



# Learning from Each Other

The Integration of Immigrant and Minority Groups  
in the United States and Europe

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Spencer P. Boyer April 2009





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# Introduction and summary

The United States and the European Union share much in common, including a similar religious and cultural heritage, strong democratic institutions, and a commitment to civil society. One thing they do not share, however, is a common set of political attitudes and attendant policies on how best to integrate immigrant and minority groups into their larger societies. Intriguingly, though, policymakers in the United States and Europe could learn a great deal from each other as they tackle this issue—one of the more important challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As this paper will demonstrate, our different views and actions on integration—derived from unique historical experiences—provide lessons for both sides of the Atlantic.

Both American and European societies struggle to find the proper balance between preserving valued traditions and incorporating individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds and beliefs. The tension can be high between those who are accustomed to, and wish to maintain, the cultural experience of the majority—often rooted in a common ethnic, religious, or political heritage—and those who do not fit within that framework. Economic anxiety, combined with political discourses that sometimes rely upon the rhetoric of exclusion and cultural difference, have the dangerous potential to undermine progress and open discourse.

Integration is not solely a social or cultural issue, but also one that has important public policy implications for both the United States and Europe. Demographic changes will present new challenges for European leaders as they are faced with aging workforces and too few taxpayers to support generous social programs. The United States will encounter similar trends with the upcoming retirement of the baby boom generation, although continued large-scale immigration, both legal and illegal, is staving off the immediacy of the impact. Ultimately, only those countries capable of effectively managing and harnessing the power of diversity in employment, education, and other areas are likely to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

How the United States and the European Union handle this demographic certainty is hugely important in another way. Poor integration carries with it security implications. Preventing the alienation, resentment, and potential backlash that can come when immigrant and minority groups are excluded from the societal benefits others enjoy are concerns on both sides of the Atlantic. At a moment when radical groups are increasing their efforts to recruit the disenfranchised in Europe, and could potentially do so as well in the United States, these concerns are particularly relevant.

While the risks to the United States and European Union are similar, there are distinct differences in how the United States and Europe look at these issues. While there are debates within the United States on the proper pathways to legal residency and how best to integrate immigrant and minority groups, there is an expectation among Americans of all backgrounds that most legal immigrants will one day be able to become American citizens. And practically no one in America today questions the right of a child born in the United States to become a citizen. Most tensions arise over how to stop the flows of undocumented immigrants.

The European Union also struggles with how to stem the tide of undocumented immigrants and how to view existing immigrants and other minorities. Additionally, there are disagreements in Europe about whether to grant citizenship to documented immigrant families who have lived in Europe for years, even generations. Citizenship in a number of European countries has often been about bloodlines and ethnic heritage, not location at birth.

The recent election of a biracial U.S. president—the son of a recent Kenyan immigrant father and mother from Kansas whose immigrant ancestors arrived in the United States almost 200 years ago—offers a unique opportunity for the United States and Europe to more seriously examine what each can offer the other in tackling ongoing integration challenges. This report explores the current integration efforts taking place in the United States and European Union, and offers recommendations for what the United States and Europe can do to be more effective in these undertakings. As the United States and European Union work to develop new federal and supranational policy tools and guidelines for addressing integration, respectively, there is much we can learn from each other.

Specifically, this report calls upon the Obama administration to:

- Signal a national commitment to improve integration through a more robust effort at the federal level. The president should establish a new National Office of Integration in the White House to coordinate between the various U.S. departments and agencies that are tasked with addressing socioeconomic hardships and lingering discriminatory practices, which are barriers to effective integration for both new immigrants and other minority groups.
- Start the process of integration at the first points of contact for the immigrant community. The Department of Homeland Security's efforts to create resources for newly arrived immigrants should be encouraged and expanded, and be included as part of the initial visa application process in U.S. embassies around the world. The Obama administration should also help provide local police and other agencies with the resources to communicate with non-English speaking newcomers in multiple ways—not just through the prism of law enforcement.



- Provide the resources to continue the integration process beyond the first point of contact. Providing civic orientation resources for new immigrants is an important first step, but more resources must also be provided to educators, employers, and government agencies to continue the process of integration beyond arrival, into the second generation, and beyond.

On the European front, the report recommends that the European Union:

- Work to translate the common vision for integration into enforceable national legislation at the state level. The European Union has been successful in creating highly structured, institutionalized programs for integration, but more work needs to be done to coordinate integration standards of member states, as well as monitor and enforce member state practices. The European Union should use the United States as a model for putting greater emphasis on helping member states strengthen antidiscrimination laws and enforce existing regulations.

## What do we mean by integration?

Traditionally, scholars have divided integration efforts into three primary categories or models:

- The multicultural model, which is based on a respect for cultural diversity and protection for the identity of the immigrant community.
- The assimilationist model, which has equality at its core but is based on the complete assimilation of immigrants into the dominant society.
- The separation or exclusionist model, which is characterized by rigid and restrictive immigration policies aimed at artificially maintaining the temporary character of an immigrant’s settlement.<sup>1</sup>

Nowadays, however, these descriptions have largely lost their relevance due to changing political realities and social developments.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the lines between the traditional models have blurred as attitudes toward immigrants and minorities continue to evolve.<sup>3</sup>

These models, as designed, have significant flaws. The separation/exclusionist model isolates communities from the mainstream and stigmatiz-

es those who are viewed as apart from the majority. The assimilationist model requires that one know exactly what an immigrant or minority is supposed to assimilate into, which is often unclear in today’s complex and heterogeneous societies. And while the multiculturalism model has generally been viewed as the most appealing, it has many detractors in Europe, who view it as an unrealistic or even utopian goal of cultural and racial harmony.<sup>4</sup> These critics often point to the United States as a hopelessly segregated “multicultural” society.<sup>5</sup>

For the purposes of this report, we will deem successful integration as a process that includes, but is not limited to, the spread of educational and economic mobility, social inclusion, and equal opportunity for newcomers and minorities into the mainstream of a society. In contrast, poor integration often results in the formation of an ethnically segregated bottom class composed of immigrant groups and/or communities of color.<sup>6</sup> In addition, we will be focusing our attention on documented—rather than undocumented—immigrants in the report.

- Institute metrics to better assess progress toward integration. Europe’s resistance to collecting racial and ethnic data, while conducted out of an expressed desire to craft “color blind” policies, ultimately serves to obscure the needs of minority populations and their difficulties integrating into the majority society. The European Union should develop a performance report card on instituting diversity and antidiscrimination measures, similar to the accession progress reports it conducts for new members.
- Offer a more expansive view of citizenship. While the process of adapting to a new, multiethnic concept of identity cannot be directed from the top by EU policymakers, more can be done to facilitate the successful citizenship application process for its minority populations. Relaxing strict standards on who can pass through the citizenship process and expanding opportunities for dual citizenship will help broaden the national identity.

# Historical and current integration perspectives

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## The United States

As a starting point for understanding what the United States and Europe are doing well and poorly with regard to integration and diversity, it is essential to first address how our different histories have shaped our ways of viewing race, ethnicity, and culture within a national context, and subsequently how immigrants and minorities have been treated within that context.

While the process has been an imperfect one that remains incomplete, the United States has arguably achieved a more thorough and widespread acceptance of differences and a relatively higher degree of institutionalizing diversity than a number of its European counterparts. The experiences and legislation of the civil rights era that ended legal segregation in the public sphere, and their enforcement through successful class-action lawsuits by minorities and women in subsequent decades, have shaped the political environment and debates over America's multicultural identity.

As a country of immigrants, the distinction between “outsiders” and “insiders” in America has always been complex and fluid. While every group arriving in the New World had its own unique challenges, immigrants from Western European countries that were Anglo-Saxon and Protestant, including those from Britain and Scandinavia, were generally more easily incorporated into a majority Anglo-Saxon-Protestant America than those from countries that were seen as more “different” in terms of race, ethnicity, or religion.<sup>7</sup>

Many groups, especially Catholics from Ireland and southern Europe who were once shunned, slowly came to be seen as part of the American mainstream over time.<sup>8</sup> This transformation largely took place as migration flows from these areas slowed considerably after World War I and the Great Depression. While Irish and Italian migrants in the mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century were heavily discriminated against in employment, housing, and other spheres of American life, their descendants are now largely viewed as simply part of a larger European-American majority.<sup>9</sup>

Self-segregation and ethnic enclaves still exist throughout the country, but barriers to the integration of white Europeans or their descendants into the mainstream based solely on ancestral origin or being a non-Protestant Christian have all but disappeared in 21<sup>st</sup>-century America.

Traditional color lines have evolved dramatically in American society with the influx of Latino and Asian immigrants over the past few decades, along with the growth of a multiracial population

Obstacles certainly existed for white ethnic groups in the United States well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Jews from Europe experienced heavy discrimination in the United States throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and were often denied entry into the country during World War II. Also during World War II, over 600,000 Italians were branded as potential “enemy aliens,” and stripped of their privacy rights, and hundreds were sent to internment camps.<sup>10</sup> It was also uncertain whether a Catholic could be elected president as recently as 1960 when John F. Kennedy made his historic run. But for most of American history, race and color distinctions, as opposed to distinctions based on other factors, have been at the forefront of determining how federal, state, and local governments legally classified and treated U.S. citizens and residents.

Accordingly, for African Americans and immigrants of color from other parts of the world, the integration experience has been much different than it has been for most Europeans. And among those of color, the African-American experience has, of course, been unique. While the legal obstacles to integration were lifted with the Supreme Court’s 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* and subsequent civil rights legislation that ended legal segregation in employment, housing, public facilities, and education, the fact that the United States grappled with slavery and Jim Crow laws for so long has had a profound effect on black integration efforts.

Large disparities in education, income, and wealth between African Americans and white Americans, as well as the disproportionate number of blacks who are single parents and involved in the criminal justice system, are further indicators that race still plays a role in social and professional mobility in America. Among other troubling statistics, the median household income of African Americans is 63 percent of white Americans; a 17-year-old black child performs, on average, at the level of a white 13-year-old; and blacks live several years less than whites in the United States.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time, traditional color lines have evolved dramatically in American society with the influx of Latino and Asian immigrants over the past few decades, along with the growth of a multiracial population. In the past several years, Latinos have overtaken blacks as the largest minority group in the country, reaching 15 percent of the population.<sup>12</sup> Asians are the second-fastest growing minority group after Latinos, reaching 15 million or 5 percent of the population.<sup>13</sup> Recent Census Bureau figures indicate that by 2042, whites will no longer be the majority population in the United States.<sup>14</sup> In 2000, a little more than 2 percent of Americans identified themselves as multiracial—or about 1 in 40 people. By 2050, the National Academy of Sciences predicts that the multiracial population could rise to over 20 percent.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the old black-white divide has become murkier as America has diversified. As a result, Americans have started viewing themselves in more complex ways. It should be noted that the historical legacy of slavery, discrimination, and the “one-drop rule,” which was designed to maintain a strict racial hierarchy in the country, has made multiracial

identification less common in the black community than among other groups, due largely to a sense of ethnic pride, unity, and political strength that comes from self-identifying as black. At least three-quarters of the African-American population is ancestrally multiracial, and thus could credibly claim a multiracial identity, but only 4 percent choose to do so. Yet multiracial identification is still increasing at a rapid rate in all groups in America, especially among Latinos, Asians, and younger Americans.<sup>16</sup>

This multicultural past and present has shaped a unique conception of American identity that acknowledges that one can be a “real” American regardless of how he or she looks, and regardless of whom his or her ancestors were. In short, one can belong to one or more cultural groups and still be an unquestioned American. The election of Barack Obama as president by the majority of the voting public provided evidence of this. The American experience has demonstrated that racial and ethnic boundaries are flexible, can be expanded, and will continue to evolve over time in the country.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, large segments of the American business community have also recognized that diversity can serve as a valuable asset in the marketplace. Many businesses embrace minorities not only for legal reasons, but also in terms of “enlightened self-interest,” which recognizes their important contributions in language skills, cultural competencies, and different visions of the world, and how these contributions affect the economic bottom line.

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## Europe

Europe’s experience with immigration and people of color has been quite different, and most EU member states have been consciously struggling with diversity issues for a much shorter period of time. While several European countries had long histories as colonial powers in the developing world and received immigrants before World War II, most European countries are considered new immigrant countries compared to the United States, Canada, or Australia.<sup>18</sup>

Large migrations from the former colonies, especially French, Belgian, and British colonies in Africa and Asia, began arriving in Europe in the postcolonial period after World War II, followed by large numbers of guest workers from Turkey, Yugoslavia, and poorer southern European countries who migrated north and west during the 1960s and 1970s. Until then, most Western European societies viewed themselves as being largely homogenous.<sup>19</sup> There was little discussion of what it meant to be German, French, or Swedish—it was a question of ethnic heritage and ancestry.

Nowadays, however, the demographics of Europe are profoundly different than they were three decades ago, forcing Europe to grapple intensely with issues of self-perception and integration. The “temporary” guest workers became a permanent component of European populations after most Western European countries ended the importation of labor dur-

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ing the oil crises of 1973 and 1974.<sup>20</sup> Many thousands never returned home, and most eventually brought family to join them. While European countries pledged to integrate the foreign workers who remained, many also attempted to discourage them from staying. Voluntary repatriation policies, however, met with little success.<sup>21</sup>

Currently, there are 18.5 million third-country nationals in the European Union,<sup>22</sup> or 3.8 percent of a total population, with the most numerous groups being from Turkey, Morocco, Albania, and Algeria.<sup>23</sup> States such as France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, and the Netherlands have now established themselves as countries of immigration. Other countries, such as Spain, Italy, and Ireland, are quickly becoming so for the first time in recent history.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, discussions about demographic change are becoming increasingly important since in most European countries not enough children are being born to replace the population. The current “replacement rate”—or the average number of births per woman needed for a country’s present population to remain stable—is 2.1. Southern and Eastern Europe are struggling to attain birthrates of 1.3, which would lead to a population being halved in just 45 years.<sup>25</sup> Northern Europe and Western Europe fare a bit better, but also fail to maintain a birthrate that would preserve a healthy labor force and economy. Scandinavian countries, which have among the highest birthrates in Europe, still fall short at around 1.8.<sup>26</sup>

In the process, the face of Europe has changed, resulting in soul searching across the continent about what it actually means to be European. Is it solely about citizenship? Does ethnic ancestry or religion matter? Can one truly be German or French and look Turkish or Algerian? Should dual nationalities or multiple identifications be accepted in society? Is the largest obstacle to an immigrant community’s sense of belonging the host country’s failure to embrace its changed population? The evidence indicates that many in Europe have not easily accepted the notion of multicultural and multiethnic societies where the idea of being European, or a national of a European state, is not tied to ancestral origin or religion.<sup>27</sup>

In contrast to the United States, where the idea of being an American is strongly linked to political ideals rooted in the constitution and civic institutions, German citizenship has until recently been perceived as tied to bloodlines.<sup>28</sup> Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, immigrant children born within German borders were forced to maintain the citizenship of their parents. Only in 2000 did German laws change, making it easier for those of immigrant backgrounds to obtain German citizenship.<sup>29</sup>

Germany, however, still does not permit dual citizenship and requires young people of migrant background between the ages of 18 and 23 to choose whether to keep German citizenship or that of their parents’ country of origin.<sup>30</sup> Given that the provisions from 2000 included children of foreign nationals aged 10 or less, 2008 was the first year that these individuals turned 18 and began to choose their citizenship. If they opt to retain citizenship from another country, they can still live and work in Germany but will lose certain civic rights.<sup>31</sup>

Other European countries are facing similar internal debates, which demonstrate the difficulty contemporary societies are having in determining who should be granted citizenship and who should decide. In June 2008, for example, Swiss voters defeated a measure that would have legitimized the practice of allowing townspeople to cast secret votes on granting citizenship to foreigners in their communities.<sup>32</sup> The measure would have overturned a 2003 Swiss Federal Court ruling, which found that secret citizenship votes are unconstitutional.<sup>33</sup> Many feared that it would lead to more discriminatory citizenship decisions that would hurt foreigners from regions such as the former Yugoslavia.<sup>34</sup> Despite the 2003 ruling, however, the practice has continued in certain locales.<sup>35</sup> The powerful far-right Swiss People's Party, which initiated the measure, has other proposals aimed at foreigners that will be voted on in future referendums.<sup>36</sup>

A series of violent flashpoints have brought these questions of citizenship and belonging to the forefront over the past several years, and increased social anxiety among many Europeans.

In October 2005, civil unrest broke out in the Parisian suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois after the accidental deaths of two minority youth being chased by police. Some residents, already frustrated by their living conditions and treatment by police, reacted to the deaths

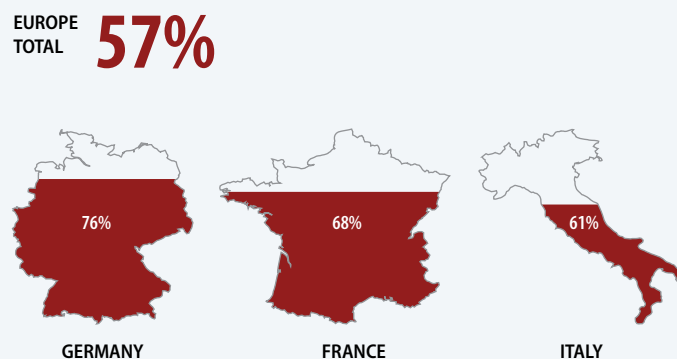
## Turks in Europe

The long Turkish struggle for EU membership provides another glimpse of the crisis in Europe regarding who should and should not be considered "European." Skeptics in Europe repeatedly state that their objections are based upon economic and political concerns, asserting that a "privileged partnership," as opposed to full EU admission, would better suit Turkey.<sup>37</sup> Turkish leaders, however, feel that Turkey is being held to a double standard, and view the idea of a "privileged partnership" to be somewhat of an insult.<sup>38</sup> Many in Turkey believe that the economic and political reasons given for resistance to Turkey's accession are merely a smoke screen for the real concern: allowing a Muslim nation of over 72 million inhabitants into what has been a political union of nations with a Christian heritage.<sup>39</sup>

While concern over Turkey's accession into the European Union hinges on a number of political and economic issues, there is evidence of an underlying cultural tension affecting the debate. According to recent polling, 57 percent of Europeans believe that Turkey has such different values that it is not really part of the West.<sup>40</sup> Seventy-six percent of Germans, 68 percent of the French, and 61 percent of Italians share this belief.<sup>41</sup>

### Europeans' view of Turkey

Percentage of population believing that Turkey has such different values that it is not really part of the West



by burning cars, churches, and schools. Violence spread throughout the “banlieues” of Paris and, eventually, to other regions and cities including Toulouse, Lille, Strasbourg, Marseille, and Lyon. Before the 21-day ordeal ended, President Jacques Chirac had declared a state of emergency. Two years later, similar violence erupted in France after two minority teenagers on a motorcycle collided with a police cruiser.

Cultural tensions boiled over in the Netherlands in 2002 in a manner that produced a wave of anxiety throughout Europe. Pim Fortuyn, a prominent Dutch politician who was known for his vehemently anti-immigration stance and anti-Islam beliefs, was murdered by a white Dutchman who believed he was acting on behalf of all Muslims.<sup>42</sup> Two years later, controversial Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh was murdered after making an incendiary film on the position of women in Islamic society. A violent extremist later confessed and was imprisoned for life.<sup>43</sup> As a result, anti-immigration sentiment in the Netherlands rose, and the government took a harder stance on immigration.<sup>44</sup>

## African Americans and Europe

The picture regarding historical differences between the United States and Europe would not be complete without noting the different manner in which African Americans have traditionally been received in Western and Northern Europe as compared to black and brown immigrants from elsewhere in the world.

Throughout the first two-thirds of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Europe provided a welcome respite from the strict racial laws in the United States limiting the opportunities for African Americans. At the end of World War I, black American regiments that were disdained in their own country were cheered when they paraded down the Champs-Élysées in Paris. The French also embraced black soldiers from the United States during World War II.

Certainly, fascist movements in Germany and Italy held racist views, which distinguished between ethnic groups that were supposedly “superior” and “inferior,” and African Americans were not immune from the “inferior” category. Nevertheless, from the 1920s through the 1960s, legions of black American artists, writers, and jazz musicians escaped racism at home by fleeing to Europe. Paris, in particular, has been a second home for black intellectuals such as Richard Wright and James Baldwin, and musicians such as Josephine Baker.

The long and positive history of African Americans in Europe has left many Europeans with a positive impression of black America. This is in stark contrast with the discrimination levied against black and brown immigrants from the developing world, and their children, in many European countries.

One possible explanation for the difference in treatment might be a greater focus on perceived cultural differences, as opposed to color differences, in many European societies. While the United States grappled for centuries with slavery and race laws, which defined America’s social order until the 1960s, European countries have had different challenges—learning to accept cultural changes in the process of becoming immigrant nations.

It could also be that many Europeans view African Americans—or at least ones with the means to travel to Europe—as more culturally similar to Europeans than immigrants of color and their children, and associate black Americans with the aspects of the United States they embrace—especially African American art and music, and the historical struggle for freedom and civil rights.<sup>48</sup> It probably helped acceptance that African Americans moved to Europe in much smaller numbers than people of color from other regions.



A heated debate took place in Cologne, Germany regarding plans to build one of the largest mosques in Europe. Over 120,000 Muslims, mostly of Turkish descent, live in Cologne, without an adequate number of houses of worship. Many of the existing mosques are based in warehouses, shops, and factories.<sup>45</sup> The Turkish Islamic Union decided to build a proper mosque and cultural center to serve the population. The city council's plans, however, were met with much resistance in the city, especially from the German right wing, who believed the mosque would encourage a separate Turkish society rather than an integrated one.<sup>46</sup> In August 2008, the Cologne city council voted to allow the project, paving the way for construction to get underway. It is expected to be complete in 2010.<sup>47</sup>

While these incidents and many others in Europe over the last decade have fueled debate, they have not produced coherent answers on how to manage the racial, religious, and cultural changes taking place throughout the European Union.

The overwhelming preference European publics had for Barack Obama over John McCain, and the ensuing outpouring of joy at his election demonstrated a hunger for a change in U.S. policy. But it also showed that most Europeans were comfortable with the idea of an African-American Western leader. In a BBC World Service poll conducted shortly before the 2008 U.S. presidential elections, respondents stated their preference for Obama over McCain in all 22 countries where the poll was conducted.<sup>49</sup> In fact, Obama was preferred by a four-to-one margin among the 22,000 individuals surveyed in countries such as Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom.<sup>50</sup> Ironically, even countries such as Italy and France, which have had significant problems integrating minority populations from Africa and elsewhere, were among those favoring Obama the most.

Despite Europe's own postcolonial racial problems, there was a pervasive sentiment in many EU countries that at least Europe was not as bad as the United States. The election of Obama has changed that to some extent and brought about a certain degree of soul searching in Europe. As French journalist Mohamed Hamidi recently noted, "They always said, 'You think race relations are bad here in France, check out the U.S.' but that argument can no longer stand."<sup>51</sup>

The U.S. elections have also brought about a vigorous European debate about whether an Obama is even possible in Europe. The consensus seems to be "no," at least not anytime soon. In France, for example, there is only one black deputy elected to the National Assembly from mainland France. Similarly, in Italy there is only one black member of the Italian Parliament and in Germany only five members of the 613-seat Bundestag are of Turkish descent.<sup>52</sup> Rama Yade, the Senegal-born state secretary for human rights in France, refers to herself as "a painful exception" in French government, and states that "[t]he enthusiasm [the political elite] express toward this far-away American, they don't have it for minorities in France."<sup>53</sup>

There are, however, positive signs of progress. The recent election of Cem Özdemir, Germany's best-known ethnic Turkish politician, to chairman of Germany's Green Party (the first ethnic individual to head a major political party in Germany) and the election of Moroccan-born Ahmed Aboutaleb as mayor of Rotterdam are encouraging developments.<sup>54</sup>



AP PHOTO/FRANK AUGSTEIN

A counter protestor wears a bib reading “We block it—no racism in our Cologne” in front of a banner reading “Stop Islam in Cologne.”

In the private sector, many European businesses are making progress on the diversity front, but they still have much work to do. Forty-two percent of companies that participated in a 2005 European Commission survey believed diversity resolved issues of labor shortages and was the source of high-quality staff. Thirty-eight percent noted that it enhanced a company’s standing and reputation within a local community.<sup>55</sup> But approximately half of the companies surveyed have yet to implement any diversity policy, with the main obstacles in promoting diversity being a lack of information and awareness of diversity practices, difficulty in measuring results, and discriminatory attitudes in the workplace.<sup>56</sup>

# European Union and integration policy

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## European Commission efforts on integration

While national governments within Europe retain the primary responsibility for developing and enforcing integration laws, regulations, and practices,<sup>57</sup> the European Union, through the European Commission, plays a significant role in creating integration benchmarks for its member states.<sup>58</sup> The commission has been fulfilling this role for the past several years by providing basic principles and best practices for its member states, while also urging EU countries to improve their efforts toward integration.<sup>59</sup>

Additionally, the commission works to coordinate integration policy standards among member states and monitors to ensure that they are appropriately upheld.<sup>60</sup> Among its roles, the commission functions as a forum for its member states to discuss common challenges and to pursue cooperative strategies.<sup>61</sup>

Promoting cohesiveness in EU integration standards has become critical as the European Union has opened its borders. If one member state fails to adequately address integration challenges and prevent the social exclusion of immigrant and minority groups, it could have an adverse affect on other EU states.<sup>62</sup> While the disenfranchised and excluded are not the only individuals to be targeted for recruitment by radical elements, they are certainly among the vulnerable. At the same time, however, the European Union strives to keep its integration policies separate from those designed to combat terrorist recruitment for fear of creating an environment where certain populations may feel unfairly targeted.<sup>63</sup>

In November 2004, the European Union established a framework for integration policy throughout Europe, “The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU,” as part of the Hague Programme, where integration had been designated as one of the top strategic priorities for the creation of an “area of freedom, security, and justice” in the European Union.<sup>64</sup> To that end, 11 principles were developed:

1. Integration is a two-way commitment between the immigrant population and the population of the host nation.
2. Integration should imply a respect for the European Union’s fundamental freedoms, values, and civics.
3. Employment is key to the integration process; nations must fight discrimination and assist in securing a job.

4. Basic knowledge of the language, history, civic systems, and culture are vital aspects of integration.
5. There must be a focus on education so that immigrants can be active and successful citizens of the host nation.
6. Immigrants must be provided access to institutions, public goods, and services in a manner that is equal to national citizens without discrimination.
7. There must be efforts to include the immigrant populations in daily life and local activities. It is important so as not to have a barrier between migrants and national citizens.
8. The respect for diverse cultures and the right to practice religious beliefs must be promoted and guaranteed as per the Charter of Fundamental Rights.
9. Immigrants should be allowed to participate in democratic politics, particularly on the local level as it supports integration.
10. Integration policies and measures must be relevant parts of policy at all levels of government.
11. Developing clear goals, indicators, and mechanisms of evaluation to accumulate data so as to evaluate progress and improve integration efforts.

The principles are not legally binding for the member states. Rather, they are considered “soft law,” or a soft policy method for the integration of immigrants in the European Union.<sup>65</sup> Overall, the commission’s efforts are not intended to replace national laws, but are instead meant to be a guide and complementary to state integration efforts.

The commission issued a *Handbook on Integration for Policymakers and Practitioners* as a tool to put the principles into practice.<sup>66</sup> In April 2009, the commission launched the inaugural meeting of the European Integration Forum, a platform for dialogue on integration challenges and priorities, as well as a website with relevant links for integration officials in EU countries. In addition, the EU established an integration fund to support its ongoing integration efforts. According to the European Commission, €825 million has been allotted to the fund so far, 93 percent of which is distributed directly to EU member state governments. The other 7 percent is left for European-wide projects known as “community actions.”

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## European Commission antidiscrimination legislation

The European Union also plays a direct role in combating discrimination in EU member states. Such efforts are, of course, critical to member state integration aims. Unlike the Common Basic Principles, EU antidiscrimination laws are mandatory. The European Union also funds research, programs, and awareness campaigns to combat discrimination.<sup>67</sup>

In 2000, the EU adopted two directives—commonly referred to as the Article 13 Directives—banning certain types of discrimination in member states, with each country given until 2003 to incorporate the directives into national law.<sup>68</sup> The Racial Equality Directive requires equal treatment of people in employment and training,

education, social security, housing, health care, and access to goods and services irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.<sup>69</sup> The Employment Equality Directive requires equal treatment in employment and training regardless of religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, or age.<sup>70</sup> These directives apply to all public- and private-sector employers.<sup>71</sup>

Under the Article 13 Directives, all EU member states are required to designate “National Equality Bodies” for the promotion of equal treatment. These bodies are expected to provide independent assistance to the victims of discrimination, conduct surveys and studies, and publish independent reports and recommendations. Member states are obligated to give victims of discrimination the right to lodge complaints through a judicial or administrative procedure, and to ensure that appropriate penalties are imposed on those violating the law.<sup>72</sup>

While the legislation refers specifically to bodies concerned with racial discrimination, many countries have also decided to set up bodies that will cover other grounds of discrimination. In addition, victims of discrimination can be supported by nongovernmental organizations or trade unions, which have a legitimate interest in their case. The burden of proving discrimination is shared between the accuser and the accused—the accuser must attempt to prove that he or she experienced discrimination, and the accused must prove that there was no discrimination.<sup>73</sup>

In July 2008, a proposal was issued for a new council directive to expand the “equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation” outside the labor market.<sup>74</sup> It sets a minimum level of protection for all EU citizens, but member states may increase the levels of protection should they so choose. The proposal is still under discussion.

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## Analysis

While the European Union has made significant progress this decade in developing integration guidelines and antidiscrimination laws for member states, there is still substantial work to be done in follow-through at the state level. As previously noted, many immigrant and minority groups throughout the European Union continue to have difficulty integrating effectively in schools, neighborhoods, and the workplace. Despite a July 2003 deadline for the 15 “older” EU member states to incorporate the Racial Equality Directive and Employment Equality Directive into national law,<sup>75</sup> enforcement continues to be a problem throughout Europe.<sup>76</sup>

In June 2007, the European Commission sent formal requests to 14 member states (Spain, Sweden, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Ireland, United Kingdom, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, and Slovakia) to fully implement rules on racial equality or face sanction in the European Court of Justice. Deficiencies cited included national legislation limited to the workplace, and not covering housing, education, and access to

All EU member states are required to designate “National Equality Bodies” for the promotion of equal treatment.

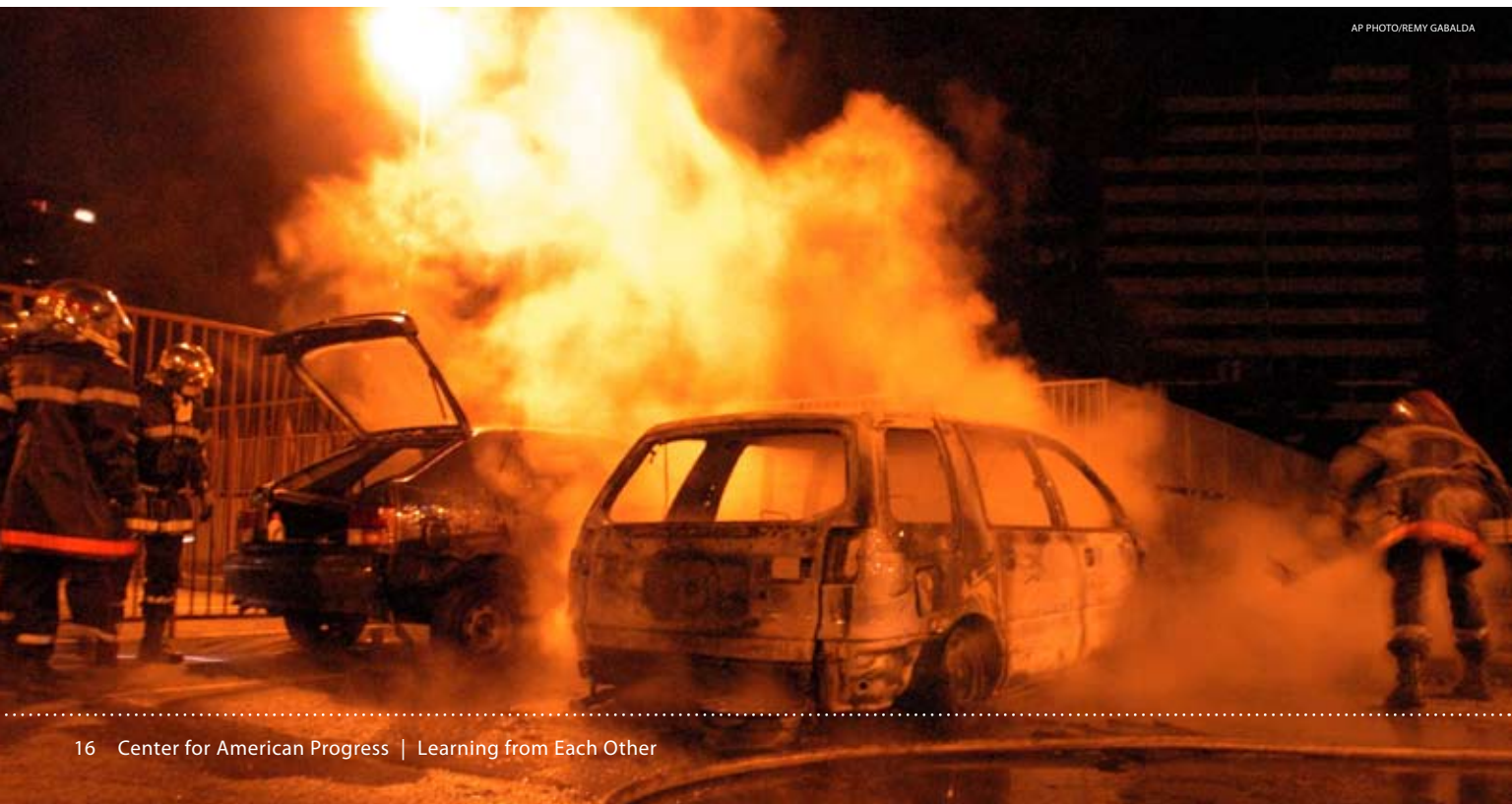
goods and services; definitions of discrimination that differ from the EU directives; and inconsistencies in the provisions established to help victims of discrimination.<sup>77</sup> In January 2008, a similar notice was sent to 11 member states (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, France, Italy, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Finland, and Sweden) for similar lax enforcement of the employment equality directives.<sup>78</sup>

For the most part, EU countries do not keep racial or ethnic data, and thus are unable to track trends that could be helpful in fighting discrimination.<sup>79</sup> Racial profiling by police has not been addressed at the European level, but nongovernment organizations have conducted studies showing that it is indeed a problem in EU countries.<sup>80</sup> Anonymous testing also shows that discrimination in the workplace is pervasive throughout Europe. The Roma, Sub-Saharan Africans, North Africans, and those from the former Soviet Union face some of the greatest problems with profiling.<sup>81</sup>

A 2004 study by the French think tank Institut Montaigne that sent out fictitious resumes to over 200 French employers found that applicants with traditional French names were five times as likely to receive calls for an interview as were those with identical resumes but Arabic or North African names.

The study's recommendation to institute anonymous application processes that shield information on the applicants' name, age, sex, and place of residence from initial reviewers has been implemented by some large French companies, including Peugeot, the Total energy group, and the national railway, among others. But these "anonymizing" practices still prevent the collection of hard data about the diversity of workforce populations or prevalence of discrimination.<sup>82</sup>

French firefighters try to extinguish cars set alight by rioters in La Reynerie housing complex in southwestern France in November 2005.



AP PHOTO/REMY GABALDA

In a potentially fruitful move, the French government recently launched a commission to investigate ways to measure the country's ethnic make-up for the first time. The goal would be to assess how effective current policies are in combating discrimination. The plan, however, is being met with resistance from opponents who say it violates long-standing French egalitarian principles.

Another study conducted in 2006 discovered that there was a great disparity between the levels of protection between member states. Many studies have been conducted on the multiple discriminations to which people are subjected. A foreign-born Muslim woman, for example, is at a much greater risk of being discriminated against than a foreign-born Christian man.<sup>83</sup>

According to large proportions of Europeans, discrimination in Europe is a major obstacle for minorities. Sixty-four percent of EU citizens believe discrimination due to ethnic origin is "widespread" within the European Union.<sup>84</sup> Fifty-one percent do not believe their country is doing enough to fight discrimination. In line with these sentiments, the European Union has had to sanction 22 out of 27 member states for violating antidiscrimination directives.<sup>85</sup>

By and large, it can be said that in Europe most parliaments have been hesitant to implement diversity legislation. Professional associations, which are mostly self-regulating, have not been at the forefront of diversity efforts either. One factor is the tradition of temporary immigration and guest worker mechanisms that expect workers to return to their home countries when their employment is terminated.

As a result of this history, integration programs differ from the American emphasis on equal opportunity and focus on employment-relevant education and skills development. Debates also address decentralized support programs within immigrant communities and some argue in favor of more direct links between government and professional associations, especially regarding rules for professional certification for immigrants. Recently, Germany's largest bank, Deutsche Bank, decided to aggressively move into the market of the migrant community and established Deutsche Bank "Bankamiz" ("The Bank for Us") with financial products targeting first-, second-, and third-generation immigrants and provided bilingual Turkish-German staffers in 10 of its branches in Berlin and Cologne.

# German integration policy— a case study

While each EU country has its own integration challenges, Germany's guest worker history and large minority population make its integration experience particularly useful as a case study for integration in Europe. It is also an important indicator for similar problems that might arise in the United States in the future.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Germany took in hundreds of thousands of guest workers—and, in subsequent decades, a great number of labor migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and family members seeking reunification—leaving Germany with an immigrant population of over 10 million, or about 13 percent of the population.<sup>86</sup> Germany has the second-largest population of immigrants from Muslim countries in Western Europe—over 3 million out of a population of nearly 83 million.<sup>87</sup>

The majority of that Muslim population in Germany is of Turkish decent. There are currently 2 million ethnic Turks in the country, many of whom are second and third generation, comprising 26 percent of the immigrant population and the largest immigrant group in the country.<sup>88</sup> In 2005, a census found that almost 20 percent of the German population has some form of migrant background.<sup>89</sup>

Despite Germany's fairly long migrant history, the country has only recently begun to address its integration challenges in a more comprehensive manner.<sup>90</sup>

## Key German Naturalization Guidelines

- Eight-year minimum residence requirement (can be reduced to seven years if integration course is completed).
- Must declare allegiance to German constitution and have sufficient command of German language.
- Must pass citizenship test.
- Background check required (convicted criminals can be excluded).
- Must give up previous citizenship in most instances.
- Must be able to support oneself without social assistance or unemployment benefits.





SUZI EMMERLING/CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS

During Germany's heavy migration phase, there was a common perception that the new arrivals were in the country on a temporary basis. Only in recent years has there been more of an acceptance of Germany as a nation of immigrants.

While many of the original guest workers—including Greeks and Italians—returned to their native countries, the subsequent groups—mainly Turks, Yugoslavs, and North Africans—stayed and eventually brought family members to join them.<sup>91</sup> In the early 1980s, the conservative government promoted the return of immigrants to their home countries, which paid thousands of deutschmarks to those unemployed foreigners that returned home.<sup>92</sup> Only a small number of immigrants, who were planning to go back anyway, took the cash.

A new, progressive government introduced a revised citizenship law in 1999, which moved Germany away from the concept of citizenship based on ancestry. This was a positive step forward in integration efforts; however, based upon the conditions attached, it applies to only half of the children born to non-national parents in Germany. Germany, which has the largest non-national population in the European Union, consistently has some of the lowest naturalization figures vis-à-vis the non-national population in the Union.<sup>93</sup>

Most major socio-cultural institutions in Germany are struggling on the integration front, including churches, labor unions, political parties, and educational institutions. Only a small percentage of schoolteachers in Berlin share an ethnic background with their students. In

Days after Germany defeated Turkey in the semifinals of the 2008 European Championship for the World Cup, these Berliners take their afternoon tea in the predominantly ethnic-Turkish neighborhood of Kreuzberg, under the flags of both countries.

addition, given Germany's poor record of incorporating those of Turkish descent and other minorities into the higher levels of the German school system, they are often faced with an early disadvantage, which negatively affects their ability to integrate into the mainstream of German society in later years. This will have consequences for Germany's future workforce, which is shrinking at an alarming rate. To replace the workforce, Germany would require 3.6 million immigrants per year between 2000 and 2050.<sup>94</sup>

Overall, Germany's struggles with integration demonstrate the extent to which the European Union's integration goals and basic principles have yet to fully take root in EU member states. While there have been notable breakthroughs of German-Turkish politicians, academics, businesspersons, artists, and television personalities, these successes have been crowded out by the challenges the greater immigrant and minority communities are facing in Germany.

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## Government integration structure and courses

Both local and federal entities are responsible for integration policy in Germany. The state—or Länder—governments are responsible for social and political integration, and for administering education, religious, and naturalization policies. Individual states have the option of adding additional requirements to the naturalization process. The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees offers integration courses to teach language, the legal system, culture, and history.

These courses are mandatory for new immigrants who are unable to communicate in German but have been granted a residence permit, with additional preschool language requirements for their children. All others are “entitled” to attend, but not required. Benefits are cut for noncompliance.<sup>95</sup> Paid employees, self-employed individuals, those rejoining family members, refugees, and asylum seekers are entitled to participate in an integration course if they are residents of Germany and their first residence permit was issued after January 1, 2005.<sup>96</sup> Individuals who entered Germany before this date are in principle not entitled to participate in an integration course, but may be allowed to take part upon request.

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## Education

Students with immigrant backgrounds have traditionally been disadvantaged in the German educational system. Children are only ages 10 to 12 when their high school is chosen for them.<sup>97</sup> Germany's three-track system—only the highest of which grants a diploma—is largely dependent upon language proficiency. Nearly half of foreign students, and most children from migratory backgrounds, are funneled into the lowest educational track (*Hauptschule*), which primarily prepares them for low-skilled jobs. Only 14 percent of foreign students go to a pre-university *Gymnasium*, compared to the national average of more than twice that figure.<sup>98</sup>

Efforts are being undertaken to insist that only German is spoken on school playgrounds, but there is no concerted effort to raise the level of fluency among youth.<sup>99</sup> Many critics of the German school system also believe that more respect should be shown in the classroom for Turkish culture, perhaps through offering Turkish language courses.

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## Employment

There are also significant integration challenges in the labor market, even between migrants and German-born citizens with similar education levels.<sup>100</sup> According to a 2003-04 report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the unemployment rate for foreign-born residents with little education was 20 percent among the industrialized democracies of the OECD, compared to 15.6 percent for those born in Germany.<sup>101</sup> The gap is even higher for those with higher education: nearly 13 percent unemployment for foreign-born residents and 4 percent for native Germans.<sup>102</sup> In addition, three times as many ethnic Turks live on welfare than Germans.<sup>103</sup>



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## Housing

Compared to education and the labor market, Germany has been successful in its housing integration efforts, largely avoiding ghettos and preventing culturally specific migrant concentrations by requiring immigrant quotas in all subsidized housing. In Berlin, for example, there are no apartment buildings where only ethnic Turks live.<sup>104</sup> Immigrant neighborhoods are often located at city centers so youth feel connected and communities have access to resources like neighborhood councils, civil society organizations, and after-school services.<sup>105</sup>

Posters like this one adorn the walls of a vocation training center in Berlin as part of a campaign run by the City of Berlin, and sponsored by the EU, to educate young migrants. The campaign aims to encourage youth of migrant backgrounds to expand their horizons and increase competences to enter the workforce.

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## Antidiscrimination efforts in Germany

A number of statutory provisions offer protection against discrimination within the German legal system, including Articles 3, 33, 136, and 140 of the German Basic Law. The most recent piece of significant legislation on the issue, the General Law on Equal Treatment (*Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz*, or AGG), was established in August 2006

to incorporate the European Union’s antidiscrimination directives into German law. The law, which covers education, goods and services—including housing—and employment, bars discrimination on the basis of race or ethnic origin, gender or sexual orientation, religion or belief, and age or disability.

The AGG also established the Federal Antidiscrimination Agency, which is tasked with providing information on legal claims, resources, and referrals for those seeking to file complaints, and conducting studies on discrimination in Germany, but which lacks the enforcement powers of the U.S. Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division.<sup>106</sup>

In summarizing German immigration and integration policies, the European Commission-sponsored Migrant Integration Policy Index, or MIPEX, described the country as having “a consistently average performance.” The country was credited with slightly better than average political participation and family reunion practices, but faulted for limiting the legal standing of nongovernmental organizations—and the Federal Antidiscrimination Agency—to directly support victims in discrimination court cases.<sup>107</sup> In addition, the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance, or ECRI, has expressed concerns over reports that members of visible minority groups are being disproportionately targeted by police for checks and controls in public places.<sup>108</sup>

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## Analysis

Overall, the integration record in Germany has been mixed. Despite individual professional breakthroughs by those of Turkish descent and success in integrating residential communities, many challenges remain. Perhaps most problematic is the structure of the German school system, which severely limits the integration potential for immigrant and minority youth by funneling the majority of them into basic training programs. Thirty percent of Turkish immigrants and their children lack a school graduation certificate, and only 14 percent graduate from the country’s college preparatory high schools, half the average of the German population as a whole.<sup>109</sup>

Discrimination in the workplace, lack of political participation, and socioeconomic inequality are also major barriers to effective integration. A Bertelsmann Foundation study estimated that failed immigration practices are costing the country up to \$20 billion annually.<sup>110</sup>

While Germany should be lauded for changing its restrictive citizenship laws in recent years, the fact that dual citizenship is not allowed in most instances may prove to be a long-term obstacle to effective integration. There is still a sense among many Germans of Turkish descent that they are more Turkish than German, and viewed as such by most Germans. The lack of a dual citizenship option leads many with immigrant backgrounds to believe that they must choose between the lesser of two evils: being officially German but a second-class citizen, or maintaining another nationality and residing in Germany without full citizenship rights.

A recent integration study by the Berlin Institute for Population and Development found that the Turkish minority in Germany still lags significantly behind the rest of the population in terms of educational achievement, pay, and employment. The German Interior Minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, suggested in response that “Integration also requires people to take a decision. They have to want to integrate themselves.”<sup>111</sup> Some have criticized the study for placing the onus to integrate so heavily on the minority population, noting that serious structural and social impediments in the majority society present a real barrier to those who would seek to become more fully German.

It is a positive development, however, that the German grand coalition government—supported by several community organizations and foundations—is currently making a significant push to improve the integration of Muslims in Germany.<sup>112</sup> In addition to holding meetings between the government and Muslim communities, Chancellor Angela Merkel upgraded the position of federal commissioner for migration, refugees, and integration to a cabinet-level post.<sup>113</sup> Those championing Germany’s integration efforts also note that Turkish immigrants have not been associated with any significant unrest or terrorism over the years, in contrast to Muslim immigrants in France and the United Kingdom.<sup>114</sup> Critics, however, believe that the absence of French-style riots is due to the fact that immigrants in Germany have been so marginalized that they do not have high expectations.

# U.S. immigration and integration policy

In spite of being a country largely shaped by immigration, the United States does not have longstanding, formal “integration” policies. While the federal government has “exclusive authority” to admit and deport people through its control over immigration policy, in practice, the responsibility of integration has historically been shared by state and local governments, and by the communities where immigrants choose to settle.

With the failure of comprehensive immigration reform in 2007, no federal laws explicitly promote social, economic, or civic integration. As a result, integration emerges on a local level through trial and error, and is shaped by variables in each community, including demographics and previous experiences with immigrants. Private-sector employers play a particularly important role in facilitating their employees’ integration by providing them with the training and economic means to establish a role in the larger community.

One area where the federal government has had a notable impact in framing the integration process has been the long-established practice of birthright citizenship, granted automatically to children born on U.S. territory, even to those whose parents may be undocumented immigrants. This practice, derived from a political conception of America as a nation of immigrants that dates back to the founding fathers, stands in noted contrast to many European countries, where even third and fourth generations are not recognized as citizens.<sup>115</sup>

Existing federal antidiscrimination and civil rights laws do offer a measure of protection and legal redress for those who suffer on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, and, in some cases, citizenship. While there are a significant number of civil rights violations reported in the United States every year, the existence of a professional and experienced federal bureaucracy dedicated to redressing these issues is one point where the United States can genuinely take pride in its accomplishments relative to its European counterparts over the past fifty years.

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## Federal immigration policy: Federal role and structure

Despite past failures to live up to the principles set out in the country’s founding documents, several landmark pieces of progressive legislation in the late 1950s and 1960s, the result of a concerted effort by national protest movements and civic organizing, helped usher in the

establishment of a federal infrastructure dedicated to enforcing antidiscrimination measures, however imperfectly. These enforcement mechanisms, enacted over the considerable protest of state-level power structures at the time who sought to preserve a legacy of black Americans as second-class citizens, offer a promise of legal recourse to both immigrants and native-born citizens who face barriers in their becoming full members of U.S. society.

Principle federal civil rights legislation includes the 1957, 1964, and 1968 Civil Rights Acts, and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which collectively established the independent, bipartisan, and jointly appointed: Commission on Civil Rights; the office of an Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights and a Civil Rights Division within the Justice Department; the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; and the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity within the Department of Housing and Urban Development. There were over 32,800 civil rights cases filed in U.S. district courts in 2006, according to the most recent Department of Justice statistics.<sup>116</sup>

In 2003, partially in response to security failings that came to light after the attacks of September 11, 2001, the Bush administration restructured national immigration, customs, and border patrol operations, which had previously been separate components of the Departments of Justice, Treasury, and Agriculture. Three agencies were established and placed under the purview of the newly established Department of Homeland Security (DHS): U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection Service (CBP).

USCIS is responsible for administering immigration and naturalization adjudication functions and establishing immigration services policies and priorities. These functions include the adjudication of immigrant visa and naturalization petitions.<sup>117</sup> USCIS also houses the

Holding aloft a U.S. flag, immigration rights demonstrators march in Los Angeles in May 2006. Hundreds of thousands of people took part in the demonstration meant to show both support for immigration reform and opposition to legislation that would criminalize the actions of an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants.



AP PHOTO/STEFANO PALTERA

Office of Citizenship, tasked with fostering immigrant integration and participation in American civic culture through the development of education and training resources.

ICE, formed by combining the law enforcement arms of the former Immigration and Naturalization Service and the former U.S. Customs Service, is the largest and primary investigative arm of DHS. It is tasked with more effectively enforcing our immigration and customs laws.<sup>118</sup> CBP, also one of DHS's largest and most complex components, has as its mission keeping terrorists and their weapons out of the United States. It also has responsibility for securing and facilitating trade and travel while enforcing hundreds of U.S. regulations, including immigration and drug laws.<sup>119</sup> Collectively, these three agencies consume 37 percent of the DHS budget and employ over 84,000 people.<sup>120</sup>

The Department of Education also plays an important role in allocating resources for the purpose of improving the performance of limited-English-proficient students and adult literacy programs, through the Office of English Language Acquisition, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, and English Literacy and Civics Education Program,<sup>121</sup> among other initiatives. Grant money is allocated for the purpose of meeting English proficiency standards and increasing civic education programs primarily through the statutes of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, which is “the major source of federal support for adult basic education and literacy education programs,”<sup>122</sup> and the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act.<sup>123</sup>

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## Recent federal initiatives on integration

In 2006, President Bush issued an executive order convening a “Task Force on New Americans” in order to strengthen the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security and federal, state, and local agencies to help legal immigrants embrace the common core of American civic culture, learn our common language, and fully become Americans.”<sup>124</sup> The task force established that American identity was not determined by religious and cultural traditions, but rather by embracing the principles of democracy, identifying with U.S. history, and communicating in English.

Headed by then-Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff, and comprising other top-level cabinet members, task force objectives include improving access to federal information and resources for new immigrants; encouraging volunteerism among U.S. citizens and newcomers; providing training and technical resources to organizations that serve immigrants; and gathering input on successful immigrant integration practices.<sup>125</sup>

In its concluding report, the task force issued calls for a national effort on the part of federal, state, and local governments, as well as community organizations, educators, members of the private sector, employee groups, philanthropies, and service groups to promote immigrant integration, with the federal government in a coordinating and facilitating role.



## U.S. citizenship and naturalization processes

Citizenship of the United States can be attained in one of three ways; by birth, either within the territory of the United States or to U.S. citizen parents; by adoption if the child is under the age of 18 and is adopted by a U.S. citizen and immigrates to the United States; or by the legal naturalization process.<sup>126</sup> While there are multiple paths to apply for lawful permanent resident status,<sup>127</sup> most commonly immigrants come to the United States through sponsorship by a family member who is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident,<sup>128</sup> or by a U.S. employer<sup>129</sup> and are subject to preference systems within each path.

Naturalization processes can vary depending on the circumstances under which a person establishes their lawful permanent resident status, but 90 percent of applicants fall into a category that meets the following requirements:

- Applicants must be 18 years old or older.
- Applicants must have lived in the United States as a lawful permanent resident for five continuous years (or three years if married to a U.S. citizen).

- Applicants must have maintained a physical presence in the United States for 30 months (half of the statutory period).
- Applicants must have lived in the USCIS district or state in which they are applying for at least three months.
- Applicants must have good moral character.
- Applicants must have English and civics knowledge.
- Applicants must have an attachment to the Constitution.<sup>130</sup>

From 1996-2008, the U.S. population grew from 200 million to 300 million people, and immigrants account for 55 percent of that growth.<sup>131</sup> According to DHS figures, 1.05 million people became permanent legal residents of the United States in 2007, and 660,000 became naturalized citizens. By 2050, estimates suggest that the foreign born population will account for 19 percent of total U.S. population. For context, a recent AP story reported a total of 7.7 million applications had been submitted to USCIS for “various immigration benefits,”<sup>132</sup> and the resultant backlog is expected to take at least until 2010 to fully process, although this varies by district.<sup>133</sup> The number of undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States was estimated to be between 11.5 million and 12 million in 2006.<sup>134</sup>

The report recommended strengthening civic education in American political principles for native-born citizens as well as immigrants at primary, secondary, and collegiate levels and through broader public campaigns. The task force’s initiatives include:

- The development of a collection of hard-copy and Internet resources geared toward immigrant-serving organizations, schools, and libraries.
- The *Civics and Citizenship Toolkit*, containing educational resources, study materials and teaching aids that have been distributed to over 6,000 public libraries and 9,000 immigrant-serving organizations nationwide.
- The WelcometoUSA.gov website, collecting government resources and information relevant to re-settling in a single portal.
- The “New Americans Project Search Engine,” designed to link new immigrants and U.S. citizens with volunteer opportunities and provide training and technical resources for public institutions and immigrant-serving community groups.

The task force endorsed a proposal in the 2007 Senate Compromise Immigration Reform Bill to establish State Immigration Councils, to bring together state and local governments, nongovernmental organizations and private groups to develop local integration programs and strategies, and recommended incorporating all of these resources into the immigrant application process at U.S. embassies and consulates overseas.

In July 2008, Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA), Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), and then-Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) introduced the Strengthening Communities through Education and Integration Act, which would address several of the DHS report's recommendations. It sought to increase appropriations funding for adult English literacy programs and elementary and secondary English education; provide grants to states to establish programming for immigrant integration; and expand the mandate of the Office of Citizenship in DHS to include the establishment of national goals on integration and assessment of existing policies.<sup>135</sup> Despite support from a broad range of business, labor, and civic organizations, neither bill emerged from committee prior to the end of the 110th Congress.

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### Analysis

While the recommendations of the New Americans Task Force hold solid potential, and the Strengthening Communities bill, if reintroduced, offers an opportunity to put these ideas into force, they are not a solution to all aspects of the integration issue. With a focus primarily on civic and English-language education for first and second-generation Americans, measures and mechanisms of political participation and economic and social mobility are only dealt with briefly in the task force report.

Furthermore, the natural focus by DHS on newly arrived citizens neglects the persistent alienation of some segments of existing minority populations from the American socio-economic mainstream. One needs only to observe the stubborn persistence of largely segregated schools and neighborhoods in many American cities to understand that much work still needs to be done on the integration front outside of language education and the programs for newcomers.

The establishment of state-level coordinating bodies as proposed by the task force is a beginning, but the European Union's goals of establishing suprastate-level guiding principles may offer a helpful model to follow, provided they are married to actual enforcement capabilities. The multifaceted nature of the issue suggests that integration goals would be best served through the establishment of a White House-level office capable of bringing together the relevant offices of the Departments of Justice, Labor, Homeland Security, Education, and Housing and Urban Development to better coordinate policy efforts across the federal government; the new Obama administration has already established similar coordinating offices, such as the Office of Urban Policy. The Office of Citizenship within the Department of Homeland Security, while focused on education for recent immigrants, offers a potential starting point for this work.

# Policy recommendations for the United States and the European Union

The integration of immigrant communities and minority populations is a public policy and security challenge for both the European Union and the United States. As both sides work to develop new federal and supranational-level policy tools and guidelines for addressing this issue, there is much we can learn from each other.

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## For the United States

### Expand the current focus

The founding principles of the United States have built a public consensus for a national identity that draws on our history as a nation of immigrants and sees value in our growing diversity. The development—still ongoing today—of a robust system of civil rights legislation, and the mechanisms for its enforcement, has helped combat discrimination in housing, employment, and education, which are major barriers to effective integration.

But our current approach is still too ad-hoc, too focused on bilingual education for the young, and not focused enough at the integration challenges of second and third generation immigrants. This needs to change.

### National-level commitment to better coordinate local and state-level efforts

The president, Congress, and other federal agencies should do more to publicly promote the cause of integration, through increased civic education, volunteerism, and federal hiring practices. One way to signal this commitment would be through the establishment of a National Office of Integration in the White House, in addition to or as an expansion of the mandate of the existing DHS Office of Citizenship.

Integration at its heart remains a process that occurs on the local level, but this federal-level body could serve a coordinating and resource-sharing role between the Department of Homeland Security, which holds primary responsibility for the immigration and naturalization process; the Department of Justice, with its extensive civil rights and antidiscrimina-

tion mandates; the Department of Education, with its role in improving English language proficiency for non-native speakers; the Department of Housing and Urban Development, responsible for fair housing; government at the state and local level; and private sector groups. The United States should closely review the difficulty Europe is having in getting the Common Basic Principles established at the European Commission level to trickle down into individual member states in conjunction with any moves to federalize U.S. integration efforts.

The office could also undertake activities similar to that of the European Union Agency of Fundamental Rights, or FRA. The FRA provides assistance to the European Union on issues of fundamental rights while simultaneously working to increase awareness of discrimination, racism, and xenophobia within the EU population through various research projects. With the help of a policy monitoring tool similar to the European Commission's Migrant Integration Policy Index, or MIPEX, the office could oversee integration practices of individual states.<sup>136</sup>

#### Start the process of integration at the first points of contact

The Department of Homeland Security's efforts to create resources for newly arrived immigrants should be encouraged and expanded, and be included as part of the initial visa application process in U.S. embassies around the world. At the local level, law enforcement authorities often become one of the most visible points of contact, setting a tone for wider community relations in their interactions with immigrants.

Too often, police lack the resources to communicate with non-English speaking newcomers, who frequently distrust law enforcement because of experiences in their homelands. A focus on immigration status, rather than a holistic approach that also views newcomers as potential victims and witnesses, can further antagonize relations.

#### Provide resources beyond the first point of contact

Providing civic orientation resources for new immigrants is an important first step, but more resources must also be provided to educators, employers, and government agencies to continue the process of integration beyond arrival, into the second-generation, and beyond. Improved access to English-language education for adults and their children are part of this process, as is the continuing mission of the Justice Department's civil rights division and broader efforts to expand economic opportunity in the United States for both recent and long-established citizens alike.

Too often, police lack the resources to communicate with non-English speaking newcomers, who frequently distrust law enforcement because of experiences in their homelands.

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## For the European Union

### Translate common vision for integration goals into enforceable national legislation

The European Union has been successful in creating highly structured, institutionalized programs for integration, but more work needs to be done to coordinate, monitor, and enforce member state practices. The European Union should use the United States as a model for putting greater emphasis on helping member states strengthen antidiscrimination laws and enforce existing regulations.

### Institute metrics to better assess progress toward integration

Europe's resistance to collecting racial and ethnic data, while conducted out of an expressed desire to craft "color blind" policies, ultimately serves to obscure the needs of minority populations and their difficulties integrating into the majority society. Information is vital to fighting discrimination, and European nations should work to collect this data to better inform and target their efforts. The European Union should develop a performance report card on instituting diversity and antidiscrimination measures, similar to the accession progress reports it conducts for new members.

France's recent decision to establish a commission to investigate ways to measure the country's ethnic make-up is a promising development. The United States Census Bureau should serve as a useful model for France and other EU countries.

### Offer a more expansive view of citizenship

While the process of adapting to a new, multiethnic concept of identity cannot be directed from the top by EU policymakers, more can be done to facilitate the successful citizenship application process for its minority populations. Relaxing strict standards on who can pass through the citizenship process and expanding opportunities for dual citizenship will help broaden the national identity, beyond strict country-of-origin qualifications that make integration for even second- and third-generation immigrants prohibitively difficult.

# Endnotes

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