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MUSLIM ASSIMILATION INTO GERMANY

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Muslims have been living in Germany for over 300 years. After World War II Germany experienced a large wave of Muslim immigrants flowing into the country as guest-workers. The Muslim population is currently estimated at 3 million of Germany's total population of 82 million. Out of this 3 million Muslim population, two-thirds are of Turkish origin and one third of them are under the age of 18. Additionally, the birthrate of the immigrant Muslim population is three times the German average, and by 2020, experts say, the native German population will decline by more than 4% while the Muslim population is forecasted to double.

This growing Muslim population is of considerable concern to the Germans. Currently, there is an energetic debate in Germany concerning public policy goals. One argument is for the German government to pursue policies that encourage Muslims to assimilate themselves to the values of Western society, even when that means abandoning some particular features of their religious identity. The other argument is for the government to encourage and celebrate religious diversity.¹

As a result of the 1991 and 1992 anti-asylum riots in the German cities of Rostock, Hoyerswerda, and Mannheim, Germany has been forced to address their immigration policies. Arguably, these riots fed the German's fear of the Muslim population and thus caused Muslim alienation. In November 1992, Muslims themselves were victimized in a firebombing in Molln, Germany, which killed two Turkish girls and a Turkish grandmother.² Subsequently in 2002, after the events of 9/11, non-government organizations in Germany have understandably reported a rise in "Islamophobia". Consequently, Muslim organizations report efforts to integrate into German society are often met with resistance.

¹ Joel S. Fetzer & J. Christopher Soper, *Muslims and the State in Britain France, and Germany*, 2005, page 3.

² Ibid, page 105.

INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, many Europeans began to look more fearfully at the Muslims in their midst. The Europeans started speaking more openly and critically about the Muslims and the societal changes the Muslims have wrought. Muslims, for their part, protested that they suddenly had been turned into aliens in their adoptive German home.³ As a result, tension between the German majority and the Muslim minority became an issue for the German government.

Turkish Muslims have been living in Germany in various degrees of assimilation. On one hand, there are Turks living in Germany who consider themselves German. On the other hand, there are Turks living in Germany who have no intention of adopting the culture of their German host country and in fact openly oppose the culture.⁴ For many young Muslims in Germany, the goal is not to assimilate themselves into the secular values of the West, but instead to adopt a true Islamic identity while living in the West. For example, Tuba Uncar, a 21 year old Muslim female from Berlin, commented about assimilation into Germany when she said, “I am integrated. I speak the German language. If you say I should live like Germans do, well, that’s not integration. That’s assimilation and I don’t want that.” Her comment raises even the more provocative question of whether Muslim’s even strive for acceptance, or do they just want to live in more of a secular environment.

Theorists of assimilation widely use generational categories to describe adaptation processes. This entails distinguishing between the first, second, and third generations. Subsequent generations are no longer described as ‘immigrants’. The second generation is expected to be better adapted and similar to the host society than the first, and more likely to

³ Peter Grier, *A Crescent Over Europe*. Air Force Magazine, Jul 05, page 1.

⁴ Hans S. Nichols. *Germany Grapples With Immigration*. Insight on the News Article. 30 Sep 2002. Page 1.

identify with the host society.⁵ As Germany faces the growing Muslim population of their second, third and even fourth generations, questions arise as to whether Muslims can successfully assimilate into German society. Can they adopt the customs and attitudes of the prevailing German culture?

To measure Muslim assimilation into Germany this paper will measure assimilation through two variables. The first variable is to measure citizenship. The dictionary defines citizenship as an inhabitant of a town or city, one entitled to the rights and privileges of a free man; a member of a state; a native of a naturalized person who owes allegiance to a government and is entitled protection from it. Citizenship is defined as the status of being a citizen.⁶ Muslims requesting citizenship will be measured against other non-Muslim immigrants to see if Muslims receive citizenship at a higher or lower rate than non-Muslims from other countries.

The second measurement of assimilation is an analysis of how adolescents in Germany (regardless of their ethnic background) feel about inclusion and exclusion of immigrants. These results come from a survey conducted by the University of Bielefeld in 2004. This study compared inter-ethnic attitudes and inter-ethnic personal contact across three groups; Germans, Turks, and Resettler Adolescents. The Bielefeld study addresses the Social Dominance Theory. This theory argues that the major forms of intergroup conflict, such as racism, classism and patriarchy, are all basically derived from the basic human predisposition to form and maintain hierarchical and group-based systems of social organization.⁷

⁵ Patricia Ehrkamp, *Becoming Turkish: Enacting home, identity and resistance*. Paper present at the TIRES Summer Institute, Miami, FL, 2002, page 1.

⁶ Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary; Tenth Edition.

⁷ Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto, *Social Dominance*, May 2001.

<http://www.cambridge.org/uk/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=0521805406&ss=cop>

CITIZENSHIP

Prior to the year 2000, the German concept of citizenship was based on ethnic descent (*jus sanguinis*) as opposed to place of birth (*jus soli*). This traditional policy presented nearly insurmountable hurdles for non-ethnic German foreigners who wished to gain German citizenship.⁸ This concept discouraged foreigners from seeking citizenship. Thus, relatively few non-European foreigners obtained German citizenship during this time.⁹

It was not until 2000 that Germany changed its citizenship law. First, the new law gave an automatic right of citizenship to children born in Germany to foreign parents. (These children can actually hold dual citizenship until adulthood, but then they must choose one or the other, German citizenship or citizenship of their parents' native country, before reaching the age of 23). Second, the new law allowed foreigners an opportunity to become a German citizen. The new German citizenship law stated that one must reside in the country for a minimum of 8 years, have a clean criminal record, have a secured income, and proof of integration in the form of language comprehension and declaration of allegiance to Germany.¹⁰

The new citizenship law comes after many years of discussion of how long-term resident aliens could best be integrated into German society. Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder noted in his first policy statement in 1998 before the Bundestag (Germany's parliament), "For far too long those who have come to work here, who pay their taxes and abide by our laws have been told that they are just 'guests.' But in truth they have for years been part of German society. For this reason, this government will modernize the law on nationality". The revisions were intended to

⁸ Joel S. Fetzer & Christopher Soper. *Muslims and the State of Britain, France, and Germany*, 2005, page 100.

⁹ Ibid. page 101.

¹⁰ Heike Hagedorn, University of Munster, *Republicanism and the Politics of Citizenship in Germany and France: Convergence or Divergence?* 2006, page 2.

send Germany's foreign residents "a signal that we welcome all those who profess loyalty to our democratic constitutional state as citizens with equal rights."¹¹

The challenges, however, of obtaining citizenship in Germany are magnified in some parts of the country. Baden-Wurttemberg, one of the sixteen states within Germany, is an example. In January 2006, Baden-Wurttemberg put tougher restrictions on Muslims applying for citizenship by creating an additional two-hour oral exam to test an applicant's loyalty to Germany. This test is to be taken in addition to the standard test of language proficiency skills and German allegiance. Baden-Wurttemberg's state interior minister said the test would be used to filter Muslims who might not be suited for living in Germany. Additionally those who answered "correctly" on the test but later act against the expected behavior in Germany, such as wife-beating, could have their German citizenship removed.¹² Hesse, a different German state, is planning to join Baden-Wurttemberg's initiative in the spring of 2006. According a source in Germany, the test in Hesse contains numerous German history questions, which most average German nationals would not be able to answer as well.¹³ The other 14 German states, in contrast, are not requiring this additional test and in fact the Christian Democratic-led state governments of Bavaria, North Rhine-Westafalia, Thuringia and Saxony strongly oppose this additional test.

Ironically, even with the new citizenship law passed in 2000, the total number of foreigners receiving German citizenship has been on a steady decline since 1995. In 1995, 313,606 foreigners received German citizenship. This number, however, had been cut in half,

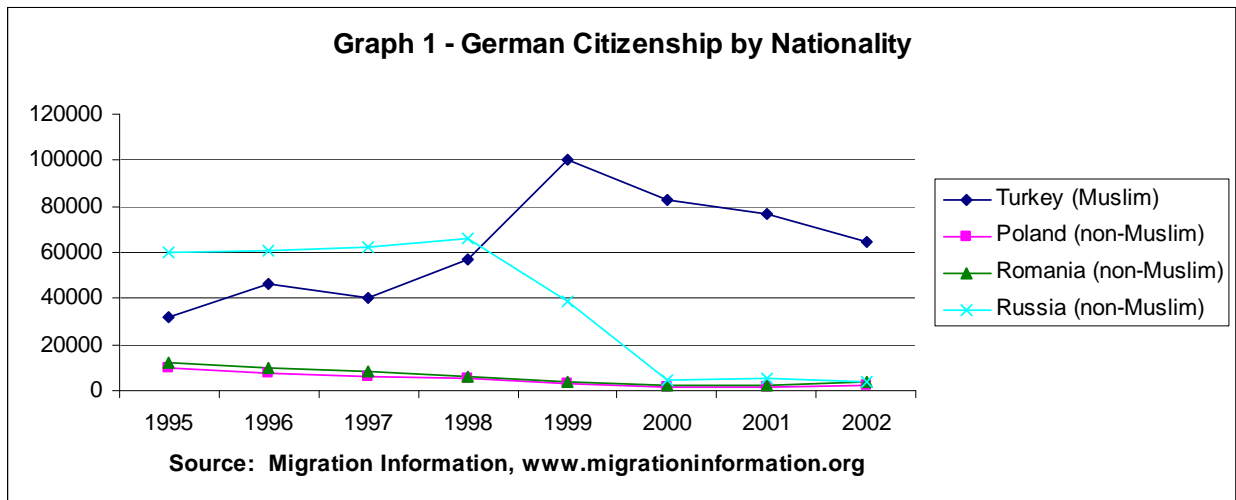
¹¹ German Embassy, Washington D.C.,28 Feb 06,
<http://www.germany.info/relaunch/info/archives/background/citizenship.html>

¹² Kate Connolly, *Loyalty test for Muslims in Germany*. The Telegraph, Calcuta, India, 2 Jan 06, pg 1.
www.telegrpahindia.com

¹³ Katrina Strauss is the source. She is currently a student working on her PhD at the University of Bielefeld in Germany.

down to 154,547 by 2002. The latest figures for 2003 and 2004 show an even further decline down to 127,150 approvals by the end of 2004.

German citizenship rates are listed below in Graph 1. The following countries are represented: Turkey, Russia, Poland and Romania. The citizenship rates of the four countries are by year from 1995 to 2002.



Muslim migration from Turkey, as compared to the total average, however, has shown a generally upward trend. In 1995, a total of 31,578 Turks received German citizenship. This figure peaked in 1999 when 100,324 Turks received German citizenship. The German government, as of 2004, report 2.6 million Turks in Germany, however, 1.9 million Turks still have their Turkish citizenship. The number of Turks who have received German citizenship total 500,000; and over 200,000 Turkish children born since 2000 are eligible for German citizenship under the new rules.

The number of Poles receiving German citizenship since 1995 has decreased from 10,174 to 2,646, approximately a 70% decrease. Romanian numbers are comparable, dropping from 12,028 in 1995 to 1,974 in 2002; an approximate 80% decrease. Arguably, the biggest decrease

was in the Russian applications for and citizenship received, dropping from 60,335 in 1995 to 3,374 in 2002; a reduction of approximately 85%.

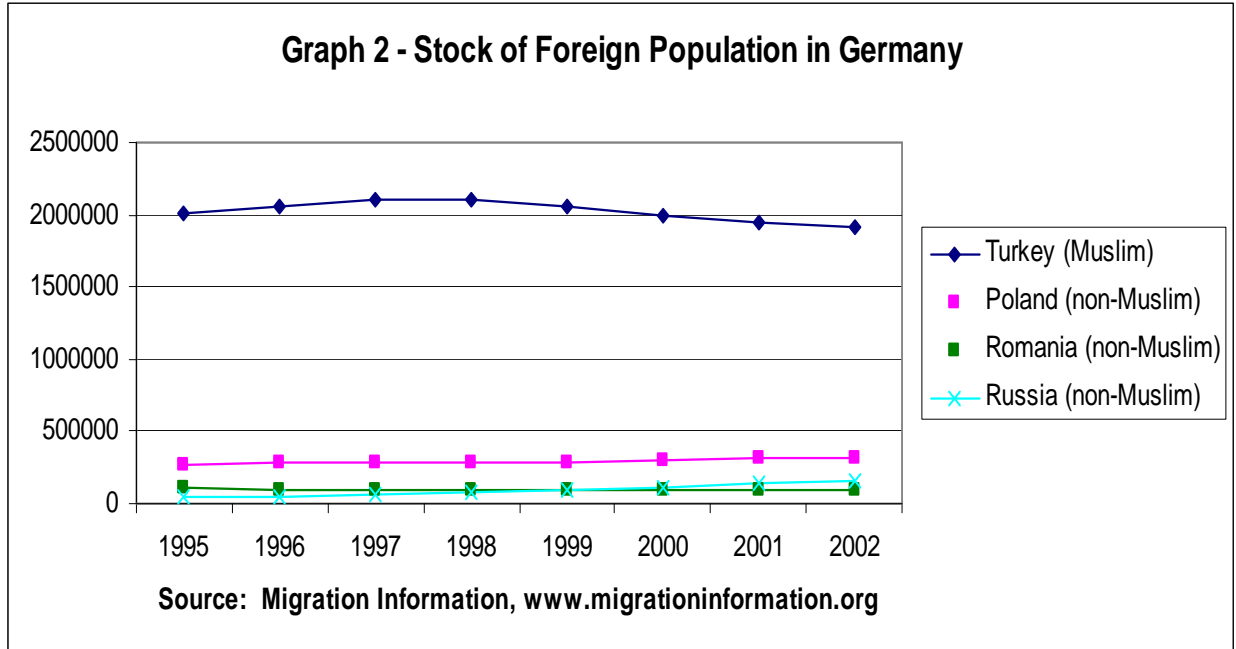
Arguably, one of the major reasons for this decrease is ‘economic’ factors. Of the three countries studied, two countries have gained acceptance into the European Union. Poland gained acceptance in the European Union (EU) in May of 2004. Romania just received acceptance to the EU and are scheduled to become a member 1 January 2007. Acceptance into the EU has opened the door ‘economically’ for these former eastern bloc countries. Thus, the Polish and Roman immigrants seem to opt to remain citizens of their own country instead of moving their allegiance to Germany.

The Russian numbers are harder to explain. Most of the Russians immigrating to Germany are Jewish. They are impacted by the law the German Government approved making Judaism an official religion in Germany. This law allows over 3 million dollars in government money to be distributed to Jewish groups, which helps with assimilating the newly immigrated to the country.¹⁴ Based upon this new law, one might think the number of Russians (mainly Russian Jews) receiving Germany citizenship would be increasing; but they are not.

Louise Hendrickson, in an article about the Impacts of Assimilation, argues that Russian-Germans are facing many problems. There are around 2 million Russians in Germany; and most of them live in ‘self-created’ ghettos. Most do not have language proficiency and they do not have a professional job that would allow them to compete in the German labor market. She argues that within the Russian German communities there are large amounts of crime, drug dealing, and unemployment.¹⁵ This could these be the reasons Russians are not applying for and receiving German citizenship at the same rate they were just ten years ago.

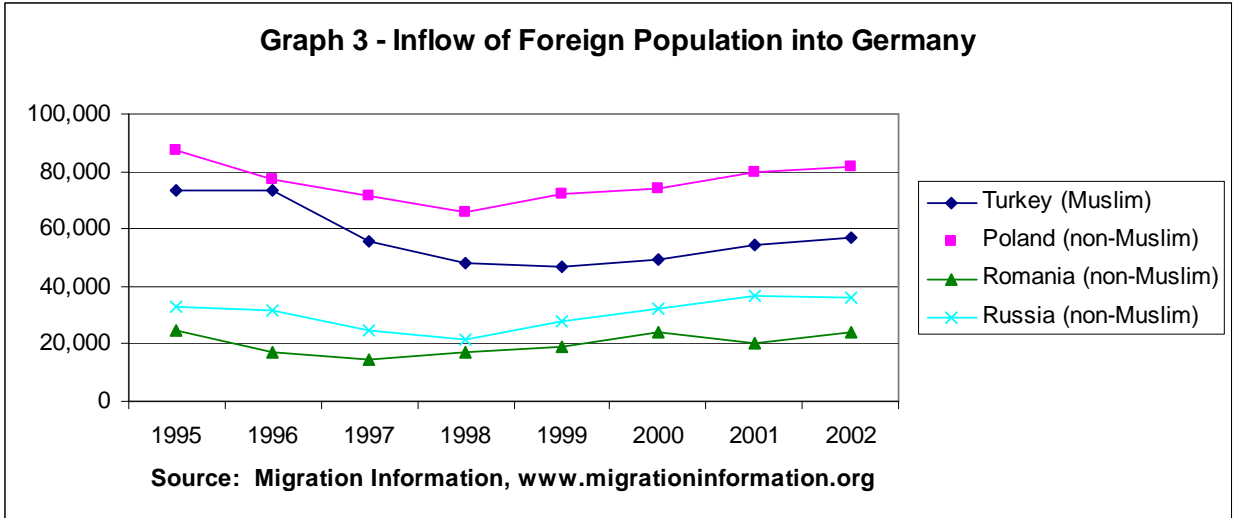
¹⁴ Louise Herdrickson, *The Impacts of Assimilation: Concepts of Citizenship in Germany*. Jan 05, page 9.

¹⁵ Ibid 15.



The total number of foreigners in Germany by country of origin is indicated in Graph 2. The number of foreigners has steadily increased since 1995, when 7.17 million foreigners lived in the country of Germany. In 2002, the number increased by 160,000 to 7.33 million foreigners.

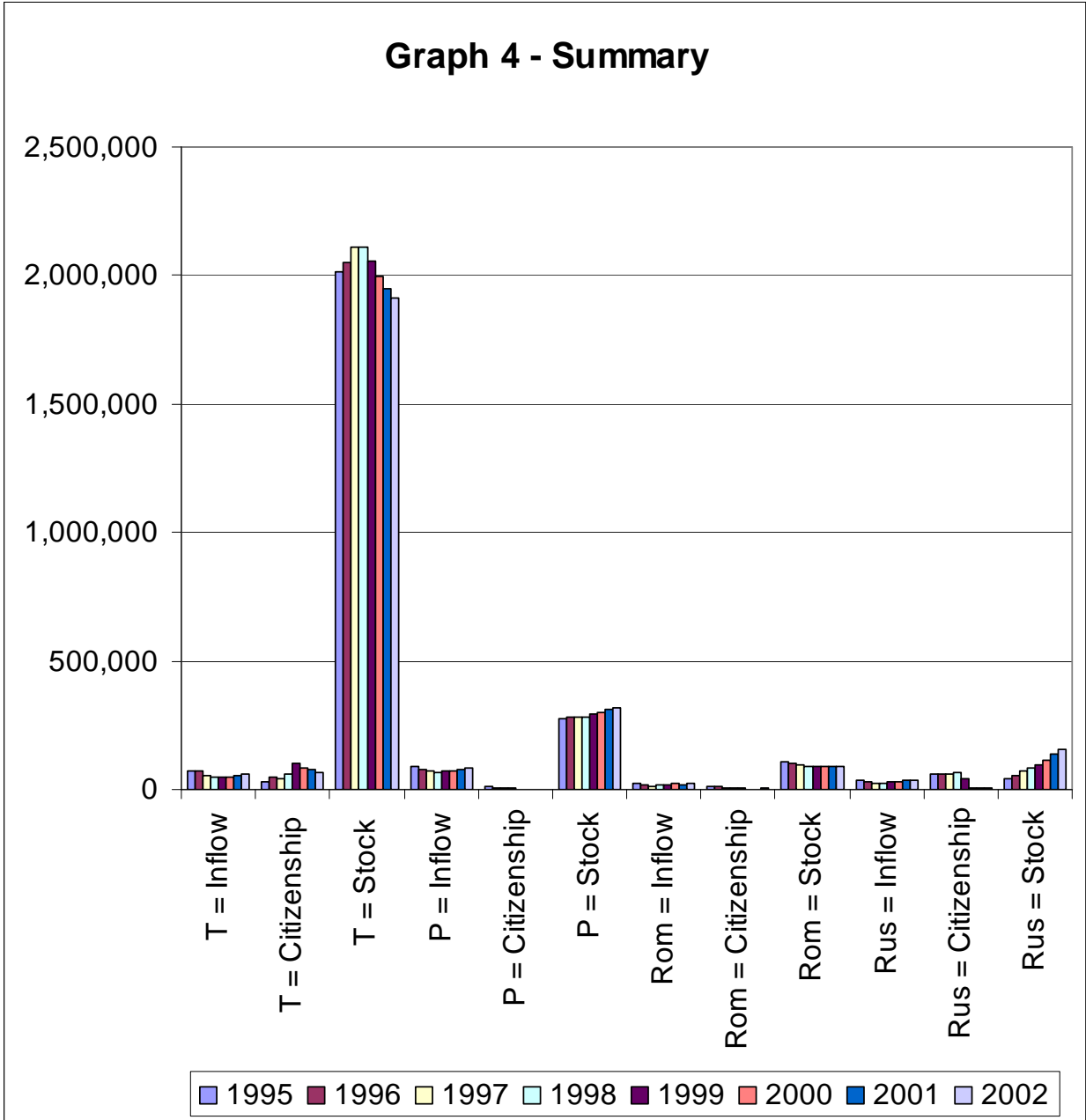
Of the four countries being studied, Turkey and Romania showed a decrease in their foreign population in Germany while Poland and Russia showed an increase. Germany had 2.01 million foreigners from Turkey living in Germany in 1995. This number had steadily decreased to 1.91 million in 2002. In comparison, the number of Romanian foreigners decreased from 109,256 in 1995 to 88,879 in 2002. Poland and Russia, however, showed an increase in their foreign population in Germany. The number of Polish foreigners living in Germany slowly increased from 276,752 in 1995 to 317,603 in 2002; a 25% increase. Russia showed the largest increase during this period - over 400% from 39,967 in 1995 to 155,583 foreigners in 2002.



The annual inflow of the foreigners to the German population is shown in Graph 3. The inflow of Turkish foreigners has been consistent during the measured period. In 1995, 73,592 moved to Germany, and in 2002, this number had fallen slightly to 57,187. The average inflow of Turkish foreigners into Germany per year was 57,342.

The change in ‘inflow’ of Polish and Romanian foreigners into Germany was similar to Turkey; a small decline. In 1995, Poland had 87,238 foreigners migrated to Germany, and by the end of 2002, the number had dropped to 81,466. The average for Poland each year was 76,178. Romanian inflow into Germany was 24,814 in 1995, and declined slightly to 23,803. The average for Romania was 20,035. Russia, on the other hand, had a small increase from 1995 to 2002 with 32,986 foreigners migrating to Germany in 1995; in 2002 the number had increased to 35,816 for an average of 30,404 per year.

Overall (not listed in Graph 3) the total number of foreigners coming to Germany in 1995 was 792,701. Seven years later in 2002 this number had steadily decreased to 658,341.



Putting this all together in a summary chart, graph 4 shows each of the four countries. T = Turkey, P = Poland, Rom = Romania, and Rus = Russia. Inflow represents the inflow of the foreign population into Germany by country. Citizenship represents the number of approved applications by country per year. Stock represents the total number of foreigners from each country. Finally, as a reminder, Turks are associated with Muslims, and the term “Resettler”

labeled youths that are ethnically German but come from culturally Slavic families from the former USSR, Romania and Poland.

So what does all this mean? Turks (Muslims) are applying for and being approved for German citizenship at higher rates than the other three countries combined. Turks receiving German citizenship have increased 200% between 1995 and 2002, while the Poles, Russians and Romanians receiving German citizenship have fallen between 70 and 85 percent respectively during this same time period. The ‘citizenship’ trends are a positive sign in a process that is going to take a long time.

In comparison, Poland’s inflow of foreigners has remained constant from 1995 to 2002. Their total stock of foreigners has risen, and yet, they seem less likely to apply for German citizenship. Romania’s inflow and their total numbers have remained consistent during this period, yet they are also less likely to apply for German citizenship. Russia, the final country in this study, shows an increase of their foreign population into Germany each year. The total stock of Russian foreigners has tripled over this eight year period; yet, Russians applying for German citizenship has decreased substantially each year.

Arguably, if Muslim assimilation into Germany is going to occur, the total number of Muslim foreigners (in this case Turks) would continue to decrease while the number of Muslims receiving German citizenship increases at a greater rate than the number of “inflow” foreigners each year. In this analysis, Turkey is the only country receiving German citizenship at a higher rate than the number of inflow foreigners. This information is reflected in Graph 4. These numbers indicate a positive signal the Turkish minority is electing to remain in Germany and not returning to their native land.

HOW GERMAN ADOLESCENTS FEEL ON INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION OF IMMIGRANTS

Funded by the German Science Foundation, the University of Bielefeld in Germany, researched social inclusion and exclusion of immigrants in 2001. Their research on social inclusion and exclusion of immigrants has repeatedly shown that conflicts emerge during the process of integration. Assimilation preferences and prejudices play a considerable role with respect to integration. The goal of the study was to assess the empirical relationships between adolescents of German, Turkish and Resettler descent, particularly focusing on inter-ethnic attitudes (acceptance/rejection) and personal contact.¹⁶ Resettler's are defined as ethnically German, but come from culturally Slavic families from the former USSR, Romania, and Poland.

This study consisted of pupils in the tenth grade (ages 16 to 18) who went to one of the four main state school types (Hauptschulen, Realschulen, Gesamtschulen, and Gymnasien) in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia during 2001.¹⁷ The selected sample was students who came from a German, Turkish, or Resettler family background in 24 urban and rural areas. Roughly 69,200 German, 5,200 Turkish, and 8,400 Resettler adolescents were asked to participate in this study. In the end, 11,000 students agreed to participate. The final numbers of those participating were 6,055 German; 1,652 Turkish, and 3,539 Resettler students.¹⁸

¹⁶ Dr Joachim Brus, *Proud But Isolated? Effects of In-Group Favoritism and Acculturation Preferences on Inter-Ethnic Attitudes and Contact Between German, Turkish and Resettler Adolescents*, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, Vol 31, No 1, January 2005, page 4.

¹⁷ Note: Hauptschulen is the lowest form of scholarly education in Germany – the minimum requirement for graduation at ninth grade. Realschulen is more competitive than Hauptschule and finishes in the tenth grade. Students in Realschulen are required to have “Mittlere Reife” which is needed to start further “blue collar” skills such as training a carpenter, handcraft training, etc. Gesamtschule is combination of all three schools, and the student can change between the different types depending on their academic performance. Gymnasien is the highest level of education – the minimum requirement is 13 years of education and finishes with the “Abitur”. In the last three years students specialize in their subjects; and take at least two foreign languages. Special thanks to Katharina Strauss for this information.

¹⁸ Ibid, page 12.

Worth mentioning is that of the four different German schools, there were variances as to participation. First, there were fewer adolescents from Gesamtschulen schools across all the groups. Second, there were fewer migrant youths from the Gymnasium schools compared with the overall population distribution. Third, students from the Hauptschule schools composed a disproportionate percentage of the sample. Finally, there were too few students from the Gymnasium schools.

Across all four schools, the gender distribution was unbalanced with more Turkish and Resettler females participating in the study. Turkish and Resettler adolescents were classified according to their migration background, not their citizenship.¹⁹ To balance the overall sampling distribution with the population, the analysis was weighted to adjust for gender and school type in relation to the distribution in the population.²⁰

Table 1 below shows the result of first part of the study.

Table 1 – Average responses to the feeling barometer

General Feelings	German Adolescents	Turkish Adolescents	Resettler Adolescents
Towards German Youth	M = 1.26	M = 0.90	M = 1.00
Towards Turkish Youth	M = -0.24	M = 1.36	M = -0.26
Towards Resettler Youth	M = 0.18	M = 0.41	M = 1.19

Labeled -2 for very negative feeling
Labelled +2 for very positive feeling

Source: IKG Youth Panel, 2001

According to the study, each group of adolescents ranked the German youth in a positive manner. Conversely, the German adolescents did not express warm feelings towards the Turkish or Resettler youth. However, rather than negative expressions towards the minority groups, they

¹⁹ Ibid, page 13.

²⁰ Ibid, page 14.

remained for the most part indifferent. This corresponds closely with assumptions of the Social Dominance Theory since the dominant group expresses closeness with the in-group but keeps the subordinate or lower-status groups at a certain distance.²¹

The Turkish youth received the worst ranking from the German and Resettler – adolescents. The Germans thought negatively about the Turkish youth, and the Resettlers thought negatively about the Turkish youth as well. The Turkish adolescents, however, had an extremely high opinion of themselves. Their positive ranking about themselves was higher than the German and Resettler positive ranking about themselves. More importantly, the Turkish youth ranked the high-status group (German Youth) in a very positive manner.

The Resettler adolescents from the former USSR, Poland and Romania, showed the largest differences in their feelings towards the other two groups. Resettler adolescents ranked the German youth extremely positive; almost as positive as they ranked their own group. The Resettler ranking of the Turkish youth showed a very negative trend with a tendency towards rejection. In summary, the Resettlers maintained the social hierarchy by expressing closeness with the dominant group but distance to the low-status group.²²

Analyzing the key aspects of Table 1, the study indicates German adolescents are friendly to Resettler's adolescents than Turkish adolescents. Secondly, the Turkish adolescents favored themselves (autonomy) over the German or Resettler adolescents. Finally, the Resettler adolescents clearly favored the German adolescents over the Turkish adolescents.

Table 2 below shows the average approval and disapproval in the attitude structure.

²¹ Ibid, page 14.

²² Ibid, page 14.

Table 2 – Average approval and disapproval in the attitude structure

Disapproval and approval of Regarding	German Adolescents		Turkish Adolescents		Resettler Adolescents	
	w/TA	w/RA	w/GA	w/RA	w/GA	w/TA
Emotional Factor	-0.30	0.11	0.91	0.28	1.00	-0.37
Behavioral Factor	-0.01	0.22	0.68	0.05	0.85	-0.27
Resource anxieties	-0.32	-0.53	-1.12	-0.83	-1.15	-0.45
Evaluations towards out- group sociality	-0.65	-0.38	-0.14	-0.13	-0.03	-0.53

Note: Means are based on a scale ranging from -2 for 'strong disapproval' to +2 for 'strong approval'.
Source: IKG Youth Panel 2001

Minority adolescents (Turkish and Resettler) have strong approval towards the German youth regarding the emotional and behavioral relationships. The results favor a very positive relationship. German adolescents, however, seem to disapprove the Turkish and Resettler youth regarding the emotional and behavior factors. In fact, the German adolescents ranked the Turkish and Resettler adolescents negatively in 6 of the 8 categories above. Only the Resettler adolescents were viewed favorable by the German adolescents regarding emotional and behavior factors.

It appears to be the case that German adolescents are widely accepted by the minority youth (Turkish/Resettler). Turkish immigrants, however, seem to be rejected or at least kept at a certain distance by both the Germans and Resettlers. Resettler adolescents were viewed more favorable by the German youth, but they seem to view Turkish adolescents in a negative manner.²³ Furthermore, Turkish adolescents received disapproval rankings in all categories from the German and Resettler adolescents.

The final part of the study analyzed Inter-Ethnic Behavior (Personal Contact). Interpersonal contact is a very personal matter based of mutual liking and an overlap of interests and sharing of preferences. The items measuring inter-ethnic contact focused on voluntary

²³ Ibid, page 16.

contact situation during leisure time, not distorted by institutionally enforced contact situations. Participants were asked how often they had met members of the other groups since the last summer vacation in order to: play together, invite her/him to their home, go to the cinema, borrow something, and visit him/her at their house.²⁴

As expected, according to the study, the personal contact mainly related to in-group encounters. Almost all German respondents (99 percent) had met with other German adolescents for leisure activities since the last summer holidays in 2000. Ninety-five percent of the Turkish adolescents had in-group gathering whereas ninety-two percent of the Resettler adolescents had in-group encounters.

The comparison of the inter-group relations revealed 82 percent of Turkish and 87 percent of Resettler adolescents met German youths; whereas 38 percent of the German adolescents met Turkish youths, and 51 percent of the Germans met Resettler adolescents during leisure time in 2000 and 2001.²⁵

Table 3 - Experiences of inter-ethnic personal contact

Personal Contact	German Adolescents	Turkish Adolescents	Resettler Adolescents
With German adolescents	m = 2.98	M = 1.76	m = 2.08
With Turkish adolescents	m = .63	M = 2.34	m = 0.67
With Resettler adolescents	m = .92	M = 0.92	m = 2.49

Source: IKG Youth Panel, 2001

0 for never
4 for very often

Table 3 shows the Experiences of Inter-Ethnic Personal Contact. German adolescents have more personal contact with Resettler adolescents (.92) than with Turkish adolescents (.63). Turkish adolescents have more personal contact with German adolescents (1.76) than with the Resettler adolescents (.92). Resettler adolescents also had more contact with German

²⁴ Ibid, page 16.

²⁵ Ibid, page 16.

adolescents (2.08) than with Resettler adolescents. Resettler adolescents had relatively low personal contact with Turkish adolescents. Both immigrant groups had more contact with the host society than with the other minority groups.

So what does the University of Bielefeld study tell us about Muslim assimilation in Germany? Arguably, these findings indicate that it does not seem to be that one of these three ethnic groups is isolated, but the high rates of in-group encounters for the immigrant groups might indicate a tendency towards self-isolation.²⁶ In the end, members of the host society (Germany) might insist on assimilation whereas the member of the migrant groups (Turks/Resettlers) might stress dissimilation if they are not willing to give up their traditional way of life.²⁷

This study supports the Social Dominance Theory that once a group gains dominance of another group, it will monopolize resources in an attempt to maintain and perpetuate its privileged status.²⁸ Because the ability to attain one's goals is deeply connected to one's social status, those of lesser status (Turkish/Resettlers) might find it in their interest to challenge the status quo that assigns them in a low position.²⁹ Furthermore, because nobody wants to be on the bottom of the social hierarchy, and few are willing to share the top; such group conflicts between different ethnic groups tend to be very difficult to resolve.³⁰

²⁶ Ibid, page 17.

²⁷ Ibid, page 4.

²⁸ Michelle Maiese, Social Status, http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/social_status/, September 2004.

²⁹ Ibid, page 2.

³⁰ Ibid, page 3.

THE “ROAD AHEAD”

Looking at Germany’s ‘Road Ahead’, there are a few recommendations that need to be tackled so Muslims can better assimilate into Germany. First, Muslims need to be fluent in German, their host country’s language. Second, grants of citizenship to the Muslim population needs to continue on its upward trend. Third, achieving public corporation status would also represent a symbolic affirmation by Germany that Islam has become part of the everyday religious landscape. Fourth, the German public school system needs to offer Islam as a religious class option. Fifth, leadership needs to continue to promote unity between Muslims and non-Muslims. Sixth, the citizens of Germany need to move away from calling 2nd and 3rd generations of Muslims “foreigners.” Finally, the importance of Turkey’s acceptance into the EU can’t be overemphasized.

The first recommendation in the “Road Ahead” is the language barrier of the first and second generation Muslims. The language barrier has hindered the process and serves as a difficult obstacle for older generations of Turkish guest workers. When Turkish laborers were recruited for the car, steel and mining industries, they were offered mostly arduous shift work. At the time, they weren’t required to take language courses, nor did their shift schedule make it easy to find the time.³¹ More than likely the older segment of the Turkish (Muslim) population will continue to have challenges with the language barrier; and therefore, never receive German citizenship due to inability to meet the language proficiency requirement. Hence, the total number of Turkish foreigners in Germany will continue to remain high until the first and second generations of Turkish immigrants pass.

³¹ Hans Nichols. *Germany Grapples With Immigration*. Insight on the News, Article, 30 September 2002, Volume 18 Issue 36, pg 24, 2p, 1c

Other experts have argued the importance of the minority group speaking the host society language. For example, Louise Hendrickson, a professor from San Francisco State University, in a January 2005 article argues that the main determining factor to whether someone is assimilated into German culture largely rests on whether individuals can speak German and are willing to follow German customs and rules. She further elaborates that all that truly matters is if one can speak the language, until then, all immigrant groups stay in their isolated communities, removed from the German citizens.³²

A second recommendation to better assimilate Muslims into Germany is that grants of citizenship to the Muslim population continue on its upward trend. According to Dr. Ghulam M. Haniff, St. Cloud University, St. Cloud, Minnesota, the arrival, settlement, and adjustment of the Muslim population to their adopted land takes place in five stages. The first stage is bewilderment. The second stage is adaptation and adjustment. The third stage consists of organization. The fourth stage is activism, and the fifth stage is integration. His study indicates the Muslim community in Germany has remained separate and apart from the rest of the German society. He argues, “The result is that even after half a century of living in Germany; Muslims, collectively, are not fully accepted into society. The large community of Turkish and other Muslims continue to be viewed as guest workers that now should go home.”³³

Dr. Haniff states the future is faced with many obstacles, but there are positive trends for Muslim assimilation into Germany. Arguably, Muslim assimilation is in the early fifth state of integration. As assimilation is part of a process, citizenship (or the sense of belonging) plays an integral role. As the citizenship analysis indicates, Turks (Muslims) are receiving German citizenship at higher rates than the other three countries combined. Turks receiving German

³² Louise Herdrickson, *The Impacts of Assimilation: Concepts of Citizenship in Germany*. Jan 05, page 15

³³ Graham M. Haniff, *Muslim Communities in the West: From Margins to the Mainstream*”, Paper presented at the AMSS 32nd Annual Conference Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 26-28 Sep 2003.

citizenship have increased 200% between 1995 and 2002, while the Poles, Russians, and Romanians receiving German citizenship have fallen between 70 and 85 percent during this same period. The ‘citizenship’ trends are a positive sign in this assimilation process that is going to take time.

A third key factor in the “Road Ahead” involves financial benefits from official recognition and achieving public corporation status. This would represent a symbolic affirmation by the state that Islam has become part of the everyday religious landscape in Germany. Given that Germany has ultimately granted public corporation status to religious groups other than Protestants and Catholics in the past, it is hard to believe that more than three million German Muslims will be forever shut out of this system.³⁴ There are approximately 45,000 Jews in Germany. In 2003, for example, Germany officially recognized Judaism as a religion. This action brought in over 3 million dollars in money to be distributed to Jewish groups, which can help with assimilating the newly immigrated to Germany.³⁵

The fourth aspect to the “Road Ahead” is an examination of religious education in Germany’s school system. Most German schools provide religious education as part of their core curriculum; and parents can choose whether to send their children to Evangelical or Catholic religious classes, or to withdraw them from such school activities. If a student opts to withdrawal from a religious class, he/she can still graduate, but cannot receive extra points on his/her diploma. One must have high points to get accepted into a German University. Understandably, Muslims would like Islam to be one of the religious choices. Islam, however, is not being taught in the German schools, and discussions of the issue are very contentious. Islam

³⁴ Joel S. Fetzer & J. Christopher Soper, *Muslims and the State in Britain France, and Germany*, 2005, page 100

³⁵ Louise Hendrickson, *The Impacts of Assimilation: Concepts of Citizenship in Germany*, Article, San Francisco State University, 2005, page 9.

is the third largest religion in Germany after Catholicism and Protestantism. Yet, unlike them, it is not officially recognized as a legal public body.³⁶

Muslim organizations have persistently requested the inclusion of an Islamic alternative subject taught in the German schools, and so far they have received varying responses from cities and federal states. Several regions are considering requests for Islamic religious courses in schools, but this issue has not yet been resolved. For example, in May 2005, it was announced in the state of Hesse that all schools will soon offer instruction in Islam to Muslim students.³⁷ In some areas of Germany, like Bremen, students learn about Islam in their extracurricular Turkish language and civilization classes, which are managed by an organization linked to the Turkish government, with a secular character and orientation. In other areas, all German students study Islam in a comparative course which is part of the core curriculum. The course is not confessional but oriented towards the objective knowledge of the contents, practices and histories of the different religions.³⁸

The presence of Islam still poses a number of challenges for German schools, but the integration of this religion is a key to assimilation in the future. Despite, however, concerns on the part of secularists and others, as well as the divisions apparent in the Muslim community, the movement to spread Islamic education in the German school system seems to be gathering speed. Another challenge is the education of teachers to teach Islam. As of 2004, only one university had announced plans to introduce training programs for teachers in Islamic education.³⁹ Therefore, despite the large number of Muslim students, there is no efficient system

³⁶ Joel S. Fetzer & J. Christopher Soper, *Muslims and the State in Britain France, and Germany*, 2005, page 44.

³⁷ Sean. Hannity. *Europe Closing Shop*.

³⁸ Berta Alvarez-Miranda, Complutense University, Madrid, Muslim Communities in Europe, Recognition of Religious Difference in Britain, Germany and France, Feb 2005, page 7.

³⁹ Veysel Oezcan, Humboldt University Berlin, *Top German Parties Back Islamic Education*. www.migrationinformation.org, 1 Oct 2002, page 1.

of religious instruction in the German schools for them.⁴⁰ To be treated equally, the Muslim's choice of religion should be offered at the German schools and the integration of Islam in the school system should not be overlooked.

Fifth, leadership is a key aspect of assimilation. German leadership must refrain from alienating the minority Muslim population. Strong leadership is needed from both the German and Muslim communities in order to overcome alienation. Thankfully, world leadership has taken a proactive step in this process; starting the process off in the right direction. In August 2005, for example, Pope Benedict XVI told Muslim leaders in Cologne, Germany, that Christians and Muslims must work together to defeat terrorism. The Pope said terrorism undermines the foundations of all civil society. Muslim leaders expressed satisfaction following the meeting. The President of the Turkish Islamic Union said the participants shared the Pope's position. He said: "With this common platform, we are able together to fight terrorism".⁴¹

Muslim leadership can continue to follow this peaceful process through media and community outreach. For example, in Germany there are no holy days for Muslim, Jewish and other minority religious groups. Holy days such as the Islamic Eid ul Fitr or the Jewish Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kipper are not public holidays in Germany. Turkish elders have taken the first step in community outreach. They are using major Turkish and Islamic holidays to host celebrations to which they invite Germans, other Turks from the neighborhood, and the wider city to create opportunities for encounters that serve to create better communication between Turks and Germans. The primary goal for such events is to make Turkish culture and holidays

⁴⁰ Ibid, page 2.

⁴¹ Sabine Castelfranco, *Pope Meets with Germany's Muslim Leaders*, 20 August 2005, page 1.

known to the wider public and to educate Germans about Turkish culture and Islamic religious practices.⁴²

A sixth recommendation comes from the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). In a report dated 6 June 04, the ECRI noted that persons of immigrant origin, including those who are second or third generation born in Germany, tended to remain “foreigners” in the eyes of the German public and in the way the German government keeps demographic statistics. The report argues that the term “foreigner” still seems in fact to encompass people who have applied and received German citizenship. ECRI encourages the German authorities to make further progress in shaping immigration and integration policies which do not consider immigrants primarily in terms of their utility value and which recognize the positive role of immigration and the fact that immigrants constitute an integral part of the German society.⁴³ For many Germans the typical “foreigners” are Turks, even though they are less than a half of all the foreigners in Germany. Cem Ozdemir, the first ethnic Turk elected to the German Parliament, says there is alienation among Turks, which create conditions for a potential explosion in Germany. He states, there is no guarantee that better integration precludes all extremist violence, but if Germany’s increasing Muslim population is not better integrated, extremists will have more potential supporters to recruit and train.⁴⁴

Lastly, and arguably, the toughest challenge in the upcoming years is Turkey’s pending entry into the European Union (EU). This is an important milestone for the Muslim community, specifically for the Turks living in Germany. If the EU disapproves Turkey’s entrance into this

⁴² Patricia Ehrkamp, *Becoming Turkish: Enacting home, identity and resistance*. Paper presented at the TIRES Summer Institute, Miami, Fl, 2002, page 1.

⁴³ *European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, Third Report on Germany*, Adopted on 5 December 2003 and released in Strasbourg 8 June 2004, page 13 & 14.

⁴⁴ Pamela Irving Jackson and Peter A. Zervakis; *The Integration of Muslims in Germany, France and the United States: Law, Politics and Public Policy*, Paper prepared at the 2004 annual meetings of the American Sociological Association. All rights reserved 2004. Page 19.

union, then all Turks, and probably all Muslims, will wonder why they were not worthy to be accepted into this union of states. The future of this relationship between Turkey and the EU is a catalyst. If Turkey is denied entrance into Europe, millions of Muslims in Europe will feel alienated, possibly causing resentment and possibly unrest where their population is the greatest. This challenge is further exuberated when important members of the political elite, such as the former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, call for rejecting Turkey's admission to the EU because of its Muslim culture was irredeemably non-European.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Stefano Allievi and Jorgen S. Nielsen. Muslim Networks and Transnational Communities in and across Europe. Muslim Minorities Volume I. Copyright 2003. page 106.

CONCLUSION

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 in the United States and those recently in Spain and Britain have forced many in the non-Muslim European majority to begin looking fearfully at newcomers, mainly Muslims. There has been a sense of alienation between the German majority and the Muslim minority. As a result of this alienation, tension between the German majority and the Muslim minority is an issue the German government is addressing. This tension, as a result of demographic changes in Germany and Europe, and the alienation of the Muslim minority in Germany and Europe, could have crucial security ramifications for this part of the world, and ultimately the United States.

The question of Muslims assimilating in to German society, conforming, and becoming German is not easy to answer. Muslim acceptance by the German majority has thus far remained colored more by alienation than by a sense of belonging and integration.⁴⁶ Assimilation is not a condition, but a process that takes time. The greater alienation by the German majority will lessen assimilation of the Muslim minority into German society. There are numerous challenges to Muslim assimilation in Germany. Measuring assimilation does not provide a definite yes, or a definite no, to its answer set.

The “Road Ahead” for true Muslim assimilation into Germany will be faced with many challenges in the upcoming years. The good news is Muslims are applying for and receiving German citizenship at a higher rate than other minority countries. This signals a positive trend that both the German majority and Muslim minority can continue to monitor and examine in the years to come. The University of Bielefeld study, on the other hand, indicates Muslim children are not yet being accepted by the host society. German adolescents are friendly to Resettler’s

⁴⁶ Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, *Muslims in the West: From Sojourners to Citizens*. Copyright 2002, page 65

(non-Muslim) adolescents than Turkish (Muslim) adolescents. Secondly, Turkish adolescents favored themselves (autonomy) over the German or Resettler adolescents; indicating a higher degree of self-assessment. Third, the Resettler adolescents clearly favor the German adolescents (host society) over the Turkish adolescent.

In the end, the two variables in this study; citizenship and University of Bielefeld study, only scratch the surface of whether or not Muslims can assimilate into German society. As the German government continues to debate their public policy goals, the issue of whether Germany can be transformed into a multicultural society capable of naturalizing Islam remains to be seen.

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