



German Multiculturalism: Immigrant Integration and the Transformation of Citizenship

Brett Klopp

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Migration, asylum, and citizenship have become unavoidable topics in contemporary European politics. Klopp examines the issues of immigration, integration, and multiculturalism in Germany, Europe's premier immigration country, through the perspectives of both immigrants and local institutions (unions, employers, schools, neighborhoods, and city government). Klopp addresses the potential for immigration patterns and increasing heterogeneity to produce the conditions for social transformation, and specifically he shows how these factors are challenging and gradually transforming the boundaries of citizenship and the nation in Germany.

Theoretically he argues against recent models of postnational and transnational membership that claim that the nationstate model of citizenship has been superseded by a new type of membership, one that guarantees individual rights via international human rights norms. Given the claims of these models, we should expect that long-term resident aliens will be satisfied with the partial citizenship rights (civil and social) extended to them by liberal European welfare states, and that they will not identify with, or seek political rights from, their state of residence. On the contrary, Klopp suggests that national-state citizenship remains the essential form of formal social and political inclusion for the majority of immigrants. In the past Germany has represented an extreme case of ethnocultural exclusion, and it is therefore something of a natural laboratory in which to examine the reciprocal measures and mechanisms of political and social change currently underway in Europe. Lessons learned from qualitative empirical examination of immigration and integration processes in Germany could prove instructive when compared to similar processes of transformation underway in the other traditional nation-states of Western Europe and in the efforts to define a common European identity. Provocative reading for scholars, students, and other researchers as well as policy makers involved with migration issues, comparative politics and citizenship, and contemporary German studies.

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