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Wedding Bells Are Ringing: Increasing Rates of Intermarriage in Germany

By Olga Nottmeyer

DIW Berlin (German Institute for Economic Research)

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Only in the last decade has Germany acknowledged its status as an immigrant-receiving country. This is largely due to the settlement of postwar guest workers from Turkey, Italy, and other southern European countries.

With this change in attitude has come greater government attention to integrating immigrants. German-language requirements and classes have topped the list, and accepting Germany's democratic norms and rule of law is mandatory for those naturalizing.

But beyond fluency in language and other indicators — such as employment levels and residential patterns — marriage between individuals of different ethnic and/or racial backgrounds is generally considered a test of integration.

As sociologists Richard Alba and Victor Nee wrote in *Remaking the American Mainstream*, "A high rate of intermarriage signals that the social distance between the groups involved is small and that individuals of putatively different ethnic backgrounds no longer perceive social and cultural differences significant enough to create a barrier to long-term union."

In contrast to traditional immigration countries such as the United States, research on intermarriage in Germany began comparably late. However, starting in the mid-1970s, the interest in understanding marriage patterns between native Germans and immigrants has grown steadily (see sidebar for definition of immigrants). A significant part of the literature has tried to underline the sociological and economic factors that foster interethnic partnerships.

Sociologists, including Julia Schroedter and Thomas Klein, have studied marital behavior of certain immigrant groups in Germany, such as Turks and Italians, finding different patterns depending on the country of origin and gender.

This article adds to the existing literature by analyzing recent data and using distinct definitions of immigrant status. It first examines the recent history of immigration to Germany and the size of Germany's main immigrant groups, namely those who came as guest workers in the 1950s and 1960s and asylum seekers who arrived in the 1980s and 1990s. A breakdown of immigrants by German region is also included.

The article then lays out the factors that influence intermarriage; looks at intermarriage trends by nationality, gender, and generation; and assesses the correlation of intermarriage with education level as one of the major determinants of interethnic relationships. Two data sets are used and compared: nationality data and microcensus data that distinguish the first from the second and later generations.

Due to data limitations, there is no breakdown of intermarriage rates by region or city. For the same reason, religious differences are not explored even though religion likely affects marriage decisions.

Defining Immigrants

German law defines Germans as persons holding German citizenship. Immigrants, also known in Germany as *Ausländer* (foreigners), are those holding citizenship from a foreign country only.

Aussiedler are persons of German descent, predominantly from Eastern Europe, who returned to Germany and held German citizenship upon arrival. Between 1950 and 2005, *Aussiedler* came mainly from Poland, the former Soviet Union, Romania, the former Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the former Yugoslavia. They are counted as Germans in official statistics that use *nationality* as the single criterion for immigrant status.

The German Statistical Office counts persons with dual (German and foreign) citizenship as Germans. As Germany does not grant citizenship to those born on German soil, children of immigrant parents usually hold the same citizenship as their parents.

If one parent is a German citizen, a child can gain dual citizenship. Between ages 18 and 23, these children must

The data reveal that while immigrants from Turkey, by far the largest immigrant group in Germany, have had low rates of intermarriage in the first generation, intermarriage rates among second-generation Turkish men are increasing.

In addition, first-generation Poles, another large but less regionally clustered immigrant group, show comparably high intermarriage rates.

Furthermore, increased levels of education also seem to foster intermarriage.

Immigration to Germany

Before assessing trends in intermarriage, it is important to understand the composition and historic background of Germany's immigrant population.

Due to massive labor-supply shortages and extreme economic growth during the "German economic miracle" of the early 1950s, recruitment agreements were signed between West Germany (FDG) and southern European countries, namely Italy, Greece, Spain, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia.

Based on the idea of "stay-and-return-migration" hundreds of thousands of labor migrants — mainly young men — were recruited predominantly into low-skilled positions in factories and a few industrial sectors. In general, they faced unfavorable working conditions and were expected to return to their home countries after a limited period of time.

But the "rotation model" failed, and the government's efforts to encourage return migration after recruitment ended in 1973 did not succeed. Family members of remaining guest workers, particularly those from Turkey, then came to Germany via family reunification provisions, effectively turning the guest workers into permanent migrants.

In the 1980s and 1990s, asylum seekers and ethnic Germans (Aussiedler), boosted flows — although the latter are not considered immigrants (see sidebar).

Civil wars in the former Yugoslavia, and conflicts in Kurdish territories of Turkey and in northern Iraq brought record numbers of asylum seekers. Germany received over 430,000 applications in 1992, according to the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. Ethnic Germans, predominately from Poland, Romania, and the former Soviet Union, arrived in the aftermath of the breakup of the Soviet Union.

More recently, new waves of seasonal workers and labor migrants with temporary contracts have come from Poland, the Czech Republic, and other Eastern European states. However, Germany maintains restrictions on free labor movement from the Eastern European countries that joined the European Union in 2004.

Immigrant Population Today

According to the Central Registry of Foreigners (AZR), 6.7 million foreigners — which includes the nonnaturalized foreign born and noncitizen descendants of the foreign born — were living in Germany in 2008, making up 8.2 percent of Germany's 82.1 million people (see Table 1).

choose one citizenship, as mandated by a law passed in 2000 commonly known as the "option model." Persons with dual citizenship are not counted as immigrants in official statistics that use *nationality* as the single criteria for immigrant status.

Although Germany has loosened its very strict naturalization law for children of first-generation immigrants, there are members of the second and third generations who have not naturalized. In nationality statistics, they are counted as immigrants regardless of their birthplace or how much time they have lived in Germany.

Since 2005, Germany's statistics bureau has used a second method for defining immigrants and their children: *migration background*.

The foreign born, or first generation, have a migration background, within which is their "own migration experience." Their children and grandchildren, who make up the second and later generations, have a migration background but are called "persons without own migration experience." A child with a native parent and a foreign-born parent, therefore, has a migration background but does not have his own migration experience.

According to these definitions, Aussiedler are included in the "migration background" category and in the subcategory of "own migration experience."

Table 1. Total Foreigner Population in Germany, Federal Statistical Office and the Central Register of Foreigners, 2006 to 2008

Year	Population	Foreign population - Federal Statistical Office (according to population extrapolation)*			Foreign population - Central Register of Foreigners
	Total	Total	Men	Women	
2006	82,314,906	7,255,949	3,737,409	3,518,540	6,751,002

2007	82,217,800	7,257,000	3,727,000	3,530,100	6,744,900
2008	82,095,000	7,247,156	3,716,984	3,530,172	6,727,600

* Since 1967, the stock of foreigners registered by the Central Register of Foreigners (AZR) has been published by the Federal Statistical Office. Due to major discrepancies between AZR numbers and results from a population survey in 1987, numbers from AZR were revised in 1987 and again in 2004. These revisions led to a discrepancy of about 600,000 persons between data from AZR and the population extrapolation.

Note: The Central Register of Foreigners does not include short-term stayers.

Source: Germany's Federal Statistical Office, Central Register of Foreigners (AZR), 2008.

By nationality, Turkish nationals were the largest immigrant group in 2008 (25.1 percent), followed by nationals of Italy, Poland, and Greece (see Table 2). The gender ratio for groups originating from countries that supplied guest workers (almost exclusively men) is still less than 50 percent, except for Spain. In other words, men outnumber women.

In contrast, women greatly outnumber men among nationals from the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Overall, Germany has slightly more immigrant men than women.

Table 2. Foreigners in Germany by Nationality and Gender, 2008

Citizenship	Total	Share of total (percent)	Men	Women	Percent women
Total	6,727,618		3,443,323	3,284,295	48.8
Turkey	1,688,370	25.1	889,003	799,367	47.3
Italy	523,162	7.8	308,169	214,993	41.1
Poland	393,848	5.9	189,924	203,924	51.8
Greece	287,187	4.3	156,002	131,185	45.7
Croatia	223,056	3.3	108,798	114,258	51.2
Russian Federation	188,253	2.8	73,765	114,488	60.8
Former Serbia and Montenegro ¹	177,330	2.6	92,415	84,915	47.9
Austria	175,434	2.6	92,557	82,877	47.2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	156,804	2.3	80,793	76,011	48.5
Netherlands	132,997	2	73,236	59,761	44.9
Ukraine	126,233	1.9	48,799	77,434	61.3
Portugal	114,451	1.7	62,291	52,160	45.6
France	108,090	1.6	50,487	57,603	53.3
Spain	105,526	1.6	52,615	52,911	50.1
Others	2,326,877	34.6	1,164,469	1,162,408	50.0

¹Before 2004, citizenship of Serbia and Montenegro was identical to that of former Yugoslavia; since August 2006 citizenship of the state of Serbia and the state of Montenegro are reported separately. Since May 1, 2008, Kosovo has been reported separately as well.

Source: Central register of Foreigners (AZR), 2008.

According to Germany's 2007 microcensus, the population with migration background — which includes Aussiedler and their children as well as the German-citizen descendants of immigrants — totaled 15.4 million, or 18.7 percent of Germany's population (see Table 3). Of these 15.4 million, 16.4 percent were of Turkish origin.

Table 3. Persons in Germany with Migration Background, 2007

Detailed migration status	Total	Share of total population
Total Population	82,257,000	
Persons without migration background	66,846,000	81.3
Persons with migration background	15,411,000	18.7
— according to current or former citizenship		

Turkey	2,527,000	16.4
Italy	761,000	4.9
Poland	638,000	4.1
Russian Federation	561,000	3.6
Serbia	391,000	2.5
Greece	384,000	2.5
Croatia	373,000	2.4
Bosnia and Herzegovina	283,000	1.8
Romania	240,000	1.6
Ukraine	215,000	1.4
Persons with own migration experience	10,534,000	68.4
Foreigner	5,592,000	53.1
Germans	4,942,000	46.9
Aussiedler	2,756,000	55.8
Naturalized	2,187,000	44.3
Persons without own migration experience	4,877,000	31.7
Foreigner	1,688,000	34.6
Germans	3,189,000	65.4
Naturalized	393,000	12.3
German born with parents:	2,795,000	
both parents with migration background	1,363,000	48.8
only one parent migration background	1,432,000	51.2

Source: German Microcensus 2007.

Over two-thirds of those with migration background are members of the first generation ("own migration experience"); the remaining 31.7 percent are from the second and later generations ("without own migration experience").

Sorting the second and later generations by citizenship is difficult since most of these individuals were born in Germany and hold German citizenship. Also, information about their parents can be ambiguous.

In this group of second- or later-generation immigrants, only 12.3 percent became Germans by naturalization, whereas 2.8 million were German born with either one or both parents with migration background. They presumably hold dual citizenship and were not counted among the foreign population in previous statistics. Over half (1.4 million) have just one parent with migration background, meaning they are the children of mixed couples.

Among the non-Aussiedler first generation ("own migration experience") of 7.8 million, the majority remain foreign nationals; just 2.2 million, or 28.1 percent have acquired German citizenship. The Aussiedler, at 2.7 million, outnumber the naturalized.

With respect to regional distribution, the concentration of those with migration background is especially high in cities such as Hamburg (26.3 percent), Bremen (25.6 percent), and Berlin (23.8 percent) (see Table 4).

Those of Turkish descent make up 18.1 percent of the migrant-background population in Hamburg, 22.8 percent in Berlin, and 24.1 percent in Bremen. In contrast, only about 3 to 6 percent of each city's population is composed of members of the Polish community or originated from the Russian Federation countries (see Table 5).

Table 4. Regional Distribution of People with Migration Background, 2007

	Total	Without migration background	With migration background
Regional distribution			

	Number	Number	Percent of total	Number	Percent of total
Baden-Württemberg	10,745,000	8,025,000	74.7	2,720,000	25.3
Bayern	12,504,000	10,102,000	80.8	2,403,000	19.2
Berlin	3,408,000	2,598,000	76.2	810,000	23.8
Bremen	663,000	493,000	74.4	170,000	25.6
Hamburg	1,762,000	1,299,000	73.7	463,000	26.3
Hessen	6,069,000	4,608,000	75.9	1,461,000	24.1
Niedersachsen	7,978,000	6,718,000	84.2	1,260,000	15.8
Nordrhein-Westfalen	18,012,000	13,793,000	76.6	4,219,000	23.4
Rheinland-Pfalz	4,049,000	3,319,000	82.0	729,000	18.0
Saarland	1,041,000	858,000	82.4	184,000	17.7
Schleswig-Holstein	2,835,000	2,479,000	87.4	356,000	12.6
New Federal States without Berlin	13,190,000	12,555,000	95.2	636,000	4.8
Total	82,256,000	66,847,000		15,411,000	

Source: German Microcensus 2007.

Table 5. Migration-Background Population in Bremen, Berlin, and Hamburg, 2007

	Berlin		Bremen		Hamburg	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total persons with migration background	810,000	100	170,000	100	463,000	100
Turkey	185,000	22.8	41,000	24.1	84,000	18.1
Poland	46,000	5.7	11,000	6.5	29,000	6.3
Russian Federation	28,000	3.5	10,000	5.9	24,000	5.2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	25,000	3.1	<5,000	/	13,000	2.8
Serbia	21,000	2.6	<5,000	/	8,000	1.7
Croatia	18,000	2.2	<5,000	/	8,000	1.7
Italy	16,000	2.0	<5,000	/	8,000	1.7
Greece	12,000	1.5	<5,000	/	11,000	2.4
Ukraine	11,000	1.4	5,000	3.0	<5,000	/

Note: Numbers less than 5,000 are not reported due to data imprecision.

Source: German Microcensus 2007.

Factors in Intermarriage

Factors typically affecting levels of intermarriage are generation, demographics, education, residential patterns, and the role of third parties (typically parents) who may pressure individuals to marry within their immigrant group.

Social boundaries between groups tend to fade over time, making intermarriage more likely in the second and third generations. Also, members of smaller immigrant groups are more likely to intermarry because they have fewer potential partners with the same ethnic background.

Generally, the higher an immigrant group's level of education, the higher the rate of intermarriage. Sociologist Matthijs Kalmijn has hypothesized that those with high levels of education may be less attached to their families or communities as they probably moved away to pursue their education.

In addition, economists Delia Furtado and Nikolaos Theodoropoulos found that highly educated immigrants are more likely to intermarry because they better adapt to the host country. Moreover, those whose educational levels are much higher or lower than their ethnic group's average are more likely to intermarry as economists Barry Chiswick and Christina Houseworth have reported.

Groups that are less clustered or segregated geographically are more likely to interact with those outside the group, increasing the chances of intermarriage. On a related note, since interpersonal relationships primarily evolve in settings such as schools and workplaces, a more culturally diverse school or workplace presents the opportunity for different groups to meet and interact.

Defining Intermarriage in Germany

Due to the way Germany classifies immigrants, intermarriage can be assessed in two ways: intermarriage by nationality and by migration background.

Intermarriage by nationality is marriage between a German citizen and someone who does not hold German citizenship, regardless of where that person was born. For example, an intermarriage by nationality could involve a German-citizen woman and the Turkish-nationality, German-born son of a Turkish guest worker.

Defining immigrant status by nationality is technically easy and generally unambiguous. But intermarriage status might change over time if the noncitizen spouse naturalizes.

Furthermore, these data include, misleadingly, marriages between naturalized citizens and noncitizens who are both of Turkish background, for example. Also, nationality data do not allow researchers to sort the foreign born (the first generation) from those noncitizens born in Germany to foreign-born parents (the second generation).

Intermarriage by migration background means the marital union of a person who does not have a migration background (i.e., a native-born German) with someone who does have a migration background.

In other words, this type of marriage data, only available from 2005 onward, includes members of the first, second, and later generations who hold German citizenship and who were not captured by the nationality data.

These data, which come from Germany's microcensus — a quarterly survey of 1 percent of the German population — make it possible to separate the first generation from later generations. Aussiedler can be explicitly pointed out as well.

However, due to definitional and data-related difficulties, the data do not allow distinctions between second and later generations. The data also make it impossible to further differentiate Germans whose parents have a migration background on one or both sides.

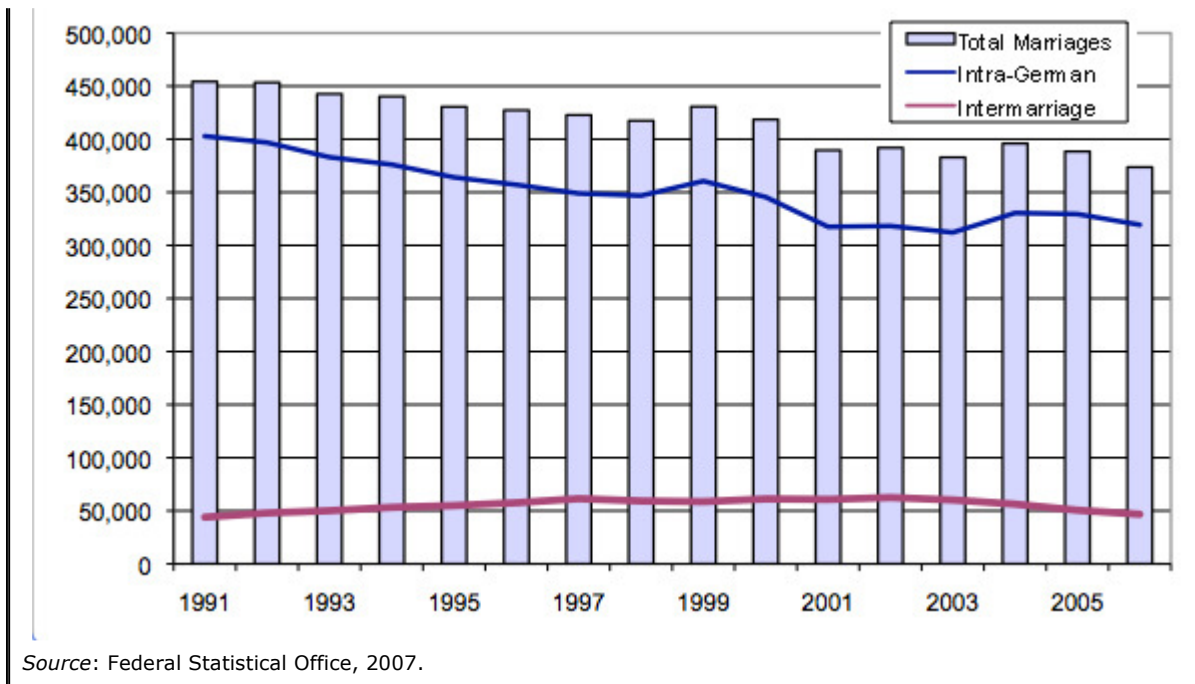
Intermarriage by Nationality

In Germany, the annual number of marriages, which are primarily between German citizens, has steadily declined since 1991 (see Figure 1).

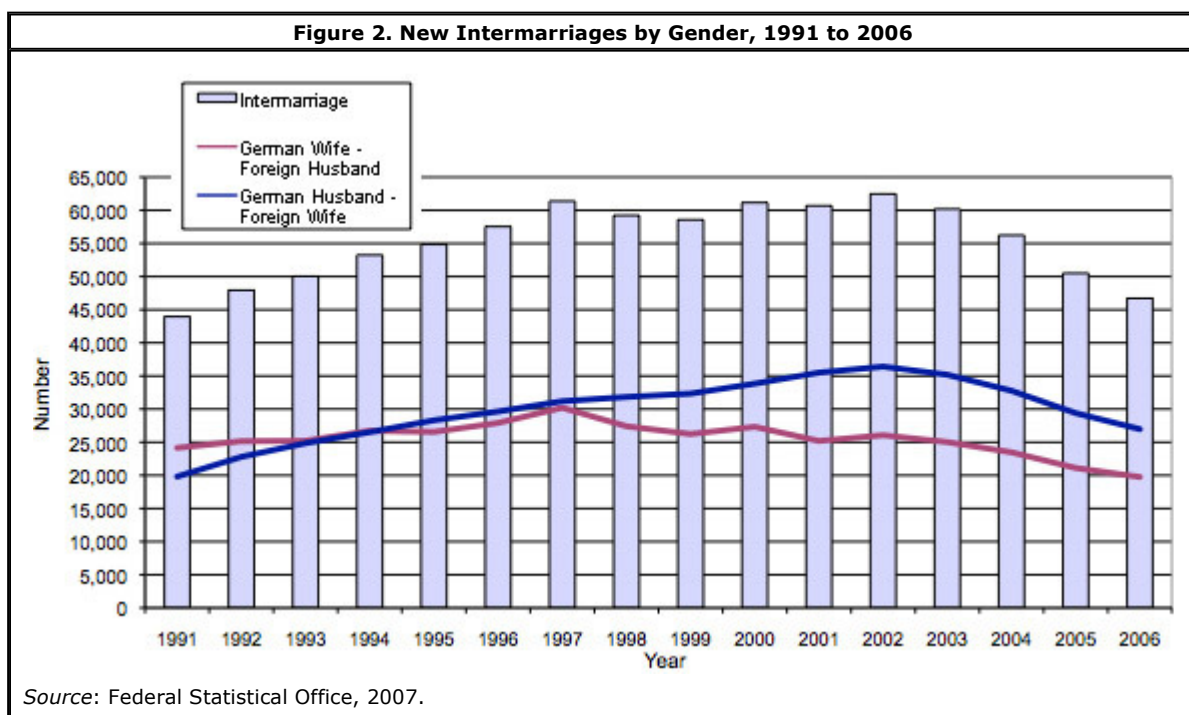
In contrast, the annual number of new intermarriages trended upward from 1991, when there were 43,955 (9.7 percent of all new marriages), until 2002, when they peaked at 62,468 (15.9 percent). Since 2002, the annual number and the share have dropped. In 2006, there were 373,681 new marriages, 46,719 of which (12.5 percent) were intermarriages.

The annual number and share of new marriages between immigrants has remained relatively small and steady over time, with just 7,578 such marriages in 2006, or 2.0 percent of the total. The surprisingly low number of new intra-immigrant marriages can be explained by the data, which only count marriages certified by a German registry office. The vast majority of intra-immigrant marriages are most likely confirmed in the spouses' home country.

Figure 1. New Marriages in Germany by Type, 1991 to 2006



Over time, the balance of intermarriages has shifted from marriages between German women and foreign men to marriages between German men and foreign women (see Figure 2). As of 2006, 57.7 percent of new intermarriages involved a German man and 42.3 percent involved a German woman.



In looking at the stock of all marriages as of 2008, nationals from German-speaking countries, such as Austria (43.1 percent), and nationals from countries of the Russian Federation (57.8 percent) showed comparably high rates of marriage to German citizens (see Table 6).

Polish nationals were also among those with high intermarriage rates (37.3 percent). In contrast, Greek (6.7 percent) and Turkish (9.7 percent) nationals showed extremely low intermarriage rates. Overall, intermarriages made up 25.0 percent of all marriages involving at least one foreigner.

Table 6. Stock of Intermarriages by Nationality, 2008

Citizenship (select groups)	Total	Married	Married to German citizen	Intermarriage share (percent)
Russian Federation	188,253	107,955	62,391	57.8
Austria	175,434	82,210	35,396	43.1
France	108,090	38,497	16,527	42.9
Poland	393,848	189,237	70,585	37.3
Netherlands	132,997	63,318	21,871	34.5
Ukraine	126,233	63,989	19,635	30.7
Spain	105,526	39,538	11,594	29.3
Italy	523,162	209,670	36,725	17.5
Croatia	223,056	112,961	16,979	15.0
Former Serbia and Montenegro	177,330	84,141	12,236	14.5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	156,804	81,518	11,777	14.1
Portugal	114,451	50,516	5,087	10.1
Turkey	1,688,370	858,502	83,204	9.7
Greece	287,187	127,372	8,529	6.7
Total	6,727,618	3,123,050	781,741	25.0

Source: Central Register of Foreigners (AZR), 2008.

Breaking these numbers down by gender, noncitizen women generally were more often intermarried (27.8 percent) than noncitizen men (21.7 percent) (see Table 7a and Table 7b).

Among noncitizen women, those holding citizenship from Thailand (81.5 percent), the Russian Federation (62.2 percent), and Romania (55.3 percent) had high intermarriage rates.

Especially among male nationals from the Russian Federation (50.4 percent), the United States (49.5 percent), and Great Britain (42.2 percent), intermarriage levels were high, presumably because of allied troops based in Germany.

Table 7a. Intermarriage among Noncitizen Women by Nationality, 2008

Citizenship (select groups)	Total of noncitizen women	Married	Married to German man	Intermarriage share (percent)
Thailand	47,030	32,148	26,210	81.5
Russian Federation	114,488	67,455	41,961	62.2
Romania	52,220	26,918	14,886	55.3
Poland	203,924	106,473	58,342	54.8
Austria	82,877	43,391	19,947	46.0
Ukraine	77,434	40,472	16,225	40.1
Netherlands	59,761	31,619	11,153	35.3
Croatia	114,258	63,810	10,396	16.3
Bosnia and Herzegovina	76,011	41,173	5,965	14.5
Serbia (with and without Kosovo)	66,024	31,189	3,819	12.2
former Serbia and Montenegro	84,915	43,581	5,303	12.2
Italy	214,993	98,671	11,629	11.8
Turkey	799,367	452,747	31,155	6.9
Greece	131,185	64,204	3,519	5.5
Total	3,284,295	1,695,867	471,984	27.8

Source: Central Register of Foreigners (AZR), 2008.

Table 7b. Intermarriage among Noncitizen Men by Nationality, 2008

Citizenship (selected groups)	Total of noncitizen men	Married	Married to German woman	Intermarriage share (percent)
Russian Federation	73,765	40,500	20,430	50.44
United States	56,972	25,768	12,752	49.49
Great Britain	59,177	24,791	10,468	42.23
Austria	92,557	38,819	15,449	39.80
Netherlands	73,236	31,699	10,718	33.81
Italy	308,169	110,999	25,096	22.61
former Serbia and Montenegro	92,415	40,560	6,933	17.09
Serbia (with and without Kosovo)	70,128	29,569	4,753	16.07
Poland	189,924	82,764	12,243	14.79
Bosnia and Herzegovina	80,793	40,345	5,812	14.41
Croatia	108,798	49,151	6,583	13.39
Turkey	889,003	405,755	52,049	12.83
Portugal	62,291	24,555	2,072	8.44
Greece	156,002	63,168	5,010	7.93
Total	3,443,323	1,427,183	309,757	21.70

Source: Central Register of Foreign Population (AZR), 2008.

Intermarriage by Migration Background

Of the population with migration background, 7.2 million in 2007 were married, 18.9 percent to someone who does not have a migration background. Although the data cannot be compared directly, this share of intermarriages is smaller than the share observed among intermarriages by nationality.

This indicates that defining immigrant status by nationality alone overstates intermarriage rates. Some of the intermarriages in the nationality data might have been between immigrants who differ by nationality but share the same ethnic origin or migration history.

Yet, the migration-background data find similar trends. As with the intermarriage by nationality findings, women with migration background were more likely to be intermarried (19.9 percent) than men (18.0 percent) (see Table 8a and Table 8b).

Women of Polish origin had high rates of intermarriage (28.7 percent), as did women of Romanian (26.6 percent) and Ukrainian origin (21.7 percent). Female current or former Turkish nationals showed an extremely low intermarriage rate of below 3 percent.

In contrast, men of Italian origin had the highest intermarriage rate — 34.6 percent — for any origin, male or female. Also, they were the only group of men who had an intermarriage rate above the male average. Croatian and Polish men also showed high intermarriage rates of 16.3 and 14.2 percent, respectively. Again the rate of intermarriage among Turkish immigrants was markedly low, just 7.7 percent.

Table 8a. Intermarriages of Women with Migration Background by Country of Origin, 2007

Migration status (select subgroups)	Total	Married				Intermarriage share of total marriages (percent)
		Total	German man		Foreigner	
			with	without		
			migration background			
Population total	41,986,000	19,426	2,297	15,325	1,804	
Persons with Migration background	7,602,000	3,618,000	1,471,000	718,000	1,429,000	19.9

— with current or former citizenship						
Poland	362,000	195,000	100,000	56,000	39,000	28.7
Romania	134,000	79,000	48,000	21,000	11,000	26.6
Ukraine	118,000	69,000	20,000	15,000	34,000	21.7
Italy	314,000	140,000	8,000	23,000	108,000	16.4
Croatia	193,000	102,000	13,000	16,000	73,000	15.7
Russian Federation	302,000	174,000	108,000	23,000	43,000	13.2
Bosnia and Herzegovina	140,000	79,000	12,000	9,000	59,000	11.4
Greece	173,000	91,000	5,000	8,000	78,000	8.8
Serbia	189,000	98,000	18,000	7,000	73,000	7.1
Turkey	1,203,000	673,000	173,000	20,000	481,000	3.0

Source: German Microcensus 2007.

Table 8b. Inter marriages of Men with Migration Background by Country of Origin, 2007

Migration status (select subgroups)	Total	Married				Intermarriage share of total marriages (percent)
		Total	German woman		Foreigner	
			with	without		
			migration background			
Population total	40,271,000	19,401,000	2,239,000	15,249,000	1,913,000	
Men with migration background	7,809,000	3,572,000	1,412,000	642,000	1,519,000	18.0
— with current or former citizenship						
Italy	447,000	202,000	16,000	70,000	117,000	34.6
Croatia	180,000	98,000	11,000	16,000	70,000	16.3
Poland	276,000	134,000	74,000	19,000	41,000	14.2
Greece	210,000	106,000	9,000	15,000	82,000	14.2
Romania	106,000	61,000	44,000	7,000	10,000	11.5
Serbia	202,000	105,000	18,000	11,000	76,000	10.5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	143,000	79,000	15,000	8,000	56,000	10.1
Turkey	1,323,000	714,000	170,000	55,000	489,000	7.7
Russian Federation	259,000	145,000	103,000	<5,000	40,000	/
Ukraine	96,000	50,000	17,000	<5,000	31,000	/

Note: Numbers less than 5,000 are not reported due to data imprecision.

Source: German Microcensus 2007.

Looking at the migration-background data by generation reveals that second-generation men and women were less likely to be married than first-generation men and women. This is presumably because the second generation is dramatically younger — their average age is 15 compared to 43 for the first generation.

Among married women with migration background, the rates of intermarriage were about the same: 19.8 percent for the first generation and 20.6 for the second generation (see Table 9a).

But second-generation men who were married were more likely to be intermarried (29.6 percent) than first-generation married men (17.2 percent) (see Table 9b). This supports the assumption that later generations are more attached to the host country — at least with regard to men.

As for specific groups, the rate of intermarriage among first-generation Turkish men was 7.1 percent but 12.1 percent for the second generation. For men of Italian origin, the rate increased even more markedly — about 11 percentage points from the first to the second generation.

First-generation Turkish women had an intermarriage rate of 2.6 percent, but the data were insufficient for showing the intermarriage rate for married second-generation Turkish women. Due to the margin of error in such small populations, the microcensus only reports exact numbers above 5,000. Thus, comparing Turkish women by generation is not possible.

The difference for women of Italian origin, however, was dramatic: 12.6 percent in the first generation compared to 31.0 percent for the second generation.

Table 9a. Intermarriages of Women by Generation and Country of Origin, 2007

Migration status (select subgroups)	Total	Married				Intermarriage share of total marriages (percent)
		Total	German man		Foreigner	
			with	without		
			migration background			
Persons with migration background	7,602,000	3,618,000	1,471,000	718,000	1,429,000	19.9
Persons with own migration experience (first generation)	5,292,000	3,380,000	1,416,000	669,000	1,296,000	19.8
— with current or former citizenship						
Poland	309,000	193,000	99,000	55,000	39,000	28.5
Romania	119,000	78,000	47,000	20,000	11,000	25.6
Ukraine	108,000	67,000	20,000	15,000	33,000	22.4
Croatia	135,000	91,000	12,000	13,000	66,000	14.3
Russian Federation	277,000	170,000	105,000	22,000	43,000	12.9
Italy	162,000	111,000	7,000	14,000	90,000	12.6
Bosnia and Herzegovina	109,000	75,000	11,000	8,000	55,000	10.7
Greece	107,000	77,000	<5,000	6,000	66,000	7.8
Serbia	140,000	91,000	17,000	7,000	68,000	7.7
Turkey	722,000	575,000	148,000	15,000	413,000	2.6
Persons without own migration experience (second generation)	2,310,000	238,000	55,000	49,000	133,000	20.6
— with current or former citizenship						
Italy	152,000	29,000	<5,000	9,000	18,000	31.0
Turkey	481,000	98,000	25,000	<5,000	68,000	<5.1

Note: Intermarriages include only those to a German man without migration background.

Numbers less than 5,000 are not reported due to data imprecision.

Source: German Microcensus 2007.

Table 9b. Intermarriages of Men by Generation and Country of Origin, 2007

Migration status (select subgroups)	Total	Married				Intermarriage share of total marriages (percent)
		Total	German woman		Foreigner	
			with	without		
			migration background			
Persons with migration background	7,809,000	3,572,000	1,412,000	642,000	1,519,000	18.0
Persons with own migration experience (first generation)	5,242,000	3,349,000	1,363,000	576,000	1,410,000	17.2
— with current or former citizenship						
Italy	270,000	175,000	12,000	58,000	105,000	33.1

Croatia	116,000	87,000	10,000	13,000	64,000	14.9
Poland	220,000	131,000	72,000	18,000	40,000	13.7
Greece	132,000	93,000	7,000	12,000	73,000	12.9
Romania	88,000	60,000	43,000	7,000	10,000	11.7
Serbia	146,000	99,000	17,000	10,000	72,000	10.1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	109,000	75,000	14,000	7,000	54,000	9.3
Turkey	788,000	631,000	152,000	45,000	433,000	7.1
Russian Federation	232,000	142,000	100,000	<5,000	38,000	/
Ukraine	83,000	49,000	17,000	<5,000	30,000	/
Persons without own migration experience (second generation)	2,567,000	223,000	49,000	66,000	108,000	29.6
— with current or former citizenship						
Italy	178,000	27,000		12,000	12,000	44.4
Turkey	535,000	83,000	18,000	10,000	55,000	12.1

Notes: Intermarriages include only those to a German woman without migration background.

Numbers less than 5,000 are not reported due to data imprecision.

Source: German Microcensus 2007.

Intermarriage Factor: Education

As outlined earlier, education level is assumed to be a leading factor in partner choice.

Germany has a tiered education system that tracks children at age 10 into *Hauptschule* (general school), *Realschule* (secondary school), or *Gymnasium* (university preparation). All three tracks culminate in a school-leaving exam.

Degrees from general schools only allow for apprenticeships, whereas graduates from secondary school may also apply for further education in so-called *Fachoberschulen* (technical colleges) to obtain the highest schooling degree, the *Fachhochschulreife* (advanced technical college entrance qualification), which corresponds to the German *Abitur*.

The *Abitur* — automatically obtained after completing *Gymnasium* — and the *Fachhochschulreife* are the only degrees that make individuals eligible to attend university or universities of applied science (*Fachhochschule*, or FH). These graduates can also start apprenticeships and attend trainee programs.

Here we define "educated" as completing one of the three secondary schools (general, secondary, and *Gymnasium*). Those who are "highly educated with respect to schooling" hold the *Abitur* or the *Fachhochschulreife*.

University degrees and degrees obtained from universities of applied science are the highest education levels possible in terms of vocational qualification, topped only by doctoral degrees and professorships following at least four years of *Habilitation* (postdoctoral lecture qualification).

Vocational training generally means education that follows completed secondary schooling. It includes apprenticeships and training as a doctor's assistant, banker, dispensing optician, or plumber, for example.

In 2007, 83.7 percent of Germany's population without migration background completed schooling compared to 63.7 percent among those with a migration background.

The share of male graduates with *Abitur* or *Fachhochschulreife* was also higher among natives (23.5 percent) compared to men with migration background (18.8 percent). In contrast, the share of immigrant women with *Abitur* or *Fachhochschulreife* was 19.7 percent, slightly higher than among natives (18.2 percent).

Also, those with migration background showed far lower rates of vocational training (39 percent) than natives (66.2 percent).

Moreover, 13.8 percent of native men and 8.5 percent of native women held university or FH degrees in 2007; the same was true for only 9.2 percent of men and 8.5 percent of women with migration background.

Both sets of intermarriage data show that especially first-generation women from Eastern European countries are most likely to intermarry. In addition, as education data by migration background show, large shares of women of Polish, Ukrainian, and Romanian origin are highly educated in terms of both schooling and vocational qualification (see Table 10).

In contrast, those of Turkish origin, who have low intermarriage rates, also had lower graduation rates from all three school levels. Only 53.6 percent had completed schooling and only 9.2 percent of men and 7.6 percent of women held the Abitur or a comparable degree. The share of those of Turkish origin with vocational training was also exceptionally small compared to all other groups.

Thus, educational data are in line with the assumption that more educated immigrants are more likely to be intermarried. However, this correlation does not imply causality and is probably related to other factors that also affect marriage choice.

Table 10. Education Levels of Persons with Migration Background by Country of Origin, 2007

Migration status (select groups)	With completed schooling (as percent of group's population)			Among those with completed schooling		With vocational training* (as percent of group's population)			Among those with vocational degree	
				Abitur or Fachhochschulreife					University or university of applied science	
	Total	Men	Women	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Men	Women
Total population	79.9	79.3	80.5	22.6	18.4	61.1	65.2	57.2	12.9	8.5
Persons without migration background	83.7	82.8	84.4	23.5	18.2	66.2	70.7	61.9	13.8	8.5
Persons with migration background	63.7	64.5	62.9	18.8	19.7	39.0	42.0	36.0	9.2	8.5
— according to current or former citizenship										
Greece	67.4	71.1	62.4	19.4	<15.6	32.8	37.1	27.6	7.1	<6.9
Italy	65.6	69.4	60.2	10.0	11.1	34.1	38.8	27.4	4.2	<5.4
Poland	77.9	75.0	80.1	24.3	35.6	55.2	57.2	53.6	9.4	11.9
Romania	82.5	80.0	84.4	<31.5	34.1	61.3	67.6	56.3	15.2	<14.1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	68.2	69.4	66.4	11.8	<12.9	41.0	47.2	35.0	<6.9	<7.1
Croatia	75.8	77.2	74.6	15.0	14.0	50.1	57.8	43.0	<6.7	<5.2
Russian Federation	78.1	76.2	79.7	21.9	29.6	52.1	51.4	52.8	14.7	19.3
Serbia	61.4	64.4	58.7	11.9	<10.5	35.0	41.9	28.0	<4.9	<5.3
Turkey	53.6	58.4	48.3	9.2	7.6	22.7	27.9	17.0	3.2	2.2
Ukraine	79.4	75.0	82.4	40.6	44.5	60.5	59.4	61.3	30.2	30.3

*Meaning additional education following school graduation. This includes apprenticeships and training to become a doctor's assistant, mechanic, or technician, but also university attendance.

Note: Numbers refer to percentage share of the group's population. Observations below 5,000 are not reported, therefore allowing only for estimates.

Source: German Microcensus 2007.

Conclusion

Even as the number of new marriages in Germany has decreased, the share of intermarriages in 2006 remained well above the share in the early 1990s though a downward trend in intermarriages is evident.

Examining intermarriage by nationality and migration background reveals that intermarriage rates have generally increased from the first to the second generation, as would be expected. Also,

some of the country's groups, particularly Italian men and Polish immigrants, have significantly higher intermarriage rates than others.

First- and second-generation, male and female Turkish immigrants, by far the largest group in Germany, are least likely to marry a native German — not surprising given that group size and concentration influence intermarriage rates.

Yet, intermarriage rates for men of Turkish background increased from the first to the second generation. This indicates the second generation's greater commitment to and integration into German society.

Furthermore, data support the idea that intermarriage rates and education level correlate.

However, it is important to keep in mind that in addition to education, intermarriage rates are also related to residential patterns, religious beliefs, and third-party considerations, including legal restrictions and additional factors not explored here.

That said, the intermarriage findings here are in line with trends in traditional immigration countries like the United States and offer researchers another less-discussed way of understanding immigrant integration in Germany.

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MPI • 1400 16th St. NW, Suite 300 • Washington, DC 20036
ph: (001) 202-266-1940 • fax: (001) 202-266-1900
source@migrationpolicy.org