Since the release on August 30, 2010 of the book by Thilo Sarrazin, Deutschland schafft sich ab. Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen (Deutsche Verlags Anstalt) (Germany Does Away with Itself: How We Are Putting our Country at Risk), which argues that Muslims are unassimilable in Germany, a lively and loud debate has filled German opinion pages and airwaves. Chancellor Angela Merkel only compounded matters when in her speech to the youth wing of her Christian Democratic Union (CDU), she asserted that Germany’s postwar efforts to build a multicultural society have “utterly failed.” This discussion on the relations among differing ethnic and religious groups is starting to gain wide international attention. The interest stems in part from the memory of Germany’s troublesome history, but also reflects the global aspects of the debate, which mirrors contemporary cultural and political concerns of many countries, including the United States.

To help the Case Western Reserve and Cleveland communities understand better the stakes of these seemingly distant debates, the Max Kade Center for German Studies of the College of Arts & Sciences presents two leading scholars of the subject, Prof. Marc Howard of the Department of Government at Georgetown University, and Prof. Yasemin Yildiz of the Department of German at the University of Illinois.

“Not Integrated: The Willful Neglect of Immigrant Perspectives in Current German Debates”

Current German debates about multiculturalism and immigration refuse to acknowledge immigrants’ existing identifications with and embeddedness into German society. This talk provides counter-cases of acts of citizenship, particularly of residents construed as “Muslim,” that are generally ignored in the debates and not integrated into the picture of Germany today.

Yasemin Yildiz is Assistant Professor of German at the University of Illinois. She specializes in 20th and 21st century German literature and culture with research interests in literary multilingualism, minority discourses (especially Turkish-German and German-Jewish), transnational studies, and gender studies. Her book _The Postmonolingual Condition: Writing beyond the Mother Tongue_ is forthcoming from Fordham University Press.

“Citizenship Policy in Germany: Immigrants, Integration, and National Belonging”

After much debate, in 2000 a new citizenship law became effective in Germany, which provides for the first time that children of foreign residents can become German by birth. But has German identity broadened to accept people of immigrant origin as full and equal citizens? This talk explores citizenship policy in order to assess Germany’s incorporation of immigrants.

Marc Morjé Howard is Professor in the Department of Government at Georgetown University. His research and teaching interests address a variety of topics related to democracy and democratization, including civil society, immigration and citizenship, hybrid regimes, rightwing extremism, and public opinion.

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