



CONTROVERSIES IN GLOBAL POLITICS & SOCIETIES

OCCASIONAL PAPER • No. I • 2006

Beyond Nationhood: Citizenship Politics in Germany since Unification

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ISBN 0-7727-0824-X
ISSN 1715-3476

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Faist, Thomas, 1959-
Beyond nationhood : citizenship politics in Germany since unification /
Thomas Faist, Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos.

(Controversies in global politics & societies 1715-3476; no. 1)
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 0-7727-0824-X

1. Citizenship--Germany. 2. Germany--Politics and government--1990-.
I. Triadafilopoulos, Triadafilos II. Munk Centre for International Studies III. Title.
IV. Series.
JN3971.A92F33 2006 323.6'0943 C2006-900755-1

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1. *Beyond Nationhood: Citizenship Politics in Germany since Unification.* By Thomas Faist and Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos.
2006 ISBN 0-7727-0824-X

Beyond Nationhood: Citizenship Politics in Germany since Unification

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In the years since unification, citizenship politics in Germany has been driven by a clash of two variants of civic republicanism. Whereas liberal egalitarian republicans view citizenship as a means of facilitating immigrants' integration, statist communitarians argue that citizenship should only be awarded as a result of their successful integration. These divergent ideological positions have mapped onto existing party cleavages, with expansive liberal egalitarian positions on *jus soli*, dual citizenship, and integration being embraced by the Greens and the SPD and opposed by conservatives in the CDU/CSU. CDU moderates and the FDP have struggled to reconcile their affinity for liberal egalitarian principles with the demands of party and coalition solidarity. This politicization of intra-republican differences has led to strained solutions that awkwardly capture both sides' positions, most notably the 1999 citizenship law's peculiar combination of an extremely liberal *jus soli* provision and principled rejection of dual citizenship.

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In the early morning of January 1, 2000, baby Seyma Kurt was born in the Kreuzberg district of Berlin. Her birth was deemed a “symbol of a historical change” by the press throughout Germany (Gaserow 2000; *Handelsblatt* 2000). This was because Seyma, whose parents were both Turkish nationals, became the first child granted German citizenship under the principle of *jus soli* — the law of territory.¹ According to

The authors gratefully acknowledge the comments provided by two anonymous reviewers.

1. The principle of *jus soli* holds that citizenship is conferred to anyone born in a state's territory. Conversely, the principle of *jus sanguinis* holds that citizenship is based on “blood ties.” In practice, most countries include elements of both principles in their citizenship regimes. The near total absence of *jus soli* in German citizenship law until the 1990s, despite the presence of millions of settled foreigners, made Germany exceptional even among continental European states with similar traditions.

paragraph 4 of the revised citizenship law introduced by the governing Social Democratic (SPD)–Green coalition in May 1999, children born in Germany of foreign parents are automatically granted German citizenship if at least one parent has legally resided in Germany for eight years and possesses a secured residence status.²

Prior to this, children of migrants born in Germany maintained their parents' nationality and thus were officially classified as foreigners, according to the 1913 *Reichs-und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz*. The 1913 citizenship law's elevation of the principle of descent (*jus sanguinis*) was meant to maintain bonds of citizenship with Germans who had emigrated abroad, while ensuring that foreign migrants and their children remained outside the German body politic, despite long-term residence and, in the case of the second and third generations, birth and socialization in Germany. The introduction of *jus soli* in German citizenship law ended the perpetuation of "domestic foreigners" by birth and promised to create many more German citizens of immigrant descent than had previously been the case. However, vehement opposition to the new law's sanctioning of dual citizenship forced the government to amend the legislation. As a result, Seyma will have to choose between her German and Turkish nationality upon reaching the age of majority. As commentators have noted, this compromise solution is extremely awkward and potentially unconstitutional (Dornis 2002, pp. 171–172).

Our paper seeks to make sense of this outcome by identifying the factors driving the liberalization of citizenship policy in Germany, while also accounting for the heated political battles that have so influenced policy-making and limited the overall scope of reforms. We argue that the 1990s featured an important shift in thinking on citizenship among German political actors: the "elite consensus" on ethnoculturalism noted by Rogers Brubaker and others gave way to a general agreement on the need to *facilitate* the integration of former guest workers and their families (Brubaker 1992). This new stress on inte-

2. For a discussion of the new citizenship law see Renner (1999, pp. 154–163); Hailbronner (2001); and Green (2000, pp. 105–124). For the full text of the revised Nationality Law (*Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz*) see <http://www.iuscomp.org/gla/statutes/StAG.htm>.

gration necessitated the introduction of new principles in German nationality law — principles that stood in stark contrast to ethnoculturalism and were reflective of a distinctly civic republican disposition.³

Yet, German political elites did not simply shift from one monolithic view of nationhood (“ethnoculturalism”) to another (“civic republicanism”). Rather, we argue that citizenship politics in Germany in the 1990s was defined by the clash of two distinct inflections of civic republicanism.⁴ On the one hand, *liberal egalitarian* republicans focus on the state’s role in providing equal rights to all permanent residents and enabling their autonomy and freedom. Liberal egalitarians give emphasis to principles of equality and participation, and champion a distinctly procedural understanding of democratic legitimacy. The state is responsible for facilitating the integration of immigrants by enacting policies that make the process less onerous and more rapid. Thus, liberal egalitarians view *jus soli* and dual citizenship as essential means of integrating immigrants and their children, and according them equal rights and standing.

Conversely, conservatives base their position on a more *statist communitarian* understanding of the relationship between individuals and the political community. Conservative objections to *jus soli* and dual citizenship do not reflect an adherence to the principle of descent, but rather to the idea that the renunciation of an applicant’s previous nationality demonstrates his or her willingness to enter wholeheartedly into his or her newly adopted political community. For conservatives, dual loyalties make a “common life” between new and old citizens difficult, if not impossible, to nurture. In line with the Catholic social doctrine of subsidiarity, which holds that the smallest social unit should fulfil its duties, conservatives maintain that individuals should prove that they have made an effort to integrate civically and socio-economically before naturalization “crowns” the integration process. The onus is squarely on the individual, while the state’s responsibilities are limited to executing core responsibilities, including the provision of security, order, and stability.

3. Civic republican membership differs from ethnoculturalism in that it does not posit ethnic “descent” as a precondition for political membership. Instead, factors such as residency and a willingness to affiliate with and be loyal to a politically defined community are key.

4. The argument developed in this paper draws on Faist, Gerdes, and Rieple (forthcoming).

These divergent ideological positions have mapped onto existing party political cleavages, with more expansive positions on *jus soli* and dual citizenship embraced by the Greens, SPD, and, to a lesser extent, Free Democratic Party (FDP). Conservatives in the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) have tended to reject dual citizenship and question the merits of *jus soli*, while centrists in the party have often struggled to reconcile their principles with the demands of party solidarity.⁵ Given the changes in the German party system since unification, and especially the hardening of divisions between “governing blocks” made up of the CDU/CSU–FDP, on the one hand, and the SPD–Greens, on the other, it is not at all surprising that these intra-republican differences have made it extremely difficult to craft mutually agreeable solutions. Institutionally patterned politics has generated strained solutions that awkwardly capture both sides’ positions. Hence the new citizenship law’s extremely liberal position on *jus soli* and continuing rejection of dual citizenship.

Our argument has important ramifications that extend beyond the German case. Citizenship politics in Germany and across Europe has not hinged on debates between advocates of ethnic versus civic nationalism, as some continue to claim (Joppke 2003, p. 4), but between defenders of rival strands of civic republicanism. More exclusionary approaches are not founded on affinities to blood descent and ethnicity but on a particular conceptualization of political community. Thus republicanism need not translate into greater openness and liberality. As our discussion of Germany will demonstrate, more restrictive policies (such as the rejection of dual citizenship) can be pursued along distinctly republican lines — that is, without reference to the inviolability of the ethnocultural nation. At the very least, our argument suggests that we need to adjust our language and concepts to better understand the character of contemporary citizenship politics in Europe — a character that the old ethnic/civic dichotomy and its attendant conceptual apparatus fails to capture.

We begin by accounting for the demise of the ethnocultural belief system in the 1980s and 1990s and the emergence of elite consensus on republican norms. We emphasize key events, including the sharply negative reaction to the murder of resident foreigners in the years immediately following unification. “Acceptable” ethnocultural discourse and platforms perished in the flames of Mölln and Solingen.

5. Simon Green makes a similar argument in Green (2001, pp. 40–44).

We then apply our argument regarding liberal egalitarian versus state communitarian positions to understand the course of citizenship policy-making in Germany from 1993 to 1998. Our retelling of events is meant to demonstrate how differences in actors' views concerning the role of citizenship policy in processes of immigrant integration mapped onto party-political cleavages, hampering efforts to forge consensus. The result was agreement on the need for reform but very little in the way of progress. We then turn to the debate over the citizenship reform of 1998–1999 to underscore the importance of political institutions in entrenching ideological differences between liberal egalitarians and state communitarians. The content of Germany's current citizenship law cannot be understood without reference to institutionally patterned political contestation, which hardened ideological cleavages and rendered efforts to forge cross-party consensus futile. We conclude by summarizing our argument and findings, and considering how our approach might be applied to make sense of citizenship politics in other European countries. We argue that the ethnic versus civic dichotomy should be abandoned in favour of a framework which recognizes that the actors driving contemporary citizenship politics are all republicans now, albeit republicans advocating quite different points of view and policy prescriptions.

Explaining Germany's Civic Republican Turn

Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany aims at explaining the two countries' "striking and consequential difference in forms of civic self-definition and patterns of incorporation" despite similar experiences with mass immigration after the Second World War. Why was it that France assimilated its postwar immigrants, while Germany incorporated only co-ethnics and excluded non-German "foreigners" from citizenship? Brubaker argues that these differences are grounded in the early political development of both states (Brubaker 1992, p. xi). Whereas "the disparity in scale between supranational Empire and the subnational profusion of sovereign and semisovereign political units fostered the development of an ethnocultural understanding of nationhood" in Germany, the "gradual formation of the nation-state around a single political and cultural center in France was the historical matrix for an assimilationist self-understanding" (Brubaker 1992, pp. 3–5). The "ethnocultural frontier between Germans and Slavs...in Eastern Prussia [and] throughout the zone of mixed settlement in East Central Europe" reinforced an ethnocultural self-understanding in Germany (Brubaker 1992, p. 5). According to Brubaker:

The preservation of German language, culture, and national identity over centuries in the Slavic east and the preservation of Polish language, culture, and national identity in Eastern Prussia furnished to the German elite a differentialist, bounded model of nationhood, a feeling for the tenacious maintenance of distinctive ethnonational identities in zones of ethnoculturally mixed populations. (1992, pp. 5–6)

In later years, the split between Romanticism and the Prussian reform movement “engendered the characteristic dualism and tension between ethnonational and state-national identities and programs — a dualism that has haunted German politics ever since.” Hence, “[i]n the German tradition...political and ethnocultural aspects of nationhood have stood in tension with one another, serving as the basis for competing conceptions of nationhood” (Brubaker 1992, pp. 7–10).

According to Brubaker, these elements of German nation-state formation persisted well into the twentieth century and explain the durability of Germany’s citizenship policies and attitudes toward non-ethnic German immigration. In short, “the German understanding of nationhood engendered an interest in [non-ethnic German migrants’] exclusion.” For Brubaker, this interest is pre-political — cultural idioms “constitute interests as much as they express them.” This leads us to the crux of his argument:

[O]nce reinforced and activated, these cultural idioms framed and shaped judgements of what was politically imperative. Of what was in the interest of the state... . [J]udgements of what is in the interest of the state are mediated by self-understandings, by cultural idioms, by ways of thinking and talking about nationhood. (1992, p. 16)

Brubaker asserts that this exclusionary cultural self-understanding is broadly shared among political elites (Brubaker 1992, pp. 176–177). Thus, despite the presence of over seven million non-German immigrants, the claim that Germany was “not an immigration country” could be sustained into the 1990s.⁶ This putative elite consensus has made wide-scale reforms to citizenship policies and attitudes toward immigration extremely difficult to envision, let alone enact. In Brubaker’s words, “[t]he *unthinkability* of an assimilationist citizenship law in Germany reflects the lack of an assimilationist tradition

6. “[T]he *kein Einwanderungsland* claim articulates not a social or demographic fact but a political-cultural norm, an element of national self-understanding. The undeniable fact of immigrant settlement does not make Germany — according to its own self-understanding — a country of immigration” (Brubaker 1992, p. 174).

and self-understanding” (Brubaker 1992, p. 177; emphasis added). In short, for Brubaker, pre-political cultural idioms define the limits of political possibilities.

Ironically, the “elite consensus” on Germany’s ethnocultural nationhood posited by Brubaker had already begun to give way well before the publication of *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* in 1992. Indeed, recognition that Germany’s citizenship laws needed to be amended in order to integrate guest workers and their families had been voiced decades earlier. Prefiguring Yasemin Soysal’s argument for postnational citizenship by almost 30 years, Eberhard de Haan argued that cross-border labour flows and European integration were eroding the conceptual bases of Germany’s guest worker system. De Haan claimed that guest workers were in fact the vanguard of a new European citizenship (de Haan 1966, p. 54). In 1972, no less a figure than Hans-Dietrich Genscher argued that Germany should accept its de facto status as an “immigration country” and seek to fully integrate long-term foreign residents (*Stuttgarter Zeitung* 1972; Schönwälder 2001, p. 522). According to Genscher, Germany had to offer a genuine opportunity for integration to individuals who had become estranged from their former homes and had accepted their new situation in Germany.⁷ The Deputy Leader of the SPD’s parliamentary *Fraktion*, Hans Apel, also made it clear that the time had come to facilitate the acquisition of German citizenship for settled foreign workers and their families (Apel 1971, cited in Schönwälder 2001, p. 549). In 1979, the Federal Republic’s first Commissioner for the Integration of Foreign Workers and their Families, Heinz Kühn, explicitly rejected the continuing exclusion of foreign workers and called for the recognition of West Germany’s de facto status as an immigration country. Kühn recommended substantive reforms, including expedited naturalization procedures to facilitate the integration of first- and second-generation migrants (Kühn 1979).⁸ By the late 1980s, both the Greens and the left wing of the SPD had surpassed these demands and were agitating for even more radical changes to Germany’s citizenship policy, including the introduction of as-of-right citizenship for long-resident foreigners and jus soli. Critics argued that the presence of millions of disenfranchised foreigners simply did not accord with the Federal Republic’s commitment to fundamental

7. Interview with Saarländischen Rundfunk, October 10, 1972 (Schönwälder 2001, p. 548).

8. For discussion see Geiß (2001).

liberal democratic norms as expressed in the Basic Law — a point echoed by Chancellor Helmut Kohl in 1984.⁹

Several factors made the turn to a more civic republican conception of German nationhood more pressing in the early 1990s. For one, the end of the Cold War and unification of East and West Germany removed a long-standing excuse for not pursuing citizenship reform (Joppke 1995, p. 176). Furthermore, proposals aimed at extending local voting rights to resident “third country” nationals — and laws passed to that effect in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein — were struck down by the Federal Constitutional Court in 1990, thereby taking a major “post-nationalist” policy proposal off the table and increasing the salience of more civic republican alternatives (Joppke 1999a, pp. 197–199). Perhaps most important were the brutal murders of long-settled immigrant families by right-wing extremists in Mölln (1992) and Solingen (1993). These tragedies provoked shock and an outpouring of sympathy for the victims, which in both cases included young children born and raised in Germany. In the days and weeks following the murders, hundreds of thousands took to the streets throughout Germany in demonstrations, protest marches, and candlelight vigils (*The Globe and Mail* 1992; Drohan 1992; Kinzer 1993). For many, the events in Mölln and Solingen exposed the perverse workings of a system that made “foreigners” out of millions of long-settled migrants and their German-born children, while conferring instant citizenship to “ethnic Germans” whose only connection to the Federal Republic lay in their claim to German blood. The events therefore served as a turning point in policy terms: grief and indignation were channelled into demands for change, with the abolition of the 1913 *Reichs-und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz* (RuStAG) emerging as a unifying theme.

Reform advocates highlighted the incompatibility of a citizenship law based on descent with a liberal democratic society transformed by immigration. The German Trade Union Federation (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, or DGB) and Protestant Church Council of Germany demanded that *jus soli* be introduced to facilitate the incorporation of long-settled foreign workers and their families (Monz 1999, p. 44; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 1993). Leading academics also voiced their dissatisfaction with established citizenship and immigration policies and called for drastic changes that recognized

9. Kohl's 1984 statement is cited in Hagedorn (2001, p. 204).

Germany's de facto status as an immigration country (Bade 1994). The President of the Federal Republic, Richard von Weizsäcker (CDU), made an impassioned plea on behalf of citizenship reform, arguing that, despite their official categorization as foreigners, the victims in Mölln were "our people" (Agence France-Presse 1992). In von Weizsäcker's view, the 1913 law's failure to recognize this fact pointed to its incompatibility with Germany's liberal values and long-term interests (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* 1992). Similarly, the Chief Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court, Roman Herzog, argued that individuals born and raised in Germany were already "German" insofar as they spoke German and were integrated into German society. They should therefore be offered easier means of acquiring German citizenship, even if this meant greater toleration of dual citizenship (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* 1993b). A number of prominent German intellectuals and authors joined forces with the Green Party to mobilize grassroots support for nationality reform through a signature drive in support of dual citizenship (Mack 1993). The campaign drew the support of the SPD, the FDP, trade unions, churches, immigrant associations, and a multitude of concerned individuals and groups, including members of the German national soccer team and even some CDU politicians (*Referendum Doppelte Staatsbürgerschaft* 2000/02). It received significant press coverage and succeeded in provoking sustained discussion on citizenship reform. The goal of collecting one million signatures was reached within eight months, an unrivalled achievement in the history of the Federal Republic.

Domestic pressure was joined by international condemnation, as the peculiarity of Germany's "blood-based" citizenship regime and the phenomenon of second- and third-generation "domestic foreigners" drew the attention of the international press. Foreign observers argued that Germany's "blood-based" citizenship law was an affront to liberal democratic principles and the spirit of human rights. The American newsmagazine *Newsweek* pointed out the inherent injustice of Germany's "atavistic law of *jus sanguinis*," which enabled "[a] farmer in Kazakhstan whose ancestors left the Rhine Valley 250 years ago" to be granted German citizenship, while excluding "a second generation Berliner whose grandparents came from Ankara" (Breslau 1992). Syndicated columnist Gwynne Dyer likened Germany's ethnic nationhood to that of the Bosnian Serbs, arguing that the maintenance of a blood-based law was scandalous for a country "like Germany, with its

special historical burden” (Dyer 1993).¹⁰ Even more provocatively, *The New York Times*’ William Safire argued that the 1913 RuStAG was “allied to Hitler’s ‘master race’ fulminations and his search for polluting ‘Jewish blood’ ” (Safire 1993).

Ever sensitive to Germany’s standing in the eyes of the world, the Kohl administration responded quickly. In an unexpected move taken during a state visit to Turkey, the Chancellor stated that he would carefully consider the introduction of “temporary” dual citizenship to encourage Turkish migrants to naturalize (*Die Tageszeitung* 1999). The Cabinet also took steps to toughen laws against right-wing extremists and Kohl pledged to engage in discussions with civil society groups over what ought to be done to improve the conditions of foreigners in Germany (Müller 1993).

Thus, by July 1993, there was general agreement between the government, opposition parties, and civil society groups regarding the need for substantive changes to Germany’s citizenship law. Support for the principle of blood descent could no longer be expressed openly, as the terms of acceptable discourse had shifted decisively in the wake of the tragedies in Mölln and Solingen. For many, the way forward lay in incorporating civic republican principles into German nationality law. This dovetailed with theoretical proposals advanced by leading German intellectuals that advocated a German national identity based upon “constitutional patriotism” (Orberndörfer 1993; Habermas 1993 and 1996, pp. 281–294). However, the move to a new encompassing belief system did not lead to a quick break with established policies. The translation of still vaguely defined intentions into legislation would be a slow and fractious process. We account for this in the following sections of our paper.

Intra-Republican Cleavages and Stasis: 1993–1998

Domestic and international reaction to the events in Mölln and Solingen generated a widely felt need to reform Germany’s antiquated citizenship law. However, there was no consensus as to precisely what form changes should take. Whereas the SPD, Greens, FDP, and a minority in the CDU supported the introduction of dual citizenship and *jus soli*, the CSU and conservatives in the CDU rejected these options and argued instead for more modest reforms. The limited changes to the naturalization provisions of the 1990 Foreigners Law,

10. The article by Gwynne Dyer was also carried in several other Canadian and British newspapers.

introduced by the government in July 1993, were in line with this more conservative approach. According to the new regulations, immigrants between the ages of 16 and 23, along with those with 15 or more years of residence, would be granted a “right” to naturalization subject to certain conditions, including release from former citizenship. This set limits on officials’ discretion in the conferring of citizenship to eligible applicants (Green 2001, pp. 33–34). In April 1994, the CDU/CSU–FDP government voted against an initiative for dual citizenship advanced by the SPD. However, at the urging of the FDP and liberal elements in the CDU, Kohl argued that reform of the 1913 RuStAG would be a key objective after the 1994 election (Green 1999, p. 178).

Following its narrow victory in the 1994 federal election, the CDU/CSU–FDP coalition government moved to honour its pledge to reform German citizenship law. However, the key element in the government’s reform package — the so-called “child citizenship law” (*Kinderstaatszugehörigkeitgesetz*) — was an unwieldy and unpopular contrivance. According to the scheme, foreign children born in Germany could, upon application before the age of 12, obtain a legal status on a par with German children, providing one parent was born in Germany and both parents could prove at least 10 years’ residence. If his or her application was accepted, the child would be granted a temporary status equal to, but distinct from, German citizenship; the child citizenship status could be converted to full nationality only if the child succeeded in obtaining release from his or her previous citizenship within one year of reaching the age of majority (Green 1999, p. 179; Joppke 1999a, p. 207). Failure to apply for full citizenship would lead to the automatic termination of the status once the child turned 19. The status was not recognized by international law and did not exclude children from the terms of the Foreigners Law, leaving them vulnerable to deportation.

Differences of opinion between liberal egalitarians and communitarians within the CDU/CSU–FDP coalition help explain why its proposal was so convoluted. Conservatives in the CSU were unwilling to accept dual citizenship and *jus soli* in any form; the child citizenship proposal represented their maximal concession. The poor result of the FDP in the 1994 election limited its influence within the government and put it at a disadvantage in negotiations over the agreement. The CDU was also split, with progressives and conservatives disagreeing over the extent of reforms. Consequently, the child citizenship law

offered Kohl a means of formally honouring promises to liberal forces within the coalition without engaging in potentially destabilizing experimentation. The proposal was incoherent precisely because it tried to stitch together, Frankenstein-like, two quite distinct ideological positions. Intra-coalition politics drove the process and the result was not pretty.

Struggles between liberal egalitarians and statist communitarians over citizenship reform continued through the mid-1990s, as the opposition parties continued to press for more radical changes. In 1995, the SPD called for *jus soli* for third-generation foreigners, discretionary naturalization after five years, and acceptance of dual nationality (SPD, Bundestagsfraktion 1995).¹¹ Legislation introduced by the Green Party was even more far-reaching and included a legal right to citizenship after eight years, *jus soli* for the second generation, and acceptance of dual nationality (Bundestag Drucksache). The Greens also settled a long-running internal party battle and came out in favour of an immigration law that regulated flows through annual quotas. This marked an important turn in the party's approach to immigration policy and brought an end to earlier calls for "open borders."¹²

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In an unexpected move, a group of young CDU parliamentarians dubbed the *Junge Wilde* offered an alternative to the child citizenship proposal that included provisions for full *jus soli* and a compromise position on dual citizenship, whereby children would maintain their parents' nationality along with their German nationality until they reached the age of majority, at which time they would have to choose one or the other (Altmaier 1996). The Optionsmodell of the *Junge Wilde* gained the support of 150 prominent CDU members, including 31 members of the CDU's Bundestag caucus.¹³ It was also welcomed by the FDP leadership as a way out of its commitment to the child citizenship proposal. Thus, by 1996, there existed a numerical majority

11. See also Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland, Parteivorstand (Archiv, File X3 – Ausländer – K).

12. Cem Özdemir, Interior Affairs Spokesperson Green Party parliamentary group, interview by Triadafilopoulos, March 15, 2002, Berlin; Klaus Geiger, Professor of Political Sociology, University of Kassel, interview by Triadafilopoulos, March 22, 2002, Kassel. See Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (1991); Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland, Parteivorstand (Archiv, File X3 – Ausländer – September 1991).

13. Peter Altmaier, Member of the German Bundestag (CDU), interview by Triadafilopoulos, May 3, 2004, Berlin.

within the Bundestag in favour of fundamental changes to German nationality law. The potential for a broadly acceptable cross-party consensus was tantalizingly real (Altmaier and Röttgen 1997).

Hardliners in the CDU and CSU moved to quash this development by rejecting the Junge Wilde proposal and pressuring the CDU leadership to veto the proposal. Kohl did so at the CDU's party conference in October 1996 (Marshall 2000, p. 147). This removed the possibility of working out a compromise with the opposition parties and made it clear that the Union would prefer a non-decision on citizenship to a law that included even the temporary toleration of dual citizenship.¹⁴

Thus, the impetus for reform reverted to the opposition parties. A bill calling for dual citizenship for children born in Germany was introduced into the Bundesrat by the SPD–Green controlled governments of Hesse, Hamburg, and Lower Saxony in 1997. The SPD and Greens enjoyed a majority in the upper house and pressed for a vote on the bill in the Bundestag, thus forcing members of the FDP to choose between many of its members' principled support for substantive reform and the party's interest in preserving its partnership with the Union parties. Given the government's thin majority in the Bundestag, a legislative defeat was quite possible. In an effort to ensure that this did not happen, the Union parties made it clear that the failure of the FDP to vote against the opposition bill would lead to the dissolution of the government. Thus, the FDP leadership opted to enforce party discipline, with several of its members, including reformers such as Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen and Burkhard Hirsch, abstaining from the vote (Green 1999). Once again, the institutional logic of coalition government blocked the will of a cross-party majority, thwarting efforts to reform Germany's citizenship law and granting a further lease on life to the 1913 RuStAG.

The Contentious Politics of Reform, 1998–2000

The victory of the SPD in the 1998 federal election and its selection of the Alliance 90/Greens as its coalition partner created a unique opportunity to make fundamental reforms to Germany's citizenship policy along liberal egalitarian lines. The parties now controlled both the Bundesrat and Bundestag and therefore could implement policies

14. It should be noted that a reworked version of the child citizenship proposal which offered a "guarantee of naturalization" for children of immigrants born in Germany was introduced in November 1997. This proposal did not satisfy either liberals in the CDU or the opposition parties. See Green (2001, pp. 41–42).

without negotiating with the CDU/CSU or FDP. Thus, there was no ready parliamentary opposition to either dual citizenship or *jus soli*; the way toward thoroughgoing political change was clear.

The new government made the reform of Germany's citizenship law a legislative priority. A statement in its coalition agreement affirmed that Germany had experienced an "irreversible process of immigration." Given this fact, the government pledged to assist in the "integration of those immigrants who live [in Germany] on a permanent basis and...accept our constitutional values."¹⁵ To help achieve this end, a new citizenship law would be introduced that included a reduction of the residency requirement for naturalization from 15 to 8 years for foreign-born applicants and from 8 to 5 years for individuals born or raised in Germany (Federal Ministry of the Interior 2000; Münz and Ulrich 1998, p. 1). Furthermore, dual citizenship would be tolerated in order to facilitate the naturalization of long-time foreign residents. The most significant reform addressed the attribution of citizenship for children born of foreign residents. According to the new government's plan, citizenship would be granted through the principle of *jus soli*: children of qualified foreign residents born in Germany would be conferred German citizenship at birth.¹⁶ Moreover, the children could maintain their parents' nationality, thereby becoming dual citizens. The government also pledged to abandon "superfluous procedures" and grant local voting rights to non-EU foreign residents.

The proposed citizenship reforms promised to fundamentally transform the institutional grounding of German nationhood. Children of qualified immigrant parents born in Germany would no longer be foreigners but rather German citizens with equal rights and responsibilities. The easing of barriers to dual citizenship would also make it much easier for the nearly three million immigrants who satisfied the new law's residency requirements to naturalize. This would help resolve Germany's glaring democratic deficit and change the face of German politics by granting a hitherto weak segment of the population real political power. In historical perspective, this would mark a

15. An excerpt of the agreement with the relevant sections is included in Federal Ministry of the Interior (2000, pp. 166–167).

16. "Children of foreign parents who are born in Germany will receive German nationality if one parent was born here or entered Germany before the age of 14 and possesses a residency permit" (Federal Ministry of the Interior 2000).

revolutionary shift in German membership policy, a point emphasized both by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and President Johannes Rau.¹⁷

The government was confident that the citizenship reform would be passed into law quickly and did not expect the proposal to generate a great deal of opposition.¹⁸ These expectations were misplaced. The conservative Minister-President of Bavaria, Edmund Stoiber, greeted the citizenship proposal with alarm, arguing rather hyperbolically that it presented a greater threat to Germany than the terrorism of the Red Army Faction (*Die Tageszeitung* 1999). His CSU colleague, Wolfgang Zeitlmann, warned that the reforms would provoke uncontrolled waves of immigration, undermining the integration of migrants already in the country (Zeitlmann 1999).

Given the government's majority in both the Bundestag and Bundesrat, opponents of the proposed citizenship reforms sought to influence policy-making through a signature drive modeled after the Greens' 1993 campaign for dual citizenship. The CDU's leader, Wolfgang Schäuble, accepted the idea. He and other party leaders felt that something dramatic had to be done to raise the party's fortunes in the wake of its drubbing in the 1998 election. A populist campaign would motivate the party's core and ready them for the upcoming *Länder* elections in Hesse and Baden-Württemberg. Alice Holmes Cooper notes that the Union parties were also keen to "avoid ceding the issue of citizenship reform to the extreme right" and therefore moved to outflank the Republikaner and German People's Union (Deutsche Volks Union, or DVU) (Cooper 2002, pp. 88–104).¹⁹

The campaign against the "double pass" included a call for integration that proposed increased funding for German language courses and a "naturalization guarantee" that facilitated citizenship acquisition for immigrant youth but did not include *jus soli*. These commitments to integration were enough to convince party moderates in the CDU to accept their new leader's choice of strategy at a party conference,

17. Schröder proclaimed that the reform would bring German policy into line with its EU partners and correct a long-standing "modernity deficit." Similarly, Rau claimed that the new citizenship provisions marked an end to Germany's "special way" (*Sonderweg*).

18. Dieter Wiefelspütz, Interior Affairs Spokesperson SPD parliamentary group, interview by Kaoru Iriyama, April 24, 2002, Berlin; Cem Özdemir, Interior Affairs Spokesperson Green Party parliamentary group, interview by Triadafilopoulos, March 15, 2002, Berlin.

19. It is worth noting that some far-right politicians did indeed complain that the Union parties were treading on their territory.

though many did so grudgingly (Cooper 2002, p. 96; Kahlweit et al. 1999). The emphasis on integration also granted CDU/CSU politicians a means of deflecting accusations that they were stoking anti-immigrant passions and undermining the safety of foreigners in the Federal Republic. Union politicians argued that their position would ultimately benefit foreigners by improving their prospects of integration.

The referendum kicked off in January of 1999, several weeks before the government had even introduced a bill. It accumulated over 3.5 million signatures in 6 weeks. It combined an assortment of messages, including claims that the government's citizenship plan would unfairly privilege foreigners, threaten social peace by enabling foreigners with ulterior motives (e.g., Islamists) to claim the advantages of citizenship, and inevitably lead to an explosion of new immigration.²⁰ The argument regarding "fairness" proved to be particularly potent, tapping into what Heribert Prantl dubbed Germans' *Neid-Gefühle* — their "feelings of envy" (Prantl 1999). Despite all this, appeals to ethnocultural purity were conspicuously absent. Indeed, the anti-dual citizenship movement's motto was "Yes to Integration — No to Dual Citizenship."

16

The government was caught completely off guard and failed to mount an effective defence of its policies.²¹ Although key actors, including the Catholic and Protestant churches, unions, the liberal media, and even several members of the CDU, came out strongly against the referendum,²² opposition to dual citizenship generated by the campaign succeeded in raising the Union parties' visibility and led to increased media coverage of the CDU's campaign in Hesse. To the delight of Roland Koch, the CDU's candidate for Minister-President in Hesse, the signature drive succeeded in mobilizing CDU voters and improved turnout on election day (Schmitt-Beck 2000, p. 13). In the end, Koch and the CDU carried the day and found themselves in a position to block the government's reform in the Bundesrat (Hansen 2000, p. 5; Götz 2000; Cooper 2002).

20. For a good summary and discussion of the campaign see the essays in Götz (2000).

21. A point emphasized in Triadafilopoulos's interviews with Cem Özdemir, Sebastian Edathy, and Cornelia Sonntag-Wolgast.

22. The Chair of the Council of the Protestant Church of Germany, Manfred Kock, noted that he was greatly disturbed by the CDU-CSU's choice of tactics. Kock went on to say that such populism played into the hands of those "who have no interest in facilitating the integration of foreigners" and advised the Union to avoid such strategies. See *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (1999). Also see Weckbach-Mara (1999).

Without its majority in the upper house, the government was forced to enter into negotiations with the FDP to gain the necessary votes in the Bundesrat and thus avoid having to negotiate with the CDU/CSU. Ultimately, the SPD adapted elements of an FDP proposal (modeled after the Optionsmodell of the Junge Wilde) that limited the scope of dual citizenship (Fietz 1999). According to the revised law, which was passed by the Bundestag on May 7, 1999, and cleared the Bundesrat on May 21, 1999, children granted German citizenship under the principle of *jus soli* would maintain their parents' nationality until they reached the age of majority (18), at which time they would have until their 23rd birthday to choose between the two. Dual nationality would be officially discouraged in the conferring of citizenship via naturalization and criteria pertaining to language competence and loyalty to the constitution would be required of applicants. Furthermore, the fee for naturalization was raised to a flat rate of DM 500. Thus, although the new law's adoption of *jus soli* in the attribution of nationality represented a major innovation, statist communitarians in the CDU/CSU succeeded in eliminating, or at least weakening, the acceptance of dual citizenship (Keskin 2000, p. 30).

The CDU/CSU's politicization of the citizenship reform proposal reflected statist communitarians' principled objections to a liberal egalitarian interpretation of civic republicanism that included *jus soli* and tolerance of dual nationality. The decision to politicize the issue and risk what could have developed into a dangerous populist reaction was also driven by political reasoning. The CDU/CSU was well aware that the absence of dual citizenship in Germany's nationality law had dissuaded hundreds of thousands of immigrants from naturalizing and thus becoming German voters. Given that research consistently revealed that current and potential immigrant voters overwhelmingly supported the SPD and Greens, there were very real political costs in enfranchising a large number of immigrants in a relatively short period of time (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland 1997).²³ Other political factors, including leadership issues, fears of being upstaged by the extreme right, and the desire among many in the CDU to do something to take the media attention off their 1998 election failure and multiple scandals made a populist move on the scale of the signature campaign more acceptable than it might otherwise have been. Finally, the prospect of using the immigration issue to

23. See also Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland, Parteivorstand (Archiv, File X3 – Ausländer – K).

unseat the SPD–Green coalition in Hesse and thus upset the federal government’s majority in the Bundesrat offered further incentives to reject compromise and opt instead for an aggressive populist strategy. In the final analysis, a combination of principled opposition to liberal egalitarianism and political machinations came together to block consensus. The result was a reform that fell short of what the government had planned and many reform advocates had hoped for. Nevertheless, hardliners in the Union parties did not regard this as a victory and fought a hard, though ultimately futile, final battle to block the implementation of the Optionsmodell (Deutscher Bundestag 1999, pp. 3413–3462). Their continuing opposition to the new law and bitter disappointment with its passage illustrates that, for all its limitations, the citizenship reform of 1999 marked a crucial shift in Germany’s membership policies (Tsapanos 2001, p. 321; Joppke 1999b, p. 156).

This disappointment is well placed. For despite the new citizenship law’s opposition to dual citizenship, Germany has and will continue to experience great difficulty in avoiding the general trend of increasing toleration of multiple nationality (Faist, Gerdes, and Rieple 2004, pp. 913–944). The relevant mechanism could be called a democratic proliferation. Liberal democracies tend to face this dilemma when adhering to the principle of avoiding dual nationality. Because of the importance of individual rights, liberal democracies are compelled to accept dual nationality upon naturalization if the respective other state makes renouncing nationality impossible or imposes unreasonable demands. Also, liberal democracies tend to accept dual nationality in the name of gender equity when nationality is acquired by birth. Furthermore, such states may be inclined to grant dual citizenship within regional governance systems such as the EU. But once some exceptions have been granted, new interpretations of individual rights and new claims of other categories of persons combined with court cases can (and typically do) lead to a proliferation of exceptions. The result is a multiplication of “exception groups.” The more exceptions and thus potential claimant groups, the greater the likelihood that questions of legitimating different treatment arise because each exemption has to be justified on reasonable grounds. Thus, problems of justification and the rising costs of administrative procedures may well lead to a general tolerance of dual citizenship in the long run. In the German case, it is likely that unequal treatment as a consequence of the Optionsmodell will result in increased tolerance. Most probably, the Federal Constitutional Court will have to decide whether this clause can be upheld.

Conclusion

We have argued that the politics of citizenship reform in Germany since unification has been driven by the clash of liberal egalitarian and statist communitarian variants of civic republicanism. Liberal egalitarians and statist communitarians differ with regard to their view of what integration ought to entail and how citizenship policy relates to it. Whereas liberal egalitarians view citizenship as a means of facilitating integration, communitarians argue that citizenship should only be granted as a result of successful integration. The support of *jus soli* and dual citizenship by Liberal egalitarians reflects their belief that policy should aim at broadening the sphere of democratic equality to include all settled residents. Communitarians also support the broadening of democratic equality to include settled immigrants but place a greater premium on the interests of the community; new members must enter into the national family wholeheartedly and without reservations. Dual citizenship is unacceptable because it impinges upon the community's interests and fails to ensure new members' loyalty. Similarly, conservative opponents of *jus soli* object to it because it grants citizenship automatically, thus neglecting to gain the consent of the child and failing to ensure that s/he will indeed be successfully integrated into German society.

The mapping of these divergent ideological positions onto existing party-political cleavages made efforts to reach consensus positions on citizenship reform extremely difficult, thus delaying the introduction of a new law to replace the 1913 RuStAG and directly influencing the content of the new citizenship law of 1999. The contradictory nature of the law is a direct consequence of the battle between liberal egalitarians and statist communitarians.

Thus, while Germany has witnessed significant changes in its citizenship and immigration policies since unification, these changes have been blunted by ideologically driven and institutionally patterned conflicts between liberal egalitarians and statist communitarians. The stasis that Brubaker claimed was a result of the inviolability of ethno-cultural nationhood was in fact a consequence of differences between elites advancing distinct conceptions of civic republicanism. The shift to *jus soli* in 1999 coincided with the victory of the liberal egalitarian side in the 1998 federal election, while the failure to introduce a principled toleration of dual citizenship was a direct result of successful political opposition from statist communitarians.

We believe that the liberal egalitarian/statist communitarian cleavage is driving citizenship and integration politics not only in Germany but also right across Western Europe. Current debates over the terms of immigrant integration in the Netherlands, Britain, and elsewhere are difficult to understand under the terms of the older ethnic/civic framework but fall neatly into the intra-republican framework developed in this paper. Conservative opponents of multiculturalism do not seek to defend the sanctity of ethnic nations but rather to define communities according to their particular range of principles. Where they have succeeded, the result has been demands for integration, backed by threats of sanctions if immigrants fail to master the majority society's language, experience difficulty in finding work, or are suspected of contravening its norms. Paradoxically, integration has become a means of drawing lines of inclusion and exclusion that place the weight of adjustment squarely on the shoulders of immigrants. Advocates of more liberal policies must recognize that today's battles are not over integration or exclusion but rather over the grounds of integration themselves.

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ISBN 0-7727-0824-X
ISSN 1715-3476

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