THE GERMAN EDUCATION SYSTEM: 
AN IMPEDIMENT TO INTEGRATION OF TURKISH YOUTHS INTO SOCIETY 
A MODEST PROPOSAL

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by

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This thesis is dedicated to Dr. Harold Fry whose guidance has always been helpful, his wit has made me laugh and his knowledge has shown me that my abilities are endless.
A group of American tourists are anxiously sitting on a Lufthansa Airbus headed from Miami to Frankfurt, Germany. Katharina, a forty-five year old German native who is returning home after a business trip, strikes up a conversation with one of the tourists, Tom, a twenty-one year old college student. Katharina quickly discovers that this is Tom’s first trip to Germany and asks, “What are your plans for your visit?” Tom excitedly responds, “I am planning on undergoing the full German experience. I am going to drink a lot of beer, eat bratwurst, be a speed demon on the autobahn, visit some castles, and hopefully meet a cute blonde blue-eyed German girl.” Katharina nods, recognizing that Tom exemplifies the typical tourist whose views of Germany stem from stereotypes. She laughs, prompting a puzzled look from Tom.

“I will give you a fair warning dear, be prepared for a little culture shock.”

The above narrative illustrates that some people have a relative inaccurate perception of what twenty-first century Germany is really like. Their inaccurate depiction is based, for the most part, on stereotypes which in reality may be inaccurate, to a certain extent even politically incorrect. If one were to base their perception of German society on stereotypes, the Germans could be classified as a population of fair-haired excessive drinkers who reside in castles, drive fast cars, have a constant need to sport a pair of Lederhosen, and whose dietary needs consist solely of sauerkraut, schnitzel, and bratwurst.
Americans may be surprised to learn: the second most popular fast food in Germany is in fact the Döner, a Turkish gyro; a multitude of mosques have been built in Germany’s metropolitan cities; Lederhosen are primarily worn during the Oktoberfest; and approximately ten percent of the German population has a migration background which is not German. In reality, German society has drastically changed during the decades since the Second World War. The above mentioned stereotypes represent a traditional but antiquated view of Germany. The stark contrast between common American stereotypes of Germany and contemporary German reality makes it evident that there is a need to educate Americans about life in twenty-first century Germany. To gain a realistic understanding of what twenty-first century Germany is truly like, one must first address Germany’s demographics, which are provided in the opening chapters of this study.

Ten percent of Germany’s population is comprised of individuals who are not ethnic Germans. This diverse subpopulation is new to Germany; in fact, the majority of these foreigners have immigrated to Germany within the past fifty years. The largest minority currently residing in Germany are the Turks who began their migration to Germany during the Guest Worker Era in the early 1960s. The Turks have since grown to be the largest single ethnic minority, constituting two and a half percent of Germany’s total population. However, this minority is still in the process of integrating into German society.
In October of 2010 German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, declared that the integration process, which was intended to transform Germany into a multicultural country, has failed. Chancellor Merkel further insisted that Germany’s immigrants must strive to immigrate into the German society; this includes adapting to German customs and learning the German language. Deeply affected by Merkel’s statement are the Turks, who currently have a population of over two million residing in Germany. Political debates regarding this matter have become more heated, as Germany’s leading politicians place pressure on the Turks to integrate into German society. Most news stories voice strictly the opinions of the politicians and the older German population, and neglect to discuss what is happening among the German and Turkish youths. This thesis will provide a better understanding as to why the Turks are not able to successfully integrate into German society.

The focus of this thesis is conveyed through its title, “The German Education System: An Impediment to Integration of Turkish Youths into Society.” In other words, it is being asserted that the German education system is preventing the majority of Turkish students from successfully assimilating into the larger German society. The main subjects of this study are the Turks, the ethnic Germans, and the German education system. The relationship between the ethnic German majority and the Turkish minority is the central focus. This study aims to provide background information on these ethnic groups both individually and in correlation to each other. Furthermore, the study will explain why it is the German education system that is limiting the Turks integration and which school reforms need to take place to promote successful integration.
Methodology

Research materials used for this thesis include: statistics published by the German Census Bureau, publications from Germany’s leading magazines and newspapers, as well as books and dissertations which discuss the integration process in Germany. Nearly all of the sources are written in German, thus materials had to be translated. Additional information and consultations utilized in this thesis were obtained through the Kent State University’s German Studies courses, including Multiculturalism in Today’s Germany and German Culture. Most significant; however, are the personal experiences of the author who resided in Germany for twelve years. The author’s personal observations and experiences provide a first-person account of Germany’s transitioning to become a more diverse country. To eliminate bias, this thesis is written in third person and serves as an informative resource discussing the relationship between the Turks and ethnic Germans in correlation to integration. Numerous sources that voice critics’ opposing views have been consulted, and are presented to ensure that the reader can form their own opinions about the subject matter, in particular, whether or not the German education system is to blame for the Turks’ unsuccessful integration. Furthermore, all charts incorporated in this thesis with the exception of the chart depicted on page four have been created using the data provided by various sources; calculations were also made to determine several of the statistics.
CHAPTER I

GERMAN SOCIETY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The Population of Twenty-first Century Germany

As of July, 2011, Germany has 81,471,834 inhabitants, making it the sixteenth most populous country in the world and the second most populous nation in Europe.\(^1\) Germany’s population is an astonishing statistic when one acknowledges that its territory spans an area equal to the states of Ohio and Oregon. These two states have a combined total population of approximately 15.4 million inhabitants as of 2011,\(^2\) less than one-fifth that of Germany. Thus Germany is evidently a very densely populated country. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the population density was 230 people per square kilometer in December 2008.\(^3\) Germany’s most populous metropolitan cities—Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Cologne, and Frankfurt on the Main—are home to over ten percent of the German population. In fact, close to three-fourths of Germany’s population currently resides in broad urban areas.\(^4\) Germany may, however, soon lose its status as the sixteenth ranked country, if its population growth rate does not increase. As of 2011, Germany has an estimated population growth rate of minus 0.208%, placing it a

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\(^4\) Central Intelligence Agency, “Germany,” 250.
number 211 on the world’s population growth rate chart. The negative population growth rate seems like a rather curious phenomenon in view of Germany’s status as one of the world’s most populous countries. So why is Germany’s population growth rate this low? To answer this question, one must first understand what the population growth rate measures. The population growth rate is an annually published statistic which reflects the number of people who inhabit a territory at a given time as a result of birth, death, immigration, and emigration. To calculate a nation’s population growth rate, one has to subtract the nation’s death rate from the sum of its birth rate and net migration rate; the operation can be expressed as an equation,

\{(\text{births}) + (\text{migrants})\} – \text{deaths} = \text{population growth rate}

Germany’s negative population growth rate is largely caused by its declining birth rate. In 2011, only 8.3 births occurred in Germany for every one thousand people; its birth rate statistic earned Germany the 218th highest ranking in the country comparisons of birth rates. Germany’s declining birth rate also constitutes one key factor in the integration debate currently taking place, which will be further discussed in chapter five. A statistic published in July of 2011 indicated that 10.92 deaths occurred for every 1,000 people. It is clear that the births do not replace those who have died, and this contributes to a decline in population. Furthermore, the average life expectancy at birth is stated as 80.07 years. A population count, however, depends not only on the birth and death rates, but also on the net migration rate. The Central Intelligence Agency states that the net

5 Central Intelligence Agency, “Germany,” 250.
7 Central Intelligence Agency, “Germany,” 250.
migration rate denotes a figure that equals “the difference between the number of persons entering and those leaving a country during the year, per 1000 persons.” Germany’s net migration rate, as of 2011, is 0.54 migrants/1,000 population. When numbers are entered into the equation above, one finds that

\[
\left[8.3 \text{ (births)} + 0.54 \text{ (migrants)} \right] - 10.92 \text{ (deaths)} = -0.208 \text{ % population growth rate.}
\]

Why are the Germans having so few children? To answer this, one must understand why people choose to have several children. The most basic answer would indicate that humans are biologically driven to procreate to ensure their species survival and thereby extend their lineage. It is important to note that the environment a person lives in plays a key role in determining how many children a person has; for example, if a woman is living in a third world country she would be more likely to give birth to numerous children to 1) ensure that one of the children will survive to adulthood since the health care is poor, 2) have children who will be able to help the family survive by working, helping around the house, or tending to the family business such as farming, and 3) take care of the parents when they grow old. Germany is not a third world country, has universal healthcare, most adults do not live in poverty, and therefore do not need to birth children to ensure their own financial survival, and retirement homes are readily available. In light of these considerations one could say that to a German adult having a child is not a necessity but a choice. And many Germans are choosing to have few or no children at all, partially due to the Germans’ extreme work ethic. The German woman in

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10 Central Intelligence Agency, “Germany,” 250.
the twenty-first century is a well-educated individual who is likely to choose a career over having a family, or delays having a family until her thirties or forties. This factor is one of many which explain why the Germans are having fewer children. These declining birth rates explain Germany’s aging population which is depicted below.

**Altersstruktur der Bevölkerung - Deutschland und die Welt**

![Population Growth Pyramid](image)

The image above provided by the Central Intelligence Agency’s World Factbook 2011 titled “Age Distribution of the Population – Germany and the World” compares the age distributions in the population of Germany and the world through the use of population growth pyramids. The world’s youth population, which accounts for individuals between the ages of zero and fourteen, is twice as large as Germany’s youth population. Germany has a much larger senior population, which is comprised of individuals who are sixty-five years or older; in fact, it is over two and a half times larger than the world’s senior population. These data reinforce the fact that Germany is an aging

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population; researchers have indicated that the current trend will continue if Germany’s inhabitants do not choose to have more children.

Now to further define the population residing in Germany, one must consider Germany’s age structure, sex ratio, nationalities, and ethnic groups. The median age of persons residing in Germany is currently 44.9 years; furthermore, approximately sixty-six percent of the population is between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four, while over twenty percent is sixty-five years old or older, and those in the age range between newborns and fourteen years constitute only thirteen percent.\(^\text{12}\) This statistic underscores Germany’s relatively small youth population which will be further discussed in forthcoming chapters. Closer analysis of Germany’s youth population establishes that there are more boys than girls; this relationship is also true of the total population of Germany, which documents two males for every female.\(^\text{13}\)

Unsurprisingly, the primary, indeed the sole nationality of this population is German, since Germany’s citizens are broadly referred to as Germans. However, this does not mean that all of Germany’s inhabitants are in fact ethnic Germans. Twenty-first century Germany is a diverse and multi-cultural country due to its various ethnic groups. The following pie chart depicts the various ethnic groups residing in Germany as of 2011.

\(^\text{12}\) Central Intelligence Agency, “Germany,” 250.
\(^\text{13}\) Central Intelligence Agency, “Germany,” 251.
The green portion represents Germany’s largest ethnic group, the ethnic Germans. Constituting 2.4% of the entire population is Germany’s second largest single ethnic group, the Turks. The remaining 6.1% of the population, designated here as other, consist of various ethnic groups including Greeks, Italians, Poles, Russians, Serbo-Croatians, and Spaniards, among others.\textsuperscript{14} To summarize: today, almost ten percent of Germany’s population is comprised of ethnic groups other than ethnic Germans, and this sub-population totals nearly eight million of Germany’s approximately 81.5 million inhabitants.

A diverse population has an immediate effect on a society’s language and religion. Germany’s primary official and most frequently spoken language is German. Germany’s additional official languages include Frisian, Sorbian, and Danish, the latter two of which are spoken by Germany’s national minorities, the Sorbs and the Danes; furthermore, numerous immigrants converse in their native tongues including Turkish,\textsuperscript{14} Central Intelligence Agency, “Germany,” 251.
Greek, Italian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, and English. Language plays an essential role in efforts toward successful integration and will be discussed further in chapter ten.

With respect to religion, Germany is a predominantly Christian country. The bar graph below indicates that over sixty percent of Germany’s inhabitants are either Protestant or Roman Catholic Christians.\(^{15}\) Less than a third of Germany’s population has declared itself to be either unaffiliated or affiliated with a religion other than Islam or Roman Catholic and Protestant Christianity. It is important to note that those who officially declare an affiliation with a religion pay a tax which is deducted from their income and forwarded to the religion’s central office. Therefore, the large unaffiliated population may include some who are believers but have chosen to officially step out of the church to avoid having to pay this tax. Interestingly, almost four percent of Germany’s population declare themselves as Muslims.\(^{16}\) The majority of these believers who reside within Germany are of Turkish ethnicity.

\(^{15}\) Central Intelligence Agency, “Germany,” 251.

\(^{16}\) Central Intelligence Agency, “Germany,” 251.
Education is another significant component which must be studied to achieve fuller understanding of a population. A well-educated population is a literate society. According to a 2003 statistic, 99% of the population who are fifteen years or older in the land of Gutenberg are literate and thus can both read and write.\textsuperscript{17} A review of school life expectancy statistics, which measure the education achieved from primary through tertiary education, shows that the average German, whether male or female, receives sixteen years of schooling, or formal education\textsuperscript{18} which Germans refer to as \textit{Erziehung}. \textit{Erziehung} does play a substantial role in an individual’s life; this concept of education,

\textsuperscript{17} Central Intelligence Agency, “Germany,” 251.
\textsuperscript{18} Central Intelligence Agency, “Germany,” 251.
however, represents only the fundamental, elementary dimension of education. Germans value those activities which challenge them to strive to reach their potential not only intellectually, but also socially and spiritually. The Germans define this approach to gaining knowledge as Bildung. Bildung is the forming or shaping of an individual’s character through the aforementioned activities. One might observe that an individual who is educated, or gebildet in this sense, is well spoken, well read and possesses a broad range of cultural knowledge and skills. Education is taken very seriously; the curriculum is heavily academic and more advanced than the curricula offered in several competing countries. The overall education structure and the curricula of the various German school institutions will be discussed in greater detail in chapter seven.

The German economy in the twenty-first century is Europe’s largest and the world’s fifth largest in terms of Purchasing Power Parity, often abbreviated as PPP.\textsuperscript{19} The per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which measures productivity and calculates how much product on average (in terms of financial value) is produced by each inhabitant, amounted in 2010 to approximately $35,700.\textsuperscript{20} The GDP also serves as an indicator of a country’s standard of living. As of January 2012, approximately 3.08 million or 7.3\% of Germany’s inhabitants were unemployed.\textsuperscript{21} Moreover, a 2010 statistic indicated that 15.5\% of the German population lives below the poverty line.\textsuperscript{22} Germany’s high labor costs and early retirement policies today have led to Germany’s slow economic rate.

\textsuperscript{19} Central Intelligence Agency, “Germany,” 252.
\textsuperscript{20} Central Intelligence Agency, “Germany,” 252.
\textsuperscript{22} Central Intelligence Agency, “Germany,” 252.
To conclude, the population of twenty-first century Germany consists of people quite diverse in terms of ethnicity, language and religion. It is thus inaccurate to refer to Germany simply as a society consisting of Germans, when in reality it is the diverse society existing within Germany that makes it German—because to be a German in the twenty-first century is to be an ingredient in the ever more heterogeneous melting pot. This emerging society is culturally rich and diverse; approximately ten percent of its population is now comprised of ethnic groups who are not German. A journey into the past can lead to a more clearly defined understanding of how this came to be. To this end, Germany’s population in 1961 will be analyzed and compared in the following sections to provide a basis for comparison to Germany’s population in the twenty-first century.

The Population of 1961 Germany in a Journey back to Divided Times

The year 1961 is prominent in Germany’s history, as it is the year the Wall separating the two German states was erected. The concrete was poured on August 15, 1961, marking the start of construction on a permanent barrier separating the Soviet-Russian supported German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the East from the Western supported Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). The Berlin Wall, a symbol of the Cold War and an equally important structure which clearly divided the FRG from the GDR, separated West Berlin (which was like an island in a foreign “red” sea) from East Berlin and from the GDR until its iconic fall twenty-eight years later on November 9, 1989, when the border was opened. To further examine the population of 1961 Germany, the population of the Federal Republic of Germany and the population of the German Democratic Republic must be considered separately.
The 1961 Population of the Federal Republic of Germany

At the end of the Second World War, the territory which constituted Germany under the Third Reich was dismantled; a sizeable portion in the east was given to Poland, with the border marked by the rivers Oder and Neisse. The remainder was divided into four occupation zones governed by the Allied Powers: the Soviet Union, the United States, Great Britain, and France. The capital Berlin was similarly divided. Within a short time, however, the four occupation zones effectively became two as a result of international politics, the Soviet zone in the East and one single zone in the West. The fact that the United States, Great Britain, and France favored a fairly common German policy led, among other things, to the proclamation of the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*, equivalent to a constitution) for the Federal Republic of Germany with its capital in Bonn on May 23, 1949. The German Democratic Republic was established in similar fashion with its capital in (East) Berlin on October 7, 1949. Six years later, on May 5, 1955, the
Federal Republic of Germany was internationally recognized as an independent country when the Saarland voted to join the FRG.\textsuperscript{23} The Federal Republic of Germany in 1961 consisted of ten provinces, known as L\"{a}nder, and the West Berlin sector. The L\"{a}nder of the FRG, in alphabetical order, were Baden-W\"{u}rttemberg, Bavaria, Bremen, Hamburg, Hessen, Lower Saxony, North-Rhine Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, and Schleswig-Holstein. In December of 1959, the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany spanned an area of over 95,700 square miles.\textsuperscript{24}

The population of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1961 totaled 56,589,000 inhabitants; furthermore, the total population of both the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic was close to 73.7 million.\textsuperscript{25} In comparison, Germany today has close to 81.5 million inhabitants; thus within the past fifty years Germany’s population has increased by 7.8 million, or roughly 10.5 \%. The FRG’s population density equaled 214 inhabitants per square kilometer in 1959, and its population growth rate including migration was 1.1 \%.\textsuperscript{26} Do note that the population growth rate was positive over fifty years ago, as opposed to Germany’s negative population growth rate in the twenty-first century. The birth rate was 17.6 per 1,000 population, and the death rate totaled 10.8 per 1,000 population.\textsuperscript{27} The sex ratio amounted to approximately 1.12 women for each man. No concrete data documenting the net

\textsuperscript{24} Steinberg, \textit{The Statesman’s Year-book}, 1042.
\textsuperscript{26} Steinberg, \textit{The Statesman’s Year-book}, 1043.
\textsuperscript{27} Steinberg, \textit{The Statesman’s Year-book}, 1043.
A migration rate of 1961 are available. However, it is significant that a large westward migration movement occurred during the late 1950s and early 1960s as tensions in Berlin grew. The 174,000 migrants who moved from Eastern to Western Germany in 1959 were classified as political refugees.\textsuperscript{28} The main ethnic group was German. There was such an underrepresentation of other ethnic groups that data pertaining to ethnic groups in early 1960s Germany are nearly non-existent. However, in 1961 a recruitment treaty was concluded between the FRG and Turkey for the purpose of recruiting foreigners to work in West Germany and named Germany the prime host country for Turkish guest workers; similar recruitment treaties had been established a year earlier between Germany and Spain and Greece.

The official language of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1961 was German, and in terms of religion it was a predominantly Christian republic; 51.1\% of its citizens were Protestants and 45.2\% were Roman Catholics, while 0.04\% were Jews. In contrast to Germany today, it is important to note that in 1961, the number of Muslim representatives of this religion was so small as to make it appear virtually non-existent. Furthermore, in 1961, education was mandatory for all youths ranging between the ages of six and fourteen with numerous institutions providing education at various levels and with varying goals. The focus now shifts to East Germany and its demographics including its area, population, religion, and education.

The 1961 Population of the German Democratic Republic

The German Democratic Republic in 1961 consisted of fourteen districts, known as Bezirke. Each district was named after its corresponding capital town. The districts of the German Democratic Republic, in alphabetical order, were the Berlin Eastern Sector, Cottbus, Dresden, Erfurt, Frankfurt on the Oder, Gera, Halle, Karl-Marx-Stadt (formerly Chemnitz), Leipzig, Magdeburg, Neubrandenburg, Potsdam, Rostock, Schwerin, and Suhl. The German Democratic Republic enclosed an area covering over 41,600 square miles.  

The population, the number of inhabitants residing in the German Democratic Republic, saw a moderate fluctuation from the time of the GDR’s establishment on October 7, 1949, until the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989. During these forty years, the population of the GDR decreased by nearly 11.7%. The 1950 population of this territory consisted of 18,388,000 inhabitants; in 1961 it had decreased to 17,079,000 inhabitants, and in 1989 had fallen even further to 16,434,000 inhabitants. What caused this population decrease? A significant factor in the population decline was the emigration of GDR inhabitants from East Germany to the West. During a press conference in June 1961, Walter Ulbricht, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, stated that nobody had the intent to erect a wall. Panic and fear took root among the GDR’s citizens, many of whom decided to flee the territory for the FRG. In July of 1961, a record number of more than thirty thousand inhabitants 

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30 “Struktur und Entwicklung der Bevölkerung (Structure and development of the population),” Die Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, last modified March 7, 2012, http://www.bpb.de/publikationen/7WF4KK,2,0,Struktur_und_Entwicklung_der_Bev%F6lkerung.html.
refugees, *Flüchtlinge*, crossed from the GDR into the FRG. Upon the completion of the Berlin Wall, the border was closed and the GDR inhabitants were sealed in. The westward emigration rate almost immediately stopped, and all fleeing suspects were severely penalized, some even shot by border guards.

The German Democratic Republic guaranteed freedom of religion and religious instruction through its constitution. According to the 1950 Census, 80.5 % of the GDR’s inhabitants were Protestants and 11 % were Roman Catholics. This proportion continued for the next forty years, and Protestants remained dominant while Roman Catholics were in the minority. There were numerous other religious communities; however, their members represented such a minute portion of the population that few data were recorded. The education system underwent a major reform in 1959. Two types of polytechnic high schools were established, with eight and ten grades respectively. This reform aimed to prepare the students for a socialist community and integrated the students’ schooling into everyday life. By 1961 there were forty-five universities in existence in the GDR, two and a half times the number of universities as in the competing FRG which had more than double the territory and population.

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31 Rhodes, “German Democratic Republic,” 297.
32 Rhodes, “German Democratic Republic,” 297.
To conclude, one must now compare the population of twenty-first century Germany with that of the 1961 population of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic. The chart above depicts and compares Germany’s society in 2011, with the 1961 populations of the FRG and the GDR in terms of (total) area, number of states or districts within that given area, number of inhabitants, type of government, religious affiliations in order of dominance, and education in terms of number of universities.

Germany’s area has expanded within the past fifty years due to the formal unification of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Democratic Republic of
Germany on October 3, 1990. This younger reunified nation encompasses sixteen Bundesländer and is governed under the constitution of a federal parliamentary republic. Over the past fifty years, the population of this unified Germany has increased by seven million inhabitants, nearly ten percent. The population net growth, however, has decreased.

There has been a surge in ethnic groups represented in Germany. Very few available data depict the number of non-ethnic Germans residing in 1961 Germany, including the FRG and GDR. It must be observed, nonetheless, that the non-ethnic Germans represented a negligible portion of Germany’s population in 1961. The most important change has occurred in this segment of Germany’s population demographic. Today, in twenty-first century Germany, nearly ten percent of Germany’s inhabitants are not ethnic Germans. The statistics presented above illustrate that Germany is currently a much more diverse and multicultural nation than it was fifty years ago. The main ethnicity of Germany, representing ninety percent of Germany’s current population, has remained ethnic German, for now. One can stipulate from data presented earlier that a further decline in Germany’s ethnic German population is likely. The prediction is based on the fact that the ethnic Germans have a very low birth rate and that the number of immigrants in Germany has exponentially increased within the past five decades. The increasing number of non-ethnic Germans will be discussed and analyzed in chapter two.

Religion plays a dominant role in the integration process of a minority into a culture. Fifty years ago the predominant religion in the FRG and the GDR was Christianity. Nearly ninety percent of the GDR’s residents were Protestants indicative of
the fact that the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century originated here. Protestants were also the predominant religious group in the FRG. In 1961 residents of the two states were Protestant, Roman Catholic, or Jewish; the latter religion, however, represented a very small percentage of the population. In contrast, the demographics of religion in twenty-first century Germany have dramatically changed when compared to those of 1961. Only sixty percent of Germany’s current population is either Protestant or Roman Catholic, reflecting a nearly forty percent decrease within the past fifty years. Less than a third of Germany’s current population has declared itself to be either unaffiliated or affiliated with a religion other than Islam or Roman Catholic or Protestant Christianity. It is truly important to note that there currently is a Muslim population present in Germany; almost four percent of Germany’s residents affiliate themselves as Muslims. This Muslim sub-population was nearly non-existent fifty years ago and represents a factor which contributes to the paranoia the ethnic Germans exhibit toward the Turkish population. Chapter five, which focuses on the divide between ethnic Germans and Turks in the twenty-first century will discuss the attitudes of ethnic Germans toward Turks in greater detail.

The last fifty years have clearly witnessed tremendous changes in Germany in terms of political structure and population size and makeup. The present chapter has sought to serve as a general foundation for a better understanding of what Germany in the twenty-first century is like and how this came to be. A major focus of the present study is the integration of the Turkish population, their youth in particular, into German society. As will be shown in the following chapters, the Turks’ integration into German society
has not been deemed a success and continues to prove difficult. It is therefore necessary
to investigate what role Germany’s history, in particular its extreme transformation (in
terms of diversity) has played and is playing in the process. Nearly ten percent of
Germany’s population is comprised of non-German ethnic groups, and the next chapter
will identify these various groups as national and ethnic minorities and asylum seekers.
CHAPTER II

MINORITIES IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY GERMANY

A Changing and Diverse Society

Chapter one focused on the population residing within twenty-first century Germany, reviewed its progression over the past fifty years and noted that nearly ten percent of Germany’s current population consists of non-German ethnic groups. This sub-population is comprised of minorities, but can one simply assume that a person who is a non-native German is a minority? The term minority can be very confusing, since its meaning can be based on various criteria such as religious beliefs, race, sex, age, and/or ethnicity. Accordingly, the term minority must first be defined with respect to the population of Germany.

A minority is a numerically minor portion of a national population which differentiates itself from the majority of the population through individual or cultural characteristics. A minority may reside separate from the majority population in a specific demographic area, as in a state (*Bundesland*), region, or neighborhood, or it may be dispersed throughout the area where the majority resides. The present chapter will clarify this broad definition by distinguishing between *ethnic* minorities and *national* minorities.

The National Minorities Residing in Twenty-first Century Germany

A national minority, a *nationale Minderheit*, which has been legally established by the council of Europe, is different from an ethnic group in that it enjoys a legal status
which guarantees the respective minority certain rights. These rights may pertain to the
minority’s education or promotion of its language. The above definition of a national
minority represents the way Germans use this term; many European countries use it to
designate an ethnic, religious, cultural or language-based minority. It is important to
remember, therefore, that in the present study, the term national minority refers to a
minority which has been granted an official juristic status by the Organisation für
Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa, Organization for Safety and Co-Operation in
Europe (OSCE). In 1997 the Federal Republic of Germany signed the Skeleton
Agreement, known in Germany as the Rahmenabkommen, which states that the
individual signatory countries will determine which group(s) in their respective country
is/are a national minority.33 It is on this basis that the German government declared the
Danish minority, the Sinti and Roma, and the Sorbs as national minorities.

“Velkommen, or Did You Mean Wilkommen?”

Approximately 50,000 Danes reside in Germany today.34 It is important to note
that all of these Danes are legal German citizens. The Danish minority, unlike many other
minorities residing in Germany, has settled in one specific demographic area, the
Bundesland (German state) Schleswig-Holstein. This particular Bundesland has been
designated as “das Land zwischen zwei Meeren” which translates as “the land between
two seas,” with the Baltic Sea and the North Sea as the bodies of water which are being
referenced. Schleswig-Holstein is a culturally diverse area heavily influenced by Danish,

33 “Nationale Minderheit [National minorities],” Wikipedia, last modified January 24, 2012,
34 “Dänische Minderheit: Wir sind Ureinwohner [Danish minority: We are natives],” News.de, last
Frisian, and German customs. The origins of the Danish minority can be traced back to 1864 when Denmark lost the Deutsch-Dänischer Krieg, known in English as the German-Danish War or the Second Schleswig War, due to where it was fought. The Danish minority is a thriving and active society well into the twenty-first century. Its members are proud individuals who speak Danish, play Danish music, and energetically raise awareness of their culture to ensure its survival into the future. In 2008 the A. P. Møller-Skolen Institute, a Danish Gymansium, or secondary school, was opened in the city Schleswig. The school is a Danish minority school which promotes Danish linguistics, Danish music, and Danish culture, and was privately funded by the A.P. Møller-Skolen foundation. The school is depicted in the photograph below, easily identifying itself as a Danish minority school within Germany by the flagpoles which fly the Danish national flag.

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The Danish minority, although small in terms of population size, is a thriving national minority which continuously practices the preservation of its culture through education as can be seen in its Danish Gymnasium and promotion of language.

Esmeralda Danced her Way to Germany

The Sinti and Roma have resided in Germany even longer than the Danes; in fact, there is historical evidence indicating that this population has been residing in Germany since the fourteenth century. There are numerous misconceptions about the people who are often referred to as Zigeuner, or gypsies, and who according to the stereotype roam around Europe in wagons, without a fixed residence, dancing and playing music to support themselves while they sit around campfires, steal, cheat and beg the residents of the area which they have chosen to temporarily invade. Such stereotypes persist about these people, between eighty-thousand and one hundred-thousand of whom currently reside in Germany according to estimates, and have their own language, history, and culture.39

The term “Roma” is used in Germany to designate the people who immigrated into central Europe from the southeast in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth century.40 Interestingly, “Rom” means human being in the Romani language, and the Romas were labeled as “gypsies” because the Anglo-Europeans believed the Romas to have originated in Egypt.41 The photograph42 here captured a woman protesting

40 Weiss, “Sinti und Roma.”
the demeaning “gypsy” label with a sign that states “Rom = human being, all people are worth the same” or “all people are created equal.”

The Sinti are an ethnic group originally comprised of nomadic refugees from Southeastern Europe, whose initial presence in Germany was documented during the fourteenth or fifteenth century. The Roma and Sinti currently reside mostly in heavily populated metropolitan cities such as Berlin and Hamburg. They have been among the most severely persecuted minorities in Germany, a fact rarely acknowledged until recent decades in the twenty-first century. The Sinti and Roma were discriminated against by the Nazis who viewed them as being racially undesirable; they still face discrimination today by Germans who view them as homeless Landfahrer, or nomads. The protection of the Roma and the Sinti is very important, not only to prevent discrimination, but to ensure that their culture remains alive; therefore, it is truly beneficial for this group to have been granted the title of being a national minority.

The Sorbs, a Minority That Prides Itself on Tradition

The third national minority currently residing in Germany which has been designated as such by the OSCE are the Sorbs, a Western Slavic people. The photograph above highlights a group of Sorbian children dressed in their traditional costume holding a constructed wooden house which symbolizes the Sorbs’ renowned artisanry and handcraft. The Sorbs should not be confused with the Serbs, a South Slavic ethnic group currently residing in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro. An estimated sixty-thousand Sorbs reside in Germany today, and comprise the Niedersorben and the Obersorben areas. The categories of nieder and ober, which in English translate to lower and upper, refer to specific geographic locations in terms of elevation. There are an estimated 20,000 Niedersorben residing in Niederlausitz, an area within the German

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44 Picture-alliance/dpa, Sorbische Kinder beim traditionellen Fest der Vogelhochzeit, photograph, accessed January 20, 2012,
45 “Sorben in Deutschland: Minderheit ist Teil und Gegenteil der Mehrheit [Sorbs in Germany: Minority is a part of and the opposite of the majority],” News.de, last modified October 26, 2009,
state of Brandenburg, which is the Eastern region in Germany that borders on Poland, the German state Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in the North, Sachsen-Anhalt to the East, and Sachsen in the South. The approximately 40,000 Obersorben reside in Oberlausitz, an area in the German state of Sachsen just south of Brandenburg. The Sorbs began to settle in the Eastern portion of Germany near the Elbe and Saale rivers during the seventh century, at a time when the area was sparsely populated by the Germanic tribes. The Sorbs speak the Sorbian languages Wendish and Lusatian which are derived from Polish and Czech. The Sorbian languages are protected and promoted by the OSCE, whose aim is the preservation of cultures of the national minorities. The Sorbs are a religious, culturally traditional, and family-based minority. Like the Sinti and Roma, they have faced persecution and were suppressed numerous times in efforts by the Germans and Poles to integrate them into their respective cultures. These efforts failed, and the Sorbs have been able to preserve their identity into the twenty-first century.

To conclude, there are currently three national minorities in Germany, namely the Danish minority, the Sinti and Roma, and the Sorbs. These minorities are protected by the Organization for Safety and Co-Operation of Europe whose purpose it is to preserve and promote the cultural heritage, including the language, of the respective national minority.

The Ethnic Minorities Residing in Twenty-first Century Germany

An ethnic minority is a minor, non-dominant group in terms of political power and number of citizens, a group which differentiates itself from the general population through a common heritage which may pertain to language, culture, or shared religion, or
through common ancestry, which in turn can relate to race. As was noted at the beginning of chapter one, there are numerous non-ethnic-German groups that currently reside in Germany and include Turks, Italians, Poles, Russians, Spaniards, Greeks, Serbo-Croatians, Vietnamese, and Portuguese, among others. An accurate portrayal of the population of today’s Germany requires that one acknowledge the existence of all these ethnic groups, but at this point the focus is on the ethnic minorities which are more visible in Germany’s population. Greater visibility, however, may be due to any of a variety of factors: the ethnic population may stand out because of its large population, how often it appears in the media, its economic presence, and how recognizable it is within the non-ethnic population because of attire, language, and/or religious beliefs. The following section will focus on three ethnic minorities which have met one or more of these criteria. These ethnic groups are the Turks, the Italians, and the Poles.

The Crescent Moon has Risen

Over two million Turks constitute the predominant ethnic minority in twenty-first century Germany. The Turks make up nearly two and one-half percent of Germany’s current population. They are a dominant and observable presence in Germany because of their language, Turkish; their religion, which is predominantly Muslim; their attire, as some Turkish women and young girls wear headscarves; and because they are a constant and newsworthy presence in the media. The Turks are a central focus in the current integration debate within Germany. To gain a better understanding, one can compare the Turks in Germany to the Mexican population residing in the United States today. Like the Mexican population in America, the Turks are viewed by some native citizens of
Germany as foreigners, even as unwelcome ones, who are having a difficult time adjusting, integrating, into the predominant ethnic group because of their language, religion, and because of some ethnic Germans’ outright hostility and even xenophobia, Ausländerfeindlichkeit, towards foreigners. The Turkish population, and the youth population in particular, is the subject of this thesis, and several chapters have therefore been devoted to the Turkish population. An extensive discussion of the Turks, how they came to be a dominant presence in twenty-first century Germany, and the persecution they currently face is presented in chapter three.

The Maestro Has Arrived Bearing Gifts - Pizza Fungi, *per favore!*

The Italian minority in Germany, commonly known as Italo-Deutsche, or Italian-Germans, and Deutschitaliener, German-Italians, is represented by circa 650,000 inhabitants, approximately 0.08 % of the German population. The majority of this population has settled in metropolitan areas such Stuttgart, Frankfurt on the Main, Munich, and in the Rhine-Ruhr region. Individuals of the Italian minority, ethnic Italians migrants who reside in Germany, primarily immigrated to Germany to seek employment; this began during the Middle Ages when Italian architects, craftsmen, and salespeople travelled to Germany in hopes of gaining fame and fortunes. Many people do not know that more Italians reside in Germany than in any other country, with the exception of Italy and Argentina. The largest wave of migration to Germany, however, occurred after World War II. At this time Germany had a high demand for manual labor because approximately five million men died during the war; there were not enough ethnic

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46 Claudio Cumani, “Italiener in Deutschland [Italiens in Germany],” [italianieuropei.de](http://www.italianieuropei.de/ds/comunicati/20020206fes.html), last modified February 6, 2002.
German men to rebuild debris-littered Germany or resuscitate its economy. The foreign workers who met this demand are known as *Gastarbeiter* or *Arbeitsmigranten*, guest workers or work migrants. The guest workers were granted a temporary work permit and were expected to return to their respective country when construction or manufacturing was completed. Between 1956 and 1972 approximately two million Italian guest workers immigrated to Germany.  

The Italian immigrants worked primarily in the coal and steel industries, hence their great numbers in the industrial Rhine-Ruhr region. Italians remain a dominant work force in Germany’s twenty-first century economy. They own and operate numerous Italian restaurants and cafés, and their presence has led to the immense popularization of Italian cuisine in the ethnic German’s diet. The Italian minority is one ethnic minority that has been able to integrate successfully into German society because of its successful economic contributions, adaptation to the German language, active involvement in German society and contributions in art, the culinary world, and politics. This helps to explain the relative lack of animosity from ethnic Germans toward these foreigners. The Italian minority is essentially non-threatening to the ethnic German society; they practice a known and accepted religion, the Roman Catholic faith, are an economic powerhouse, and enhance cultural variety from their art to their cuisine.

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Polonaise or Polka

The Polish minority residing in Germany constitutes nearly 2.4% of the entire population of Germany, amounting to approximately two million Poles. The Polish Embassy in Germany’s capital Berlin states that approximately two million Poles currently reside in Germany; the Poles included in this population are either of Polish origin or maintain Polish citizenship. The majority of the Polish minority is centralized in three northern German cities, Hamburg, Bremen, and Hannover. Most of the individuals of the Polish minority are migrants who were granted German citizenship because of their German ancestry. Given the size of the Polish minority, one may well ask if this population has managed to integrate into the ethnic German population. Many Polish migrants who immigrated to Germany after the opening of the Wall and the demise of the German Democratic Republic in the 1980s and 1990s were able to learn the language quickly, adapted to German culture and its practices and in turn forgot their Polish heritage. They now speak a broken version of their once native language; there is, however, a portion of the Polish minority that refuse to adapt to German cultural standards, thereby rejecting the German language and clinging to their Polish ethnic origin. The Germans have been very accepting of the Poles because of the aforementioned Poles who have chosen to integrate by adapting to German customs and the fact that the majority of Poles are Roman Catholic. The Poles, like the Italians, have

also made major contributions to German culture, including contributions in music, cuisine, and athletics.

Lukas Podolski and Miroslav Klose, seen in the photograph above communicating on the soccer field, are Polish immigrants who have very successfully adapted to German society as professional athletes for Germany’s national soccer team.

To conclude, the Turkish, Italian, and Polish minorities constitute approximately six percent of Germany’s current population. They are a diverse subpopulation of Germany which distinguishes itself from the ethnic German population through their heritage, culture, language, religion, and, to some extent dress, among other defining characteristics. It is important to understand that the Italians and Poles have had an easier transition than the Turks to become integrated into German society. The Turks’ Muslim religion is one major factor which hinders their assimilation. Chapter three will present a detailed examination of the Turkish minority and efforts at integration into German

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society. The present chapter is devoted to a survey of the minorities of twenty-first century Germany. In addition to Germany’s national minorities (Danes, Sinti and Roma, and Sorbs) and the ethnic minorities (Turks, Italians, and Poles), asylum seekers constitute the last subpopulation that must be addressed in order to comprehend the full range of Germany’s truly multicultural society in the twenty first century.

Seeking Asylum

The term asylum seeker refers to an individual who seeks refuge in a foreign country in order to live in a safer environment and escape harsh or inhumane legal punishment, political retribution, natural disasters, or for a variety of other reasons. An asylum seeker normally applies to a foreign country through its embassy for his or her personal legal protection; the selected country must, however, have signed the Refugees Convention. The United Nations Refugee Agency states that “The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is the key legal document in defining who is a refugee, their rights and the legal obligations of states.” Approximately 130,000 asylum seekers, or Asylbewerber, from a variety of countries currently reside in Germany. A study conducted in September of 2011 reveals that the countries of origin of these asylum seekers in Germany are, from highest to lowest in terms of inhabitants, Afghanistan, Iraq,

Iran, Serbia, and Syria. Asylum seekers were still actively seeking refuge in Germany in 2011. 31,107 people in Germany entered an application for asylum between January and September of 2011. These statistics reinforce the fact that Germany remains an active and welcoming host nation to all asylum seekers in the twenty-first century.

To conclude, Germany has undeniably become a major immigration country. The various national and ethnic minorities, and more recently, asylum seekers have changed Germany into a multicultural country, even if that was not Germany’s intent at the outset. Germany must, however, respond to this change. Its government and its citizens have an obligation to ensure that the groups constituting its new and diverse society cohabitate peacefully. Yet one also realizes that complexity and diversity may evoke conflict. This conflict may involve xenophobia, Ausländerfeindlichkeit, resistance to integration reforms, and segregation. There are ethnic Germans who worry that the increasing numbers of immigrants threaten Germany, in particular its national identity. The ethnic Germans’ concern is further fueled by their own declining birth rate and a steadily increasing number of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers who are transitioning to and settling in Germany among the 6.9 million non-ethnic Germans who already reside there. Many ethnic Germans are anxious about voicing their concerns because they fear being labeled as xenophobic Nazis. Germany’s wartime past still lingers in the minds of many individuals, and the Germans are therefore afraid of having national pride, and

even more so of expressing or promoting it. This remains a sensitive subject, and the
ethnic Germans’ guilt continues to suppress their opinions about Germany’s changing
society. Some individuals believe that this suppression is causing Germany’s government
to be overly accepting of immigrants to overcome Germany’s dark history of persecution
of non-ethnic Germans.

How has Germany adjusted to this novel multicultural society? What has been
Germany’s federal response? Is Germany truly in danger of losing its national identity
due to its declining ethnic German population? These questions and many others related
to integration attempts and immigration law will be discussed in the forthcoming chapters
of this thesis. They will build on the present chapter, which has demonstrated that
contemporary German society consists not merely of ethnic Germans but also of a widely
diverse minority population comprising the national minorities of Danes, Sinti, Roma,
and Sorbs; the ethnic minorities including Turks, Italians, and Poles; and the asylum
seekers who have arrived more recently from Serbia, and the more distant nations of
Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan.

The focus in the next and other forthcoming chapters will be more narrowed as
the main populations which are being discussed for the purpose of this investigation are
the ethnic Germans and the Turks. It is important to recognize the vast diversity of the
numerous aforementioned ethnic groups as a basis for understanding the complex
environment and society in which the Turks and ethnic Germans reside. The following
chapter will focus on the Turks residing in Germany with respect to their existence, their
history in Germany, their impact on German society, and potential for integration.
CHAPTER III

TURKS RESIDING IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY GERMANY

Hosgeldiniz, Welcome!

As mentioned in chapter two, the Turks constitute the largest single ethnic minority in today’s Germany. Their presence is undeniable. There are over 15,000 Turkish Döner kebab diners, more than two thousand mosques, several Turkish private schools, and thousands of Turkish flags hanging from balconies in metropolitan areas, and all of these reinforce the fact that the Turks are a distinctive and visible population within Germany. This chapter will focus on the history of the Turks in Germany, their migration patterns, their development into a significant minority, and their current impact on and situation in twenty-first century Germany in terms of economics, religion, language, and culture.

Can One Define a Turk?

Various labels and terms have been assigned to classify the Turks residing in Germany. Although several of these appear to be very similar, each one carries a specific meaning and identifies a specific population. Therefore, all labels must be addressed and defined in order to clarify each one’s range of reference.

Türkeistämmige in Deutschland, or “persons of Turkish heritage who reside within Germany,” refers to individuals who come from Turkey or lived there for a considerable

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amount of time prior to residing in Germany. It consequently applies to several ethnicities, not solely to the Turkish ethnicity; for example, the term can apply to an Armenian who was born and lived in Turkey and then chose to immigrate to Germany, but can apply equally well to a Kurdish individual. It is important to note that Türkeistämmige in Deutschland may have either German or Turkish citizenship and yet be classified under this particular term.

Türken in Deutschland, “Turks in Germany,” is the term used in connection with official statistics and data. This term, however, refers mostly to those who have Turkish citizenship and are currently residing in Germany. Türken, “Turks,” has numerous meanings; although the term does refer to a person who is of Turkish heritage, it says nothing about citizenship, and therefore, when a person refers to someone as a Turk, the individual may even be a German citizen who has Turkish ancestors.

Deutsch-Türken or Deutschtürken, “German-Turks,” is a colloquial term which refers to German citizens who either themselves or their ancestors originally resided in Turkey; however, it may also refer to all ethnic Turks who reside in Germany.

Kanake is a derogatory label, essentially a curse word, and refers to a foreign person who appears to be from the Mediterranean. This term was used during the Guest Worker Era to refer to Italians, Spaniards, and Greeks. The Guest Worker Era, which lasted from 1960 to 1973, was a period during which Germany hired millions of foreign workers as a temporary work force to help rebuild its economy. Today, however, the word refers to someone who is of Turkish, Kurdish, or Arabic descent. Kanak-Sprak, “Kanak
language,” is a hybrid language of Turkish and German; the principal language is German which is infused with Turkish grammar, words, and slang.

**Turkish Population over Time**

As stated earlier, Turks currently constitute nearly two and a half percent of Germany’s total population. Over two and a half million individuals who have Turkish ancestry reside in Germany, and at least one-third of this population has been granted German citizenship. A 2010 study conducted by the Federal Statistical Office of Germany found that over 1.6 million Turks who have Turkish citizenship were residing in Germany by the end of 2010. Taking these data into consideration, it is not surprising to find that over one-fourth of all foreigners residing in Germany are Turkish, thereby making them the largest single ethnic minority in Germany in terms of population size. It is, however, difficult, however, to establish an exact number of Turks residing in Germany because the government counts only the individuals who have Turkish citizenship in their official statistics; government officials disregard the inhabitants who are of Turkish origin but possess a non-Turkish citizenship.

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The government’s approach to tracking the Turkish population is to count only the Turks who have Turkish citizenship; an example of this calculation can be seen on the above line graph. A more realistic and accurate estimate would count as Turks the over three million inhabitants of Germany today whose ancestral roots are linked to Turkey, regardless of the citizenship they presently hold. One does learn from the above line graph, however, that there was an immense population growth of Turkish immigrants from 1945 till 2001, and that a gradual decline has occurred over the past decade. The decline can be attributed to numerous factors, most importantly return migration to the motherland, Turkey, and a change in the naturalization laws. Since January 1, 2001 any
child who is born in Germany to parents who are not ethnic Germans and have assured residence permit status is granted German citizenship.

The Urban Minority

With respect to location of residence, the majority of Turks reside in booming metropolitan centers. The cities are diverse in population and allow the Turks to integrate more easily, since the majority of all foreigners residing in Germany have also settled in these densely populated metropolises. In addition, the living costs are less, more job opportunities are available, and these diverse communities are in general more accepting than are smaller, more traditional villages or provincial towns. Berlin is host to the largest Turkish community; almost 176,000 individuals, approximately five percent of the city’s total population, have a Turkish migration background. To be more precise, the specific area within Berlin which is most densely populated by Turks is Kreuzberg, which has been variously named “Turkish Berlin” and “Little Istanbul.” Kreuzberg is located in the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg borough of Berlin, and is divided into two discrete sections, one of which is SO 36 (Südost 36, named after its postal code), the southeast region of Kreuzberg where thousands of immigrants reside. Kreuzberg was once one of the poorest areas of Berlin but has transformed into a culturally diverse city center. To better understand the Turkish population note that only 0.17 percent of individuals residing in East Germany, excluding Berlin, have a Turkish migration background; and that the Bundesland with the highest percentage of Turks is North Rhine-Westphalia, whereas

Saarland, Germany’s smallest **Bundesland**, holds the fewest.\(^{60}\) Furthermore, the other four largest Turkish population areas in Germany, based on population, are in Cologne, Hamburg, Munich, and Duisburg.

**The Turkish Population in Germany: A Reflection on the Past**

A recruitment agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany and Turkey was signed half a century ago, on October 30, 1961. This agreement led to a large wave of Turkish migrants who came to Germany as guest workers. In terms of population, the Turks were the largest immigrant work force group entering Germany. Like their fellows from other countries, the Turkish guest workers were originally brought to Germany for a temporary period of employment. In fact, the early period of the Turkish migration wave to Germany, between 1961 and 1984, was a solely economically motivated movement. No one in Germany at the time anticipated that this initial wave of first-generation Turks in Germany would be succeeded by others and lead to a dominant and powerful ethnic minority which has become a culturally and economically important population in Germany’s twenty-first century society. In 1969, Germany welcomed a Turk named Ismail Bahadir as its one millionth guest worker from the southeast European region.\(^{61}\)

The waves of migration from Turkey continued as families of the guest workers joined their husbands and sons and began to immigrate and settle in Germany. The booming growth trend continued well into the 1980s because German laws did not specify when Turkish guest workers were supposed to return to their homeland, and no fixed departure

\(^{60}\) [Türkische Einwanderung in Zahlen.](http://einestages.spiegel.de/static/topicalbumbackground/16601/ismail_der_millionaer.html)

policy was established or enforced. The majority of the guest workers and their families have become permanent residents. In fact, the Federal Statistical Office of Germany has found that nearly forty-five percent of all Turkish citizens residing in Germany have lived in Germany for over three decades.

**Turks’ Role in Society: From Necessary Workers to a Nuisance and Unwelcome Guest**

The Turks remain a dominant economic presence. Long gone are the days of hired immigrant guest workers, as Turks have themselves become their employers, gifted entrepreneurs who are adding to Germany’s economic wealth. There are currently over seventy thousand active Turkish entrepreneurs, business people in Germany. So, one must ask, why are the ethnic Germans so hostile towards foreign inhabitants who are adding to their shared country’s financial wealth? This question is complicated in nature, and therefore does not have one single definitive answer. Indeed, a major factor is that the ethnic Germans are frightened by the Turks because they view them as a potential threat that is corrupting their nation’s identity. The corruption they claim is the Turks’ cultural imposition of their language and religion upon German society and will be discussed in greater detail in chapter four.

**An Economic Disadvantage**

A Turk who resides in Germany does have a more difficult time finding a job than an ethnic German, especially a prestigious position. The limited education that a Turk receives in Germany as discussed in chapter eight bears much of the blame. Confirmation of this assertion results from analysis of the Turkish working population in Germany. Sixty percent of the Turkish work force within Germany is comprised of blue-collar
workers who perform manual labor; few are self-employed or white-collar workers, and Turks who hold a civil service position are nearly non-existent. Furthermore, approximately nine percent of Germany’s Turkish population are unemployed.\(^{62}\) The occupational divide between the Turk and the ethnic German is immense; an ethnic German is four times more likely to hold a position in a highly regarded profession such as a lawyer, doctor, CEO, or teacher which pays significantly better than any of the blue-collar jobs. It has now been established that the Turks have a difficult time obtaining higher positions which should indicate that the Turks earn on average much less than ethnic Germans. This hypothesis can be verified with data published by Germany’s Census Bureau: the average Turkish household income is 1135 euros per month, or nearly 550 euros less than the average household income of an ethnic German who earns approximately 1678 euros per month.\(^{63}\) This statistic documents that Turks earn considerably less money than the average ethnic German; the lower wages/earnings result from the type of employment Turks commonly find, in particular low income jobs such as a *Putzfrau* (cleaning lady). Given the level of unemployment among Turks, a considerable number of Turkish individuals are welfare recipients, causing concern and anger among ethnic Germans who do not believe that these *foreigners* deserve to be supported by the German government.

This is not an uncommon phenomenon; individuals of a population’s minority frequently earn less than members of its majority, just as members of the majority


\(^{63}\) “Hintergrund: Zahlen und Fakten.”
commonly hold more prestigious jobs such as public office, a position in the media or in the medical field, among other professions. Why are the Turks in Germany, or any minority, for that matter, restricted on average to the lower paying jobs? It is caused by a combination of factors such as the lack of comprehensive education, language discrepancies, and discrimination by employers based on cultural differences, including religion.

A Religious Debate

Islam is the dominant religion in Turkey, and almost all of Turkey’s inhabitants are adherents of Islam and accordingly are registered Muslims. An astonishing 99.8 % of Turkey’s citizens are Muslims, most of whom are Sunni Muslims; the other minute 0.2 % are Christians or Jews.64 This parallels the Turkish population residing in Germany. The majority of the immigrant Turks have chosen not to convert to a Western religion such as Christianity, but have remained actively practicing Muslims. A 2011 study conducted by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation found that sixty-three percent of Turks residing in Germany are Sunni Muslims, twelve percent are Alevi, two percent are Shiite Muslims, seven percent have declared themselves as “other,” and eight percent are non-denominational.

As is evident in the graph above, the majority of the Turks residing in Germany are registered Muslims. This population constitutes a portion of the over three and a half percent of inhabitants residing in Germany who are Muslims. However, one must take into consideration that over two-thirds of Germany’s inhabitants are Christians, and that Christianity remains the dominant religion within Germany. Conflict has arisen and continues to escalate between the ethnic Germans and the Turks due to conflicting religious beliefs.

The ethnic Germans are worried that the Turks’ presence, and in particular their Muslim faith, will transform Germany into an Islamic State. The Turks, in turn, are upset that a majority of the ethnic Germans are ignorant and intolerant of their religion, and are unwilling to respond to integration proposals which request the Turks to succumb to a more acceptable Christian-based faith. Nevertheless, the Turkish community members in
Germany continue to practice their religion. This is evident in the increasing emergence of Muslim places of worship or mosques in Germany. There are currently thirty mosques in metropolitan Cologne, Germany’s fourth largest city heavily populated by Turks.\(^6^5\) As of 2006 an estimated 2,600 mosques exist in Germany; only 143 of these mosques are actually large and completed constructions, the majority of mosques in Germany are in reality “underground” or backroom mosques which are located in non-religious buildings.\(^6^6\) This number may seem immense, when in all actuality the number of mosques is actually miniscule in comparison to the number of Roman Catholic and Evangelical Churches which comprise an estimated 40,000 houses of worship.\(^6^7\)

The Bible is the basis of religious doctrine which is studied in these Christian-based houses of worship, whereas a Muslim who attends a mosque follows the religious text of the Quran which was originally composed in the Arabic language. The majority of the world’s Turkish population does not, however, speak Arabic, as their native tongue is Turkish. The Turkish language is also spoken by a large percentage of Turks who reside in Germany today; their language is another factor which differentiates and thus divides the Turk from the ethnic German; the section below serves to underline the importance of language in terms of integration.

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An important issue in the current discussion of multiculturalism in Germany is the integration process between the German and the Turkish people. A key to successful formation of good relationships and adaption to a new culture is a thorough understanding of the language. The German government relies heavily on the Turkish people to learn German and to communicate in the official national language, German. Government efforts in support of integrating the Turkish minority into German society by emphasizing German and neglecting Turkish have been self-defeating, and have contributed little that is positive. One may well ask why the Germans are not learning Turkish in order to aid the integration process. A study conducted in April 2010 found that every fifth Turkish resident of Germany speaks the German language insufficiently or not at all.\footnote{“Integrations-Studie: Jeder fünfte Türke in Deutschland spricht mangelhaft Deutsch [Integration survey: Every fifth Turk residing in Germany speaks German insufficiently],” \textit{RP Online}, last modified April 18, 2010, http://www.rp-online.de/politik/deutschland/jeder-fuenfte-tuerke-in-deutschland-spricht-mangelhaft-deutsch-1.2125771.} This clearly indicates that a large subpopulation of Turks residing in Germany cannot successfully communicate with the larger ethnic German population. This language insufficiency is significant because it prevents these Turks from successfully integrating into the dominant society; it also has an immediate impact on their potential job opportunities. The importance of communication, and language in particular in its association with integrating the Turkish youths into German society, is a significant factor in this study and will be further discussed in the forthcoming chapters.
The Cultural Impact of the Turks on German Society

The Turks’ presence, including their language, whether welcome or not, has had an impact on Germany’s society, in particular on Germany’s culture. By its simplest definition culture is the „learned and shared patterns of thought and behavior characteristic of a given population, plus the material objects produced and used by that population.” The Turks have contributed to Germany’s culture in numerous ways; this section will, however, focus on the contributions in terms of media such as television, film, music, and print, and cuisine.

The Turks’ large presence is reflected in the media of twenty-first century Germany. Numerous television programs and films have been created for, feature members of, or discuss and comment on the Turkish population. One television program which exemplifies this is “Was guckst du?!?” (“What are you looking at?”), a popular German comedy program which aired between 2001 and 2005 and was hosted by German-Turkish comedian Kaya Yanar. The show incorporated numerous skits similar to the styling of “Saturday Night Live,” which sought to explain and break Turkish stereotypes. This program is an example of an ethno-comedy, and the satire enabled its audience to visualize how ridiculous many of the Germans’ stereotypes about the Turks are. Another famous television personality is a stunning young woman named Gülcan Kamps. Kamps, who is of Turkish ethnicity, defeated over five-hundred individuals, many of whom were ethnic Germans, to become the next Video DJ on Germany’s popular music channel Viva; her success can be attributed to her charming personality.

and her demeanor as a young, hip Turkish woman who openly embraces and expresses her Turkish heritage.

Many German movie theaters have closely observed the growing Turkish population over the past decades, and have chosen to capitalize on this trend. Numerous theaters have chosen to host weekly or bi-weekly Turkish movie nights on which Turkish feature films are screened back to back. Mannheim, a metropolitan city located in Baden-Württemberg, is one of the cities which offer this particular cinematic service to its large Turkish population. The CinemaxX theatre in Mannheim is currently (March 2012) screening Sen Kimsin, a Turkish family comedy. Although the majority of the audience is indeed comprised of Turks, the Turkish feature films can be viewed with German subtitles. Another part of the media which has been influenced by Germany’s Turkish population is Germany’s music scene. Turkish singers such as Tarkan and Muhabbet who sing in both Turkish and German have met with both critical and commercial success. Tarkan’s single “Şımarık” (“Spolied”), released in Germany in 1997, peaked at number six on the top ten German Singles Chart, an incredible feat for a song whose song text is entirely in Turkish.

As one can gather from the foregoing, Turkish culture has had an effect on Germany’s media. The Turks have also published Turkish newspapers and magazines in Germany. These are not, however, the most popular items embraced by Germany’s culture; the ethnic Germans have been most affected by Turkish cuisine. The Turkish kebab, known as a Döner, has become one of Germany’s most popular fast foods. This Turkish specialty combines roasted meat cooked on a stake with different vegetable
toppings, and a yoghurt based tzatziki sauce; these ingredients are then wrapped in a freshly baked Fladenbrot (pita bread). A survey conducted by Germany’s Men’s Health magazine found that the majority of German men, at 34 %, would rather purchase an inexpensive and delicious Döner over the traditional German Currywurst (sausage), an Italian pizza, or an American hamburger. Numerous studies have proven this choice of fast food to be accurate; the Germans are simply crazy about their Döners.

A Unique and Unfitting Piece of the Puzzle

It should be evident from the preceding sections that the Turks have had a significant impact on Germany’s society; their influence has steadily grown since the early days of the Guest Worker Era. The Turkish minority has made recognizable contributions in terms of making Germany a more multicultural society; they have, for example, made Islam a present religion in Germany. The Turkish language is alive today on the streets of Germany; an individual who resides in a metropolitan city cannot ride the metro or walk through the city without being exposed to the Turks’ foreign language. Furthermore, it is nearly impossible to find a television channel, news story, or radio station whose content does not take note of the Turkish population.

This chapter has highlighted the Turks’ migration to Germany, their demographics, and their contributions to German society. It should be evident in view of the ethnic Germans’ demographics mentioned in chapter one that the Turks are different from Germany’s greater population. The Turks’ complex culture has contributed to

Germany’s diversity, but has also managed to create conflict. There are ethnic Germans who believe that the Turks’ growing dominance challenges Germany’s identity; furthermore, some ethnic Germans question the Turks’ right to residence in Germany. The two differing and at times opposing cultures are the focus of the next chapter which will analyze the causes for the divide between the ethnic German and Turkish populations.
CHAPTER IV

THE DIVIDE BETWEEN ETHNIC GERMANS AND TURKS IN
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY GERMANY

A Square Peg in a Round Hole

The relations between ethnic Germans and Turks in the opening decades of the twenty-first century may accurately be characterized as a clash of identities. A minority is attempting to transition and integrate into a society; this society is not, however, welcoming the minority with open arms. Chapter one provided an understanding of society in twenty-first century Germany and included a detailed description of the demographics of ethnic groups and Germans. Chapter two introduced Germany’s minorities, among them the Turks who were the central focus in chapter three which discussed their lives and presence in Germany. Each individual group was studied in terms of population size, location of residence, nationality, religious affiliation, citizenship status, and language. It has become increasingly evident that the ethnic Germans and the Turks who inhabit Germany are two very different groups—so different, in fact, that one could almost state they are foreign to one another. Yet the German government is asking them to co-habit peacefully. Each of the preceding chapters has focused on one particular population sample: German society; national minorities, ethnic minorities, asylum seekers; and finally Turks. The present chapter will attempt to identify the Turks’ role within German society, how the ethnic Germans are
responding to the Turks’ presence within their country, how the Turks are adjusting to this foreign land and in turn their Kraut-eating Nachbarn (neighbors), and how the Turks have attempted to integrate into that society.

Turk = Foreigner

A Turk residing in Germany is viewed as a foreigner by the majority of the German population. This label applies also to individuals who are of Turkish ethnicity, even those who were born in Germany and those who have obtained German citizenship. The Turks have been labeled as foreigners, and have in turn internalized this social role. They have been confronted by the ethnic Germans to acknowledge their cultural differences such as their language, religious beliefs, and traditions which clearly separate them from the majority of the German population. This confrontation forced some Turks to segregate themselves from the ethnic Germans, as they feel more welcomed by individuals who share their beliefs and customs. This division has led to the creation of Turkish neighborhoods, Turkish schools, and mosques in Germany’s metropolitan centers. The role of the Turk in German society has been an unstable and unsure one.

The first role assumed by the Turks in Germany was that of the worker during the Guest Worker Era. The Turks were welcomed by the ethnic Germans during this time, and were viewed as a needed asset. As the need for these workers declined, they were encouraged to return to their native countries; many workers decided, however, to remain in Germany, and a large percentage of workers remaining were Turks. These Turks were then regarded as unwelcome guests by the majority of Germany’s population, and the role of a Turk residing in Germany became that of an alien. Factors marking the divide
between ethnic Germans and Turks include the negative view ethnic Germans have of the
Turks, the clear lack of shared identity, and the fact that Germans have specifically
chosen not to extend an invitation for permanent residence to the Turks. To better
understand why ethnic Germans view the Turks’ presence in Germany in such a negative
light, one must address their attitudes towards the Turkish population residing in
Germany, and how these attitudes are constructed.

A Negative Disposition

An attitude can be defined as “a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone
or something, typically one that is reflected in a person’s behavior.”\(^7\) An attitude toward
a certain group cannot be defined solely by one individual’s experience or behavior.
Instead, the shared ways of thinking and feeling about that group and the demonstrable
behavior which stems from these beliefs must be amalgamated to form and reflect a more
generalized attitude which reflects all of the individual attitudes of members of one group
towards the member of another group. Therefore, to truly understand how ethnic
Germans feel and think about immigrants who reside within Germany, including the
Turks, one has to take into consideration numerous and varying attitudes among the
ethnic Germans.

What exactly do ethnic Germans think of a Turkish person and in turn the Turkish
population residing in Germany? Given the preceding information, one can understand
why there is no simple answer to this question, and why it remains a complex and not
easily defined response because one has to consider numerous viewpoints.

\(^7\) “Attitude,” *Oxford Dictionaries*, last modified 2012,
A study conducted in 2010 by the Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony, the Kriminologisches Forschungsinstitut Niedersachsen (KFN), found that Germans regarded the Turks as the least popular minority (in terms of being pleasing to ethnic Germans) residing within Germany. This particular study documents the hostility toward the Turks shared by individuals of the German population. How did this come to be? Cultural differences are certainly a key contributor, but ignorance and fear of change cause further division between ethnic Germans and Turks; these two factors will be further discussed in the succeeding paragraphs. The aforementioned study concluded that the Germans’ attitude toward Turkish inhabitants is indeed a negative one; in fact, many ethnic Germans practice Ausländerfeindlichkeit towards the Turks.

The German word Ausländerfeindlichkeit denotes an attitude of hostility (Feindlichkeit) towards foreigners (Ausländer). The German noun Feind means enemy and carries some of the connotations of the similar English word “fiend.” The past two decades have seen an increase of Ausländerfeindlichkeit in Germany. A study conducted in 2010 by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation found that one-fourth of Germany’s population agrees with hostile statements toward foreigners and also states that uneducated and older individuals are more likely to agree with antagonistic views toward foreigners. Ausländerfeindlichkeit is openly expressed by some German citizens, both verbally and physically.

A Study conducted by Zeit Magazin in 2006 found that approximately every second German is fremdenfeindlich (xenophobic). 48.5% of the people taking the survey were categorized as xenophobic; the highest percentage of xenophobic Germans was, however, found to be in the Bundesland Mecklenburg-Vorpommern where over 63% of its inhabitants hold xenophobic views toward foreigners.\footnote{“Jeder zweite Deutsche fremdenfeindlich [Every second German is xenophobic],” Focus Online, last modified Dezember 13, 2006, http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/studie_aid_120975.html.} Truly interesting is that the lowest percentage of xenophobic views among Germans was found in Germany’s capital Berlin. Could this be attributed to the fact that ethnic Germans are more exposed to the Turks, as this city holds Germany’s largest Turkish population? An increase in exposure can lead to more physical contact and confrontation, and thus forces these different groups to interact and communicate with one another. The ethnic Germans were asked a series of polarized questions or given statements to agree or disagree with to determine if they held xenophobic views. Some of these statements and questions presented were: “Too many foreigners are residing in Germany” and “If unemployment were to rise, should we deport the foreigners to ensure jobs for Germany’s citizens?” The above survey should understate how many people express mild even moderate discontent toward foreigners residing in Germany; this naturally also applies to the Turkish population.

This hostility comes into sharper focus when one takes into account the hate crimes that have been committed against Turks and other immigrants who have been and still are residing in Germany. Between 1991 and 1992 the cities Hoyerswerda (southeast
of Berlin) and Rostock on the Baltic Sea were the scene of intense riots between ethnic German skinheads and immigrants which ended in murder, hundreds of arrests, and an increasing hostility between the German population and Germany’s immigrants. The arson attack in Mölln (east of Hamburg) in 1992 which claimed the lives of three individuals who were of Turkish ethnicity and a similar arson attack in Solingen (in northwest Germany between Düsseldorf and Cologne) in 1993, where five individuals of Turkish ethnicity, were murdered are examples of the Ausländerfeindlichkeit, the hostility toward foreigners, referred to above. These tragic events were planned and executed by ethnic Germans who identify themselves as right-wing extremists; furthermore, the perpetrators proclaimed themselves as Neo-Nazis. Their views toward foreigners are indeed extreme and hostile but not characteristic of the majority of Germans. It is important to note that not every ethnic German who has reservations toward immigrants is a Neo-Nazi. The Neo-Nazis and people who identify themselves as right-wing extremists constitute a very small percentage of the entire German population.

Why exactly do individuals of the German population, in particular the ethnic Germans, have or share these hostile views towards foreigners? There are several reasons, some economically motivated, while others are based on sociological factors. The ethnic population does not understand the Turkish culture and therefore feels threatened by its presence in their German country; the Germans fear losing their cultural relevance.
A Frightened Population

The Germans who exhibit prejudice against immigrants are predominantly worried that the presence of the immigrants threatens their German identity. These Germans are worried that the ever-changing demographic of Germany, which is becoming increasingly more diverse and multicultural, is upsetting the status quo. Some exhibit *Ausländerfeindlichkeit* in an effort to preserve their culture and national identity because they fear that the immigrants will change Germany’s national individuality. These Germans fear several possible developments, including: 1) the German language will be replaced and will therefore no longer be the standard national language of Germany; 2) Germany will lose its Christian identity and become a Muslim state; and 3) traditional German heritage and culture will lose its distinctiveness. The views of these Germans are also economically motivated; they believe that the immigrants pose a threat to their livelihood in that they and other ethnic Germans will lose jobs to the immigrants who are willing to work for lower wages.

To summarize, some ethnic Germans fear that the ever-growing population of immigrants will change Germany into a state **foreign** to them because the German language is less spoken, the religious affiliation is less Christian, and the cultural identity is less distinctively German and doomed to be even less relevant. These Germans are afraid that their sense of *Heimat* (homeland) could be extinguished. *Heimat* is a German concept which does not have an exact literal translation; it refers to the homeland or home with which individuals have an intensely emotional relationship because of their birth, upbringing, heritage, and/or language. The Germans who share these attitudes tend
to view the Turks, and all immigrants for that matter, as temporary visitors who do not have a right to permanent residence within Germany.

The Ignorant Majority

Another key factor in this division and prejudice among the ethnic German population toward the immigrants is ignorance which is generated by and expressed in the form of stereotypes. Ignorance is a lack of knowledge or information. This ignorance is caused by a lack of education about a particular group’s cultural background. Many ethnic Germans do not fully comprehend who the Turks are, what their heritage is, or their practices, in particular those which correlate to their religion. Some ethnic Germans regard Turks as burka-wearing Islamic extremists who are incapable of speaking the German language and live off the German government. All such opinions stem from stereotypes.

To conclude: the majority of the ethnic Germans share hostile views toward the Turks because of cultural differences between themselves and the Turks which were discussed in chapter three, the fear that Germany will lose its identity if the Turkish population were to continue to grow; and a lack of education which has made the ethnic Germans ignorant about Turkish culture. How does one eliminate this hostility expressed by the ethnic Germans? To fight ignorance, one has to look to its antonym, knowledge, which one can combat by means of education. The Germans must be properly educated about their foreign neighbors, in order to enable them to better comprehend the Turks’ actions, comprehension based on fuller and more accurate knowledge could potentially eliminate the causes of their feeling threatened. Another factor which could close the
great divide between ethnic Germans and Turks is the elimination of the segregation which is happening now, but to achieve this the two different ethnic groups will have to consistently be a larger and more active presence in each other’s lives. Integration must take place if the Germans’ sense of the Turks’ foreignness is to be overcome.

Integration is essential to the Turks’ acceptance and continued existence in Germany, and in turn to the survival of a multicultural Germany. But what exactly does one mean by the term integration? It is a word often misconstrued with a different meaning to almost every single individual. Therefore, integration must be defined in order to effectively clarify both the goal and the events which need to occur in order to ensure that the Turks and ethnic Germans can cohabit with a minimum demeaning or, worse yet, violent conflicts. The following chapter will define integration, discuss the integration attempts between ethnic Germans and Turks, identify the process which has been made, determine if integration has been successful, and furthermore, which attempts at integration still need to be made.
CHAPTER V

INTEGRATION IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY GERMANY

A Call for Assimilation

“Türken müssen sich integrieren (Turks must integrate into German society)” requested German chancellor Angela Merkel in 2010 during a head of state meeting between Germany and Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The German government made that complex demand of Germany’s inhabitants who are either from Turkey or are of Turkish ethnicity. The government has been urged by the ethnic German population to enforce assimilation to ensure that the Turks integrate into Germany’s population peacefully. But what exactly is Germany’s government calling for? What conditions are included in regard to integration, and more importantly: what exactly is integration? The answers to these questions will demonstrate that the demand of the German government is considerably more complex than might appear at first glance.

Integrate: To Bring Together or Incorporate Parts into a Whole, or:

Ethnic Germans + Turks = Heterogeneous Society

In its simplest definition, integration is the act or process of integrating; this, however, identifies very little about what the term “to integrate” actually entails. A more helpful definition provided by the online Oxford Dictionary states that integration is “the

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intermixing of people or groups previously segregated.” This can apply to any type of
group, whether these are segregated because of their differing nationalities, ethnicities,
languages, or some other factor. The definition provided by the online Oxford Dictionary
is useful for the purposes of the present investigation because it discusses the intermixing
of Turks and ethnic Germans, and as noted earlier, these two groups have come into
physical proximity with each other only in the last sixty years and need to develop a
modus vivendi, a way of living together. But what exactly constitutes intermixing? Is it
the process of interaction, face-to-face communication, physical contact, or does it
pertain to the concept of the two distinct groups blending into one larger group? A few
moments’ reflection suffices to reach the recognition that intermixing of the sort under
discussion here must involve a combination of all the aforementioned actions; there must
be interaction among individuals and groups of individuals for integration to be possible.
The goal of integration is the unification of two previously segregated groups into a
single society in which members co-exist more or less harmoniously and deal with each
other peacefully. If such a goal is achieved, the integration process can be deemed a
success. What criteria might one employ to judge an attempt at integration a failure? If
success is measured by unification, failure must be measured by a division. A failed
attempt at integration is one which causes or permits a continued existence of a division
between the two groups, thus essentially causing or continuing the segregation, and in
turn limiting the interaction between the two groups and/or any of the members of the
two groups, who therefore do not peacefully co-habit but rather merely share a common
hostility towards one another which might turn to violence with relatively little provocation.

It has now been established that the groups under discussion here are the ethnic German population and the Turks who reside within Germany. These two groups were previously segregated because there was a minimal to non-existent Turkish population residing in Germany prior to the Guest Worker Era. The groups previously were segregated because they inhabited individual and separate territories: the ethnic Germans resided in Germany and the Turks resided in Turkey. As was mentioned in the previous chapters, a Turkish population emerged in Germany during the Guest Worker Era, and this population has grown extensively during the past fifty years. Today, the Turks are an active and visible population within Germany. They remain, however, a segregated individual population. This segregation is due to characteristics which distinguish them from the ethnic Germans: religious beliefs, language, cultural traditions, clothing, and physical traits such as the color of their skin or their hair. When one takes these matters into consideration, it should be easy to comprehend why the Turkish and German populations are clearly distinct groups. Yet both groups are expected by Germany’s government to develop into one homogenous peaceful society. The “intermixing” which occurs when two previously separate groups integrate has already begun in the sense that the Turks and ethnic Germans are continuously interacting with one another. Whether that integration is peaceful, neutral, or hostile is a separate issue. It has now been established that integration is already occurring in the most basic sense of the word.
Integration, a Fundamental Responsibility and Necessity

Why is integration between the ethnic Germans and the Turks necessary? Integration is a necessity to ensure that there is a unified, society peacefully cohabitating within Germany. If the ethnic Germans and Turks were to remain segregated, that would mean a divided German society and social and economic conflicts would more likely arise. As noted earlier, Germany has become a multicultural nation; whether or not that was the intent of the ethnic Germans remains irrelevant. Present circumstances require the ethnic Germans to face the fact that the Turks have become a part of their society; they therefore have an obligation to welcome and incorporate their new inhabitants into their country and culture. By the same token, the Turks must integrate into the society in which they have chosen to live.

It is important to state that integration is a global phenomenon and responsibility. Integration is a human right; all citizens should be treated equally regardless of their skin color, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, sexual preference, gender or any such distinguishing characteristic. And it is, therefore, the host country’s responsibility to be understanding and welcoming to their immigrants. This means that the ethnic Germans have a human responsibility to welcome immigrants and to help them adapt.

The Integrator vs. the Integratee

It has been established that integration is indeed a necessity, and that all inhabitants of Germany are urged to integrate to keep the peace among their diverse communities. One must now ask exactly who is being asked to integrate, and why they have any obligation to do so. If an individual moves from their native country to a foreign
one, that individual is expected to assimilate into the life of the new country. Thus it is reasonable to expect that Turks will adapt to German customs. To the extent that they do so, Turks will ensure that they are accepted by the majority of Germany’s population, the ethnic Germans. In addition, Turks will ensure that they are able to communicate on a satisfactory level with Germany’s population; this in turn will aid the Turks’ economic and social circumstances. But most importantly, integration can lead to a level of tolerance between both groups which will guarantee the safety of the Turks who are foreigners in an alien country. So again one must ask: for whom is integration important and whom does it benefit? The answer, of course, is that everybody who is involved in the integration process benefits from its success. The ethnic Germans gain tolerance, the Turks are granted safety and opportunities to succeed, and furthermore both groups gain the privilege of becoming more accepting individuals.

The Importance of Language and Education

Indeed, the Turks are the group that is expected to be more actively engaged in the integration process. As stated above, this expectation results from the fact that the Turks have chosen to immigrate to Germany and reside there. Two factors which are essential for integration are language and education. Both are vital acquisitions human beings must develop in order to lead successful lives in society. One of the most important factors contributing to successful integration is communication, and language is the means of communication. Members of a society have to comprehend what members of a foreign population are saying before any relationship with them can be developed, and language is certainly the key to such comprehension. The ethnic Germans
speak predominantly German, while the majority of individuals of Turkish ethnicity and/or heritage speak Turkish. The Turks are expected by the ethnic Germans and the German government to learn German and to set their native language aside.

Many ethnic Germans, however, do not understand Turkish language, culture or traditions. Such lack of understanding finds expression in emotionally based stereotypes and misconceptions, which when expressed openly and frequently tend to arouse Ausländerfeindlichkeit, or hatred toward foreigners. This Ausländerfeindlichkeit is one of the chief impediments to integration. How can this ignorance and Ausländerfeindlichkeit be overcome? Since education is the key to overcoming ignorance, a prominent role must be given to education in the effort to overcome ignorance and build understanding and tolerance.

The Extreme Push towards Integration

It is necessary to recognize at the outset that ethnic Germans are deeply conflicted. On the one hand they recognize that they have rewarded the Turks for the development of their economy and that the integration of these people helps to maintain that development. Accordingly they press for cooperation from the Turks in that process. On the other hand, their lack of understanding of the Turkish language and culture fuels their fear that the increasing numbers of Turks settling permanently in Germany and integrating with German society threatens their traditionally German Germany. Moreover, the tremendous importance they place on preserving their own culture has a significant and negative impact on the Turkish population: the Turks see Germans concerned about preserving their own culture while they not only fail to understand Turks
or learn Turkish language and customs; to the Turks it appears that the Germans also refuse to do so.

**Attempts at Integration**

In 2005 the German government of the Federal Republic officially declared Germany a multicultural nation. By this declaration Germany acknowledged that it has an extensive number of immigrants with a wide range of national and ethnic backgrounds residing within its borders.

In 2010 a campaign was organized to encourage these immigrants to learn German because this would support their integration into German society. The campaign was supported by the *Deutschlandstiftung* (Germany Foundation), a German political organization which existed between 1966 and 2007 with the mission of conserving German culture. The sole purpose of this campaign was to encourage immigrants to speak German. It employed posters in newspapers, magazines, and on billboards showing heads of ethnic immigrants with protruding tongues painted with the German flag. Accompanying the images were slogans such as “Ich spreche Deutsch” (“I speak German”) and “Raus mit der Sprache” (“out with the language”). This campaign met with positive and negative criticism. Some of Germany’s residents believed that the immigrants should not be forced to learn German, and that the campaign strongly supported the immigrants abandoning their native language.

**Has Integration Failed, and Was it even a Possibility?**

Many German citizens, including several politicians, have stated that the process of integrating the Turks into German society is not working. Furthermore, in 2010,
Germany’s Chancellor Angela Merkel formally declared that the integration process had failed. Why is the integration process failing? There are several reasons why these individuals believe that the Turks are incapable of properly assimilating into German society. One of the most frequently stated reasons is the hostility of ethnic Germans towards foreigners, in particular the Turks. Some ethnic Germans are hesitant to participate in the integration process because they fear that integrating the Turks into their society will mean that they also have to integrate Turkish culture into their German culture. More specifically, the fear of Germany becoming an Islamic state threatens their national being, and they therefore choose to segregate themselves from Turkish individuals.

Can integration be successful, or does it remain a dream an ideal that is simply unattainable? Is integration the impossible dream? Some humans continue to segregate themselves because they want to be unique, to cherish their individuality, and are not keen to see themselves as equal to all other human beings. Could it be that humans are not integrating because they are being selfish? Is it in their nature to hold on to power and maintain a feeling of superiority? In other words, will integration succeed only when humans view themselves as equal to one another?

Serious consequences could occur if the integration process were to fail or be abandoned. One consequence would be that numerous Turks would return to their native land. Statistics presented in chapter three showed that some Turks are already returning to Turkey; between 2001 and 2010 the number of Turkish citizens residing in Germany dropped by almost 370,000 individuals. Why have these Turks chosen to abandon a life
in Germany? They claim that they simply do not feel welcome in Germany. Without a systematic effort to integrate them, society is further segregating itself. Germany will have to make a stronger, more intense effort; it cannot allow the isolation of these immigrants and thereby possibly enable further and more potent discrimination against those viewed as alien. Without efforts on the part of the government, mere discrimination can grow to attitudes and feelings of superiority on the part of the larger portion of the population, and attitudes of superiority can culminate—indeed, it has culminated—in acts of violence against the alien population.

To conclude, integration is important to ensure that individuals who represent a minority, in this case the immigrant Turks, can lead safe and stable lives. The reality is that Germany boasts a multifaceted society, and it is the responsibility of all of Germany’s citizens to deal with this demanding and at times difficult situation. As the majority population, the ethnic Germans have a human responsibility to welcome immigrants and to help them adapt, in the process building a society in which both Turks and ethnic Germans benefit.
CHAPTER VI

YOUTHS IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY GERMANY

Germany’s Diverse Youth Population

A major goal of this thesis is to describe the role the German education system plays in limiting the Turkish youths from successfully integrating into German society. Of course, all variables involved in the process must be defined. One of the variables are the Turkish youths themselves. Chapter one defined the population of Germany in general terms; the present chapter examines the youth population within it. A youth is an individual who is experiencing the period between childhood and adulthood. For the purpose of this thesis, a youth is an individual between the ages of eleven and nineteen. This age range was chosen because youths who are attending secondary schools are between the ages of eleven and nineteen. Most individuals are or turn eleven during their fifth grade year, the year in which one enters a secondary school in Germany, and the average age is nineteen upon completion of the most advanced secondary grade, the twelfth year at the Gymnasium. Therefore, anyone discussing Germany’s youths is referring to individuals who are between the ages of eleven and nineteen.

Germany’s youth population has experienced a steady decline during recent decades, predominantly due to the low birth rate mentioned in chapter one. During the thirty-year span “Between 1970 and 2000, the portion of Germany’s young people under the age of eighteen declined by forty percent.” Indeed, there has been a decline among
the population of Germany’s youth, but there has also been an increase in one particular demographic of this population. This statistic further emphasizes the increasingly diverse German population. As was noted in chapter one, Germany has become a multicultural nation; ten percent of Germany’s total population is comprised of non-German ethnic groups. Taking this statement and the previous statistic into consideration, it can be concluded that Germany’s youth population is also a heterogeneous population in terms of ethnicity, and therefore diverse. The majority of Germany’s youth population is composed of ethnic German youths, second to which are Turkish youths who are residing in Germany.

The focus of the present chapter is Germany’s youth population; it will be divided into two complementary parts. The first of these will highlight and discuss the ethnic German youth population, while the second will focus on the Turkish youth population residing in Germany. It is important to note that these are not the only youth populations residing in Germany, as there are many youths of varying ethnic backgrounds who also live in twenty-first century Germany. The ethnic German and Turkish youths, however, are the focus of this thesis and are therefore the ones which will be analyzed to ensure that the reader has a clear understanding of the subjects of this thesis.

Before one analyzes the sub-population of the ethnic German youths, it is important to note that the experience of a youth varies from one individual to the next. The variation can be attributed to numerous factors such as the youth’s location, cultural and economic background, and the parents who are raising them. These factors shape the youth’s experience and the way the youth interprets and evaluates that experience. There
are, however, numerous commonalities which a majority of Germany’s youth population shares, including the youth’s hobbies, family life, residence, and language. These factors will be addressed for the ethnic German and the Turkish youth separately; by the end of the chapter the reader should be able to compare these two distinct experiences.

What does the majority of a youth’s life focus on? Friends and family quickly come to mind, but the most prominent and time-consuming factor will most likely be education. As in many Western countries, a youth in Germany is required to attend school. The education a youth receives in Germany can be provided by a public institution, a private institution or even a parent who may choose to home-school their youth. German law requires a youth to complete a minimum of nine years of education, excluding the years spent in kindergarten. After ninth grade individuals who attend a Hauptschule or a Realschule may choose enter an apprenticeship, or an internship, to pursue further education at a different institution, or to join the workforce. The ethnic German and the Turkish youths both receive a secondary education, but their school experiences can differ with respect to which institution they attend, the type of instruction they receive, how their educators perceive them, and if they, and their culture, are represented in the materials they are being taught. These differences are a major cause of the divide between the ethnic German and the Turkish youths and feed the ever-growing alienation of the Turkish youths among Germany’s society. Since education is the most influential factor which shapes a youth’s life, it will be the main factor analyzed in chapter eight and will compare the ethnic German and Turkish youths’ school
experiences, and highlight how these prevent the Turkish youths from successfully integrating into German society.

Part I: The Ethnic German Youths

Earlier it was stated that education plays a central role in a youth’s experience. One would be foolish, however, to believe the ethnic German youth spends each waking hour sitting at a desk surrounded by his or her textbooks. After all, youths have varying interests. The average ethnic German youth is really very much like the average American, or, for that matter, any western youth. The ethnic German youths divide their leisure time among meeting and spending time with friends, going to youth dance clubs, listening to music, watching television, reading, shopping, and playing sports, especially Germany’s unofficial national sport Fußball (soccer). As active members of the twenty-first century digital world, Germans’ hobbies revolve, not surprisingly, around technology and include playing computer games and surfing the internet.

Family life plays also plays a major role in an ethnic German youth’s experience. Some people may be surprised to learn that German youths are encouraged to be highly independent from a very early age, and this can weaken family ties. However, in line with the fact noted in chapter one that Germany has a low birth rate, it is common for an ethnic German youth to be an only child. The limited number of siblings further weakens the traditional family experience. Many ethnic German youths have parents who are both actively working which further reduces the quality time shared by family members.

As stated above, a dominant focus of any youth’s experience is education, and this applies to ethnic German youth as well. All ethnic German youths attend a secondary
school, which may be a Gymnasium, a Realschule, or a Hauptschule; the distinctions among these schools are explained in detail in chapter seven. Germany’s statics yearbook for 2011, Statistisches Jahrbuch 2011, states that approximately 8.1 million children and youths attended German schools including kindergartens, elementary schools, integrated Gesamtschulen, the institutions mentioned above, and other vocational schools. Since this thesis focuses on youths, the main interest remains the secondary schools.

The typical ethnic German youth attends school Monday through Friday and spends between four and ten hours in class, the variation occurring from one day to the next. Outside of school students are expected to keep up with their studies through numerous hours of homework. German students are rarely granted time in class to work on their assignments and are expected to expend several hours of studying on their own time. In general, education in Germany is taken more seriously than in the United States because youths are expected to be highly motivated students. Class time is focused solely on education, and all extracurricular activities such as sports and theater are handled by the city, not the school. Therefore, it is expected of youths that they will dedicate the majority of their time to their education.

Part II: The Turkish Youths

Before the discussion of Germany’s Turkish youth population commences, one must remember that numerous stereotypes and misconceptions have accumulated to shape most Germans’ perceptions of who the Turks are, including their youth. It is common for ethnic Germans to believe that the Turkish youths are exceedingly obsessive about their Islamic roots or that their young women are very conservative. These
generalizations are damaging to the Turkish youths because they not only are stereotypes; they also assert that all Turkish youths are alike, that no distinction among them exists. This is false, of course, and this part of the present chapter will aim to provide some realistic insight into the lives of Germany’s Turkish youth population.

An Identity Crisis

Many Turkish youth residing in Germany today were born in Germany, yet German society, in particular the ethnic Germans, still perceives them to be Turks, not Germans. Even more surprising is that many of these Turkish youths do not identify themselves as Germans, even though 1) they were born in Germany, 2) they have lived in Germany for all or the majority of their lives, and 3) the majority of them have never visited Turkey. A 2002 study conducted at the University of Cologne questioned Turkish youths about their national identity, and the results indicated that sixty percent of these Turkish youths, of whom almost all were born in Germany, declared Turkey their Heimat, their native land.

Living Like a Turk

The Turkish family is a large one, and its dynamics and relationships, therefore, differ greatly from those of ethnic German families. The present chapter is dedicated to the youths of Germany, to better understand the Turkish youths one must have an understanding of their living conditions; furthermore, to understand the differences between the Turkish and German youths, this section will serve as a side by side comparison of each group's living conditions such as household size, relationship status, number of people per household, and living space per person. These factors provide an
accurate depiction of the vast differences a Turk and ethnic German youth face as they spend time at home.

It is typical for Turkish women to give birth to numerous children; this differs from the ethnic German women who are more likely to give birth to only one child during their lifetime. A Survey titled “Selected Migrant Groups in Germany 2006/2007” ("Ausgewählte Migrantengruppen in Deutschland 2006/2007") collected data on different migrant groups including the Turks and concentrated in part on the migrants’ living conditions. The survey found (based on the answers provided by Turkish migrants) that 53 % of Turkish families reside in households in which four or more individuals reside; this percentage is higher than any of the other minority groups including the Italians, Ex-Yugoslavs, Poles, and Greeks who took part in the survey.76 Who resides in these large Turkish households? Typically the parents and their children; note the plural, as it is also not unusual for a grandparent to reside in their child’s home as well.

It has been established that the Turks have large households in terms of individuals who reside in said household, much larger in fact than the typical ethnic German household. One could, therefore, assume that the Turks occupy a larger living area (in terms of square footage). In reality, the ethnic Germans who have fewer people residing in their households also occupy a much larger area. The average Turkish household size was 3.9 people of which each individual resided on a living area of 264.8 square feet; whereas the average ethnic German household has only 2.4 people, and a

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living area of over 520 square feet. This statistic indicates that the average ethnic German has double the living space of the Turk.

The Turks also place great emphasis on the institution of marriage and therefore unsurprisingly have a much higher percentage of adults who are married than the ethnic Germans. Germany’s Federal Bureau of Statistics (Destatis) found that 79% of Turks were married in 2006, opposed to only 52% ethnic Germans. The study further found that an ethnic German was three and a half times more likely to be in a non-marital partnership than a Turk, and that the rate of divorce was two and a half times higher among ethnic Germans. If one were to guess the typical living situations of a Turkish youth in Germany based on the statistics above, one could assume that the youth is not an only child, has parents who are married, and probably has a difficult time trying to find any privacy within his/her home.

The Great Divide

What are some of the factors that cause the Turkish youths to identify more closely with their ethnic identity than with their potential German identity? Segregation is the leading factor which prevents Turkish youths from peacefully assimilating into German society. Dr. Robert Kecskes, a sociologist at the University of Cologne, states that factors such as neighborhood and schools play a significant role in the lack of social assimilation of Turkish youths into German society.

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78 “Hintergrund: Zahlen und Fakten.”
79 “Hintergrund: Zahlen und Fakten.”
As stated in chapter three, the majority of the Turkish population resides in metropolitan cities such as Berlin, Cologne, and Frankfurt on the Main. Furthermore, within those cities the Turks have congregated in specific sections or regions of a city (like the boroughs of Manhattan in New York City), such as Kreuzberg in Berlin and Kalk in Cologne. The areas in cities where the Turks have settled have become known as Turkish quarters among the ethnic German population due to the highly dense population of Turks who reside in those areas. Most of the ethnic Germans have abandoned their residences in these neighborhoods, and thus segregated Turkish living communities have developed. The residences are on average low income housing, tenement structures. Numerous families live in door-to-door apartments. Since many Turks live in these residences, they are surrounded by Turkish neighbors and have limited interaction with ethnic German neighbors. This certainly has an impact on children and youths who tend to play with the children who reside in their own neighborhoods. Sociologist Dr. Kecskes notes that most Turkish youths indeed have friends who are predominantly of Turkish origin. This can be attributed to their residence which, as noted above, further limits interaction between Turkish youths and ethnic German youths. One would think, however, that the Turkish youths would encounter constant interaction with their ethnic German peers at school; surprisingly this interaction, too, may be limited, as it depends on the school into which the youth is placed.

While Turkish youths residing in Germany face numerous disadvantages, the issue of secondary school placement constitutes the most controversial source of disadvantage which will be discussed in greater detail in the forthcoming chapters.
School placement and location of residence have now been established as two factors which segregate Turkish youths from their ethnic German peers. It can be assumed that this social separation, indeed alienation, and the acceptance of the ethnic German youths which is thus denied to them causes the Turkish youths to identify with their Turkish roots all the more intensely.

To conclude: is it possible for Germany’s Turkish youths to consider themselves a part of German society? It seemed impossible over a decade ago, when in 1999 a study conducted among Turkish and German youths found that only three and a half percent of Turkish youths felt that they were a part of German society. To better understand if the Turkish youths have integrated into the German society, one must study data represented in chapter eight which fully explains the clear separation which is occurring in Germany’s secondary schools between the ethnic German and Turkish students. The forthcoming chapter surveys the contemporary German school system and its controversial placement process that is partially to blame for the Turkish youths’ alienation.
CHAPTER VII

THE CONTEMPORARY GERMAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

Intellectual Forefathers

Sixteenth century English philosopher and father of the scientific method, Francis Bacon, declared that “knowledge is power.” A universally accepted concept, Bacon’s statement has been translated into numerous languages including German where it is “Wissen ist Macht.” In the late eighteenth century French author Germaine de Stael characterized Germany as a country comprised of poets and thinkers, das Land der Dichter und Denker. The accuracy of her assessment is evident when one considers that the Germans have for centuries placed emphasis on the importance of being a cultured individual. A cultured person is a well-read literate individual who is familiar with art, music, language, theater, religion, and similar fields of human endeavor. Germany has produced some of the most prominent and well-rounded intellectuals such as inventor Johannes Gutenberg; renaissance men Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Nietzsche; mathematician Karl Gauss; physicists Albert Einstein and Wilhelm Röntgen; physician Robert Koch; Wilhelm Wundt, widely regarded as the father of experimental psychology; not to forget painters from Albrecht Dürer and Lucas Cranach to composers Heinrich Schütz and Johann Sebastian Bach to Ludwig van Beethoven and Johannes Brahms.
The aforementioned intellectuals realized that the key to this power, a derivative of knowledge, is education for one obtains knowledge through education. This statement prompts several questions, such as what is the true definition of education, how does an individual obtain an education, and who is the provider of this education, the educator? By its most simple definition, education is the process of acquiring knowledge and skills such as reasoning and judgment, which are gained from study and practice. Initially one obtains education through experiences and human interaction, in particular from one’s care givers who inculcate values as well. This education is essential as a starting point and foundation. From there, one receives a more specialized education from institutions, such as schools. Education does not involve one sole, dedicated provider. An educator can be an individual, including a parent or teacher or a piece of writing, in particular books.

Part I: The Institutions of the Contemporary German School System

This chapter will focus on the education which is provided by an institution, in particular the institutions that constitute the contemporary German school system. It is important to understand that in Germany each Bundesland (state) organizes and oversees its own curricula and schools, and ensures that each school is meeting the implemented nationwide standards. The German school system is a unique structure which differs greatly from the American school system. The subsequent paragraphs will define and analyze the different institutions, schools, which constitute this system, the correlation between them, the students who enroll in these schools and the advantages and
disadvantages a student obtains from receiving their education from the aforementioned institutions. The first institution encountered by a child in Germany is the kindergarten.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is a German cognate which literally translates as children’s garden or a garden of children—who need to be cultivated and nurtured. The term was coined in 1852 by German educator Friedrich Fröbel. Fröbel saw a clear parallel between a child and a plant, for like the plant a child must be nurtured to support growth. A kindergarten in Germany is not mandatory and may be either public or private. The main function of a kindergarten is to provide an early education for a child at age four with the most essential and basic academic building blocks such as counting, reciting the alphabet, writing and reading. It also serves as an environment in which children interact and develop their interpersonal skills. Naturally, a kindergarten also serves as a daycare where children are supervised while the parents are at work. In the United States the kindergarten is an integrated year in an elementary school from which a child moves on to the first grade. In contrast, children in Germany actually attend kindergarten for several years. A child usually enters kindergarten when approximately four years old and remains in kindergarten until initiation into elementary school at about age six or seven. The individuals who provide instruction and care for these children are Erzieher (nursery school educators), Sozialpädagogen (social education workers), and Kinderpfleger (childcare workers). The parent determines the length of time the child is in the care of these providers. Services provided by kindergartens vary from part-time supervision in

the morning and afternoon to prolonged morning supervision to full-time supervision. Children who have completed kindergarten will have gained the necessary social and cognitive skills to enter first grade in the Grundschule.

Grundschule

The Grundschule, literally the fundamental or basic school, is Germany’s elementary school. It serves as a primary school encompassing first through fourth grade, although some include fifth and sixth grade as well. It educates students between the ages of six and ten (the extended Grundschulen continue to age twelve). The majority of Germany’s Grundschulen are public institutions. The curriculum is heavily academic; students receive a Stundenplan, a very detailed class schedule which has a clear parallel to a standard university class schedule and prescribes the courses and hours of instruction. Students remain in school for four to eight hours, varying with the day. During their instruction they are taught the fundamentals of reading, writing, math, science, history, and English. This education is provided by one instructor who accompanies the student throughout their four, in some cases six, years. After the completion of their education at the Grundschule the student is placed in one of three secondary schools on the basis of their teacher’s evaluation. This placement is a tedious process involving several factors, including a student’s academic progress, and will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. The three corresponding secondary schools provide varying educational content which determines a student’s future, in particular their occupational aspirations. The three most common secondary schools currently in existence within Germany are the Gymnasium, the Realschule, and the Hauptschule.
Gymnasium

The Gymnasium is a prestigious German secondary grammar school and represents the gateway to a university degree; students who are placed in this educational institution aspire to obtain the most comprehensive and academically challenging education. Students who have maintained a B or better average throughout their elementary school years are placed in a Gymnasium. This type of secondary school provides education for students from fifth to twelfth grade. Until 2011, there was actually a required thirteenth year which was configured in an educational reform to condense the duration of the instruction. During the last year of instruction the students prepare for their most important exams, the Abitur. These exams determine if and where the student will pursue their university degree. The Abitur is the final secondary school examination; a passing grade establishes general qualification for university entrance exam. A student must obtain a minimum set of marks to receive this type of diploma. The education provided by the Gymnasium is essentially the stepladder to a university education which in turn leads to a position in a prestigious and well-paid Beruf or profession.

The instruction that is provided for these students is challenging and the most comprehensive academically oriented education a student can receive from any of the three different secondary schools. These pupils must be intelligent and dedicated to their studies to ensure that they achieve acceptable grades. Students who fail to do so are in danger of being placed, or in effect demoted, to the Realschule. As stated above, the coursework which a student must undertake in a Gymnasium is demanding and includes biology, chemistry, physics, history, music, German, geography, math, social studies and
more specialized, upper division courses such as religion, economics, information technology, educational theory, and political science. In addition, students are required to study at least two foreign languages; one of these is English, and the other one is chosen by the student. Alternatives available vary somewhat from one Gymnasium to another but frequently include Latin, French, Spanish, and Russian. The educators who provide this instruction are well-educated and well-paid, and being an educator, especially at a Gymnasium, is deemed a prestigious career. Some schools of this type emphasize particular disciplines, both in their name and in their curricula; these include natural sciences and technology, music, sports, economics, and social sciences and languages.

Realschule

The Realschule differs from the Gymnasium in several respects. On the one hand, its completion does not enable a student to obtain an Abitur and consequently prevents the student from entering a University. Upon graduation, a Realschule pupil can attend either a Gymnasium if the student has achieved an impeccable record or a vocational college, or pursue an apprenticeship. In addition, students attend a Realschule for six years, two less than a Gymnasium, from fifth to tenth grade, and the curriculum is not nearly as extensive or as difficult; for example, a student who attends a Realschule is required to learn only one foreign language. Some of the required subjects are German, English, math, economics, science, social sciences, geography, history, religion, physical education, and either art or music. Mittlere Reife is the term used to designate the diploma a Realschule pupil obtains upon completion of the program. It literally means “intermediate maturity.” In reality, a more accurate term would be general certificate of
secondary instruction. Recent years have seen education reforms as several of the Bundesländer (German states) have replaced some of their Realschulen and Hauptschulen with Stadtteilschulen and Sekundarschulen; these new specialized secondary schools are defined below.

**Stadtteilschulen** - A Stadtshule (city school) is a revolutionary institution in Germany which was first established in Hamburg merely two years ago in 2010. This school replaces the Realschule, the Gesamtschule (a comprehensive secondary school developed under a school reform in the late 1960s), and the Hauptschule. Its purpose is to eliminate the mediocre education numerous students receive at these latter institutions, and especially the social stigmas which are associated with them such as being viewed as one of Germany’s lowest academically achieving youths. This school provides students an opportunity to complete any of the programs that the other schools offer; for example, a student even has the ability to attain their Abitur during the thirteenth year at a Stadtteilschule or they could choose to complete ten grades as one would in the standard Realschule. What further differentiates this type of school from the traditional secondary school is the fact that a student does not need a teacher’s recommendation to be placed into this school. A parent simply has to register their child.

**Sekundarschule** – the Sekundarschule, literally “secondary school,” is similar to the Stadtteilschule in that it also integrates the Realschule and Hauptschule into one curriculum. Bremen and Sachsen-Anhalt have Sekundarschulen established since the late 1990s; other states like Rhineland-Palatinate, Lower Saxony and Saarland have recently instituted similar schools but have chosen different names for their particular state-
sponsored secondary schools. The *Sekundarschule*, like its sister school the *Stadtteilschule*, has been created to improve the education which *Haupt- and Realschule* students receive. This permits the students to have better chances for future employment because they will not be as severely stigmatized as a result of the school they have attended, and to ensure that teachers provide the quality education often times not available in a *Hauptschule*. Indeed, some German states are choosing to abandon the *Hauptschule*.

**Hauptschule**

The *Hauptschule* is the most controversial secondary school in Germany. Its definition provides some explanation as to why that is, since *haupt* means head, chief or main; in this sense, one could also use the English word primary. This type of school provides the most basic secondary education and also the least comprehensive and thus the least helpful in terms of expanding the range of occupational opportunities a student may encounter later. There is no ideal translation in English appropriate for this institution. One can, however, regard it as the educational equivalent of an American junior high school, or middle school, education. Any individual who successfully completes the *Grundschule* can attend a *Hauptschule*; the excellent record which is a prerequisite for enrollment in a *Gymnasium* or a *Realschule* is impressive but not critical in this case. Indeed, many of the students who enter the *Hauptschule* are those who have received average or poor grades during their *Grundschule* years. The instruction offered at a *Hauptschule* is the most basic education and includes some of the same core courses as the other secondary schools, but are taught at a slower pace. Many critics argue that
the education is too remedial. Upon completion of the required years, grades five through nine, a student receives their *Hauptschulabschluss* (leaving certificate). The student then has the opportunity to begin practical vocational training, to work in the public service at a basic or secretarial level, or attend a *Berufsfachschule* (full-time vocational school).\(^8\)

Some students who qualify can choose to further their education at a *Realschule* or *Gymnasium*; this requires impeccable marks and extreme determination and work ethic. The student must also repeat their tenth grade at the new institution. A *Hauptschule*, for the most part, prepares a youth to be a worker, not an intellectual.

**Germany’s School System is Embracing Change**

In conclusion, there are three different types of secondary schools in Germany, each unique in the education it offers and the occupational path it opens for the student. Students who attend a *Gymnasium* are university bound, while students who attend a *Hauptschule* or a *Realschule* are prepared for a trade or some technical occupation. German educators are more aware today that the instruction in some institutions, in particular the *Hauptschule*, is too basic and prevents students from successfully integrating into adult life by preventing them from obtaining jobs which earn a decent income. Educators and politicians in different *Bundesländer* have therefore decided to adapt and incorporate institutions that integrate the curricula taught at a *Realschule* and *Hauptschule*. These educational reforms are one solution which will enable students who are non-ethnic Germans to better integrate into German society by providing them a more comprehensive education, and will be further discussed in chapter eight.

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Part II: Placement in German Schools

One of the most important events in a German pupil’s school experience is their placement into a secondary school. As was stated in part one above, a child in Germany is placed into a secondary school after having completed kindergarten and Grundschule (elementary school). The process of placing a young student is a complicated task based on numerous key factors and the opinions of several individuals. This decision, the placing, determines not only the child’s educational path but also his/her career path. It was previously mentioned that it is very difficult to move in an upward direction from one secondary school to another, for example from a Realschule to a Gymnasium. For the majority of students in Germany, the school they are placed in remains their main institution. Why do the Germans choose to decide the future of their children at the young age of nine or ten? The following sections aim to provide a clearer understanding of the process of placing students, the effect it can have on a child, and what benefit if any the placement holds for the children.

A Complex Formula: A + B + C = Success

To understand the process of placing, one first has to understand which factors are being evaluated to determine the student’s capabilities. The recommendation is based on the child’s overall development during his/her elementary school years; the overall development is measured in the areas of reasoning powers, attitude toward work, collaboration both with other children and the teacher, and productivity/achievement in his/her coursework. These criteria are meant to measure not only the child’s academic accomplishments but also their social and cognitive skills, in addition to their
determination and work ethic. These diverse criteria should remind one of the German’s concept of Bildung. Recall that Bildung is an approach to gaining knowledge which includes intellectual, social, and spiritual activities; a person who is gebildet is a well-rounded individual who is both intellectual and cultural. The process of placing is so complex and diverse because the Germans value complexity; their definition of knowledge is not one-dimensional, whereas some institutions in other nations choose to evaluate their students’ achievements chiefly on grades. It should not be a shock, therefore, that evaluating and calculating these factors which determine a student’s future can be quite confusing. After all, how does one determine which skills are the most important? These mindboggling decisions are predominantly determined by one individual, the student’s teacher.

The Teacher, the Ruler of Children’s Futures

The child receives his/her recommendation for placement during the beginning of the last semester of elementary schooling. This recommendation is made by the student’s teacher, who has the most input and in the end makes the final decision. It is important to note that a teacher in a German elementary school teaches not only one grade, as in the United States for example, but actually accompanies the students through their entire elementary school experience. One could argue therefore, that the teacher actually knows the students rather well since they were able to oversee and nurture each student’s intellect and potential for a span of four years. The teacher should be fully aware of the student’s academic achievement, progress, capabilities, social behavior, and work ethic.
Annabel Marcum

Placement: A Controversial Procedure

This is, however, the problem. One person evaluates a child’s potential and capabilities based on numerous factors and makes a life-directing decision for that child. Is valuing only one person’s opinion not a very biased way to evaluate a child’s academic progress? Conflict can arise if a student is known to make trouble for the teacher—such as speaking out of turn, picking on peers, or refusing to work; how can the teacher remain unbiased if they do not like the student, how do they refrain from letting the student’s bad behavior be the main indicator in the student’s placement recommendation? And furthermore, is the student’s placement a biased reflection of the student’s behavior—whether that behavior is good or bad? Children who have disruptive personalities, and in particular children who have learning disabilities, are often placed in lower secondary schools such as the Realschule or Hauptschule. This is problematic because the child’s potential is measured on the basis of external behaviors. It is not difficult to see why the determining of a child’s placement in a secondary school at age nine or ten can be controversial.

Another controversial aspect of placement is the evaluation of a non-ethnic German’s academic progress. It can be difficult for a teacher to evaluate a student’s progress, especially if German is not the student’s native tongue. A lack of understanding of different cultures can also allow the teacher to associate a student’s ethnicity with a lower expectation of performing well in certain subjects, for example, German. The placement of non-ethnic students into secondary schools in Germany is a central focus of this thesis and bears a direct correlation to the non-ethnic German student’s success in
their adult life. The placing of non-ethnic Germans into secondary schools, and their achievements in these schools and later on in adult life, as a part of German society, will be further discussed in chapter eight.

A Lack of Control

It has now been established that it is the teacher who makes the formal and final decision regarding the student’s placement into a secondary school. This placement is based on the student’s performance. One important factor that has not been addressed are the student’s parents and/or guardians. What is their involvement, and more importantly, do they have the authority to impact their child’s placement? They do, but not in a very direct way. A student’s parents and/or guardians play an important role in their child’s educational development: they oversee the child’s progress, assist them with their homework, and are responsible for encouraging their child to reach their full potential. The parent and/or guardian acts mostly as a motivator and as an enforcer to ensure that the student is attending school and completing their assignments to the best of their abilities. A parent and/or guardian is, however, also responsible for ensuring that their child is receiving a good education and must therefore monitor and question the teacher who is educating their child, and in particular the relationship and interaction between their child and his/her teacher. A parent-teacher conference is held after the completion of each semester (when grades have been awarded) during the elementary school years to ensure that the parents and/or guardian are fully aware of their child’s academic progress.

A similar conference between the parents and/or guardian and the child’s teacher is held after the first semester of the student’s fourth grade year to determine which
secondary school the child should attend. The parents do not, however, have the authority to overrule the teacher’s decision; they may, however, choose to question their decision, attempt to persuade the teacher, and/or appeal the decision. If this happens, the Direktor (principal) of the elementary school becomes involved and investigates the teacher’s decision, and has the authority to sustain or overrule the decision. A parent is, however, a key decision maker if the teacher is unsure of where to place the student.

Corrupting Dreams

To best exemplify the effect placement can have on a student’s life, consider the following anecdote. Fadime is a nine-year-old student currently in fourth grade at the Ludwig-Hoffmann-Grundschule, one of thirty-four public elementary schools in the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg region located in Berlin. Fadime is a very motivated student who has earned a B- average during her first three and a half years of elementary instruction. During the month of January the placement process begins and her parents have been invited to consult with her teacher, Frau (Mrs.) Lehmann, who has taught at this institution for over twenty-five years. Fadime has great aspirations and dreams of becoming a teacher herself. She is a gifted mathematician for her young age, and often helps her siblings and neighbors solve equations; she thoroughly enjoys helping her peers and knows that a career as a math teacher would be both rewarding and intellectually stimulating. Mrs. Lehmann is aware of Fadime’s gift and continually praises her for impeccable performances on math exams.

Mrs. Lehmann is worried, however, about Fadime’s language skills, which Mrs. Lehmann attributes to Fadime’s upbringing. Mrs. Lehmann is aware that Fadime’s
parents immigrated to Germany from Turkey to join Fadime’s grandfather who has resided in Germany since the late 1970s; furthermore, she also knows that Fadime’s parents speak both Turkish and German at home, and that Fadime was born in Germany and is a German citizen (since she was born in 2002, the year after the naturalization laws changed). Mrs. Lehmann has observed that Fadime rarely speaks up in class to answer prompts or participate in discussions, socializes little with her peers, and receives her poorest grades in (the subjects) German and English; Mrs. Lehmann has noted that Fadime’s vocabulary is not as extensive as the other children’s and that Fadime seems to have a difficult time voicing her ideas and structuring her thoughts in writing. Based on Fadime’s performance, Mrs. Lehmann recommends placing her in a Realschule, an institution where Fadime would have a better chance developing her language skills, and would not be penalized nor expected to speak, read, and write at an advanced level in all of her subjects. Mrs. Lehmann has not vocalized her explanations for Fadime’s problems, but suspects that Fadime’s bilingual upbringing has prevented Fadime from properly learning German in terms of grammar and sentence structure.

Fadime’s parents are surprised by the recommendation, as they knew that Fadime was hoping to get placed in the Gymnasium and have witnessed their child working feverishly each night on her homework. They therefore, have not expected this path of education for their daughter. Fadime’s parents remind the teacher that Fadime is a very gifted individual and excels in the subject of math, and that her grades in social studies, history, and religion are sufficient in correspondence to a Gymnasium education. Fadime’s mother is aware that her daughter is a reserved child, and blames her daughter’s
shyness for the insufficient communication during German and English class. Regardless, Mrs. Lehmann convinces Fadime’s parents to place the child in the Realschule.

Fadime continues on to her new secondary school and excels in almost all of her subjects even in German, but is often bored in her math and science-based courses. Because she is not challenged enough, Fadime begins to become less motivated. As she gets older, she is further saddened when she realizes that her dream of becoming a math teacher has been taken away from her, because she will not be receiving the instruction that will enable her to take or succeed on the Abitur, the university entrance exam.

Does the Process of Placement need to be Challenged?

Fatime’s story should underscore the fact that a child’s potential cannot be accurately measured at such a young age, that a child’s performance is not one-dimensional, and that educators can make false presumptions about a child’s abilities based on stereotypes. These factors can have a severe impact on a child’s dreams, hopes, and aspirations, and in turn their future. Is placing a student at such a young age beneficial to the child? The secondary school a student is placed into essentially determines the career path for that individual. But to what extent can one really evaluate a child’s potential at the tender and inexperienced age of nine or ten? To go even further, is it ethical for adults to make these life-directing decisions for the children, who essentially have very limited role in their placement? The document which states the student’s placement is titled “Empfehlung zur weiteren Schullaufbahn” which translates as “recommendation for continuation of school career.” A more realistic and accurate title
would be “the formal recommendation that dictates this student’s, or rather, this child’s future.”
CHAPTER XIII

INTEGRATION HAS FAILED:
GERMANY’S EDUCATION SYSTEM IS TO BLAME

The present chapter intends to clearly state the problem that is being addressed in this study. The Turks, especially their youths, have not successfully integrated into Germany’s society. The blame for this lies with the German education system which is preventing Turkish youths from obtaining a comprehensive education. The chapter will be broken into two parts. Part One will restate the assertion that integration has failed with supportive data, and explain why integration has failed, and Part Two will clearly define that integration among Germany’s youths has failed, and that Germany’s education system is to blame for this. The aim of this study is to demonstrate that the contemporary German education system is making the Turks a permanent underclass and in doing so is impeding integration.

Part I: Integration Has Failed

Integration is essential to ensure social stability, and to provide a safe environment for all groups that are involved. To determine if integration of the Turks into German society has failed, one must first answer one very important question: When can integration be deemed a success? The answer to this question is complex, and most individuals will have different views regarding which factors indicate a successful integration of a population. Two factors have been chosen in this study to measure
integration success: 1) the attitude of the majority of the population toward the minority, and 2) the minority group’s ability to support themselves. Each factor will be evaluated with respect to the Turkish population that resides in Germany.

An Unwelcome Population and its Unfriendly Host

The first factor used to evaluate successful integration is the attitude of the ethnic Germans, Germany’s dominant population, toward the Turks. Chapter Four discussed in detail the current divide between these two populations in terms of religion and language. It was also noted that the Turks were initially a welcome minority during the Guest Worker Era but from its end to today have been viewed by the majority of Germany’s population as unwelcome and foreign guests. Furthermore, data were presented which stated that one German in two holds xenophobic views; thus the Germans’ attitude toward foreigners, including but especially Turks, is in large part a hostile one. It has also been established that the Turks do not feel at home in Germany, and that there currently is a small subpopulation of Turks residing in Germany who are returning to Turkey.

The subject of this study is Germany’s youth population; it must, therefore, be established how the ethnic German youths view their peers, the Turkish youths. Research conducted by the Kriminologisches Forschungsinstitut Niedersachsen (Criminological Research Institute in Lower Saxony) surveyed over 20,000 ethnic German youths and 1600 youths of Turkish ethnicity to better understand the ethnic youth groups’ attitudes toward each another. The results were disheartening in terms of integration among Germany’s youth; over 38% of Germans do not like any Turks, approximately 14% found their Turkish peers to be “very unpleasant,” and over 14%
found the Turks to be simply “unpleasant.” This statistic indicates that there is a clear dislike and therefore, a sharp divide between the ethnic Germans and Turks. Thus, a noteworthy segment of the ethnic German population holds negative views toward the Turks. It can therefore be concluded that this aspect (one of two factors used to measure successful integration) of integration has failed.

The Economic Divide

To further determine if the Turks have been able to successfully integrate into German society, assessment will now focus on the minority group’s ability to support themselves and maintain a reasonable lifestyle. How much does the average Turkish individual residing in Germany earn? This complex question is difficult to answer because it depends on the individual’s education, age, and place of residence. It was noted in Chapter Three though that the Turks are earning significantly lower income than the ethnic German. Germany’s Census Bureau found that the average income of a person of Turkish ethnicity was only 67.6% of the income an ethnic German would earn. A study conducted by the Berlin Institute further found that many Turks residing in Germany are unemployed, the percentage of stay-at-home mothers/wives is extremely high, and a substantial portion of the Turkish population is dependent on social contributions, such as welfare. It is very difficult to measure the exact number of

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unemployed individuals residing in Germany who are of Turkish ethnicity because the
government does not have a concrete estimate of how many Turkish individuals are
currently residing in Germany.

Data published in 2005 by the Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft (Germany’s
Economic Institute) found that unemployment among foreigners was almost double as
high as ethnic Germans. The Institute also found that every third erwerbstätige
(economically active/eligible) Turk residing in Germany is unemployed; in 2005 this
amounted to 219,300 unemployed Turks.  

What is to blame for the Turks’ poor
economic situation? Factors include the Turks’ limited qualifications (in terms of
education) and limited knowledge of the German language. To conclude: the Turks are at
a disadvantage in terms of being employed, earning a substantial income, and supporting
their families; this, too, has led to the unsuccessful integration of Turks into German
society.

Chapter Five surveyed the current process and attempts that have been and are
being made for integration in twenty-first century Germany. It was noted that Germany’s
ruling Chancellor Angela Merkel declared in 2010 that the integration process has failed.
This study reaffirms the Chancellor’s deposition. The Turks have not yet successfully
integrated into German society with respect to their relationships to the ethnic Germans
and their own financial success. To blame for this is the Turks’ lack of proper education.
The second part of this chapter serves to clearly identify why the contemporary German

84 “Ausländer doppelt so oft arbeitslos wie Deutsche [Foreigners twice as likely to be unemployed as
Germans],” Handelsblatt, last modified April 5, 2006,
education system is to blame for the Turks, especially their youths, unsuccessful integration.

Part II: Germany’s Contemporary Education System Prevents Turkish Youths from Successfully Integrating into German Society

One purpose of this thesis is to identify a component that is preventing the Turkish youths from successfully integrating into German society. This study establishes that it is the contemporary German school system that is limiting the Turks’ education, and in turn their opportunities to be successful later in life as adults. The previous chapter thoroughly discussed the process of placing students in Germany into secondary school on the basis of the teacher’s evaluation. As noted there, placing students is a controversial practice, and many foreign students (in particular the Turks) are placed into the lower achieving secondary schools. If a student is placed into a more basic secondary school they will not receive a very comprehensive education and will not be able to attain a university degree. Inequality is a reality when one looks at data that depict the placing among ethnic German youths and foreign youths who reside in Germany (including the Turkish youths). Ethnic German youths are more likely to receive a comprehensive education which will lead to a university degree than a youth who is not of German ethnicity.

Placement: Separating the Foreigners from the Natives

The chart below portrays statistics which were published by Germany’s Census Bureau, the Statistisches Bundesamt; these indicate the number of ethnic German youths attending the main secondary schools in 2011.
As can be seen in the above pie chart, the majority of ethnic German youths attend the Gymnasium, Germany’s more prestigious secondary institution. As stated in chapter seven, students who attend a Gymnasium are bound for a university education. Do note that this is the most popular secondary school for ethnic German youths to attend; approximately 2.37 million ethnic German youths or 56% attend a Gymnasium. One can conclude that the majority of ethnic German youths are expected to attend a university, and are therefore placed into the Gymnasium after completing their primary education. By contrast, fewer foreign students, in terms of percentage, attend the advanced secondary schools such as the Gymnasium, as will be documented below.

It has now been established which secondary institutions the ethnic German youths attend. Educational institutions in Germany also have a significant impact on the Turkish youths. Upon completion of the Grundschule or elementary schools, many
Turkish pupils are placed into the lower-performing secondary schools, in particular the Hauptschule. The graph below depicts data collected by Germany’s Census Bureau and published in its 2011 Statistic Yearbook (in correlation with the data represented in the above pie chart). The data indicate which percentages of Germany’s foreign students are attending the three dominant secondary schools, in terms of attendance. The statistics demonstrate that the majority of Germany’s foreign students attend a Hauptschule, which offers the most limited and basic mandatory education and thus is the least demanding of Germany’s secondary schools.

Pupils in Germany are often stigmatized as a result of attending a Hauptschule; these schools are generally viewed as a dumping ground for children who have learning disabilities, social disorders, are foreign, and especially those children who possess
minimal German language skills. 43.6% or approximately 164,400 of Germany’s foreign students attend a *Hauptschule*, more than double the 17% of ethnic German youths who attend a *Hauptschule* mentioned in part one of this chapter. If one were to take these two figures, both published by Germany’s Census Bureau, into consideration, a **foreign student is two and half times more likely to attend a Hauptschule than an ethnic German student**. In addition, an ethnic German student is on average almost two times more likely to attend a Gymnasium than a foreign student. The important thing to take away from these statistics is that more ethnic German students are placed in higher accelerated secondary institutions than foreign youths who reside in Germany. In correlation, ethnic German youths are therefore granted more and better professional opportunities and will earn significantly more money than a youth who is a non-ethnic German. This divide early in life leads to further segregation between ethnic German youths and foreign youths, in particular the Turkish youths who comprise the majority of these foreigners.

**The Turks’ Lack of Education**

The above statistics prove that the majority of students whose ethnicity is not German are being placed in Germany’s less demanding and less comprehensive secondary schools. The subjects of this study, however, are the Turkish youths; one must therefore assess their educational achievements. When attempting to discuss the Turkish youths’ experience in German schools, one must examine several statistics which reflect the past success rates of Turkish youths who have attended German educational institutions. In 2009, a Berlin Institute (Berlin-Institut für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung)
found that only fourteen percent of the Turkish population residing in Germany had completed the *Abitur*,\(^{85}\) the general qualification for university entrance in Germany. The Berlin Institute further found that the Turks have the lowest percentage of *Abiturienten* (youths who have attained their *Abitur*) among all of the migrant groups who reside in Germany. Considering the value that Germans place on education, the statistic that indicated that thirty percent of the Turkish population in 2009 had not obtained a diploma is a source of greater concern to those supporting Turkish integration in German society.\(^ {86}\) This statistic further reinforces the fact that the majority of Turks do not receive the same education which the majority of ethnic Germans receive.

Baden-Württemberg, Germany’s third largest *Bundesland* located in the southwestern part of the country, published data that detail the demographics of Turks residing there; the study included data which measured scholastic achievements among Turks. This study showed results regarding where the Turks, who are foreigners, are placed similar to what noted above for Germany as a whole; one is more likely to find a Turk attending a *Hauptschule* than a *Gymnasium*. In fact, for the 2010/11 school year, every ninth Turkish youth residing in Baden-Württemberg attended a *Hauptschule*, whereas only every eighty-second Turkish youth attended a Gymnasium.\(^ {87}\) This thesis reinforces the fact, that the majority of Turkish students are placed in secondary schools that offer the most basic but least comprehensive education. This placement for the

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\(^{86}\) E.S., “Türken schneiden bei Integrationsstudie am schlechtesten ab.”

Turks’ into a *Hauptschule* leads to the following career opportunities: practical vocational training, work in the public service at a basic or secretarial level, further education at a *Berufsfachschule* (full-time vocational school), or education at a *Realschule* or *Gymnasium*, this latter path is achieved by only a very small percentage of the student body. The reality is that many *Hauptschule* students actually drop out before acquiring a degree or cannot find an apprenticeship or learning position because the number of available annual spots are limited and often given to students who have acquired a better degree such as the *Mittlere Reife* (the certificate received upon completion of the *Realschule* program).

**Hidden Identity**

Although the Turks constitute Germany’s largest ethnic minority, one would not know this when reviewing the curriculum taught in Germany’s secondary schools. The Turks’ language, culture, and history are not represented. How can the Turkish students be made to feel welcome if the institutions that they attend do not acknowledge their existence and relevance as a part of society? Only a limited number of secondary schools offer Turkish as a second language to their students.

**Change is the Only Solution**

Change must occur; Turkish youths are extremely underrepresented at *Gymnasien* and at universities. The consequences of this reality are extensive; there are few Turks who attain their *Abitur* or even the *Mittlere Reife*, the lack of these degrees prevent Turks from attaining university degrees and profitable jobs. Thus, the Turks remain at the lower end of the socio-economic scale. How can the German government and its society better
integrate its Turkish youth population? This study will present two viable solutions that can lead to a better integration. The last two chapters will identify and present changes which need to be implemented to improve the Turks’ education and in turn provide them with job opportunities, and to build tolerance among them and Germany’s majority, the ethnic Germans.
CHAPTER IX

FORM MUST FOLLOW FUNCTION:

REFORMS TO THE GERMAN EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT WILL ENABLE THE TURKS TO SUCCEED

Change is a Requirement

Integration has been attempted but has been deemed unsuccessful. The last chapter explained this statement; the ethnic German’s attitudes towards the Turks are indifferent at best, and the Turks are not competing with the larger population in terms of financial success. A major factor to blame for this is the limited education that the Turks receive. The education is limited for the reason that the Turks are placed in less comprehensive secondary schools such as the Hauptschule. The educational divide between ethnic Germans students and those who have migration backgrounds is immense. As previously stated, a student who is not an ethnic German is two and half times more likely to attend a Hauptschule, according to data that Germany’s Census Bureau collected for the 2010/11 academic year.

The lack of integration that has caused segregation and negative attitudes between the ethnic Germans and the Turks can be overcome. This study suggests that a reform in Germany’s Education System and its curriculum is the answer that can promote tolerance from the ethnic German students and better opportunities for the Turkish youths. Chapter ten will address that a change in language curriculum is a necessity to ensure tolerance
between ethnic Germans and Turks. Adding Turkish as a foreign language in German secondary schools will permit youths of all ethnicities to better understand the Turkish culture, its people, and allow the Turkish youths to improve their academic performance. Diversity and tolerance education is needed to support better integration, and could be brought on by the aforementioned change in language curricula. The present chapter, however, will focus on the reforms that have to be made to the institutions and methods for placing their students.

The study presents two solutions to enable better integration among the ethnic Germans and Germany’s largest minority group, the Turks. Chapter Ten will address the changes which need to be made to the language curriculum being taught in Germany’s secondary schools, whereas this chapter addresses changes which need to be made to Germany’s institutions and the placement process they use to determine which schools youths should attend. The chapter will be therefore divided into two parts; Part One focuses on the reformation of placement while the Part Two will discuss replacing Germany’s Hauptschulen with integrated Stadtteilschulen and Sekundarschulen.

Many of the proposed changes are being made because Germany’s least comprehensive secondary school, the Hauptschule, provides the most basic education. Furthermore, it has been severely criticized as an environment, or more accurately, a last resort, for youths who are foreign, troubled, have learning disabilities, and/or whose families are social welfare recipients. To best understand the solutions presented in this chapter, one must understand why the Hauptschule is the worst secondary institution for youths to attend.
Hauptschule, the Pink Slip for a Student

The purpose of the Hauptschule is to strengthen and nurture the students’ basic skills, work ethic, ability to use technology, and autonomous learning.88 Students who attend a Hauptschule are required to complete grades five to nine, but may volunteer to study an additional tenth year if they would like to be placed in an accelerated program which will enable them to integrate to better secondary schools and in turn eventually attain a better degree. Most students do not, however, choose the previously mentioned path.

The German population is aware that the Hauptschule has become an environment intended specifically for troubled, foreign, and academically challenged students. Many individuals lament that the Hauptschule’s pupils are not one homogeneous group in terms of intellectual ability and academic achievement. The problem is that many Hauptschulen have inconsistent placement, for their student body includes students who have average achievement, above average capabilities, and those whose IQ’s are so low that they could almost be classified as having a learning disability. The portion of students who have a migration background or Sprachproblem (incompetent language abilities) is exceedingly greater than average.

Simply put, the German education system is unfair. The existence of such a structure, in particular the Hauptschule within it, has created a growing population of educational “losers” who cannot find a place in Germany’s society. These youths lose in that they become labeled as Hauptschule students who are viewed as unintelligent (due

to the limited education they receive), misbehaved, poor, and likely to be unemployed or asozial. This German term literally means asocial but is often used as a derogatory term to designate people who are socio-economically challenged or foreign; equivalent to the term “trash.” Thus, researchers characterize 16% of all German Hauptschulen as Schulgettos (school ghettos); this percentage increases in metropolitan cities such as Hamburg where researchers cite 70% of all Hauptschulen to be school ghettos.89

Eighty percent of Germany’s secondary school dropouts previously attended a Hauptschule.90 Researchers believe that many students who attend these less comprehensive secondary school choose to abandon their education because they know that they have been rejected by their teachers, the institution, and furthermore, the state. Placement into a Hauptschule represents for many students an order to accept their future low-socioeconomic status. Students respond by becoming less motivated as they accept their new role as a youth with little educational experience whose chances of an apprenticeship, further education, and overall job opportunities are slim to non-existent. Already at the age of nine or ten they see their future cut off.

It should be evident now that the Hauptschule is a poor secondary school because it provides education which is not comprehensive, provides very limited educational and/or occupational opportunities, and in effect, however unintentionally, labels its youths as failures. These students are thus viewed by society to be members of an underclass who have little to no hope for a brighter future. Consequently change must

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90 Sarah Dreyer, “Was ist eine Hauptschule?”
take place; placement either needs to be more consistent and accurate or Germany must choose to abolish its *Hauptschulen* completely and replace them with integrated secondary schools such as the *Stadtteilschule*.

**Solution I: Placing a Makeover on Line One**

Of the two proposed solutions, choosing to revise the placement process is easier because it would bring a smaller financial burden, consume less time, and most importantly, ensure that Turks, indeed all students, are placed in a secondary school based on their true academic potential. The process of placement has to change in terms of when the student is placed, by whom the student is placed, and the factors that determine placement. To begin, note that placement currently occurs during the student’s fourth year.

The problem with placing a child at the age of nine or ten is that the measurement of this person’s capabilities is undertaken well before most children have become aware of any potential, dreams and aspirations and are therefore unable to fight for and thus earn a personally selected future. It is simply too early to measure the child’s potential for adult success. The average child has not yet undergone puberty, truly evolved a sense of self, or is self-aware enough to comprehend that his/her potential for future success is based on performance between first and fourth grade. This unassuming child is thus at the mercy of the guidance of their parents who at best nurture the child’s potential by assisting/motivating them to learn, or at worst pay little or no attention to the child’s academic performance with the consequence that the child performs below average and is placed into a *Hauptschule*. The student should not simply be the subject of the placement
process but have the opportunity to play a more active role in determining their future. Since placement as mentioned above has a direct correlation with the student’s future career, the student must be old enough to comprehend this and to monitor and nurture their individual academic performance in order to ensure that they are placed into the desired secondary school.

What is the proper age to evaluate an individual’s potential? In the United States students begin to be formally assessed, in terms of evaluating their University potential, from ninth to twelfth grade. This is when the youth’s performance, measured as the cumulative grade point average, begins to count. The assessment of this average and national testing such as the SAT Reasoning Test and the ACT standardized test are taken into consideration when the student is evaluated by teachers, guidance counselors, and universities. The average ninth grade student at the age of fifteen and sixteen is aware that their academic success begins to be evaluated at this point and can make conscious choices to improve their academic performance to achieve their desired future outcome.

Placement needs to occur when the student is mature enough to comprehend that their future is being determined; the student must thus be old enough to have a basic conscious understanding of their own potential abilities and their dreams and aspirations. It will be difficult to assess the approximate age when children are capable of doing this; numerous psychologists, Pädagogen (educators), and statistics and research that detail the success rates of placement or tracking in other nations have to be consulted. It can, however, be established that the age of nine and ten is too young; this is supported by the fact that many of Germany’s youths, including but especially the Turks are consistently
placed into the wrong secondary institutions because their academic achievement and potential are inaccurately measured.

Another change to the placement process that must be implemented is deciding who gets to place the student. Chapter Seven noted that the students are placed into secondary schools per formal evaluation of their teacher who evaluates the students’ achievements, potential, and behavior. The parents and/or guardians also play a minor rule, as the teacher consults their opinions prior to the official recommendation. As established above, the teacher has too much control over the student’s placement, and consequently over their future. Having only one person make this decision significantly increases the chances of personal bias which makes the recommendation questionable at best. Relying solely on one educator’s recommendation increases the likelihood of inaccuracy.

It is a simple solution; more people need to voice their opinions about the student’s potential which will influence the placement and in turn eliminate bias. Who, apart from the student’s main teacher and their parents, should be chosen to serve as an advisor? Note that the student’s assigned first through fourth grade teacher provides approximately eighty percent of the student’s curriculum, with the other twenty percent taught by educators who teach music, physical education, religion, and other more specialized subjects. These teachers have personal insight into the students and could thus be consulted not only regarding the student’s performance in their areas of expertise but could evaluate the child’s overall behavior, performance, promise, and attitude towards work as well. This additional information will enable the student’s teacher to gain a
deeper understanding of the student, and could reveal potential or disciplinary issues otherwise hidden from view. Most importantly, it will minimize bias toward foreign students. The evaluations will be diverse as people from various walks of life who hold different opinions come together to evaluate. This process could potentially also force teachers to address their peers who may be placing and treating students of minority backgrounds differently.

Implementing a standardized test could also minimize human error. Each child would be tested on their core subjects such as math, science, German, and English. These results could then be combined with the teacher’s evaluation of the student’s academic and behavioral performance; if the standardized would account for thirty or more percent of the placement, the student would have a less chance of being placed into a less comprehensive secondary school such as the Hauptschule on the basis of misconceptions and improper evaluation by the teacher. The testing could be conducted after the students’ first fourth grade semester which would leave enough time to publish the results, consolidate them with the input from the teachers, and to conference with the parents, and for the teacher to make their final recommendation. Stricter observation of the student’s achievement through standardized testing will allow educators to assess migrant students’ language abilities more appropriately and effectively. These collected data will allow educators and politicians throughout Germany to analyze the migrant students’ integration process in terms of language; and could lead to more education reform which could help migrant children better learn German.
To be more efficient in placing the students the German education system must implement a placement process which occurs later in a youth’s life when they are consciously aware of their evaluation; include numerous individuals’ opinions from different educators; and measure the students’ basic academic abilities to prevent a biased evaluation. This new process would still be problematic, though, because German schools would either have to extend their elementary education or establish a middle school to house and educate the students until they are mature enough to be evaluated. In addition, it is also problematic because a youth is placed in an education where all courses are taught at the same level of difficulty, and most people do not share equal strengths in all subjects.

Solution II:

Abolish *Hauptschulen* and Replace Them with Integrated Secondary Schools

To best integrate Turkish students, they have to be removed from the *Hauptschule*. The education they and all students receive during their schooling places them in Germany’s socio-economic underclass. Therefore all *Hauptschulen* must be abolished and be replaced with integrated secondary schools such as the *Stadtteilschulen* and *Sekundarschulen* previously mentioned in Chapter Seven.

Berlin and Hamburg are two of Germany’s sixteen *Bundesländer* that have already chosen to abolish their *Hauptschulen*. These institutions were replaced with integrated secondary schools which combined the curricula taught in *Haupt- and Realschulen*. This change permits their students to attain a more comprehensive education and to not be stigmatized later in life for attending a mediocre institution. The
students are not placed into these institutions but are instead registered by the students’ parents.

Berlin’s government decided that as of January 2010 all Haupt-, Real- and Gesamtschulen were to be abolished and replaced with Sekundarschulen for the upcoming 2011/2012 school year. This controversial decision took over a year to be reached. Note that the only institutions available to students in Berlin currently are the Gymnasium and the Sekundarschule; this is a very significant educational reform. The Secretary of Education from the Social Democratic Party of Germany Jürgen Zöllner stated that the change will provide students with equal opportunities. Furthermore he stated that it will give the institutions more freedom to examine their curriculum to ensure that all students receive quality education and not merely one that meets a federal requirement.

It is yet to be determined if the abolition of the Hauptschule will truly help minority students. The integrated secondary schools promise equal opportunities, but one has to remember that these opportunities are provided by employers and individuals of German society who will ultimately choose their employees and students. The abolition of less comprehensive secondary schools and the reforms that may be made to the placement process can provide better education for the minority groups which include the Turks and thus open the way to a more promising future.

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92 “Berlin hat keine Hauptschule mehr.”
CHAPTER X

MERHABA! LESS CONFUSION, MORE UNDERSTANDING:
INTRODUCING TURKISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN GERMAN SCHOOLS
TO PROMOTE INTEGRATION AMONG TURKISH AND GERMAN YOUTHS

The title of the final chapter clearly identifies the second solution being proposed in this study. Not only do Germany’s institutions need to undergo change; the curriculum which is being taught must change as well. This study proposes that implementing Turkish as a foreign language in Germany’s secondary schools will help integration between Turkish and ethnic German youths 1) by building tolerance through education in the areas of Turkish culture, history, and language; 2) by enabling Turkish youths to achieve better cumulative averages in school; and 3) by having the government acknowledge that Turkish is indeed a language of importance with respect to Germany’s society and economy.

An important subject in the discussion of multiculturalism in today’s Germany is the integration process between the ethnic Germans and the Turkish people who reside in Germany. The key to successfully form good relationships and adapt to a new culture is to have a thorough understanding of the language of the people whose culture it is. The German population relies heavily on the Turks to learn German and to communicate solely in German, their unofficial national language. One might well ask why the Germans are not learning Turkish in order to aid the integration process. If Turkish were
offered as a foreign language in German schools, today’s youth would have a better understanding of one another while simultaneously learning new language skills. In addition, Turkish students would have a better chance to complete their education and improve their language skills while taking a course in the tongue of their parents and ancestors.

**Competing Languages**

German schools offer their pupils numerous alternatives to study a foreign language. The most popular languages are English, French, Russian, Latin, Spanish, and Italian. Some secondary schools, the Gymnasien, even offer courses in Mandarin, Chinese and Japanese. Nevertheless, in a country where over three million Turkish people reside and their children attend German schools, why is Turkish not offered in schools as a foreign language? Many argue that Turkish is not a global language, and it would therefore not be useful for students to study because they would not use it once their education is completed. Critics believe that Mandarin Chinese, French, and Russian are more useful with respect to the global economy platform, especially when one considers business relations. However, it is important to make critics aware of the fact that Turkey is not only one of Germany’s key vacation locations, but also an important business partner in international trade. Knowledge of Turkish can thus serve both public and private interests.

**Who Will Benefit?**

From the standpoint of evaluation, it is important to examine the numerous advantages which can result if Turkish is incorporated into the foreign language
curriculum of Germany’s schools. Today’s youth, especially Germany’s teenagers, face a challenging time fitting into society. More problematic is the fact that Turkish and ethnic German teens rarely interact with one another; individual Turks and Germans prefer to engage in activities with their own respective ethnic groups. A major barrier which is preventing the youths from interacting is the language. Each group continues to speak in its own language. And consequently neither talks to or with the other. Indeed, they talk about and talk past each other. This generates hostility within each ethnic group. If the ethnic German students were to learn Turkish, just as the Turkish students are expected to learn German, they would have more of an incentive to approach a Turkish student who might not feel completely comfortable speaking German. Now the German student would comprehend the difficulties Turkish students face when they attempt to interact with their ethnic German schoolmates. In addition, if each group understood what the other is saying, each might be more careful with the language it uses to describe the other.

A Competitive Edge

It is clear that adding Turkish as a foreign language in German schools would help German students better understand their Turkish peers, but there are many other advantages as well. Since Turkish is becoming an important business language in Germany’s economy, students who learn Turkish will have an advantage in being hired to perform certain jobs. Examples include a business position dealing with Turkish business owners, a travel agent, or German tutor teaching Turkish students, a mayor in a large diverse German metropolitan city that has a large Turkish population (among many other possibilities).
Building Tolerance

While in school the German students will obtain language skills and be able to speak another language. Their new Turkish language skills can be practiced with many of their Turkish peers, again creating an invitation for the two groups to communicate with one another. Since language classes also teach about culture, ethnic German students would learn about the history, rituals, and religion of Turkey. Their newfound understanding could lead to an appreciation of the Turkish culture which would counter the negativity which is presently fueled by ignorance of the subject.

Education builds tolerance; tolerance enables successful integration, and thus fights segregation and *Ausländerfeindlichkeit*. It is therefore fundamental for ethnic Germans to gain a better understanding of the Turkish culture. Exposure to the Turkish language and culture at a young age could ensure a generation of ethnic German youths who grow up to be adults who have an understanding and appreciation of the Turks.

Realistically, therefore, successful integration could be a part of Germany’s near future.

Helping the Turks Succeed in Academia

Teaching Turkish to ethnic German students has many advantages, but how would this be of assistance to the Turkish students residing in Germany? One of the most prominent problems Turkish students face while attending German schools is the low expectancy rate of graduating. Some Turkish students have difficulty understanding the German language. This affects their grade not only in German class, but also in all of the subjects that are taught in German including math, chemistry, biology, and history among
others. The students are intelligent and willing to learn, but insufficient skills in German prevent them from reaching their full potential, and their grades suffer as a result.

A solution to improve the rate of graduating Turkish students would be to offer a Turkish language class to Turkish students. Consider this scenario: Mehmet is a student in the eleventh grade at a German Realschule. His parents moved to Germany when he was seven; although Mehmet has a basic understanding of the German language, he struggles with German grammar and complex language. He usually receives a D- or lower mark on his report card for his German class; in his other classes Mehmet averages between a B- and C. His grade point average suffers tremendously because of his failing grade in German. If schools would offer Turkish as a foreign language, Turkish students would be able to receive formal training in their native language, just as ethnic Germans receive formal training in theirs, and thus improve their performance in all their classes. Mehmet speaks Turkish at home with his parents, and due to his skills he is able to earn an A- in Turkish. This grade will help to balance the poor grade he receive in German, the two would averaging as a C. Mehmet’s average would improve, enabling him to graduate with a grade which reflects his potential and talent.

Turkish students’ ability to understand and use the German language depends on several factors. Foremost among them is the level of the parents’ skills, as children most easily learn and use the language they hear their parents speak. Since extended periods of time are spent together in a Turkish family, Turkish students may learn only grammatically incorrect German from their immediate family or not any German at all. By the same token, Turkish students may not be acquainted with proper Turkish either,
and this may result from various circumstances. The parents’ educational background is an indicator of the Turkish language skills they possessed on arrival in Germany and of the effort they expended to maintain their skills as they were transitioning into their second language, German. Some Turkish students therefore find themselves wedged between two languages, with neither one spoken grammatically correctly.

Turkish students would finally have an opportunity to improve or maintain their Turkish language skills if Turkish were taught in German schools. It is vital for individuals, regardless of their nationality, to remain fluent and active in their native language. Indeed, German students are required to take German in school, even though they have an understanding of the language; they take the class in order to improve, maintain, and expand their vocabulary and grammar skills. The same opportunity should be available to Turkish students. Apart from the Turkish course improving their language skills, these students will also be able to learn in an environment where they feel comfortable. Learning in a class taught in one’s own language is more effective because the student in general responds better to the material and instructor.

**Restrictions Preventing Implementation**

Given the numerous advantages for both ethnic German and Turkish students, one wonders why Turkish is not already being taught in German schools. One of the regulations preventing implementation of this change is the requirement that need for instruction in an additional language be documented. Moreover, when a school decides to offer Turkish, the administrator has to separately apply to the head of the Kulturamt, or Department of Education, for their respective Bundesland, or state. This is an extensive
process involving numerous formalities, since new teachers must be found, a curriculum established, and decisions would have to be made regarding the anticipated group(s) of students, the level(s) of instructions and number of years of study available to the student.

Clearly, establishing a new language curriculum is a complex task. Many Germans believe that it is a process or idea simply not worth their time, arguing that English, French, Italian, Spanish, and Latin are adequate, more effective and accessible because these languages are of European origin and/or more traditionally accepted European languages. Apart from Latin, many individuals believe these languages have a superior global usage; they believe a student would be more likely to apply them after graduation when employed, especially as international business and relation majors. Germany is the largest economy in the European Union and the third largest in the world. The Article entitled “Top 15 German Export & Import Partners” states that Germany’s top export partners include France, the United States, Great Britain, Italy, and the Netherlands. Therefore it is understandable that students and parents would choose to learn languages which represent a larger population in numerous countries, such as French, Spanish, and English. Critics also argue that Turkish will not be useful when an ethnic German youth travels abroad, once their destinations tend to be more metropolitan European cities than say, Istanbul or Ankara.

Attempts at Implementation, the Struggle Worth Fighting

This debate has indeed been ongoing for the past several years, but many do not know that it originated several decades earlier. The early attempts to teach Turkish in Germany began during the Guest Worker Era, when children of the Turkish Guest workers were taught their native tongue by educators who were hired by the German government. This arrangement was undertaken to ensure that the Guest Workers’ children would remain fluent in their native tongue, to offer them an education they would thoroughly comprehend, and to prevent the workers’ children from being ridiculed in the German schools. The government did revoke this idea when they came to believe that the hired educators were teaching the children socialistic and other ideologies opposed by the German government. Naturally these educators were dismissed when the Guest Worker Era came to an end and the families were encouraged but not compelled to return to their respective countries of origin.

Since the beginning of the 1980s, Turkish secondary school students have had the opportunity to study their native Turkish instead of taking a second foreign language. It began when an elementary school in Berlin-Kreuzberg decided to offer Turkish students the opportunity to take their native language (Turkish) as their primary foreign language. The academic year 1980/81 was the year in which the elective was made available to young Turkish students who resided in the continually expanding Berlin suburb of Kreuzberg heavily populated with Turks. Since the beginning of the 1980s, Turkish secondary school students have had the opportunity to take Turkish instead of choosing a

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second foreign language. Ultimately, the attempt to teach Turkish at the Berlin-Kreuzberg school failed because once the children graduated from elementary school there were no courses available to expand and deepen their Turkish language skills. Another essential dilemma was that the program included no Abitur course designed for advanced study of the Turkish language. Thus any time spent learning Turkish was in essence deemed a waste of time; after all, the ultimate goal for a student was to complete their Abitur, the secondary school leaving examination, with passing marks.

After these early unsuccessful attempts, educators pursued a different approach; instead of teaching Turkish solely to Turkish students, they decided to also teach Turkish to ethnic German students as well. Some large metropolitan cities such as Frankfurt on the Main and Berlin began to teach Turkish at German schools. In the beginning they taught Turkish solely to ethnic German students, excluding the native Turkish speakers. The overwhelming problem they faced was the lack of interest to learn Turkish shown by the ethnic German students. After the German students began to evacuate the classrooms, Turkish students had the opportunity to learn the language.

A more sensible and successful approach might have been not to separate the German and Turkish students from one another; after all, integration is an important aspect of society, and successful integration can be achieved through a better understanding of one another’s culture and language. The Turkish students could assist the German students in learning about a new language and culture while the Turkish students are learning to break out of their shells and learn to feel more comfortable

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95 "Türkischunterricht."
toward fellow students who are ethnic German while in a safe environment where their language is spoken.

**Progress in Recent Years**

Much has changed since Turkish was initially taught to the Guest Workers’ children. Currently in Germany many students, both Turkish and ethnic Germans, are given the opportunity to learn Turkish in their schools. A law was created and passed in 2008 to ensure that many German states could offer Turkish as a foreign language.96 Once more it is important to stress that each institution has to willingly make the decision to offer Turkish as a foreign language. The fact that many Gymnasien are now offering Turkish as an *Abiturfach* is a significant achievement; furthermore, some Universities are even offering a major in Turkish studies, education, and translation.

**Accomplishments in the Twenty-first Century**

The Clauberg-Gymnasium located in Duisburg, the western part of the Ruhr area in North Rhine-Westphalia, is an example of a secondary school which has successfully taught Turkish. As of 2012, the Clauberg-Gymnasium has taught thousands of students Turkish, and that for over twenty years. The students who attend this Gymnasium have the opportunity to take Turkish upon entering seventh grade. The majority of the students who choose Turkish as their second language requirement, the first being English at a Gymnasium, have a Turkish background; they themselves or their parents were born in Germany. This unique course has attracted many Turkish students who have increased the Gymnasium’s Turkish student body population. Thus, many people who reside in the

96 “Türkischunterricht.”
area have started referring to the institution as a “Türkenschule” (Turkish school). Note that the implementation of Turkish to the language curricula enabled a minority student body to identify with the material which in turn evoked their interest and led to success rates, documented in the proceeding statement. This does not bother the Gymnasium’s principal Hartmut Roth; he is happy that integration is taking place at his institution, and more over that students with migration background who are residing in Germany are academically successful. Roth happily boasts that sixty to seventy percent of his graduating Abiturienten are not ethnic Germans.97 Another institution that has welcomed Turkish into its curriculum is Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen (University of Giessen) located in Hesse which offers Turkish language and culture as a minor to its student body.98

The Woman Behind the Cause

A name that has become synonymous with the fight to include Turkish as a foreign language in German schools since 2008 is Ute Vogt. Vogt asked her fellow ethnic-German citizens why bilingualism of French and English was being advocated as an important language, while simultaneously Turkish was essentially being disregarded.99 Vogt is a representative for the Integration Department of her political party, the Social Democratic Party of Germany. She began campaigning for this cause in an effort to better integrate Turkish and German students; Vogt believes that in the long run this can only

aid the relations between Germany’s largest minority in terms of population size and the ethnic Germans. Vogt also stresses that Turkish is becoming an important language in Germany’s economy today, especially since Turkey is a dominant export and import partner of Germany. Vogt stresses that she wants to help the German export economy. She also believes that Turkish as a foreign language should be offered to all students studying in Germany, since it has multiple, but different advantages for the ethnic German and Turkish students alike.

Vogt’s efforts have been met with criticism however. Fellow politicians argue that her attempts are a tactic to distract from the larger integration debate. Her critics do acknowledge that Vogt’s efforts may help Germany’s youth, but question where this would leave the rest of Germany’s population. Opposing politicians also claim that Turkish students would not put a genuine effort toward learning German if they were to be permitted to take Turkish. In addition, politicians believe that there is no real interest among German students to learn the Turkish language. The Chairman of the Federal Council of Parents, Dieter Dornbush, believes that the idea of teaching Turkish in German schools is absurd.100

The response of many politicians to Vogt’s argument that introducing Turkish as a foreign language in German schools will help the economy in the long run is to shake their heads in disbelief. The Chairperson of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Bundesländer in the Federal Republic, Annegret

Kramp-Karrenbauer, states that “when one discusses the markets of the global economy, one can also accomplish this in many other languages – from Japanese to Arabic”.\(^{101}\) Kramp-Karrenbauer is under the impression that Turkey is not an economic global powerhouse. While that may be true, one should not forget that over three million citizens of Turkish ethnicity reside within Germany and have an impact on Germany’s economy; moreover, Turkey itself remains an important economic partner to Germany.

On the other hand, some politician and school representatives agree with Vogt that adding Turkish as a second language in German schools will help not only students but also the integration process in its entirety. Germany’s Minister of Education, Barbara Sommer, believes that “being able to speak numerous languages is a cultural treasure and reflects the globalization in an ever growing Europe.”\(^{102}\) Sommer makes the valid argument that learning another language will not hurt or hinder a student’s competence or education; on the contrary, it will build their intellect, language skills, and cultural awareness.

Vogt’s reply to helping better integrate Germany’s youth through teaching Turkish at German schools came in response to the suggestion of Turkey’s Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Redogan that Turkish Gymnasien be built in Germany. His proposal was met by fear among ethnic Germans who are worried that the Turks not only reside within Germany, but would take the country over if schools were permitted to be

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101 Repinski, “Türkisch als Fremdsprache.”
built. Vogt saw a more pressing issue, that integration would not be possible if Turkish students separated themselves from their German peers. In an article “Turkish Gymansien? But of Course” the author agrees that “one positively denies the legitimate interest of a child, born in Germany to Turkish-speaking parents, to correctly be taught his mother tongue.”

This author makes the point that many students residing in Germany are of Turkish descent but cannot properly communicate in their native language. Although Erdogan’s proposal appears extreme, he does make the legitimate point that Turkish students who have linguistic proficiency in their own language, Turkish, might have an easier time learning German if the course were taught in Turkish. This would permit students to ask their educators questions in Turkish in order to ensure that they are truly grasping a concept. Turkish as a foundation for learning German could help Turkish students more fully and more easily grasp the nature of the German language.

A similar debate is taking place in the United States: in certain southern states, politicians are advocating enforcement of a regulation that students take Spanish as a foreign language. Given the circumstances that large numbers of Cuban and Mexican migrants reside in many southern states, this proposal could help the integration process dilemma the United States is currently facing between its Hispanic and American citizens.

Will the Germans Speak Turkish?

It is yet to be determined whether offering Turkish as a foreign language in German institutions will prove to be an important step in improving integration between Turkish and German students. Years, if not decades, will have to pass before society truly knows the impact this change will have made. It is, however, a step in the right direction. Vogt and others alike, politicians, and school representatives, urge this change because they see the potential of Turkish being an aid not only for a better understanding between Germans and Turks but also a global advantage because knowing Turkish could help Germans on the global economic market when dealing with importation for and exportation to Turkey, and building better relations domestically with Turkish business owners residing in Germany. Schools have the opportunity to be a part of an important integration experiment; all that is yet to be accomplished is for administrators to apply to offer Turkish as a foreign language in their respective schools.
CONCLUSION

Germany is a multicultural society. It has been established that Germany’s largest national and ethnic minorities including the Danes, Roma and Sinti, Sorbs, Turks, Italians, Poles, and the asylum seekers have drastically diversified Germany. The minority, which has had the largest impact on German society, is, however, undoubtedly the Turks. This minority has influenced the German culture including its religion, economy, language, media, and education system. These influences have had both positive and negative impact on the perceptions the ethnic Germans hold toward Turks. A substantial population of the ethnic Germans do not have positive opinions about the Turkish minority. These ethnic Germans feel threatened by the Turks’ increasing presence, and are worried that their cultural identity is being challenged. The Turks are distinctly perceived as foreigners whose language, religion, and customs are not compatible with the German lifestyle. The ethnic Germans feel threatened by the Turks, and these feelings prevent them from identifying with the minority. Ignorance has led to unsuccessful attempts at integration. The Turks do not feel welcome in Germany and are performing substantially worse in terms of providing for their families and holding prestigious positions within the German society. The key to establishing better relations between the two ethnic groups is education. Teaching German’s more about the Turkish culture would lead to understanding and tolerance. The implementation of Turkish as
second language in German secondary schools would educate German youths about their most dominant minority group, and highlight their importance in correlation within the larger population. This is one solution that would lead to better integration; the second solution is to provide a more comprehensive education for the Turkish students. The majority of Turkish youths are being placed into less comprehensive secondary schools which limit their opportunities as adults. These limitations place the Turks in a socio-economic underclass leaving many unemployed, on social welfare, or earning significantly less than the greater population. The German school system must be reformed to improve the Turks’ chances of becoming successful adults; these reforms will permit them to better integrate. The German school system must abolish its *Hauptschulen* and replace them with integrated secondary schools. Placement must also be revised to ensure that the Turks are not being placed into less comprehensive secondary schools based on a teacher’s bias toward minority students. These changes, if implemented as they have been in Duisburg, Berlin, and Hamburg will enable the Turkish youths to academically succeed and become more distinguished members of German society.


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