

# The Governance of Immigrant Integration in Europe\*

Roland [Czada](#), University of Osnabrueck (2010)

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Among a variety of governance institutions in the field of immigrant integration policies in Europe one finds an increasing number of consultative committees set up by governments. They serve as institutions of functional interest representation for migrant associations and corporatist intermediation between governments and administrations on the one hand and the immigrant population or parts of it on the other hand. As institutional interfaces of state and society such consultation bodies not only enable migrant associations to voice their opinions on issues which concern them as residents or citizens, but they also provide governments an opportunity to address minority groups in matters of policy-making and policy implementation, particularly legislation and political conflict management. The analysis of consultation bodies between national governments and migrant representatives in different countries reveals a high degree of complexity and a bewildering cross-national variety of procedures and institutional choices. To explain these choices the specific problem characteristics of immigration as well as the historical origins of such bodies of interactive governance must be considered and major variables affecting their scope, structure and functioning examined with a cross-national perspective. I will first present some general empirical evidence on immigration and integration policies in Europe and then follow with some background discussion of corporatist immigrant consultation bodies that have been set up to integrate immigrant groups into national societies, cultures and systems of social and religious governance.

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### **Immigrant integration policies**

Immigrant integration policies gained priority in many European countries following the September 11 Islamist attacks on the World Trade Center, the White House and the Pentagon in 2001 (Musch 2011a). Integration efforts have been further intensified in the aftermath of immigrant unrest in the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, and Denmark. In 2005 Muslim mobilization and claim making intensified throughout Europe and worldwide following the publication of disrespectful Muhammad caricatures in Denmark. Shortly thereafter, in October and November 2005, the massive riots of suburban youth in France were blamed on a failed immigrant integration policy. Anti-immigration parties have gained momentum since the 1980s in some European countries, and have been unexpectedly successful in national elections, particularly in Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland and Sweden.

Apart from varying anti-immigration sentiments, the factual challenges of immigrant integration differ considerably across OECD countries. This is due to different scales of immigration, the number of alien long term residents in relation to naturalized citizens, and the share of repatriates among immigrants. Moreover, integration problems as well as policy measures are highly dependent on the national and cultural origins of immigrant populations. In the same way the behaviour and cultural traits of the host country play an important part. Most Europeans and their governments feel particularly challenged by dangers of segregation or even ghettoization. Above all this holds if certain ethnic or religious immigrant groups prevail such as North African Muslim immigrants in France or those of Turkish origin in Germany.

The proportion of the foreign-born population to non-citizens can be seen as a rough indicator of the extent to which immigration may cause policy problems in a given country. The higher this ratio the more foreign-borns have acquired citizenship, whereas lower ratios mean that more foreign borns stay in their receiving society as long-term alien permanent residents. One should keep in mind, however, that foreign-born can also be repatriates, i.e. citizens or citizens' children born abroad who have returned to their home countries. The latter has been particularly relevant for Poland, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Turkey, and Hungary (OECD Factbook 2007, 253). Apart from these special cases the ratio of foreign-born to non citizens is strongly correlated with data on naturalization rates (Table 1). Lower shares of non-citizens in relationship to the foreign-born population indicate

liberal naturalization regimes. In this case relatively short residency requirements facilitate immigrants' access to full citizenship. This applies to traditional immigration countries such as Australia, Canada, the USA, or New Zealand.

The highest portions of alien residents (non-citizens or non-nationals) as a share of the total population are found in Luxemburg and Switzerland both displaying low rates of naturalization thus far. Among the EU-member countries, immigration has been high in Sweden, Germany, Austria, France, Belgium and the Netherlands (see table 1). In contrast, immigration remains comparatively low in Eastern Europe and Finland. Outside of Europe low naturalization rates can be found in South Korea, Mexico, and Japan, the last having the lowest rates compared to all other OECD countries (Chung 2010: 666).

**Table 1. Immigration in OECD countries**

Country	Percentage foreign-born		Percentage non-citizens		Ratio Foreign born / Non-citizens (2001)	Naturalization rate (2007) <sup>1</sup>
	2001	2009	2001	2009		
Australia	23,0	25,5	7,4	n,a,	3,11	75
Austria	12,5	15,4	8,8	n,a,	1,42	52
Belgium	10,7	n,a,	8,2	n,a,	1,30	59
Canada	19,3	20,2	5,3	n,a,	3,64	84
Czech Republic	4,5	3,7	1,2	3,9	3,75	n.a.
Denmark	6,8	8,8	5,0	5,8	1,36	57
Finland	2,5	4,1	1,7	n,a,	1,47	n.a.
France	10,0	11,0	5,6	5,8	1,79	47
Germany	12,5	11,6	n,a	8,8	1,42	37
Ireland	10,4	14,1	5,9	11,3	1,76	n.a.
Japan	1,3	1,7	1,0	n,a,	1,30	n.a.
Luxembourg	32,6	32,2	36,9	43,5	0,88	12
Netherlands	10,1	10,9	4,2	3,9	2,40	78
NewZealand	19,5	22,3	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Norway	7,3	10,3	4,3	6,3	1,70	70
Poland	2,1	2,7	1,0	1,0	2,70	n.a.
Portugal	6,3	7,4	2,2	4,2	2,86	n.a.
SlovakRepublic	2,5	6,1	0,5	1,0	5,00	n.a.
Spain	5,3	13,8	3,8	12,3	1,39	44
Sweden	12,0	13,8	5,3	5,9	2,26	82
Switzerland	22,4		20,5	21,7	1,09	35
UnitedKingdom	8,3	11,4	4,5	6,6	1,72	67
UnitedStates	12,3	13,8	6,6	10	1,86	50

1) Percentage of immigrants aged 15 to 64 who have become naturalized citizens until 2007

Sources: OECD: International Migration Outlook: SOPEMI – 2006, 2007, 2010 Editions, OECD, Paris; Dumont / Lemaître (2005).

One can distinguish between two principal approaches to shaping immigration and integration policies. One principal governance approach rests on the granting of rights and supportive measures for individuals up to liberal naturalization policies. Among them one finds Sweden, Norway Portugal, the Netherlands and Belgium with relatively inclusive citizenship regimes each. The Netherlands and Belgium make an exception so far as they combined inclusive liberal citizenship policies aiming at naturalization with a group politics approach, namely corporatist special consultation bodies inherited from former traditions in industrial relations and labour politics. Nowadays it seems more convenient for governments to deal with and address individual citizens or organized groups of citizens rather than ethnic or religious groups of alien residents; especially in situations of conflict and social unrest.

As already mentioned, a second approach towards immigrant integration problems consists of group-specific consultation procedures. This approach can be frequently observed in countries with more restrictive citizenship regimes that are the possible products of, among other things, ethno-nationalist principles of statehood, high unemployment, xenophobia or traditions of the *jus sanguinis* principle of inherited nationality. The national governments of many of these mainly continental European countries – Germany, Denmark, Switzerland and Austria in particular - were decidedly unaware of immigration problems for a long time. The reason for this was a “guest-worker” syndrome: the belief that labour migrants would only stay for a certain period of time. Later on when it became obvious that migrants have settled in their host-countries, governments were reluctant because they feared that immigration policies would cause awkward troubles not only in terms of difficulty but also in regard of electoral politics. The increase of conflicts over immigration issues and the concomitant rise of strong anti-immigration parties in Denmark, Austria, the Netherlands, and Switzerland have confirmed such fears (van der Brug/ Fennema 2009). During the 2010s, however, all European governments and the European Commission were forced to address and solve a growing number of immigration and integration issues.

Policy making concerned with problems of immigrant populations in areas such as legal rights and anti-discrimination, public safety and security, social rights, labour market access, education, schooling, family reunion, and particularly religious governance have proven difficult as governments have met obstacles in addressing and negotiating with non-citizens, who often lack civic rights, remain politically less organized and dissociated from public life. Fears that ghettos and deviant “parallel societies” may emerge from social

isolation in terms of language, culture, social status and political orientation have prompted most European governments to set up far reaching immigrant integration programmes. After 2005 the main concern of policy programs has been extended from social welfare integration policies to civic integration courses and tests – particularly language courses - and to the religious dimension associated with multiculturalism. German sub-national *länder* governments established university chairs for Islamic theology and several university study programs for imams who serve as prayer-leaders and directors of mosques. This should be seen as a first step to incorporate the Muslim faith into the German model of religious governance (cf. Czada 2010).

Learning of the host-country language has been declared a priority goal for immigrants in all European countries. Headscarf debates have led the total ban of religious symbols in French schools. A teacher headscarf ban came into effect in several German states following as ruling of the constitutional court in 2003. Some sub-national Länder laws explicitly forbid female Muslim teachers from wearing headscarves, while allowing students to do so and, as Green (2005: 202) points out, “simultaneously permitting the display of Christian and Jewish religious symbols, such as crucifixes, in the classroom”.

In 2000, after long political debates, Germany liberalized its naturalization laws, whereas Ireland and other countries have turned towards a more restrictive practice of naturalization. In general, European countries have increasingly turned away from earlier visions of a multicultural society. To be sure, governments and major civil society associations continue to strive for a climate of tolerance and cultural diversity, but one that is compatible with goals of social cohesion, inclusive civic discourse and mutual understanding.

### **Challenges to established state-society relations**

Large-scale immigration has posed specific problems for established state-society relations in some cases. Immigrants constitute latent or manifest social groups based on their countries of origin, ethnicity, religion, language etc. Such groups are somewhat out of place in established national associational systems at first. This is especially true if relatively closed or even exclusive corporatist systems of interest intermediation prevail in their host countries as for instance in Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Norway or – outside Europe – Japan. Corporatism refers to a political power structure and practice of

consensus formation based on the incorporation of groups into public policy-making. Political status is attached not only to individual rights and citizenship but also to one's membership in social groups in this case. The fact that immigrant groups are foreign to existing national systems of interest-intermediation, may cause disadvantages and irritation, even unrest, when it comes to the representation, articulation, and consideration of their special interests and political concerns in a receiving society.

A number of European governments have established consultation committees to address immigrant groups. Some of the consultation processes remain informal while others come close to highly institutionalized corporatist bodies based on national laws and regular meetings between representatives of governments and ethnic or religious immigrant minorities (table 2) in particular. As institutional interfaces of state and society, such consultation bodies not only enable migrant associations to voice their opinions on issues which concern them as representatives of citizens or residents, but also provide governments an opportunity to address minority groups in matters of policy-making and policy implementation, legislation and political conflict management. National immigrant consultation bodies of major relevance can be found mostly in countries which have experienced long traditions of corporatist interest intermediation: Norway, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. Austria and Sweden rely on the participation of immigrants in corporatist bodies and consultation procedures that have not been tailored especially for immigrants but are regularly used in different policy-contexts and on different levels in society.

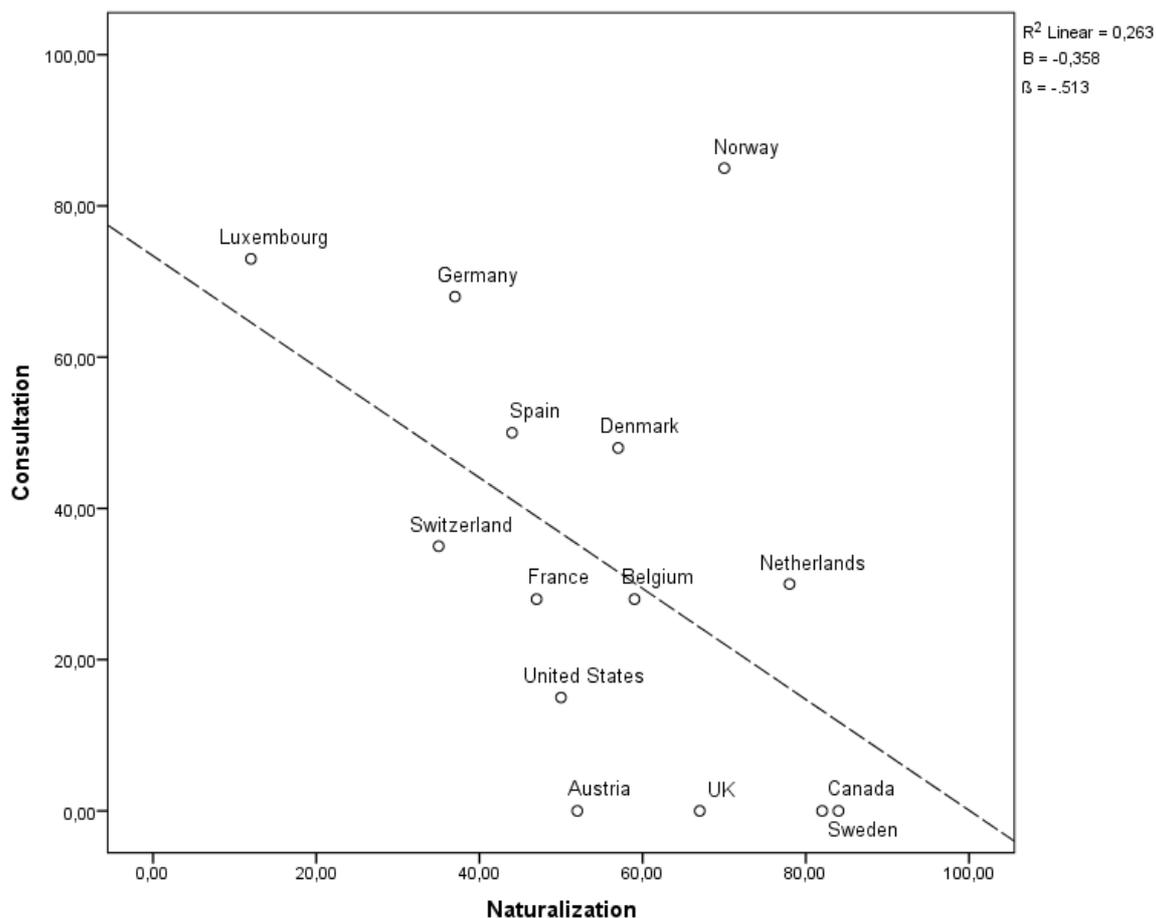
The European Migrant Integration Policy Index (Niessen J. et. al., 2007, Huddleston et.al. 2011) provides data on existing consultation bodies for foreign residents on national, regional and local levels. The data comprise processes of leadership selection, degrees of institutionalisation and representativeness, e.g. whether candidates have to be endorsed or directly selected and appointed by the state. The participation of immigrant associations in policy implementation is indicated by public funds provided, e.g. public funding or support of immigrant organisations on national, regional and local levels. In some countries such as Sweden consultation bodies are not formally stated or regulated but part of consultation procedures in different general contexts that are not necessarily immigrant-specific. Others switched from the informal participation of migrants in pre-existing corporatist bodies of self-government to more formal immigrant-specific national consultative bodies. In Germany for instance, labour migrants have been represented in welfare state institutions

such as boards of social security schemes or of welfare associations as well as in obligatory labour councils (Thränhardt 1984). It was not before the mid 2000s that the national government established a special consultation structure for immigrants called the “Integration Summit” (table 2).

Data on formal immigrant consultation bodies established by governments laid down in the MIPEX-index (Huddleston et.al. 2011) reveal a negative correlation with naturalization rates (figure 1). This points out to the underlying paradigms of group incorporation versus individual citizenship. Immigrants’ individual legal and democratic civic rights acquired through naturalization seem to soften problems associated with mass immigration, and simultaneously tend to make special consultation structures for non-functional ethnic or religious groups of immigrants less important. One has to be cautious, however, to draw functionalist conclusions of this sort. In a historical perspective the establishment of consultation structures regularly followed from immigrant protests and conflicts over immigration issues. Therefore social unrest among immigrants and intensified conflicts over immigration could serve as an underlying variable explaining both low naturalization rates and the establishment of consultation structures.

In some countries parties opposing immigration have grown strong during the last decades. Fennema (1997) in his study on the ideologies of the new Western European protest parties proposed to call them anti-immigration parties. However, the term ‘anti-immigration’ does not fully capture right wing protest parties from Central or Eastern Europe since immigration into these countries has been very limited thus far (cf. van der Brug / Fennema 2009). Taking strong europhobic and xenophobic, anti-gypsy sentiments into account, however, nationalist right-wing parties and movements in Eastern Europe bear a close resemblance to their Western European counterparts.

**Figure 1: Specific immigrant consultation bodies and naturalization rates**



Sources: International Migration Outlook: SOPEMI 2010 – OECD (see table 1), (Huddleston et.al. 2011; <http://www.mipex.eu/sites/default/files/downloads/mipexrawdata.xlsx>)

A closer look at various consultation bodies reveals that on the one hand, governments instituted dialogue structures with immigrants' representatives on general integration issues and, on the other hand, special Muslim integration bodies to fight radical Islamism and deal with challenges in incorporating growing Muslim communities into national systems of religious governance. The organizational solutions vary across countries. One finds corporatist dialogue committees with multi-partite membership consisting of state officials and representatives of societal groups (e.g. Germany, Netherlands, Denmark) as well as peak-associations of immigrant groups that have been established by governments to serve as their officially recognized contact partners (e.g. Belgium, France). Moreover, these bodies differ in terms of size, degree of institutionalization and membership selection (cf. Musch 2011a).

Among the first bodies was the Dutch National Minorities Consultation Structure established by law in 1985 (Landelijk Overleg Minderheden; LOM, see table 2). The

consultation began in reaction to escalating conflicts over migration and integration issues. Violent activities of young Moluccans served as a catalyst for the Dutch government to become active in immigrant integration issues. In 1976 the *Inspraakorgaan Welzijn Molukkers* (IWM) was set up by ministerial decree. The decree stated that it should be representative and act as a dialogue partner to the government. The Parliamentary debate on policy measures for Moluccan migrants broadened to a debate on developing an integration policy for all (immigrated) ethnic minority groups. The target groups of the Ethnic Minorities Policy were Turks, Moroccans and Tunisians, Southern Europeans, Surinamese, Antilleans and Arubans, Refugees, Caravan Dwellers and Gypsies. When developing its Ethnic Minority Policy the Dutch Government fell back on the action repertoire of “consociationalist” accommodation (Lijphardt 1968) as a proven model for social and political integration of different segments or pillars of society (Musch 2011a).

The Dutch consultation processes have been separated between ethnic groups such as Mollucans, Turks, Chinese, Surinamese; Caravan Dwellers and Gypsies etc. and chaired by the government’s Integration Minister. Furthermore, a delegation of civil servants of the Department of Civic Integration and Integration (*Directie Inburgering&Integratie – DI&I*) also participates. In the case that sectoral policy such as labour market policy, education policy, etc. is discussed the minister or state secretary of the department in question is invited to participate. The criteria of ‘representativity’ that the various participating societal groups and organisations must fulfil are regulated by law (Musch 2011a).

Apart from general immigrant integration bodies, national governments have established separate dialogue platforms with representatives of Muslim communities (see Table 2). The first such contact structures arose from the Belgian Governments’ initiative to install a Muslim “Head of Cult” and later from the Executive Committee of Muslims in Belgium (*Exécutif des Musulmans de Belgique*; EMB, established in 1996). It was intended to serve as a mediator between the state and Muslim communities with tasks ranging from providing religious education at schools and educational training for imams to the appointment of Muslims’ chaplaincies in hospitals and prisons. The EMB received state subsidies since 2001 and in 2002 the government began paying salaries to imams assigned to officially recognized mosques in Belgium. In 2008 the EMB was dissolved by governmental decree due to financial irregularities and complaints that the Muslim Executive did not adequately represent the diversity of the Muslim population in Belgium.

The religious incorporation in Belgium started as early as 1974 with the official recognition of Islam as a Belgian religion. 25 years later the Muslim „Head of Cult” has actually been institutionalized. “In both, the initial recognition and the final realization, it is the Belgian Government that has taken the initiative. Official recognition of Islam was characterized by a hasty response to the international political climate on the one hand, and by the fact that Islam was becoming problematic in terms of the state minority policy on the other hand” (Kamaz 2002: 99). Events such as the American attacks on Libya in 1986, the Salman Rushdie affair in 1989, the first Gulf War of 1991 and the headscarf conflict in France in 2003 have all had an impact on the Belgian development. Politicians have also reacted upon the electoral success of the extreme right-wing political party Vlaams Blok which was found in 1979 and has won a growing share of votes in city, regional and national elections. In 1989 the Royal Commissariat on Immigrant Policy (KCM) was established. For the first time, there was an attempt to create a coherent ‘integration’ policy to deal with minorities. KCM reopened the issue of Islam and tried to organize the elections of the “Head of Cult” or Muslim Executive. Implicitly the negotiations and debates took for granted that this body should be representative and democratically elected (Kamaz 2002).

**Table 2: National Immigrant Consultation Bodies in Europe**

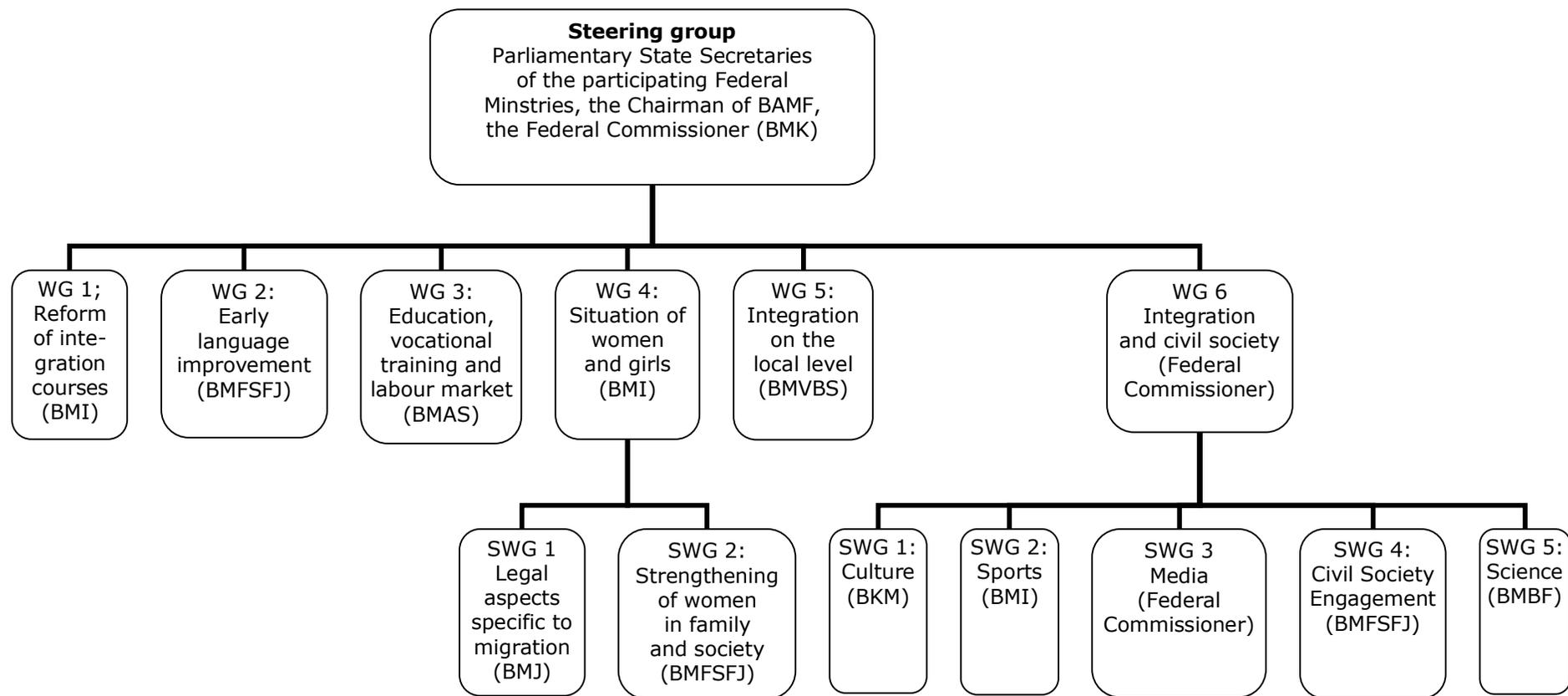
Country \ Focus	Immigrant ethnic minorities (Governmental contact and dialog committees)	Immigrant religious minorities (Governmental and non-governmental contact bodies and dialog committees)
Belgium	Minority Forum (Flanders) ( <i>Minderhedenforum; MF, est. 2000</i> )	Executive Committee of Muslims in Belgium ( <i>Exécutif des Musulmans de Belgique; EMB, est. 1996, abandoned 2008</i> )
Denmark	Danish Council for Ethnic Minorities ( <i>Rådet for Etniske Minoriteter, est. 1999</i> )	Danish Muslim Joint Committee ( <i>Muslimernes Fællesråd, est. 2003</i> )
Germany	Integration Summit ( <i>Integrationsgipfel, est. 2004</i> )	German Islam Conference ( <i>Deutsche Islam Konferenz; DIK, est. 2005</i> )
Netherlands	National Minorities Consultation Structure ( <i>Landelijk Overleg Minderheden; LOM, est. 1985</i> )	Inter-islamic Platform for Governmental Affairs ( <i>Inter-islamitisch Platform Overheidszaken; IPO, est. 2006</i> )
Norway	Contact Committee for Immigrants and the Authorities ( <i>Kontaktutvalget mellom innvandrerbefolkningen og myndighetene; KIM, est. 1984</i> )	Islamic Council of Norway (Islamsk Råd Norge, est. 1993)

Germany was a latecomer in matters of national immigration dialogue. The establishment of the German Integration Summit and German Islam Conference in 2006 (see table 2) followed fierce public debates about youth violence in schools, especially among pupils at

the Rütli high school in Berlin-Neukölln, a school with a large share of immigrant youth. Furthermore, the riots in French suburbs in 2005 also played a role (Musch 2011a). In advance of the Integration Summit the Federal Government Commissioner for Integration had been shifted from the Ministry of Social Affairs to the Chancellery. The establishment of two dialogue structures – the Integration Summit and the German Islam Conference can be seen as part of a new policy approach. Already having begun under the red-green government led by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (1998-2005) with the enactment of an immigration law in 2005 (Thränhardt 2009: 271), the establishment of the Islam Conference was primarily security related. In terms of the duration of the dialogue platforms it remains to be seen if they will be further institutionalized. Under the second cabinet of Angela Merkel (CDU/CSU-FDP-coalition), having been in office since October 2009, both consultation structures have been continued, but in a slightly different shape (Musch 2011b).

Official dialogue structures with societal minority groups deal with a multitude of problems. They comprise not only state-society networks and dialogue but they also pose severe administrative challenges for inter-ministerial coordination. The government was represented by seven ministries at the German Integration Summit. The summit's substructure consisted of six working groups and five sub working groups each tasked with special responsibilities (figure 2). Its work has been burdened not only with conflicts among immigrant representatives but also jurisdictional disputes between governmental departments and between the federal and state levels of government. The latter have been particularly burdened by overlapping competences due to the predominance of *länder* responsibilities in matters of cultural, educational and religious governance (cf. Czada 2010). As the consultation procedures involve a host of cross-sectional tasks allocated to different levels of government they pose particular problems for multi-level governance, all the more so since the European Commission tries to win national governments for a coordinated all-European approach. Until present, however, one must say, that European institutions – despite their capacities in controlling the external frontier of the EU - have not been major players in immigrant integration policies. This is due to the fact that these policies aim at integration into national societies. Moreover the major topics – legal status, citizenship, culture, language and religion – are still close to the core of national sovereignty or, in regards to culture and education –subject to sub-national regulation in many countries.

Figure 2: German National summit conference on immigrant integration issues.  
Working groups and federal ministries in charge



Source: Musch 2011a; Blätte 2007

**Abbreviations**

WG=Working groups, SWG=Sub-working group  
BAMF=Federal Office for Migration and Refugees,  
BMI=Federal Ministry of the Interior,  
BMFSFJ=Fed. Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

BMJ=Federal Ministry of Justice,  
BMVBS=Fed. Ministry of Building, Transport and Urban Development,  
BKM=Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media,  
BMBF=Federal Ministry of Education and Research

## **Summary and conclusion**

From the 1990s onwards, growing conflicts over issues of immigration and Islam have led to the establishment of consultative bodies or councils dealing with immigration and Muslim religious matters in many Western European Countries. These councils have been expected to function as official interlocutors with governments and administrations as well as with other religious and civil society groups in some cases. The official institutions established by governments during the last decades have served to address immigrant ethnic and religious minorities, negotiate policy issues with their representatives, and more or less incorporate immigrant associations into national systems of interest intermediation and religious governance. From a political science point of view it seems remarkable that immigrant and Muslim consultations have been initiated in a top-down fashion by national governments, but not by the groups concerned.

Governmental initiatives, in most cases, can be traced to challenges such as cultural identity conflicts, xenophobic incidents, conflicts over modes of religious governance, and terrorist threats. As state actors create institutional opportunities for immigrant groups to organize and negotiate minority integration policies with public authorities, the establishment of national consultation structures must be seen as an example of state-led “Administrative Interest Intermediation” (Lehmbruch 1991). This procedure resembles governance forms known from studies on the Japanese political system, namely practices of administrative guidance of societal sectors by governmental departments that are responsible for these sectors.

When dealing with immigrant associations current studies often refer to the theory of political opportunity structures (POS). The central argument here is that the development of social movements and their mobilization depend upon pre-existing opportunities and constraints set by the structural characteristics of the political system. In contrast to this approach, governments themselves have set up new governance institutions in order to cope with new problems of minority integration and religious governance. It can be shown that the establishment of these “new” institutions has followed traditional, national patterns of interest intermediation, including consociationalist, corporate pluralist, or corporatist legacies.

It was the administrative state, not as a structure but as an actor, which set up and shaped institutions of interest intermediation and interactive governance in the field of immigrant integration policies. By involving migrant ethnic and religious groups into policy-making

processes, governments followed a rational exchange paradigm: They recognized the interests of immigrant groups and attributed status to them. At the same time government actors set the guidelines and rules according to which consultations take place. In exchange for the attribution of political status to migrant associations and their involvement in policymaking processes governments intended to gain knowledge, consensus and support for their policy proposals. The interactions between government actors and migrants and their associations can thus be seen as an exchange of resources in the face of mutual dependency. Despite this overall functional explanation, cross-national variations of institutions and procedures of immigrant consultation seem to be deeply rooted in the traditional “action-repertoires” of administrative actors and bound to specific historical patterns of state-society relations found in these respective countries.

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