucial link joining integration and social cohesion lies in policy’s role in facilitating the state’s embrace of groups deemed problematic from the point of view of social cohesion – in other words, those immigrants who appear unwilling or otherwise incapable of fitting in to the broader German society. Two such groups are key:

- Young men of immigrant background who undereducated, unemployed and understood to be prone to criminality and violence; and
- Turkish-Muslim women who lack German language capabilities and are therefore unable to access core institutions and the majority society more generally.

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There is a widely shared belief that lack of access to core institutions – especially in the areas of higher education and formal labor markets – contributes to the isolation of these groups in so-called “parallel societies,” wherein the taken for granted rules and norms which order relationships in the majority society are absent. Integration policy therefore aims at facilitating immigrant groups’ interaction with the core institutions of the host society to mediate stratification, lessen inequalities and, in so doing, diminish the likelihood of social conflict.

The importance of the first perceived problem group (young, under-educated, unemployed and potentially violent immigrant men) is nicely captured in a statement by Kristina Schröder (formerly Köhler), a member of the CDU and Federal Minister for Family, Seniors, Women and Youth as of 2009. Schröder’s statement was made during the course of a debate in the Bundestag on the violent events at the Rütli school in Berlin in March 2006. This school’s student body was characterized by a large proportion of immigrant students, many of whom were accused of engaging in rude and violent behavior toward their German teachers. The escalating violence prompted the teachers to write to the Bundestag to address the problem. Schröder’s response highlights the threatening nature of young immigrant men, particularly Turkish youth:

We cannot close our eyes to the fact that, and this has been proven, among young Turkish men there is a particularly high tendency towards violence. Young immigrants usually come from a disadvantaged social background, they have no education diplomas and they do not have training certificates. Of course this plays a role in violent behavior… When we look at criminological research, we
always come up against the same point, namely that there is not only a social, but also a cultural problem of violence in many Turkish families, and the victims are wives and children. This problem of violence is related to the question of honor. Here we cannot just look away. These women and children are part of our society. Hence, we must be able to influence these families and this has to be done by enlightening them, but also by relying on all the weight of the law…. We have been concerned with a misunderstood political correctness for too long and we have explained things away (Deutscher Bundestag 2006, 2574-2575).

Schröder’s statement also highlights the important role of Turkish women in German integration discourse. On the one hand, they are cast as victims of men obsessed with patriarchal cultural rules based on honor. Standing up for these women thus enhances German politicians’ claims to be acting in the service of gender equality. In an interesting and peculiar way, gender equality has been turned into a marker of contemporary German national identity, which is cast as a modern, progressive antidote to immigrants’ retrograde cultural/religious fundamentalism (Rostock and Berghahn 2008; Rottmann and Ferree 2008). At the same time, Turkish-Muslim women’s perceived lack of German language capabilities and consequent inability to engage with the institutions of the host society is seen to diminish their capacity to successfully socialize future generations (Schneider 2005). In a sense, “saving the mothers” (through their successful integration) is seen as a way – perhaps the most important way – of improving the prospects of future generations and thus enhancing social cohesion.
Integration in this sense means bringing Turkish-Muslim women into line with
distinctively German beliefs and practices, particularly as regards childrearing. Improving immigrant women’s ability to serve as advocates of their children’s needs is seen as a way of improving future generations’ prospects.

Seen through this lens, integration policy is primarily prophylactic in nature. Improving the prospects of young men, mothers and future generations will lessen the dangers posed to German society by individuals with dim prospects, living on the margins of society and susceptible to the lures of crime or, worse yet, religious radicalization. Social cohesion, understood as the dampening and avoidance of conflict, thus depends on the state’s ability to reverse longstanding trends that threaten future disintegration and conflict.

The prevailing German conceptualization of integration stands in stark contrast to the nation building variant operative in Canada (Kymlicka 2007; Papillion this volume). Whereas multiculturalism in Canada has been harnessed as a means of crafting a national identity based, in part, on cultural differences among groups, in Germany (as in most of Europe) it has been overwhelmingly rejected (Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010; Vasta 2010). This is in large part due to the way in which the concept has been framed and understood. Multiculturalism is equated with an easy going relativism, where cultures are placed on an equal footing and the state has little, if any, role to play mediating the interaction of newcomers and the host society (Wiefelspütz 2008; Bosbach 2009). According to its critics (who are legion), multiculturalism combines the very worst features of left-liberal naïveté and libertarian laissez-faire. Conversely, integration policy is policy – an expression of the host society’s will as embodied in tangible regulations.
This orientation is clear in the motto used in Germany to characterize integration: “Fördern und Fordern” – promoting and demanding.

The narrow way in which integration has been conceived of among German policymakers helped to bridge longstanding divides among members of the CDU/CSU and SPD during the period of Grand Coalition government between 2005 and 2009. This, in turn, allowed for the introduction of an impressive range of integration policies. At the same time, however, the prevailing understanding of integration policy tended to preclude action on issues of importance to immigrants, particularly as regarded anti-discrimination and citizenship policies. Integration related goals, such as the pursuit of gender equality, were also used as a means of blocking the admission of “problem” immigrants, particularly Turks entering via family reunification. Thus the signal sent to immigrants was mixed, raising suspicion among them regarding the ultimate aims of integration policy. We deal with each of these points below.

**Progress through Pragmatism: Germany’s New Integration Policy Framework**

Immigrant integration quickly emerged as one of the Grand Coalition government’s principal concerns. Among the new government’s first steps was the organization of a National Integration Summit, organized by the Federal Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration, Maria Böhmer, and hosted by the Chancellor. The event drew together representatives of the federal, state and local governments, alongside civil society groups and representatives of migrant-based organizations. Federal and state ministries of Interior, Labour and Social Affairs played a particularly important role in the Summit.
The aim of the first Summit was twofold: first, to begin the process of formulating a National Integration Plan (as per Section 45 of the 2005 Residence Act) and, second, to raise the status of integration on Germany’s policy agenda. This latter objective was advanced forcefully by the Chancellor herself: Merkel’s introductory statement to the summit’s participants (echoed in the press and through government organs) noted that integration was among the most important challenges facing Germany (“On Integrating Immigrants” 2006, 598). Concerted action was needed to both improve the situation of men and women with a “migration background” and enhance social cohesion.

Merkel stressed that successful integration would require the efforts of all three levels of government, along with civil society actors and migrants themselves. Integration was thus cast as a contract of sorts between migrants and the broader host society:

It is critical, first of all, that immigrants be willing to adapt to life in our society, accept our Constitution and entire legal system without reservation and show a visible sign of affiliation with Germany, particularly by learning the German language.... In exchange, we require from the host society acceptance, tolerance, civil engagement, and the willingness to sincerely welcome people who lawfully live with us (“On Integrating Immigrants” 2006, 598).

The key to moving forward with this project lay in devising “a common understanding of integration that establishes mutual duties and rights: for migrants as well as the native population” (“On Integrating Immigrants” 2006, 598). This would be pursued through the consolidation of measures “at all levels of state and society” in a National integration
Plan “with clear goals, concrete measures and self-enforced obligations” (“On Integrating Immigrants” 2006, 599). The development of the plan would be carried out by working groups made up of officials from the federal and state governments and supervised by relevant federal ministries. Most importantly, efforts would be made to improve the content and administration of integration courses; provide better access to German language teaching for young children; address the problems faced by ethnic minority youth in schools and the labour market; enhance the situation of immigrant and ethnic minority women; offer better supports for integration at the local level; and strengthen civil society.

Members of the working groups spent a good deal of their time inventorying the programs that Germany’s states and municipalities had already developed (Santel 2009). In many instances, these were significant. For example, the state of North Rheine Westphalia had already implemented a well developed integration policy, as had municipal governments in Berlin, Frankfurt am Main and Stuttgart (Reimann and Schuleri-Hartje 2005). Most new policy formulation was taken up by the federal government, a reflection of its laggard status.

The second National Integration Summit held in 2007 showcased the results of this work, as laid down in the National Integration Plan, a 200 page document replete with 400 recommendations (Der Nationale Integrationsplan 2007). Core areas of proposed action included promoting language acquisition and equal opportunities in education, vocational training and the labour market. Each level of government committed itself to fulfilling a number of objectives. The federal government’s obligations included:
• Improving the content and range of the integration courses, with an eye to better tailoring them to meet the needs of particular clienteles, such as youth, mothers of young children, and illiterate participants;

• Increasing the number of “full-day” schools and childcare options available to immigrants, through consultations with the state governments and local authorities; and

• Providing young people with a migration background expanded opportunities for vocational training, through programs developed in conjunction with private firms.

State government committed themselves to:

• Providing more opportunities for German language learning for school age children, through reforms to their educational systems;

• Offering special support for employment related language courses at vocational schools;

• Increasing funding for schools with a high proportions of migrant students.

Municipalities pledged to:

• Make integration a cross-cutting, interdepartmental, responsibility;

• Enact policies of “intercultural opening” by hiring more staff with a migration background and adapting services to meet the special needs of immigrant residents; and

• Enhance the participation of migrant organizations in municipal-level policy formulation and implementation, through consistent and meaningful consultation.

For their part, migrant organizations committed themselves to:
Advancing programs dedicated to gender equality; and

Developing programs aimed at encouraging children to do well in school.

Integration courses formed the core of Germany’s new integration policy approach. As per the 2005 Residence Act, “third-country nationals” – i.e. immigrants from non-EU states – would be obliged to take part in integration courses if (1) they were not able to communicate in German orally on a simple level, (2) the migration authorities demanded that they do so because they received unemployment benefits, or (3) the same authorities deemed they had a “special need for integration.” Refusal to comply with a request to take part in integration courses – even in cases of long-term residents and naturalized citizens – could result in the denial of requests for the extension of residency permits and cuts to unemployment benefits. Penalties for “unwillingness” to integrate were sharpened in 2007.

Initially, integration courses were made up of 600 hours of language instruction and 30 hours of “civics” lessons, focusing on Germany’s legal framework, history and culture. They would conclude with an examination, testing language proficiency and knowledge relating to the civics component of the course. Passing the examination would grant certain benefits to immigrants, including the rewarding of a permanent residency permit\(^9\) and a reduction in the residency period required for naturalization. Based on feedback from course providers and participants and a program review undertaken by the Ministry of Interior, the courses were modified in 2007 so that the language component is now 900 hours and the civics component is 45 hours. Long

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\(^9\) Immigrants to Germany are usually granted a temporary residency permit which may be upgraded to permanent status after several years.
settled immigrants, including naturalized citizens, were also given access to a special course tailored to their needs. Other targeted courses were developed for parents of school-aged children, “speedy learners” (who often possessed some familiarity with Germany and the German language) and illiterate individuals. Participants able to pass the integration exam within two years could also apply to have half of the costs they had borne for the courses refunded.\textsuperscript{10} Successful completion of an integration course also allowed for the reduction of the residency requirement for naturalization from eight to seven years.

In 2008, 121,275 individuals participated in the courses, an increase of 6 per cent over the previous year (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2009, 6). Of these individuals, 19,198 were German nationals – that is, individuals with a migration background who had already naturalized but were instructed to take an integration course by an official because their mastery of the German language was deemed insufficient. About half (51 per cent) of all of those who had completed the integration course passed the final examination (37,438 of 73,557). Publicly available data on immigrants punished because of their unwillingness to integrate is presently unavailable.

Beginning in 2006, the federal Ministry of the Interior has hosted a series of recurring “Islam Conferences,” drawing together federal, state and municipal officials, representatives of Germany’s Muslim faith communities, and “secular Muslims,” including feminist and others critical of certain cultural practices associated (rightly or

\textsuperscript{10} The cost of integration courses are shared by participants and the federal government, with the government paying the lion’s share; in 2008, the federal government contributed 169.4 million Euros to cover the costs of the courses.
wrongly) with the Muslim faith (Hermani 2010; Musch 2011). In the words of the former federal Interior Minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, the German Islam Conference would assure Muslims that they were welcome in Germany, on the condition that they accept our constitution and legal order and wish to make their homes here [in Germany]. This approach to integration is the only way to hinder the radicalization of Muslims. This is precisely the point of our saying that we must take a preventative approach to combating the danger of terrorism (Die Muslime sind in Deutschland willkommen 2009).

Through plenary sessions held every six months and the ongoing efforts of working groups, conference participants aimed to resolve a number of practical challenges, including how to fund Muslim religious instruction, train Imams in Germany, and steer German Islam in a direction compatible with Germany’s post-Christian/secular political institutions. Schäuble also hoped to dampen the hysteria around Islam, while building stronger ties between Muslims and the German state, in part by granting Muslims the same official recognition that members of the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish faiths have long enjoyed. This has led to the formation of a Coordinating Council for Muslim organizations, to serve as a peak association for Muslims, modelled along the lines of similar institutions for Christians and Jews.

The Limits of Pragmatism
Despite the progress made between 2005 and 2009, the prophylactic nature of the Grand Coalition’s integration policy approach also led to some serious omissions. To begin with, the National Integration Plan contains no reference to Germany’s 2006 *Anti-Discrimination Act*, despite the obvious relevance of anti-discrimination measures in several areas of concern, most notably as regards immigrants’ and ethnic minorities’ labour market participation (Schönwälder 2007). The Plan also has little to offer second- and third-generation individuals who have few, if any, qualifications for employment, implicitly turning its back on what some officials have dubbed a “lost generation.” Just as importantly, the National Integration Plan suggests that there is a pre-existing set of standards which immigrants must accept, at risk of sanction, and may not question. While the “two-way street” motif is frequently repeated, the Plan calls for immigrants to adapt to “our” values and cultural self-understandings (*kulturellen Selbstverständnisses*), without defining in any detail what these core attributes are. The tendency among German officials to repeatedly demand that immigrants “accept our values” implies that they are either unable or unwilling to do so in the absence of hectoring and compulsion.

Critics have also noted that integration has been used to defend what are, in essence, exclusionary migration policies. Amendments to the *Residence Act* introduced in June 2007 have made integration a condition for the migration of spouses via family reunification. Spouses wishing to enter Germany must pass a language test administered in their country of residence, ostensibly to ensure that female migrants are able to avail themselves of German institutions once they arrive in Germany and thus not be subject to control by their husbands. During the course of debates in the federal parliament, members of the CDU/CSU argued that the measure was necessary to counter forced
marriages and “misogynist parallel societies” (Klusmeyer and Papademetriou 2009, 281). The regulation does not apply to migrants from EU countries or Canada, the United States, Australia, and Japan. Given that most migrants admitted to Germany via family reunification come from Turkey, the regulation has a clear bias, a fact not lost on representatives of Germany’s largest Turkish organizations, who boycotted the second Integration Summit in 2007 to register their displeasure with the government’s decision (Spiegel Staff 2007).

Several CDU-led states have also instituted bans on Muslim teachers’ and civil servants’ ability to wear headscarves while on the job. Their actions came on the heels of the Federal Constitutional Court’s Ludin decision, wherein the Court both upheld the right of public servants to wear religious symbols but also recognized the right of states to regulate such conduct, so long as they did so via statute (rather than regulation) and treated all religions equally. The ambiguity generated by the Court’s decision was further extended by its declaration that “legislatures could take into account educational tradition and the confessional composition of the population when making a decision” (Henkes and Kneip 2009, 16). Several CDU-led governments took advantage of this stipulation by including references to their state’s Christian and Occidental traditions in an effort to justify the unequal treatment of Muslim headscarves, on the one hand, and Catholic nuns’ habits, on the other: while the former were banned the latter continued to be allowed.

The Grand Coalition’s commitment to integration was also tested in the area of citizenship policy. On a positive note, a uniform citizenship test was introduced in 2008 in response to the tendency among some states to interpret the language and values requirements of the 1999 law in a decidedly exclusionary fashion. Baden-Württemberg
went so far as to develop an interview guide for Muslim applicants that included queries regarding applicants’ attitudes toward homosexuals and other personal subjects in an effort to ensure that they “sincerely” accepted the principles of Germany’s Basic Law (Joppke 2010, 55). This marked a rather illiberal expression of the prophylactic view of integration noted above.

A commission made up of the federal Interior Minister and his state colleagues was charged with developing a common citizenship test for all the federal states. Drawing on recommendations set forth in an EU Directive on Immigration and Integration, the commission agreed to the introduction of a catalogue of 300 questions relating to Germany’s legal framework, political institutions, history and civic culture (Winter and John 2010). In a nod to federalism, each state was also entitled to draw up 10 questions pertaining to its own institutions and history. Successful candidates would answer 17 out of 33 questions drawn from the catalogue that is available for study in advance of taking the test. Rules regarding language competency were also systematized, after the Federal Administrative Court struck down some states’ efforts to demand proficiency in written German (Hofhansel 2008). Instead, the court held that a basic ability to speak, understand and read German was sufficient.

While the introduction of a uniform citizenship test marked a step forward, the Grand Coalition did little to address other areas of concern in German citizenship policy. Chief among these was the steady drop in Germany’s naturalization rate and the looming problems posed by the Optionsmodell. With regard to naturalization, the 1999 law’s opposition to the toleration of dual citizenship has served as a powerful disincentive to many long settled immigrants, particularly former guest workers from Turkey.
number of naturalizations per annum peaked at an all time high of 186,688 in 2000, it has since dropped sharply, reaching a post-reform low of 94,470 in 2008 – out of a foreign population of 7.1 million of whom some 4 million are estimated to fulfill the residence requirement for naturalization (Worbs 2008, 28).

Germany’s position on dual citizenship is also unfair, in that not all naturalization candidates are treated equally. Citizens of EU member states and states with bilateral agreements with the Federal Republic (such as Switzerland) may retain their existing nationality, as can ethnic German resettlers and individuals who can successfully claim that the stripping of their former citizenship poses a severe hardship. Consequently, nearly 50 per cent of all naturalizations in Germany countenance dual citizenship; here it is worth noting that Turks make up only a small proportion of these cases.

For its part, the Optionsmodell’s awkward melding of *jus soli* and opposition to dual citizenship promises to create an administrative and political quagmire.\textsuperscript{11} Here again a double standard operates, as not all children of immigrants are similarly affected: Those from mixed German/non-German marriages do not fall under the condition; neither do the children of parents who are citizens of EU member states. Children of Turkish immigrants are most affected by the rule, as Turks are the largest group of Third Country Nationals in Germany. Perhaps most importantly, the Optionsmodell sends a very odd signal to the children of migrants, suggesting that they must confirm their attachment to a national identity they have held since birth.

\textsuperscript{11} It is estimated that 385,541 young Germans will be affected by the law up to the year 2026 (Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration 2010, 588). The law already affects youth born between 1990 and 1998, as they fall under a transition clause in the legislation.
Both the administrative deficiencies and lack of fairness in the *Optionsmodell* are widely understood and accepted. Yet it has stood without revision because of differences among parties as to what to do about it. Whereas the SPD would have preferred that the *Optionsmodell* be rescinded, conservatives in the CDU/CSU believed that the 1999 law’s *jus soli* provision was at fault and should therefore be struck (Edathy 2008; Altmaier 2009; Bosbach 2009). While flawed, the *Optionsmodell* continues to command the support of conservatives who see it as an, albeit weak, means of testing the loyalty of children born and raised in Germany (Deutscher Bundestag 2009).

**Conclusion**

The CDU/CSU-SPD Grand Coalition government succeeded in making immigrant integration an important area of federal government concern. The introduction of the National Integration Plan and establishment of the National Integration Summit and Islam Conference marked important, indeed unmatched, achievements in the annals of German immigration policy. Nevertheless, progress toward making Germany a more tolerant, self-assured country of immigration has been fleeting. We believe this is due to the way integration has been conceived of by German policymakers. Rather than serving as a nation-building tool, integration was to foster social cohesion by guarding against the disintegrative effects of immigration. In some instances, distrust of perceived problem groups led to policies that might reasonably be judged restrictive and exclusionary. The innovations in family reunification policy, bans on headscarves, and continuing acceptance of flaws in the 1999 citizenship reform discussed above serve as useful examples.
The 2009 election spelled the end of the Grand Coalition and the formation of a new government joining the CDU/CSU and FDP. To date, the change in government has reinforced the developments explored in this chapter. In particular, integration remains an important area of concern but immigrants, particularly Turks and Muslims (categories that are often conflated by politicians and the press), continue to be treated with suspicion and, at times, outright derision. Perhaps the most acute example of this general trend was the debate sparked by the publication of Thilo Sarrazin’s *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (*Germany Does Away with Itself*) in summer 2010. Sarrazin, a ranking member of the SPD and former member of the Bundesbank’s Board of Directors, painted an alarming (and alarmist) picture in which a shrinking “German” population would soon be overwhelmed by poorly educated, underemployed, welfare dependent and criminally deviant Muslim immigrants whose population was buoyed by high birth rates. Sarrazin claimed that Muslim boys were raised to be violent and patriarchal and that most crime in Berlin was committed by a small minority of “Turkish and Arabic” criminals. He also suggested that “congenital diseases” were partly responsible for “the failure of some of the Turkish population in the German school system.” Germany’s only hope for survival lay in better controlling immigration and being much more aggressive in its integration policies. This was prophylaxis with a vengeance – immigration did not simply threaten social cohesion, Germany’s very survival was at risk.

Initially political elites, including the leadership of the SPD, some members of the CDU and Merkel herself, criticized Sarrazin. The SPD began proceedings to expel him from the party and the Bundesbank rescinded his directorship. When the book’s sales soared (it eventually shipped 1.2 million copies) and conservatives complained of
creeping political correctness among Berlin’s centrist political elite, the leadership of the SPD and CDU changed tack; the former quietly gave up on its plans to expel Sarrazin while Merkel took to giving speeches aimed at underscoring her conservative bona fides in the area of immigration and integration. This trend culminated in the chancellor’s now infamous speech declaring multiculturalism’s failure (Gould 2010). The aims of the German Islam Conference were also reconfigured such that demands among Muslim groups for more robust anti-discrimination programs were trumped by an agenda more firmly aimed at countering youth radicalization and protecting Muslim women from patriarchal Muslim men. The pragmatism of the Grand Coalition era thus appeared to have given way to a more aggressive discourse that highlighted differences between “real” Germans and immigrants in need of integration.

While this shift in emphasis is noteworthy, it is also worth highlighting that the current CDU/CSU-FDP government has not reversed the policies established by its predecessor: the aims of the National Integration Plan remain in place, as do the National Integration Summit and German Islam Conference. These institutional advances may allow for a more constructive dialogue among governments and representatives of immigrant groups when the political incentives motivating calls for “tougher” policies diminish. Moreover, more fundamental changes are already taking hold in Germany’s large cities, where municipal governments are seizing the opportunity and funds made available by the National Integration Plan to develop policies and approaches to integration that are more receptive to immigrants and positive as to the consequences of diversity. Stuttgart is particularly interesting in this regard. In its “Pact for Integration” – a statement of principle and purpose introduced in 2001 – the city formally embraced
diversity as one of its core characteristics and strengths and developed its own distinctive approach to integration (Özbabacan 2009). The Pact for Integration was developed collaboratively, through the efforts of the city’s political and administrative staffs, the private sector, and civil society groups, including ethnic associations, sport clubs, community groups, and NGOs. Stuttgart is by no means alone in this regard; many German cities, including Berlin, Hamburg and Munich, have developed similar policy approaches (Gesemann and Roth 2009). In so doing, they demonstrate that integration policy in Germany might yet break out of its prophylactic mode and develop more imaginative ways of managing diversity and pursuing social cohesion.
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