



# **The Evolution of German Media Coverage of Migration**

**Gualtiero Zambonini**  
**Commissioner for Integration**  
**Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR)**



*The Migration Policy Institute is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank dedicated to the study of the movement of people worldwide.*

## About the Transatlantic Council on Migration

This paper was commissioned by the Transatlantic Council on Migration for its meeting held in May 2009 in Bellagio, Italy. The meeting's theme was "Public Opinion, Media Coverage, and Migration" and this paper was one of several that informed the Council's discussions.

The Council is an initiative of the Migration Policy Institute undertaken in cooperation with its policy partner, the [Bertelsmann Stiftung](#). The Council is a unique deliberative body that examines vital policy issues and informs migration policymaking processes in North America and Europe.

For more on the Transatlantic Council on Migration, please visit:

[www.migrationpolicy.org/transatlantic](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/transatlantic)

© 2009 Migration Policy Institute. All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission from the Migration Policy Institute. A full-text PDF of this document is available for free download from [www.migrationpolicy.org](http://www.migrationpolicy.org).

Permission for reproducing excerpts from this report should be directed to: Permissions Department, Migration Policy Institute, 1400 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036, or by contacting [communications@migrationpolicy.org](mailto:communications@migrationpolicy.org)

Suggested citation: Zambonini, Gualtiero. 2009. *The Evolution of German Media Coverage of Migration*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

## I. Executive Summary

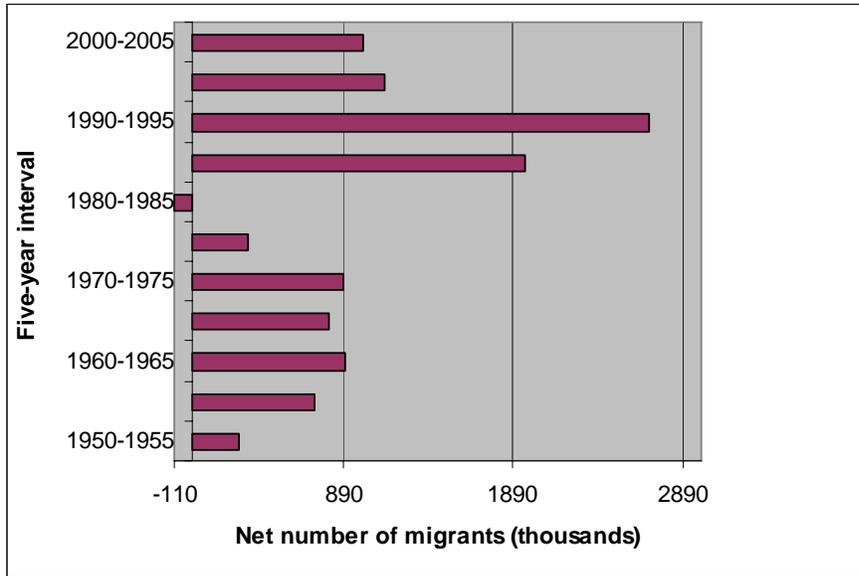
The German media has helped reinforce the image of immigrants as “foreigners” and “aliens” — sometimes even in exaggerated terms — since the first guest workers came to Germany in the 1950s and 1960s. By focusing primarily on the problems associated with migration and leaving out the positive or even mundane aspects of immigrants’ lives in Germany, the media have helped contribute to an atmosphere of polarization among the German public. These images conditioned the public to think of immigration policy solely in light of the problems caused by new arrivals (which conjured up the image of the country being stretched beyond capacity: “the boat is full”), and not in terms of the need to enact sensible *integration* policies to help immigrants already residing in Germany.

In 2000, Germany’s migration strategy shifted to reflect the long-overlooked need for integration policies, and with this change, media coverage also transitioned away from regarding immigrants as “foreigners.” Public debates on migration and integration — as well the media’s awareness of, and coverage of, this issue — are likely to evolve further due to three main changes in Germany: First, there is broad political consensus that Germany needs a modern integration policy; second, politicians at the highest level are promoting a dialogue with immigrant communities; and third, the media have begun to cater to immigrant audiences.

## II. Introduction

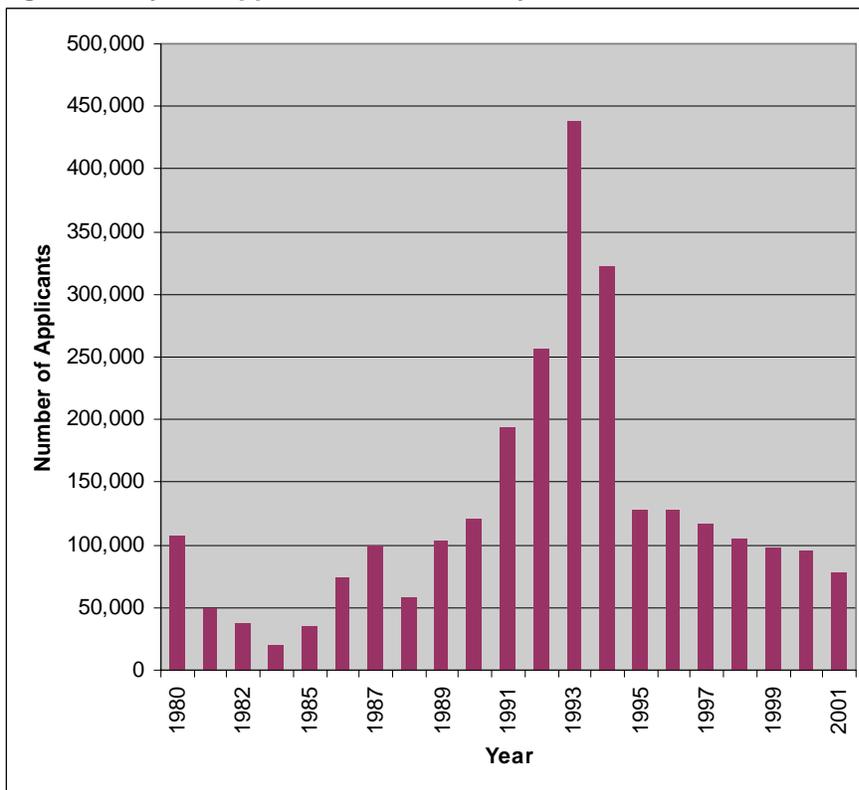
Until earlier this decade, Germany adamantly resisted seeing itself as a country of immigration. This attitude has to be understood in the context of the government’s recruitment policies of the 1950s and 1960s, when migrant workers (Italians, Spaniards, Greeks, Portuguese, and later Turks as well as workers from the former Yugoslavia) came to Germany as *Gastarbeiter* — “guest workers” with temporary work and residence permits. Even after the oil and economic crises of 1973 brought these recruitment policies to a halt, family reunification policies ensured a continued inflow of immigrants (mainly the wives and children of the *Gastarbeiter*), which gave rise to unforeseen integration questions, especially in the area of education. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the debate on migration in Germany became increasingly heated in light of mass immigration from Eastern Europe and the Balkans, as well as the high number of asylum seekers from various conflict areas in Turkey, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Africa (see Figures 1 and 2).

**Figure 1. Net Migration Flows to Germany in Five-Year Intervals, 1950 to 2005**



Source: United Nations Population Division World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision, <http://esa.un.org/unpp/>.

**Figure 2. Asylum Applications in Germany, 1980 to 2001**



Source: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, Asylum in Numbers 2007, [http://www.bamf.de/clin\\_101/nn\\_442496/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/DasBAMF/Publikationen/broschuere-asyl-in-zahlen-2007.html](http://www.bamf.de/clin_101/nn_442496/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/DasBAMF/Publikationen/broschuere-asyl-in-zahlen-2007.html).

“Das Boot ist voll” (the boat is full) was an oft-heard slogan echoed in the public discussion of the times, and bannered across the cover of the renowned news magazine *Der Spiegel*. Acts of xenophobia, which culminated in 1994 with the arson attack on a Turkish home in the city of Solingen that killed a family of five, were interpreted as a dramatic expression of the tense socioeconomic situation and the overstretched capacity of the country. Such interpretations did not provide the necessary impetus to initiate a coherent and farsighted immigrant integration policy.

From the immigrants’ perspective, the message the media sent in the 1950s and 1960s was one of being tolerated guests, welcome so long as they contributed to the country’s economic development. That perception shifted in the 1970s and 1980s with the economic crisis, the ban on guest worker recruitment, and family reunions: the former guests became unwelcome aliens. By the 1990s, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the removal of the Iron Curtain, the media’s portrayal of “the immigrant” shifted yet again, focusing largely on the “illegitimate refugee.”

The image of the immigrant as alien and foreigner dominated political debates as well as media<sup>1</sup> coverage in Germany during these years. By portraying the migrant first and foremost as a problem, opinion leaders such as *Der Spiegel*, high-circulation tabloids such as the *Bild Zeitung*, and popular networks of public and private broadcasters have enforced and sometimes exaggerated this image to various degrees. At best, the migrant is a useful temporary helper in times of economic growth.

This view dominated until early 2000 when public debate began over a new naturalization law, proposed by the coalition government of the Social Democrats and the Green Party, that went beyond the old principal of *ius sanguinis* (citizenship by blood) to include *ius soli* (citizenship by birth). For the first time, children of immigrants who were born in Germany were automatically granted German citizenship.

That marked a sea change from the earlier law, dating to 1913, under which citizenship was primarily inherited and foreigners had limited possibilities of obtaining citizenship. Under the pre-2000 law, a 15-year stay in Germany was required for naturalization; dual citizenship was not allowed. As a result, naturalization rates were low, and a large portion of second-generation immigrants was permanently resident but did not hold German citizenship.

With only a few exceptions, the debate in the mainstream media about the new citizenship law for the most part led to significant polarization, of public opinion as well as fragmentation in the political sphere, with the public divided between supporters and opponents. To some extent, mainstream media even amplified clichés. In the run-up to the federal elections in Hessen in 1999, the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party campaigned by organizing a petition against the draft law’s plan to grant dual citizenship. When the conservative candidate for Minister President of Hesse, Roland Koch, won the election and unseated the incumbent, the option to keep dual citizenship was removed from the draft.

The polarization, intentionally or unintentionally enforced by the mass media, also shows how after 40 years of migration, Germany still struggled to accept the permanence of its immigrants, the majority of whom had lived in the country for more than 15 years and had made Germany their home.

---

<sup>1</sup> In the context of this paper, when talking about the media, I refer to the so-called mainstream media, which includes mainstream print and broadcast news organizations, mainstream on- and off-air media, and the mainstream media in the news sector. Specialized media and press as well as experts are named separately.

### III. Media Coverage as a Reflection of the Sociopolitical Debate on Migration

Germany's new acceptance of its identity as a country of immigration has caused a paradigm shift in the German political debate on migration. Gradually, migration policies aimed at regulating the flow of new arrivals have given way to new social and integration policies.<sup>2</sup> Both the federal government's National Integration Plan, as well as private-sector integration initiatives (such as the "Charta for Diversity"),<sup>3</sup> frame integration as a necessary task for Germany's future and acknowledge cultural diversity as a resource. All political parties self-critically agree that the delay in recognizing this fact led to major shortcomings in creating and implementing successful integration policies.

Only the specialized press, some public broadcasters (e.g., in Berlin, Stuttgart, and Cologne), experts and certain groups (e.g., migrant organizations) brought about this newfound recognition that integration programs are important. But the mainstream media still remained in their former opinions and did not recognize the importance of integration programs until policymakers did.

Yet the German mainstream media still routinely refer to immigrants and their families as "foreigners." Radio programs catering to former *Gastarbeiter* (run by public broadcaster ARD) carried the telling title "Foreigner Programs." These targeted programs were finally cut in the late 1990s, as broadcasters assumed that most immigrants would choose the national broadcasts of their home countries (newly available via satellite) instead of engaging with mainstream German media. This shift in media strategy coincided with the shift in the sociopolitical debate on migration.

Since the events of 9/11, both media coverage and public debates on immigration have focused on Islam and immigrants of Muslim descent. That increased focus has come as the Muslim population in Germany has increased significantly and is now estimated to be between 3.2 and 3.4 million.<sup>4</sup> As we will see later, this coverage is predominantly negative. However, there have been increasingly good and bold fictional and nonfictional examples that deliver a nuanced portrayal and analysis of immigration and Islam. This new development is due largely to the fact that writers and directors with immigrant backgrounds have gradually entered the scene and brought in their own entirely new perspectives, such as in the evening program *Turkish for Beginners* (shown by ARD, the public

---

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed list of Germany's immigration and integration reforms since 2000, see Rita Süßmuth, "The Future of Migration and Integration Policy in Germany" found elsewhere in this volume.

<sup>3</sup> Four major German companies – the Daimler Group, Deutsche Bank, Deutsche Telekom, and Deutsche BP – initiated the Charta of Diversity, stating a private- and public-sector commitment to the economic benefits of diversity, tolerance, and fairness. Dozens of additional employers, representing more than 1 million employees, later signed on to the Charta.

<sup>4</sup> Thilo Guschas, *Zahlen und Hintergründe*, (Berlin: Deutsche Islam Konferenz, January 20, 2009),

[http://www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de/cln\\_101/nm\\_1318760/SubSites/DIK/DE/InDeutschland/ZahlenHintergrund/zahlenhintergrund-node.html?\\_nnn=true](http://www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de/cln_101/nm_1318760/SubSites/DIK/DE/InDeutschland/ZahlenHintergrund/zahlenhintergrund-node.html?_nnn=true). Exact figures on the German Muslim population are unknown, because these worshipping communities do not record data on their membership in Germany. The federal statistics office cannot make the collection of data on religious affiliation mandatory, so estimates are based on the number of immigrants and their descendents resident in Germany, who originate from predominately Muslim countries and are not known to have another religious affiliation. The estimated number of Muslims living in Germany has grown as the number of immigrants from these countries and their descendents has increased.

broadcaster), or the award-winning social drama *Wut* (Anger) from WDR, Germany's largest regional broadcaster. Cultural diversity is increasingly used as inspiration for comedy and entertainment in a care-free, funny, and sometimes self-deprecating way.

## IV. The Evolving Image of Immigrants in the Media

The evolution in the media's portrayal of immigrants, driven in measure by the increasing diversity within newsrooms and on film and TV sets, parallels the changes in the sociopolitical perception of immigrants and immigration in Germany.

In the 1960s, the *Gastarbeiter* was depicted as an appreciated and welcomed figure living on the fringes of society in factory housing provided by Volkswagen and BMW; while still a "foreigner," he was seen as a vital force in shaping the booming German economy. This attitude was embodied by the celebrated reception of the millionth guest worker at Cologne's train station: Armando Rodrigues, a guest worker from Portugal, received a moped as a present when he arrived in 1964. The pictures of his reception circulated in the press and in the main news headlines on TV, with Rodrigues serving as the symbolic image of a worker in service of a resurgent Germany.

That image changed dramatically and suddenly in the 1970s. The economic crisis, the halt on immigration, and the reunification of immigrant families constituted new challenges for both immigrants and German society alike. This era can best be described by Max Fritsch's statement, "We recruited workers, but it is human beings who have come," which revealed the problem of reducing guest workers to a simple labor-market calculation without also considering the sociopolitical ramifications on society. Xenophobia and the poor integration of children and teenagers became an increasingly hot topic in Germany. Aside from the specialized press or certain groups (e.g., migrant organizations) the mainstream media either ignored the issue completely or used clichés in their coverage. In a 1979 memorandum, Germany's first Integration Officer, Heinz Kuehn, urged a shift in perspective away from an immigration policy purely motivated by labor-market policies to a modern integration and social policy that acknowledged that Germany is a country of immigration and addresses the full implications of this. Kuehn's point of view triggered a vigorous and controversial debate among experts; however, the memorandum never reached the mass media, and thus did not result in a wide public debate.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the subject of asylum became the dominant topic of discussion. Article 16 of the German Constitution granted individuals a right to asylum on the basis of political persecution. Hundreds of thousands of refugees from Turkey (mainly Kurds), the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Africa came to Germany on the basis of this law. While only a fraction of the asylum requests were granted, the asylum seekers were allowed to stay in the country during the legal process. The calls for constitutional changes grew louder until asylum reform came into effect in 1993. This reform was introduced by the former government, a coalition between the German conservative party (CDU) and the liberal party (FDP). The decision was even supported by major parts of the opposition Social Democrats (SPD). The media played a role in shaping the debate, frequently portraying foreigners as refugees who sought asylum under false pretenses. An unprecedented wave of violence against immigrants and their families swept the country,

culminating in the attacks of Mölln and Solingen.<sup>5</sup> Reacting to the attacks, the media alternately portrayed the “foreigner” as victim and perpetrator. Immigrant crime was a favorite recurring subject in the news coverage, even though, according to experts, the higher crime rate for immigrants was mainly due to residency and visa violations rather than serious criminal acts. The German press council spoke out against this pointless generalization by introducing a code of conduct that prohibited the naming of a perpetrator’s national identity unless it was necessary to clarify the motivation for the crime.<sup>6</sup> In the 1990s, discussions of the media’s role in an increasingly diverse society took on new urgency, particularly with the shocking rise of racist crimes against immigrants.

Most recently, in particular after the 9/11 attacks that had links to Germany, with several of the hijackers having lived in Hamburg, the German media’s discussion of immigration has focused largely on Islam. Some media theorists are critical of the media’s coverage of immigration, which is predominately represented in a negative way, even in the state-owned media.<sup>7</sup>

The media focus on negative aspects of immigration has not gone unchallenged. Immigrant organizations repeatedly criticize the media for painting an incomplete image of immigrants in Germany by underplaying immigrants’ “normal” lives and overplaying more sensational items. Honor killings, terrorism, and arranged marriages have been the dominant topics of reporting, provoking criticism that the media is promoting stereotypes of immigrants and fueling resentment and fear. The scholars Hafez and Richter, for example, came to a similarly critical conclusion: In public broadcast news programs and talk shows in 2007, 81 percent of coverage related to Islam had a negative connotation.<sup>8</sup> The authors called for more topical pluralism while seeing the normal, the mundane, and the positive almost entirely missing from the reporting on immigration and immigrants.

Despite this legitimate criticism, it would be shortsighted to draw the conclusion that a program promotes Islamophobia solely by its choice of topic. More recent research shows that entertainment and fictional programs have significant integrative potential. Christina Ortner (2007), for example, ascertained in her analysis of *Tatort*, German TV’s most popular thriller series, that the detective stories highlight the topic of migration in a multifaceted way and depict examples of a coexistence that is free of conflict.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> In the early 1990s following German reunification, a series of attacks on foreigners by right-wing extremist groups swept through the country. During the night of November 23, 1992, extremists in the town of Mölln set fire to a duplex in which two Turkish families lived. Two girls, ages 10 and 15, were killed in the racially motivated attack. Their 51-year-old grandmother was also killed, and nine others were injured. The family had been resident in Germany for six years, and one of the victims had been born in Germany. The perpetrators received the highest penalty possible under law. A similar attack followed in the town of Solingen a year later, on May 29, 1993. Again the house of a Turkish family was set on fire by right-wing extremists. Two women and three children were killed. The perpetrators were sentenced to 10- to 15-year prison terms.

<sup>6</sup> This code of conduct was a voluntary commitment. The German press council does not have a direct executive force; it can only make announcements and recommendations.

<sup>7</sup> See Georg Ruhmann, Denise Sommer, and Heike Uhlemann, “TV Coverage about Immigrants: From Politics to Terror” in *Mass Media Integration: Media and Migration: A Comparative Perspective*, eds. Rainer Geissler and Horst Pöttker (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Kai Hafez and Carola Richter, “Das Islambild von ARD und ZDF. Themenstrukturen einer Negativagenda,” *Fachjournalist* 3 (2009): 10-16.

<sup>9</sup> Christina Ortner, “Migranten im tatort – Das Thema Einwanderung im beliebtesten deutschen TV-Krimi,” *Tectum-Verlag*, 2007, <http://www.tectum-verlag.de/inhaltsverzeichnis/9783828894013.pdf>.

## Mainstream Media and Immigrant Audiences

Both politicians and the media have long operated under the assumption that immigrants in Germany live in a parallel media society. This belief was demystified by Professor Hans-Jürgen Weiss's 2000 study on the media preferences of Turks in Germany, which concluded that most had a diet consisting of both German- and Turkish-language media (with television as the main medium). Only a small number lived in a narrow media enclave and, due to subpar German skills and low social status, were regarded as not integrated. The groundbreaking study's findings were corroborated by a nationwide representative study conducted by ARD and ZDF (Germany's most-watched public TV channels) in 2007, as well as in three studies in 2002, 2004, and 2006 commissioned by WDR in Germany's most populated state of North-Rhine Westphalia; these studies showed that immigrants were reached sufficiently by the media.<sup>10</sup> Most immigrants surveyed watched both German- and native-language programs.

Even though the consumption of native-language media is typically lower among young adults (who are thought to be better integrated into mainstream culture), some second-generation immigrants are starting to seek out native-language programs due to frustration with the current climate and their challenging social situation. On one hand, watching native-language programs functions as a social event within migrant families and as a way to preserve parts of their cultural identity. On the other hand, second-generation immigrants do not improve their German language skills and do not follow the coverage of current topics in German society.

WDR research in 2006 showed that young second-generation adults of Turkish descent are pledging stronger allegiance to their Turkish heritage.<sup>11</sup> The young respondents criticized German television for portraying a distorted image of immigrants. In addition, German TV was accused of lacking "emotions" and hence falling short of their expectations and viewing habits. Only the public broadcast news programs were regarded as highly trustworthy.

Overall, the WDR study showed a differentiated picture of TV viewing habits and a general demand for a more relaxed, natural approach to the topic of integration and cultural diversity, as well as for more protagonists with an immigrant background. The study clarified that the majority of people with immigrant background are reached quite well with German media programs; a parallel media society does not exist. Of course, TV-viewing habits vary notably by age, and habits also depend on the individual's language skills.

---

<sup>10</sup> See ARD and ZDF, *Migranten und Medien 2007* (Powerpoint presentation, 2007), [http://www.unternehmen.zdf.de/uploads/media/Migranten\\_und\\_Medien\\_2007\\_-\\_Handout\\_neu.pdf](http://www.unternehmen.zdf.de/uploads/media/Migranten_und_Medien_2007_-_Handout_neu.pdf); Westdeutscher Rundfunk, "Zwischen den Kulturen Fernsehen, Einstellungen und Integration junger Erwachsener mit türkischer Herkunft in Nordrhein-Westfalen," (news release, November 21, 2006), [http://www.wdr.de/unternehmen/presse lounge/pressemitteilungen/2006/2006\\_11/Zusammenfassung\\_kap1-6.pdf](http://www.wdr.de/unternehmen/presse lounge/pressemitteilungen/2006/2006_11/Zusammenfassung_kap1-6.pdf); and Hans-Jürgen Weiss and Joachim Trebbe, "Mediennutzung und Integration der türkischen Bevölkerung in Deutschland: Ergebnisse einer Umfrage des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung," in *Integration durch Politik und Medien?*, eds. Karl Heinz Meier-Braun and Martin A. Kilgus (Potsdam/ Berlin: Nomos Verlag, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> "Zwischen den Kulturen Fernsehen, Einstellungen und Integration junger Erwachsener mit türkischer Herkunft in Nordrhein-Westfalen."

Though Turkish-language media have established a greater editorial presence in Germany, their coverage sometimes is overly filtered through the perception of Turks as the victims of prejudice. For example, in the news coverage of last year's devastating fire in a house inhabited by Turkish families in Ludwigshafen, the Turkish press heavily suggested a right-wing attack against Turks even though there was no evidence to support the claim. As a result, Turkish immigrants and their children are exposed to a cross-fire between Turkey's overly critical views of life in Germany and the oftentimes clichéd depiction of Turks in the German media.

In an era of increased focus on integration policies, witness Chancellor Angela Merkel's national integration plan, media executives also are conscious of the emerging demographic reality. According to forecasts by the German Federal Statistical Office, 40 percent of all individuals under age 40 living in Germany in 2010 will have an immigrant background.<sup>12</sup> These findings contribute to the growing conviction in the German media industry that programs and staff recruitment strategies must reflect this new reality. Public and private broadcasters have taken steps to specifically target immigrants and engage them as listeners and viewers, particularly in programs with mass appeal. The search for appropriate program hosts and hostesses with foreign roots has begun and is already bearing fruit: for example, the public news magazine *Aktuelle Stunde* (WDR) often reports very authentically on everyday life of immigrants of Turkish background.

The call for including non-European Union immigrants in the measurement of TV and radio audience rates also continues to be a topic of debate. By way of example, during the 2008 European Cup match between Germany and Turkey, the TV ratings did not include Turkish households, even though the 3 million Turks in Germany represent the country's largest immigrant group. Currently, only German households and those of EU-national immigrants are measured in the TV ratings.

## V. Indicators of Change

Three main factors indicate how public debates on migration and integration — as well the media's awareness and coverage of this issue — are likely to evolve in Germany.

First, there is broad political consensus about Germany's need for a modern integration policy, and all political parties in parliament fully acknowledge Germany's status as a country of immigration. While there are differences regarding preferred implementation strategies, there is no evidence that the 2009 elections will lead to political polarization on immigration and integration (except to a marginal extent with the extreme right-wing National Democratic Party).

Second, politicians at the most senior level are promoting a dialogue with immigrant communities and their associations. The national integration plan initiated by Chancellor Merkel in 2007 and the Islam Conference organized by Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble show that high-ranking officials consider Muslims an integral part of German society. The subjects of integration and migration have been emphasized by politicians as important, future-shaping issues for the country. Events outside of Germany admittedly contributed significantly to this political progress: according to Integration Minister Professor Maria Böhmer, the immigrant insurrections in the Parisian *banlieus* in 2005 led to a concern that a misguided integration policy could lead to similarly dramatic unrest within

---

<sup>12</sup> Defined as an individual with at least one parent who was born abroad or carries a foreign passport.

Germany. The events in France were discussed widely in the German mass media with an overriding focus on whether a similar situation was likely to unfold in Germany, too. While the general consensus was that Germany did not face the same conditions as France, where immigrants are congregated in suburbs with high unemployment and few prospects for advancement, the public debates still have increased Germans' awareness of integration policy.

Third, public broadcasting programs in Germany have renewed their focus on integration. In 2006, the directors general of the WDR, Fritz Pleitgen and Markus Schächter, and the president of France Television, Partrick de Carolis, organized a European media conference in Essen, Germany, on "Integration and Media as a European Challenge." The conference's focus was how migration has changed German society and media audiences, and the commitments public broadcasting networks have made to reflect these social changes in their program and recruitment policies. The recommendations made in Essen were formalized in Merkel's National Integration Plan, with a voluntary commitment by public and private media representatives. The plan emphasizes the demand for more immigrants to be represented in the media, especially in popular TV programs.

## VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

Until 2000, the mainstream media reflected or even amplified during their coverage the negative attitudes in political debates. Only the specialized press, specialized editorial departments, most of them located in public broadcasters, rendered a more positive image of immigration. One remarkable positive example originated with German public broadcasters. CIVIS, Europe's Media Prize (and foundation) for integration and cultural diversity,<sup>13</sup> was founded in 1987 to sensitize radio and television journalists to the themes of integration and cultural diversity in Europe. By recognizing exemplary programs, CIVIS encourages journalists to cover these issues. Through CIVIS, public-service broadcasting companies seek to promote understanding between different cultures and religious communities. Presenting the reality of immigration — without denying its problems — is one of their essential tasks. The CIVIS media prize is known as Europe's most important prize for integration and cultural diversity.

As the political discussion has evolved since the landmark 2000 legislation and as new immigration laws have been passed, the media coverage has changed. There is a growing understanding among the public and the media that Germany's evolving sociodemographic changes must be presented and discussed in greater depth and with more nuance in the media. For the media to successfully broaden its appeal to the overlooked immigrant population, it is vital to undertake a differentiated view of their media usage that takes into account the country of origin, demographic criteria, social situation, and lifestyles. The Sinus Study of 2007<sup>14</sup> is a good starting point, as it shows that the lives of immigrants hardly differ from the lives of Germans from similar socioeconomic backgrounds when criteria of education and professional and social status are considered. The Sinus Study, conducted from 2006 to 2008, deconstructs the false notion, often used in the mainstream media, of immigrants as a homogeneous group. One of the main findings of the study is that immigrants do not define themselves by their ethnic or religious background. For the first time in Germany, migrants were analyzed the same way as Germans: according to their social background, interests,

---

<sup>13</sup> For more on the CIVIS prize, see <http://www.civismedia.eu>.

<sup>14</sup> See *Zentrale Ergebnisse der Sinus-Studie über Migranten-Milieus in Deutschland* (Heidelberg: Sinus Sociovision, December 9, 2008, <http://www.sinus-sociovision.de/Download/ZentraleErgebnisse09122008.pdf>).

and basic attitudes. The Sinus Study approach has been partially adopted in an ongoing representative study conducted by ARD and ZDF that analyzes the media usage of immigrants. The results are expected to be published in 2010.

Social changes within Germany have already outpaced the media. Minorities have become majorities in some larger cities, like Berlin, the Ruhr area, and Cologne, where every second child under age 6 has an immigrant background. The TV audience is increasingly changing into an audience with different cultural roots and experiences. If the broadcast media fails to integrate this reality into its programs, it may miss the chance to evolve and have relevance in the lives of a growing share of Germany's population.

Though German politicians and the mainstream media have largely avoided politicizing the subject of immigration in recent years, it remains to be seen how the deepening economic crisis will influence the country's attitude toward integration policy. So far during this election year, politicians from Germany's established democratic parties have not exploited immigration issues.

It is essential that Germany develop an active policy of immigrant inclusion that distances itself entirely from the previous mentality of "we Germans" vs. "you foreigners." Fully realized integration will be possible only when it is widely accepted that Germany is a multiethnic society in which different cultures and languages are a self-evident, enriching part of the fabric of life, business, and the broader society.

There are already some important moves toward this political change: large municipalities such as Stuttgart and Hamburg, as well as densely populated states such as North-Rhine Westphalia, have encouraged making administrative positions increasingly available to qualified applicants with foreign roots. While cultural diversity is increasingly recognized as a resource, there is still a conflicting attitude towards multilingualism. Policymakers should recognize that the linguistic diversity of immigrants, for example of the Turks, could be a significant asset for an export-oriented country like Germany. A culture of recognition is incidentally the best regional economic policy for a country that wants to assert itself amidst global competition.

## VII. About the Author

**Gualtiero Zambonini** has served as Commissioner for Integration and Cultural Diversity at West German Broadcasting Corporation (WDR) since 2003. In 1976, Dr. Zambonini became editor and later editor-in-chief of the WDR Italian Service. Head of the Forum Europa programs (WDR Radio), he was responsible for the foreign-language broadcasts of German Broadcasting Corporation (ARD). In 1999, he became Head of WDR Funkhaus Europa and in 2002 was one of the founders of the CIVIS Medienstiftung, a media foundation. In 1992, Dr. Zambonini was the recipient of the CIVIS radio prize, an award that honors broadcast programs for their effective promotion of peaceful coexistence of people of different national, ethnic, religious, and cultural origins.

## VIII. Works Cited

ARD and ZDF. 2007. Migranten und Medien 2007. Powerpoint presentation, 2007.  
[http://www.unternehmen.zdf.de/uploads/media/Migranten\\_und\\_Medien\\_2007\\_-\\_Handout\\_neu.pdf](http://www.unternehmen.zdf.de/uploads/media/Migranten_und_Medien_2007_-_Handout_neu.pdf).

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge. 2007. Asylum in Numbers.  
[http://www.bamf.de/cln\\_101/nn\\_442496/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/DasBAMF/Publikationen/broschuere-asyl-in-zahlen-2007.html](http://www.bamf.de/cln_101/nn_442496/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/DasBAMF/Publikationen/broschuere-asyl-in-zahlen-2007.html).

CIVIS.  
<http://www.civismedia.eu>.

Guschas, Thilo. 2009. *Zahlen und Hintergründe*. Berlin: Deutsche Islam Konferenz.  
[http://www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de/cln\\_101/nn\\_1318760/SubSites/DIK/DE/InDeutschland/ZahlenHintergrund/zahlenhintergrund-node.html?\\_nnn=true](http://www.deutsche-islam-konferenz.de/cln_101/nn_1318760/SubSites/DIK/DE/InDeutschland/ZahlenHintergrund/zahlenhintergrund-node.html?_nnn=true).

Hafez, Kai and Carola Richter. 2009. Das Islambild von ARD und ZDF. Themenstrukturen einer Negativagenda. *Fachjournalist* 3: 10-16.

Ortner, Christina. 2007. Migranten im tatort – Das Thema Einwanderung im beliebtesten deutschen TV-Krimi. *Tectum-Verlag*, 2007.  
<http://www.tectumverlag.de/inhaltsverzeichnis/9783828894013.pdf>.

Ruhrmann, Georg, Denise Sommer, and Heike Uhlemann. 2006. TV Coverage about Immigrants: From Politics to Terror in *Mass Media Integration: Media and Migration: A Comparative Perspective*, eds. Rainer Geissler and Horst Pöttker. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag.

Süssmuth, Rita. 2009. The Future of Migration and Integration Policy in Germany. In *Media, Public Opinion and Migration*, eds. Bertelsmann Stiftung and Migration Policy Institute. Gütersloh, Germany: Bertelsmann Stiftung.

United Nations Population Division World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision. 2007.  
<http://esa.un.org/unpp/>.

Weiss, Hans-Jürgen and Joachim Trebbe. 2002. Mediennutzung und Integration der türkischen Bevölkerung in Deutschland: Ergebnisse einer Umfrage des Presse-und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung. In *Integration durch Politik und Medien?*, ed. Karl Heinz Meier-Braun and Martin A. Kilgus. Potsdam/ Berlin: Nomos Verlag.

Westdeutscher Rundfunk. 2006. Zwischen den Kulturen Fernsehen, Einstellungen und Integration junger Erwachsener mit türkischer Herkunft in Nordrhein-Westfalen. News release, November 21, 2006.  
[http://www.wdr.de/unternehmen/presrelounge/pressemitteilungen/2006/2006\\_11/Zusammenfassung\\_kap1-6.pdf](http://www.wdr.de/unternehmen/presrelounge/pressemitteilungen/2006/2006_11/Zusammenfassung_kap1-6.pdf).

*Zentrale Ergebnisse der Sinus-Studie über Migranten-Milieus in Deutschland..* 2008. Heidelberg: Sinus Sociovision.  
<http://www.sinus-sociovision.de/Download/ZentraleErgebnisse09122008.pdf>.