



Factors of Integration for Second and Third Generation Muslims: Perspectives from Germany and the United States _____

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Factors of Integration for Second and Third Generation Muslims

Perspectives from Germany and the United States

The first generation of native-born German Muslims will come of age in a different country than that where their grandparents settled, and where their parents remained institutional outsiders. A German with Turkish parents now chairs one of the five national political parties,¹ the German Islamic Conference (DIK) is in its third year of meetings with government officials,² and scores of thousands of German passports are granted annually to the children of foreigners. In February, the coach of the national soccer team called up his first Turkish-German starter.³ All of this takes place within recent memory of the last major party leader to utter the defiant words “Germany is not a country of immigration.”

Voters in the United States elected to the presidency the Christian son of a non-practicing Kenyan Muslim and a white Kansan mother, just two years after the first Muslim was elected to the US Congress⁴, and seven years since the country engaged in open warfare with largely Muslim adversaries around the globe.

As two of the most dynamic immigration societies in the transatlantic community, Germany and the US have each experienced successes and persistent challenges in the political representation and socio-economic integration of their immigrant origin populations. At a recent high-level workshop held by the Transatlantic Academy and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Washington DC, a group of German and American experts reviewed predominant perceptions and gleaned lessons from the two countries’ experi-

ences integrating the second and third generation Muslims into local and national civic, political and economic life. The twenty-seven participants were drawn together from think tanks, public administration, academia, news media and foundations in the US and Germany to explore what is known about the two cases and what can be done to promote integration.

This workshop was especially attractive to the participants, since it offered a particular approach to engage the group and gain a substantial dialogue and formulate recommendations as a result. The facilitator, an expert from the German *Denkmodell*, incorporated a three-step work process: a critical analysis of current achievements, a visionary phase on remaining and new challenges, and the recommendation phase.

Several insights about the difficulties of the US-Germany comparison emerged during an initial overview. The US is thought to enjoy an advantage with integrating its own Muslim minority because of Americans’ greater comfort level with religion. In a country with well established traditions of conspicuous expressions of religious faith, as well as the recent embrace “visible” ethnic and racial diversity, the sight of Muslim piety – whether of women wearing headscarves or permit requests for mosque construction – is more easily accepted. In Germany, a “return to religion” can sometimes be construed as a historical regression. Combined with the first generation’s linguistic and cultural distinctiveness, this has made Germany’s absorption of Muslim populations more difficult. The

1 <http://www.oezdemir.de/>

2 <http://www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de/>

3 <http://www.mesut-oezil.com/>

4 <http://ellison.house.gov/>



coincidence of economically disadvantaged, religiously and ethnically different populations has reinforced systemic discrimination. The relatively privileged socio-economic status of many Muslim Americans, on the other hand, has led public opinion to disassociate ethnicity, race, religion and class. Nonetheless, the links between political preferences and religious belonging are increasingly intertwined.

Muslims are more ethnically diverse in the US, with significant proportions of South Asians, Arabs, North Africans, Southeast Asians, and non-immigrant African-American Muslims. In Europe, ethnic groups tend to be clustered, e.g. North Africans in France, South Asians in the UK, and Turks in Germany and Austria. After immigration quotas were lifted in 1965, many wealthy Muslims settled permanently in the US. Turks came to Germany as guest workers, and many of them

and German officials expected they would eventually “go home.” Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan’s comments in a recent tour of Germany illustrated the remaining tensions surrounding the place and role of Turkish communities. He said Turks in Germany should have faith in German institutions and justice systems, but also that they should resist assimilation as a crime against mankind. This reopened discussions that many had hoped to leave behind after the failed campaigns for double citizenship in the 1990s, and the reform of German citizenship law in 1999–2000.

The pressing issues of socio-economic and political integration are often subordinated to discussions of security and terrorism. Just as a local form of militant religion briefly served as a vehicle to combat racial injustice and foreign policy decisions by US Muslims in the 1960s and 1970s (the Nation of Islam), so has vio-

	United States	Germany
Number of Muslim immigrants	2.5-3.5 million	3.5-4.5 million
Period of most immigration	1990-2000	1970-1980
Percent born in country	35%	50%
Main origin	Arab countries	Turkey
Percent of Muslims holding citizenship	70%	35%

lent extremism found a small toehold in contemporary Germany. In the winter of 2008–9, two young Germans were at large⁵, presumed to be plotting against German interests to Afghanistan or Pakistan. No one knows whether they can carry out their threats to target Bundeswehr soldiers or if they will try to return to Germany. A German Muslim was convicted in Paris this February for complicity in the Djerba synagogue bombing of 2002, and several others were arrested in September 2007 for a plot aimed at US military installations in Germany. The small but dangerous threat represented by these men, who include a large proportion of “native” converts (the counterparts of Americans José Padilla and Adam Gadahn, accused of helping Al Qaeda), has raised serious security concerns.

Less spectacular than terrorism, but just as urgent, are the broader questions of fine-tuning integration policies towards the successive generations of young Muslims coming of age in today’s Germany and United States, where civil society leaders and public officials are struggling to keep up with demographic change. Are educational opportunities sufficient? Is the poli-

tical system open enough? Is religion finding its place in the national institutional landscape? Is discrimination an obstacle to advancement? As might be suspected, the challenges of full integration – with the mutual respect, recognition and openness of both “the state” and “communities” – are subtle. Recent developments in both countries belie some of these complex realities. Workshop participants began their discussion by considering four statements designed to provoke strong reactions.

These points provoked a wide-ranging background discussion, allowing participants to pool together some basic assessments of achievements and challenges in the German and American cases. Four themes

- 1) political participation**
- 2) socio-economic integration**
- 3) educational opportunities and**
- 4) religious integration**

guided participants in breakout discussions during the course of the daylong workshop.

Discussion Starters

The “average” Muslim in the US is wealthier and better educated than the average American; in Germany, the reverse is true.

The right to religious education (or an ethics/philosophy substitute) in public schools is guaranteed by most German Länder with large Muslim minorities; in the US, a “wall of separation” keeps religion out of schools – even the pledge of allegiance has attracted lawsuits because of its inclusion of the words “one nation, under God...”

Citizenship law in the US is famously liberal – being born here makes you a citizen; for the past decade, Germany has had partial *ius soli* (i.e. one parent must have been legally resident for 5+ years).

The US has damaged its reputation among Muslims in the West due to its detainee policies and practices; Germany has upheld the rule of law in its terrorism trials

On the socio-economic front, for example, equal access to educational opportunity was seen to be critical to any future success story. This can mean early language training (pre-Kindergarten), but it can also mean seeking out the best and the brightest to make sure they have the chance to attend the top high schools and universities. The methods pursued by government may differ, but these are crucial steps to avoiding the trap of “parallel societies” and to making sure there are opportunities for social mobility based on meritocratic values. Whether or not there will be greater opportunities will depend a good deal on the health of the economy. The fact that economies are contracting does not bode well for those of migrant background, who suffer higher unemployment rates because of lower skill sets as well as occasional discrimination. Workshop participants elaborated a set of descriptions and recommendations in a first attempt to tackle broad issue areas. The conference aimed to describe status quo of second and third generation Muslims, to collectively appraise achievements and challenges and to elaborate recommendations for the new governments in each country. The recommendations collected here are not exhaustive and do not reflect a group consensus. But they do reflect a shared objective among participants to what might be called the “New Powell Doctrine.”

When Islam came up in presidential primaries and 2008 election campaign, it took the form of exhortations against “Islamofascism” or whispered insinuations and emphatic denials – in all, not exactly an affirmative experience for Muslim American voters. Retired general Colin Powell offered an eleventh-hour endorsement to Barack Obama and denounced the rumors about religion and stated the obvious retort (what he called “the really right answer”) that had eluded national politicians: Muslims can be good, patriotic Americans as anyone else.

The correct answer is he’s not a Muslim; he’s a Christian and has always been a Christian. But the really right answer is what if he is? Is there really something wrong with being a Muslim in this country? The answer is no, that’s not America. Is there something wrong with some seven-year old Muslim-American kid believing that he or she could be President?⁶

Workshop participants wondered whether the 44th President of the United States would keep with recent tradition of saying aloud his middle name when taking the oath of office or if he would downplay his family’s own heritage in Muslim lands (he said Hussein, twice). In a gesture to the predominantly Muslim audience of Arab satellite television, President Obama chose to grant his first interview to the Washington correspondent of *Al-Arabiya*. Powell’s words – “is there really something wrong with being a Muslim in this country?” – will continue to echo in Washington and Berlin as officials and civil society leaders take on extremism and discrimination while also providing constructive channels for substantive integration at the highest levels of government and society.

The remainder of this report reproduces the lists drawn up by sub-groups during the workshop of “achievements and challenges” in the four domains,

1. Political Participation
2. Socio-economic Integration
3. Educational Opportunity
4. Religious Integration

as well as a repository of all recommendations raised as potential policy directions in these areas – no particular item is the subject of consensus, but together they provide an interesting snapshot of the group’s concerns at a time of modest optimism and progress in integration in Germany and the United States.

Report: Jonathan Laurence, Transatlantic Academy

6 Ret. Gen. Colin Powell on Meet the Press, Sunday October 19, 2008. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYELqbZAQ4M> [Accessed January 15, 2009]

Results

Working Group Results on

- Political Participation
 - Socio-economic Integration
 - Educational Opportunity
 - Religious Integration
-



1. Political Participation

United States

Achievements:

- Voting and political engagement are widespread, voter turnout among Muslims is high
- High percentage of Muslim immigrants are U.S. citizens
- Muslim media makers
- Muslim Congressman elected after 9/11
- Muslim officials in the administration, bureaucracy
- Anti-Obama campaign + anti-Muslim sentiment had little effect

Challenges:

- Combat political discrimination
- Obama dodged the question of his family's Muslim background, failing to counter with "what if I am?"
- A xenophobic anti-Muslim lobby, supported by some powerful Christian organizations
- The Muslim Lobby=does it even exist? Is it influential like the Israel lobby?
- Backlash/violence against Muslims
Is participation "token" (i.e.: one Muslim in Congress or two=symbolic not meaningful of larger change)

Germany

Achievements:

- Cem Özdemir becomes head of Green Party (increase of elected immigrants in political parties and office)
- 2001 ius soli law
- Acknowledgment of minorities (e.g. Islamic Conference)
- Creation of civil society associations

Challenges:

- Dual citizenship
- No local level enfranchisement
- Legal status "Ausländer"
- Leitkultur
- Exclusive political rhetoric
- Addressing the migrants as citizens and not as migrants
- Overcome language protectionism
- Existence of "parallel societies"
- Risk of community spokesman w/o legitimacy
- Structural problem of party nomination system

Recommendations:

Germany

- Advancement of Minorities in Parties
- Voluntary Party Quotas
- Ius Soli (Born in Germany = Citizen)
- Dual Citizenship
- Inclusionary Terminology

United States

- More Political Appointments
- Rigorous Due Process
- Expediting Visa
- Expediting Citizenship
- Guidelines on Approved Charities (Treasury)
- More Muslims in Media

2. Socio-economic Integration

United States

Achievements:

- Muslim participation in and formation of civic organizations is widespread
- 41% of Muslims in US make more than 75 K/year and only 2% are poor as compared to 18% in Germany
- Integration of Muslims from diverse ethnicities
- Higher education attained
- Hyphenation in self-identification or community identification (e.g. Pakistani-American)
- Likely to have close “non-Muslim” friends, according to public opinion polls

Challenges:

- Successful Muslims tend to be clustered in professions (e.g. engineering, medicine, law, science, etc) and don't contribute as much to the arts, literature, etc, especially in the U.S.
- Economic disparity among groups of Muslims (e.g. African-American Muslims as a group are worse off than more recently arrived Arab, South Asian and Southeast Asian Muslims)
- Culture and gender issues within American context
- Inter-marriage

Germany

Achievements:

- Economic discussion of community based commerce
- Tourism / groceries
- Professional training
- Betriebsräte / workers councils
- State subsidized advisory bodies
- Social Welfare
- Migrants as a chance in global economy (between achievement and challenge)

Challenges:

- Segregation
- Language problems
- Lack of migrants in leading positions
- Employment discrimination
- Higher unemployment rates of migrants
- Religious issue at work

Recommendations:

Germany

- Education and Media: Address heterogeneity of Europe as Point of Pride (Immigrant Benefits)
- Public Discourse on accessible “German Values” (Not Exclusive)
- Address Dual Citizenship / Access to Citizenship
- Develop a Civil Rights “Apparatus”

United States

- Job Training: Preserve and Enhance Idea of Upward Mobility for All
- Enforcement and Protection of Civil Rights Law
- Gov't Officials / Edu Take Pride in Immigrant Narrative & History
- Positive Feedback
- Leverage Private Sector – Promote Diversity (Corporations Cater to Consumer Base)

3. Educational Opportunity

United States

Achievements:

- College grades in Muslim America average with that of all Americans
- Acceptance of religiosity
- Robust student loans available for most people
- Unified high schools (one track for all), and Muslims also often attend coeducational high schools, suggesting they are taking advantage of the education system and not allowing conservative views to keep girls out of school, e.g.
- Rise in number of religious schools

Challenges:

- Inequality of access
- Access to information
- No "Muslim higher education" opportunities (like Christian or Jewish)
- Flight from public to private schools
- K-12 education is very Western-centric, exposing Muslim children to history and culture with which they might not fully identify
- Gender issues; Girls sometimes being excluded (e.g. from sports), either because of their parents or by their own choosing
- Cost of higher education, Public vs. private schools

Germany

Achievements:

- Low cost of high education
- Language courses (e.g. "Mama lernt Deutsch", intended specifically to teach mothers, so they can teach their kids)
- Mother tongue + religion programs after school
- Few scholarships available for minorities

Challenges:

- Early teaching in schools
- Mainly not a religious issue
- 3-tier secondary school system
- State operated educational system; differential university attendance rates
- Ethnic homogeneity (all-German or all-foreigner schools)
- Few scholarships available for minorities
- Islamic education not uniformly offered
- Recognition of Turkish-language abilities

Recommendations:

Germany

- More Fluid Tracking System – Create and Support "Second Chance" for Gymnasium for Muslims
- "EI" (Excellence Initiative) for schools: best practice; better performance; cultural competence
- Begin Language Training Earlier: German as 2nd Language

United States

- Consider Cost for Better and/or Higher Education as Part of Broader Reform of Education Policy (Accessibility)

4. Religious Integration

United States

Achievements:

- Mosque construction
- Acceptance of religious practice, even in public sphere (e.g. headscarves are widely worn by girls and women in primary and secondary schools as well as in colleges and universities)
- Interfaith dialogue (esp. Post-9/11)
- Recognition of Muslim traditions and holidays
- Separation of church and state
- 1st Amendment
- Modernity is compatible with religiosity in the US
- Pride in Pluralism

Challenges:

- Work out balance between being a member of an international religion and a member of a nation state
- Mosque construction sometimes faces bureaucratic or neighborhood hurdles in excess of what would normally confront a new building project, suggesting prejudice
- Acceptance of religious practices and symbols
- Embrace secular holidays
- Post 9/11 Islamophobia
- Post 9/11 Legislation (Patriot Act)
- Reform of religious texts and how they are interpreted in the U.S.

Germany

Achievements:

- Muslims in public media (Wort zum Freitag?)
- Presence of mosques
- German Islamic Conference
- Mutual acquaintance + visibility of religious leaders/politicians
- Improvement of citizenship/naturalization (test questions)
- Construction of mosques (e.g. Cologne)
- Cooperation between church and state is an opportunity

Challenges:

- Religious instructions in public schools (Ländersache)
- Head scarf
- Muslim X (Ethnic Identity)
- Islam's official recognition (e.g. German tax collecting system)
- Lack of interfaith dialogue
- Resistance against "minarets"
- Lack of education on Islam
- Role of state

Recommendations:

Germany

- Expand German Language Teacher Training For Islamic Education
- Create Legal Space For Islamic Schools
- Create Local-Level DIK (German Islam Conference)
- In-Country Training of Imams
- Strive for Less Hypocrisy in Federal Politics with Regards to Role of Turkish State

United States

- Security Policies Need to be More Mindful of U.S. Civil Liberties' Transition and Law; Consider Repealing P.A.T.R.I.O.T. Act
- Increase Qualified Representation of Muslim Americans in Political Appointments
- Speed Process of Naturalization / Personnel Available to Conduct Bureaucratic Process
- Avoid Polarizing Language in Official
- Enunciate the New Powell Doctrine: Clarify Role/Place of Religious Americans

Factors of Integration for Second and Third Generation Muslims: Perspectives from Germany and the United States

Friday, December 12th, 2008

at The Transatlantic Academy (GMF Building) 1700 18 Street NW, Washington, DC 20009

8:30 – 9:00am	A light breakfast will be available from 8:30 – 9:00am.
Opening Remarks 9:00 – 9:15am	Joint welcome by TA and FES Introduction of objectives for the day by Workshop Moderator: <i>Prof. Dr. Ulrich Erhardt</i> , Denkmodell
Part I 9:15 – 11:15am	GROUP DISCUSSION ON FOUR MAIN TOPICS <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) What are the key factors of political participation in local and national political life?2) What is the role of religion and religious communities in the social and political life of second and third generation migrants?3) How is socio-economic integration defined?4) What are relevant educational opportunities or professional training programs? Coffee break
Part II-A 11:30 – 12:30pm	BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION Each group will discuss one of these objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Political Participation• Religion Policy• Educational System• Socio-Economic Integration Lunch break
Part II-B 1:30 – 2:30pm	BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION Coffee break
Part III 3:00 – 5:00pm	GROUP PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS
Reception 5:30 – 7:30pm	WORKSHOP RECEPTION AND LIGHT DINNER

Participants List

Workshop on December 12, 2008



Name	Affiliation
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Azzaoui, Mounir	Georgetown University
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Cameron, Erica	Transatlantic Academy
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Czogalla, Michael	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
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Erhardt, Ulrich	Denkmodell
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Hartmann, Bastian	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Iftikhar, Arsalan	Islamica Magazine
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