American Nativism and Islamophobia in Germany

Drawing Parallels

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This paper seeks to draw parallels between the phenomenon of Anti-Catholic nativism seen in 19th century America with the current trends of Islamophobic discourse in contemporary Germany. By drawing upon a framework of comparisons established by Jose Casanova in his essay "The Politics of Nativism: Islam in Europe, Catholicism in the United States," it becomes evident that there are undeniable similarities between the two. This paper relies largely on two types of evidence: discursive and political. First the paper outlines the roots and historical context of Catholicism in America and the American response to this new immigrant group throughout the 19th century. This background is then followed by an analysis of Islam in Germany, and an analysis of how the German people and government since the late 20th century have received it. The paper concludes that similar rhetoric and political response can be seen in the case of 19th century America and Germany today. Ultimately, the conclusion serves to fully support Casanova's framework of analysis and is useful in attempting to predict the future path of Islam in Germany, and perhaps even greater Western Europe, by acknowledging the successful integration of Catholicism into America throughout the early 20th century.

Introduction: Framework of Analysis

In "The Politics of Nativism: Islam in Europe, Catholicism in the United States," Jose Casanova proposes that "the politics of nativism directed at Catholic immigrants in 19th century America offer a fruitful comparative perspective through which to analyze the discourse and the politics of Islam in contemporary Europe."[1] Casanova posits that both ideological attacks are steeped in the "fusion of anti-immigrant xenophobic attitudes, perennial inter-religious prejudices, and an ideological construct setting a particular religious-civilizational complex in essential opposition to Western modernity."[2] In order to assess Casanova's argument, this paper applies this comparative framework to the Catholic immigrant experience in 19th century America, and draws parallels to the Muslim immigrant experience in contemporary Germany.

Catholicism in America: The Early Years

It can be argued that the American people have held prejudice against the Catholic faith since the inception of the colonies. English Puritans brought Anti-Catholicism from the Old World to the New World, carrying with them the negative experiences associated with the Irish Catholic church and the association of Catholicism with the French and Spanish--rivals of the British Empire.[3] As such, it was no surprise that Puritan Massachusetts legally forbade the practice of Catholicism, barring the entrance of any Catholic priests to the colony as early as the 17th century. By the time Jamestown was founded in 1608, a general sentiment of anti-Catholicism and anti-popery reigned in the colonies.[4] This Catholic repudiation first reverberated in the colonies after the passing of the Quebec Act in 1774, which granted religious freedom to the Catholics living in territories recently conquered by the French.[5] For example, the Puritans held that "if Gallic papists have a right to worship their own way, then farewell to the liberties of poor America!"[6] These strong sentiments were quickly quelled by the impending revolution, yet remained an integral part of American discourse up until the Civil War. Ironically, during the revolutionary years, anti-Catholicism was dampened by the financial and military assistance provided by Catholic Spain and Catholic France.[7] Moreover, the Catholic minority was so negligible at the time, that there existed little cause for uproar. Instead, the colonists faced a far more important challenge at hand: their impending independence.

In the revolutionary years, and the few years directly following, the issues faced by Catholics remained largely internal. The Catholic hierarchy faced a variety of obstacles as it tried to root itself in the colonies. The first challenge was that of blending the diverse nationalities of Catholics into a unified American Catholic community, and the second was the attempt to establish the institutions necessary for the practice of Catholicism in light of a deficiency of priests and issues of lay trusteeship.[8] The shortage of clergy found the Catholic Church in an unprecedented dilemma, as lay trustees do not typically have power within the formal Catholic Church. The shortage of clergy, however, necessitated modernization of the pastoral selection process, bringing about an attempt by the laity to control clerical assignments--an attempt that proved, and still proves, entirely incompatible with the hierarchical structure of the Church. As conflict arose among Catholics, the American government remained uninvolved, leaving the clergy to deal with both the heavenly and temporal matters of the newly cemented Catholic community. Suddenly, at the turn of the 19th century, anti-Catholic nativism emerged stronger than ever from the newly formed American political landscape.

The Nativist Era:

In his book *Strangers in the Land*, John Higham defines the core of nativism as a "be-

lief that some influence originating abroad threatened the very life of the nation from within," and should thus be understood as "an intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign connections."[9] In line with this conceptualization, Catholic immigrants were understood by some as a distinct threat to the American way of life. Catholic traditions were seen as entirely un-American due to their attachment to the authoritarian organizational structure of the Church and their association with the monarchical and feudal governments in Europe.[10] "European popery" was thus incompatible with American notions of individual freedom and democracy. For this reason, Catholics were seen as unfit American citizens. These anti-Catholic sentiments were first directed at Irish Catholics, who were not only viewed critically for their allegiance to Rome as a result of their faith, but also represented a "rowdy ne'er-do-wells, impulsive, quarrelsome, drunken and threadbare" community.[11] Not only were they Catholic, but they were also poor and uneducated.

> ## Natavism: "an intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign connections."

Three major factors made the 1820s onward a particularly difficult time for Catholics: first, the religious revival among Protestants was largely translated as anti-Catholicism; second, the increased urbanization and territorial expansion occurring in America led to greater social dislocation; and third, the growing numbers of immigrants, who were often destitute Catholics, occupied the logical role of scapegoats.[12] The situation was of such magnitude that the few Catholic Bishops present in the U.S. held the First Provincial Synod of Baltimore in 1829 in order to decry the poor treatment of their faith's practitioners by their fellow Americans. The bishops sought to fight back against vilification and misrepresentation.[13]

Major Controversies: Maria Monk and F.B. Morse

Two major scandals shook the Catholic community in the mid-19th century: the publication of Maria Monk's *Awful Disclosures*, and F.B. Morse's *Foreign Conspiracy.* The full title of Maria Monk's *Awful Disclosures* was in fact the self-explanatory, "*Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk, As Exhibited in a Narrative of Her Sufferings, During a Residency of Five Years as a Novice, and During Two Years as a Black Nun, in the Hotel Dieu Nunnery at Montreal.*" In this publication, Maria Monk told the tale of her tenure in the Hotel Dieu nunnery, making an inflammatory accusation that the priests in this Catholic nunnery forced themselves upon the nuns. Upon impregnating these young women, the priests killed the illegitimate children soon after their birth--only after baptizing them first.[14] Maria Monk's account appealed in every manner to the dominant contemporary American values-- these Catholic priests were a prime example of the Church's hierarchical obsession, and, by forcing themselves on young nuns in the name of obedience to God, presented an affront to egalitarianism. Moreover, the description of events ridiculed the strict codes of sexual propriety which partially defined the Catholic Church, by making the nunnery sound more like a brothel than a house of women of God.[15] While the story was ultimately found to be a fabrication, the damage it caused was near indelible. The suspicions against the Church now seemed tangible to anti-Catholics. Adding onto Maria Monk's narrative was F.B. Morse's Foreign *Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States*. In his book, he held that it was the duty of all Americans to unite in anti-Popery to save America, as he strongly believed that the Catholic agenda was centered on overthrowing the American government and undermining its democratic foundations. He proposed barring Catholics from political participation, closing down all Catholic schools, and restricting immigration.[16] Morse effectively caused the Catholic threat in America

to take on universal proportions, establishing the foundation for the future Know-Nothing era. These two narratives served as popular references throughout the anti-Catholic, nativist era, encapsulating the fears and judgements that American Protestants held against Catholicism.

The Know-Nothing Party:

The legitimation of anti-Catholic rhetoric was established by the birth of the Know-Nothing Party. While anti-Catholicism had always had social implications and educational consequences for Catholics, the discourse shifted towards being an integral piece of the broader political spectrum. In 1854, the Know-Nothings were catapulted to the forefront of American politics. In one election, they elected 43 members to the House of Representatives, 5 additional Senate seats, and 27 new congressmen who were known members of Know-Nothing lodges. This triumph afforded them a 75-member congressional delegation.[17] However, their greatest electoral success was in the state of Massachusetts, where after the 1854 election, the governor, every state officer, every member of the senate and 376 of the 378 members of the Assembly were Know-Nothings.[18] The Know-Nothings also swept Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Maryland, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, New York and California the following year.[19] Shockingly, and perhaps ironically, no major legislation was passed under the Know-Nothing government. Its sole platform was anti-Catholicism, and it held little water in terms of actual legislation. Moreover, it is largely agreed upon that the widespread election of Know-Nothings was a distraction from the growing dissent over the issue of slavery. Having little policy goals other than dismantling the Catholic Church, the party provided a moderate position between abolitionists and secessionists.

However, the rapid rise of the Know-Nothing Party represents the pinnacle of nativism in America. As nativism was slowly starting to shift from anti-Catholicism towards issues of race, anti-immigration discourse embedded within prevalent anti-Catholic sentiments gathered tremendous support. Above all, the rise of such strong, anti-Catholic political powers drew a reaction from the Catholic community, which began to show signs of becoming a more unified community in the 1840s--the beginning of the Know-Nothing era. A prime example of this growing union was Bishop John Hughes' campaign to alter the Protestant-oriented school system.[20] When it came to public education, Catholics had few choices: they could either pay for the maintenance of separate Catholic schools (which was unlikely and burdensome due to the majority working-class composition of the Catholic immigrant community), jeopardize the faith-based education of their children by sending them to traditional, Protestant-oriented public schools, or forego educating their children entirely, which would simply perpetuate the poverty of the immigrant generation.[21] Bishop Hughes set out on a mission to rectify this issue in New York City, where the Public School Society, a Protestant organization, controlled 100 major public schools by 1840. As American citizens, Bishop Hughes argued that Catholics had the same rights as other Americans to have their tax money be spent on an education compatible with their beliefs. He rallied the Catholic community in New York in order to swing the upcoming election. Bishop Hughes instructed Catholics, who made up a significant portion of the Democratic vote, to only support candidates who would support a bill which would bypass organizations such as the Public School Society and give government money directly to local

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schools. In that election, only the 10 of the 15 Democratic candidates running for the city council supported the bill were elected to the council.[22] This was the first instance of major Catholic political mobilization in the United States.

American Nativism: Conclusion

The Catholic immigrant experience in 19th century America can thus be understood as the framework of opposition for the creation of a distinctly Protestant American identity. American nativism as a socio-political movement served to solidify identitary claims made in the post-American revolution years. Over this period certain essential changes must be underlined. First, the initial arrival of Catholics, followed by the growth of anti-Catholic sentiments should be highlighted. Anti-Catholicism, while carried from the Old World, did not become essential to American identity until the post-revolution years, when the formation of a distinct American identity was essential to the birth of the new nation. The second notable development was the emergence of an association between Catholicism and authoritarianism due to the Church's hierarchical structure, which was seen as the antithesis of American democracy. Third, the American fixation on egalitarianism played a central role in the success of Maria Monk's *Awful Disclosures*. Fourth, attempts to bar Catholics from the public sphere, whether through restriction of their voting rights or limiting their reach in education proved influential. As noted by Casanova, "quasi-perennial religious-theological Protestant anti-Catholic prejudices became fused with a modern liberal reconstruction of Catholicism as an anti-modern, anti-democratic, uncivilized fundamentalist religion."[23] These changes are essential to understanding the parallels between the Catholic experience in 19th century America and the Muslim experience in contemporary Germany.

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Islam and Germany: Background

While there have been Muslims, specifically Turkish Muslims, in Germany since the 17th century, the Muslim population in the region remained fairly negligible until the 1960s.[24] Guest workers began arriving in 1955, when a foreign labor recruitment treaty was signed with Italy. Germany subsequently signed similar bilateral agreements with Spain and Greece, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, and Yugoslavia. By 1964, prior to even signing an agreement with Tunisia or Yugoslavia, Germany had welcomed its millionth guest worker.[25] In 1973, German foreign labor recruitment came to a halt. Up until this point, guest workers were largely single males who were perceived as disposable labor hands. By the mid-1970s, however, these workers began to have their families join them in Germany, and others started new families. At this time, the first public awareness of particular city districts becoming Turkish "ghettos" rose, and pressure on German health, social and educational services due to the population influx began to be felt.[26] The permanent settlement of Muslim immigrants was also marked by the emergence of religious organizations in the 1980s, such as the Islamic Community Milli Gorus (IGMG) in 1985. The influx of Turkish migrants was so important that the Turkish government went as far as establishing the Turkish-Islamic Union of the Office for Religious Affairs in 1984 in order to maintain a hold on its diaspora community.[27] These organizations were, and are still today, classified as associations or foundations, unlike Christian Churches and the Jewish communities which hold the status of publicly recog-

nized corporations. This special status, known as Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts, grants them additional privileges, including tax benefits, the ability to form confessional schools with public funding, and the right to employ under belief-oriented labor laws.[28] Muslim associations and foundations have been unable to attain this status due to the diversity among Muslims in Germany. German law only grants recognition to institutions or organizations that are broadly representative (both in membership and internal structure) of the greater faith-community which it aims to represent. Moreover, the organization must have a permanent character, and accept the provisions of German Basic Law, which guarantees freedom of religious worship, organization, and teaching.[29] The state is considered religion neutral, and thus does not take a position on religious affairs. While the Islamic German community lacks these official rights, it still has the right to construct places of worship based on the constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion inscribed in German law. The result of these limited rights is the emergence of mosque unions as organizing bodies for German Muslims.

The Muslim community's outsider status compared to Christians and Jews is part of the greater discourse surrounding the Muslim immigrant experience in Germany. Casanova notes that one of the pillars of European nativism today is the anxiety that originates from Muslim organized collective identities and their public representations. This anxiety is fueled both by the foreign character of these organizations, but also due to their non-Christian character, and their inherent religiousness.[30] Thus, as the German state continues to exclude Islam from the corporatist structure, whether motivated by valid legal reason or not, the fears of Muslim organizational bodies become self-fulfilling. As mosque unions become the primary representative entities for German Muslims (and do so without being state-approved or sanctioned in the same

manner as other religious bodies), they become part of a cycle of Muslim alienation in Germany.

One of the most egregious instances of Muslim immigrant alienation is the fact that Germany does not consider itself a country of immigration, and thus often still employs the term "guest worker" in reference to those labor immigrants. Additionally, at various times, the German government has undertaken measures to repatriate foreign workers, specifically Turks, by either offering lump sums of money, or going as far as restricting welfare benefits.[31] Restrictions have also been witnessed in the political sphere, as foreigners have struggled to gain the right to vote on the local level.[32] In order to compare the current Muslim immigrant experience in Germany to that of the Catholic immigrant in 19th century America, a closer look at the rhetoric and public outcry against Islam in Germany is necessary.

Islamophobia and Germany:

Casanova's framework holds that the nativist rhetoric of 19th century America is comparable to the Islamophobia that has emerged in contemporary Europe.[33] Islamophobia is a modern noun used to define a relatively new concept: manifestations of anti-Muslim or anti-Islam sen-

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timents.[34] While it is often associated with being a post 9/11 phenomenon, research has proven that such feelings precede the 2001 attacks. As such, "Islamophobia existed as much on 10 September 2001 as indeed it did on 12 September 2001."[35] In Germany, the emergence of Islamophobic discourse has been largely framed by the context of multiculturalism. Multiculturality is an inherently terrifying threat to the German nation, a nation that holds a largely biological and ethnic vision of itself.[36] Thus, a change in the

ethnic composition of the country would be understood as a "dissolution of a previously homogenic structure into ethnically heterogeneous segments."[37] As Chancellor Angela Merkel famously remarked in 2010, "the approach [to build] a multicultural [society] and to live side-by-side and to enjoy each other... has failed, utterly failed."[38]

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Post-9/11, a discourse of foreign "sleepers" and "dewy-eyed" Germans emerged, in which Muslim foreign workers were viewed suspiciously in the wake of the terrorist attack. In an official statement by the German Lutheran Church, the officials held that, "Our [Lutheran] representatives who maintain dialogue with Muslims cannot persist with their dewy-eyed innocence any more. They should make better use of the Protection of the Constitution."[39] "Sleepers" were undercover terrorists and criminals hiding among foreign workers, and protected by innocent, "dewy-eyed" Germans who had failed to acknowledge their existence. In response, the German government passed a law legalizing dragnet searches.[40] Dragnet searches are systematic government searches that match certain criteria against existing datasets to find "terrorists." German authorities used a "terrorist-profile" provided by the FBI which cross-searched for anyone who fit the following description: male, affiliation with Islam, between the ages of 18 and 41, student or former student, living in Germany and hailing from one of 27 specific countries.[41] In 2006, these searches were deemed unconstitutional, but during the five-year span during which they occurred, 31,988 personal data sets were sent for analysis. This decision on behalf of the German government highlights two of the main ideas put forth by Casanova as he draws parallels between American and European nativism: first, the "undifferentiated conflation of the categories of "immigrant" 'Muslim' and 'Islam' in European discourses," and second, the constant suspicion cast upon Muslim people in Germany.[42] In the case of Catholics in the U.S., accusations were those of popery and Romanism, while those against Muslims are of terrorism and Islamization.

In 2014 and 2015, Germany witnessed a major public outcry against Muslim integration in the wake of the numerousf terror attacks that swept over Europe. In October 2014, Patriot Europeans Against the Islamization of the West (PEGIDA) formed in reaction to the prevailing view "that the religion of Islam was gaining influence in various quarters, including the government."[43] The group organized mass protests in the streets of Germany, and in April 2015, over 10,000 protesters gathered to express their outrage over the immigration crisis. Unsurprisingly, these events came after the rise of Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), a new, far-right party that has gained tremendous traction in Germany. While the party's original platform was largely focused on opposing debt bailouts for countries such as Greece, AfD has now become the anti-immigration party in Germany. AfD has been enormously successful in light of the European refugee crisis. The party calls for EU border closures, rigorous identity checks along national borders, and an overall rejection of Angela Merkel's refugee policy.

German "terrorist profile":

male	affiliation with Islam	between the ages of 18 and 41	student or former student	living in Germany	from one of 27 specific countries

This political group has espoused parts of PEGI-DA's rhetoric, particularly in regards to challenging the "Islamization" of Germany. In 2017, AfD entered the German parliament as the third largest party, drawing the strongest support from Eastern and Southern federal states--areas with high immigrant concentrations.

Drawing Parallels:
American Nativism and German Islamophobia

In assessing the Catholic immigrant experience in 19th century America and the current Muslim immigrant experience in Germany under Cassanova's comparative framework, a variety of common rhetorical threads arise between American nativism and contemporary Islamophobia. Just as Catholics were accused of Popery and Romanism by news outlets and famous publications like F.B. Morse's *Foreign Conspiracy*, Muslim immigrants today are consistently targeted as potential terrorist threats. Catholics were and Muslims are accused of wanting to overthrow the government system of the receiving country: the Catholics by way of their allegiance to Rome, and the Muslims by way of allegiance to the global *ummah*. AfD's official platform manifesto states: "Islamic countries aim to spread Islam in Germany and extend their power base by building and running mosques."[44] Moreover, both faiths are consistently painted as distinctly opposed to democratic institutions. In the case of Catholicism, the authoritarian and hierarchical structure of the Church theoretically opposes the democratic ideal of individual freedom in America. Islam is often painted as an anti-democratic religion, as once again highlighted by AfD's campaign manifesto, in which the party blatantly outlines firm opposition to "Islamic practice which is directed against our liberal-democratic constitutional order, our laws, and the Judeo-Christian and humanist foundations of our culture."[45] In the same breath, both Catholicism and Islam are characterized as affronts to egalitarianism. During the American nativist era, Maria Monk's *Awful Disclosures* epitomized this view of Catholicism, while politics of the veil and the rights of women in Islam often shape a similar conversation in Germany. As such, many liberal arguments that call for scrutiny and regulation of Islam in the public sphere are vaguely grounded in feminist rhetoric. However, these arguments make a great contribution to Islamophobic discourse and fail to make a genuine feminist case. Casanova also refers to a blatant conflation of Catholics, Muslims, and immigrants in both cases.[46] Thus, the negative associations held against immigrant communities, which includeabuses of welfare benefits, violent inclinations and lack of education, become intertwined with the religious identity of the immigrant. This is exemplified by a Midwestern carpenter's complaint in 1886: "we poor, native-born citizens are just pulled around same as dogs by foreign people. We do not stand any show, and it seems as though everything is coming to the very worst in the near future unless free immigration is stopped."[47] Similar discourse on immigration is echoed throughout Germany today, particularly by AfD. This fusion of negative stereotypes strengthens pre-existing anti-Muslim rhetoric

Another strong parallel that can be drawn between the Catholic immigrant experience in the U.S. and the Muslim immigrant experience in Germany is the political response. The Know-Nothing party which rose in the 1840s in America was entirely premised on anti-Catholicism. In the 1854 elections, the Know-Nothings were omnipresent in American politics. Their raison d'être, however, was ultimately their downfall, as their myopic desire to thwart Catholic influence resulted in little significant legislation being passed. The emergence of the Know-Nothings is comparable to that of the AfD party in Germany. AfD is one of many prominent far-right political parties that have risen to power in the past few years in Europe. Ideologically,

they resemble the French National Front and the Austrian Freedom Party; these parties advocate anti-European Union stances, resort to often populist discourse, and hold strong views against immigration and the Muslim faith. AfD's sudden rise to parliament in 2017 highlights growing anxieties within Germany. AfD's casting of Islam as the natural scapegoat of the state through its identity as "other" indicates the direction of German public sentiment towards the faith.

In F.B. Morse's *Foreign Conspiracy*, he called for three major solutions to curbing the Catholic issue: (1) remove Catholics from the political sphere by limiting their ability to vote, (2) limit funding for confessional schools, and (3) halt immigration completely as to prevent the arrival of more Catholics. While the German constitution largely protects Muslims from the first two obstacles, up until 2000 it was incredibly difficult for Muslim immigrants to attain citizenship due to stringent naturalization laws. Moreover, as Islamic organizations remain outside the corporatist structure of the German state, it is still difficult for Muslims to form and adequately finance confessional schools. In the case of immigration, the rise of AfD represents a genuine threat to the ability for Muslim people to immigrate to Germany. AfD does not nuance its stance, declaring that "Islam does not belong to Germany. Its expansion and the ever-increasing number of Muslims in the country are viewed by the AfD as a danger to our state, our society, and our values."[48] While the Know-Nothing party had little long-term impact on the American political landscape, AfD has the potential to profoundly alter the future of German politics.

Conclusion: The Integration of Catholics in America and the Future of Islam in Europe

The beginning of the Civil War in 1869 marked a turning point for American Catholics. The war provided an opportunity for Catholic immigrants to demonstrate their loyalty to their new country by way of serving in the Union armed forces. Additionally, the Catholic population in America swelled in size between 1850 (7% of the population) and 1900 (16% of the population).[49] Throughout the 1900s, Catholics began to carve out influential roles in labor unions and within the urban political machine, slowly assimilating themselves into the greater American population and strengthening their political sway. The election of President John F. Kennedy, a descendant of Irish-Catholic immigrants, in 1960 would mark the culmination of acceptance of Catholicism in the public and political sphere.

The stark contrast between the Catholic immigrant situation in the U.S. from 1850 to 1950 from those that greeted them when they originally arrived provides interesting insights into the potential path for Muslims in Germany. As a leading European nation, Germany's policy towards the Muslim faith and Muslim people will undoubtedly serve as an example to smaller European nations. While France and the United Kingdom have long taken their own paths, the corporatist structure could very well be the future of European policy vis-à-vis Muslims. Most importantly, the originally arduous Catholic immigrant experience is now considered long in the past of American

history and serves as a success story for minority faith immigrants. Today, the conflation of Islam and immigration, or Islam and terrorism, renders the mechanisms of assimilation put forth by Germany, and the rest of Western Europe, complex and fragile. Yet there is cause for a certain amount of moderate optimism. This optimism is best understood through one final parallel that can be drawn between the early Catholic immigrant experience in the U.S. and the current Muslim immigrant experience in Germany. While the Civil War is often noted as the turning point for Catholic immigrants, it is truly their assimilation into the political system, and thus their ability to impact policy and election outcomes, that signified genuine integration into American society. If the greatest charge against Catholic immigrants was their inherent inability to be democratic based on their ties to the Church, becoming key players in the political system, particularly the Democratic party in the early 20th century, was indubitably an ideal means of assimilation. Over the past 20 years, the rise of immigrant membership in both German and immigrant associations has increased, which counters narratives of exclusive "home-country" oriented organizations being the heart of the Muslim community.[50] In 2010, only 17 of the 622 members of the German Bundestag had an immigrant background.[51] Today, still, only 58 members are of migrant background, climbing from 3% to 8% over the past seven years. This political shift in orientation of Muslim immigrants towards the German state from their homeland is crucial to securing proper rights and recognition for Muslims in Germany. Immigrant organizations also continue to prove essential in government-initiated dialogues, providing a platform for prominent immigrant blocs, like the Turkish community, to openly critique government policies and promote the immigrant interests.[52] The greatest concern for these organizations is the inferior place of Islam in German official and public discourse, which is seen by

these groups as a barrier to the normalization of Muslim civil society and to Muslim actors having a voice in the country. These groups are central to lobbying for political and legal solutions pertaining to Islam, such as halal-slaughtering or issues related to public wearing of the headscarf. The most fundamental obstacle facing these intermediary bodies is simple: in Germany, Islam remains on the outskirts of the corporatist structure, which does not grant Muslims the same state recognition given to representatives of other communities of faith. As much as Muslims seek adequate representation, they are barred by this seemingly minor, yet ultimately enormous hurdle. Thus, while the Catholic community in the U.S. was able to carve out a place for itself within the political process with the help of unions and identity politics tactics, the corporatist structure of Germany perpetuates the outsider narrative surrounding Islam. The question then becomes one of the ethnicization of religion, and how this must be surmounted in order for Muslims, whether as one unified community, or smaller

Members of the German Bundestag with an Immigrant Background
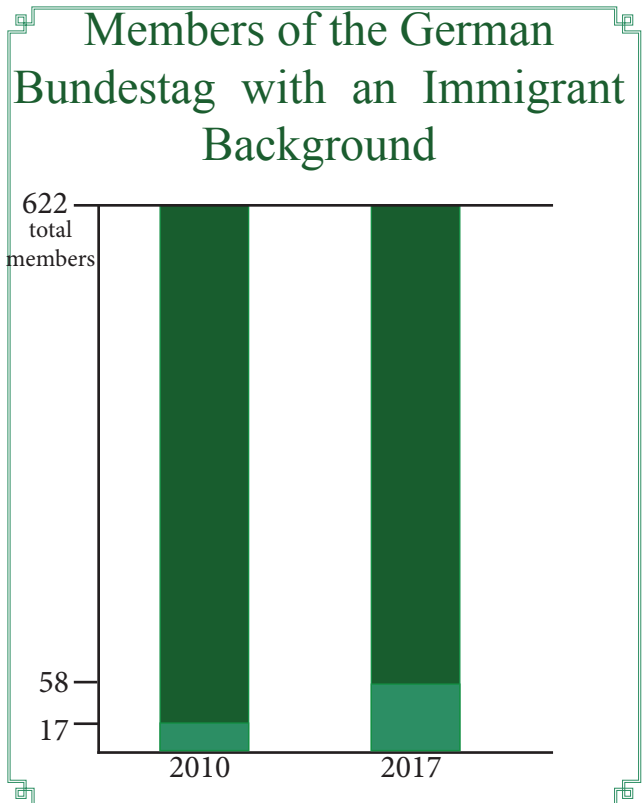
bodies representative of the diversity of Islam in Germany, can become integral pieces of the German corportarist structure. Ultimately, the most clear path for Muslims in Germany to follow is one of political involvement and representation, where they can begin to overcome and circumvent the obstacles posed by the corporatist state structure individually, and perhaps eventually, as a diverse community. Thus, moderate and long-term outlooks becomes essential in determining a positive future direction for Muslims in Germany.

In conclusion, through numerous parallels binding the Catholic immigrant experience in 19th century America to the Muslim experience in contemporary Germany, it becomes evident that the framework of analysis put forth by Jose Casanova in the "The Politics of Nativism: Islam in Europe, Catholicism in the United States," is not only accurate, but robust as well. This comparison is most striking with regard to external biases imposed upon Catholics and Muslims, as demonstrated by the common discourse surrounding both faiths being anti-democratic, un-egalitarian and invasive to their new "host" country. This comparison provides a concrete starting point to a better understanding of the challenges faced by Muslims in Western Europe today, and how their paths have been, and will be, forged by both their own internal issues and the obstacles presented to them by the state.

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