

The Great Debate
Germany, Turkey and the Turks
Part I: Intellectuals

October 2010





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Introduction

In 2004 a paperback appeared in German with the title *Turkey and Europe – the positions*. The book described the German debate on Turkish accession to the European Union. In the introduction, Claus Leggewie, the book's editor, outlined three big issues at the centre of this debate: the state of Turkish democracy; the relative backwardness of the Turkish economy; and geopolitics, including the question whether the EU would want to share a border with Iraq.

The book captured a German debate dominated by serious men with grey hair. Historians such as Hans-Ulrich Wehler and Heinrich August Winkler built their case against Turkish accession on the history of civilisations. Wehler's opening argument, presented in a much discussed essay in 2002, was that Turkey "has never been a part of historic Europe" as it had missed out on "antiquity, Roman law, the reformation, not to mention the enlightenment." Another German historian, Jurgen Kocka, pointed out that European identity was partially forged out of a common "defence against the Turks." Elder European statesmen such as Valery Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt warned the readers of the German feuilleton about the incompatibility of cultures and long-term historical legacies.

The EU summit in December 2004, which followed the publication of the Leggewie collection, was to prove a turning point for EU-Turkey relations and the German debate on Turkey. In the second half of 2004 two-thirds of EU parliamentarians, 30 EU commissioners and 25 EU governments supported 'open-ended' accession negotiations with Turkey. This marked the political defeat of arguments based on the history of civilisations. It did not end the debate on Turkey in Germany, far from it; but it changed the debate in surprising ways, bringing to the fore new voices, issues and concerns.

Among the 39 authors selected by Leggewie in 2004 very few spoke Turkish. Only two of the discussants were women: one was an American academic and another was a German foreign correspondent. Not one woman of Turkish origin appeared in the anthology. From January 2005, however, it was above all two German women born in Turkey – Necla Kelek and Seyran Ates – who set out to redefine the issues at stake in the public debate. The new debate took place against the background of a series of traumatic events, including terrorist attacks in Madrid and London, riots in the banlieus of Paris, the assassination of film director Theo van Gogh in Amsterdam, and the honour killing of a young woman, Hatun Surucu, in Berlin in early 2005.

At the core of the debate that unfolded between 2005 and 2010 are the real lives of German Turks, in particular those who reside in urban areas such as the Berlin district of Neukolln, home to a large number of poor Muslim migrants. The new debate is no longer dominated by older men who do not speak Turkish but by eloquent women who do. Arguments about history and the borders of Europe are replaced by arguments about the treatment of women and the failures of integration of migrant communities in German cities, particularly Berlin.

By 2010 this debate has moved to the very centre of German politics. Its apex, for now, has been the summer 2010 publication of *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (Germany doing away with itself), a book by Bundesbanker Thilo Sarrazin. Ironically, Sarrazin, another grey-haired man with no particular knowledge of either Turkey or Islam, completes the circle, picking up many threads of the debate of previous years – including arguments made by sociologists Stefan Luft and Necla Kelek (by now one of his most prominent supporters).

It is ESI's conviction that this Great Debate is one of the most important to take place in post-cold war Germany. It bridges the border between foreign and domestic policy, linking arguments about the integration of German Turks in Berlin with those about the integration of Turkey in a wider Europe. As such, it offers enormous challenges for Turkish citizens who want to keep the debate on accession focused on traditional foreign and economic policy issues; it also offers great opportunities for populists. This cannot be helped, however; nor can it be an argument against engaging robustly with the many complex issues at stake.

This Great Debate derives its energy from fears and hopes; from the real sense that Germany (like other European societies) is changing rapidly and that Turkish EU accession would change it further; from the real challenge of an aging society faced with a youthful migrant population; from the need to integrate a new religion into a largely secularised society; from an avalanche of serious new research; and from an enormous reservoir of old prejudices.

Germany matters and so does Turkey, which turns this national debate into one of European importance. The quality of this debate and, most importantly, the policy responses it generates, will leave a defining mark on German domestic politics and the future shape of Europe.

Necla Kelek



Necla Kelek was born in Istanbul in 1957 and emigrated to Germany with her family in 1968. She studied sociology in Hamburg and wrote her PhD on religious attitudes among young Turks living in Germany.

The publication of Kelek's book "The Foreign Bride" (*Die Fremde Braut* in German) in early 2005 was one of the turning points in the recent German debate on Turks and Islam. According to her publishing house some 200,000 copies of the book were sold. "The Foreign Bride" turned Kelek into a media star, a regular guest on talk shows, and a sought-after columnist. Two other books followed: "The Lost Sons" (2006) and "Bittersweet Homeland" (2008).

At the centre of Kelek's argument is the claim that the wide-spread practice of forced and arranged marriages has turned tens of thousands of Anatolian women, coming to Germany to marry German-Turkish men, into modern-day slaves. They are repressed by their husbands and receive insufficient support from a largely indifferent German society. To bring the outrage of modern-day female slavery to an end requires a rigorous critique of what Kelek calls "Turko-Islamic culture", a culture which has remained largely unchanged for centuries.



Die fremde Braut – Die verlorenen Söhne – Bittersüße Heimat

Islam and Slavery

Kelek's books mix autobiography, social analysis and polemical commentary on Islam and Turkish culture. Kelek describes the treatment of women in her own family as a drama set against the colourful canvas of Islamic cultural practices since the time of Mohammed:

"This is a true story. It is about love and slavery, honour and respect, Turkish mocha [a strong black coffee] and sold brides. It is the story of my family, which came from Anatolia via Istanbul to Germany, and it is the story of my path to freedom."

Kelek's "true family story" of love and slavery begins in the mountains of the Caucasus, where her Circassian great-grandfather Ali married the love of his life and took her to Anatolia when he fled his homeland. Her story ends 160 pages later in Hamburg, where Kelek finds freedom escaping the constraints of her own family.

Ali the great-grandfather, we learn, was a slave trader: his merchandise and the source of his wealth were beautiful Caucasian women sold to the court of the Sultan. Kelek paints the Muslim world as a civilisation of slave traders hounding Christians and turning the Mediterranean into a "sea of fear" (p.47). We learn that in 1627 Muslim pirates kidnapped 400 Icelanders; that up to 1.2 million white Christian slaves were sold in the slave markets in North Africa between 1530 and 1780; that in the early 19th century Muslim parents from the Caucasus sold their children in the markets of Istanbul (which is a surprising claim given that Islam does not allow Muslims to be slaves) .

In a few opening pages Kelek discusses murderous intrigues in Ottoman harems, the story of 1001 nights (which is, of course, set in medieval Arabia) and tales of demented Sultans chossing the spouses for their children. On this rollercoaster through an exotic landscape no cliché is missing, from abundant references to the "exceptional beauty" of Circassian women to the tales of the sultan's wives' murderous intrigues. Telling the history of slavery in past centuries Kelek explains – using the present tense - that "children are considered the property of their parents in Islam, they have no rights and are not supposed to have any will of their own" (p. 49).

All these titillating stories only serve as an introduction to an analysis of German Turks in the early 21st century:

"Whoever wants to understand why young Turkish-Muslim men and women allow themselves, even today, to be married off by their families, in particular by their mothers, and do not even try to influence these decisions, needs to understand the cultural and historical background of these structures. Marriage is understood differently here {*among Muslims*} than it is among Christians. The position of women is understood differently. Even terms such as honour, shame, respect and sin mean different things to people from this cultural background (*Kulturkreis*)."

Kelek argues that arranged marriages, forced marriages and the enslavement of women are all part of a "Muslim civilisation" that is fundamentally different from "Christian civilisation". She sees a direct link between North African slave markets and today's "slave holder mentality of mothers-in-law and the slave mentality of children in Turkish-Muslim families." This analysis leads her to a damning conclusion:

"There has been no change in all this since the Middle Ages. In fact, the truth is even more bitter: *growing* Islamisation can be observed among immigrants in Germany, old traditions

and customs, which one thought would have been left behind by the reforms of Ataturk and modernity, are being applied again. Tradition eats modernity."

Necla Kelek's family

We learn a lot in "The Foreign Bride" about Kelek's family: the story of three generations of women (her grandmother Azize, her mother Leman, and herself), as well as that of Kelek and her siblings, takes up much of the book. But what are we really being told?

We learn that Azize, the grandmother, is a beautiful 17-year-old, blue-eyed, blond girl when she is kidnapped by her future husband. Her story is immediately followed by a description of Ataturk's reforms in the young Turkish Republic. Kelek quotes Ataturk approvingly: "Islam, the absurd religion of an immoral beduin, is a decaying corpse that poisons our lives." The chapter ends with a lament: that even today, despite Ataturk's reforms, life throughout rural Turkey is governed by "religious authorities and the traditional Sharia law of Islam."

We next learn that Azize's oldest daughter, Leman, was sold to her future husband, Kelek's father, for a bride price of "500 Turkish lira and two oxen." We are told that from the very first night spent together Leman hated her husband Duran, who beat her that night. Leman and Duran left Central Anatolia to go to Istanbul. From there they went to Germany.

We also learn that Kelek, growing up in Germany, was forbidden by her father to attend gym and swimming classes when she turned 13. Kelek the teenager began to hate her father for having brought her to Germany. She describes how her father sent her older brother back to Turkey to do his military service at age 18. Her brother later asked her parents to find him a bride, "any bride", and then ended up unhappily married. Her sister also agreed to marry at the age of 22, again unhappily. And Necla Kelek herself ended up in a stormy and violent argument with her father who soon thereafter abandoned the family and returned to Turkey, never to see his daughter again. Kelek was 18 at the time. Soon afterwards, Kelek left home to study in another city – and went on to marry one of her German teachers.

Hers is certainly an interesting story of social change and migration. However, the way it is told – and the conclusions the reader is led to draw – raise many questions. The first concerns Kelek's suggestion that "The Foreign Bride" is a story of emancipation, of a personal "march to freedom", and of overcoming religious obstacles.

In fact, Kelek tells us, her family was not religious at all. Her mother never wore a headscarf in her life. Her father was a passionate supporter of Ataturk's reforms: "My parents have never been very religious Muslims, and in Istanbul their life-style became even more Westernized." (p.81) Kelek describes the Istanbul of her youth as a city "free from mullahs, as we called the fundamentalists, and there were hardly any mosques." Her favourite uncle, who lived in Ankara, was a passionate Kemalist. Most of Kelek's views about Islam as a backward religion would have been shared by her close relatives and by a large part of the Turkish establishment.

Kelek's own history also contradicts the argument that there is no cultural change within "Turko-Islamic culture". In her own nuclear family four out of five marriages ended in divorce! Her parents divorced. Her oldest brother divorced. Her older sister divorced. Kelek herself, having married a German, ends up divorced, as well. Only her younger brother – with

whose wedding the book opens – appears still happily married by its end. One thing is clear: the way the Keleks live their lives – and the choices they have - is dramatically different from the world of Azize, Kelek's grandmother, in conservative Anatolia!

The problem with Islam

Kelek also made a name for herself on account of her very critical views of Islam: she discusses the nature of Islam in her books, articles and public lectures. These views express attitudes common among hard-line Kemalists in Turkey who regard *any expression* of religion as a symptom of backwardness.

The problem with Islam, says Kelek, stems from its very origins:

"It is my growing suspicion that much that makes Islam resistant to the demands of modernity has its roots and origins in the life of its founder."

(Necla Kelek, "Die fremde Braut", p. 164)

Kelek's description of Islam's influence on marital relations is a case in point: a Muslim bride (gelin in Turkish), she writes:

"cannot expect any love from her husband. Love is reserved for the mother and for God, love between a husband and a wife is not envisaged."

Marriage in Islam, she argues, is always "a form of slavery." Discussing the life of the Prophet Mohammed, Kelek notes that "under Mohammed the wife became a prisoner of her husband." In her second book she declares that "in Muslim culture boys grow up without love."

Kelek also compares Islam unfavourably to Christianity. In her second book ("The Lost Sons") Kelek argues that while Islam calls for the faithful to destroy their enemies, Christianity asks its followers to love them. Christianity, claims Kelek, has a joyful message. Islam, on the other hand, is often barbaric: one example is its insistence on male circumcision, which – Kelek suggests – should be forbidden by law in Germany as a human rights violation (p. 121). She also writes:

"The Koran does not know anything about an open struggle between good and evil, which each individual needs to resolve using moral values and social norms. A practicing Muslim knows with certainty that he is saved only by submitting to all the commandments of God" (p. 271).

For Kelek the problem is thus with Islam itself, not individual Muslims. As Kelek told ESI in an interview:

"An individual Muslim can be integrated into German society. Islam cannot. This is not possible because of Sharia."

(Necla Kelek, ESI interview, 30 November 2006)

Gelins and criminals

According to Kelek, given the nefarious influence of Islamic values on most Turkish migrants, it is not surprising that their integration into German society has turned into a massive failure. It is the fate of women – in her book Kelek tells the stories of six of them, Zeynep, Fadime, Emine, Asuma, Shaziye, and one unnamed – which best illustrates this failure:

"The typical import bride (*import-gelin*) is usually just 18 years old, comes from a village and has in four or six years barely learned how to read and write. She gets married off by her parents to a man she doesn't know, but who is probably related, of Turkish origin, and living in Germany. After marriage she comes to a German city into a Turkish family. She lives exclusively in that family, does not have contact with people outside the Turkish community. Soon she will give birth to one, two, three children ... She will live in Germany, but she will never arrive there." (p. 183/184).

According to Kelek, this is the fate of thousands of import brides coming to Germany every year.

Kelek makes another controversial claim in her chapter on "The Tragedy of Arranged Marriage", arguing that "there is no significant difference for me between an arranged and a forced marriage." (p. 235).

According to UN resolutions and the view of the German government, forced marriages are a serious human rights abuse; those responsible should be punished with prison sentences. But Kelek argues that all forced marriages *and* arranged marriages should be banned. She acknowledges that this is an extreme view, noting that even the NGO "Terre de Femmes", which works to help victims of domestic violence, defines arranged marriages as "based on a voluntary agreement" (p.236). To criminalise arranged marriages, she concedes, would mean criminalizing half of the currently married Turks living in Germany (p. 231). Kelek is able to perceive a change of values among the young generation of Turks in Germany, however: "All teenagers whom I had asked had the wish to choose their partner themselves." (p. 251)

Kelek, the EU and Turkey

"I am against all forced marriages, whether for young people or for states. For me the 'Turkish bride' is not yet of marriageable age [*for the EU*]." This quote is from Kelek's most recent book "Bittersweet Homeland", published in October 2008. The book looks at Turkey, while covering a large number of different issues: Ottoman history, current politics, excursions to Istanbul and Diyarbakir as well as reflections on Kelek's family.

In a chapter entitled "The Infantile Society" Kelek concludes:

"It does not matter whether one is for or against Turkish EU accession. It should be sufficient to decide that this wedding must be delayed, to the benefit of both sides." (p. 286).

In a 2006 article Kelek called Turkey a "country without progress." In fact, she seems always to refer to Turkey in her books as a country sliding backwards in all areas. There is the Istanbul of her youth, "stolen" from her through rural migration, which brought "ignorant

brides from the villages, covering the metropolis with a veil." (p. 105/106). And there is the AKP government of Recep T. Erdogan, setting out to "Islamicize the country." (Necla Kelek, lecture at University Duisburg-Essen, 16 November 2006).

Kelek's impact - and her contradictions

The success of Kelek's books and the public debates she has triggered led 60 German social scientists in February 2006 to publish an open letter accusing her of working "unscientifically" and using her personal story to feed prejudices against Islam "in order to score a hit on the book market." In public relations terms this was a coup for Kelek: she was able to respond in an open letter of her own, arguing that German migration researchers had been irresponsible for decades:

"Left and liberal 'multiculties' have done a huge disservice to integration with their folkloristic view of foreigners. Under the banner of tolerance they have defended the 'peculiarities' of the Turkish-Muslim community in Germany. Thus they often fostered the self-isolation of immigrants."

(Necla Kelek, "Die fremde Braut", p. 261)

Many other German intellectuals, including veteran German feminist writer Alice Schwarzer, came to Kelek's defence viewing the letter of the 60 as a form of bullying..

At the same time, the open letter did raise a question which Kelek has not yet clearly addressed: why did her views on the situation of Muslim migrants in Germany change so drastically between 2002 and 2005?

After all, in her early research (PhD) on young German Turks and Islam "*Islam im Alltag*" ("Islam in Everyday Life", 2002) Kelek presents findings – based on extensive interviews with young immigrants undertaken between 1997 and 1999 – that stand in stark contrast to what she propagated later on. Kelek discovers and describes numerous important changes in values among migrant youth:

"Modernisation processes inevitably accompany, and result from, changes in individuals, social structure and culture."

(Necla Kelek, "Islam im Alltag", p. 36)

Kelek shows her familiarity with the work of other experts, such as the anthropologist Werner Schiffauer, whose empirical study *Die Bauern von Subay* (The Peasants in Subay, 1987) also investigates the changes in religious values (p. 65 ff). She even criticises Wilhelm Heitmeyer, Professor at the University of Bielefeld, for stoking fears of Islamic fundamentalism (p. 78). Her own conclusion, based on a large number of interviews, could not be clearer:

"There is no evidence that Islam and modernity are not compatible" (cit. p. 189)"

And:

"Tradition should not be seen as an antithesis to modernity, but as a blueprint for individual reinterpretations with regard to changing living conditions."

Suggested readings

- Die Welt, "Nicht Sarrazin, sondern die Diskussion spaltet das Land" (Interview with Necla Kelek und Monika Maron) (2 September 2010)
- Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Necla Kelek: Ein Befreiungsschlag (30 August 2010)
- Necla Kelek, Mr Buruma's stereotypes, signandsight.com, 5 February 2007. Necla Kelek responds to Ian Buruma as part of a debate on multiculturalism and the integration of Muslims in Europe:

"Whether it is headscarves or gender-specific separation of public space, political Islam is trying to establish an apartheid of the sexes in free European societies."

- Lale Akgun and Necla Kelek, interview on Spiegel Online, "We Really Have Nothing to Celebrate", 12 July 2007: Kelek and Akgun speak about their diverging views on the successes and problems within Germany's Turkish community. Kelek: "The Turkish associations don't do anything to promote integration in Germany."
- Michaela Schlagenwerth, Happier without father, Berliner Zeitung, 10 April 2006, interview with Necla Kelek. Kelek defends her criticism of the Turkish community in Germany:

"What is happening there – that is the scandal, and not the fact that someone is making it public. I don't deny that there is an open-minded Turkish middle class. But I'm interested in the losers, those who haven't made it."

- Necla Kelek, Heirat ist keine Frage (Marriage is not a question), Zwangsverheiratung in Deutschland (forced marriage in Germany, Schriftenreihe des Bundesministeriums für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, Band 1, 2007 (German only)

Necla Kelek has written four books (all only available in German):

- Necla Kelek, Bittersüße Heimat: Bericht aus dem Inneren der Türkei, September 2008
- Necla Kelek, Die verlorenen Söhne – Plädoyer für die Befreiung des türkisch-muslimischen Mannes, 2006
- Necla Kelek, Die fremde Braut, February 2005
- Necla Kelek, Islam im Alltag, Juni 2002

Thilo Sarrazin



In August 2010 Thilo Sarrazin, a member of Germany's Social Democratic Party (SPD), former senator of finance for the state of Berlin and until recently board member of the German central bank (Bundesbank), published a book that has provoked a huge debate in Germany. By the end of October 2010 1.1 million copies of the book had been printed of which 750,00 had already been sold: "Deutschland schafft sich ab" ("Germany abolishes itself") looks at the effects of immigration, the shrinking birth-rate in Germany and the growth of a social "underclass". Above all, Sarrazin accuses Muslims in particular of being unwilling to integrate. German integration authorities, academics and politicians, he argues, are refusing to even discuss the problem:

"In Germany, a host of integration researchers, Islam scholars, sociologists, political scientists, interest groups as well as a flock of naïve politicians work hand in hand and intensively in belittlement, self-delusion, and denial."

(Deutschland schafft sich ab, p. 279)

In an interview with the weekly Die Zeit, Sarrazin summed up his analysis in "the rule of three":

"First: the natural population dynamic of our people is declining. Second: birth-rates are related to class – the lower classes are having more babies. This asymmetry results in a

contraction of the intellectual potential of society, even without immigration. Third: Measured by the deficits stemming from demography and birth-rate structure, the current immigration doesn't match. Especially immigration from Muslim countries poses a threat to the European cultural model."

Die Zeit: Sind Muslime dümmer? ("Are Muslims more stupid?"), 26 August 2010

Sarrazin is not a newcomer to the topic of Islam and integration. While senator of finance in Berlin, he repeatedly commented on the issue:

"I did not make up my opinion about Kreuzberg by going there and saying, ah, another headscarf or another pram. I looked at the Berlin statistics. As senator of finance, of course I thought to myself: how are we to pay for all this?"

Berliner Morgenpost: Thilo Sarrazin: "Ich bin kein Rassist" ("I am not a racist") (29 August 2010)

In 2009, Sarrazin clearly spelled out this line of thinking in a long interview with the cultural magazine *Lettre International* in a special issue on "Berlin on the couch – writers and artists on 20 years the fall of the Berlin Wall":

"I don't need to respect people who live off the state, despise that state, don't properly care for the education of their children and constantly produce new little headscarf-girls."

"The lower the class the higher the birth-rate. The share in birth-rates of Arabs and Turks is two to three times higher than their corresponding share in the population. Many of them are neither willing to integrate nor capable of doing so. The solution to this problem can only be no more immigration; and those who would like to marry should do this abroad."

"A large number of Arabs and Turks ...have no productive function, except for trade in fruits and vegetables and in all likelihood there won't be any other perspective."

"The Turks are conquering Germany in the same way the Kosovars conquered Kosovo: by using higher birth-rates. I would like this if it would be Eastern European Jews who have an IQ which is 15 points higher than the one of the German population."

Lettre International: "Klasse statt Masse" ("Quality, not quantity"), 30 September 2009, issue 86

Sarrazin's statements on immigrants in Berlin caused an uproar in the media and among many politicians who called for his dismissal from the Bundesbank and his expulsion from the SPD. These calls were renewed after Sarrazin published his book in August 2010.

Two of his statements in particular drove politicians and journalists to the barricades. In his book he wrote:

"We have to assume that for demographic reasons the underclass section of the population is growing steadily. Among migrants we have seen that the birth-rate is highest among those groups of migrants with the lowest levels of education, in other words those from Turkey, the Middle East and Africa. Studies on the workforce have come to similar conclusions. These show that women who are poorly or not integrated into the labour market at all are more likely to have children or increase the size of their fold. But intelligence is 50 to 80 percent

hereditary and thanks to the class-related reproductive rate, this unfortunately means that the hereditary intellectual potential of the population is continually shrinking."

And when asked in an interview with Die Welt whether there is such thing as a "genetic identity", Sarrazin replied, "All Jews have a certain gene in common. Basques have a certain gene which differentiates them from others." Sarrazin later apologised for the remark, saying that he had read about two studies (by Harry Ostrer and Doron Behar) which suggest that many Jews have shared genetic roots, the interview effectively sealed the fate of the book.

Most of Germany's politicians united in a choir of disapproval of Sarrazin's ideas. Chancellor Angela Merkel described them as "nonsense". Sarrazin's statements were "marginalising" and "contemptuous of entire groups of society...His language is socially divisive," she said in a TV interview. Shortly thereafter the chairman of the Bundesbank asked German President Christian Wulff for permission to remove Sarazzin from the bank's board. Only a few hours later the SPD filed for his expulsion from the party. While the procedure for Sarrazin's expulsion from the SPD is still ongoing, he has withdrawn from the Bundesbank board without waiting for the president's official decision.

Sarrazin and his controversial book have rekindled a debate on Islam and integration that has made headlines in Germany for almost a decade. Despite the claims made by Sarrazin and many of his supporters, the problems of integration have certainly not gone unnoticed or unmentioned for reasons of political correctness in the five years preceding his book, as this website also shows.

Many mainstream media have also been critical.

"Germany abolishes itself" tells the tale of a nation's decline. And the Muslims who make up a mere six percent of the population are being held responsible. It begs the question as to what the remaining 94 percent have spent the past decades doing to secure the future of their country. Sarrazin's book is an attempt by a disoriented elite to exonerate itself. No wonder it is such a success."

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung: "So wird Deutschland dumm" ("This is how Germany is becoming stupid"), 25 August 2010

The Frankfurter Rundschau concluded that the book's thesis is the work of a madman. The book "attempts to connect his statistically-grounded contempt for the overweight, welfare-grabbing underclass couch potatoes with racist theories on cultural mentalities." And the Frankfurter Allgemeine on Sunday observed that the book is an attempt

"to establish a very different understanding of culture. One that links genetics with culture, on the basis of a word that Sarrazin (citing Darwin) drops as casually as Gottfried Benn once did: 'selective breeding'. Sarrazin is not talking about Goethe and Schiller, though his book does mention poetry. For him, culture is the reflex of a biological process. The fact that in Germany ever more children are being born to families from the underclass milieu automatically results in the dumbing down of society. Those who succeed in making a career for themselves in spite of their background do nothing to influence his findings. There is nothing new about this theory. On the contrary, it is based on the Enlightenment idea of education, school and upbringing. But Sarrazin's message is different: education, which he refers to contemptuously as a 'mantra', is powerless as a vehicle for intellectual advancement. Individuals and entire nations are limited by their genetic and ethnic dispositions."

At the Tagesspiegel, writers, Islam scholars, education and immigration experts spoke out more or less in unison. Feridun Zaimoglu explained:

"People like him are fire starters. He is handing over the Muslim as the boogie man to a frightened middle class, with the implication that the Muslim is also responsible for the bank crisis and for the collapse of the welfare system."

The publicist Hilal Sezgin wrote:

"In the US we have started to hear discussions about whether black people are less intelligent than whites. This is obviously racism talking. In Germany too we need to develop a sensibility for the kind of debates which upset the underlying moral consensus. It is pure negligence to define groups and stir up bad blood between them."

And the publicist Mark Terkessidis explained:

"It might be an insult to the intelligence that Sarrazin swears by to have to dwell for any length of time on the lengthy passages of utter nonsense in his book, but the debate it has triggered has clearly demonstrated that certain opinions are no longer tolerated in the political spectrum of the German republic."

There were also voices in support of Sarrazin, however. In the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung Necla Kelek asked why Sarrazin had been demonised when a proper discussion about his book was what was needed:

"All this fuss strikes me as somewhat staged and the racism argument smacks of a red herring. So he doesn't want to live in a Muslim Germany because he is suspicious of that sort of society. What's wrong with that? The economist in Sarrazin has calculated that the 750,000 Turkish immigrant workers now number almost 3 million and that 40 percent of the able bodied among them live off the state instead of working. This makes no economic sense for him and leads him to ask whether immigration, in its current form, is not a mistake. This is no reason to get upset at Sarrazin. Instead we should be asking the politicians who are responsible for this state for affairs whether or not they have really served the interests of the country."

For the writer Monika Maron, speaking with Die Welt, the public debate has missed the point:

"Why can't we leave aside Sarrazin's obviously potty ideas about genetic theory and start talking about something much more worrying: the growing confessionisation of our society, the millions of euros we are doling out in welfare cheques, the education deficit and the criminality among Muslim youth? Government schemes and vast sums of money have done little or nothing to change a situation that has been well-known for many years. What else has to happen?"

The debate about Sarrazin's book was also picked up by the international media. In its online edition, the Economist wrote that

"In a way, the stir [Sarrazin] has created is a tribute to Germany's political culture. The mainstream parties are not blind to the problems he identifies but strive to be politically correct about them. The few openly xenophobic parties are marginalised. Mr Sarrazin has given voice to fears and resentments that have no political outlets. Germany has rightly worked hard to close them off. Now that Mr Sarrazin has prised one open, politicians will have to work doubly hard to prove him wrong."

The Washington Post refers to the fact that while the political elite and mainstream media refuted Sarrazin's arguments almost in unison, the picture among the ordinary population is not as clear. (According to some surveys, more than 40 percent support Sarrazin.)

"Yet Sarrazin's critique of Muslim immigrants has without question touched a national nerve. In the bars, taxis and offices of Berlin these days, it is the hottest topic of conversation, with his supporters feeling almost liberated by Sarrazin's willingness to throw caution to the wind and speak openly about their concerns. More than anything, he has tapped into German frustrations about the tendency of Muslim Turks – who began large-scale immigration in the 1960s to help run German factories – to live clannish lives, jealously guarding their language and religious traditions."

The New York Times places the Sarrazin debate in the wider context of Islamophobia:

"Mr. Sarrazin has set off a painful public discussion here that highlights one of the nation's most vexing challenges: how to overcome what is widely seen as a failed immigration policy that over decades has done little to support and integrate the nearly 20 percent of the population with an immigrant background. It is a policy that also stokes anti-Islamic sentiment and hostility."

Suggested readings

English articles

- The Economist: Sarrazin vs the Saracens (1 September 2010)
- Spiegel Online: Leading German Economist Demands More Workers from Abroad (8 September 2010)
- The Washington Post, Anthony Faiola: Economist's views on Muslims spark controversy in Germany (9 September 2010)
- The New York Times, Michael Slackman: Right-Wing Sentiment, Ready to Burst Its Dam (21 September 2010)
- The New York Times, Michael Slackman: Book Sets Off Immigration Debate in Germany (2 September 2010)
- The New York Times, Judy Dempsey: German Party Moves Toward Expelling Sarrazin (13. September 2010)

Articles

- Die Zeit, Sigmar Gabriel: Welch hoffnungsloses Menschenbild! (15. September 2010)
- Frankfurter Rundschau, Peter Schneider: Thilo Sarrazin - blamiert haben sich andere (15. September 2010)
- Welt am Sonntag, Ralph Giordano: Wo Thilo Sarrazin recht hat (19. September 2010)
- Bertelsmann Stiftung, Pressemeldung: "Deutschland schafft sich NICHT ab" (23. September 2010)
- FAZ: Jeder kann das große Los ziehen (Interview mit Elsbeth Stern) (2. September 2010)
- FAZ, Melanie Amann: Was treibt diesen Mann? (5. September 2010)
- Die Zeit, Elsbeth Stern: Was heißt hier erblich? Die Intelligenzforscherin Elsbeth Stern widerspricht der Verdummungsthese (2. September 2010)

- Die Welt, Heimo Schwillk: Man muss nur "Spanisch" durch "Türkisch" ersetzen (6. September 2010)
- Süddeutsche Zeitung, Andreas Zielcke: Vorseilender Pessimismus (9. September 2010)

Interviews with Thilo Sarrazin

- Welt am Sonntag: "Mögen Sie keine Türken, Herr Sarrazin?" (29. August 2010)
- Die Zeit: Sind Muslime dümmer? (26. August 2010)
- Deutschlandradio: Sarrazin: "Unqualifizierte Migration" kann so nicht weitergehen (24. August 2010)
- Berliner Morgenpost: Thilo Sarrazin: "Ich bin kein Rassist" (29. August 2010)
- Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung: "Böswillige Interpretation" (30. August 2010)
- Focus: "Niemand wird beleidigt, niemand wird diffamiert" (30. August 2010)
- Deutschlandfunk: "Ich bleibe SPD-Mitglied bis an mein Lebensende" (29. August 2010)
- SZ Videointerview: "Ich verlasse nirgends die Grundwerte der SPD" (1. September 2010)
- Bild: Wie geht's jetzt weiter, Herr Sarrazin? (13. September 2010)
- Bild: Thilo Sarrazin spricht über seinen Rückzug (15. September 2010)

Other interviews

- Focus: "Der Umgang mit Sarrazin ist unwürdig" (Interview mit Wolfgang Clement) (7. September 2010)
- Bild am Sonntag, Haben die Politiker selbst viele Fehler gemacht, Frau Merkel? (5. September 2010)
- Spiegel Online: "Es gibt keine Integrationsmisere in Deutschland" (Interview mit Klaus Bade) (7. September 2010)
- HNA.de: "Sarrazin spricht aus, was andere ahnen" (Interview mit Henryk M. Broder) (29. August 2010)
- Bild: Darf man nicht mehr seine Meinung sagen, Herr Gabriel? (1. September 2010)
- Spiegel Online: "Ohne Migranten müssten die Deutschen mehr Steuern zahlen" (Interview mit DIW-Chef Zimmermann) (31. August 2010)
- Frankfurter Rundschau: "Kein Märtyrer der Meinungsfreiheit" (Interview mit Michel Friedman) (2. September 2010)
- Neue Westfälische: Interview mit FDP-Generalsekretär (1. September 2010)
- Münchner Merkur: CSU distanziert sich von Sarrazin: "Der hat einen Knall" (Interview mit CSU-Generalsekretär Alexander Dobrindt) (29. August 2010)
- Die Welt, "Nicht Sarrazin, sondern die Diskussion spaltet das Land" (Interview mit Necla Kelek und Monika Maron) (2. September 2010)
- Deutschlandradio, "Demokratie lebt von Falschmeinungen" (Interview mit Henryk M. Broder) (30. August 2010)
- Frankfurter Rundschau: "Da kommt Hass zum Vorschein" (Interview mit Andreas Zick) (2. September 2010)
- Deutschlandradio, "Mehr und mehr im rechtspopulistischen Raum beheimatet" (Interview mit Christopher Ricke) (1. September 2010)
- Die Welt: "Hochzeiten bewahren den Genpool" (interview mit Gil Atzmon) (31. August 2010)
- FAZ: Jeder kann das große Los ziehen (Interview mit Elsbeth Stern) (2. September 2010)

- Der Tagesspiegel: "Wir müssen uns zum Anwalt der Kinder machen" (Interview mit Heinz Buschkowsky) (10. September 2010)
- Spiegel Online: "Thilo driftet ab" (Interview mit Ehrhard Körting) (28. August 2010)
- Die Welt: Die nachhaltigen Offenbarungen der Sarrazin-Debatte (Interview mit Necla Kelek und Monika Maron) (27. September 2010)

Book reviews

- FTD, Jens Tartler: Sarrazins Buch ist erstaunlich sachlich (30. August 2010)
- FAZ, Christian Geyer: So wird Deutschland dumm (26. August 2010)
- SZ, Matthias Dobrinski: Alle mal herhören: Das Ende naht! (29. August 2010)
- FAS, Frank Schirrmacher: Sarrazins Konsequenz: Ein fataler Irrweg (30. August 2010)
- Deutschlandradio, Klaus Pokatzky: Onkel Thilo erklärt die Welt (30. August 2010)
- Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Joachim Güntner: Biedermann als Brandstifter (4. September 2010)

TV shows and interviews

- Hart aber fair: Integration im Praxistest – Wie viele Einwanderer verträgt Deutschland? (15. September 2010)
- Hart aber Fair: Rechthaber oder Rechtsausleger? - Deutschland streitet über Sarrazin (1. September 2010)
- Beckmann: Thilo Sarrazin (30. August 2010). Artikel dazu bei Spiegel Online. Video der Sendung bei Youtube (Teil 1 von 7)
- ARD-Sommerinterview mit Angela Merkel: "Sarrazins Äußerungen sind vollkommen inakzeptabel" (29. August 2010)
- RBB-Interview mit Thilo Sarrazin: Teil 1 und Teil 2 (26. August 2010)
- Maybrit Illner: Kampf der Kulturen? (2. September 2010)
- Maybrit Illner: Sarrazins Erfolg - Versagen der Politik? (9. September 2010)

Bassam Tibi



"If Turkey, governed by the AKP, became a full EU-member, it would not only be a burden, but also a handicap for the integration of Turks in Europe as European citizens."

(Bassam Tibi, "Mit dem Kopftuch nach Europa?", p. 83)

Bassam Tibi is a political scientist of Syrian origin born in 1944. He taught at universities worldwide, including the University of Gottingen and Cornell, and published a number of books on Islam, Turkey and integration.

One of his most recent contributions to the German debate on Turkey is a book published in 2005: "Mit dem Kopftuch nach Europa?" ("With the headscarf to Europe?") There he argues that the Muslim headscarf is the symbol of an Islamic political orientation, which is gaining ground both in Turkey and among Turkish migrants in Germany.

The headscarf is central to his argument:

"The fact that the AKP is a 'headscarf party' means that it is a party in favour of Sharia and not, as it claims itself, a party of Islamic conservatism."

(Bassam Tibi, "Mit dem Kopftuch nach Europa?", p. 11)

Tibi writes that he has no problem with the "silk headscarf" of his mother living in Damascus, nor with the traditional headscarf of his mother's housekeeper from the countryside. What Tibi resents is the scarf as a symbol:

"I recognize in the headscarf of political Islam a third, and completely new type of headscarf, which symbolizes a kind of political uniform, which is related to a certain attitude." (109)

For Tibi the headscarf thus becomes the symbol of Sharia law. He argues that Europeans would end up sliding down a slippery slope were they to allow this "political headscarf":

"They'd end up having to allow corporal punishments of Sharia (lashing, hand cutting etc.) in the name of religious freedom." (p. 111).

Tibi also argues that the integration of Turks in Germany has failed, and that this suggests that the integration of Turkey into the EU would also fail. He quotes a number of German Social Democrats who make the same argument. The former consultant to Chancellor Willy Brandt, Klaus Harprecht, wrote in December 2002 that

"If we were unable until now to integrate two to three million Turks into German society ... how can Europe maintain its cohesive power in the face of 65 million people of a civilization which is neither worse nor better than ours – but simply different?" (p. 39)

At the same time, former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt wrote in the weekly *Die Zeit*:

"There are pressing reasons to avoid full EU membership for Turkey. The urgently needed integration of Turks and Kurds living with us would become futile ... " (p. 56)

Tibi explains that Turkey would risk being an alien enclave inside the EU just as the Berlin district of Neukoelln (inhabited by a lot of German Turks) is an enclave inside Berlin. In case of Turkey's EU accession its "*gecekondu* slums would be moved to German cities."

A major reason for the failure of the integration of Turkish immigrants is rising Islamic fundamentalism, says Tibi. Turkey's governing AKP, he argues, is essentially a vehicle for advancing a radical Islamist agenda. Between 1993 and 2003 Turkey became even "less Western", he says (p. 66) and is becoming "*de-kemalised*" (p. 31).

For Turkey to protect itself from Islamisation, it must maintain the influence of the Turkish National Security Council and the Armed Forces. Tibi blames the EU for inadvertently strengthening Islamists:

"The EU strengthens the Islamists by weakening the secular-oriented Security Council, which protects the laicism of Turkey. [...] What can the European Union do if an EU member Turkey replaces the Swiss [Civil] Code from 1926 with Sharia through a democratic procedure after removing the National Security Council?"

(Bassam Tibi, "Mit dem Kopftuch nach Europa?", pp. 71, 72)

In fact, a new Civil Code reform, adopted in 2001 with the votes of the AKP, did not deliver Sharia but a more democratic and gender-friendly legislative framework.

According to Tibi, Turkey certainly cannot join the EU under an AKP government:

"Turkey may belong to Europe and become a member of the European Union, but not as a country ruled by Islamists and symbolised by the headscarf – and a corresponding mindset."

(Bassam Tibi, "Mit dem Kopftuch nach Europa?", p. 19)

A striking passage in his book sheds light on Tibi's understanding of religious tolerance. He compares the situation of Christians in Damascus to the position of Turks in Berlin. If Christians were to openly wear their crosses in Damascus, "there would be bloodshed." (p.117). But, says Tibi, Syrian Christians are wise enough to recognise one thing: the *Leitkultur* (dominant culture) of Syria is Islamic. At the same time, Turks in Germany should recognise that the *Leitkultur* of Germany is, well, not Islam.

Suggested readings

- Bassam Tibi, Europeanisation, not Islamisation, signandsight, 22 March 2007
- Interview with Bassam Tibi in Spiegel Online, Europeans Have Stopped Defending Their Values, 10 February 2006. Tibi writes about the weakness of Europe: "Europeans have stopped defending the values of their civilization. They confuse tolerance with relativism."

Books in English:

- Bassam Tibi, Political Islam, World Politics and Europe, December 2007
- Bassam Tibi, The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder, August 2002
- Bassam Tibi, Islam Between Culture and Politics, February 2002
- Bassam Tibi, Islam and the Cultural Accommodation of Social Change, October 1991

Books in German

On political developments in Turkey::

- Bassam Tibi, Mit dem Kopftuch nach Europa? Die Türkei auf dem Weg in die Europäische Union, June 2007
- Bassam Tibi, Aufbruch am Bosphorus: Die Türkei zwischen Europa und dem Islamismus, 1998

on Islam and fundamentalism:

- Bassam Tibi, Die islamische Herausforderung. Religion und Politik im Europa des 21. Jahrhunderts, 2008
- Bassam Tibi, Im Schatten Allahs. Der Islam und die Menschenrechte, 2002
- Bassam Tibi, Fundamentalismus im Islam: Eine Gefahr für den Weltfrieden?, 2000

On integration and multiculturalism:

- Bassam Tibi, Islamische Zuwanderung. Die gescheiterte Integration, March 2002
- Bassam Tibi, Der Islam und Deutschland. Muslime in Deutschland, October 2000
- Bassam Tibi, Europa ohne Identität? Die Krise der multikulturellen Gesellschaft., April 2000

Other links:

- Homepage Bassam Tibi
- Gale Reference Team, Biography - Tibi, Bassam (1944-): An article from: Contemporary Authors Online, December 2007

Bassam Tibi's role in the "mainstream debate" is analysed (in German) here:

- Sascha Herrmann, Die Leitkulturdebatte - Von Bassam Tibi's Beitrag zur Integration von Migranten zum Unwort des Jahres, November 2007.

One book about Bassam Tibi's theories:

- Eva Stockl, Koran - Islam - Islamismus. Ein Vergleich anhand der Stellung der Frau und der Theorie Bassam Tibis, July 2007.

Henryk M. Broder



"You cannot separate Islam from Islamism. One has to ask the question: If Islam is the norm, if it is peaceful, non-radical and open to co-operation, where does Islamism come from? What is its basis if not Islam?"

(Henryk M. Broder in Planet Interview, November 2007)

Henryk M. Broder is a writer and journalist born in Katowice, Poland, in 1946. In 1958 his family emigrated to Germany. He writes regularly for *Der Spiegel* and *Spiegel Online*, the most widely read German-language news website.

Broder has published several books about German-Jewish relations. Recently his major concern has been Islamic terrorism and what he considers European appeasement of its radical agenda. One of Broder's favourite targets is what he considers displaced 'political correctness'. At the beginning of his recent book "Hurra, wir kapitulieren!" ("Hurray, we capitulate", 2006) he quotes Winston Churchill: "An appeaser is somebody who feeds a crocodile, hoping that it will eat him last."

In his book he defends Necla Kelek against her critics, praises Peter Schneider and attacks the anthropologist Werner Schiffauer. Given Broder's status as a respected and widely read commentator, his arguments are a good illustration of the turn that the German debate on Islam took in 2005.

Islamic terrorism

One factor that has shaped the German debate on Islam and Muslims is the fear of Islamic terrorism.

In November 2003 bombs went off in Istanbul, destroying two synagogues and a British bank, leaving 57 people dead and 700 wounded. In March 2004 bombs aboard four commuter trains in Madrid killed more than 190 people. In November 2004 Dutch film director Theo van Gogh was murdered by a Dutch-born Islamist. In July 2005 multiple suicide bombings in London left 53 people dead.

There were no terrorist attacks in Germany itself in recent years, but there have been enough reasons for concern. Several of the plotters behind the 9/11 attacks on New York's World

Trade Centre came from Hamburg, where they had been living as students. In September 2007 three men were arrested in Southern Germany on suspicion of planning attacks on Frankfurt International Airport, a U.S. military base, pubs and schools. An attempt by foreign students of Lebanese origin to detonate suitcase bombs aboard German trains narrowly failed.

Against this background, not surprisingly, the debate on Islam came to focus increasingly on the issue of terrorism. Broder argues that, rather than fighting Islamic terrorism and the ideology behind it, Europeans, led by their intellectuals, sought to appease these threats. As the cover of his book points out, this approach "accelerates the danger of a transformation of Europe into an Islamic continent."



Hamas fighters. Photo: Ali Rafiei

Broder also regards the failure to defend full freedom of speech in the case of the Danish Mohammed caricatures as alarming: "Islamic fundamentalists are considering the West, with full justification, as weak, decadent and not ready to defend itself." (p. 24) He goes on:

"Is a system more vulnerable to totalitarian temptations, the more liberal it is and the less experience it has with political ideas that use democratic means to annul democracy? This would explain why the Brits are so endlessly tolerant. But Germany, which went through the steel storms of two dictatorships [...], should know well where tolerance in response to intolerance leads: straight into a catastrophe."

(Henryk M. Broder, Spiegel Online, 17 December 2007)

The phantom of "Islamophobia"

Broder's central claim is that it makes little sense to distinguish between "good" Islam and "bad" Islamists. European politicians and intellectuals have too much empathy for Muslims, he says, and show too much concern for their sensibilities.

Broder dismisses concerns about "Islamophobia" in Germany. He sees instead a direct link between Islamic terrorists in the Middle East, Palestinians fighting Israel, and violent youth in the streets of Berlin:

"There is a direct line leading from Al Qaida in Iraq and the Intifada in Palestine to the young people of "migration background" in Neukolln and Moabit [*districts of Berlin*] ... Osama Bin Laden says to the whole world to F*** off – and they do just that in the schoolyard and in the Berlin underground. Meanwhile the Central Council of German Jews, together with the Turkish Islamic Union, organises a symposium on 'Antisemitism, Islamophobia and xenophobia', thereby suggesting that there is something real about the phantom concept of 'Islamophobia'."

Germans are much too concerned about the perspective of "people with migration background", particularly Muslims:

"Whoever has a "migration background" only needs a lawyer very rarely, for example when slaughtering a film director in the street. In case of smaller infractions of law and order it is generally enough to point out – in the media and to the general public – that the offender is of "migration background". This immediately triggers empathy with the criminal, criticism of the behaviour of the victim ("a provocateur, not showing respect for anything") and the usual question: What have we done to them, that they hate us so much?" (p. 92)

Broder points out that there are "around 2,000 mosques in Germany, while in Saudi Arabia even owning a bible carries an enormous risk" (p. 30). He suggests that one prominent German critic of "Islamophobia", Nobel Prize-winning author Gunther Grass, should apply the principle of reciprocity instead:

"We will transform a church in Lubeck into a mosque, if at the same time a mosque in Riyadh is transformed into a church" (p. 45)

Not surprisingly, Broder is also critical of academics who call for more "understanding" of the problems of (mostly Muslim) migrants. He sides with Necla Kelek in arguing that it is "Islamic culture", which makes it so difficult for Muslims to integrate into Western societies. What counts "for Muslims from Turkey and Arab countries (with different nuances) is above all honour, respect and submission."

(Henryk M. Broder in "Hurra, wir kapitulieren!" p. 113)

Broder notes that in the spring of 2006 the German debate on Islam intensified:

"Three great media events came together: the arguments about the caricatures of Mohammed, the debate about honour killings and other cases of crimes in "migrant families", and the discovery that many German schools were beginning to look like pools full of piranhas." (p. 107)

In 2005, writes Broder, there were no less than 849 cases of violence in Berlin schools. His chapter on violence in German schools ("Foreigners prefer schools without foreigners") also ends with a discussion of terrorism and the murder of Theo van Gogh.

The overall message of his writing is clear: that the Western world faces a serious threat from Islam, be it in the form of terrorism or violence in schools. This requires a robust response,

which is not forthcoming. What exactly this response should be in Germany, however, is left unclear.

Suggested readings

- Deutschlandradio, "Demokratie lebt von Falschmeinungen" (Interview mit Henryk M. Broder) (30 August 2010)
- HNA.de: "Sarrazin spricht aus, was andere ahnen" (Interview mit Henryk M. Broder (29 August 2010)
- Henryk M. Broder, *The Last Days of Europe*, lecture at Maastricht University, 28 February 2007

Broder on multiculturalism, tolerance and integration in Germany (in German)

- Henryk M. Broder, Hildegard von Bingen, Gott und ich, faz.net, 16 September 2008. Receiving an award for his journalistic work Broder notes:

"Today, older and wiser, I believe in God, I am convinced that he exists, but I don't believe in the benign, just, omnipotent God. The God I believe in is a sadist, a cynic, a joker and chaotic."

- Henryk M. Broder, *Der Westen und der Islamismus, Selbstmord aus Angst vor dem Tod*, Spiegel Online, 29 December 2007
- Henryk Broder, *Kusst die Islamisten, wo Ihr sie trifft (Kiss the Islamists where you find them)*, Spiegel Online, 17 December 2007
- Henryk M. Broder: *Toleranz hilft nur den Rucksichtslosen (Tolerance only helps the ruthless)*, speech on 25 June 2007
- Henryk M. Broder in Planet Interview, January 2007

An interview about religion, multiculturalism, the causes of terrorism and Islam.

- Henryk M. Broder, *Einen bedrohen, eine Million einschüchtern*, Spiegel Online, 31 January 2006. Broder comments on the Mohammad caricatures in a Danish paper:

"Something changed in the public awareness after September 11: 'Punish one, educate a hundred,' is what Mao said. 'Threaten one, intimidate a million' could be the motto today."

Book in English

- Henryk M. Broder, *A Jew in the New Germany*, 2003. Eighteen of Broder's essays from 1979 - 2001, exposing contradictory attitudes of Germans toward Jews.

Books in German (since 2000)

- Henryk M. Broder, *Kritik der reinen Toleranz (Criticism of pure tolerance)*, 2008
- Henryk M. Broder (with Josef Joffe Dirk Maxeiner, Michael Miersch) *Schöner denken. Wie man politisch unkorrekt ist. (How to be politically incorrect)*, 2007
- Henryk M. Broder, *Hurra, wir kapitulieren! (Hurrah we capitulate)*, 2006.

- Henryk M. Broder, *Kein Krieg, nirgends: Die Deutschen und der Terror* (No war nowhere: the Germans and terror), 2002
- Henryk M. Broder, [www. Deutsche-leidkultur.de](http://www.Deutsche-leidkultur.de), paperback June 2001

Other links:

- Henryk M. Broder's website with blog, articles and podcasts (only in German)
- Video: Henryk M. Broder, Europe and Islam, lecture at Maastricht University on 28 February 2007

Stefan Luft



"Any policy oriented towards the future of people in one country has to bid farewell to multiculturalism."

(Stefan Luft, *Farewell to Multikulti*, p. 412)

Stefan Luft, an expert on migration and integration, is a lecturer at the university of Bremen.

Stefan Luft is a harsh critic of Germany's integration and immigration policies. His book *Farewell to Multikulti* (*Abschied von Multikulti*), published in 2006, has had a large impact on the German debate on integration. The book was widely discussed by policy makers and the German media. What makes it particularly important for Germany's Great Debate is that one of its strongest recommendations concerns German foreign policy towards Turkey. In order not to make Germany's integration crisis even worse, Luft argues, German politicians must prevent Turkish accession to the EU.

Ethnic colonies

Across 454 pages, *Farewell to Multikulti* investigates the history of the integration of foreigners, mainly Turks, in Germany since the early 1960s. It does so against a background set out at the very beginning of the book: honour killings in Berlin, violence in the suburbs of Paris in 2006, the murder of film director van Gogh in Amsterdam and the scandal in the Berlin Ruttli school in early 2006, which Luft describes as a "symbol of German integration policy". In early 2006 the teachers at the Berlin Ruttli school in the Neukolln district had written a desperate letter complaining that rampant violence and threats from their students (81 percent of them with a "migration background", mainly Arabs and Turks) had made their job impossible. Things were out of control. The pupils came from failed families, lived in substandard housing, had criminal records, and were prone to violence. They were also in a hopeless situation. Not one of the 60 pupils who completed the school in 2006 had found a place for further vocational training.

The book connects the fears of the moment with a historic failure. It makes for grim reading. Was Ruttli the future of German inner cities? In 2006 there were 62 schools in Berlin where the percentage of non-German (mother tongue) students was higher than 60. In 29 schools more than 80 percent of pupils were non-German. Such schools will become increasingly common, Luft warns, pointing to the net decline in the number of German citizens since the

early 1970s (until the revision of the 2000 law on citizenship) and a parallel rise in the number of foreigners, particularly Turks. By 2050 the descendants of foreigners (not counting future changes of citizenship) will account for 38 percent of the total population under the age of 20. In Germany's cities, however, this future is already visible. In West Berlin, writes Luft, "the share of the descendants of foreigners among the population under the age 20 will reach 52 percent by 2015." (Luft, p. 33) By then, "Germans" will have become a minority (note, however, the use of the concept of "German": why is a descendant of an immigrant forever marked as "non-German"?).

What does this mean for the future of Germany's cities? Luft argues that it will become increasingly difficult to "integrate" these "non-Germans" as they turn from minority into a majority. This is already made difficult due to their concentration in "ethnic colonies", neighbourhoods where speaking German is no longer necessary. The Berlin districts of Neukolln or Kreuzberg offer a taste of the future, says Luft. They are areas "where it is possible to fulfil most of one's needs for commercial and social relations within the Islamic community, avoiding all contact with non-Muslims." (Luft, p. 145)

What is life like in such ethnic colonies? Luft describes a world where women are mistreated, where crime rates are rising, where schools are out of control. People are poor: in the Berlin district of Neukoll, 65 percent of the population live below the poverty line (Luft, p. 160). Unemployment is rampant and unlikely to drop: 90 percent of unemployed people of Turkish origin in Berlin have no vocational training whatsoever (Luft, p. 162). Among young (age 16-21) Turkish adults in Berlin, one out of two is unemployed (Luft, p. 163). Foreigners survive in Berlin through state aid. In the central Berlin district of Wedding, 40 percent of children spend the first five years of their life in families that receive social assistance. In Neukolln 36 percent of households receive assistance. Not having work is becoming a "normal lifestyle" in such communities. Given the lack of any positive role models, children and adolescents begin to look up to criminals (Luft, p. 189).

Such ethnic colonies are "trapped in a vicious circle": bad schools, no incentives to learn good German, a collapse of values which sometimes leads to religious radicalisation, which in turn deepens the gap to mainstream society. In the future, says Luft, things will get even worse. In the district of North Neukolln (home of the Ruttli school), 17 percent of those older than 61 are of foreign origin, compared to 42 percent of those aged 3-6. Luft also stresses the phenomenon of "import brides". "Some 60 percent of marriages of Turkish citizens in Germany are with somebody from Turkey," he writes. (Luft, p. 191) Citing Necla Kelek, Luft discusses the ways in which such brides reinforce the ethnic colony structure: they speak no German and bring the backward values of uneducated Anatolians to German cities.

Luft's chapter headings make clear where all of this is leading: "Influence of Islamism", "Ethnic colonies, violence and crime", "Wall of silence", "Youth and violence", "Religion and violence", "Organised crime", "Honour killings" ... (Luft, p. 201 – 241).

There are many villains in Luft's story: the Turkish governments of the early 1970s, which lobbied Germany to accept guest workers; German business elites, which sabotaged the notion that guest workers would return home after a certain period to be replaced by new workers; and naïve German politicians who opened the way to a largely unregulated family unification process in the 1970s. But the most important targets of Luft's criticism are all those in Germany who had succumbed to "multi-cultural illusions", ignoring problems and arguing in favour of respecting the immigrants' cultural heritage.

Why Turkey must not join the EU

This analysis leads Luft to make a number of recommendations: to lower the percentage of non-German pupils in schools; to insist on German language skills for new migrants; and to focus more resources on education. At the same time, the priority of German policy must be to stop further immigration into ethnic colonies. This, says Luft, requires a German veto on possible Turkish EU accession.

Luft's Turkey is as grim a place as Neukolln. The country he describes is one where (as he puts in an article in *Der Spiegel*) only 68 percent of girls go to school, where entire regions remain underdeveloped, and where a huge reservoir of unskilled potential workers awaits the chance to move to Germany. "It is unclear whether Turkish policy makers and economic growth can solve these problems" (Luft p. 445):

"Germany is the EU member which would be most affected by Turkey's EU membership. Without doubt it is not in the interest of Germany that Turkish citizens obtain the full freedom to move within the EU as a result of Turkish accession." (Stefan Luft, p. 447)

Luft sharply criticises the former SPD-Green government under Chancellor Gerhard Schroder for having promoted Turkish EU accession:

"There is a clear connection between the integration of the migrants from Turkey who already live here and their offspring as well as the degree of further immigration. Previous governments – including the Social Democrats – had been aware of the fact that better integration and strict immigration control go together. It is the duty of responsible politicians to reconsider the mid- and long-term consequences of those decisions that might trigger migration or at least encourage it as a result of Turkey's EU accession." (Stefan Luft, p. 442)

Suggested readings

There are no texts by Stefan Luft available in English. This is a sample of books, lectures and articles by Stefan Luft on multi-culturalism, integration and Turks in Germany:

- Stefan Luft, *Abschied von Multikulti. Wege aus der Integrationskrise* (Farewell to Multikulti), Grafelfing 2006
- Stefan Luft, *Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland. Mechanismen, Manipulation, Missbrauch* (Policy towards foreigners in Germany), 2002
- Stefan Luft, *Einmal Türkei, immer Türkei?* (Once a Turk, always a Turk?), *Anmerkungen aus Anlass der Kölner Rede Recep Tayyip Erdogans*, *Politische Studien*, May/June 2008
- Stefan Luft criticizes Erdogan's visit in Germany in February 2008. Erdogan had called on Turks in Germany to lobby German policymakers: "The German polity should make clear to the spokespersons of Turkish interests that while lobbying is legitimate, poisoning the political climate in Germany is harmful to all."
- Stefan Luft, *Staat und Integration – Zur Steuerbarkeit von Integrationsprozessen*, in: *Sozialwissenschaftlicher Fachinformationsdienst (soFid), Migration und ethnische Minderheiten* 2008/1, S. 11-39. Luft writes about the conditions, possibilities and limits of state policies concerning integration: "Young immigrants without perspectives will not identify with the community where they live. In ethnic colonies they see for themselves neither the chance to finish school nor a possibility to start a job. They see

themselves in many ways as excluded from the upward mobility which society offers to others."

- Stefan Luft, Staat und Migration. Anmerkungen zur Steuerungskrise (State and Migration), in Sozialwissenschaftliches Journal Nr. 5, December 2007
- Stefan Luft, Die Dynamik der Desintegration - Zum Stand der Ausländerintegration in deutschen Grossstädten (The Dynamic of Desintegration), 2002. "Migration always causes conflicts. These conflicts are often related – especially in the case of migrants from non-European countries – to cultural differences. To talk about this has nothing to do with racism."

Ralph Giordano



Ralph Giordano

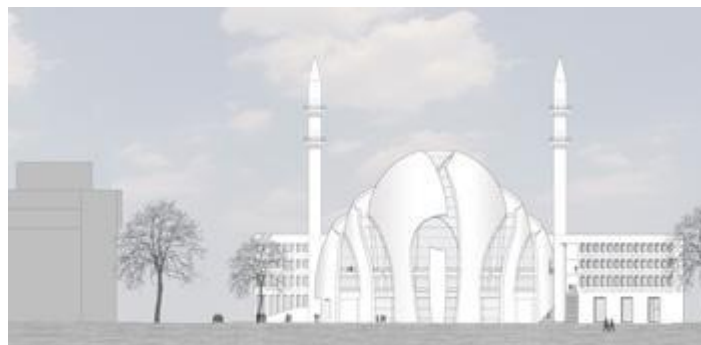
"I consider the planned construction [of the mosque in Koln-Ehrenfeld] as deeply hostile to integration.... Together with critical Muslims I have brought into discussion a problem which cowardly politicians have suppressed "

(Focus Online, 29 August 2008)

Ralph Giordano, born in 1923, is a well known German writer who argues strongly that the integration of German Muslims has failed. This, he explains, is due to the very nature of Islam. It would therefore be inappropriate for Germans to allow the construction of too many mosques.

In an open letter published in August 2007 Giordano wrote about the "Fata Morgana of a reconcilability of the two cultures" (i.e. Western culture and Islam). In 2007 he emerged as one of the leading voices fighting the construction of the future central mosque of DITIB (Turkish-Islamic Union of the Office for Religious Affairs) in Cologne. He is one of the founders of the "Critical Islam Conference", which held a first congress in May 2008.

The city of Cologne is home to a about 64,000 Turks. The previous main mosque could only hold up to 600 worshippers. The plans for the whole mosque foresee space for more than 2,000 people.



Design of new Cologne mosque

Giordano regards the mosque as a symbol of "a creeping Islamisation" of the country. In an open letter to DITIB he argued:

"The problem is not the mosque, it is Islam. The essential question is: is Islam compatible with democracy, human rights, pluralism, enlightenment and the critical method? ... I read the Koran and was left speechless. ... I am wondering how anybody for whom the Koran – this text founding an archaic shepherd's culture – is holy, can adhere to [Germany's] constitution ... One excludes the other and lip service remains lip service, even when it is repeated. ...

Is there a realistic perspective for an integration that merits the term? I doubt it. What will happen in the end is the permanence of a status that forces the majority community and the Muslim minority to get along with each other peacefully even without integration."

(Open letter by Giordano in Kolner Stadtanzeiger, 16 August 2007)

Giordano also argues that there are already many mosques in Cologne and therefore no need for a big central mosque (in fact, most of the 31 registered mosques are prayer-rooms). He considered the project as a "declaration of war." However, in Cologne the political leadership of the city, including the CDU mayor, has not budged and has continued to support the construction in a multi-party alliance. Throughout Germany there are currently around 180 ongoing construction projects of mosques.

On 7 November 2008, the city of Cologne officially permitted DITIB to begin construction works. Exactly one year later, on 7 November 2009, the foundation stone was laid in a ceremony with around 2,000 guests, including the Turkish state minister Faruk Celik, Diyanet president Ali Bardakoglu, architect Paul Bohm, as well as the current and former mayors of Cologne, Fritz Schramm and Jürgen Roters.

Giordano has also emerged as a vigorous critic of Islamic dress, calling women wearing burkas "human penguins". He explains that he regards the history of Islam as a history of the degradation of women. Fully veiled women as well as the Muslim call to prayer "disturb my aesthetic sensibilities".

Giordano's comments about Islam and the Cologne mosque have brought him the (unwanted) support of right-wing NGOs and political parties such as the regional movement Pro Köln. In January 2007 and again in autumn 2008 there have been demonstrations organised by Pro Köln against the construction of the mosque, drawing support from right-wing leaders from across Europe. Giordano has criticised these groups, but his arguments have been quoted by right-wing leaders, including Austria's Hans Christian Strache.



Pro-Köln Demonstrators with a citation from Giordano. Photo: pro-koeln.de

One journalist, Eberhard Seidel, wrote in Tageszeitung:

"For Giordano, Islam is responsible for parallel societies, for insufficient German language skills of migrants, for the oppression of women and for honour killings ... Ralph Giordano, whom we have to thank for important books and interventions, today presents an undifferentiated friend/foe thinking, and his outpourings are dangerous hate speech An important moral instance destroys itself. This is regrettable."

(Op-ed by Eberhard Seidel in Die Tageszeitung, 29 May 2007)

Suggested readings

On the Cologne Mosque controversy:

- Der Spiegel, Go-Ahead for Germany's Biggest Mosque, 29 August 2008
- International Herald Tribune, Cologne approves mosque over far right's objections, 29 August 2008
- Der Spiegel, Far-Right Mobilizes against Cologne Mega-Mosque, 19 June 2007

By Ralph Giordano:

- Die Welt, Ralph Giordano: Die Gutmenschen und die dunklen Seiten des Islam (19 September 2010)
- Die Welt, Ralph Giordano: Wider die Kreidefresser (4 September 2010)
- Ralph Giordano, Gruselkabinett Türkei (Turkey – a chamber of horror), Die Welt, 11 October 2008. In a review of Necla Kelek's new book "Bittersweet home country" Giordano notes: "This is a settling of old scores with Turkey, which is refusing

fundamental democratization and secularization of society and cannot emancipate itself from either Ataturk or the prophet."

- Ralph Giordano and Wolfgang Schauble discuss the Integration of Muslims in Germany: Mir macht Angst, dass Sie so viel Verstaendnis haben (I am frightened that you show so much sympathy), www.faz.net, 2 March 2008. Giordano criticizes the German Islam Conference and Schauble's optimism concerning integration: "The Turkish dominated Muslim community in Germany cannot be integrated as a collective."
- Die Geschichte des Islam ist eine einzige Entwürdigung der Frau - Interview with Ralph Giordano, Deutschlandfunk, 23 May 2007
- Ralph Giordano, Stoppt den Bau dieser Moschee, Kolner Stadt-Anzeiger, 16 May 2007. He writes: "Stop constructing the mosque. It is a wrong signal. The truth is that the integration of the Muslim minority in Germany has failed."
- Ralph Giordano, Nein und drei mal nein, FAZ, 1 June 2007
- Ralph Giordano, letter to Bekir Alboga, DITIB, 2007
- Bekir Alboga and Ralph Giordano discuss the construction of the mosque in Cologne, "Streit im Turm", Kolner Stadtanzeiger, 16 May 2007

Claus Leggewie



"For the German Turks it is finally clear: they will stay here. They are no second-class 'alien fellow-citizens' anymore. They ask for equal political rights, social integration and cultural autonomy. Islam, to which most of them belong, has become the second European religion."

(Claus Leggewie, "Deutsche Turken, Turk Almanlar," p.131)

If there is one German intellectual who is associated with a principled defence of multiculturalism, it is Claus Leggewie. Born in 1950, Leggewie wrote his PhD on French colonial policies in Algeria under the guidance of Bassam Tibi. Although others – including former CDU General Secretary Heiner Geissler and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a Green MEP – have defended multiculturalism in Germany, few have done so as consistently as Leggewie, who has also worked on migration and globalisation, German politics after 1945, and digital communication. He is also the co-editor of *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* (Sheets for German and international affairs), a political monthly.

Leggewie sees Germany changing as the root cause of some unease:

"The construction of mosques is a visible sign that Islam has arrived in Germany and that in the long run a lot of Muslims want to live their religion here. Exactly this demonstration of a decision to settle scares many citizens and leads to resistance."

(WDR 15 June 2007)

In fact, already in 1993, Leggewie and Zafer Senocak published "Deutsche Turken-Turk Almanlar", a key book on multiculturalism. In its foreword Leggewie writes that the book "makes the case that one can become German and remain Turk." ("Deutsche Turken, Turk Almanlar," p. 8)

Leggewie puts forward "ten commandments" for Turkish-German relations. These include proposals for easier naturalisation so that children born in Germany acquire German citizenship. He also advocates the right to stand in local elections for Turkish citizens living in Germany for a long time, better protection against discrimination, better vocational education for young migrants, and a joint effort to address the needs of older migrants. He pins his hopes for the future of German society on the children of Turkish migrants.

"One does not have to watch the emergence of a Turkish sub-proletariat inactively; and the problem of highly visible violent criminality among a small minority of German-Turkish youth cannot be solved by threatening deportation. Those who only see the mafia-like drop-

outs and fanatic fundamentalists ... ignore the optimism, the power of innovation and the imagination of the children and grandchildren of Turkish migrants."

("Deutsche Turken, Turk Almanlar", p. 133)

Leggewie also argues for cultural autonomy for ethnic minorities. He refers to the agreement made between Germany and Poland in 1991. Why should German Turks not have the same guarantees that have been extended to Germans living in Poland? He cites Article 20 of the agreement:

"[the right to] freely express, as an individual or in a community with other members of the group, their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity, to preserve and develop it; free from any attempts to become assimilated against their will."

(Claus Leggewie, "Deutsche Turken, Turk Almanlar", p. 135)

He also calls for an institutionalisation of the Islamic community.

"There must be institutional consultations between the German cultural administrations and every Islamic association to enable a constitutional Islamic religious education and to solve school conflicts stemming from the absence of an approach towards Islam. In doing so the rules of a secular state and the guaranteed freedom of religion must apply. The Islamic rite, which is seen by the majority of German Turks as non-integrative, has to come out of its niche, where fundamentalist radicalization is prospering."

(Claus Leggewie, 'Deutsche Turken, Turk Almanlar', p. 134)

In a 2002 essay, historian Hans-Ulrich Wehler put forward the argument that Christian/Occidental culture and Islam were incompatible. The article provoked a heated debate, including a reply by Leggewie:

"[Wehler] makes two principal mistakes. First, he fails to see the growing heterogeneity among Turkish migrants. Second, he Islamises Turkey – thus Christianising the European Union ... Europe's identity has always been both eccentric and inclusive. EU citizenship can be based only on the acceptance of the European treaties and a (future) European constitution, not on any substantial quality, which might, or not, be found exclusively among Europeans. European identity is to be found in its future. Europe's borders and its necessary exclusivity are determined by this political non-identity, not by the rejection of Islam, which, following mass immigration, has become part of Europe and which has an opportunity to modernise especially here."

(Claus Leggewie, 'Fundamental ruckstandig', taz.de, 22 November 2002)

Suggested readings

The two most important texts authored by Leggewie are in German only:

- Claus Leggewie, Die Türkei und Europa. Die Positionen, July 2004
- Claus Leggewie and Zafer Senocak, Deutsche Turken. Turk Almanlar, 1993

Other publications:

- Claus Leggewie, Angela Joost and Stefan Rech, Der Weg zur Moschee: Eine Handreichung für die Praxis, Herbert Quandt Foundation, May 2002
- Claus Leggewie, Alhambra, der Islam im Westen, 1993

Essays and Articles in English:

- Claus Leggewie, Transnational Citizenship, Cultural Concerns, in: International Encyclopaedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences 2003, pp. 15857-15862
- Claus Leggewie, How Turks Became Kurds, Not Germans, in: Dissent, Vol. 43 (1996), No. 3 (Summer 1996).

To read more about different views on multiculturalism the following publications of different authors we recommend:

- Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Thomas Schmidt, Heimat Babylon. Das Wagnis der multikulturellen Demokratie, 2001
- Stefan Luft, Abschied von Multikulti. Wege aus der Integrationskrise, 2006.
- Bassam Tibi, Europa ohne Identität? Die Krise der multikulturellen Gesellschaft, 1998. (Neuausgaben 2000/2002 mit dem Untertitel: Leitkultur oder Wertebeliebigkeit)
- Seyran Ates, Der Multikulti-Irrtum - Wie wir in Deutschland besser zusammenleben können. Ullstein-Verlag, Berlin 2007.
- Rainer Geissler, Multikulturalismus in Kanada, Modell fuer Deutschland, 2003

Werner Schiffauer



"It is not Necla Kelek who should be attacked, but the German public, which is longing for somebody like Necla Kelek, somebody who confirms all that they have always thought about Muslims."

(Werner Schiffauer, *Die Welt*, 8 February 2006)

Werner Schiffauer is one of the leading researchers on Turkish culture and society in Germany. He studied in Berlin and Ankara and is teaching anthropology at the Europa University Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder. He has personally investigated most of the taboos that figure in the German debate on Turkish culture and identity: notions of honour in rural Turkey; honour crimes; the violent and conspiratorial world of German Islamists; and German attitudes to Islam.

Schiffauer has emerged as one of Necla Kelek's leading intellectual opponents. In 2008 he published a book on "parallel societies", calling for a "new realism" and closer attention to cultural change among migrants. In a 2007 essay published (in English) as part of a collection on "Islam in Europe", he decries a long tradition of "positing an antagonistic relationship between a purportedly Islamic and a purportedly Judeo-Christian value system."

Islam in Europe, Schiffauer writes, has often been "the religion of the worker, of the underclass, the outsider and the ghetto-dweller." There are very different perspectives among Turks in Germany, as well as real debates. Schiffauer describes the "individualized" approach to Islam in migrant society by reference to a typical family:

"The family members deduce from their individual devotion to God that there is no compulsion in Islam ... In family practice, women with traditional veils and women without veils live together, the older members pray regularly, the younger ones don't. The children are sent to Koran class, but the family also tolerates it if a daughter marries a non-Muslim. Such families are sceptical about too strong a position for Islamic associations. They see them as institutions that principally position themselves between the individual and society and often make dictatorial claims."

He also outlines a second position, shared by those who fight for the right to be different as a group:

"Islam must become an accepted way of life in European society. People must come to take Islamic clothing just as much for granted as they do a necklace with a crucifix. An Islamic girl must be able to wear her veil with confidence and pride ..."

Schiffauer's research: Turkish Honour

Schiffauer undertook extensive field studies in Anatolia in the 1970s and 80s, the results of which he outlined in a book called "The peasants of Subay" (Die Bauern von Subay, 1991). He describes notions of honour and shame as central to traditional Turkish village life:

"Each extramarital sexual contact puts into question not only the honour of the woman, but the honour of her whole family. In the village, the respect of honour was essential for surviving."

(Werner Schiffauer, *Suddeutsche Zeitung*, 25 February 2005)

Schiffauer's book "Die Gewalt der Ehre" ("The Violence of Honour", 1983) also investigates notions of honour, this time among young Turkish men in Berlin.

"The belief in a clear line which differentiates between the inside, the area of the family, and the outside, the – male – public life of the village or the town, is subject to the value of honour (namus). The honour of a man is offended if this line is crossed, if somebody from the outside molests or harms a family member, especially a woman. A man who does not implicitly and decisively defend his relative is considered a man without honour."

(Schiffauer, "Die Gewalt der Ehre", p. 65)

Unlike Necla Kelek, Schiffauer does not believe such values to be static. The meaning of honour changes when people migrate to Germany, he argues.

"In the urban environment, the compulsion to stand up to others ceased to exist ... With the wider scope of the individual, the idea of honour, shared by all family members, took a back seat. If there was talk about honour now, it was more and more in reference to the individual."

(Werner Schiffauer, *Suddeutsche Zeitung*, 25 February 2005)

Diaspora Islam

In 2000 Schiffauer published "Die Gottesmänner" ("God's Men"), an analysis of political Islam in Germany. In it, he describes the history of the small but radical movement of Cemaleddin Kaplan, "the Caliph of Cologne". Kaplan, an imam in Turkey, came to Germany in the early 1980s. His political objective became the establishment of an Islamic state in Turkey.

The world of political Islam in Germany was riven by tension. When Kaplan died 1995, he was succeeded by his son Metin. Personal and ideological differences within the Islamist community led to the proclamation of a rival "Caliph of Berlin", Ibrahim Sofu. In 1996 Metin Kaplan publicly called for Sofu's assassination. In 1997 Sofu was killed. Three years later Kaplan was convicted for "public incitement to a criminal offence". In 2004 he was deported

to Turkey, where he now serves a life sentence for planning an attack on Ataturk's mausoleum.

Islamophobia

In recent years Schiffauer has focused on the precarious situation of Muslims in Germany:

"I have the impression that massive Islamophobia exists in our society, having replaced anti-Semitism."

(Schiffauer in taz, 6 November 2003)

In his new book "Parallelgesellschaften" ("Parallel Societies", 2008) Schiffauer describes the story of a young Turk from a small village in the Kurdish East who travels to Germany to carry out an honour killing. Schiffauer investigates how traditional notions of honour clash with the more individualistic ways of life embraced by a growing majority of German Turks. Culture clash is a real phenomenon: what is misleading is the notion that culture does not change.

Schiffauer was also the co-editor of the Migration-Report 2006, in which he calls for closer scrutiny of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, Germany's internal intelligence service, which spends 30 to 50 percent of its resources on investigating Islamism. Schiffauer complains that German officials arrive at far-reaching conclusions based on little data. He cites cases where German Turks have been denied naturalisation simply for having had contact with Milli Gorus, which is a legal organisation.

"For conservative Muslims, Germany in 2006 is less and less an open society... Germany is seen as a society that controls, registers and monitors Muslims."

(Schiffauer, "Migrationsbericht 2006", pp. 158-159)

Suggested readings

- Werner Schiffauer, Migration and Religion. A special relationship, 2006
- Werner Schiffauer, Democratic culture and extremist Islam, opendemocracy.net, 15 October 2002
- Werner Schiffauer: Production of fundamentalism: on the dynamics of producing the radically different. In: Religion and media. 2001
- Schiffauer W. Muslimische Identitäten in Europa. (Muslim Identities in Europe) inamo, 2006
- Werner Schiffauer, 'Die Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Gorus - ein Lehrstück zum verwickelten Zusammenhang von Migration, Religion und sozialer Integration', in: Klaus J. Bade/Michael Bommers/Rainer Munz (Hg.), in Migrationsreport 2004. Fakten - Analysen - Perspektiven, Frankfurt a.M./New York, 2004

Books in German about parallel societies, migrant communities, Turkish rural migrants in Germany, Turkish village life and conceptions of honour among Turks in Turkey and Germany:

- Werner Schiffauer, Parallelgesellschaften, July 2008
- Michael Bommers and Werner Schiffauer, Migrationsreport 2006. Fakten - Analysen - Perspektiven, October 2006
- Werner Schiffauer, Die Gottesmänner. Türkische Islamisten in Deutschland, March 2000
- Werner Schiffauer, Die Bauern von Subay. Das Leben in einem türkischen Dorf, 1987
- Werner Schiffauer i.a., Staat - Schule - Ethnizität, July 2002
- Werner Schiffauer, Fremde in der Stadt, 1997
- Werner Schiffauer, Familie und Alltagskultur: Facetten urbanen Lebens in der Türkei, 1993
- Werner Schiffauer, Die Migranten aus Subay. Türken in Deutschland. Eine Ethnographie, 1991
- Werner Schiffauer, Kulturelle Charakteristika als Bedingungen interkultureller Kommunikation. Die türkische Minderheit, 1987
- Werner Schiffauer, Die Gewalt der Ehre, 1983

Seyran Ates



"I am absolutely in favour of Turkey's accession to the EU so that people can see that there are also 'other' Turks. Turkey offers a chance to peaceful co-existence of Orient and Occident. Islam is of course compatible with democracy. Other religions are similarly hostile to women, but have developed further. Islam, too, is capable of developing. Europe has to succeed in dealing with Turkey – this is a great opportunity."

(Seyran Ates, lecture at Humboldt University, Berlin, 29 January 2007)

In 2005 German writer Peter Schneider published an article in the New York Times under the title *The New Berlin Wall*. In his piece Schneider referred to three German authors of Turkish origin, "three rebellious Muslim musketeers." One of these was Seyran Ates, author of *Große Reise ins Feuer* (*Great Journey into the Fire*, 2003), a book about violence against women, a problem which she herself faced as a child.

Seyran Ates was born in Istanbul in 1963. Her personal story, told in the "Great Journey" is a gripping account of the trials of the first generation of Turkish migrants in Germany. Ates also writes about the costs of emancipation for the daughters of this generation, many of whom succeed against all odds.

The lessons Ates derives from her own experience have reshaped the German debate on the Turkish migrant community.

Ates first describes her life, her early childhood in an Istanbul *gecekondu* (an illegally constructed settlement). Beset by poverty, Ates' parents left for Germany, leaving their children with an uncle. In 1969, when she was six years old, Ates and her siblings joined their parents in Berlin. Ates was not allowed to leave the house alone, except to go to school. She was raised as a de facto "servant" for her father and her brothers, being groomed for marriage to another Turk. The young Ates was torn between two worlds: her home, where she was almost locked up, and her school.

"I had been locked up since the first day. I was not allowed to go outside to play, I might have gotten lost. The boys were allowed to go outside, as if they could not have gotten lost. My area of playing in front of our house was limited by the corner on the left and the shoemaker on the right. Until there one could watch me from out of the window, 50 meters on each side. My

brothers had to make sure that I would not leave this area. When I dared a few times to go further, I was beaten up."

(Seyran Ates, "Grosse Reise ins Feuer", p. 51)

Ates stresses that Turkish migrants were often very afraid of German culture and of values that were different from traditional Turkish ones, especially at the time of the sexual revolution of the 1970s. As a result, they frequently opted to isolate themselves from the Germans among whom they lived.

"My parents saw a loss of values. They saw no love, no faithfulness, no faith. Hence, they closed themselves off. It is important to understand this, since it was the starting point for the development of parallel societies."

(Seyran Ates, lecture Humboldt University Berlin, 29 January 2007)

At the age of 17 Ates fled from home and started a new life. She studied law and joined the leftist scene in Berlin-Kreuzberg. But escaping domestic violence did not spare her from an even bigger tragedy. Ates barely survived a gun attack in 1984. Although the perpetrator has never been found, Ates suspects that it was the "Grey Wolves", a Turkish fascist movement, who tried to kill her because of her work with battered Turkish women. It was a pattern that reappeared later in her life, when repeated threats forced her to abandon her legal practice in August 2006 (she resumed it in September 2007).

For Ates the main problem of integration is mistrust, which exists on both sides. In an interview in March 2008 she stated, "It is a fact that the mutual distrust between the Turks who live in Germany and the majority society is big. There is no mutual trust, because one does not live together. Many of the Turks who live here see Germans as opponents." (Seyran Ates, interview, Spiegel Online, 13 March 2008)

Multikulti

"Many Germans, especially leftists, still believe that the dream of a multi-cultural society will some time become true automatically. But this is an error. 'Multikulti', as it has been lived so far, means organised irresponsibility."

(Seyran Ates, "Der Multikulti-Irrtum", p. 9)

Ates supports the idea of a "transcultural society" in a globalised world, where people move between different cultural environments and are exposed to different cultural influences. Thus new identities, "transcultural" identities are formed.

"We live in Germany in a multicultural society on the way to a transcultural society, in which the cultures do not just exist next to each other, but mix and let something new emerge. In my opinion this is a good thing. Diversity is richness."

(Seyran Ates, "Der Multikulti-Irrtum", p. 247)

For Ates this can never mean unconditional acceptance of other cultures and customs. She writes:

"Minority protection with respect to Islam and religious freedom can only be had at the cost of the equal rights for women, and ultimately only serves to perpetuate and reinforce obsolete, archaic, patriarchal structures ... The situation of Muslim girls and women in Germany has been played down to an extreme."

(Seyran Ates, Tolerance for the tolerant, signandsight, 2 September 2005)

How much tolerance is needed? Ates recommends that German schools not allow Muslim girls to stay away from sports and swimming lessons. She has also criticised German Green politicians and Turkish organisations in Germany for opposing the proposal that migrant children should speak only German in schools.

"Many of them are 'multikulti' fanatics who regard the minority as dumb and who try to patronise it. Turkish associations must take responsibility for the non-integrating majority of Turks and Kurds. I was lucky that I was the only non-German in my school in Wedding – this is why I have learned to speak such good German."

(Seyran Ates in Spiegel Online, 8 February 2006)

Seyran Ates participated at both the Integration Summit, initiated by the Merkel Government in 2006, and the German Islam Conference which started the same year. In a published conversation with German chancellor Angela Merkel and the writer Feridun Zaimoglu in the weekly Die Zeit, she spoke out in favour of Turkey's accession to the EU:

"With the accession to the EU it [unregulated immigration] would get better. More immigrants from other social levels would come, who are better at finding their way. And Turks who cannot identify with Germany, because it is difficult for some of them, could, however, identify with Europe."

(Die Zeit, 30 September 2004)

In summer 2010 a film was made about her life and broadcast on the Franco-German channel Arte.

Suggested readings

- Seyran Ates, Tolerance for the tolerant, www.signandsight.com, 8 September 2005 (in English)
- Seyran Ates, Den Islam integrieren (Integrate Islam), Die Welt, 4 July 2008. "Islam has to be integrated into a democratic state of law."
- Seyran Ates, Tschüss, Herr Sen (Bye Mr. Sen), Die Welt, 2 July 2008. Ates criticizes the former director of the Center for Studies on Turkey, Faruk Sen, who had to step down after saying that Turks are the Jews of today.
- Seyran Ates, *Muslimen müssen sich zur deutschen Werteordnung bekennen*, interview in Spiegel Online, 13 March 2008. Seyran Ates discusses the German Islam Conference, the dominance of conservative Muslim associations in Germany, and Erdogan's speech in Cologne: "Erdogan forgets that he drives a wedge between the German government and the Turks who live in Germany."

The sources that best help understand Seyran Ates are her three books, published in 2003 and 2007 but only available in German:

- Seyran Ates, "Der Islam braucht eine sexuelle Revolution: Eine Streitschrift" 2009
- Seyran Ates, Der Multikulti-Irrtum, October 2007
- Seyran Ates, Grosse Reise ins Feuer. Die Geschichte einer deutschen Turkin, March 2003
- Heinrich Wefing, Islamismus. Der Fall Ates, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 10 January 2007. Wefing comments on Seyran Ates's decision to close her legal practice because of threats and assaults by Turks and Kurds and the possible reopening of her office.

Video

- Seyran Ates on German TV ZDF on Integration of Turks in Germany, 12 February 2008

Feridun Zaimoglu



"We [the migrants] are tired of those who are hysterical and their myths, and we long for someone to give hope and strength. The migrants want their integration achievements or simply their work performance to be appreciated. Immigration is just a matter of heart. Nobody says that a few warm words would be ineffective."

(Feridun Zaimoglu, *Mein Deutschland*, *Die Zeit*, 12 April 2006)

Feridun Zaimoglu is a journalist and a writer. He was born in 1964 in Bolu in Turkey and grew up in Germany where he studied arts and medicine. Zaimoglu is one of the founding members of the movement *Kanak Attak* (www.kanak-attak.de). The organisation took its name from the title of Zaimoglu's 1995 book, *'Kanak Sprak'*, which consists of fictional interviews with young Turkish men in Germany. "Kanake", a pejorative term for foreign workers and immigrants, is now most frequently used against people of Arab or Turkish origin. "Kanak Attak's declared aim is to "eradicate racism from German society."

"Our common position consists of an attack against the 'Kanakisation' of specific groups of people through racist ascriptions which deny people their social, legal and political rights."

(*Kanak Attak Manifesto*, November 1998)

In 2006 Zaimoglu wrote *"Leyla"* (2006), a fictional counterpart to Necla Kelek's analysis of Turkish men and women in Germany, described in *"Die fremde Braut"* and *"Die verlorenen Sohne"*. *"Leyla"* tells the story of a young woman raised in Turkey in a conservative family. The slow collapse of the traditional patriarchal family is at the heart of the book: children rebel against their authoritarian father; traditions like arranged marriage are overcome.

Zaimoglu complains about what he perceives as Necla Kelek's tendency to simplify the debate on such issues.

"In the statements of these women who frequently criticise Islam, it is only Islam which is blamed for problems – for me this is an incomprehensible, quite crude view of the world. It is not that simple. ... You should not act as if the Islam debate is an apocalyptic battle between good and bad where the goal is to beat the evil orthodox antagonists, because they stand for everything which cannot be integrated."

(Interview with Feridun Zaimoglu, *Spiegel Online*, 24 April 2007)

Zaim Zaimoglu was initially one of the non-affiliated Muslims who participated in the German Islam Conference when it was launched in 2006. He criticised the fact that not a single woman taking part in the conference was wearing a headscarf:

"If the Islam Conference wants to be a democratic forum, it cannot leave out young religious women who have confidently decided to wear a headscarf and who see themselves as German Muslims. In this community there is anger at the German Islam Conference ... It is likely that one does not want them [women wearing a headscarf] to participate because they do not fit the picture. The composition [of the German Islam Conference] – on the one side orthodox men, on the other side secularised women – produces a very simplistic image of Islam. This plays right into the hands of those who like to divide the world into good and bad ... Women like Necla Kelek question the democratic intentions of these neo-Muslim women. Politics seems to follow this view."

(Feridun Zaimoglu, interview in Berliner Zeitung, 25 April 2007)



Photo: info-turc.org

In addition to his work as an author, Zaimoglu also provokes with visual art. In March 2005, he carried out a "flag installation" at the Kunsthalle in Vienna under the title 'Kanak Attack. Die dritte Turkenbelagerung' (Kanak Attack. The third Turkish siege). As intended, it triggered strong reactions from right wing politicians.

Suggested readings

Articles in English

- Feridun Zaimoglu, Mein Deutschland, Die Zeit, 12 April 2006 (translation My Germany)
- Feridun Zaimoglu, From Turkish boy to German writer, signandsight, 19 December 2005 (the article originally appeared in the Neue Zürcher Zeitung on 26 November 2005)

In German

- "Ich bin ein begeisterter Deutscher" (I am an enthusiastic German), interview in Wirtschaftswoche, 12 October 2008. Zaimoglu on literature, integration and Islam in Germany: "If the theoreticians of failed integration made the effort to walk with open

eyes through German cities, then they would realize that integration is a long process and that the German model is one of very small steps."

- Feridun Zaimoglu, Wunsche mir grosseres Selbstbewusstsein der Moslems (I wish for a bigger self confidence of Muslims), Islamische Zeitung, 24 April 2007
- Guten Morgen, Deutschland! (Good Morning Germany), Islamische Zeitung, 28 September 2006, (interview with Zaimoglu about the German Islam Conference)
- Patrik Bahners, Kritiker der Islamkritikerinnen, 26 April 2007
- Michaela Schlangenwerth, Wo sind die jungen Schamtuchtragerinnen? Der Schriftsteller Feridun Zaimoglu kritisiert die Zusammensetzung der Islam-Konferenz, Berliner Zeitung, 25 April 2007
- Arzu Toker, Feridun Zaimoglu schlagt sich auf die Seite der Schamtuchtragerinnen, www.freitag.de, 4 May 2005
- Eren Guvercin, Gegen jedes Klischee, Portrait uber den deutschen Schriftsteller Feridun Zaimoglu, www.zeitschrift-zukunft.de, 20 August 2007

Feridun Zaimoglu's books dealing with Turks in Germany and integration are available in German only:

- Feridun Zaimoglu, Leyla, February 2006
- Feridun Zaimoglu, German Amok, 2002
- Feridun Zaimoglu, Abschaum, 1997; (made into a film with the title Kanak Attack by Lars Becker in 2000)
- Feridun Zaimoglu, Kanak Sprak. 24 Misstone vom Rande der Gesellschaft, 1995
- Feridun Zaimoglu, Koppstoff. Kanaka Sprak vom Rande der Gesellschaft, September 1998

In summer 2008 Zaimoglu released a CD featuring interviews with young Muslim women in Germany: Feridun Zaimoglu, Gunter Senkel, Schwarze Jungfrau, Audio CD

Zafer Zenocak



"Of course there are problems with integration. In a way, they are natural if one looks at the social structure of the people who came from Turkey, if one looks at the economic situation in Germany, if one bears in mind that the majority of the jobs for which the Turks came have disappeared."

(Interview with ESI, 7 December 2006)

The author and journalist Zafer Senocak, born in 1961, migrated to Germany at the age of nine. He studied German, politics and philosophy. He publishes poetry, essays and prose in German.

Senocak is one of the leading voices in the German discussion about multiculturalism, Islam and German-Turkish relations. He is influenced by his father, a critic of Kemalism who protested the lack of free speech in Turkey and, as a result, left Turkey. Senocak's book "Das Land hinter den Buchstaben" ("The Country behind the Letters", 2006) describes how Atatürk's reforms hindered reform in Islam as a religion.

Senocak on Integration:

"It is time to accept that Germany has become a multi-ethnic state with national minorities. These minorities belong to Germany, they are its constituent elements."

(Zafer Senocak, "Deutsch Turken, Turk Almanlar", p. 13)

Senocak perceives an unwelcoming atmosphere in Germany. In an interview with ESI he said:

"What would be important is the idea of partnership to determine how things are discussed in politics. For example, the discussion in Germany about Turkey ... has an influence on people. I think it's grave that one of the big People's Parties, the CDU/CSU, gives the impression of 'Everything but Turkey in the EU'. Some of their politicians, e.g. [Michael] Glos [CSU], spoke of a 'dark day for Europe' when the negotiations were launched. [Turkish migrants] do not like being addressed in this way. These ... processes are not helpful."

(Interview with ESI, 7 December 2006)

Senocak sees the integration deficit as a result of the lack of proper policies, the Turks' reluctance to change their culture, and an education system that is still not prepared for immigrants (which is itself an outcome of German politicians' inability or refusal to see their country as an immigration country). In the interview with ESI Senocak noted:

"If measures had been taken in the educational field, there would have been preparatory classes. The whole question of culture and cultural backgrounds, how to teach differences – that is a vast area. This is being reduced to numbers of drop-outs ... I still do not see any serious attempts to tackle this. There is only a lot of complaining."

(Interview with ESI, 7 December 2006)

At the same time, Senocak criticises those who argue that "integration has failed".

"That one can come to such a conclusion, which is widely accepted in the media and in the public, although everybody knows that a serious integration policy has in fact not even been implemented, compromises the whole debate."

(Zafer Senocak, "Das Land hinter den Buchstaben", p. 169)

Senocak looks for answers to the problem of migrants' lack of identification with Germany:

"What conditions do we need to make the migrants identify themselves with the host society and to see themselves as part of this society? Even those who attend beginner classes in psychology know that the first step cannot be to convince the migrant of the inferiority of his culture ... A successful host society needs, as a first step, to show the willingness and readiness to receive."

(Zafer Senocak, "Das Land hinter den Buchstaben", p. 170)

Why EU accession matters

For Senocak the perspective of Turkish EU membership is crucial for the country's reforms.

"Kemalists still oppose by all means a reform of the Turkish state, new rights and freedoms for citizens, the idea of a state serving its citizens and not the other way around, and a critical reappraisal of the state's past."

(Zafer Senocak, "Das Land hinter den Buchstaben", p. 16)

Senocak underlines the need for reforms in Turkey and highlights the EU's impact with regard to women's rights and reforms in Turkey. On the issue of Turkey's EU accession, he disagrees with Necla Kelek.

"If the position of women is to be improved one should be a strong advocate of EU membership, one should want for European institutions and European law to gain influence in Turkey ... A Turkey that is left outside cannot be better for women's rights than a European Turkey ... All active women in Turkey support EU membership. I have not heard any other voices. This also applies to religious women, who are also a product of Turkey's women's movement."

Suggested readings

- Zafer Senocak, Feuer und Eis (Fire and Ice), Tagesspiegel, 11 February 2008. Senocak on integration and Turks in Germany: "In the past years in Germany a stigmatized minority was created – the Turks. And a German majority which defines itself by distancing itself from this minority ..."
- Zafer Senocak, Islam-Gläubige integrieren, wo immer es geht (Integrate Muslims wherever possible), Die Welt, 3 January 2008. Senocak sees dialogue with moderate Muslims as an antidote to rising Islamic fundamentalism.
- Zafer Senocak, Eine moralische Katastrophe (A moral catastrophe), Die Welt, 20 April 2007. "Intolerance, violence and hate are the predominant sentiments in the Islamic world. This is a tragedy with far-reaching consequences. The Turks – or at least the vast majority of them – would like to move away from this. They want so much to be different from Iran, with its crazy leader, and the Arab countries with their despotic rulers and fanatic masses."

Senocak's most important books on the German debate about Turkish migrants are (in German only):

- Zafer Senocak, Das Land hinter den Buchstaben: Deutschland und der Islam im Umbruch, 2006.
- Claus Leggewie and Zafer Senocak, Deutsche Turken, Turk Almanlar, 1993

Other books, including poems, essays and prose:

- Yunus Emre and Zafer Senocak, Das Kummerrad/Dertli Dolap: Gedichte. Turk./deutsch., 2005.
- Senocak Zafer, Übergang: Ausgewählte Gedichte 1980-2005, 2005.
- Berkan Karpat/Zafer Senocak, Nazim Hikmet. Auf dem Schiff zum Mars, 1998.
- Aras Oren, Zafer Senocak, Rukhsana Ahmad, Essmail Choi, Name blau Farben der Augen keine. Literatur aus dem fremden Abendland. Mit einem Brief an Salman Rushdie, 1992.

Peter Schneider



Peter Schneider, born in 1940, is a German author and visiting professor at many prestigious US universities. He was active in the student movement of the 1960s and wrote speeches for SPD politicians during the election campaign in 1965. Peter Schneider's texts are a mixture of politics and literature. His focus is very often on the experience of the 1968 generation, as in "Lenz" (1973). He recently published an autobiographical novel, "Rebellion and delusion" ("Rebellion und Wahn").

In 2005 Peter Schneider published an essay outlining his belief that the German debate on integration and Islam was changing, particularly in Berlin. In "The New Berlin Wall", Schneider argued:

"There is a new wall rising in the city of Berlin. To cross this wall you have to go to the city's central and northern districts – to Kreuzberg, Neukölln and Wedding – and you will find yourself in a world unknown to the majority of Berliners. Until recently, most Berliners held to the illusion that living together with some 300,000 Muslim immigrants and children of immigrants was basically working."



Kreuzberg + İstanbul = Kreuztanbul. Photo: flickr/ Ozan™

But this consensus was wrong:

"When a broader German public began concerning itself with the parallel Muslim world arising in its midst, it was primarily thanks to three female authors, three rebellious Muslim musketeers: Ates, who in addition to practicing law is the author of "The Great Journey Into the Fire"; Necla Kelek ("The Foreign Bride"); and Serap Cileli ("We're Your Daughters, Not Your Honor"). About the same age, all three grew up in Germany; they speak better German than many Germans and are educated and successful. But they each had to risk much for their freedom Taking off from their own experiences, the three women describe the grim lives and sadness of Muslim women in that model Western democracy known as Germany."



Turkish people in Kreuzberg near Kottbusser Tor. Photo: flickr/ Pim Rupert

Schneider credits the writing of Seyran Ates, Necla Kelek and others with breaking taboos. Their books “tell us what Germans like me didn't care to know.”

“What they report seems almost unbelievable. They describe an everyday life of oppression, isolation, imprisonment and brutal corporal punishment for Muslim women and girls in Germany, a situation for which there is only one word: slavery.

Seyran Ates estimates that perhaps half of young Turkish women living in Germany are forced into marriage every year. In the wake of these forced marriages often come violence and rape; the bride has no choice but to fulfill the duties of a marriage arranged by her parents and her in-laws. One side effect of forced marriage is the psychological violation of the men involved. Although they are the presumed beneficiaries of this custom, men are likewise forbidden to marry whom they want. A groom who chooses his own wife faces threats, too. In such cases, according to Seyran Ates and Serap Cileli, the groom as well as the bride must go underground to escape the families' revenge.

Heavily veiled women wearing long coats even in summer are becoming an increasingly familiar sight in German Muslim neighborhoods. According to Necla Kelek's research, they are mostly under-age girls who have been bought – often for a handsome payment – in the Turkish heartland villages of Anatolia by mothers whose sons in Germany are ready to marry. The girls are then flown to Germany, and “with every new imported bride,” Kelek says, “the parallel society grows.”

Suggested readings

- Peter Schneider, *The New Berlin Wall*, *New York Times Magazine*, 4 December 2005
- English Articles
- *The Wall Jumper*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983)
- *The German Comedy* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1991)
- *Couplings* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1996)
- *Eduard's Homecoming* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2000)
- Lenz, in *Three Contemporary German Novellas* (New York: The German Library, 2001).
- Official website: www.peterschneider-autor.de

Fatih Akin



"There are three communities in Germany. Two communities which formed a third. There is the Turkish community, the generation of our parents and the German community. Out of the conjunction of these two generations originated a third generation, the German-Turkish generation. This is a completely separate generation with its own kodex and its own socialisation. [...] It has its own culture, different from the German or Turkish culture."

(interview with Fatih Akin, outnow.ch, 21.04.2004)

In his films Akin shows the close links between Germany and Turkey through migration. In "Wir haben vergessen zurückzukehren" ("We have forgotten to return", 2001), a documentary, he tells the story of his own family, which immigrated from a fishing village in the Turkish Black Sea region, and describes life as a German Turk.

Fatih Akin was born in 1973 in Hamburg. Winner of the prestigious Golden Bear award for his film "Gegen die Wand" ("Head On", 2004), he is one of Germany's most successful film directors and script writers.

In the 1960s Akin's parents moved from Turkey to Germany. During his studies at the University of Fine Arts in Hamburg, the young Akin directed his first movie, "Sensin" ("It is you", 1995), followed by "Geturkt" (1996) and "Kurz und Schmerzlos" ("Short Sharp Shock", 1998), which portrays the life of three young immigrants in Hamburg.

The 2002 film "Solino" pictures an Italian family who immigrated to Germany (Duisburg) in the 1960s. In an interview, Akin voiced his views on second generation migrants:

"There is something which I repeatedly observe with Turks of the second generation and also with myself. I definitely do not have the same temperament as my parents or as Turks who

live in Turkey. The temperament of the motherland gets lost with the second generation, it melts with the German spirit – this is the story of 'Solino'."

(Planet Interview with Fatih Akin, 16.10.2002)

Akin's international breakthrough came in 2004, with "Head on". In the center of the movie is a young Turkish woman in Germany who escapes family pressure by marrying a German Turk she meets in a hospital:

"The film is a plea to give Turkish daughters in Germany more freedom. I do not want to be seen as the big moralist. But I hope that Turkish parents who have seen the movie will also start to discuss how to bring up their children."

(Fatih Akin about his film 'Head On', taz, 11.03.2004)

Looking at Turkey, Fatih Akin is more concerned about Kemalism than about Islamism.

"I see more of a reactionary force in Kemalism than Islamism. Islamism in Turkey does not frighten me ... Ataturk, the founder of Turkey, was a soldier, and as a pacifist, I am sceptical. He had the ideas that the military has to protect the country from domestic and foreign enemies, especially from internal ones. Members of the army receive big pensions, it is a matter of power and the old elites do not want to lose their power. There is still the rhetoric, the thinking which originated in 1918. But we live in a period of globalisation, in 2007, one cannot survive with this thinking."

(Fatih Akin, interview, www.faz.net, 3 September 2007)

For Akin, the main obstacle to integration is mutual mistrust. In an interview in 2007 he said, "There is no integration taking place in Germany ... There is too much mistrust, too much fear within both the immigrants and also the other side." (Fatih Akin, interview on rp-online, 26 September 2007)

(Fatih Akin, interview on rp-online, 26 September 2007)

Suggested readings

The following is a list of films directed, some of them also produced, by Fatih Akin:

- 2009: Soul Kitchen
- 2008: Chiko (producer)
- 2007: Auf der anderen Seite (The Edge of Heaven) (director, scriptwriter and producer)
- 2006: Takva – Gottesfurcht (Takva) (producer)
- 2005: Kebab Connection (scriptwriter)
- 2004: Gegen die Wand (Head on)(director, scriptwriter and producer)
- 2002: Solino (director)
- 2000: Im Juli (In July) (director and scriptwriter)
- 1999; Kismet (actor)
- 1998: Kurz und schmerzlos (Short Sharp Shock) (director and scriptwriter)

Short movies:

- 2004: Die alten bosen Lieder (Evil Old Songs)
- 1996: Geturkt
- 1995: Sensin (It is you)

Documentaries:

- 2005: Crossing The Bridge – The Sound of Istanbul (director, scriptwriter and producer)
- 2001: Wir haben vergessen zuruckzukehren (We forgot to return) (director and scriptwriter)
- Fatih Akin's Production Company Corazón