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## GERMANY – A MIGRANT STORY

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*Germany stands in the focus of the "refugee crisis", which is currently causing political and social debates in Europe. In Germany, the developments are discussed controversially, often more emotionally than rationally. Here, the current German policy and discussions on this issue should not be analyzed, because they are too diverse regionally and too different according to social groups. Likewise, after the fall 2015, when refugees of various nationalities and motivations escaped across the Mediterranean and the Balkans, came into Europe and arrived in Germany and other countries, the process is still too present to judge this more clearly from a distance. But it certainly helps to trace the historical immigration of people to Germany in order to clarify how the "Germans" deal with migrants and refugees. This report is the view on the historical dimension of migration and flight in Germany, which exerted great influence on cultural developments there. So this article should be understood rather as a first overview about the developments of "who had come, for what reasons, and under which circumstances they had become a part of German society", without claiming it complete or universal.*

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## 1. FIRST ARRIVALS

Germany has been a country of immigration since the Romans, whose legionaries from all parts of the empire settled after their service in Germania. Most of the oldest urban settlements in Germany (for example Cologne, Mainz, Trier, Bonn, Koblenz or Speyer) originate from that period. In the West, South-West and the South of Germany many main roads between settlements and regions follow the old roman ways. The epoch Migration Period (375-568 AD) also increased the population in many German regions. For example, the Avars, who came from the Pannonian Plains and settled in the Bavarian-Austrian region. As we know today these movements of several people were caused by a changing climate in Europe. Since the early middle-ages the marriage policy of the German nobility had been an international affair, to claim dynastic power against other competitors. These weddings provided many cultural impulses at many courts and cities. After the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) not only soldiers from Sweden, Hungary, Poland, Italy, France, Swiss, Belgium, Denmark, Scotland and Ireland from the disbanded mercenary armies settled in the devastated German lands. Workers from Tyrol came as builders to help with the reconstruction of the cities or to build new residences for the rulers and stayed. But the traces of all these early immigrants are today only visible through archaeological, architectural aspects and tangible in church records (Engelmann, 1984: 57-76).

## 2. 18TH CENTURY

The first immigration into German regions, which is still today realizable for example through family names and interest groups for the study of their own stories (Bauemerth, 1987), was the arrival of the Huguenots and Waldenses, expelled from Catholic France and Savoy Piermont for their Protestant confession. After the revocation of the edict of Nantes from 1685 the reprisals against them triggered an escape of about a quarter of a million people to Protestant dominated areas in Europe and overseas. Approximately 50.000 came to various German territories – mainly to Prussia. Many of them, with their craft-technological and mercantile knowledge from their economically developed old home, promoted the economy of their economically desolate new home, after the periods of religion and confession wars of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Protestant refugees from the Netherlands, Switzerland and Bohemia contributed as well. All of them, therefore, had been taken in by the sovereigns of the German small states by calculation. The so called "Peuplierung" was the idea to increase incoming taxes by a growing population. Not only many cities and villages got new inhabitants, even a lot of new villages and towns were founded, with their own congregations and schools often existing into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. (Brandenburg, Brandenburg, 1990) In Hamburg, Cologne or Leipzig settled comparable Portuguese, Italian or Greek merchants, who long formed their own communities. (Engelmann, 1984: 99-124) The French Revolution of 1789 persecuted the nobility in France and the clergy and its members sought refuge all over Europe but especially in the bordernear German territories. Mostly

they were gladly accepted because of their financial resources and their cultural standards or admired lifestyle (Höpel, 2000).

### 3. 19TH CENTURY

The 19th century became the epoch in which, despite the growing idea of a German nation state, immigration in Germany actually increased. This was connected with the rise of the bourgeoisie in the political and economical section. The new elite of the bourgeois and mercantile strata developed the idea of a "people" or a "Nation" as the opposite to the ruling aristocracy. This process was accompanied by the uprising and the transformation of the German territories from agricultural land into an industrialized country. Immigration caused by religious or political persecution changed to the mostly pure aspect of economic migration. Prominent for this is the railway construction from the 1830s on, for which in the German states the technical know-how and skilled workers simply lacked. Not only engineers, technicians and those who were able to operate the locomotives came. Also skilled workers and auxiliary staff for track, bridge and tunnel constructions arrived: Mostly from England, Italy but also from Belgium. A lot of them remained and continued to teach the Germans (Engelmann, 1984: 151-165).

Other parts of the German industry, such as mining, metalworking or textiles, had similar beginnings. After the needed specialists for the construction of the facilities, there was a lack of simple workers in the following economic boom. A striking example: From the 1880s on, the East-West migration increased in Germany, which was dominated by Prussian Berlin. From the Prussian, but also Austro-Hungarian and Russian Polish areas, people moved to the prosperous "Ruhr area". They formed there "Polish" communities, which were consciously promoted, because the mine owners feared a politicization of the "frugal" Polish laborer by the contact with the socialism of the German working class, which demanded better working conditions and wages. The "Ruhr Poles" formed their own cultural milieu, especially in Essen, Dortmund and Gelsenkirchen. In 1910, about three million people lived in this region, about half a million of them were Polish. At first young men came, followed soon by their families. Many had only wanted to earn money for a better existence in their old homeland, but most stayed forever. Polish elements like religious and cultural congregations survived in this region till the early 1930s (Murzynowska, 1979).

Every year till around 1900, around 100.000 Poles from Russia or Italians came to Germany, another 100.000 people from Bohemia and Moravia or the Karpato Ukraine, but also from Hungary, Austrian Poland or Croatia. So mainly from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was regarded in a way as a state with German roots and which was allied in many political and economical terms to the Wilhelmine Empire. This certainly eased getting an entry permit. Most of them were poor agricultural workers and small craftsmen (Engelmann, 1984: 191).

In Berlin, for example, not only the technical companies and the construction industry profited from this, but also the newly created "Konfektion", which mainly

produced clothes in a semi-industrial form with semi-industrial skilled seamstresses working in small workshops and at their homes. In connection with this immigration precarious living situations existed in the big cities, especially in Berlin: overcrowding of the rooms or even the rental of beds in shifts. Small rooms, dirt, alcohol and petty crime influenced the "Milieu" of Berlin which was later transfigured in art, literature and songs. Nevertheless, the ones who arrived, who worked for low wages, did not think of returning to their region of birth (Engelmann, 1984: 193-197).

The immigration of this period developed proportionally to the emigration of Germans for political but mainly economic reasons. Between 1830 and 1875 about five million Germans and about 250.000 persons of Polish origin from the German Empire had made their way to the USA - mainly poor peasants and people from the lower classes of the cities. (Engelmann, 1984: 183) After the failed German revolution of 1848/49 members of the bourgeois-academic strata and well educated craftsmen went as well. From 1880 to 1885 another million of Germans left, until 1900 another one. (Engelmann, 1984: 187-188) Also in the agricultural sector, mainly at the aristocratic estates of the German east provinces, nothing worked without foreign (mainly Polish) seasonal forces. But the constant emigration of the rural German population into the cities was a factor as well (Engelmann, 1984: 189-190).

#### 4. FORAY

But what did "German" mean in the 1871 founded national construction "Deutschland"? We have to remember that for nearly 1.000 years – since the coronation of Karl the Great in Rome 800 till the policy the arrival of the policy of Napoleon in German Territories the German rulers claimed a descending from the Roman Empire. The "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation" in his different dimensions included parts of Spain, Italy, France, the Benelux-States and Bohemia or Moravia. The Empire was a conglomerate of ethnicities and languages. In the preceding German small states Wuerttemberger, Palatine or Hessians, for example, were already mentioned in Baden as "foreigners", because they came from other sovereign dominions. And despite its representation as a nation-state, the Wilhelmine Empire was a multi-ethnic structure. In the eastern provinces lived Polish people, Sorbs, Mazurians or Lithuanians, in a small rate Czechs and Slovaks. Danes and Frisians settled in the north. In the northwest Walloons. In the southwest French. In between, without a central settlement area, were the groups of Sinti and Roma. So many citizens did not speak German as their native language. The state faced this with a "Germanization", for example with the prohibition or obstruction of the minorities' own schools, clubs or parties. Chiefly the great Polish minority and the French in the East and in the South-west of the Empire had to face this because Berlin feared the ideas of separation. (Wehler, 1988: 114-118) This assimilation pressure was accompanied by the general industrialization and urbanization. Apart from national exclusion, the exclusion of the Jews for religious reasons began, although these had participated decisively in the rise of the German bourgeois

society, in the idea and construction of a German nation-state and contributed to the upswing of industry and trade (Engelmann, 1984: 200-2001).

## 5. 20TH CENTURY: FIRST HALF

After the First World War, millions of people in Europe had to leave their old homeland after the different peace treaties. Because of shifting borders they now had the wrong ethnicity or nationality. The Weimar Republic for example had to care for around one million German people coming from areas ceded now to France, Belgium, Denmark, Poland and Czechoslovakia (<http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/dossier-migration-ALT/56357/zwischenkriegszeit?p=all>).

Berlin temporarily became a center of Russian migrants who had fled because of the Revolution and the Civil War. For Jews from Eastern Europe, the city had been already a refuge since the pogroms in Russia 1881. They came mostly from Russia, but also from Romania and the eastern German provinces and the Habsburg Empire. But for Orthodox Jewish groups in particular, Germany was more of a transit station for a following overseas emigration, promoted by the established, mainly secular Jews in Germany. This refugee movement from the Russian Empire had to face an ugly xenophobia in the German press and popular discussions (Geisel, 1981).

After the exodus and extermination of people of Jewish descent, Sinti and Roma, political opponents and other "abominations", the largest wave of refugees that ever hit Germany came after 1945. Those who fled and were displaced came from the German eastern territories claimed by Poland and the Soviet Union and from German settlements in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and the Baltic States. "Displaced persons", former forced laborers and foreign concentration camp inmates had to find a new place or be repatriated. In 1944 six million civilian forced laborers still had been working in the "German Reich", most of them from Poland and the Soviet Union, some even from France and England. But there also existed an amount of persons, especially from the ethnicities from the Soviet Union (Ukrainians, Latvians, Georgians), Yugoslavia (Croats), Czechoslovakia (Slovaks) or Hungary, who had joined in auxiliary troops of the German army. A lot of them remained in Germany or fled to this country because of the fear of a repression as alleged collaborators, even caused by the shift of the Polish border to the west and the uncertain political conditions in the struggle between bourgeois and communist groups in Poland and other East-European states in the postwar years (Engelmann, 1984: 274-283).

The population doubled in many regions of the later FRG and GDR. In once denominationally homogeneous areas with strong traditions - such as Upper Bavaria, the Lüneburg Heath or Mecklenburg - now lived people with different lifestyles or denominations. Austria was also involved in the reception of more than 12 million people (Kossert, 2009). Although classified as "Volksdeutsche" in the previously propagated National Socialist "Volksgemeinschaft", their reception was often not cordial, because even the locals lacked many things. The refugees of this

time were mainly sent to rural areas because of the destroyed cities. Anyone who still had a house was obliged to accept refugees, mostly just a room for a whole family. But often this was better than the barracks in the cities (Segsneider, Westphal, 1989). A "social jealousy" of the old inhabitants towards the newcomers appeared, chiefly promoted by the law on equalization of 1952, that offered Germans who had suffered the loss or damage of property, especially refugees and expelled persons, some compensation. This was financed by a long-term tax for those who had kept their fortune. There existed also integration loans and construction subsidies for refugees and expelled persons. But also the political attention for them as potential voters promoted the unrest (Wiegand, 1992). The German "economic miracle" of the 1950 / 60s equalized this, because the starting economy needed all available working hands. Many men had died in the war, returned as invalids or remained until 1955 in Soviet captivity. And also the emigration from Germany to the USA, Canada and Australia had started again, because many of the young generation dreamed of economical standards and "way of life" (Abelshausen, 1983).

## 6. 20TH CENTURY: SECOND HALF:

According to agreements with the respective countries "guest workers" from Italy (1955), Spain (1960), Greece (1960), Turkey (1961), Portugal (1964) and Yugoslavia (1968) came to the FRG. Moroccans and Tunisians (1965) were also recruited. In 1964, the millionth guest worker was still welcomed. At the beginning they were mostly low qualified. A classic win-win situation, because the economically less developed countries of origin reduced the number of their unemployment and hoped for incoming money and the German economy could pay low wages. It is worth to be mentioned that this idea had been an initiative of the countries like Italy and Spain themselves. At the beginning short working contracts were planned, a rotation system was the idea. But the economy pushed for longer residence times to avoid necessary training periods for the hired workers (Meier-Braun, 2002: 30- 42). In 1973, there was a recruitment stop caused by a previously weak economy, by the beginning of an economic crisis after the onset of the oil crisis and also by the increased automation of work processes. Many got unemployed in Germany. Many guest workers returned to their homelands. Others stayed. Although the guest workers initially lived in dormitories away from the rest of the population, the continuation of the right for family reunification in the industrial centers gave rise to corresponding ethnic milieus. In fact, the recruitment stop caused more immigration via family reunification because it was now the only legal way to come into the country (Meier-Braun, 2002: 42-46). Many more came as asylum-seeking Kurds from this politically unstable country, which had experienced a military coup in 1980. This development was not welcomed everywhere in the FRG especially because of the perceived cultural difference to the immigrants from Turkey. A new wave of xenophobia arose. But this was largely on a discussion level, still concomitant with the efforts of the integration of immigrants. The discussions about the expansion of the European Union and the lasting stable economy relativized the situation. In this context the introduction of the birth control pill in the mid-1960s

and the changing social position of women after the year 1968 should be mentioned, because that effected a demographic transformation of the German population. The birth rate declined. Immigration was seen as a possibility to compensate it. At the reunification of Germany in 1990, around 5 million people with the migration background of former "guest workers" lived in the territory of the old FRG (<https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/5062/umfrage/entwicklung-der-auslaendischen-bevoelkerung-in-deutschland/>).

This primary form of immigration in West-Germany was accompanied by the arrival of dissidents or resettlers after the uprisings in the German Soviet Zone or GDR (1953), Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968) and after the military coup in Poland (1981) but also by the rising number of the "Aussiedler", persons of German origin from Poland, the Soviet Union and Romania, especially in the rise of the political thaw in the 1970 / 80s.

By the insistence of the UN, the FRG also took refugees from Vietnam from 1979 onwards, with a large donation and helpfulness of the population. Around 1990, around 35.000 people of Vietnamese origin lived in the old FRG because there had been allowed family reunification here as well. Even though they are a respectable number, they are an "invisible" part of the German migrant society. They are regarded as well integrated and show a high level of education (Bösch, 2017).

A separate point of German migration history was the German reunification. 16.5 million East German citizens were connected 1990 to the FRG. There began an internal migration, dominant from east to west, (about 1.6 million people just until 2001). This happened not without complications, because the Germans had alienated themselves through the various political and economic system values over almost 30 years. Especially individual economical or professional hopes were often disappointed in the new federal states. In a way this is evident still today (<https://www.bpb.de/geschichte/deutsche-einheit/lange-wege-der-deutschen-einheit/47253/zug-nach-westen?p=all>).

Even contract workers living in the GDR now played a role in the reunited German view on migration. Until the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, almost 3.5 million people had emigrated to the FRG from the German Soviet Zone respective the GDR. From 1965, the GDR hired contract workers from Poland, Hungary, Mozambique, Vietnam, Angola, Cuba, Nicaragua and Yemen. Their stay was planned to last two, later five years. Family reunification was not tolerated. They lived in dormitories and the contact with the locals was not wanted. Contract workers were employed in the state enterprises where the GDR citizens rejected hard, dirty and monotonous work. In 1989 they were about 93.000 people, among them 60.000 Vietnamese, many of whom tried to stay, but also people from the other nations, as well as members of the Soviet army stationed in the GDR (Elsner, Elsner, 1994).

In the early 1990s a new immigration of "late repatriates" in the reunited Germany took place - mainly Russian Germans, but also Transylvanian Saxonians and Banat Swabians from Romania and Germans from Poland, after the old political systems collapsed there. From the Soviet Union alone 200.000 people came already in

1988/89, then as a peak 400.000 in 1990, in contingents until 2001 each year about 100.000 (Meier-Braun, 2002: 78-79). Refugees from war affected regions also arrived to Germany: mainly from Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Latin America and the Arab world.

The reception of the German-born "Spätaussiedler" (in the tendency economic migrants, because in their countries of origin they had only nominal equal rights or minority rights) was supported by the then conservative German government. The inclusion of asylum seekers from other countries was a humanitarian task. But more "Spätaussiedler" came as asylum seekers at this period. The former Soviet Union is thus even the main country of origin of immigrants in Germany in the 1990s. But they were not easy to integrate. Not a few of the late repatriates felt superior to the foreigners who had been living a long time in Germany, or showed rapidly xenophobic tendencies, even though they often did not speak German or could not cope with the systems there. On the other hand, foreigners long living in Germany, often felt that they were the better integrated citizens. These attitudes created a potential of intermediate conflicts within migrant groups (Meier-Braun, 2002: 79-80).

Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe - mostly from the area of the former USSR - also constituted an immigration group. Since 1990, about 220.000 people of Jewish descent had come to Germany. Their immigration was due to the German history in a special public perception interest with a political background. And still today the descendants of former German Jews have the right to get the German citizenship without complications (<https://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/kurzdosiers/252561/juedische-kontingentfluechtlinge-und-russlanddeutsche? p=all>).

During the 1990s, the discussion about the integration of immigrants, which had been going on since the 1980s in the FRG - the positive idea of a multicultural society in the background - turned into the debate on asylum, with the idea to introduce contingents or to inhibit immigration. Since then right-wing extremist assaults on asylum seekers or foreigners in general had become a part of everyday life in Germany. Attacks against the life of migrants like in Hoyerswerda 1991, Mölln 1992, Solingen 1993 shocked the public. A split of the society in the refugee question with increasing polarization began (Meier-Braun, 2002: 84-85). According to the official statistics, in 2006 about 6.75 million foreigners lived in Germany among 82.5 million inhabitants in total.

These numbers are mentioned here because with the phases of the EU enlargement to the east 2004 - 2013, immigrants from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, then Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia came to Germany with different weighting depending on the size of the respective countries, their proximity to Germany and already existing historical immigration structures there. Finally, due to the economic crisis in Greece, Spain or Portugal an immigration of young, well educated people followed.

Actual statistics of "foreigners" living in Germany are only of limited relevance in terms of reality. Also, the numbers used here are to be treated with caution. They give only an approximate idea of the dimensions. There are too many falsifying



aspects: Mainly the statement about the national descent of a person is giving no evidence about the ethnic origin of the person. Many foreigners who left the country during the last years are kept in the statistics. The second or third generation of immigrants already owns a German passport. German-born immigrants from Eastern and Southeastern Europe are not seen as foreigners in Germany. Foreign students are also not added. Immigrants from other EU countries also have a different status. "Marriage migrants" from Thailand, South America, Eastern Europe, who married German men, as well as men from North Africa or for example from the Dominican Republic who married German women, have rights granted by the Spouse reunification regulations (<https://www.bib.bund.de/DE/Forschung/Migration/Projekte/Archiv/Heiratsmigration-und-Ehegattenzuzug-aus-der-Tuerkei.html>).

Also, the number of current asylum seekers in Germany is not completely recorded. After around 1995, the number of asylum applications in Germany had been steadily declining. Ten years later it was rising again. In 2016, the number of asylum applications peaked: around 745.000 applications for asylum, more than in the previous year with nearly 476.000 persons who applied for asylum. 2017 there had been around 222.000 asylum applications. In the current 2018 there were nearly 110.000 cases. Their number does not necessarily correspond to the number of asylum seekers, because between the arrival in Germany and the application for asylum there is often a time gap of weeks or month (<https://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/flucht/218788/zahlen-zu-asyl-in-deutschland>). People from other states who are more or less illegally staying – as tourists - for a certain period of time in Germany and try to work on a "black market", leaving the country and returning, form a gray area.

In 2015, around 11.5 million people with a migrant background lived in Germany, about 14% of the population. The "Russian Germans" represented the largest group with nearly 2 million (18% of registered migrants). Turks were 1.365.000 people (12% of registered migrants). People from Poland were about 1.334.000 persons (11.5% of registered migrants). Other registered countries of origin, such as Romania, Italy, Greece, Croatia or Kosovo, ranked between 2 and 5 percent of the total number of foreigners in Germany. Those from other states accounted for around 6.7% (nearly 70.000) ([https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Einwanderung\\_aus\\_der\\_T%C3%BCrkei\\_in\\_die\\_Bundesrepublik\\_Deutschland](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Einwanderung_aus_der_T%C3%BCrkei_in_die_Bundesrepublik_Deutschland)).

## CONCLUSION

A paradoxon of German migration history is the fact that for a long time Germany's (or FRG's) status as an immigration country has been politically denied, although the reality has been quite different. Especially during the second half of the 20th century immigration took place intensely without clear concepts or definite immigration laws. Slowly the opinion has changed during the last decade and a political discussion has started, but still divided into the view on asylum seeking and on the legality of working migration. Like in the 19th century immigration was

rather determined by the interests of the German economy. So the general acceptance of migrants and refugees was often proportional to their expected usefulness for the national economy. It is a fact that thanks to the migrants the German economy could keep the lower-pay sector going. Its continuation is still considered most important for the sake of Germany's competitiveness. But this means accepting to play off German employees against the newcomers looking for jobs. So, additionally to the question of asylum for political, religious reasons or migration for purely economical reasons the acceptance of the new-arrived always depended greatly on the respective economical and generally social situation in Germany. During periods of prosperity, the problems of immigration and integration played a minor role in the main political and social debates. A major concern was rather the east-west conflict, disarmament and, in this context, the extension of the European Union.

The cutback of once well established social security systems in the reunited Germany after 1990, the disappearing of jobs or their transfer to low-pay countries, tax flight and finally the "Hartz IV" regulations after 2003 (severe cuts in social welfare just under a social-democratic legislation) caused social jealousy in the population against everything supposedly "foreign" which was channeled into nationalist currents. Thus discussions about immigrants of all kinds in Germany changed with the general socio-economical development, even especially with the radical change of employment caused by globalization and digitization but also with the continuous vanishing of protective traditional family structures. In spite of today's splendid economic results a gradual impoverishment, degradation and brutalization of certain parts of German Society are recognizable. The fear of social downfall has even taken hold of the middle class which has diminished in the last decades. At the same time, the property of a small upper class has increased.

A look back: After the establishment of "social legislation" by Bismarck in the 1880s and the emergence of trade unions, the great industrialists, including small businessmen, valued their skilled workers throughout the late nineteenth century. They established for them settlements, works canteens, fixed working hours, company pensions, or other perks. Caught in old patriarchal structures, the "boss" felt responsible for the welfare of his workforce. Behind this was the intention to ensure the quality of work and loyalty of the workers, a model that lasted in many enterprises of the FRG until the reunification of Germany. State-owned ones such as post and rail also provided social benefits. The old idea of a social market economy, that combined freedom in the market with aspects of social compensation was discarded with the deregulation of the market and replaced by the maximum profit as a "leitmotif". The idea of the "factory family" gave way to new, anonymous forms of ownership. For example, the principle of "shareholder value", in which the management has to act mainly in the interests of the shareholders, became dominant. In this way many factories were split, parts of them were closed or sold because of finical interests. The economy largely delegated the social responsibility for its employees to the state, the single federal states and the municipalities, or it was suggested that everyone is responsible for itself. Whether this happened for purely profit motives or because of the necessity to persist on a globalized market is

an open question. But an unsteady feeling spread not only in the working class. Also to be considered is the internal migration in Germany itself. For example, there is a high number of daily or weekly commuters to their jobs despite continuing urbanization and rural exodus.

With the topics migration, asylum and integration politicians can address potential voters in Germany, who see themselves in a competitive situation with the immigrants of all kinds. In addition, most of the immigrant groups can hardly defend themselves politically. Thus, a distraction from the country's actual problems seems to be carried out by persons with political power, who have only a limited connection to the ethnic or national even religious or educational affiliation of the people living in Germany. Likewise, it is certain that the general public is looking for simple answers for orientation. Until the fall of the "Iron Curtain" in Europe, the geographically clear west-east polarization had taken over this function since 1945. After that, coupled with a rapid globalization, it was necessary to define new "enemy images". Worldwide "terrorism", "Islamism" are the keywords that have taken this place, coupled with the fear of changing cultural and traditional norms. The definition of the "we" and the "other", the thinking in negative as well as positive national or social stereotypes, as the projection screen of our own fears and inabilities, are however elements of every society as well as of every individual.

The attitude of all inhabitants of Germany towards the question of asylum and migration, as mentioned at the beginning, is not uniform. Due to the history of National Socialism, Germany has a special view of asylum in general, mainly in the old federal states, because the GDR rejected the legal consequence and thus the responsibility for this era. The attribute "Christian" is included in the names of the conservative parties which originated from the FRG. In the GDR, the postulate "solidarity" and "Antifaschismus" were important political statements. Actually these words hint to help those seeking help. This may explain an attitude of many people in Germany under the motto and movement "Refugees Welcome" of the years from 2015 on.

But the public's view on immigration differs according to location, social position and level of education as well as own experiences with migration and migrants. In the old federal states - due to longer experiences – it differs from the new federal states. But this cannot be generalized, because in economically prosperous cities such as Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne, Frankfurt / Main and Munich as well as Dresden, Leipzig, Erfurt, Halle, Magdeburg or Rostock, the dealing with immigrants is different from the countryside affected by structural change such as Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, North Rhine Westphalia or the Saarland. Also with this allocation caution is necessary, because even in the big cities there exists rejection of "strangers", as well as a positive attitude to them in rural areas.

The rise of the AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) who mainly want to prevent the arrival or stay of migrants, the recent big losses of voters of the old parties like CDU, CSU and SPD on the one side, and the increase of "Bündnis 90/ Die Grünen", who declare consequently their programme to the human rights, on the other side, are a sign for the described development and situation.

But it is important to notice that daily life is mostly different from political or public discussions. Many of the former German displaced persons and refugees from 1945/46 show for example an understanding for today's Syrian refugee families as they remind them of their own fate in the past. With individual male asylum seekers, such as of oriental origin (who are not all Muslims) or from sub-Saharan Africa, things look different again. With the immigration groups officially known as "resident aliens" living here for a long time, especially in the old federal German states, hardly any more friction arises. Italians, Greeks, Spaniards, Portuguese or people from former Yugoslavia, who already live here in the third generation, are well established, they not only run shops, craft shops or restaurants. This is also true of immigrants of Turkish descent, although quite a lot of them are actually considered suspicious because of their Islamic beliefs and the loyalty to the current president of Turkey among many of them in spite of his anti-democratic and anti-European tendencies.

The fact is that the German industry, crafts or service industries would scarcely survive today without the immigrants. Even on a profane level like food: Today's Germany without Pizza, Pasta, Gyros, Falafel or Döner – that is not possible. Even the migrants which had come before the new increase of asylum seekers around 2010 are mostly already integrated – that means they have a job or small business. However, many of these jobs are problematic. Sometimes they include an exploitation in mafia-like structures with protagonists in Germany and the respective countries, for example in the meat processing industry with employed Romanians and Bulgarians or in the transport and logistics section for "amazon", "DHL" or "Hermes" with sub-enterprises from the eastern EU-countries.

Many complain an erosion of the German social systems by "asylum seekers" or "foreigners". But at the same time the asylum seekers themselves are quite an economic stimulus: they have to be housed and fed, they have to learn the language and they buy. Not a few in Germany profit from this. It is also undeniable that the large number of refugees in the recent years caused problems in different ways: in petty-crime as well as in supposed terrorism. However, this is more likely to affect small individual groups or individuals, but this has more to do with the socialization of these people than with their ethnic origins. We should remember that daily life during the first years after 1945 in Germany was dependent on a "black market" and petty-crime just for surviving. But the public today likes to rub itself at extreme events which spread on the Internet and the new social media that have come into competition with official reporting. Despite all the difficulties, a great chaos or doomsday scenario predicted by the demagogues has failed to materialize. Language and integration courses are booked, programs that have been missed in the past. In trades training, young asylum seekers are already able to fill more vacancies than expected before. As a result with the ability to use the German language, they will have better opportunities in the labor market in the longer term, such as those venturing for example out of the eastern EU countries to start in Germany. Just from a demographic point of view, Germany has been unable to exist for decades without immigration, for example to fill pension funds. The aging of society has already become real. Retirement and long-term care insurance are important topics. Taking

care of an aging society is an increasing market, which hardly already works without immigrant forces – in particular persons from Eastern Europe.

It remains to be remembered that "the migrant" in general does not exist. They do not just differ by national, ethnic or religious origin. Added to this are education and socialization, their own values, whether old or young, whether male or female, whether they arrive alone or in families or whether they form closed communities - associated with the perceived need to acquire the German language, not only to have an understanding in German daily life or law, but also to gain a foothold in culture and history or simply to be able to face a job.

But what has really changed is the speed of the migrations process. Like with the traffic revolution of the 19th century when increasing railway systems and steamboats eased migrant traveling, the possibilities of cheap flights and modern highways all around the world have the same function in our days. Important also the new media technology: Just consider the importance of smartphones for the migration across the Balkans and the Mediterranean, not only to keep in contact with family and home but even to use it for navigation on unknown ground or to get information where to go and how to act. Refugees and smartphones: They form something like an inseparable picture. It seems to be a joke: But in this way they are already skilled for a digitalized world which West European Companies declare to be.

The hope that an EU policy can fix the matter is limited, for the EU, with roots in the EEC as an economic interest group, made only few efforts towards the approximation of the same legal bases of its members. The unequal social conditions, in addition to the economic situation, will probably remain one of the main engines of EU internal migration for some time to come. A major problem seems to be that in the process of migration, people with the will or compulsion of change - leaving their ancestral living environment - meet people who fear a change in their living environment. The fear and the problems on both sides are as well human facts. It makes really no sense to divide migrants in asylum seekers and migrants searching for work. People in motion or with the intention to migrate are unstoppable. This means that migration is hard to prevent, but it should be possible to use it sensibly and prudently to control the situation. Looking back all the passed centuries it becomes clear that migration – no matter for what reason – is a human right. But what may help is simply the fact that those who have made money in the process of migration over the past few decades are more committed again to social responsibility. The acquisition of language, education and communication will help to get closer - from both sides. At the end: The most important thing will be to keep a clear head to accompany the situation with care and good ideas. This even requires courage to take new paths.

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## NEMAČKA - MIGRANTSKA PRIČA

*Nemačka je u fokusu "izbegličke krize", koja trenutno izaziva političke i društvene debate u Evropi. U Nemačkoj se o dešavanjima diskutuje kontroverzno, često više emocionalno nego racionalno. Oude se trenutna nemačka politika i rasprave o ovom pitanju (problemu) ne bi trebale analizirati, jer su one previše regionalno raznolike i previše različite, prema društvenim grupama. Isto tako, nakon jeseni 2015. godine, kada su izbeglice različitih nacionalnosti i motivacija pobege preko Mediterana i Balkana, došle u Evropu i stigle u Nemačku i druge zemlje, proces je još uvek previše prisutan da bi se o njemu moglo jasnije raspravljati iz daljine. Proces svakako pomaže da se prati istorijska imigracija ljudi u Nemačku kako bi se razjasnilo kako "Nemci" postupaju sa migrantima i izbeglicama. Ovaj izveštaj predstavlja pogled na istorijsku dimenziju migracije i "bekstva" u Nemačku, koji je vršio veliki uticaj na tamošnji kulturni razvoj. Dakle, ovaj članak treba shvatiti pre kao prvi pogled događaja "ko je došao, iz kojih razloga i pod kojim okolnostima postao deo nemačkog društva", bez tvrdnje da je potpun ili univerzalan.*

**KLJUČNE REČI:** migranti / Nemačka / politika / društvo