

“A Visual Tour of Kreuzberg, Berlin” Slide Show Notes

For use in conjunction with the curriculum developed by William Linser and Yolanda Cieters. Photographs courtesy of William Linser.

1. Slide 3: “Serhat Firhini-Serhat Bäckerei” (Serhat Bakery)

This bakery (with description of its products in Turkish and German) is located in Kreuzberg. Kreuzberg is a section of Berlin, nicknamed “Little Istanbul” for its high concentration of Turkish immigrants or second and third generation Turks, who today are often German citizens.

During the reconstruction after WWII, Germany opened its doors to so-called “guest workers” from Turkey. Germany, as well as the Turkish workers, assumed their presence was temporary. Over two million Turks came, mostly honest, hard-working and religious people, but poor villagers from the eastern Turkey, not model citizens of Ataturk's secular republic. They took up low-grade jobs that the booming post-war economy could no longer fill from the domestic labor market.

2. Slide 4: “Satellite Dishes: News from the Motherland”

For a long time, little effort was put into integrating those workers into society, in part because both the Germans and the laborers assumed the arrangement was temporary. It wasn't! Most of them settled down and never returned to their motherland. Although Germany tried to repatriate workers, many stayed and eventually brought their families into the country. Their children were born in Germany and grew up there.

3. Slide 5: “Upcoming Elections: Muslims and non-Muslims campaigning”

One poster shows SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland-Social Democratic Party of Germany) candidate Ahmet Iyidirli. The poster below shows FDP (Freie Demokratische Partei-Free Democratic Party, a free market liberal party in Germany) candidate Christopher Paun. They were both running for parliament in the September 2005 elections.

But, are the residents of Turkish origin in Kreuzberg, German citizens? Do foreigners have the right to vote and to run for elections?

German policy toward immigrants long favored ethnic German ancestry. For decades, German institutions defined citizenship in German ethnic terms and portrayed non-Germans as a social problem.

In 2000, this ethnically defined law was changed. For the first time German-born children of foreigners have the automatic right to citizenship. They must however decide between the ages of 18 and 23 years whether they want to retain their German nationality or the nationality of their parents. Provided that certain other prerequisites are fulfilled, foreigners in general now have the right to become naturalized after only eight years of habitual residence in Germany instead of 15, as was the case before. Of about two million Turks in Germany, approximately 700,000 are now citizens.

The new law also requires foreigners seeking permanent residence to take courses in German language, law and other matters. This reform takes into account the fact that more than seven million foreigners live in Germany on a long-term basis. One third of them have lived there for more than 30 years, half of them for at least 20 years. The lives of most of the foreign nationals living in Germany center on Germany. The citizenship and nationality law of 2000 offers them a shorter mandatory waiting period for naturalization. It is an offer to facilitate their integration into the civic community, an offer that is based on reciprocity. The reform is aimed at closing the gap that has existed to date between social reality and citizenship status. This gap exists because, in practical terms, most of these people have become Germans. In legal terms however, they continued to be foreigners. This offer to facilitate the integration of foreign nationals living in Germany however also involves obligations. These obligations include in particular that the respective individual learns German and professes loyalty to the Basic Law, Germany's constitution.

A large portion of Germany's population now has the opportunity to participate in and help shape social and political issues with all inherent rights and obligations. To vote or to run for office, German citizenship is required. Nevertheless, with only about 700,000 citizens, Turkish Germans do not have enough vote and political clout to battle for example racism in the workplace, the public policy and public discourse. The citizenship and nationality law of 2000 has been a step forward, but another crucial aspect is the implementation of an anti-discrimination law according to European regulations, which Germany has not done so far.

4. Slide 6: "Muslims in a Secular State: the Hijab and other Controversies"

Since Islam is not a traditional religion in Germany and since most problems with migration into Germany focus on this religious point, currently there are several intensive disputes about the place of Islam in the German state and society.

Currently discussed topics are the [headscarf](#) worn by teachers in schools. The freedom of belief enjoined by the teacher contradicts in the view of many the neutral stance of the state towards religion. Many people also see the headscarf mainly as a political symbol of the oppression of women even though many Muslims reject this view. Worth noting in this context, is that in schools in Turkey, a secular state, neither students, nor teachers can wear the headscarf.

As of 2004, some of the German states have introduced legislation banning headscarves for teachers. It is unclear if these laws will prove to be constitutional. However, unlike in [France](#), there are no laws against the wearing of headscarves by students.

In the German federal states with the exception of [Bremen](#), [Berlin](#), and [Brandenburg](#), lessons of religious education overseen by the respective religious communities are taught as regular subjects in public schools. It is being discussed whether apart from the Catholic and Protestant (and in a few schools, Jewish) religious education that currently exists, a comparable subject of Islamic religious education should be introduced. However, all efforts to deal with the issue in cooperation with the existing Islamic organizations have proved difficult since none of them can be considered a representative of the whole Muslim community.

The "Islamic Federation of Berlin" (IF) for example employs 22 teachers, with 90% of the funding provided by the Berlin government. It has enrolled about 3200 pupils in religious instruction at 28 primary schools, 74% of whom are Turkish and 21% of Arab origin. But many Berliners remain suspicious of the IF, that in their eyes promotes a radical form of Islam, one that discourages integration in Germany. The IF's director made clear "that they are different and want to remain so. That they will never confirm to German law or political conditions if it means violating or compromising the Koran."

Mosques are allowed to be built in Germany, but their construction occasionally arouses hostile reactions in the respective neighborhoods. There are about 2,200 mosques and prayer rooms in Germany, most of which are built by Turkish bodies. The oldest mosque in Germany was built in Berlin in 1924. Mosque attendance in Germany is robust, while Church attendance is low, about 20% of the 32.6% Catholics, and about 5% of the country's 39.8% Protestants attend the church regularly.

Fears of religious fundamentalism came to the forefront after [September 11, 2001](#), especially in relation to a renewed religious fundamentalism of second- and third-generation Muslims in Germany. Educators express concern that an increasing number of Muslim families prevent their daughters from school experiences such as field trips.

In the past year, some six Muslim women living in Berlin, have been murdered by their family members. The Turkish women organization Papataya has documented 40 instances of honor killings in Germany since 1996, killings by husbands or partners or family members for besmirching the family's Muslim honor. Islam though does not condone honor killings, and murder is an affront to the Muslim religion. In October 2004, the German government passed a law that makes it illegal for parents to force their children to marry. Turkey has long had such a law.

As a response to the murder of Theo van Gogh (a Dutch filmmaker, killed by a Muslim extremist angered by van Gogh's controversial film *Submission*, which was harshly critical of Islam's perceived treatment of women), German lawmakers proposed to require prayers in mosques to be conducted in German.

Also the various confrontations between Islamic religious law ([Sharia](#)) and the norms of German [Grundgesetz](#) (the constitution of modern Germany) and culture are being discussed hotly. German critics come from the rank of the liberals as well as from Christian circles. The first claim that Islamic fundamentalism violates basic fundamental rights whereas the latter see Germany as a state and society grounded in the Christian tradition.

The struggle between secularism and religious identity among Muslims is cast not only in terms of immigrant versus Germans. It is also cast, for example, in terms of Turkish history and the experience of mosque-state relation in the "homeland." In a very fundamental way, the split between the "Kemalists" and the "Islamists" reflects a conflict with roots outside of Germany.

5. Slides 7 and 8: "Employment"

Kreuzberg is filled with Kebab shops, Turkish stores, groceries, banks, pharmacies and small businesses. However, unemployment and poverty rates among immigrants and their descendants are more than twice that of ethnic Germans. Continuous problems of poverty and joblessness may confound the "identity crisis" among second and third generation Muslims that leads them to embrace Islam as an alternative to German nationality.^[1]

Statistics show that the total unemployment rate in Germany in 2003 was 10.1%, while the unemployment rate of foreigners was 21.5% (23.8% of the Turks; 17.7% of the Greeks; 18.2% of the Italians; 13.7% of the Portuguese; 13.5% of the Spanish; and 15.5% of the Yugoslavian). In 2003 about 26% of the foreigners (19% in 2000) and 14% of the natives (12% in 2000) lived in poor households.

It has been demonstrated that migrants face numerous problems in the labor

market and that they are in many ways at a disadvantage compared with members of the host society. Some of the problems are connected with objective factual handicaps such as inadequate education and training, non-recognition of qualifications gained abroad, or inadequate command of the host country's language. But, in addition, migrants experience discrimination on grounds of their nationality, color, religion, race, or ethnic origin.^[2]

6. Slides 9 and 10: "Youth and Education"

Most children of the first generation immigrants were born in Germany and grew up there. Many of them have moved on, to become anything from prominent European parliamentarians to European footballers. One of them even married one of the sons of Helmut Kohl, a former German chancellor. Nonetheless, many children of immigrant families still speak poor or little German, even though they were born in Germany. International test scores suggest that Germany is raising a generation of second/third generation immigrants who are far behind the achievement curve.

German is a second language for about half of all students in the Kreuzberg district. Across Berlin, the number is one in four. More than half come from Turkish families, other nations of origin include Lebanon, the former Yugoslavia, Russia, Poland, and Vietnam. Of course, plenty of well-educated and -integrated immigrant families live in Berlin, but educators, especially in places like Kreuzberg, say they encounter many children whose parents are unemployed, poorly educated, and speak little German. School and occupational qualifications are main components of the human capital and serve as important determinants of individuals' position on the labor market.

The share of Turkish migrants of the second generation without school diplomas in 2002 was seven % whereas the share among Germans was at two %. Fifteen % of Turkish migrants of the second generation had completed upper secondary school. However, the comparable group of Germans scores better, as 41% received upper school certificates in 2002, more than twice as many as the second generation of Turkish migrants (15%). Though school certificates are an important indicator of a group's educational structure, more crucial for the position on the labor market are vocational qualifications. In this context it is striking that Turks commonly remain without formal vocational training. In 2002, 42% of second generation Turks had completed formal vocational training.

Germans between the ages of 18 to 30 not only had a lower share without a formal vocational training, 22% in 2002, but also earned higher vocational degrees more frequently. Whereas 10% of Germans had completed university, only 1% second generation Turks had a comparable degree.

7. Slide 11: “Racial Tolerance and Inter-ethnic Friendships”

Berlin is a diverse, multiethnic capital with some 3.4 million people. The city is socially progressive with a reputation for tolerance, and it has one of Europe's few openly gay mayors. At the same time, nonwhites avoid certain neighborhoods in the east, fearing attacks by skinheads. Kreuzberg reveals one of Berlin's multiple personalities. A headscarf attracts no more notice than a ponytail in this area.

But, studies on racial tolerance and inter-ethnic contacts demonstrate that a successful integration of Muslims, migrants and the second and third generations, still requires significant efforts on the part of the Germans as well as on the part of migrants and their families.

A study in 2000 pointed out that only 18% of the Turks self-identified with the German nationality. Only 36% of the second generation report inter-ethnic friendships. According to a study from 2001, 13% of Germans reported that they would prefer not to have a Muslim neighbor, and according to a PEW study in 2002, 41% describe Turks as a “bad influence” on the country. A new study conducted by the University of Leipzig, points out that every fourth German subscribes to xenophobic views. Barbara John, former Commissioner for Integration and Migration, notes “there is a widespread feeling that Muslims cannot integrate, that they cannot be democrats and Muslims at the same time. There is a prejudice building up, that Muslims have become synonymous with non-integrating.