The year 2011 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the bilateral recruitment agreement that the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) signed with the Republic of Turkey in 1961. According to official figures, the immigrant group with roots in Turkey and its offspring make the second largest group currently after ethnic German emigrants (resettlers) in Germany. Understanding this migration experience and the broader issues of immigration in Germany is the motivation behind this special issue.

The contributions assembled here were derived from a conference “(Re)Considering the Last Fifty Years of Migration and Current Immigration Policies in Germany,” which took place in October 2011 in Washington, DC. The conference brought senior and junior scholars and politicians together to articulate the contemporary debates on migration and immigration policy in Germany in comparison with other European countries and North America from an interdisciplinary and international perspective. The time frame covered (1961-2011) and focus on immigration from Turkey to Germany enabled participants not only to trace the dynamics of and discourses on issues of immigration, but also how they shape contemporary debates and public attitudes, which, in turn, shape migration policies in Germany. Against this background, the following questions were central for discussions at the various conference panels: What makes migration in/to Germany different from other countries of immigration? What do immigration and immigrants mean for German society? Is immigration an exceptional issue in the sociopolitical and historical context of Germany in comparison to other European countries,
and, if yes, what makes it exceptional? Historically, how has German society been dealing with diversity and difference? What significance do race, ethnicity, religion, and gender have for the incorporation and acceptance of immigrants? Given that the agreement with Turkey was the first with a country considered to be non-European and with Islamic faith, what is the significance of this for the past fifty years of German immigration history and in the years since 9/11? What kinds of images of immigrants are created by the German mass media? What links can be found between these representations—especially in terms of gender-related topics such as violence, oppression, integration, and education—and acceptance of immigrants in society as a whole? Considering the impacts of the global economic crisis, what significance do immigrants have economically for Germany today? How important are political diversity, equal treatment, and anti-discrimination law and policy approaches for immigrant rights and political participation, and what are the practical experiences?

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Since 1961, the so-called *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) from Turkey and their offspring have been co-writing Germany’s history. The following introduction aims to give some insights into the sociohistorical and sociopolitical significance of the aforementioned immigration agreement and how it has impacted Germany and the *Gastarbeiter* from Turkey, as well as their offspring born and raised in Germany. First, however, a brief historical background of post World War II immigration to Germany is necessary.

The Federal Republic of Germany began its labor recruitment program with Italy in 1955 just six years after its establishment as a liberal democratic polity by the Basic Law of 1949. This agreement opened the new guest worker era. Although Germany’s *Gastarbeiter* system is generally recognized as having been formulated at this time, the model can be traced back to the system that Prussia began developing in 1890 to regulate the entry, residence, work, and exit requirements of Polish workers from the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires. Later, the Nazis forced many foreigners to work in Germany. According to Douglas Klusmeyer, by August 1944, Greater Germany was employing more than 9.5 million foreign workers (*Fremdarbeiter*), comprising 25 percent of the total domestic work force.

Clearly, from the Imperial era and through the founding of the Federal Republic Germany, labor was imported to meet economic objectives, rather than being seen as part of an immigration process. This was the case until the 2005 declaration of Germany as a country of immigration...
Nevertheless, politicians after 1949 used the term guest worker to avoid any comparison with Nazi practices. When the first guest worker came to Germany from Italy in 1955, however, the only legislation covering immigration stemmed from Nazi Germany: the Ausländerpolizeiverordnung (AVPO). This remained in force until the Foreigner Law of 1965, which was later reformed in 1990.

In the beginning of the new guest worker era, Germany applied a policy of nonintegration, intended to ease the return of guest workers to their home countries. Moreover, the recruitment of workers from other countries enabled upward mobility for many German workers so that between 1960 and 1970 around 2.3 million German blue-collar workers able to become white-collar employees. On the other hand, this policy model created a kind of new “sub-proletariat” of the guest workers themselves.

In 1961, less than two months after the building of the Berlin Wall, Germany signed the labor recruitment agreement with Turkey, a country considered to be both non-European and Islamic. The guest workers from Turkey were considered compensation for the labor now lost by the hardening division of Germany. After 1972, workers from Turkey became the largest foreign minority and the most prominent symbol of the guest worker in the eyes of the German public. When recruitment was stopped in 1973, many guest workers concentrated on family reunification and brought their children to Germany. Meanwhile, Germany’s foreigner policy had not altered in its structural nonintegration approach. In 1977, federal naturalization guidelines declared: “the Federal Republic of Germany is not a land of immigration. It does not aspire to increase the number of its citizens through naturalization.” Immigration and integration in German society was further discouraged by the cost of related steps, for example, the naturalization fee in 1974 was DM 5000. Moreover, the politics of anti-integration of non-Germans in society was supported by the majority of the German population. Public backing for the politics of sending foreigners back to their country of origin rose from 39 percent in 1978 to 68 percent in 1982.

The 1980s were characterized by a strong instrumentalization of the “Turkish issue” by political parties and public discourses. The focus on people from Turkey, according to Peter Katzenstein, transformed the “the Polish question” of the 1890s, to the “Turkish Question” of the 1980s. Indicative of such attitudes, in 1982, the newly elected government of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) passed a law to supply financial benefits for those workers, primarily from Turkey, who wanted to go back to their country of origin. Central issues related to immigrants from Turkey in public discourse circled around the cultural, religious, and educational...
differences of this group, which made them “foreign” and less valued compared to average German citizen. Recent years have witnessed a discursive change to a superficial tone of equality, albeit without content. Several contributions in this issue detail arguments related to the terms difference and diversity.

The fall of the Wall and German unification in 1990 initiated a new epoch in German migration history. The 1990s were characterized by a new cohesive German identity and racist violence towards immigrants, especially those from Turkey symbolized by the racist attacks in Mölln and Solingen, as well as criminalization off their offspring. At the same time, there has been a marked reaction by offspring of immigrants against racist attacks and anti-citizenship, especially anti-dual citizenship policies.

Hate crimes in Germany are generally viewed through the lens of politically motivated crimes. According to the United Nations Human Rights Council, a narrow understanding of racism still permeates many public institutions in Germany. In this approach, racist crimes are viewed primarily as products of right wing extremism. Although racism against guest workers/immigrants was already a big issue in the 1980s in West Germany, the public and political discourses targeted East Germany as particularly xenophobic. The revelations about the National Socialist Underground (NSU) since 2011 and, since May 2013, ongoing court proceedings concerning their racist motivated murders in the 2000s raise questions about possible support of such racist organizations by state sources.

These crimes, along with the deep-seated homogenization of all people from Turkey as Turks in Germany and attacks on Alevis and Kurds in Turkey, encouraged many to claim diverse belongings—in terms of ethnicity, religiosity, and language—rather than being simply named “Turk.” Against this backdrop, the young generation of the 1990s can be termed a generation of societal transition.

The loyalty of people from Turkey and their children was most questioned in the 1990s in terms of citizenship. Many—even liberal-positioned politicians and media—argued against dual citizenship for people with Turkish citizenship. This was justified with the fear that Turkish people could be influenced by politicians from Turkey and could vote according to orders from Turkey. Turkish people were represented as loyal to the Turkish state and prone to extremism. In some mainstream arguments, such claims were justified with representations of Muslims in France: “As is well-known, ius soli has not hindered Islamists in France from increasing their influence with Algerians who have French citizenship.” Even today, the fear that Germany will lose political control and Turkey will dominate
Germany is utilized and reproduced both in German and Turkish politics—especially since the AKP has been in power in Ankara over the last decade. Debates related to the accession of Turkey to the European Union or recent criticism of the Erdoğan government’s reaction to the Gezi protests in Istanbul and around the country in May and June 2013 refer to repetitive instrumentalization of “Turkish immigrants” in Germany.

The end of the 1990s marked the change of the citizenship law from nationality by descent to nationality by birth. This important gesture of official recognition to the young generation with immigrant parents facilitated a further important step with Germany declaring itself an immigration country in 2005. To keep family unification under control, however, changes for non-European countries in general were implemented in 2007. For potential new immigrants from Turkey, this means they must learn German in Turkey prior to their arrival in Germany. Overall, immigrants from Turkey and their offspring have become symbolic for public and political debates on immigration policies and immigrants in Germany.

The official categorization of immigrants and their offspring by the Federal Office of Statistics and in public discourse is currently “persons with migration background.” This term is used for all people who arrived in Germany after 1949, as well as for all foreigners born in Germany, or any German-born person with at least one immigrant or foreign-born parent.

There is also a secondary categorization: depending on an individual’s experience, one is termed a “person with or without personal migration experience.” In other words, any person who has a biological bind to a post 1949 immigrant falls under the category of “migration background.” In this context, being a migrant seems to be a biologically inherited trait.

Different from this official labeling and categorization, the descendants of immigrants self-categorize themselves in various ways depending on their political attitudes. The most commonly employed term, which does not refer to specific ethnic or national belonging but refers to power relations, is “people of color” (PoC). This term also facilitates a symbolic solidarity between all non-white and non-ethnic German groups. Some of the contributors in this special edition give more insight into the application of this and similar terms.

According to the Federal Office of Statistics, there are almost 16 million persons with a migration background living in Germany today, making up almost 20 percent of the present population. The original wave of guest workers from Turkey and their offspring—with almost 2.5 million individuals—constitute the second largest groups of immigrants living in Germany, after the ethnic German resettlers. Among the 2.5 million, almost a mil-
lion were born in Germany, have no personal migration experience, and hold either German or Turkish citizenship. In the fifty years since migration from Turkey to Germany began, over 4 million people “with migration background” have left Germany for Turkey. Statistically, the number is rising: people leaving for Turkey outnumber those entering Germany.

In light of these demographic trends, the recent discussion in Germany in terms of immigration has been about how much cultural diversity can be accommodated within liberal and secular democracies like Germany, or Europe in general. This discussion is last but not least, interrelated with 9/11 and its aftermath at the local and global level. For immigrants from Turkey and their offspring, this creates a new category of ascription: being named Muslims regardless of whether they define themselves as Muslims or not. The evolution of categorization over the past fifty years seems to be from guest workers to foreigners, from foreigners to immigrants, from immigrants to citizens, and finally to Muslims.

In contrast to the shrinking number of immigrants from Turkey to Germany, the number of European immigrants is rising in Germany since the construction of European Union citizenship. According to the official statistics, the number of immigrants rose in 2012 for the first time since 1995 because of young southern and eastern European immigrants coming to Germany. With its special issue in February 2013, Der Spiegel celebrated the arrival of these highly skilled young immigrants in Germany (from Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece, Italy and Spain) with their higher educational capital than the average German population.

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Following the central questions of the conference mentioned above, the contributions assembled here focus on issues related to diversity, difference, belongings, and identity including perspectives on gender, generation, race, education, ethnicity, class, and citizenship.

Writing from a historical perspective, Cornelia Wilhelm argues that the legal framework for the Turkish minority since the beginning of the migration to Germany was influenced by perceptions of diversity and cultural differences based on experiences with Jewish and Polish minorities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. She highlights critically that the nature of Vergangenheitsbewältigung (coming-to-terms with the past) and the memory of the Holocaust have long prohibited a broader discussion on inclusion and exclusion in German society and did not allow immigrants to participate in the discourse that was so central in shaping post-World War II German identity. Against this background, Wilhelm suggests a new
understanding of Germanness, one that expands out of a broader discourse on the social reality of Germany and the patterns of constructing diversity, cultural difference, memory, and identity. According to her, this would allow immigrants to identify with the nation, and help Germans to understand their own identity as far more “diverse” and culturally different than frequently purported by their memory.

The article from Daniel Williams is based on his interviews with second generation individuals with various national backgrounds. He argues that the interviewed individuals were not only clearly differentiated by understandings of citizenship and Germanness, but that these understandings also differ by national origin and gender. He argues that the diverse understandings he found in his study point out that citizenship and Germanness are not distinctive even among a specific and small subset of individuals of the same generation, education, and urban residence/location, and are framed nationally, postnationally, or transnationally.

Based on their exploratory interdisciplinary project both in Germany and in the U.S., Zeynep Kılıç and Jennifer Petzen focus on the power relations, competing racial knowledge, and transnationally reproduced racial formations that mediate the production of art and the reception of the migrant artist within a framework of comparative race theory and ethnic studies. They argue that migrant artists are the racialized artist, and their work in the visual arts is used in large to exotify and commodify “the migrant” by artificially opposing “migrant culture” to “Western culture.” Kılıç and Petzen assert that the marketing of art relies on the commodification and circulation of racial categories, which are reproduced and distributed as globalized racial knowledge within a neoliberal context. According to the authors, this knowledge is mediated by the racial logic of the multicultural, which produces and displays the multicultural subject, who is displayed as proof that the institutions of democracy and multiculturalism really do function. They point out that there are diverse forms of how artists deal with the limitation of the “migrant” discourse in the art market and these should be critically looked at in terms of how the racial categories differ from each other and how artists develop strategies of resistance against participating in these framings.

Next, Ruth Mandel critically examines the last fifty years from the perspective of the complex relationship between Turkey, Germany, and the European Union. Deconstructing/questioning Turkey’s outsider status in core European thought and practice, she argues that “violence, fear, and fantasy” are core aspects directing the perspective of the North on Turkey and Turks. Mandel claims that the motivating factors for the exclusion of
Turkey from the EU are not the Copenhagen criteria, but rather the role of Islam and the historical memory of the Ottoman Empire’s relationship with Europe. In this context, Samuel Huntington’s civilizational clash often has been referred to openly and used as a legitimate rationale. She considers long-existing stereotypes and the siege mentality of being overrun, taken over, overwhelmed, or over-foreignized (Überfremdung) in the specifically German migration context in regard to migrants from Turkey as being linked to aforementioned historical perspectives on Turkey. Drawing attention to changing dynamics of integration of migrants from Turkey in Germany and Turkish integration in the European Union, she highlights the aspect of increasingly transnational relations, which are being lived simultaneously between and in both societies over the last fifty years. To conclude, she urges the development of a dialogue even if difference is taken as a given and pleads that official discourse should catch up to lived realities.

Through his case study of a three-generational originally Zazaki-speaking Alevi family from Turkey, Halil Can points to the need for moving from national to transnational, transbelonging, and cosmopolitan perspectives in the migration context. He considers migration as a multifaceted process with plural roots and routes, and migrants as actors who can impact and change their situation of disempowerment and discrimination, as well as creating new prospects for a paradigm shift in migration discourse. He regards plural belongings and identities as social and cultural resources. Can concludes that the suggested perspective enables and supports the inclusion of pluralities and differences, and simultaneously promotes social, cultural, and political concepts of empowerment, power-sharing, participation, and equality, rather than the pathologizing and exclusionary concepts of integration and assimilation.

Esra Erdem critically examines the Sinus study on migrant milieus, which argues that social milieus constitute much stronger markers of difference than ethnicity. Erdem argues that the Sinus study articulates a post-ethnic vision and thereby reflects the heterogeneity of contemporary society more adequately and attracts attention as a proponent of a multicultural society. Yet, the primarily milieu-focused approach restricts articulation of a politics of difference and understates social inequalities rooted in relations of gender, race, and class. Furthermore, through questioning the methodological approach of the study with regards to data collection and analysis, she shows how the applied research methods can determine the results of a study.

Czarine Wilpert discusses the function of the citizenship concept in Germany for identity orientation—as new expressions of belongingness—of
the descendants of immigrants from Turkey in the last decade in Germany. She argues that tradition, institutions, and public discourse continue to articulate an ethnicized view of citizenship that creates barriers to identification with becoming a German. Based on her analysis of some identity-related events in Germany since the beginning of migration from Turkey to Germany, she criticizes that in the context of the dominant political discourse it is not commonly acknowledged that citizenship and ethnic belongingness can legitimately coexist. She concludes that despite the dominant political discourses, there is a gradual emergence of a generation of “postmigrants” or “new” Germans, who refuse to be locked in the ethnic view of German citizenship and define their own belongingness.

Finally, Maureen Maisha Eggers discusses the intersection of gender and schools with persistent social inequality. Taking the example of the educational environment of young people with Turkish backgrounds, who (self-) categorize themselves as people of color and racist marked subjects, she focuses on racist and hierarchized difference experienced by female students of color in school settings. She finds a lack of analytical sharpness in popular perceptions of the relationship between equality and difference. Moreover, in these contexts, the principle of equality is considered as given and already achieved. She then takes a critical perspective on the term diversity and proposes a problematization of the concept. Her real interest, however, is not diversity itself as a social phenomenon, but rather the conditions under which diversity is anchored as a social correction and used as an instrument of equality and diversity policy. Eggers concludes that the concept of diversity has the potential to perpetrate a central analytical link between heterogeneity and social justice and could be mobilized as an analytical engine relevant for intervention.

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Different than in recent years, the focus of the fiftieth anniversary of migration from Turkey to Germany was not on problematizing the “Turkish presence” in Germany, but rather, many films, music, and arts festivals endeavored to celebrate the “Turkish presence” and successful life stories. The focus was on success stories of people considered as fully integrated and internationally recognized second- or third-generation individuals such as Fatih Akın, Sibel Kekilli, Mehmet Kurtuluş—playing Kommissar Cem, an important character in the German cult television series Tatort—in film, and Mesut Özil in sports. In politics, largely motivated by the 2008 presidential elections in the U.S. in which Barack Obama became the first African-American to hold the office, Green politician Cem Özdemir is...
even mentioned as a possible future chancellor of Germany. Economic success was represented by the example of Vural Öger, a first-generation entrepreneur with 75 percent German employees. According to the Turkisch-Deutsche Industrie- und Handelskammer (TD-IHK/Turkish-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry) there are 80,000 investors stemming from Turkey in Germany with an annual profit flow of approximately EURO 40 billion. These investors make up an important part of the German economy and provide jobs for around 400,000 people.

There are also films being made by the descendants of immigrants from Turkey, humorously dealing with issues of immigration, different than the movies of the 1970s and 1980s. For example, the film Almanya, Welcome to Germany, made by the Samyeli sisters—two young women who were born and raised in Germany and whose parents hail from Turkey—on the one hand, criticizes the unwelcoming culture in Germany, but, on the other, deals with immigration-related topics of language, belonging, and intergenerational relations in an amusing way and with an open and hopeful perspective. In his short film relating to the fiftieth anniversary of migration from Turkey to Germany in 2011, Neco Çelik, also a second generation filmmaker, states that the hope for a better life brought their parents to Germany fifty years ago and today the hope of their children could bring Germany forward.

A close examination of the last fifty years of migration enables us to note, that German society, like European society overall, consists of differences. Besides developing new immigration policies, Germany needs a new concept of mutual recognition, which will recognize its new generation as a dynamic of a changing society, rather than as a marginalized group, and which will achieve a new understanding of “diversity in Germanness.”

Notes

1. The conference was organized by the BMW Center for German and European Studies, Georgetown University and made possible with generous support from the following organizations: The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), The American Institute for Contemporary German Studies (AICGS), the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, the Goethe Institut, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, the American Consortium on European Union Studies (ACES), the Institute for the Study of International Migration, Georgetown University (ISIM), The German Marshall Fund of the United States, the Center for Eurasian,
Russian, and East European Studies, Georgetown University (CERES), and the Institute for Turkish Studies, Georgetown University.


3. Ibid., 91.


5. Klusmeyer and Papademetrios (see note 2), 99.

6. Herbert (see note 4), 243-244.


10. For more and detailed information about the NSU process see http://www.spiegel.de/thema/nsu_prozess/; accessed 27 June 2013.


14. There are some exceptions regarding the ethnic German immigrant “resettlers,” especially after 1999.


16. According to the Statistisches Bundesamt, 1,081,000 people immigrated to Germany in 2012 (provisional results)—an increase of 123,000 (+13 percent) from 2011. Such a high level of immigration was last recorded in 1995. Available at https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/SocietyState/Population/Migration/Migration.html; accessed 20 June 2013.

18. Deniz Göktürk highlighted this inflationary celebration in her talk at the conference related to this special issue on 27 October 2011 in Washington, DC.

19. Joel Cruz in interview with Suat Bakır, the President of the Turkish-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Türkisch-Deutsche Industrie- und Handelskammer), *Deutschtürken Sorgen für 400,000 Arbeitsplätze*, 30 July 2012; available at http://www.migration-business.de/2012/07/8741/, accessed 30 June 2013.

20. This short film was published online and accessible in October 2011 and is unfortunately no longer accessible. However, there is a manuscript related to this short movie available online: “50 Jahre Anwerbe-Abkommen: Türken in Deutschland,” available at www.mdr.de/fakt/tuerken102-download.pdf, accessed 30 June 2013.