Changing Ethnic Identities in Post-National Germany:  
A Study of Turkish-German Literature, Politics, and Society

INTRODUCTION

In 2005, incidents of so-called “honor killings” increased in Turkish-Muslim immigrant communities in Germany. Women belonging to highly conservative Muslim families were murdered by relatives for adopting a more western lifestyle. In *Grosse Reise ins Feuer (A Long Journey into the Fire)*, Turkish-German author Seyran Ates describes how her family, including her mother, attempted to murder her after she acted on her desire for independence as she sought out educational and occupational opportunities. Personal incidents such as those highlighted by Ates and Necla Kelek, author of *Die Fremde Braut (The Foreign Bride)*, which details the practice of trafficking under-age Turkish brides to Germany for Turkish men, give a voice to Turkish-German women stifled by conservative, oppressive gender roles and religious traditions. Although occurring more regularly in rural areas of Turkey, the practice of this custom in Germany violates western ideology of a civil society imbedded in German culture that seeks to maintain a secular government and strives for gender equality. However gender equality in some migrant-dominated German suburbs is largely unenforced, due to what German journalist Peter Schneider refers to as the “Islamist oppression of women and its proponents… [and] the guilt-ridden tolerance of liberal multiculturalists.”¹

Although conservative interpretations of Islam are certainly oppressive to women and dismissed by ultraliberal multiculturalists, Schneider’s assertion that a binary exists between the oppression of Islam and German liberal multiculturalists serves to further encourage essentialist definitions of conflicted Turkish and German identities. As a result, he disregards the voices in between these cultures that fail to take sides or analyze the situation from an entirely western or

eastern perspective. Such an in-between voice emerges, for example, in the works of prominent Turkish-German author Emine Sevgi Oezdamar. Not only does Schneider’s binary contribute to the negative stereotypes of Islam as extreme, conservative and backwards, it refuses the highly relevant influence of the ethnically-based German national identity that dates from the Enlightenment period. In this paper, the discussion of the construction of the Turkish-Muslim cultural identity as well as the Kultur-based German national identity, both of which produce rigid definitions of who belongs to the national community, will seek to justify an equal power relationship and provide a voice for Turkish-Germans whose past remains in Turkey but whose present is in Germany.

The current widespread negative public opinion of Germans toward the more than 2.5 million Turkish immigrants living in Germany² had fueled, for many decades, unprogressive government policies that inhibit the integration process of many immigrants in favor of “protecting” the ideologies of the western German nation. I have defined integration as the process by which an ethnic minority group attains political, cultural, and economic equality in a nation, including adapting, but not necessarily assimilating to, the language, social and political structure, and culture. In this context, assimilation involves the permanent adoption of the dominant culture. Forms of integration currently in place include a 2005 law for 600 hours of mandatory lessons in German language and another thirty hours on German culture, history, and way of life for incoming immigrants, which are intended to assist with immigrant integration;³ yet these laws do not apply to immigrants who arrived in the post-war period during Germany’s

recruitment of foreign workers, *Gastarbeiter*, nor are they accounted for by cultural theories of multiculturalism and hybridity.

Twentieth century Russian cultural theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) explains the effects of cultural integration in his theories on hybridization, what he defines as the inadvertent change in the dynamic of both the dominant culture and the minority culture through a process of unintentional, unconscious ‘organic hybridity’ or the establishment of an in-between culture that would ultimately serve to enhance both cultures. This contrasts with his conscious, ‘intentional hybrid’ that “sets different points of view against each other in a conflictual structure.”

Postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha positions Bakhtin’s definitions of hybridity in relation to colonial theory, concluding that the inclusion in political discourses of the other “‘denied’ knowledges” creates a challenge to “the structures of domination in the colonial situation.” Theories of hybridity are especially relevant to Turkish-German literature and its role in the disarticulation of German society.

Yet Bakhtin and Bhabha’s theories of the processes of hybridization and the emergence of an enhanced culture has clearly not yet been put on Germany’s political or social agenda. Until 2000, German citizenship laws were still based on the idea of *jus sanguini*, under which German citizenship was granted to those with blood lineage or familial ties to the nation. This form of citizenship differs from the United States, Britain, and France, where national identity is based on *jus soli*, or citizenship based on the location of one’s birth. Under this definition of citizenship, immigrants should be able to integrate rather easily, assuming that exposure to the national culture cultivates a self-identity or hybridization of cultures that shares similar

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5 Young, 23.
historical, political, and linguistic traditions. However, in the case of the German nation, this process has not been legitimized. Although the German citizenship law based on *jus sanguini* was changed in 2000, public opinion and treatment of immigrants and strict policies regarding citizenship suggest that the German public is still coming to terms with the presence of various cultures and peoples within German society.

Turkish-German women, such as Oezdaman, Ates and Kelek, are caught between seemingly mutually exclusive cultural values and practices with no easy mechanism for resolving the conflict. Thus at the intersection of gender, economics, and politics, the honor killings, alluded to above, are a symptom of the increased tensions between Germans and Turkish Muslims living in Germany. Such violent acts based on traditional historical and political perceptions of ethnicity and national identity raise concern as to the position of Turkish-Germans in Germany. The discourse of the Turkish-German identity in German society is best articulated through Turkish-German literature and represents, to an extent, a threat to the dominant, traditional and culturally-exclusive German society. My discussion of these concerns does not seek to take sides, as it is “their complex juxtaposition [that] matters, not the simplification of taking sides.” So, in the spirit of multiculturalism, I will attempt to examine the various reasons for the conflicting tensions in Germany today and suggest prospective pathways leading to peaceful integration and acceptance of minority populations. In this paper, I will discuss Turkish immigrant integration in Germany at three levels: 1) the individual effects of specific political leaders; 2) the influence of conflicted ethnic identity formation within the German state; and 3) international influences of globalization on immigrant integration in European society.

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THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL OF ANALYSIS: ANGELA MERKEL

At the individual level of analysis, the conflict between German and Turkish ethnic groups may be examined in its present manifestation through careful analysis of the country’s current political leader, Chancellor Angela Merkel, who defeated former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder (1998-2005) of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in controversial national elections in September of 2005. Merkel grew up outside of Berlin in East Germany as the daughter of a Lutheran pastor and homemaker. She received her doctorate in physics in 1978 and later married Joachim Sauer, a current professor of Physics at the University of Berlin. Her religious and rather traditional upbringing has certainly shaped her political views to mirror those of the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the sister party of the Bavarian based Christian Social Union (CSU).8

A source of her conservatism in the economic sphere may well be her upbringing under Soviet control in East Germany from the post-war period until German reunification in 1990. Although she did not join the CDU until 1989, Merkel had strongly opposed East German communist economic policy, in which all systems were entirely controlled by the state. A witness to the failure of the East German state to create an economically self-sustaining nation, she personally experienced the slow economic devastation that shattered the East German infrastructure and sharply increased unemployment rates. Fifteen years after Germany’s unification, the eastern German economy still lags behind western parts of the nation and suffers from astronomical rates of unemployment that have reached more than eight percent the national

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average at around eighteen percent in some areas. In response to this experience, Merkel’s current economic policies are formulated against socialist policies and attempt to create a more competitive free-market economic system. She rejects many policies advocated by the Social Democrats that seek to limit the number of hours in a work week and protect job security by creating difficulties for employers to fire their workers – a law that recently sparked protests in France and is expected to create controversy in Germany.

Her traditional values also include a strong opposition to Turkey’s pending membership into the European Union as well as strict policies on immigrant assimilation that call for immigrant adherence to western values and traditions. In November of 2004, she stated, “the notion of multiculturalism has fallen apart. Anyone coming here must respect our constitution and tolerate our western and Christian roots.” However, Merkel’s denial of the possibility of a multicultural society raises questions concerning those who live in-between Turkish and German society, such as second and third generation immigrants. Must they choose a side? Will they be accepted by society as German-speakers, but rejected as Muslims? Therefore if a leader rejects policies of immigration reform and multiculturalism based on integration and recognition, then ethnic immigrant groups will be excluded from the democratic political process and from social and economic inclusion, thus intensifying ethnic tensions in Germany.

Merkel’s promise to revamp the German economy is a primary reason for her election, which arrived at a time when economic circumstances have created an anti-immigration public, particularly due to gradual decreases in social welfare programs. According to Joel S. Fetzer’s

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study on public attitudes toward immigration in Germany, economic insecurity in Germany has historically rendered an increase in anti-immigration public opinion and even hate-crimes against foreigners, especially those whose cultural and ethnic tradition significantly varies from the dominant German practices. When the reunification of Germany brought widespread economic devastation in the early 1990s, hate crimes drastically increased against foreigners or those who were perceived as foreigners.\footnote{Joel S. Fetzer, \textit{Public Attitudes Toward Immigration in the United States, France, and Germany}, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 73.} In November of 1992, a hate-inspired arson attack killed an elderly Turkish woman and two Turkish children in Moelln; the fire-bombing of a private home in May 1993 in Solingen produced more lethal results: five Turkish women and children fell victim to the blaze and nine more were injured.\footnote{Adelson, xiii.} Such anti-immigrant events, coupled with an overwhelming seventy-two percent of the German public who believed in the amendment of the constitution to prevent the abuse of the asylum system, caused the government to ultimately pass legislation in 1993 decreasing access to those seeking asylum in Germany.\footnote{Fetzer, 73.}

According to Fetzer’s study, the sluggishness of the current state of the German economy revives the threat of violence against immigrants, especially with a conservative leader at its head. In addition to her strong conservative economic policies, Merkel’s refusal to accept multicultural policies suggest that she will address the problem of immigrant integration only as it pertains to the health of the German economy. Similarly, the state of the German economy and her predisposed position against strong socialist policies has caused Merkel to advocate a decrease in funding or elimination of additional or existing “expensive” social welfare programs that aid immigrant integration into the German society and economy, such as courses in German at adult education centers and discussion groups for Turkish women. Led by members of the
second and third generations, immigrant communities in Germany continue to rally for inclusion and representation in Merkel’s government at a time when European nation-states and social democracies are at risk economically and culturally.15

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, nation-states became the only acceptable form of recognized government. Yet, as Anne-Marie Thiesse argues in her article “Inventing National Identity,” nation-states are not eternal. Under monarchs, the nation was separate from the state. The idea for nation-states existed as a result of the Enlightenment period of the eighteenth century, which bestowed upon European citizens the recognized ability for self-rule and autonomy from oppressive monarchs that dominated the politics of the period. Thus, common identities were formed to unify populations on the basis of “a history establishing continuity through the ages, a set of heroes embodying its national values, a language, cultural monuments, folklore, historic sites, distinctive geographical features, a specific mentality and a number of picturesque labels such as costume, national dishes or an animal emblem.”16 Thus, the development of a culturally-unified national identity was essential to the formation and unity of the independent state.

Although these symbolic and material cultural identities worked to create strong nations in the past, their invention is a part of a shifting historical movement. In twenty-first century Europe, globalization and increased mobility of goods and labor has sparked a new trend of a multicultural society, which is changing the role of the nation-state. Angela Merkel’s conservative economic policies are an attempt to save the German nation-state. She advocates the development of the German economy in opposition to social welfare programs that seek to

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16 Thiesse, 3.
incorporate immigrant communities into the German economy and society. But since the German birth rate remains stagnant, the integration of these immigrants is essential to future German economic growth and sustainability; therefore, Merkel’s rejection of a multicultural German nation and of integration of immigrants actually inhibits German economic growth.\textsuperscript{17}

To a remarkable extent, her predecessor Gerhard Schröder embodies her opposite. He was raised in a poor single-parent household by his mother in Lower Saxony. While studying law at night school in the 1970s, Schröder became involved in the environmental activist groups and Marxist movements, such as the Young Socialists. The German social welfare system played a large role in providing for his basic needs: health care and higher education that leveled the playing field for opportunities in his future. Perhaps for this reason, Schröder remains an advocate of such social welfare programs. Yet under his leadership (1998-2005), the German economy slowed, raising concerns about the German economy’s competitiveness in the world market, the necessity of the social welfare system, and the perceived negative impact of immigrants on German society and economy.

In addition to differences in their personal histories, Merkel and Schröder’s policy views clash, especially on the issue of immigration. Merkel’s party, the CDU, of which Merkel was elected leader in April 2000,\textsuperscript{18} has consistently opposed Schröder’s ambitious immigration reform. In 2000, the German government, backed by the SPD and its coalition party, the Green Party, passed the first law in ninety years that changed the definition German citizenship. Under the law, children of immigrants in Germany are granted German citizenship, if one parent had been a German legal resident for eight or more years. Although rejected by the CDU/CSU for

\textsuperscript{17} David Horrocks and Eva Kolinsky, ed., \textit{Turkish Culture in German Society Today}, (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996), xv.
\textsuperscript{18} “Profile: Angela Merkel.”
conflicting with the conservative ethnic definition of the German nation\textsuperscript{19}, dual citizenship is granted up until the age of twenty three. Additional requirements for citizenship for adults include financial independence, fluency in German, and an oath on the German constitution. In August of 2000, Germany announced its version of the “green card” that allows immigrants to enter and stay in the country for five years as a way to alleviate the need for jobs in the field of information technology.\textsuperscript{20}

After successfully changing the German citizenship laws in 2000, Schroeder’s Minister of the Interior, Otto Schily, formed the Suessmuth Commission, named for CDU member Rita Suessmuth who was appointed chair of the commission. This independent commission was comprised of members from the CDU and SPD, churches, local governments, and trade unions and formed to research immigration trends in Germany and write a proposed immigration policy.\textsuperscript{21} In 2001, the Commission released its findings in “Structuring Immigration, Fostering Integration,”\textsuperscript{22} calling for “active selection of qualified immigrants…the active promotion of integration by way of language and cultural awareness courses for immigrants; and an overhaul of asylum rules” to combat German demographics, such as decreased birth rates, longer life expectancy, and an aging population.\textsuperscript{23} The Commission particularly supported the controversial selection process of “economically attractive,” qualified immigrants based on a point system, similar to existing point systems in Canada and Australia. Yet strong opposition, led by the CDU and CSU state representatives, who dominate the upper house in the Bundesrat, cited high migrant unemployment rates and the past failed attempts of the German government and society

\textsuperscript{22} Oezcan.
\textsuperscript{23} Muenz.
to properly assimilate foreigners. In addition, the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001 escalated the threat of terrorism in Western Europe by foreigners; thus public opinion against pro-immigration policies increased, causing the bill to stall in the Bundesrat.\textsuperscript{24}

Finally in 2004, the immigration bill was passed without the point system. It was rejected by the conservatives, as it was regarded as a form of recruiting skilled workers that contradicted the recruitment ban on foreign workers passed in 1973. The law did provide advantages for: foreign students by allowing them to stay an additional year after graduation to search for a job; distinguished foreign scientists and managers (if no Germans or EU citizens could fill the position), who are given a permanent, instead of temporary, residence permit; and foreign entrepreneurs, whose self-employed status gains them access to an indefinite residence permit after three years with a list of attached regulations. Furthermore, the new legislation provides better protection for asylum seekers and refugees, whose application process has been criticized for being arbitrary, degrading and in violation of human rights laws of free mobility throughout the country.\textsuperscript{25} The law also addresses terrorism concerns by allowing for the “expulsion of terror suspects and also of persons preaching hatred”; restriction of movement of such persons is permitted under this law; however, the CDU/CSU backed notion of “prolonged administrative detention on security grounds of non-deportable extremists” was not included in the law. Finally, in order to foster integration of immigrants, language and integration courses became mandatory under the law for non-EU immigrants.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{24} Muenz.
\textsuperscript{26} Muenz.
Immigration policy reform and public opinion has sparked increased tension for government parties and leaders over the past decade. Merkel and Schroeder’s personal experiences contribute to their particular world views, their loyalty to particular parties and recommended policies for the nation. However, particular leaders do not entirely account for ethnic tensions in Germany today, especially since the structure of the democratic system requires political cooperation and compromise. For example, liberal and conservative groups frequently act in strong opposition to particular policies and have thus weakened recent policies on immigration reform and integration. Therefore, although Merkel advocates tough conservative policies for the nation, she is prevented from passing legislation that is too far to the right, as her party governs in coalition with the former ruling party, the SPD.\textsuperscript{27} Secondly, Merkel’s conflicting economic policies that try to scapegoat immigrants and decrease funding for social welfare programs while simultaneously encourage the growth of the German economy, may be the result of compromises she has made within her the CDU and are attempts to evade political suicide. Furthermore, legislative implementation of laws that act to integrate immigrant populations into German society may not necessarily be effective or even enforced. For the most part, such laws cannot undo the societal fear of a heterogeneous German society that stereotypically has the potential for mass urban poverty and ethnic violence. Thus Germany’s controversial discourse on the integration of immigrant groups cannot be solved merely by legislation influenced by personal experiences of individual leaders, but must include the participation of immigrant populations as well as the social and economic commitment of the dominant German culture.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{27} “Profile: Angela Merkel.”
\textsuperscript{28} Adelson, xxxix.
THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL OF ANALYSIS: EAST VS. WEST

The multicultural debate on an international level represents not only the intermingling of cultures under one flag, but more importantly the complex coexistence and fusion of eastern and western religions that has a long and conflictual history. Since the conflict between eastern and western ideologies remains unresolved in international affairs, the relationship between immigrants and Germans also remains conflicted. Thus if international politics reproduce an ongoing ideological conflict between West and East, then those emigrating from East to West will be excluded from democratic political processes and from social and economic integration, thus intensifying ethnic tension in Germany.

At the international level, it is essential to understand Turkey’s political history as ideologically conflicted between East and West in order to come to terms with problems of Turkish immigrant integration in Germany. This will serve to confront the issue from another (Turkish) perspective. That Turkey is geographically divided between East and West, or Europe and Asia should further make clear that Turkey’s history and identity cannot be told from only a western perspective, nor can it be viewed as a product of, or belonging to the West. Only eight percent of its territory lies in Europe in an area known as Thrace; the majority of Turkish land is located in Anatolia to the east. The two distinct areas are separated by the Straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles, which connect the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea to the Sea of Marmara, respectively. Formerly named Constantinople in the fourth century A.D by the eastern half of the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the city of Istanbul rests on the western side of the Straight of Bosphorus. 29 Turkey’s capitol, Ankara, is located in the center of Anatolia, near the river Kizil Irmak. Thus Turkey’s geographic location has perpetually defined its role as the metaphorical and literal battleground between eastern and western powers and traditions.

Despite continuous historical conflicts between the East and West, Turkish history also acknowledges periods punctuated by cooperation and collaboration.

Conflict between eastern and western traditions in Turkey and Europe has historically been in the form of religious war, between Islam, which is still practiced by more than ninety-nine percent of Turks, and Christianity, which remains the dominant religion in the western world. In 1071, Muslim Seljuk Turks forced the Byzantine army out of Anatolia and pushed their forces westward into Europe. In defense of its Christian traditions, the West retaliated and recaptured a part of Anatolia in 1097 in the Crusades. Upon the fall of the Byzantine Empire, the Ottoman Empire reigned in the area now known as Turkey from 1299 to the end of World War I and the founding of the Republic of Turkey by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. Ottoman Turks devoted their military to the expansion of their empire, which reached deep into Africa, across the Middle East to the Caspian Sea, and as far West as Vienna in sieges on the city in 1529 and 1683. The failure of the second battle in Vienna marked “the beginning of the end of the Ottoman Empire,” as the increasing power of western European nations prohibited the Ottomans from engaging in independent, self-interested behavior. In the following centuries, European Empires France and Britain were able to demand Turkey’s recognition of Greece as an independent state in 1832 and later defend the country in the Crimean War (1854-1856) against Russia, which ended with further loss of Ottoman territory in northern Africa to European Empires. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, advances in western technology further enhanced already-powerful western economies.

32 “Country Profile: Turkey.”
Furthermore reform movements that materialized in the late nineteenth century and gained momentum in the early twentieth century decreased the political stability within the Ottoman regime. The emergence of groups such as the Young Turks led by Mustafa Kemal, also known as Atatuerk (meaning “Father Turk”), who was later elected president. A series of wars over territory, including the two Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913, broke out in the early twentieth century, in which the Turks lost and regained control of Thrace. In the First World War, the German-allied Ottoman government went to war with France, Britain and Russia. Mass genocide of more than one million Armenians in 1915 further diminished the political legitimacy of the once powerful Ottoman Empire; eventually the capture of Damascus in 1918 led to a provisional Turkish government at the end of World War I.33

The official end of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 represents for some scholars the end of a Muslim-dominated world view or the cultural superiority of Islam, which represented until then not only a military threat to Christianity, but a barrier to western cultural dominance. Islam and eastern traditions exemplified one of “the world’s greatest civilizations, producing art, architecture, literature, and material culture which have been the envy and admiration of the world”34. The British and French division of Ottoman territory after the fall of the Ottoman Empire based on geographic landmarks, rather than ethnic and cultural divisions perhaps was a way to reduce the cultural and military threat by ethnically destabilizing and culturally debilitating the region. Western powers may have been ignorant to the ethnic divides within the region; however, the result of such imposed nationalism caused citizens of countries drawn during this period have little national pride or loyalty to state institutions and laws.35 Similarly, the shift in power from East to West as a result of the fall of the Ottoman Empire and increased

33 “Country Profile: Turkey.”
35 Williams, 213.
economic power of western nations caused many nations in the Middle East drawn by western
powers “imitated” western society. By resorting to western-influenced lifestyles that would
“emphasize nationalism rather than Islam,” eastern leaders hoped to regain power and sustain a
profitable existence.³⁶

The new Republic of Turkey’s first President, Atatuerk, embraced many of these western
ideologies after the First World War, including secularism, western art and architecture, the Latin
alphabet, European fashions and names, civil rights (including women’s rights), and a
parliamentary government with a constitution, signed in 1924; these ideas are also referred to as
Kemalism or the “Six Arrows” of Kemalism that were written into the constitution:
republicanism, nationalism, populism, reformism, statism, and secularism.³⁷ In addition,
Atatuerk promoted an authentic Turkish language and tradition that erases the influences from
other similar eastern traditions, such as Arabic and Persian. His swift turn away from previous
eastern traditions, such as Arabic script and Islamic symbols, in favor of western nationalism and
secularism is especially important to the later discussion of Turkish-German identity formation
and the role of Turkish-German culture and literature in German society today.³⁸

Although a German ally in the First World War, Turkey remained neutral in the Second
World War, but declared war on Germany in 1945 in order to remain a charter member of the
United Nations and thus a participant in the world political forum dictated primarily by western
ideologies. Yet the founding of Israel and the Middle East War in 1967, in which western
powers helped defeat Muslims and ultimately took over sacred Islamic landmarks in Jerusalem,
the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank, deeply affected the Muslim world. This sparked violent

³⁶ Williams, 213.
³⁸ Brigid Haines and Margaret Littler, Contemporary Women’s Writing in German: Changing the Subject, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 120.
protests in Turkey against the failure of Atatuerk’s previously instated western ideologies and forced the Turkish military to act in defense of Atatuerk’s constitutional western policies against authoritarian leaders in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet during this period, Turkey also began to ignore its western allies as political tension increased between Turkey and Greece over Cyprus, which was eventually partitioned in 1974.39

As a result of severe political and economic instability in Turkey, many Turkish workers, a high percentage of which were Turkish-Kurds, sought more lucrative jobs and generous social welfare systems in the West. They participated in the newly established German government’s Guest Worker Program, which recruited foreign workers first from Italy (1955), followed by Spain (1960), Greece (1960), Turkey (1961), Portugal (1964), and Yugoslavia (1968). When the program abruptly ended in 1973, Turkish immigrants represented twenty-three percent of the four million foreigners in Germany.40 Renewed political chaos in the 1970s caused a massive influx of the family members of Turkish guest workers under family reunification laws. Violent outbreaks in Turkey erupted in response to the failure of western-influenced hegemonic political and economic structures of the East; eastern governments began to renounce western values in search of independent political and economic constructs that often included the participation of Islam. The Islamic resurgence became a popular option for those against what they saw as deliberately oppressive western ideals of secularism, socialism, and nationalism in support of a form of government that was not a mere imitation of the West. To assert their independence, eastern governments waged war on a western ally, Israel, creating the Arab oil embargo, and overthrowing the US-backed Shah of Iran. Some Islamic resurgents include highly-conservative

39 “Country Profile: Turkey.”
40 Oezcan.
Islamic fundamentalists or radical activists, whose strict interpretation of the Koran calls for militant action against non-Muslims.41

Unstable government coalitions and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism led to widespread resentment of embraced western political traditions and resurgence in the belief of an Islamic state. Political violence and terrorism peaked in 1978 and 1979, when a military government, led by General Kenan Evren, successfully secured the economic and political stability in 1980. A new constitution was drafted in 1982, but restricted basic human freedoms, allowing for the censorship of the media, the cessation of oppositional political activity, and torture. After a decade of coalition governments, the Turkish government inaugurated female Prime Minister Tansu Çiller, in 1993. Under Çiller, Turkey experienced an increase in strict government policies in violation of human rights laws as a result of the escalation of terrorist activity by the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) in the southeastern part of the state. For the majority of western countries, human rights violations are strictly prohibited within the state; thus Turkey’s human rights violations could be viewed as an object stemming from its eastern heritage and constructed in opposition to western more “humanitarian” values. Human rights issues stemming from ethnic conflict are often cited as a reason against its pending membership into the European Union.42

Human rights violations continued under Çiller’s coalition party with Mesut Yılmaz, which failed in 1996. They were exacerbated by the political rise of the Islamic Fundamentalist Welfare Party, whose endorsement of strong conservative interpretations of Islam in a strictly secular state led to military intervention to quickly overthrow the party the following year. Later in the nineties, coalition government coupled with the indictment of former Welfare Party

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41 Williams, 215.
42 “Country Profile: Turkey.”
members and Islamic extremists sustained temporary stability; however an economic crisis in 2000 shattered the strength of the nation and provoked political changes that culminated in 2002 with the election of Islamist Justice and Development Party member, Tayyip Erdogan. Despite the party’s continued popularity, Turkey remains at odds with Greece over the isle of Cyprus and continues the oppression of Turkey’s Kurdish population in the southeast of the nation, which is still without political freedom or representation in the Turkish government. After a five year hiatus, the PKK resumed terrorist activity in Turkey in 2004 to obtain governmental representation or an independent Kurdish state.43

Functioning as a necessary link between the two continents of Europe and Asia, Turkey’s tumultuous history and ongoing ethnic conflict represents a struggle for a cultural and national identity. Turkey’s ongoing human rights violations and the current problems involving the integration of Turkish immigrants in German society suggest that the nation and its citizens are caught in a seemingly mutually exclusive web between the ideologies of eastern and western traditions. However, the election of Turkey’s current party in power, the Islamist Justice and Development Party, could be considered a successful fusion of Turkey’s religious Islamic tradition with western democratic parliamentary systems and represent the independent political entity many for which eastern states strive. This fusion also suggests that the conflict between eastern and western ideologies does not necessarily have to be mutually exclusive, thereby eliminating the need for religious extremism and a sense of western superiority.

The discourse on the inflexibility of definitions of eastern and western religious and political ideologies is already at work between international scholars. In his controversial article “The Clash of Civilizations” (1993), Samuel P. Huntington wrote of a bipolar world in which the West was pitted against the East in essentialist ideological, religious, and cultural warfare. He

43 “Country Profile: Turkey.”
believes world politics to be in the position of the “West versus the Rest” in which the “Rest” will have to choose to defect from economic or political participation with the West, join western society and adopt its ideals, or violently fight against it. Therefore, the West will need to continue to promote and protect its economic interests in order to remain the dominant power in world politics. Yet Palestinian scholar Edward Said disagreed with Huntington’s argument in favor of western supremacy and protectionist policies. In his opposition article “The Clash of Ignorance” (2001), he argues against Huntington’s essentialist philosophies of East and West.

Certainly neither Huntington nor Lewis has much time to spare for the internal dynamics and plurality of every civilization, or for the fact that the major contest in most modern cultures concerns the definition or interpretation of each culture, or for the unattractive possibility that a great deal of demagogy and downright ignorance is involved in presuming to speak for a whole religion or civilization. No, the West is the West, and the Islam Islam.

Said does not ignore the cultural differences and historical conflicts that have plagued the East and West over time. Instead, he suggests the world community embrace similarities between cultures and abstain from drawing boundaries that would serve to divide the world into polarized opposites, enhance existing conflicts, and justify the self-interested behavior of the West. By examining the intricate history of ethnic clashes within Turkey, I have further confirmed Said’s argument that nations, religions, and civilizations cannot be defined under homogenous and essentializing notions of East vs. West.

Furthermore, the western political structure of the mighty nation-state has recently started to deteriorate, not only for eastern states whose national boundaries were drawn by western powers, but for powerful western nations as well. In a more globalized world, where populations

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45 Refers to Orientalist Bernard Lewis, author of “The Roots of Muslim Rage” (1990), which strongly influenced Huntington’s essentialist definitions of East and West.
of people move more fluidly across national boundaries, regional politics and institutions, such as the European Union, dictate new methods of national identity formation and nationalism in the international sphere. Regional institutions have gained power through the increased porousness of western borders and the aforementioned economic state of western European nations. Despite the debate on the supposed death of the nation-state versus the mere obstruction of sovereign power by such regional institutions, most scholars believe globalization has caused a shift in politics away from being conducted exclusively at the level of nation-states.48

THE DOMESTIC LEVEL OF ANALYSIS: NATIONAL IDENTITY

In this post-national context, I will examine the historical and cultural issues of immigrant integration in Germany that best help to explain the complexities of the conflicting ethnicities and national identities among Turkish immigrants and Germans living in Germany today. I will argue, if opposing ethnic identities fail to break through the boundaries of national identity and generate peaceful coexistence via the creation of a new multicultural society, then ethnic immigration groups will continue to be excluded from the democratic political process and from social and economic integration, leading to increased ethnic conflict within Germany.

In addition to the discussion of Turkish identity, an understanding of the German national identity will serve to better clarify Germany’s problems with immigrant integration and acceptance. With its roots in the Enlightenment, the German national identity is based on a traditional ethnic identity, known as Kultur that stands firmly by tradition and is slow to accept economic, cultural, and political change. The term Kultur was first coined by German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder, who used it to imply a certain personal or spiritual

quest (*Bildung*) toward becoming a cultural or civilized individual. With a particular emphasis on individual development, Herder believed the civilized and spiritually-perfect individual was attained through education. Thus, anyone could become cultured by attending the primary institution used to “culture” the German middle-class: the university. The idea of *Kultur* developed in opposition to the universal idea of French civilization, a more exportable form of culture that had already spread to numerous parts of the world by French colonialists. Norbert Elias details the conflicts between the two ideologies in his book *The Civilizing Process* (1939, translated to English and thus popularized in 1960). He argues the French belief in the cultured aristocracy, which German intellectuals found to be artificial and materialistic, further divided the two nations, as Germans valued “the individual achievement of spiritual growth…above inherited status and the artificial trappings of courtly style.”

The individual nature of the German idea of *Kultur* thus by definition caused its focus to reflect on the northern European identity and its purpose or position in world affairs. At German universities, intellectuals developed self-encouraging theories on the destiny of the German national culture and race. In her book *Colonial Fantasies*, Susanne Zantop discusses German literature that created German supremacist attitudes and paved the way for future colonial endeavors. She argues that Germany’s relatively late entrance into the colonial competition does not necessarily give reason to believe German intellectual activity was without colonial interests or racist beliefs. In fact, in the mid-eighteenth century at the peak of French and British imperial colonial empires, German literature and thought produced colonial fantasies, or “colonialism without colonies” in which literary and scientific texts sought to prove theories of northern European supremacy in order to justify its ideology of a racially-determined destiny. German

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50 Kuper, 32.
philosophy asserted the hierarchy of races, genders, and cultures alongside the eighteenth century ideals of the Enlightenment. Even prominent eighteenth-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who wrote groundbreaking essays on the human capacity for individual reason,\textsuperscript{51} contributed literature that asserted the existence of and attempted to explain a hierarchy of races.\textsuperscript{52}

A second method that German scholars of the Enlightenment period used to justify their colonial fantasies was through analysis of physical anatomy. The study of comparative physical anatomy as a method for ranking the superiority of human races became widely accepted and discussed in the late eighteenth century. Eighteenth century German professor Christian Ernst Wuensch’s study of eight human skulls found the German skull consisted of a “well-shaped jawline, beautifully curved temple, and beautifully formed forehead,” which proved that “Germans have reached the highest level of civilization, beauty, and morality” when compared to the other three in his “racial-craniological” study. Wuensch’s study verified the biological differences and similarities between human races, which offered early explanations in favor of the existence of a “national” cultural identity based on biology.\textsuperscript{53}

At the turn of the century, France became a military and cultural threat to German territory. In response, the inward shift that German literature had taken during the Enlightenment period, changed again from the discourse on the superiority of the northern European racial identity to that of the specifically\textit{ German} national identity. A “paternalist conservative protectionism of German territories, German governments, [and] German conditions” followed, which displayed “outright hatred toward any republican experiments,” such as those practiced in France, and included a strong disapproval of race theories that sought

\textsuperscript{51} See Kant’s essay “What Is Enlightenment?” (1784).
\textsuperscript{52} Zantop, 70. See also Kant’s essay “On the Different Human Races” (1775).
\textsuperscript{53} Zantop, 77-78.
to promote similarities and equality between human races. Instead divisive and hierarchical theories based on cultural superiority and racism, such as those of Christoph Meiners, arose at the turn of the century. Meiners’ most important theory for the context of Germany’s problems with immigrant integration and citizenship laws is his idea that German superiority and national identity is based on physical characteristics - thick bearded, tall, white men, being the most superior - and is thus based on genetics or blood lineage. Similarly, the introduction of a foreign blood into the German national identity would only serve to “weaken the ‘national,’ that is the militarized virile German body”.

According to Zantop, these fantasies or myths of German superiority and conquest pervaded the definition of the German national identity during the time of its actual colonial endeavors in the late nineteenth century and contributed to the nationalistic, imperial goals set by the National Socialists in World War II. Although resistance to colonial conquest and racist literature existed in the eighteenth century as well as in Nazi-era German literature, the effects of supremacist literature and its contribution to a German national identity based on Kultur is reflected in present-day conservative sentiments toward eastern nations struggling with western-style democracies. German conservative opinion that seeks to maintain the essentialized, individual, national culture helps to explain the negative public opinion toward eastern immigrants and problems of immigrant integration and citizenship.

A reason for the negative public opinion toward immigrants in Germany may also have its roots in colonial theory and the homogenous demographic of the German territory. In a study by Gordon Allport, the frequency of inter-ethnic personal contact was found to affect the sensitivity of a dominant group to the marginalized people. Intimate or friendly contact

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54 For more details on Meiner’s theories see Zantop Chapter 5.
55 Zantop, 89.
56 Zantop, 203.
decreased prejudices; on the other hand, mere casual contact could actually increase prejudice toward an ethnic group within a society, as the act of seeing a foreigner brought to mind “stereotypes, hearsay, tradition, rumor by which the marginalized is known, strengthening adverse mental associations.” Thus, while cultural interactions between French imperialists and the natives resulted in few positive relationships, the absence of any such encounters by Germans enhanced stereotypes and encouraged ethnic superiority.57

Allport’s study may also suggest that the failure to integrate foreign-born populations in Germany has produced a strengthened negative German public opinion of ethnic minority groups in Germany. The presence of so many foreign-born citizens in Germany coupled with the declining economic strength of the German nation (and social-welfare states in general), has produced evidence of a renewed belief in ethnic supremacy and German nationalism, which scapegoats immigrants for the downfall of the German economic nation-state. This may account for the election of conservative Angela Merkel, who promotes policies that “protect” the German national identity and simultaneously are designed to increase the competitiveness of the German economy through the elimination of social welfare programs designed to aid immigrant integration. The culturally-based German national identity may also expose reasons for Germany’s delayed compliance with the required European Union anti-discrimination law on the basis of gender, religion, and disability.58

Yet a recurring theme throughout German history seems to be that Germany’s cultural politics have yet to match practical economics, or in other words, “nationalism can trump

57 Fetzer, 15.
economic self-interest.”59 This means that the economic state of Germany currently requires the participation of educated, ambitious foreign-born citizens in their society; their previous role as foreign-born skilled or unskilled guest workers is no longer sufficient, as the discussion of second- and third-generation immigrants below will prove. Statistical analysis of birthrate trends will only further support this theory, as they have decreased to lower rates among German women than in the final year of World War II;60 births among foreign-born women in Germany now account for about twenty-five percent of all births in Germany.61

Divisions still exists between those who agree with the incorporation of immigrants in society, those against it, and unrepresented generations of Turkish-Germans who live in-between or outside of the discourse altogether. Important to the discussion of Turkish-German immigrant integration is the complexity of the differing identities of second- and third-generation immigrants and their parents. In addition to differing identities, the roles of second- and third-generation immigrants within German society largely contrasts with those of their parents, many of whom initially arrived in Germany as guest workers. As a solution to the labor shortages in the restored post-war German economy, their recruitment in 1961 was seen by both Germans and Turks as strictly temporary. But when Germany abruptly ended its Guest Worker program by banning the recruitment of foreign-labor (Anwerbestopp) in 1973, the number of Turkish women and children immigrating to Germany increased (by seventeen percent and thirty-nine percent, respectively). While many recruited guest workers from other countries took advantage of the “returnees’ premium,” which offered guest workers money to return to their country of origin, family reunification rights doubled the number of Turks in Germany. Political, economic and

60 According to the 2006 census in the CIA Factbook, there are approximately 1.39 children born per woman. This accounts for a population growth rate of negative 0.02. 
61 Bernstein.
cultural instability in Turkey during the 1970s and 1980s may account for the influx of Turkish families to Germany during this time. This caused “a shift from short-term to long-term residency and the emergence of established non-German minorities within German society”.

Many former guest workers and first-generation immigrants, particularly women, continue to live in isolated communities, maintain few if any German contacts, and in many cases, cannot speak the German language; a 1991 survey found that nearly seventy-eight percent of first-generation immigrants socialized only with other Turkish immigrants. In addition, more than fifty percent of Turkish migrants live near relatives and visit with them on a regular, if not daily basis. Reasons for the strong solidarity among Turkish immigrants is largely due to the actions and sentiments of a rather xenophobic German public, whose perceive Turkish immigrants as backward, poor, and uneducated. Insufficient education among first-generation immigrants from rural areas of Anatolia has resulted in Turks with inadequate Turkish or German language ability, and plays a particularly large role in the development, or lack of development of a middle-class among Turkish migrants which contributes to their backwards image.

The formation of the first-generation Turkish migrant identity is highly influenced by the cultural traditions and values of their homeland; it provided a way for them to distinguish themselves in opposition to the unwelcoming German atmosphere. However, cultural and religious traditions, particularly those of the Islamic faith, also perpetuated the negative image of

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64 Kuersat-Ahlers, 117.
66 Kuersat-Ahlers, 118.
Turkish immigrants in German society, thereby inhibiting minority integration. From the German perspective, oppressive Islamic traditions were demonstrated in the form of patriarchal family structures, arranged marriages, and limited educational and occupational opportunities for women and girls. Additionally, the episodes of “honor killings” have acted to further portray inhumane images of Islam to the German public and all actors in the German political arena.67

As the first-generation reaches retirement age, there is much speculation as to whether their children will continue to pass on their cultural values, such as a fluency in the Turkish language, strong familial and community support for the young and the elderly, basic traditional, patriarchal family values, including the adherence and acceptance of authority, upholding family honor, particularly for females, and in many cases, Islam. The role of Islam for first-generation immigrants remains important to the first-generation Turkish immigrant identity, but has changed throughout the years. Many first-generation Muslim immigrants have become more strictly faithful in their later years, as Islam requires one to “settle any debts” with Allah before death. Thus, more recently, Islamic Mosques and organizations have become increasingly popular. Formerly Islamic organizations acted to create change in Turkey, thus providing hope for nearly two-thirds of the Turkish migrants who intended to return. Now, these same organizations primarily promote equality for the Muslim community within German society.68

Second and third generation Turkish immigrants, on the other hand, have a more conflicted, hyphenated identity. Despite having grown up in Germany, they too remain largely unintegrated into German society. Approximately sixty-five percent of second generation Turkish-Germans socialize primarily with other Turkish-Germans, which illustrates their lack of social integration. In addition, the economic status between first and second generation

67 Kolinsky, 186.
68 Karakasoglu, 171.
immigrants has remained largely unchanged; this is partially the result of a loss of skilled and unskilled jobs in the German labor sector to developing countries, such as China, which has left a large percentage of second-generation workers jobless. The initial incorporation of Turkish immigrants into the German lower-wage workforce caused some Germans to move to higher-paid positions; however the decrease in jobs has most affected second-generation immigrants, who have fewer contacts to maintain or find new jobs and often face discrimination. Discrimination leading to unemployment has especially affected young Turks, whose difficulties obtaining apprenticeships have lessened their competitiveness in the job market, which has led to an astronomical unemployment rate that exceeds thirty percent.69

As a result, second-generation Turkish-Germans still live in overcrowded apartments in primarily non-German neighborhoods. In addition to tight studying quarters, the unsupportive educational atmosphere for second-generation immigrant students is exacerbated by the little education and at-home help of first-generation parents and in some cases, particularly with female students, distrust in and undervaluing of the education system. Although second-generation immigrants attend German schools and often speak both German and Turkish fluently, the social stigma of being different and the emotional stress of living “in-between” cultures and languages may be another reason for immigrant underachievement rates in school. These reasons may help to explain the significantly higher rates of Turkish-German students who finish school with the minimum required education, the lower percentage of students who pass their high school graduation tests (Abitur), and the even lower (0.8 percent) number who attended German universities. Statistics of economic and educational inequities among second-

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69 Kuersat-Ahlers, 129.
generation Turkish-German immigrants help to explain the perpetuated cycle of immigrants as laborers in Germany as well as the absence of a strong immigrant middle-class.\textsuperscript{70}

With the establishment of Turkish community centers in Germany, second and third generation immigrants are beginning to acquire the education and fluency necessary to lead their communities to equality. Most second- and third-generation immigrants do not place all of their values in either eastern or western traditions, sometimes to the dismay of their first-generation parents; their parents’ and grandparents’ homeland is for many third-generation immigrant children a mere week-long vacation spot to see relatives once every so often.\textsuperscript{71} Instead, they represent the in-between culture that refuses to take sides, and has put forth a new identity that embraces both religious Islamic and western traditions. In the Turkish language, the word for Turkish-German, \textit{almanyali}, exists and is commonly used and accepted, like the words Italian-American or Irish-American are in reference to Italian or Irish immigrants to the United States. It is used to describe Turks who live in Germany and frequently visit Turkey, but are not permanent members of Turkish society. Yet in Germany, an acceptable word that demonstrates an equal power relationship between the two nations, Turkey and Germany, has yet to become frequently used and accepted. \textit{Deutsch-Tuerken} (German-Turks) is perhaps the closest, but still connotates German as the dominant culture.\textsuperscript{72} The lack of a word for immigrants from Turkey in the German language also denotes an obvious reality that Turks are Turks, and foreign is foreign, despite their individual differences and degree of integration in German society.\textsuperscript{73} Thus, second-

\textsuperscript{70} Kuersat-Ahlers, 130.
\textsuperscript{72} Tan and Waldhoff, 152.
\textsuperscript{73} Kolinsky, 184.
and third-generation immigrants have inspired a new discourse on immigrant integration among intellectuals and politicians that has created both extreme conservative and liberal perspectives.

Within the conservative realm, there exist extremist attitudes grounded in essentialist definitions of German and Turkish (specifically Turkish-Muslim) culture. The conservative, German Neo-Nazi movement, which most recently reemerged after German reunification, is known for its violent acts against immigrants and perceived foreigners in Germany, such as the aforementioned arson attacks on immigrant homes in Moelln and Solingen. After reunification, the Neo-Nazi attempted to reignite the flame of German nationalism and the promise of a strong, homogenous German nation for the future. Despite the long-defunct idea of monoculturalism in West Germany, the spark of post-reunification nationalism coupled with popular eastern conservative attitudes toward foreign-born Germans caused the growing multicultural debate in West Germany to grind to a halt.74 More recently in 2000, more than 14,000 hate crimes were reported and far-right organizations and political parties continued to obtain public support for their anti-immigration sentiments. Yet in electoral campaigns of the past decade, political parties such as the far-right Republikaner, who were led by a former SS agent, and the even farther-right National Democratic Party (NDP) experienced little support due to the assumption of strict immigration laws and anti-immigration platforms by mainstream conservative parties, such as Merkel’s CDU and the Bavarian CSU.75

Followers of a conservative agenda enact policies and behave in discriminatory practices that reflect a “mutual process whereby each culture encounters the other with surprise, distance, suspicion, alienation and a sense of its own superiority, so creating a double ethnographic

74 Kolinsky, 185.
Other.” On the German side, this sense of protectionism against immigration groups can be described as the reemergence of a belief in colonial theories of supremacy and the kind of nationalism that helped to unite the German nation-state during late nineteenth-century industrial society. Such theories are also linked to a strong sense of nationalism and national identity based on *Kultur* and thus by definition in opposition to the “other” in the form of eastern immigrants. Nationalism prevails when economic, political, and social stability is under threat (and, according to the aforementioned Fetzer study, so does violence against migrants). Similarly, terrorist attacks led by infiltrated Islamic fundamentalist organizations against the United States in 2001, Spain in 2003, and most recently England in July of 2005, has evoked a public fear and distrust of eastern Muslim immigrants. This fear has most recently manifested itself in a proposed controversial 100-question citizenship test for foreigners advocated by Merkel’s CDU party. It is intended to filter out extremists or terrorists, but it has been argued that it is sending the wrong message to immigrants living in Germany, whose successes in Germany have gone completely ignored in German politics.

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Germany, and Europe at large, is in part a response to the domination of western cultural values and oppressive, arguably racist policies. Yet the assertion of ethnic identities through violent extremes within Europe has also been interpreted as the reclamation of cultural masculinity. This form of extremism traditionally breeds in rural, isolated, often economically deprived regions of Turkey; yet due to the high percentage of guest workers and first-generation immigrants from underdeveloped parts of Anatolia, Islamic fundamentalism has found a voice in similarly depressed immigrant ghettos in Western Europe.

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76 Fischer and McGowan, 8.
78 Bernstein.
as well.伊斯兰fundamentalism largely differs from Islamic revivalists mentioned earlier, as it believes that a war already exists between the Muslim world in the East and the West, Marxism, and Zionist Israel; they believe the intent of such institutions is “to dominate, colonize, and exploit the Muslims.” Furthermore, they refuse to recognize any form of government not in compliance with their conservative interpretation of Islam. Although extremist agendas account for only a minority of public opinion, the unsuccessful integration and acceptance of Turkish migrants in Germany serves to further exacerbate extremism on both fronts.

The liberal agenda appeals for the equality and integration of immigrants in German society. Despite the recent change in citizenship laws, the lack of socially-aided integration programs and a slew of honor killings has limited the success and increased criticism of the liberal agenda. However, under the umbrella of liberal politics, more inclusionary and progressive definitions of citizenship and identity are being debated. In the context of a weaker nation-state and globalized, competitive economy, liberal debates seek to encompass the security and welfare of the German state, as well as the inclusion of the Turkish-German voice that lies in-between Turkish and German essentialist national identities. This is the more inclusive discourse of immigrant integration in Germany that conservative politics fail to address.

One such German philosopher who encourages Turkish integration in German society is Juergen Habermas. In an address to Stanford University in 1995, Habermas highlighted his beliefs on immigrant identity formation in relation to the political and legal theories of liberalism and communitarianism. He defines liberalism as the complete defense of the rights of the individual, for example, the right to the independent development of an individual identity. Communitarianism, on the other hand, requires the cultural, ethnic, national, or religious

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80 Kuersat-Ahlers, 118.
81 Williams, 216.
participation in the formation of an identity; thus, an individual identity is posited in relation to that of a society and therefore must be in complete defense of the society from any outside threats. His own interpretation of identity formation rests on the assumption and belief in the constitutional state. Although he believes the interpretation of constitutional principles to be a product of a political culture shaped by a common history, he advises constitutional states to maintain neutrality and a distinct separation from the “shared political culture and common civic identity” in order to fairly govern “the subcultures and collective identities, which are as a consequence of equal rights to cultural membership, entitled to equal coexistence within the polity.”82

According to Habermas, the German nation-state’s problems of the integration of non-Germans stems from the fact that the German national identity is based too much on a “shared political culture and common civic identity.” As a result of the presence of foreign-born residents within Germany, the culturally-influenced German state then enforces an irrational cultural protectionism. For Habermas, cultural protectionism acts in opposition to the individual’s freedom and ability to manifest their own cultural identity as well as each generation’s decision to perpetuate the popularity of cultural traditions. Although Habermas believes immigrants must obey certain German constitutional principles as interpreted by the common political culture, their voice as citizens within the political arena will influence and perhaps justify a new interpretation of the constitutional principles.83

The implementation of Habermas’ participatory democracy would include both German and non-German voices in society, without discrimination based on race or ethnicity. However,

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83 Habermas, 853.
this voice cannot so easily be transferred and understood from one culture to another.84 One way of best examining this voice is in literature of Turkish-German authors, who describe the complexities of immigrants’ cultural and individual identities and break down destructive binaries that isolate, essentialize, and oppress immigrant populations in Germany. Like Habermas’ social theory, the interpretation of a piece of literature must not only include the deconstruction of the individual (individual’s writing style, themes, plot), but the cultural, social, and historical influences (communitarian) that serve to contextualize a text.85 Literature written by immigrant writers has evolved since the first Guest Workers’ initial arrival in Germany. In the early years of the Gastarbeiter period of the 1960s, literature that was then coined as Gastarbeiterliteratur, or guest worker literature, was mostly not written by actual guest workers, but by those perceived as guest workers and thus endured similar discrimination in German society. Most recruited guest workers had not yet published during this time, as many still believed they would return to their homelands and were stricken with a stifling sense of culture shock. Moreover, their background did not emphasize education or literacy; therefore many had not yet acquired sufficient vocabulary to publish work in the German language.86

Guest worker literature written in the 1970s primarily described the male perspectives of German working conditions, cultural differences, and experiences of discrimination, rejection, and homesickness, also known as Betroffenheitsliteratur, or “therapeutic writing by victims of social process, articulating, objectifying and establishing the commonality of experience by recording it in simple, conventional, usually autobiographical forms.”87 By the early 1980s,

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85 Fischer and McGowan, 2.
86 Fischer and McGowan, 3.
87 Fischer and McGowan, 4.
German publishing houses, such as Suedwind and the PoLi-Kunst-Verein, had marketed and popularized anthologies of immigrant literature and university scholarships were established in praise of its authors; however the commercialization of immigrant literature in homogeneous anthologies served to isolate the literature and keep its authors dependent on the praise of the dominant German public. Furthermore, the name Gastarbeiterliteratur, reminded its authors of their place outside of the realm of German literature, and to an extent, outside of German society and created confusion over how it should be read and analyzed, in the context of the literary structures of the West or the East. 88 Yet the market for immigrant literature opened a new voice for all immigrants in German society, including authors who “never acquired the Gastarbeiter label, explicitly reject it, or set out to deconstruct it.” 89

While the aforementioned work of Ates and Kelek, which seems to have never really acquired the Gastarbeiter label, creates strong public opposition to the number of women who suffer greatly at the hand of conservative religious practices, it also serves to perpetuate negative stereotypes of Islam. In a nation in which Muslims are the minority, this can undoubtedly encourage fundamentalism of all kinds and prove counterproductive to the project of a peaceful multicultural society. For this reason, the work of Turkish-German author Emine Sevgi Oezdamar is perhaps the best example of female minority writing, or Migrantinnenliteratur that set out to break down cultural, religious, and gender stereotypes by offering alternatives to these negative images and essentialized cultural values. Born in Malatya in eastern Anatolia, Turkey in 1946, she first arrived in Germany in the 1965 as a guest worker. While working in a factory with other guest workers, she became well acquainted with the power relationships between Germans and Turkish workers and the historical relationship between the two countries.

88 Littler, 219.
89 Fischer and McGowan, 4-5.
Although Turkey never became a colony of Germany, the exploitation of Turkish guest workers has been described by Oezdamar as a German “inner” colonialism. She says: “The Germans came by their colonies relatively late in the day, and they have ended up creating new colonies on their home territory.”

Yet Oezdamar’s initial stay in Germany also introduced her to the works of famous German playwrite Bertolt Brecht. Inspired by Brecht’s simplistic and politicized nature, she returned to Turkey in 1967 to pursue an acting degree and became tangled in Turkish politics in the early seventies. She returned to East Berlin in 1976, after political demands shut down most Turkish theaters, and worked for a disciple of Brecht, director Benno Besson. Following a short performance in Paris, she began working for the Schauspielhaus in Bochum as assistant director and actress; she also began to write. She wrote her first play, “Karagoez in Alamania” (“Blackeye in Germany”) in 1982. It was published with three other short stories, “Mother Tongue” (“Mutter Zunge”), “Grandfather Tongue” (“Grossvater Zunge”), and “A Chairwoman’s Career: Memories of Germany” (Karriere einer Putzfrau: Erinnerungen an Deutschland”), in a collection titled Mother Tongue (Mutter Zunge) in 1990.

My analysis of the first two short stories in Oezdamar’s collection argues that knowledge of both eastern and western traditions are necessary to appropriately analyze her literature. In her works, she asserts her appreciation for both traditions, but refuses the essentialized notions of either. Instead, her complex prose seeks to overcome the definitive boundary that sets them apart by creating her own unique space that rests in between. Thus, Oezdamar’s works simultaneously recognize the importance of tradition to individual identity formation while resisting the classification of cultural traditions into essentialized, homogeneous categories in

90 Horrocks and Kolinsky, 52-53.
91 Horrocks and Kolinsky, 46.
92 Littler, 220.
favor of individual experience and creativity. Oezdamar finds this in-between space in the constant movement through time and space in her texts that blur the lines of essentialized linguistic traditions, gender roles, and geographical points of reference.

The significance of language in Oezdamar’s short stories demonstrates a particular movement of time (pre-Atatuerk Arabic, post-Atatuerk Turkish and Latin alphabet, and present-day German language) and physical space (Turkey and Germany; home and work for Turkish-immigrants). She interjects her poetic German prose with Turkish words, making it difficult for non-Turkish-speaking readers to follow her exact storyline or meaning. The title of her collection and short story “Mother Tongue” (Mutterzunge) does not translate properly in German; the German word for tongue, Zunge, is not synonymous with the German word for language, Sprache. Thus, the word for one’s native language would be Muttersprache, which literally translates in English to “mother language”, and not Mutterzunge, or “mother tongue” in English. The inspiration came from a train ride with Greek, Yugoslavian, Turkish, and Bulgarian guest workers, whose common language was German.

They made mistakes, of course, but the German they spoke was devoid of clichés, and came out almost like poetry as they struggled to express the images of their mother tongues in this new language. And this, as I now realized, was the language of some five million Gastarbeiter. If I wanted to write a play about their experience, and I did, I knew it would have to be written in this new language.

In order to fully comprehend her work written in her new language, the reader would need to be knowledgeable of both German and Turkish. Therefore, the reader would most likely be in a very similar situation as Oezdamar and her characters, a situation of people of in-between cultures, languages, and traditions. This acts as a way of empowering those who geographically,
culturally (and linguistically), and emotionally live in-between Germany and Turkey. Furthermore, the intentional disregard for German grammar and use of Turkish colloquialisms alienates and thus shifts “linguistic” power away from the German reader, again proving the “incommensurability of cultural difference, rather than offering the assurance of a comfortable common ground.”

In “Mother Tongue”, Oezdamar recalls the story of a young Turkish woman living in Germany who is upset that she cannot remember when or where she lost the ability to speak her native tongue. The protagonist experiences movement by traveling through her memories and recounting possible places in Germany she may have lost her mother tongue, such as upon first sight of the Cologne cathedral that acts as a constant reminder her of her foreign environment and her foreign appearance in Germany. She details places where she encountered her native language in Germany, such as overheard conversations by Turkish-speaking prisoners while walking outside a prison or Turkish-speaking restaurant workers outside a cafeteria. This minimal understanding of her mother tongue by non-Turkish Germans sets her apart from mainstream German culture, but does not represent a longing for her homeland. For instance, she bitterly remembers the political turmoil and corruption in her homeland; the blatant gender discrimination expressed toward independent women such as herself, who are considered prostitutes and dishonorable to their fathers. Ultimately, the protagonist finds it necessary to learn Arabic script, the written language of her grandfather, in order to reconnect with her mother tongue and form a cohesive individual identity. “Perhaps only by going back to Grandfather will I be able to find my way back to my mother, back to my mother tongue.”

96 Littler, 220.
quest to rediscover her mother tongue takes place in the next story, “Grandfather Tongue,” where she seeks the help of Ibni Abdullah, an Arabic scholar, in order to learn Arabic and “recreate a sense of cultural continuity.”

In “Grandfather Tongue,” Oezdamar’s character experiences physically movement in her travels from East Berlin to West Berlin, where her Arabic teacher lives, in order to journey back in time to connect with her ancient Grandfather’s linguistic and traditional roots. The significance of her desire to learn her grandfather’s language is perhaps exacerbated by her position in German society as an outsider in search of an identity in a city that itself is divided into an East and a West. Yet her position as a resident in East Berlin may also represent a physical and political aspect of in-betweenness. She is neither living under the Ottoman Empire in ancient Turkey, nor modern day western-influenced Turkey, nor West Berlin, the epitome of western capitalism and materialism; instead she lives in East Berlin, an awkward portion of land that represents neither an independent, western state, nor an eastern independent or western-influenced state. Rather, East Berlin is itself trapped in-between its physical dwelling in the West and the values and politics by which it is dominated that lie to the East. Thus, it seems fitting that instead of traveling East to East Berlin or Turkey to find her Turkish linguistic and cultural roots, she is forced to travel West in order to search for the roots of the influence of Atatürk’s western policies that prohibited the use of Arabic script. Interestingly, there exists a space in-between East and West Berlin. “In the corridor between the two Berlins is a photomat.” The presence of a photomat in the corridor between East and West Berlin serves to solidify the existence of an individual, alternative in-between identity.

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99 Littler, 222.
100 Oezdamar, 14.
As she learns Arabic in Germany, she becomes fascinated by Muslim women who continue to practice traditional Islam through their dress and lifestyle; she also becomes more aware of her own place outside of German society and therefore realizes the importance of reconnecting with past linguistic and religious traditions in her quest to create a contemporary, individual in-between identity. From a western feminist perspective, this desire to embrace Islam and its ancient Arabic texts may seem to be in opposition to Atatuerk’s western policies that actually emancipated women from strict Islamic interpretations and provided basic rights, such as education and jobs. “The language into which she seeks to be initiated [Arabic] is unequivocally that of the law of Islam, a symbolic order for which female desire is a dangerous and destabilizing excess, and therefore must be controlled.”\(^\text{101}\) The initial joy that the protagonist experiences at the prospect of reconnecting with her grandfather’s tongue is also the lure of a “simple, homogenous and prescribed identity” free of the effort of “border-crossing.”\(^\text{102}\) Thus, she accepts her role as the subordinate, obedient, patient, and beautiful object of the patriarchal Ibni Abdullah and willingly spends forty days and forty nights with him locked in his room. The narrator soon falls in love with her teacher, as he represents the patriarchal (grandfather) figure necessary to find her identity. But their sexual desire for each other breaks the rules of the patriarch (Ibni Abdullah) and his orthodox Islamic teachings; the narrator takes the position of a threatening, sensuous force her teacher must resist in order to maintain control. The consummation of their love represents one way in which the narrator does not entirely conform to the gender roles prescribed by Ibni Abdullah’s traditional Islam.\(^\text{103}\)

Similarly, the narrator’s alternative reading of the Arabic letters suggests her creative use of tradition for the formation of her identity. At first she is frightened of the letters, which she

\(^{101}\) Haines and Littler, 124.
\(^{102}\) Bird, 168.
\(^{103}\) Bird, 166.
has described as Ibni Abdullah’s “guards.” Since Islam forbids the pictorial expression of its holy figures, Arabic script is used in its place. Thus, when the narrator reads the letters not for their literal, oppressive meaning, but rather for their aesthetic representation, she still maintains respect and appreciation for Arabic script partially within the tradition of the Islamic faith. Letters came out of my mouth. Some looked like a bird, others like a heart pierced by an arrow, others like a caravan, others like sleeping camels, others like a river, others like trees flying apart in the wind, others like fleeing snakes, others like pomegranate trees freezing in the rain and the wind, others like a log floating on the river, still others like a fat woman’s arse sitting in a Turkish bath on a hot stone, others like eyes that cannot sleep.

Although she views Arabic script as a work of art, she does not translate their aesthetic value to their orthodox meanings. Margaret Littler uses this passage to demonstrate how Oezdamar’s protagonist detaches the meaning (signified) from the actual symbol or letter (signifier). In other words, the protagonist’s emphasis on the appearance of the letters deconstructs the powerful, oppressive meaning of the traditional context by giving them her own pictorial meaning and reconfiguring them to her own, more complex female identity. Likewise, selected lines from the Koran are interjected with quotes from Turkish songs and passages from other sections of the Koran. The narrator deconstructs or “de-centers” the “intended” meaning of Ibni Abdullah’s orthodox texts. By doing so, she shifts and shapes the symbolic power of the Arabic letters and Koran verses from the traditional meaning to adapt to her own identity of an emancipated female. Through the narrator’s attempt to reconnect with her mother tongue through her grandfather’s Arabic script, she learns to disregard the temptation of a cultural homogenous identity and instead embraces the complexity of her multicultural identity. Her quest to form an

104 Haines and Littler, 125.
105 Oezdamar, 20.
106 Littler, 224-225.
107 Bird, 171
individual identity cannot be satisfied by such straight-forward solutions as those dictated by oppressive Islamic traditions or dominating western values. Instead, she learns the importance of independently blending and adapting traditional discourses to her own westernized female identity.\footnote{Bird, 167.}

In Oezdamar’s short stories, language, both written (the altered meaning of the Arabic script) and spoken (Arabic, Turkish, and German) is linked to the formation of an individual cultural identity. The narrator’s creative alteration of the traditional meaning of Arabic script and the Koran to fit the narrator’s independent, complex cultural identity demonstrates a power relationship identified in Bakhtin’s theories of both intentional and organic linguistic hybridization and Bhabha’s theory of colonial hybridization. The construction of an organic hybrid in “Grandfather Tongue” would suggest that the narrator had formed a new language and identity out of the Arabic, Turkish, and German languages. An organic hybrid generally connotes a natural evolution of languages throughout time, thus making it unintentional and unconscious. Oezdamar demonstrates the similarities between spoken Arabic and Turkish in a discussion between Ibni Abdullah and the protagonist.\footnote{Oezdamar, 48.} Thus, the progression from Arabic to Turkish and Arabic script to the Latin alphabet in Turkey should have been natural and uninterrupted; however, Atatuerk’s westernizing reforms created a substantial break in the traditions and interrupted the flow of the natural evolution of language, tradition, and culture. Similarly, her move to Germany as a \textit{Gastarbeiter} established a break in a natural, continuous flow of an unconscious linguistic hybrid.\footnote{Littler, 229.}

Although organic hybridity mirrors the style of Oezdamar’s prose, which is written in what she described as the “new language” of guest workers, in grammatically-imperfect poetic
German, the narrator’s identity as a result of Atatuerk’s western policies seems to embody more of an intentional hybrid that instead positions languages in opposition to each other. For example, at the end of “Grandfather Tongue,” the narrator compares the Turkish word, *Ruh*, meaning soul, with the German word *Ruhe*, meaning peace and quiet. The words take on two contradictory meanings in two different languages for the single speaker. The story of the narrator’s quest to find her mother tongue in Germany with Ibni Abdullah is thus the representation of her attempt to maintain some cultural continuity between the interrupted Arabic linguistic traditions of her grandfather and the Turkish Latin alphabet. Therefore, the protagonist’s intentional hybridity according to Bakhtin is the outcome of Atatuerk’s political policies that caused a disconnection between her westernized Turkish linguistic identity and her past Arabic roots.

In “Grandfather Tongue,” Oezdamar’s simultaneous critique and embrace of the role of tradition in identity formation extends beyond linguistics. She alludes to historical events that occurred as a result of Atatuerk’s absolute embrace of western political and cultural structures; the subsequent banishment of Islamic tradition not only interrupted the natural, progressive flow of Turkish cultural identity and language, but provoked a recent, often violent revival of repressed, unprogressive Islamic traditions. Thus, the jump from traditional Islam to westernized reforms in the 1920s caused a reversal in the formation of Turkish cultural identity that reverts back to pre-Atatuerk Islamic traditions. In response to the backlash against western imperialism, Bhabha formed his theory of colonial hybridity, which by definition, is almost a form of hybridity itself, taking on the form of both Bakhtin’s unconscious and intentional hybrid. In his theory, he promises the peaceful reversal of colonial power relations. “For Bhabha, hybridity

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111 Young, 20-22.
112 Littler, 229.
becomes the moment in which the discourse of colonial authority loses its univocal grip on meaning and finds itself open to the trace of the language of the other, enabling the critic to trace complex movements of disarming alterity in the colonial text.”113 In other words, the single voice of the colonial hegemon destabilizes its own power by including minority voices, or the other, in its affairs, thus becoming a “double-voice.” Bhabha’s intentional hybrid thus stems from the ability of the minority to independently assert its interests in opposition to the colonial authority in the public sphere while simultaneously defending its interests from the authority of the colonizer. The relationship between the dominant colonial culture and the colonized has resulted in the development of Bhabha’s “hybrid displacing space” which challenges the “authenticity” of the dominant cultural and political structure and more recently his “Third Space”, which represents the space where the fusion of dominant and minority cultures, languages, and religions takes place.114

From the perspective of Bhabha’s theory of colonial hybridity, the protagonist’s desire to learn the linguistic and religious traditions of her grandfather extended beyond Bakhtin’s theories that arrange them in opposition to each other (Arabic against Turkish against German) in order to understand her position in the dominant German society and form an identity accepting of her differences. Instead, Bhabha politicized the subject of hybridity that takes on dominant, oppressive powers by fusing together similarities in differing cultural and linguistic traditions. In “Grandfather Tongue”, the protagonist’s lessons with Ibni Abdullah empower the repressed traditional Arab culture of her grandfather, but also establish a break with it and a “third space” of cultural fusion in-between. She demonstrates this in her independent reading of the meaning

113 Young, 22.
114 Young, 23.
of the Arabic letters, but renouncement of traditional Islamic traditions that are oppressive to women and thus restrict her westernized Turkish (and German) identity.

Oezdamar’s de-construction of the cultural divisions between westernized Turkish Muslim women and traditional Arabic Islam is highly significant when applied to the relationship between Turkish-Muslim women and German society. The break in cultural linguistic continuity between the protagonist and her grandfather was the result of Atatuerk’s westernizing policies, including the repression of Arabic. She attended lessons with Ibni Abdullah to regain this aspect of her cultural identity.\textsuperscript{115} In order to form a linguistic and cultural identity with traditional German society and politics, the Turkish protagonist may follow Bhabha’s theory of colonial hybridity, and establish a voice within the “inner” colonialism of the German political system. Furthermore, the concept of Bhabha’s “Third Space” allows for the independent formation of one’s own cultural identity. This is especially important for the formation of female cultural identities that are often forced into subordinate gender roles that aim to emphasize the cultural masculinity of their male counterparts.\textsuperscript{116} Perhaps for this reason, it is common for the protagonist to witness (and follow) Muslim women living in Germany in traditional dress and lifestyles. Bhabha’s “Third Space” echoes Habermas’ constitutional identity in that it provides women with the freedom to form their cultural identities independent of cultural traditions, but also in relation to them, thereby empowering Turkish-German women in their quest for hybrid identities. Thus, they can be feminists and Muslims, modern and traditional, sexual and pure.

Oezdamar’s literature creates a space of language and discourse particular to the Turkish-German voice; she breaks down dominant cultural values that determine gender roles, language,

\textsuperscript{115} Haines and Littler, 120.
\textsuperscript{116} Malkani.
and identity to create a third space that enables a unique multicultural voice. Her space recognizes the influence of history and tradition to the formation of identity, but seeks to embrace alternative interpretations to traditions, thereby deconstructing their original, traditional meaning. Her literature is most important when applied to the position and identity of Turkish-Germans in German society today. The discussion of where to categorize Turkish-German literature (is it Turkish if it’s written in German? Is it German if it’s written by a Turk?) reflects the complexity of the question of where the Turkish-German citizens and residents of Germany belong. For this reason, despite its recent popularity, Turkish-German literature is still largely controversial, as it represents the beginnings of a multicultural German nation. The emerging third voice within German society is beginning to deconstruct and delegitimize the strong national identity to which many Germans, especially in the realm of conservative politics, cling.

In an ideal democracy, conflicting voices and identities are represented, including those in support of conservative world views, both German and Turkish, that form essentialist definitions of national and cultural identity in order to preserve cultural traditions. It would thus be unreasonable to attempt to obscure or condemn these beliefs, but rather, accept them as a part of the variety of voices that comprise a multicultural democratic state. Yet the danger lies in dominant policies of Angela Merkel and CDU that discount the German multicultural identity altogether and thereby exclude the many different voices and identities that make up its population. Despite the presence of Turkish immigrants in Germany since the post-war period, German citizenship laws based on familial ancestry and blood lineage (jus sanguini) instead of location of birth (jus soli) denied German citizenship to long-term Turkish residents, which justified the exclusion of immigrant populations from political participation and their
constitutional right to fair representation.\textsuperscript{117} Since the change of citizenship laws in 2000, the absence of a Turkish-German voice in the public sphere has become even more unacceptable. Habermas expresses the need for the participation of immigrant populations as a key component of a democratic state. Although the integration of Turkish-Germans in a constitutional democracy is not a legal right and precedes their participation in the public sphere, the excess of cultural influence on German national identity and politics has heavily influenced policies of cultural protectionism. For Habermas, these policies violate the individual’s right to self-determination by presupposing the destiny of cultural traditions.

Furthermore, conservative cultural protectionist policies are based in an ideological conflict between the western and eastern cultural traditions; they define the German national identity in opposition to eastern ethnic minority identity and thereby oppress Turkish-German minority voices in German society, whose identity rests in-between. This ideological conflict is complicated by Turkey’s national history, which has defined itself in concordance with neither the West nor the East; its geographic location between West and East; and conflicting cultural identities that embrace eastern Islamic tradition and western-inspired Kemalism. Turkish-German identity is also dependent on generational differences. First generation Turkish immigrants arrived in Germany as temporary guest workers, and thus maintained the cultural values of their homeland. Second- and third-generation Turkish-German identities identify with both sides of the existing conflict between East and West. Instead of taking sides, Turkish-Germans have created a space in-between essentialist definitions of Turkish and German ethnic identities.\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{117} Adelson, xvi.
\textsuperscript{118} Adelson, xvi.
However, the Turkish-German identity has found little representation in the current structure of the German political sphere. For this reason, is necessary to listen to Turkish-German voices that have emerged most strongly in the cultural sphere. According to Bhabha’s theory of colonial hybridity, Turkish-German literature represents the “third space” that, like the Turkish-German identity, fuses the linguistic and cultural traditions of the East and West and has thus introduced traditional discourses of the German national identity to alternate interpretations. Therefore, German politicians must search beyond the boundaries of the German political sphere for a source of renewed perspectives on the problems and solutions of immigrant communities in Germany; they must listen to Turkish-German voices in literature, film, and other cultural texts belonging to a German multicultural democracy to alleviate ethnic tension within Germany.

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119 Young, 23.