



A German Obama? a Comparison of African Americans and German Immigrants of Turkish Descent in Terms of Integration and Political Participation

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Seminar paper from the year 2012 in the subject American Studies - Culture and Applied Geography, printed single-sided, grade: 1,0, Arizona State University (School of Social Transformation), course: African American Politics, language: English, abstract: Ever since Barack Obama was elected as the 44th President of the United States, it seems that minorities all over the world have gained hope in regard to the possibility of having a minority representative in their specific state's highest office. Especially in Germany, with nearly 20% of its inhabitants being of foreign descent, Obama and his achievements were looked up to. This could be seen on Obama's visit to Berlin in July 2008 when an estimated number of 200,000 people cheered Obama (Zeleni). His election in 2008 set high hopes in Germany which seem to manifest in Cem Oezdemir, one of the leaders of the German Green Party (Buendnis 90/Die Grünen). Oezdemir is a German politician of Turkish descent. He is a representative of Germany's largest minority. From the 1960s on, Turkish foreign workers, among others, came to Germany to rebuild the state's economy. Many of them did not leave the country as initially planned but rather got their families to emigrate to Germany as well. By now, the Turkish minority is by far the largest minority in Germany. Until today, the Turkish minority is politically underrepresented. Oezdemir seems to be a glimpse of hope for this minority. When Oezdemir was 28, in 1994, he was the first German of Turkish descent to enter the German Bundestag. In November 2008 he was elected to be one of three people heading the Green Party. Thereby, Oezdemir became the first immigrant leader of a German party. His election, shortly after that of Obama's, made the German and international press compare Oezdemir to Obama. Apart from the symbolic similarities, does that comparison make sense? I think it does. This is what I will try to prove in this paper. In the following, I will point out the sim

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