


Doi: 10.30520/tjsosci.1346044**Received Date:** 18.08.2023**Accepted Date:** 12.09.2023**MIGRATION FROM TURKEY TO GERMANY: INTEGRATION POLICY AND THE
GERMAN LANGUAGE**Özlem TEKİN¹**Abstract**

The aim of this article is to assess the extent to which German integration policy with particular regard to the German language has been adopted and modified over time, in the context of Turkish migration to Germany. For this purpose, first the history of migration from Turkey to Germany is outlined, focusing on key events such as the recruitment agreement in the 1960s, the recruitment stop and the 'return assistance' in the 1970s and 1980s, the rise of racism in the 1990s and 2000s, and the emergence of the 'New Turkish Wave' in the 2010s and 2020s. Subsequently, German integration policy and the role of the German language within it will be traced through different phases: the absence of an integration policy in the 1960s and 1970s, Germany's status as an 'immigration country that does not want to be an immigration country' in the 1980s and 1990s, the transition from an immigration act to an integration policy in the 2000s, and the era of 'welcome culture' and concrete integration policy in the 2010s and 2020s. Finally, it will be determined to what extent the integration policy of the Federal Republic of Germany, especially with regard to the German language, is adapted to the lifeworld of Turkish migrants currently living in Germany and thus facilitates their successful integration in Germany.

Keywords: Migration, Turkey, Germany, Integration policy, German language**1. Introduction**

Migration takes place worldwide for a variety of economic, political, social and individual reasons. Migratory movements lead to interactions between societies and cultures, affecting both the migrant population and the host societies. Some host societies accommodate migration into their country by developing integration policies aimed at supporting the social, cultural and economic integration of migrants into their society. In this context, language, i.e., the acquisition of the national language, is of particular importance for the integration process of migrants. It is the most important means of communication in society and therefore knowledge of the national language is an indispensable prerequisite for the integration of migrants. The acquisition of the national language empowers migrants to access education, employment and health services, enables them to participate actively in society and promotes cultural understanding. Acquiring and mastering the language is therefore a crucial factor in the integration process, which affects not only the migrants themselves but also the host society.

¹ Assoc. Prof. Dr., Namık Kemal University, Tekirdağ, Turkey, mail@ozlemtekin.de,  ORCID: 0000-0002-6283-7741

One of the global migratory movements is the migration from Turkey to Germany. For more than sixty years, Germany has been a popular destination for migrants from Turkey. Initially, these were migrants who came to Germany temporarily for work purposes. However, for a variety of reasons, these so-called ‘guest workers’ settled down and their descendants, now in third and fourth generation, are still living in Germany. At present, a ‘new wave’ of Turkish migrants is moving to Germany. These are educated Turks who migrate to Germany for skilled employment and represent a ‘new’ generation of Turkish migrants, distinct from the original Turkish labour migrants and their descendants in Germany. The Federal Republic of Germany has had difficulties in responding to migration from Turkey to Germany. It is only in the last 20 years that a German integration policy has been developed with measures to support the social, cultural and economic integration of Turkish (and other) migrants in Germany. From the outset, the German language has been a priority, as the following statement of a report commissioned by the German government in 2001 makes clear: “Learning the German language in particular is an important prerequisite for integration. Language acquisition is the entry ticket to social, economic and political life in Germany [...]. It is in the interest of both the immigrant and the host society to acquire the language as quickly and thoroughly as possible. Both sides must make an effort to achieve this.” (Unabhängige Kommission „Zuwanderung“, 2001: 201). Since then, Germany has further developed its integration policy measures with regard to the German language and adapted them to the various constellations of, among others, Turkish migrants in Germany.

The aim of this article is to examine, in the context of Turkish migration to Germany, the extent to which the integration policy of the Federal Republic of Germany with regard to the German language has been and is being adopted, developed and adapted to the various migration constellations. To this end, the history of migration from Turkey to Germany is presented in Section 2. This is based on critical stages, namely the recruitment agreement in the 1960s (Section 2.1.), the recruitment stop and the ‘return assistance’ in the 1970s and 1980s (Section 2.2.), the rise of racism in the 1990s and 2000s (Section 2.3.) and the ‘New Turkish Wave’ in the 2010s and 2020s (Section 2.4.). An interim summary of these stages is provided in Section 2.5. On this basis, Section 3 traces German integration policy and the role of the German language in it. The following stages are examined: the absence of an integration policy in the 1960s and 1970s (Section 3.1.), Germany’s status as an ‘immigration country that does not want to be an immigration country’ (Section 3.2.), the transition from an immigration act to an integration policy in the 2000s (Section 3.3.) and the era of a ‘welcome culture’ and concrete integration policy in the 2010s and 2020s (Section 3.4.). Finally, Section 4 summarises the results of this research and answers the question to what extent the integration policy of the Federal Republic of Germany with regard to the German language is adapted to the lifeworld of the Turkish migrant groups currently living in Germany and thus facilitates their successful integration in Germany.

2. Migration from Turkey to Germany

2.1. 1960s – Recruitment Agreement

After the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, the nation experienced rapid and sustained economic expansion, which is later referred to as the ‘economic miracle’ (*Wirtschaftswunder*). While the German economy was booming, the aftermath of the Second World War became visible: a significant number of men perished in the war, and the post-war generation had lower birth rates. This resulted in a labor shortage, which worsened after the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Under the leadership of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer

(in office 1949-1963) and Economics Minister Ludwig Erhard (in office 1949-1963), the government determined that the only solution was to hire foreign workers. As a result, recruitment agreements were signed with the following countries: Italy (1955), Spain (1960), Greece (1960), Morocco (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965) and Yugoslavia (1968). The 'Recruitment Agreement between Germany and Turkey' (*Anwerbeabkommen zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Türkei*, or *Regelung der Vermittlung türkischer Arbeitnehmer nach der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*) was signed on 30 October 1961 (Der Bundesminister für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, 1962).

At the same time, Turkey was facing a situation of economic, social and political instability. The liberalisation of the Turkish economy and the modernisation of agriculture led to an economic crisis and high unemployment, causing social unrest among the population. In addition, a military coup took place in 1960, which was followed by a series of changing coalition governments that were unable to provide any real solutions to the country's existing problems. Thus, the Recruitment Agreement between Germany and Turkey in 1961 offered many Turks in the 1960s an opportunity to escape these hardships and work, albeit temporarily, in Germany.

The German-Turkish Recruitment Agreement laid down various guidelines, including the restriction of Turkish workers' stay in Germany to a maximum of two years (Der Bundesminister für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, 1962: 70). According to the 'rotation principle', Turkish workers were required to return to their home country after two years of service and would then be replaced by new workers as needed. The recruitment agreement also stipulated that Turkish workers were only allowed to come to Germany for the purpose of employment and were not permitted to bring their families with them. In Germany, the Turkish workers were mainly employed in the mining, construction, iron, metal and textile industries. Therefore, the majority of Turkish migrants who came to Germany were unskilled workers. They were usually accommodated in hostels or barracks close to the workplace and had little contact with the German population outside of work. This was reciprocal, as Turkish migrants were often seen by German society only as 'guest workers', mainly due to the temporary nature of their employment.

Although the rotation principle seemed beneficial at first, it turned out to be unfeasible in the long term due to the lack of profitability for the German employers. Therefore, under the leadership of Chancellor Ludwig Erhard (in office 1963-1966) a 'Revision of the Recruitment Agreement' (*Neufassung des Anwerbeabkommens*) came into force on 30 September 1964 (Der Bundesminister für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, 1965). This regulation removed the previous limitations that were imposed on Turkish workers regarding their duration of stay in Germany for a period of two years and reunification with their families. This marked a new milestone in Turkish migration to Germany, as from then on the focus shifted from labour migration to family migration.

2.2. 1970s and 1980s – Recruitment Stop and 'Return Assistance'

Due to the oil crisis in 1973 and the changing global economic situation, there was a decline in demand for labour in Germany. Consequently, on 23 November 1973, the Federal Minister of Labour, Walter Arendt (in office 1969-1976), under the leadership of Chancellor Willy Brandt (in office 1969-1974), announced a 'Recruitment Stop' (*Anwerbestopp*) for non-European workers (Der Bundesminister für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, 1973). The recruitment stop had no effect on foreign workers already residing in Germany, nor on Turkish migrant workers and

their families who had already migrated to Germany. Furthermore, family members living abroad could still join foreign workers in Germany. However, since the introduction of the recruitment stop, new Turkish migrant workers have been banned from entering Germany (Deutsche Welle, 2021).

The recruitment stop caused many Turkish migrant workers to abandon their plans of returning to their home country and to consider permanent residency in Germany. In line with the 1964 revision of the recruitment agreement, Turkish migrant workers increasingly brought their family members from Turkey to Germany through family reunification, which persisted even after the 1973 recruitment stop. Therefore, contrary to the original intention of Germany, the new restrictions did not decrease the number of Turkish migrants living in Germany; but rather, led to an increase in their number, which was primarily due to family migration. From 1961 to 1964, around 85,000 Turkish migrants came to Germany (Hunn, 2011: 9). By 1973, the number had increased to nearly 1 million (Der Spiegel, 1973). Due to continuous family immigration and increased birth rate of the second generation, the total number of Turkish people in Germany exceeded 1.5 million in 1982 (Schührer, 2018: 15).

The second oil crisis in 1979/1980 and the subsequent recession in 1982 resulted in a challenging economic situation in the Federal Republic of Germany, which entailed a rapid increase of unemployment. In addition, the high unemployment rate among Turkish migrants, who were increasingly perceived as unwelcome competitors in the labour market by the German population, was becoming a pressing concern (Hunn, 2011: 50). In response to this issue, Chancellor Helmut Kohl (in office 1982-1998) and Federal Labour Minister Norbert Blüm (in office 1982-1998) passed the 'Return Assistance Act' (*Rückkehrhilfegesetz*, or *Gesetz zur Förderung der Rückkehrbereitschaft von Ausländern*) on 28 November 1983 (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 1983). The purpose of the act was to provide financial incentives for foreign workers to return to their countries of origin and to prevent further immigration to Germany. Specifically, foreigners were offered a 'return bonus' of 10,500 marks per person and 1,500 marks per child to leave Germany permanently within one year. As a condition, foreign workers had to waive any claim to severance pay or other claims against their employers. Consequently, the beneficiaries of this act were compelled to terminate all connections with Germany and permanently repatriate. In this way, foreign workers lost their right to return to Germany and receive a pension there. However, the number of Turkish citizens residing in Germany who actually decided to return to Turkey was significantly lower than originally predicted. In total, only around 300,000 Turkish citizens returned to Turkey (Kizilocak, 2011: 3). This development prompted the German government to realise that the Turkish presence in Germany was not merely temporary.

2.3. 1990s and 2000s – Racism

In the 1990s, Germany was home to migrant workers and their families from several countries including Italy, Spain, Greece, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, and Vietnam. Immigrants of Turkish origin comprised the largest proportion of the immigrant community. For instance, by 1995, the total number of foreigners in Germany reached approximately 7 million (Institut Arbeit und Qualifikation der Universität Duisburg-Essen, n.d.), out of which approximately 2 million were Turkish citizens (Schührer, 2018: 15). The rising number of immigrants became a challenge for German society, particularly in terms of the labour market. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 compounded the existing labour market problems. The rising discontent in Germany led to numerous racist attacks on immigrants during the 1990s. Starting in the east of Germany, the racist incidents later spread to the west as well.

The first racist attack took place in September 1991 in the East German town of Hoyerswerda, where Vietnamese immigrants living in a hostel were attacked. Demonstrators stoned the hostel, threw Molotov cocktails and organised further attacks. The riots of Hoyerswerda marked the beginning of anti-immigrant violence in Germany (Deutsche Welle, 2014). These riots were followed in August 1992 by an attack on a housing estate for asylum seekers and Vietnamese workers in Rostock-Lichtenhagen, eastern Germany. A group stormed the building, threw Molotov cocktails, set fire to the building and attempted to lynch the immigrants (Deutsche Welle, 2012). However, the Mölln arson attack in November 1992 was the first attack on Turkish immigrants, which was also the first attack in western Germany. A neo-Nazi group set fire to two houses of Turkish immigrants with Molotov cocktails in Mölln, Schleswig-Holstein. Three Turkish immigrants died (Norddeutscher Rundfunk, 2022). Thereafter an attack took place in May 1993 in the city of Solingen in the western German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, where most Turkish migrants lived and still live. The Solingen arson attack resulted in the deaths of five Turkish immigrants and raised serious concerns about increasing right-wing extremist violence in Germany (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2023). In summary, the riots and attacks in Hoyerswerda (1991), Rostock-Lichtenhagen (1992), Mölln (1992) and Solingen (1993) show that the racist resentments that began in Germany in the 1970s and 1980s were transformed into physical attacks in the 1990s.

However, the problem of racism and discrimination in Germany was not limited to attacks against Turks. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States had a profound impact on the whole world, including Germany. As a result of the attacks, prejudice and hostility towards Muslims in German society increased. The 11 September attacks damaged the reputation of the Muslim community living in Germany and further fuelled racist and Islamophobic tendencies in German society. Accordingly, Islamophobic prejudices and discriminatory acts against Muslims increased.

Almost a decade after these events, in 2010, German politician and author Thilo Sarrazin published his controversial book 'Germany Abolishes Itself' (*Deutschland schafft sich ab*) (Sarrazin, 2010). The book addresses issues such as cultural differences between migrants and the German population, as well as the integration of immigrants, population change and the role of Islam in Germany. In his book, Sarrazin argues that Turkish, Arab and other immigrant groups living in Germany are usually undereducated and struggle to integrate into German society. He argues that the high birth rates among immigrants would change the demographic structure of Germany and lead to economic and social problems. According to Sarrazin, Islam is gaining more influence in German society, which he considers to be incompatible with the country's democratic values. He claims that certain teachings and cultural practices of Islam violate women's rights, promote violence and undermine social cohesion in Germany. The release of Sarrazin's book sparked controversy and drew criticism upon its publication. It received frequent criticism and was accused of being anti-immigrant and racist. According to some critics, Sarrazin's arguments were fundamentally misleading and discriminatory, and immigrants were an important element contributing to Germany's multicultural structure (Deutsche Welle, 2011).

In summary, the racism in Germany that began in the 1990s, especially against Turkish migrants, took on a new dimension with the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the publication of Thilo Sarrazin's book in 2010. The racism against Turkish immigrants in the 1990s turned into racism against Muslims in the 2000s. Regardless of whether they were actually Muslims or not, this kind of new racism also affected the Turkish immigrants in Germany.

2.4. 2010s and 2020s – ‘New Turkish Wave’

After some 50 years in which Turkish migrants in Germany were predominantly settled first-generation labour migrants and their second- or third-generation descendants, a new, different wave of migrants from Turkey to Germany began in the 2010s. With the Gezi Protests in 2013, and even more so with the attempted coup in 2016, changes in Turkey’s political, social and, more recently, economic climate have led to an increase in the number of people migrating from Turkey to Germany. This latest group of Turkish migrants is referred to as the ‘New Wave’ (*Neue Welle*) or ‘New Turkish Wave’ (*Neue türkische Welle*) (fluter, 2021). In contrast to the earlier ‘waves’ of Turkish migrants, who were mainly labour migrants and their families, the ‘New Turkish Wave’ consists of highly skilled professionals, including doctors, engineers and academics. For this reason, they are often referred to as the “Turkish elite” migrating to Germany (Der Spiegel, 2018). In addition to the aforementioned factors driving Turkish emigration, Germany’s numerous educational and professional opportunities have also contributed to the brain drain from Turkey. Germany, which has been facing a shortage of skilled workers since the 2010s, offers a wide range of educational and professional opportunities in German universities, research institutes and the private sector to ‘new’ Turkish (and other) migrants who have the necessary qualifications and are willing to migrate to Germany. This is still the case today.

2.5. Overview of the Phases of Migration from Turkey to Germany

With regard to the remarks made in Sections 2.1. to 2.4., it can be concluded that the reasons for Turkish migration to Germany have changed over time. Based on important historical events in Germany, Turkey and worldwide and the types of Turkish migration to Germany, the following can be summarised for the four phases of migration from Turkey to Germany from its beginning to date:

Phases	Important Historical Events	Types of Migration from Turkey to Germany
1960s	since 1950s: ‘Economic miracle’ in Germany since 1950s: Economic and political instability in Turkey 1961: Recruitment Agreement between Germany and Turkey 1964: Revision of the Recruitment Agreement	Labour Migration (‘Guest-Workers’) part. Family Migration
1970s / 1980s	1973: Oil Crisis 1973: Recruitment Stop 1979/1980: 2nd Oil Crisis 1983: Return Assistance Act	part. Labour Migration Family Migration
1990s / 2000s	1992: Mölln Arson Attack 1993: Solingen Arson Attack 2001: September 11 Attacks 2010: Thilo Sarrazin’s book ‘Deutschland schafft sich ab’	part. Family Migration
2010s / 2020s	since 2010s: Skills shortage in Germany since 2010s: Changes in Turkey’s political, social and economic climate	Qualified Labour Migration (‘New Turkish Wave’)

Figure 1. Phases of Migration from Turkey to Germany

3. Integration Policy and the German Language

3.1. 1960s and 1970s – Absence of Integration Policy

With the German-Turkish Recruitment Agreement of 30 October 1961, and in particular with the rotation principle (see Section 2.1.), the German government aimed at a temporary stay of Turkish workers, as the term ‘guest workers’ used at the time also indicates. This understanding was based on reciprocity, as the Turkish migrant workers also wanted to work in Germany for a limited time and return to Turkey with their savings. Accordingly, the German government generally did not consider it necessary to take measures to integrate Turkish labour migrants in the 1960s (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2017: 15).

In the context of the ‘Foreigner Policy’ (*Ausländerpolitik*) of the time, the only concern was the ‘inclusion’ (*Eingliederung*) of labour migrants into their new working and living environment, which was supposed to ensure the smooth running of companies and thus the efficiency of the workforce on the one hand, and the smooth interaction of foreign migrants with their German environment on the other (Hunn, 2011: 22). In this context, for example, educational films were produced and shown to teach guest workers about German working and living habits (Südwestrundfunk / Westdeutscher Rundfunk, 2020). However, these efforts were obviously still far from an actual integration policy.

Even the reunification of families, made possible by the Revision of the Recruitment Agreement in 1964 (see Section 2.1.) and reinforced by the Recruitment Stop in 1973 (see Section 2.2.), did not change the behaviour of the federal government. Although a certain degree of integration would now have been necessary, especially, but not only with regard to the education of the children of Turkish migrant workers, “school integration was [indeed] supported by special and foreigner classes, but here too the segregating character of the ethnically divided classes was designed more for a possible return than for long-term integration” (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2017: 16).

In 1978, the German government under Chancellor Helmut Schmidt (in office 1974-1982) established the office of the Federal Government Commissioner for Foreigners’ Issues. Heinz Kühn, the former Minister President of North Rhine-Westphalia, was appointed to this position and thus became the first ‘Federal Government Commissioner for Foreigners’ Issues’ (*Ausländerbeauftragte*) (Rütten, 2013: 33). This brought the issues of migration and integration onto the federal political agenda for the first time (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2017: 16). In the so-called ‘Kühn Memorandum’ of 1979 (Kühn, 1979), the new Commissioner for Foreigners’ Issues strongly criticised the existing foreigners’ policy in terms of labour market policy and contrasted it with an integration policy approach (Rütten, 2013: 33). The focus of the memorandum was on the integration of the children of Turkish migrants growing up in Germany. However, Kühn’s demands went largely unheeded at the political level.

In summary, due to the absence of an adequate integration policy in Germany during the 1960s and 1970s, these decades can clearly be characterised as Germany’s “lost decades” of integration efforts (Kohlmeier & Schimany, 2005: 71). As a result, this situation posed individual and social challenges such as language barriers and cultural differences for Turkish migrant workers and their families, as well as for German society at the time.

3.2. 1980s and 1990s – ‘Immigration Country that Does Not Want to be an Immigration Country’

The first signs of an integration policy, albeit not a real one, did not appear until the 1980s, almost two decades after the German-Turkish Recruitment Agreement of 1961. The Federal Government under Chancellor Helmut Kohl (in office 1982-1998) made foreigner policy an offensive issue on the agenda. The 1982 coalition agreement between the Union Parties CDU/CSU and the Liberal Democratic Party FDP stated: “Foreigners and their families have been living among us in the Federal Republic of Germany for many years. Their integration remains an important task of domestic policy.” (Deutscher Bundestag, 1982: 6). In contrast, the same coalition agreement also asserted: “The Federal Republic of Germany is not an immigration country.” (Deutscher Bundestag, 1982: 6).

In a government statement of 4 May 1983, Chancellor Kohl specified the three principles of the ‘new’ foreigner policy: “[1.] the integration of foreign workers and their families who have lived with us for a long time, [2.] the limitation of further immigration and [3.] the promotion of the willingness to return” (Deutscher Bundestag, 1983: 66-67). Although the ‘integration’ (*Integration*) of labour migrants and their families was openly mentioned and addressed for the first time in the coalition agreement of 1982 and the government declaration of 1983, the Return Assistance Act of 28 November 1983 (see Section 2.2) shows that the focus was primarily on the latter two principles, namely restricting new immigration to Germany and encouraging labour migrants and their families to return to their home countries.

However, due to the fact that many foreigners did not return to their home countries and that by the end of the 1980s there were already 5 million foreigners living in Germany, including the second generation (Institut Arbeit und Qualifikation der Universität Duisburg-Essen, n.d.), a new ‘Foreigners Act’ (*Ausländergesetz*, or *Gesetz zur Neuregelung des Ausländerrechts*) came into force on 1 January 1991 (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 1990).² In this law, for the first time, the residence status of foreigners was made dependent on their knowledge of the German language. Thus, in the case of family reunification, the immigration of a child and the granting of a ‘residence permit’ (*Aufenthaltserlaubnis*) was only possible if “the child has mastered the German language or it appears guaranteed that he or she will be able to integrate into the living conditions in the Federal Republic of Germany on the basis of his or her previous education and living conditions” (§ 20). An ‘unlimited residence permit’ (*unbefristete Aufenthaltserlaubnis*) was granted to migrants who had already lived in Germany for a longer period of time if they were able to “communicate orally in German in a simple manner” (§ 24), and to their children who had joined them and had also lived in Germany for a longer period of time, if they had “sufficient knowledge of the German language” (§ 26). Furthermore, ‘naturalisation’ (*Einbürgerung*) was excluded if the “applicant does not have sufficient knowledge of the German language” (§ 86).

Despite this law, the continued political denial of the social reality by the German government under Chancellor Helmut Kohl until the end of its legislative period in 1998 meant that actual measures to integrate migrants and their families did not manifest themselves in further legal measures (Herbert, 2001: 261). Thus, at the end of the twentieth century, the Federal Republic of Germany – in line with the statement in the coalition agreement of 1982 that Germany was not an immigration country – still presented itself as an “immigration country that does not

² The Foreigners Act of 1990 is a revision of the ‘Foreigners Act’ of 1965 (*Ausländergesetz*) (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 1965). It defined different types of residence permits, but did not link them to the German language.

want to be an immigration country” (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2017: 18), although more than 7 million foreigners had already settled in Germany by that time (Institut Arbeit und Qualifikation der Universität Duisburg-Essen, n.d.).

3.3. 2000s – From an Immigration Act to an Integration Policy

The electoral victory of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Green Party (Grüne) coalition in 1998, led by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (in office 1998-2005), marked a “paradigm shift” in the integration of migrants in Germany (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2017: 18). However, it wasn’t until the 2000s that this paradigm shift became discernible in the experiences of Turkish migrants in Germany. In 1999, a substantial reform of the citizenship law was passed, which enabled children without German ancestry to acquire German citizenship by birth in Germany, effective from 1 January 2000. What was even more significant, however, was the Immigration Act of 2005, which established the basis for an adequate integration policy within the Federal Republic of Germany.

The way for the Immigration Act was paved by a report entitled ‘Shaping Immigration, Promoting Integration’ (*Zuwanderung gestalten, Integration fördern*), which was drawn up by the ‘Immigration Commission’ (*Kommission „Zuwanderung“*) appointed in 2000 by Federal Minister of the Interior Otto Schily (in office 1998-2005) (Unabhängige Kommission „Zuwanderung“, 2001). In contrast to the previous era under Helmut Kohl, the foreword to the report by the chairwoman of the commission, Rita Süßmuth, emphasises that “Germany is in fact an immigration country” (Unabhängige Kommission „Zuwanderung“, 2001: 1). Accordingly, the report contains various recommendations for an integration policy in Germany. For the first time, the report also emphasises in all clarity the importance of learning German for the integration of foreigners in Germany, as follows:

“Learning the German language in particular is an important prerequisite for integration. Language acquisition is the entry ticket to social, economic and political life in Germany; inadequate language skills considerably limit the opportunities for contact and information. It is in the interest of both the immigrant and the host society to acquire the language as quickly and thoroughly as possible. Both sides must make an effort to achieve this. The reciprocal nature of this relationship is reflected in the principle of ‘encourage and challenge’ [*Fördern und Fordern*]. While we, as the host country, are obliged to provide sufficient teaching opportunities, the immigrants are obliged to make an active effort to learn German and to integrate.” (Unabhängige Kommission „Zuwanderung“, 2001: 201-202).

Based on the recommendations of the Immigration Commission’s report, Federal Minister of the Interior Otto Schily drafted a new Immigration Act, which was passed in 2004 after debate and amendments. On 1 January 2005, the new ‘Immigration Act’ (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*, or *Gesetz zur Steuerung und Begrenzung der Zuwanderung und zur Regelung des Aufenthalts und der Integration von Unionsbürgern und Ausländern*), finally came into force (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2004). This law set new accents in many areas, because for the first time a single law regulated all central aspects of migration policy, namely the integration of foreigners, the right of residence, labour market-oriented migration and humanitarian migration (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2017: 19). In the context here, Article 1 of the Immigration Act, the ‘Residence Act’ (*Aufenthaltsgesetz*, or *Gesetz über den Aufenthalt, die Erwerbstätigkeit und die Integration von Ausländern im Bundesgebiet*), is of particular importance as it replaces the Foreigners Act of 1991 (see Section 3.2) and contains important new regulations regarding to integration and the German language.

The Residence Act of 2005 (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2004), in line with the 1991 Foreigners Act, links residence status to the ability to communicate in German. As a result, a ‘settlement permit’ (*Niederlassungserlaubnis*) is only granted if a foreigner “has sufficient knowledge of the German language” (§ 9) or, in the case of family reunification, “is able to communicate orally in German in a simple manner” (§ 28).³

Furthermore, the 2005 Residence Act for the first time explicitly outlines the role of integration: “The integration of foreigners who are legally and permanently resident in the federal territory into the economic, cultural and social life of the Federal Republic of Germany is promoted.” (§ 43). In this context, regarding the German language, integration courses (*Integrationskurse*), which are organised and conducted by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, BAMF*), play an important role: “The integration course includes offers that introduce foreigners to the language, legal system, culture and history in Germany [...] [and] consists of a basic and an advanced language course of equal duration to acquire sufficient language skills, as well as an orientation course to provide knowledge about the legal system, culture and history in Germany.” (§ 43). Foreigners who are “unable to communicate orally in German in a simple manner” are obliged to attend integration courses (§ 44a). In this way, “foreigners [...] are to become familiar with the living conditions in the federal territory to such an extent that they are able to act independently in all matters of daily life without the help or mediation of third parties” (§ 43).⁴

In 2007, two years after the Immigration Act came into force, the new federal government under Chancellor Angela Merkel (in office 2005-2021) and Federal Minister of the Interior Wolfgang Schäuble (in office 2005-2009) reformed the Immigration Act on the basis of European Union directives (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2007). The key points of the reform were, in particular, innovations in the right of residence, access to the labour market, family reunification through marriage and the addition of integration support (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2017: 19).

The reformed Immigration Act of 2007 in turn led to a new ‘Residence Act’ (*Aufenthaltsgesetz*, or *Neufassung des Aufenthaltsgesetzes*, or *Gesetz über den Aufenthalt, die Erwerbstätigkeit und die Integration von Ausländern im Bundesgebiet*) which was announced on 25 February 2008 (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2008). While § 9 and § 28 of the 2005 Residence Act remain unaffected, the 2008 Residence Act has extended two residence statuses with regard to two groups of persons and their knowledge of the German language: Firstly, foreigners can obtain a ‘long-term EC residence permit’ (*Erlaubnis zum Daueraufenthalt-EG*) if they have “sufficient knowledge of the German language” (§ 9a). Secondly, in the context of spousal reunification, a ‘residence permit’ (*Aufenthaltserlaubnis*) can be granted if the spouse of a foreigner “can communicate in German at least at a basic level” (§ 30).

³ The ‘naturalisation’ (*Einbürgerung*) of foreigners, which was regulated by the 1991 ‘Foreigners Act’ (see Section 3.2), was incorporated into the ‘Nationality Act’ (*Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz*) with the introduction of the Immigration Act in 2005. Initially, naturalisation was still regulated in the form of an exclusion clause, namely that the naturalisation of foreigners was to be refused “if the foreigner does not have sufficient knowledge of the German language” (§ 11). Later, it was changed into a positive clause, according to which naturalisation is only possible if a foreigner “has sufficient knowledge of the German language”, which is the case if he or she “fulfils the requirements of a language test at level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages” (§ 10) (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2022).

⁴ With regard to Section 3.4, it should be also noted that in the context of labour market-oriented migration, the Immigration Act of 2005 for the first time promotes the immigration of educational and occupational groups, especially highly qualified workers, to Germany by significantly facilitating access to educational opportunities and the labour market (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2017: 19).

On the other hand, the 2008 Residence Act has reformulated the wording of the law with regard to integration courses. First of all, it states that “[t]he integration of foreigners who are legally and permanently resident in the federal territory into the economic, cultural and social life of the Federal Republic of Germany is promoted *and required*” (§ 43). It also emphasises that “[t]he *aim* of the integration course is to *successfully teach* foreigners the language, legal system, culture and history of Germany” (§ 43). Furthermore, foreigners are obliged to attend integration courses if they are “unable to communicate in German in a simple manner” (without the term ‘orally’, as in the 2005 Residence Act) or “if they do not have sufficient knowledge of the German language at the time the residence permit is issued” (§ 44a).

In addition to the reform of the Immigration Act and the subsequent new Residence Act, the federal government under Chancellor Merkel took further steps in integration policy that were “meaningful and at the same time often committed to the goal of reorienting public perception and signalling the federal government’s willingness to take responsibility for integration issues” (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2017: 20). Thus, starting in 2006, the Federal Chancellery hosted a series of ‘Integration Summits’ (*Integrationsgipfel*) that brought together political representatives and various actors of migration in Germany, such as migrant organisations, sports and employers’ associations, trade unions and the media. A total of thirteen integration summits were held between 2006 and 2021, during Chancellor Merkel’s term in office. The aim of these summits was to discuss integration in Germany together and thus enter into “dialogue and exchange” (Die Bundesregierung, 2021).⁵

In the course of the Second Integration Summit in 2007, the Merkel government also presented a ‘National Integration Plan’ (*Der Nationale Integrationsplan*) (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 2007). Developed jointly by the federal government, the federal states and local authorities, as well as non-governmental institutions and organisations such as migrant organisations, research groups and the media, the National Integration Plan was intended to “improve integration in Germany step by step” (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 2007: 7). To this end, the participating groups formulated voluntary commitments, “the fulfilment of which [was] to be regularly reviewed and further developed within the framework of further integration summits” (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2017: 20).

With regard to the German language, Angela Merkel states in the foreword to the National Integration Plan (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 2007): “If you want to live here permanently and take advantage of the many opportunities our country has to offer, you need to have an adequate command of the German language.” (7). Three groups of migrants are mentioned in particular: First, participants in integration courses, for whom the following is stated: “The evaluation of the courses has confirmed that language level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is the minimum requirement for a successful further integration process. The aim must be for many more participants than in the past to reach

⁵ In parallel, the ‘German Islam Conference’ (*Deutsche Islamkonferenz*) was held for the first time in 2006, after which Federal Minister of the Interior Wolfgang Schäuble (in office 2005-2009) declared: “Islam is part of Germany and Europe. Islam is part of our present and our future.” (Welt, 2006). This statement is significant in that the attacks of 11 September 2001 and later, in particular, Thilo Sarrazin’s book ‘Germany Abolishes Itself’ (*Deutschland schafft sich ab*) in 2010 (see Section 2.3.) led to an intensification of the political debate in Germany and a resurgence of right-wing populism. Analogous to Schäuble’s statement, almost 10 years later, Federal President Christian Wulff (in office 2010-2012) tried to counter Islamophobic voices and promote the recognition and integration of Muslims with the statement “Islam belongs [...] to Germany” (Der Bundespräsident, 2010). This statement led to a heated debate about the role of Islam in Germany in the 2010s, but also to a focus on the largely unacknowledged integration of Muslim migrants in Germany.

this level.” (16). The second group is the children of migrants, who are given a special place in the integration plan (47-60). The overall aim is “to improve the integration and educational opportunities of children with a migration background – in particular by supporting and promoting language development from the outset and by providing sufficient opportunities to acquire a good knowledge of German as early as possible” (47). While this primarily means early language promotion in childcare facilities, it also calls for “continuous, systematic and explicit promotion of the German language in oral and written form [...] throughout the entire school career and also in subject teaching” (64). In addition, the special role of “persons and institutions involved in upbringing and education” is emphasised (47). On the one hand, this refers to parents who should play a supportive role in their children’s language acquisition and development (48). On the other hand, it also focuses on teachers by defining “the language didactic qualification and further training of teachers at all school levels and in all subjects as an urgent task” (64). Finally, the third group mentioned in the National Integration Plan are foreign students and researchers, for whom the intensification of German language acquisition is called for as “an important integration factor” (185).

The 2007 National Integration Plan, which addresses many other areas of the integration of foreigners in Germany, has been praised by Angela Merkel as a “milestone in the history of integration policy” which claims to put integration policy in Germany “on a new footing” and make it sustainable (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2007). Even if this statement should not be limited to the National Integration Plan, it can be summarised that a rethinking towards a real integration policy has taken place with regard to migration to Germany in the 2000s. This integration policy not only focuses on different groups of migrants, but also clearly emphasises the importance of the German language for integration in Germany.

3.4. 2010s and 2020s – ‘Welcome Culture’ and Concrete Integration Policy

The 2010s have seen a reorientation of Germany towards skilled migration, which was already evident in the Immigration Act of 2005 (see Footnote 4). The recruitment of skilled workers from abroad has been supplemented and strengthened by the following three main measures: First, the ‘Recognition Act’ (*Anerkennungsgesetz*, or *Gesetz zur Verbesserung der Feststellung und Anerkennung im Ausland erworbener Berufsqualifikationen*) came into force on 1 April 2012 (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2011). It standardises and simplifies the procedure for recognising vocational qualifications acquired abroad “with the aim of promoting the recruitment and sustainable integration of foreign skilled workers” in Germany (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, n.d.). In addition, the European Union’s ‘Highly Qualified Persons Directive’ (*Hochqualifizierten-Richtlinie*) of 2009 (Rat der Europäischen Union, 2009) was implemented in Germany on 1 August 2012 (*Gesetz zur Umsetzung der Hochqualifizierten-Richtlinie der Europäischen Union*) (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2012). The Act and the associated ‘EU Blue Card – Germany’ (*Blaue Karte EU – Deutschland*) allow academics who are not from the European Union but have a job offer in Germany to work and live here with their families (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz, 2023). Finally, the ‘Skilled Immigration Act’ (*Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz*), which came into force on 1 March 2020, further expands and consolidates the immigration of skilled workers (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2019). The law has a dual focus: it expands the immigration of skilled workers with qualified vocational training from non-European countries to Germany and generally facilitates entry to Germany for qualification measures and the search for training and employment (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz, 2023). This is intended to address the skills shortage in areas such as medicine, engineering and information

technology, but also in areas such as crafts and care (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Klimaschutz, 2023). Overall, the Skilled Immigration Act thus expands the range of educational and occupational opportunities for which foreigners can be recruited to Germany.

In the context of these laws, only the Skilled Immigration Act specifies German language requirements based on educational and occupational groups, which are linked to residence status in four different ways (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2019): Firstly, in the context of vocational training, “a residence permit for the purpose of in-company training and further training” is linked to “attendance of a German language course in preparation for vocational training, in particular attendance of a job-related German language course” (§ 16a). In addition, a foreigner can also be granted a residence permit for the purpose of seeking a training place “if he or she has a good command of the German language” (§ 17). Secondly, in the context of studies, “a residence permit shall be granted” if either “attendance of a language course in preparation for studies” or “proof of knowledge of the language of instruction required for the specific course of study” is provided (§ 16b). Furthermore, a foreigner can also be granted a residence permit for the purpose of seeking a university place “if he or she possesses the [...] language requirements for the commencement of studies or if these [...] are to be acquired” (§ 17). Thirdly, in the context of the recognition of foreign professional qualifications, a residence permit is granted if “the foreigner [...] has at least sufficient knowledge of the German language” (§ 16d). And fourthly, a skilled worker with qualified vocational training is entitled to a settlement permit if “he or she has sufficient knowledge of the German language” (§ 18c). In addition, a skilled worker can also be granted a residence permit for the purpose of seeking employment if “he or she has a knowledge of the German language which is appropriate to the job he or she is seeking” (§ 20).

The fact that the federal government under Angela Merkel has increasingly focused on skilled migration since the 2010s was already evident in the 2013 coalition agreement, which emphasizes the recruitment of skilled workers and, in this context, spoke for the first time of a ‘welcome culture’ (*Willkommenskultur*): “We will strengthen the welcome and recognition culture in our country. This will promote social cohesion and at the same time make our country more attractive to the foreign skilled workers we need.” (CDU/CSU/SPD, 2013: 74).

In order to address the shortage of skilled workers, not only new migrants but also migrants who have been living in Germany for a longer period of time are taken into account. The ‘German Language Promotion Ordinance’ (*Deutschsprachförderverordnung*, or *Verordnung über die berufsbezogene Deutschsprachförderung*), which came into force on 4 May 2016 (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2016), provides for the promotion of the German language in the context of employment (*berufsbezogene Deutschsprachförderung*). It “serves the purpose of language acquisition in order to improve opportunities on the labour and training market” (§ 3). In this context, vocational German language courses “build on the integration course according to § 43 of the Residence Act” of 2008 (see Section 3.3.) (§ 11). On the one hand, ‘basic vocational language courses’ (*Basisberufssprachkurse*) serve to achieve language levels B2, C1 and C2 (§ 12), on the other hand, ‘special vocational language courses’ (*Spezialberufssprachkurse*) serve to achieve language levels A2 or B1 (§ 13). The basic and special vocational language courses are concluded with corresponding certificate examinations according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (§ 15). In addition,

vocational language courses may be combined with measures for active integration into the labour market (§ 16).⁶

The basis for further German integration policy in the 2010s under the Merkel's government is also enshrined in the 2013 coalition agreement as follows: "The basis of integration policy is the jointly developed National Action Plan on Integration." (CDU/CSU/SPD, 2013: 74). The 'National Action Plan on Integration' (*Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration*) is seen as a continuation of the 2007 National Integration Plan (see Section 3.3.) and was presented at the 5th Integration Summit in 2012 (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 2011). In the foreword, Angela Merkel states: "With the National Action Plan we want to introduce a new phase in integration policy. The goals of integration policy must be measurable and verifiable in order to increase their effectiveness. At the same time, we know: Integration is not a temporary, one-off project. It is a long-term, cross-cutting task for society as a whole." (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 2011: 5). Accordingly, in the National Action Plan on Integration experts from various fields formulate different operational goals for eleven thematic areas (1. Early Childhood Development, 2. Education, Training and Further Training, 3. Labour Market and Working Life, 4. Migrants in the Public Sector, 5. Health and Care, 6. Local Integration, 7. Language - Integration Courses, 8. Sport, 9. Civic Engagement and Integration, 10. Media and Integration, and 11. Culture). For each of these objectives, concrete measures are listed, together with the corresponding instruments and responsible institutions. The monitoring of the achievement of the objectives is linked to a specific timeframe and determined by certain indicators. The implementation of the National Action Plan on Integration was spread over several years and was divided into five phases, which at the same time represent the phases of integration: I. Pre-immigration, II. Initial Integration, III. Inclusion, IV. Growing Together, and V. Cohesion. According to these phases, the results of the implementation of the National Action Plan on Integration were presented in the form of five reports at the Integration Summits in 2020 and 2021 (Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2021a, 2021b).

With regard to the German language, the National Action Plan on Integration of 2012 and the subsequent reports of 2020 and 2021 outline five main aspects: Firstly, a large number of objectives are listed for the language acquisition, development and support of migrants in relation to different areas of life (see 11 thematic areas). Secondly, these objectives are translated into specific measures, which are in turn empirically verified. Thirdly, the new plan takes into account all migrant groups in Germany, including long-established migrants, children, young people and parents with a migration background, as well as new migrants such as skilled workers. Fourthly, the integration process is divided into clearly defined phases (see 5 phases), and the objectives and measures set are then evaluated in relation to these phases. Fifthly, the reports show a significant progress in the integration policy of the Federal Republic of Germany between the National Integration Plan of 2007 and the reports on the National Action Plan on Integration of 2020/2021: the transition from emphasising the importance of the

⁶ This establishes a crucial link to § 45a of the Residence Act (*Aufenthaltsgesetz*, or *AufenthG*), which was originally added in 2015 in the context of accelerating asylum procedures (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2015). § 45a *AufenthG* deals with "job-related German language support" (*berufsbezogene Deutschsprachförderung*), for which the following is stated: "Integration into the labour market can be supported by job-related German language support measures. As a rule, these measures build on the general language support provided by the integration courses. [...] A foreigner is obliged to participate in [...] job-related German language support if he or she receives benefits [...] and the provider of benefits for jobseekers [...] requires him or her to participate in the measure" (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2023).

German language in the context of integration of migrants in Germany to specific objectives, measures and outcomes regarding the linguistic integration of migrants in Germany.

The fact that the new government under Chancellor Olaf Scholz (in office since 2021) also pays special attention to Germany's integration policy and the role of the German language can already be seen in the coalition agreement of 2021 (SPD / Die Grünen / FDP, 2021). It states: "We want to shape a new beginning in migration and integration policy that does justice to a modern immigration country. For this we need a paradigm shift: with an active and regulated policy we want to shape migration in a forward-looking and realistic way." (110). The following groups are mentioned in particular: firstly, new immigrants, for whom the following is stated: "For the fastest possible integration, we want to offer integration courses to all people who come to Germany from the very beginning." (111). Secondly, the children of migrants, for whom "early childhood education" is targeted, especially with regard to "language promotion" (75). Thirdly, young and adult migrants, for whom "rapid and sustainable integration into the labour market" is to be made possible on the basis of "vocational language courses building on integration courses" (111). And fourthly, skilled workers from abroad, for whom, on the one hand, "a second pillar is to be established alongside the existing immigration law with the introduction of an opportunity card based on a points system [...] in order to allow job-seekers controlled access to the German labour market" (27). On the other hand, in the context of skilled workers, the "Blue Card [...] is to be extended in national law to non-academic professions", subject to a concrete job offer (27).⁷ The fact that the new federal government is taking its plans quite seriously, particularly in regard to skilled workers, is shown by the 'Skilled Worker Immigration Act' (*Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz*) passed on 7 July 2023, in which the German language also plays an important role (Die Bundesregierung, 2023). However, only time will tell whether the integration policy of the new government under Olaf Scholz with regard to the German language will also be fruitful for the other groups of migrants in Germany, including the various groups of Turkish migrants.

4. Conclusion

This article shows that substantial progress has been achieved in the integration policy of the Federal Republic of Germany over the past twenty years. The state's recognition and awareness of the issue of integration and, in particular, of the importance of the German language for the successful integration of migrants has increased. As a result, important steps have been and are being taken in German integration policy to improve the linguistic and thus also the social, cultural and economic integration of migrants in Germany. In addition, the discourse on integration and the 'open' integration policy of the Federal Republic of Germany have also raised the awareness of German society for this issue and, associated with it, for cultural diversity and social tolerance. All in all, the crucial and substantial 'triangular relationship' between the state, migrants and the host society that has been established as a result of the German integration policy is an essential and promising basis for mutual understanding and harmonious coexistence in Germany.

⁷ In addition, the new government under Olaf Scholz aims to modernise citizenship law, including the possibility of multiple citizenship, simplifying the acquisition of German citizenship and settlement permits, and facilitating naturalisation (SPD / Die Grünen / FDP, 2021: 94). With regard to Turkish migrants in Germany, the coalition agreement states: "In recognition of their life's work, we want to make naturalisation easier for members of the so-called guest worker generation, whose integration was not promoted for a long time, by lowering the language level required for this group" (SPD / Die Grünen / FDP, 2021: 94).

While it took almost forty years for Germany to become active in integration policy with regard to the integration of Turkish migrants, who have now been living in Germany for more than sixty years, today a range of integration measures is in effect. These measures focus mainly on linguistic integration and thus also have an impact on the social, cultural and economic integration of the different groups of Turkish migrants living in Germany today. For the first generation of Turkish migrants, however, ensuring adequate linguistic integration came too late, but the relaxation of the language requirements for naturalisation (see Footnote 7) could be seen as a kind of ‘remedy’ for past inadequacies. For their descendants, the second, third and fourth generations of Turkish migrants in Germany, including adults, adolescents and children, various measures have been and are being implemented, albeit belatedly for some of them. These measures range from the provision of early childhood language support to integration into the German education system and the integration into the labour market through vocational training programmes, including job-related German language support. In contrast, for the most recent generation of Turkish migrants in Germany, including skilled workers, linguistic integration is actively promoted from the outset through integration courses, including language courses, and additional language support within work contexts. For the future of the integration of Turkish migrants in Germany, it is to be hoped that these integration policy measures of the Federal Republic of Germany will be continued and expanded.

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