Thilo Sarrazin

* born Feb 12 1945
* German politician (SPD), writer, former member of Exec board of Deutsche Bank until Sep 2010. Senator of finance for state of Berlin (2002-2009).
* Well known for publishing controversial book about Muslim immigrants in Germany (2010).
* *‘Deutschland schafft ab’* – denouncement of failure of Germany’s post war immigration policy, sparked much controversy about costs and benefits of multiculturalism.
* **Features of book:** Sarrazin argued in regard to the restriction of Muslim immigration to Germany on the grounds that Muslims who had immigrated to Germany from Turkey and other Muslim countries had failed to assimilate into German society, lived culturally separate lives in densely Muslim neighborhoods and 2/3 lived on welfare. If immigration continued, Germany would become a predominantly Muslim country
* But the book was at the same time a **critique of the German welfare state,** which is every bit as wasteful and destructive as ours, and of the loss of traditional values. He is also big on **the link between IQ and race**. He believes some poor have only themselves to blame. And he is no fan of childless German women.
* **Argument of state promotes ‘spiritual poverty:** state’s social benefits are so high that there is no great enough incentive to work. Can live in dignity, dress adequately, able to education children for free up until high school. Enough to eat comfortably.
* Idea that intelligence is hereditary- argued that more intelligent women are having less children whilst the less intelligent, lower class citizens are having more children on average so the ‘less intelligent’ are multiplying disproportionately, means a loss of average intelligence. Endangerment of the future of Germany. Argument to ‘change birth behavior’. Instead **of income independent child benefit**, which is more beneficial for lower class, should instead be tax advantage for families with children.
* Argue for an incentive for academic women to have children at an early age eg. Have first child before the age of 30, receive premium of 50,000 euros.
* **Responses:** Split in two. Has many supporters much to his surprise.
* criticism bordering on revulsion dominated the first wave of the reaction. Politicians and opinion leaders condemned Sarrazin almost unanimously.
* But then it slowly became apparent that many citizens agreed with Sarrazin. The publisher announced that, due to high demand, it was going to increase the book's initial printing to 250,000 copies. Furthermore, Internet forums and political events made it clear that Sarrazin -- a member of the center-left Social Democrats, which has initiated proceedings to throw him out of the party -- had broad public support. Many are saying he is right; or, even if he does make a mistake here and there, he isn't being treated fairly.
* **Out of control**: To be sure**, the subject of immigration should be up for discussion**, but the current debate has gotten out of control. From the very beginning, Sarrazin's choice of language has been unfortunate. He described problems with integration, which are indeed deplorable, but he introduced an element of biological determinism. He reflected on the inheritability of intelligence and speculated over a "specific gene" that "all Jews share."
* This placed him squarely in the disgusting realm of race theory -- and has called forth uncomfortable memories of the Nazi scourge. Sarrazin, too, sensed that he had gone too far and apologized for his statement about the Jewish gene. **But he almost certainly has enjoyed the provocative nature of his statements, as have, no doubt, some of his supporters.**

**Points why he was supported:**

* That, in fact, **is the first of three big questions** the book has raised: In what country are we living? After the 2006 World Cup, it seemed that Germany had become cheerful and cosmopolitan
* But the popular approval of Sarrazin leads us to question whether there isn't an underlying xenophobia after all.
* **The second question** the debate raises concerns **the current state of affairs**. Is Sarrazin right when he claims that the integration of Turks and Arabs has largely been a failure?
* **The third question** has to do with the relationship between the political and journalistic class with the rest of the country. Do citizens feel abandoned on the question of integration? Or, asked another way, does Germany have a fertile breeding ground for the kind of populist right-wing party that is already par for the course in many European countries?