Introduction

The Woman with the German House

During her thirty years in Şarköy, a quaint beach town about a four-hour drive west of Istanbul, an elderly lady named Gül, whose petite, five-foot frame can barely contain her exuberant personality, earned herself quite a reputation among her neighbors. When I visited her in 2014 and again in 2016, "Auntie Gül" or "Gül Teyze" (as neighbors called her deferentially) spoke loudly and excitedly, switching back and forth between Turkish and German. For vacationers and passersby, Gül's bursts of German must have seemed inconsonant with the picturesque local setting of Şarköy, which has remained untainted by the booming international tourism industry so evident elsewhere along the Turkish coast. Long-term residents, however, were accustomed to Gül's frequent use of German, and truth be told she was not the only local who did not quite fit in. In fact, within just a three-mile radius lived two dozen other so-called *Almancı*, as Turkish migrants in Germany and Western Europe are called derogatorily in Turkish. Like Gül, they too had returned to Şarköy only to become the targets of local gossip and speculation. Depending on whom I asked, these returnees were simultaneously outsiders and insiders, embraced and ostracized. They were both Turkish and German, neither Turkish nor German, or perhaps half-and-half.

Gül and the other returning migrants in Şarköy are just some of the millions of people who have journeyed back and forth between Turkey and Germany for the past sixty years, fundamentally reshaping both countries' politics, economics, cultures, and national identities in the process. Since the 1970s, Turks, 99 percent of whom are Muslim, have been Germany's largest and most contentious ethnic minority. Despite Germany's historical refusal to identify as a "country of immigration" (*Einwanderungsland*),

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the reality is undeniable: today, people with Turkish heritage in Germany number at nearly 3 million, representing approximately 12 percent of the 23.8 million "people with migration backgrounds" (*Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund*) in a country where every fourth person is now ethnically "non-German."[1] Migration is also crucial to Turkey, not only in terms of the diaspora. Four million people living in Turkey are ethnic Turks who at some point remigrated after living in Germany. No longer can one speak only of a Turkish diaspora in Germany without considering what one might call a "German diaspora" in Turkey, comprised of return migrants.[2]

The eldest among these returnees, like Gül, now in their eighties, had been part of the first generation of Turks to migrate abroad as participants in West Germany and Turkey's bilateral guest worker program (*Gastarbeiterprogramm*), which lasted formally from 1961 to 1973. As young men and women, they had learned that the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) suffered from a labor shortage and was recruiting foreign workers to revitalize its industry after the death and destruction of the National Socialist regime, World War II, and the Holocaust. They had also heard the plea from the Turkish government, which faced the opposite problem: too many workers and not enough jobs. Their backbreaking labor in German factories and mines would be a patriotic duty, the Turkish government insisted, as the workers would return with newfound technical knowledge and skills to spark their struggling homeland's internal industrialization.[3] For the migrants themselves, the goal was overwhelmingly financial. Racked by poverty and unemployment in Turkey, they believed that working in Germany would allow them to earn riches beyond their wildest dreams, secure a better life for their families, and retire comfortably upon their return (Figure I.1).[4]

[1] Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, "Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund," April 29, 2023, www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/zahlen-und-fakten/soziale-situation-in-deutschland/61646/bevoelkerung-mit-migrationshintergrund/.

[2] Susan Beth Rottmann, *In Pursuit of Belonging: Forging an Ethical Life in European-Turkish Spaces* (New York: Berghahn, 2019), 15.

[3] On Turkey's motivation for modernization and development, see: Brian Joseph-Keysor Miller, "Reshaping the Turkish Nation-State: The Turkish-German Guest Worker Program and Planned Development, 1961–1985" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2015).

[4] On both countries' motivations and the recruitment process, see: Karin Hunn, *»Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück…« Die Geschichte der türkischen »Gastarbeiter« in der Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005); Ahmet Akgündüz, *Labour Migration from Turkey to Western Europe, 1960–1974: A Multidisciplinary Analysis* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 2008); Jennifer A. Miller, *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany: Hidden Lives and Contested Borders, 1960s–1980s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 9–18, 31–56.

FIGURE I.1 Gül, age twenty-eight, waves the Turkish flag on a train from Istanbul to Göppingen, where she worked as a guest worker, mid-1960s. Family photograph, given to author with permission.

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At first, Gül felt welcome in the Federal Republic, and that feeling remained with her for quite some time. By the early 1980s, however, she watched in horror as Turks became the primary targets of West German racism since the Holocaust. Amid the global economic recession and unemployment following the OPEC oil crisis of 1973, West Germans argued that guest workers had overstayed their welcome. In response, the West German government stopped recruiting guest workers in 1973 and encouraged existing guest workers to leave. Fearing further restrictions, however, guest workers navigated the situation by exploiting West Germany's lax family reunification policy (*Familiennachzug*) and bringing their spouses and children to the Federal Republic.[5] On the streets, neo-Nazis and right-wing extremists shouted "Turks out!" (*Türken raus!*), spray-painted swastikas and racist graffiti, and attacked migrants – sometimes fatally. Inside parliamentary chambers, politicians responded to popular racism by passing a law to persuade Turks to leave the country – or, as critics decried, to "kick out" the Turks. Based both on culture and biology, this racism was overlaid onto an archaic ethnoracial definition of citizenship that dated back to 1913. Rather than embracing guest workers' contributions to West Germany's famed "economic miracle" (*Wirtschaftswunder*), Germans blamed them for taking their jobs, perpetrating crimes, birthing too many babies, draining the social welfare system, and lowering the quality of German schools. They further justified their racism with an essentialist, Orientalist interpretation of Turkish migrants' culture and Islam that denigrated the migrants as "backward," "authoritarian," and "patriarchal."[6] The overall conclusion, many

[5] On family reunification, see: Lauren Stokes, *Fear of the Family: Guest Workers and Family Migration in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

[6] On German controversies over Muslim migrants' gender relations, see: Susan B. Rottmann and Myra Marx Ferree, "Citizenship and Intersectionality: German Feminist Debates about Headscarf and Antidiscrimination Laws," *Social Politics* 15, no. 4 (2008): 481–513; Rita Chin, "Turkish Women, West German Feminists, and the Gendered Discourse on Muslim Cultural Difference," *Public Culture* 22, no. 3 (2010): 557–81; Katherine Pratt Ewing, *Stolen Honor: Stigmatizing Muslim Men in Berlin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); Damani J. Partridge, *Hypersexuality and Headscarves: Race, Sex, and Citizenship in the New Germany* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012); Barbara M. Weber, *Violence and Gender in the "New" Europe: Islam in German Culture* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013); Anna C. Korteweg and Gökçe Yurdakul, *The Headscarf Debates: Conflicts of National Belonging* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014). For the French case, see: Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Mehammed Amadeus Mack, *Sexagon: Muslims, France, and the Sexualization of National Culture* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017).

Germans insisted, was clear: Turks could never integrate into German society, and they could never truly be considered German.

It was amid this racist climate of the 1980s that hundreds of thousands of migrants like Gül left West Germany and returned to cities, towns, and villages throughout Turkey. Gül and the others who chose to settle in Şarköy did so deliberately, hoping to live out their twilight years as they pleased: drinking tea, chatting with neighbors, and lounging along the sapphire-blue Marmara Sea. Underlying their triumphant return, however, was a sense of unease. The foreignness that they experienced in Germany accompanied them back to Turkey – this time, in the eyes of their Turkish neighbors who had not migrated. Both to their faces and behind their backs, neighbors mocked them as *nouveau-riche*, culturally estranged, and no longer "fully Turkish." They insisted that the migrants had transformed into *Almancı* – the derogatory moniker that I translate as "Germanized Turk." For the home country, the problem was not that the migrants had *insufficiently* integrated into German society, but rather that they had *excessively* integrated into it.

For the migrants themselves, the term *Almancı* is a slur. Many regard it as the Turkish analog of *Ausländer*, the German word for foreigner, which is frequently deployed to derogatory effect. This sentiment is best encapsulated in the rhyming phrase "Almanya'da Yabancı, Türkiye'de *Almancı*" (Foreigner in Germany, *Almancı* in Turkey), which is the title of a 1995 anthology of essays and poems by migrants.[7] The cartoon on the book's cover conveys the message well (Figure I.2). A stereotypically portrayed guest worker – a man with working boots, a mustache, and a feathered fedora – stands between two signs pointing in opposite directions to "Deutschland" and "Türkei" and carries a red bindle adorned with the Turkish half-moon. On his buttocks is a footprint in the colors of the German flag, symbolizing that Germans have not only kicked him out of the country in response to rising racism but also that his time spent in Germany has left an indelible imprint on him that he can never erase.[8] But crucially, returning to Turkey is not a positive experience. His shoulders are hunched, his expression is somber, and tears stream down his face. As the anthology's writings convey, being labeled as an *Almancı* makes the migrants feel foreign even in their own homeland.

[7] *Almanya'da Yabancı, Türkiye'de Almancı. Türkiye ve Almanya'dan İlginç Yorumlar* (Ulm: Merhaba Yayınları, 1995).

[8] For the latter insight, I thank my student Hailey Faust.

FIGURE I.2 Cartoon on the cover of the 1995 anthology *Almanya'da Yabancı, Türkiye'de Almancı* (Foreigner in Germany, *Almancı* in Turkey), illustrating the migrants' dual estrangement. Merhaba Yayınları, used with permission.

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Of all the so-called *Almancı* in Şarköy, Gül stood out the most. She had even earned a special nickname: "The Woman with the German House." Apparently, as her neighbors told me, Gül loved Germany so much that she had attempted to transport her entire German life to Turkey when she moved back in the 1980s. Jaws open and ears abuzz, neighbors had gawked at Gül and her late husband's red station wagon, a German Volkswagen Passat, filled to the brim with construction materials lugged 3,000 kilometers from Germany. Everything in her two-story home – the appliances, light switches, doors, and windows – had been "Made in Germany." Gül confirmed the rumors. While giving me a tour, she pointed out German pots and pans, bedroom furniture, picture frames, vases, radios, televisions, and chandeliers. In her kitchen, she even had a German deli meat slicer, which, she whispered shamefully, she had often used to slice ham. "I miss pork!" she exclaimed and lamented having to keep her "yearning for beer and bratwurst" a secret.[9] If neighbors found out that she was violating Muslim dietary restrictions, they might call her not only an *Almancı* but also a *gâvur,* a derogatory word for non-Muslims.

Well aware that her private home had become the target of local gossip, Gül defended herself by dismissing her German possessions as "just things." To any outside observer, however, these objects clearly had emotional significance. Her middle-aged nephew, who accompanied us on the tour and had been threatening to clean the junk out of her house for years, likewise saw through Gül's attempts to distance herself from the term *Almancı*. "She doesn't know what she's talking about," he said, rolling his eyes. "Obviously she's obsessed with Germany, and she keeps these things around so that she never loses the connection."[10] His assessment rang true. Weary of travel in her old age, Gül had been visiting Germany less frequently. She had given up her German apartment, where she had often spent up to six months at a time, and now traveled there only once a year to visit her sister. Holding onto these objects and continuing to speak German helped preserve her emotional ties to the beloved "second homeland" that her body had long departed. Neither in her reputation nor her heart, could she escape her connection to Germany (Figure I.3).

Although each of the returning migrants in Şarköy had a different relationship to their *Almancı* identity, the pattern was the same for all – the label had been initially imposed upon them externally by individuals within Turkish society, by fellow Turks who had never been to

[9] Gülmisâl E., interview by author, Şarköy, July 16, 2014.
[10] Erdem E., interview by author, Şarköy, July 16, 2014.

FIGURE I.3 Gül, then in her early 80s, welcomed the author in her "German house," 2016. In the background is one of Gül's most cherished possessions from Germany: a red radio. Author's personal collection.

Germany and had little direct knowledge of what life in Germany was like. Nevertheless, the nonmigrants were still able to judge from afar whom and what could be considered "German." Little by little, year after year, as guest workers like Gül returned to Turkey driving German cars, wearing German clothes, giving neighbors tastes of German chocolates, speaking German, and raising German-speaking children, Turks in their home country increasingly concluded that they had transgressed their national identity. Neither fully Turkish nor fully German to outside eyes, the migrants existed in a liminal space between rigidly constructed conceptions of Turkish and German national belonging that had come to assume new and contested undertones of fluidity. As physical estrangement evolved into emotional estrangement, the migrants became foreign in two homelands.

RETURN MIGRATION AND TRANSNATIONAL LIVES

This book tells the history of Turkish-German guest worker migration from a transnational perspective, focusing on the themes of return

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migration, German racism, and the migrants' changing relationship to their home country. It begins in 1961, when Turks first arrived in West Germany as formally recruited "guest workers" (*Gastarbeiter*), and ends in 1990, the year that marked both the reunification of divided Germany and landmark revisions to German citizenship law.[11] Putting a human face on migration, it tells the stories of guest workers and their families as they traveled back and forth between Germany and Turkey and navigated their uncomfortable connections to both countries over three decades. In so doing, it turns the concept of "integration" on its head: while not nearly as egregious as the overt racism they faced in Germany, many migrants encountered parallel difficulties *reintegrating* into their own homeland. After years or decades of separation, their friends, neighbors, and relatives met them not only with open arms, but also with ostracization, scorn, and disavowal. Turkey's ambivalence toward returning migrants complicates our understanding of German identity. As much as Germans assailed Turks' alleged inability to integrate, they *had* integrated enough for their own countrymen to criticize them as culturally estranged, "Germanized," and no longer "fully Turkish." Kicked out of West Germany and estranged from Turkey, many migrants felt foreign in both countries, with consequences that still drive a rift between Germany, Turkey, and the diaspora today.

By focusing not only on the migrants' arrival and integration but also on their return and reintegration, this book adds complexity to a story that has been typically told within German borders. Its narrative is – at once – German, Turkish, European, transnational, and local. The chapters resemble the migrants' lives in that none is strictly delineated by the rigid boundaries of a static "homeland" or "host country." Likewise, none offers an exclusively "German" or exclusively "Turkish" perspective. Rather, the book and its various chapters take readers on a spatial journey, following the migrants back and forth between West Germany and Turkey, as well as along the 3,000-kilometer international highway that lay between them, traversing Austria, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria at the height of the Cold War. Zooming in and out between domestic policies,

[11] The term "guest worker" (*Gastarbeiter*) is inherently problematic. The notion that the migrants were guests who were only staying temporarily and were expected to return home made it harder for Germans to accept them as permanent residents, long-term immigrants, and citizens even decades later, and the word "worker" reduced them solely to their economic function. In line with other scholars, I nevertheless use "guest worker" because it was the primary term at the time, and because it identifies a particular group of people who, while far from homogenous, shared a similar migration experience.

international affairs, public discourses, and the history of everyday life (*Alltagsgeschichte*), the story not only plays out in editorial offices, parliamentary chambers, and other public spaces, but also in more private settings where the migrants' personal agency and emotions take center stage.[12] To portray the richness of the migrants' transnational lives, the book brings together a kaleidoscope of sources collected in both countries and both languages, including government documents, newspaper articles, sociological studies, company records, handwritten letters, memoirs, films, novels, poems, songs, material objects, and two dozen oral history interviews that I conducted with former guest workers and their children.

Above all, this book rests on a fundamental premise: global migration and mobility are central to the history of modern Europe, and we cannot fully understand European history without placing migrants' transnational lives at the center of it.[13] To a certain extent, this premise might seem intuitive: after all, migration and mobility are core parts of human experiences across time and space. But placing migration at the center of European history is especially crucial, not least since Europeans have historically defined their national identities homogenously. While all European societies have struggled to come to terms with demographic shifts, the German experience has been peculiar due to the country's exclusive, ethnonationalist, and blood-based (*jus sanguinis*) definition of identity, which began to change only in the 1990s.[14] Such a narrow view of what it means to be "European," or what it means to be "German," obscures the reality that people in Europe have always been on the move. Europeans have traveled both within and beyond the constructed borders of empires, nation-states, and supranational institutions, crossing

[12] On the history of everyday life, see: Alf Lüdtke, ed., *Alltagsgeschichte. Zur Rekonstruktion historischer Erfahrungen und Lebensweisen* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1989).

[13] For a historiographical overview of this argument and a call for further scholarship, see: Tara Zahra, "Migration, Mobility, and the Making of a Global Europe," *Contemporary European History* 31 (2022): 142–54.

[14] For theoretical discussions of the ethnoracial foundation of German identity in a comparative European framework, see: Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Christian Joppke, "Immigration Challenges the Nation-State," in Joppke, ed., *Challenge to the Nation-State: Immigration in Western Europe and the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 5–46; Jan Palmowski, "In Search of the German Nation: Citizenship and the Challenge of Integration," *Citizenship Studies* 12, no. 6 (2008): 547–63; Dieter Gosewinkel, "Citizenship in Germany and France at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: Some New Observations on an Old Comparison," in Geoff Eley and Jan Palmowski, eds., *Citizenship and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 27–39.

landscapes and waterways near and far, and have often become immigrants themselves. Sometimes, such as during the ages of exploration and imperialism, they have twisted their outward mobility toward bloody and genocidal ends.[15] On the other hand, people from across the globe have traveled to Europe, increasingly settling there permanently. And in so doing, they have forever staked a claim as a part of European history, fundamentally reshaping both national and European identities.

Migration is not, however, always a one-directional process, whereby migrants leave a static "home country," arrive in a static "host country," and stay put. Rather, as scholars of transit migration have emphasized, migration is also circular and back and forth, marked by frequent twists, turns, and *returns* in "zigzag-like patterns" rather than straight lines.[16] Both temporarily and permanently, migrants often return to the places from which they came, encountering new and unexpected challenges while *reintegrating*.[17] Before they arrive at an intended destination, they

[15] Imperialism must be viewed as part of the longer history of European mobility. On German colonizers (and their brutality), see among others: Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); David Olusoga and Casper W. Erichsen, *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's Forgotten Genocide and the Colonial Roots of Nazism* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011); Jürgen Zimmerer, *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz?: Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2011); Jeremy Best, *Heavenly Fatherland: German Missionary Culture and Globalization in the Age of Empire* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020); Steven Press, *Blood and Diamonds: Germany's Imperial Ambitions in Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021); Adam Blackler, *An Imperial Homeland: Forging German Identity in Southwest Africa* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022); Zoe Samudzi, "Capturing German South West Africa: Racial Production, Land Claims, and Belonging in the Afterlife of the Herero and Nama Genocide" (PhD diss., University of California San Francisco, 2021).

[16] Robert Donnelly, review of *Rethinking Transit Migration: Precarity, Mobility, and Self-Making in Mexico,* by T. Basok, D. Bélanger, M. L. Rojas Wiesner, and G. Candiz, *Population, Space and Place* 23 (2017). See also: Aspasia Papadopoulou-Kourkoula, *Transit Migration: The Missing Link Between Emigration and Settlement* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008); Franck Düvell, Irina Molodikova, and Michael Collyer, eds., *Transit Migration in Europe* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2014).

[17] For interdisciplinary studies of return migration in general, see: Takeyuki Tsuda, ed., *Diasporic Homecomings: Ethnic Return Migration in Comparative Perspective* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Katie Kuschminder and Russell King, eds., *Handbook of Return Migration* (London: Routledge, 2022). Scholars of European history have often emphasized return migration from North America. Mark Wyman, *Round-Trip to America: The Immigrants Return to Europe, 1880–1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Mark I. Choate, *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2016); Benjamin Peter Hein, "Emigration and the Industrial Revolution in German Europe, 1820–1900" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2018); Grant W.

pass through multiple cities, countries, landscapes, seascapes, and airways. And they often go on to further journeys, some planned and some unexpected, turning former destinations into mere stops along the way. Just as migrants impact their points of departure and arrival, so, too, do they shape the spatial buffer zones that they pass through.[18] In this sense, the journeys themselves, not just the start or end points, are central to migrants' experiences, for they are the roads – both physical and psychological – on which migration *happens*. But, as the dark global history of slavery, imperialism, war, genocide, and displacement reminds us, their pathways are often precarious and involuntary. The policing of borders, whether through legislation, brutal force, or racial and socioeconomic exclusion, blurs the line between "voluntary" and "forced."[19] These themes – return migration, the policing of borders, and the journey itself – guide this book.

Within this vast history of mobility and migration, the period after the end of World War II stands out for the enormous challenge – and opportunity – that the unprecedented rise in mass migration posed to European demographics and national identities. Although Europeans had previously encountered so-called foreigners within their borders, postwar labor shortages and decolonization brought millions of migrants to European shores – in numbers like never before.[20] Countries with long

Grams, *Coming Home to the Third Reich: Return Migration of German Nationals from the United States and Canada, 1933–1941* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2021). See also, on the *longue durée* and the global British case: Marjory Harper, ed., *Emigrant Homecomings: The Return Movement of Emigrants, 1600–2000* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

[18] On the "buffer zone," see: Claire Wallace, et al., "The Eastern Frontier of Western Europe: Mobility in the Buffer Zone," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 22 (1996): 259–86; Claire Wallace, "The New Migration Space as a Buffer Zone," in Claire Wallace and Dariusz Stola, eds., *Patterns of Migration in Central Europe* (London: Palgrave, 2001), 72–83.

[19] I emphasize the blurriness between voluntary and forced migration, or what others have called "mixed migration," in my discussion of the 1983 remigration law in Chapters 4 and 5. See also: Nicholas Van Hear, Rebecca Brubaker, and Thais Bessa, "Managing Mobility for Human Development: The Growing Salience of Mixed Migration," MRPA paper, no. 19202 (Oxford: United Nations Development Reports, 2009); Marta Bivand Erdal and Ceri Oeppen, "Forced to Leave? The Discursive and Analytical Significance of Describing Migration as Forced and Voluntary," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44, no. 6 (2006): 981–98.

[20] Rita Chin, *The Crisis of Multiculturalism in Europe: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017). See also: Leo Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat: The Integration of Old and New Migrants in Western Europe since 1850* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005); Elizabeth Buettner, *Europe after Empire: Decolonization, Society, and Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Peter Gatrell, *The*

histories of brutal imperialism, like the United Kingdom and France, relied on migrants from their former colonies to revitalize their infrastructure.[21] The two halves of Cold War Germany, whose colonies had been stripped from them after World War I, sought laborers elsewhere.[22] Amid its 1955–1973 "guest worker" program, West Germany recruited workers from Italy beginning in 1955, Spain and Greece in 1960, Turkey in 1961, Morocco in 1963, Portugal in 1964, Tunisia in 1965, and Yugoslavia in 1968. Turkey, eager to export surplus laborers, sent workers to other countries as well: to Austria, Belgium, and the Netherlands in 1964, France in 1965, Sweden and Australia in 1967, Switzerland in 1971, Denmark in 1973, and Norway in 1981.[23] The history of labor migration is also inextricable from the history of Germany's Cold War division. Across the Iron Curtain, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), or East Germany, recruited "contract workers" (*Vertragsarbeiter*) from the socialist, communist, or nonaligned countries of North Vietnam, Cuba, Angola, and Mozambique.[24] And crucially, West Germany signed

Unsettling of Europe: How Migration Reshaped a Continent (New York: Basic Books, 2019). On Europeans who returned from the colonies after 1945, see: Andrea L. Smith, *Europe's Invisible Migrants* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003); Amy L. Hubbell, *Remembering French Algeria: Pieds-Noir, Identity, and Exile* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015).

[21] On the impact of postcolonial migration in Britain, see among others: Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Jordanna Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Clair Wills, *Lovers and Strangers: An Immigrant History of Post-War Britain* (London: Penguin UK, 2017). On France: Paul A. Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Amelia H. Lyons, *The Civilizing Mission in the Metropole: Algerian Families and the French Welfare State during Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

[22] For a comprehensive account of postwar German migration history, see: Jan Plamper, *Das neue Wir: Warum Migration dazugehört: Eine andere Geschichte der Deutschen* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2019).

[23] Outside continental Europe, Turkey also signed recruitment agreements with the United Kingdom in 1961 and Australia in 1967. Ahmet İçduygu, "International Migration and Human Development in Turkey," United Nations Development Program Human Development Research Paper, no. 52.

[24] On migration, racialization, and foreignness in the GDR, see: Jan C. Behrends, Thomas Lindenberger, and Patrice G. Poutrus, eds., *Fremde und Fremd-Sein in der DDR. Zu historischen Ursachen der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in Ostdeutschland* (Berlin: Metropol, 2003); Quinn Slobodian, ed., *Comrades of Color: East Germany in the Cold War World* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015). On Vietnamese migrants, see: Pipo Bui, *Envisioning Vietnamese Migrants in Germany: Ethnic Stigma, Immigrant Origin Narratives, and Partial Masking* (Münster: Lit Verlag,

the 1961 recruitment agreement with Turkey just two months after the GDR began constructing the Berlin Wall, thereby cutting off the steady stream of East German day laborers. Highlighting the West German case is important because, as Emmanuel Comte has argued, the Federal Republic developed a "strategic hegemony" over European migration policy and European integration, shaping them in a way that favored its long-term geopolitical and economic interests.[25]

Return migration was embedded into the logic of the Turkish-German guest worker program, but both the perceptions and reality of return fluctuated greatly from 1961 to 1990. Despite rampant discrimination even in the 1960s, West Germans initially welcomed guest workers as crucial to the economy.[26] This idea manifested in the choice of the problematic term "guest worker" itself, whose hospitable connotation distanced it from forced labor (*Zwangsarbeit*) under Nazism.[27] Also embedded in

2003); Karin Weiss and Mike Dennis, eds., *Erfolg in der Nische? Die Vietnamesen in der DDR und in Ostdeutschland* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005); Bengü Kocatürk-Schuster, Arnd Kolb, Thanh Long, Günther Schultze, and Sascha Wölk, eds., *Unsichtbar. Vietnamesisch-Deutsche Wirklichkeiten,* vol. 3 of *edition-DOMiD* (Cologne: DOMiD, 2017); Phi Hong Su, *The Border Within: Vietnamese Migrants Transforming Ethnic Nationalism in Berlin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022); Paige Newhouse, forthcoming PhD dissertation at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. On Mozambicans and Angolans, see: Ulrich van der Heyden, Wolfgang Semmel, and Ralf Straßburg, eds., *Mosambikanische Vertragsarbeiter in der DDR-Wirtschaft: Hintergrund – Vorlauf – Folgen* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2014); Marcia C. Schenck, *Remembering African Labor Migration to the Second World: Socialist Mobilities between Angola, Mozambique, and East Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023). On Africans who came to the GDR as students, see: Sara Pugach, *African Students in East Germany, 1949–1975* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2022).

[25] Emmanuel Comte, *The History of the European Migration Regime: Germany's Strategic Hegemony* (London: Routledge, 2018).

[26] On the perception of the 1960s as both an economic and a cultural miracle, see: Hanna Schissler, ed., *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[27] *Gastarbeiter* was the term chosen from 2,000 submissions to a West German radio contest, with other proposed names including "loyal helpers" (*treue Helfer*) and, sarcastically, "Euro-slaves" (*Eurosklaven*). Ernst Klee, ed., *Gastarbeiter: Analyse und Berichte* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972), 149–57, quoted in Chin, *The Guest Worker Question*. On Nazi forced labor, see: Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany under the Third Reich,* trans. William Templer (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Alexander von Plato, Almut Leh, and Christoph Thonfeld, eds., *Hitler's Slaves: Life Stories of Forced Labourers in Nazi-Occupied Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Marc Buggeln, *Slave Labor in Nazi Concentration Camps,* trans. Paul Cohen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

the word "guest" was the assumption that the migrants' stays would be temporary. Per the recruitment agreement's "rotation principle" (*Rotationsprinzip*), they were only supposed to stay for two years, after which time they would be rotated out and replaced by new workers. The Turkish government, too, initially welcomed the guest workers' return on the grounds that they would bring the knowledge and skills needed to modernize their home country's struggling economy. In reality, the rotation principle was minimally heeded, since guest workers wished to keep earning money in Germany, and employers considered it too cumbersome to train new workers. Beyond economics, political optics also played an important role in West Germany's failure to adhere to the rotation principle: just decades after the atrocities of Nazism, forcibly moving labor migrants, as Adolf Hitler had done earlier in the twentieth century, was simply not an option.[28] Numerically, the turning point was the 1973 recruitment stop, after which half a million guest workers – 20 percent – left West Germany within three years.[29] Still, the number of Turkish citizens who left was outweighed by those who arrived through family migration in the 1970s.

By the early 1980s, the very idea that Turks had *failed* – or even *refused* – to go home became a dangerous weapon in Germans' racist arsenal: if only Turks had returned as planned, many Germans insisted, these massive demographic changes and the perceived threat of Islam might have been avoided.[30] Such rhetoric feeds into what I call the "myth of non-return": the idea that Turks' return migration was a mere "illusion" or "unrealized dream" that failed to materialize.

[28] Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos and Karen Schönwälder, "How the Federal Republic Became an Immigration Country: Norms, Politics, and the Failure of West Germany's Guest Worker System," *German Politics and Society* 24, no. 3 (2006): 1–19.

[29] Comte, *The History of the European Migration Regime,* 111. On the recruitment stop, see: Marcel Berlinghoff, *Das Ende der »Gastarbeit«. Europäische Anwerbestopps 1970–1974* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2013).

[30] Scholars have offered varying interpretations of when Turkish guest workers became seen first and foremost as Muslims. Historians have generally emphasized the 1980s as the turning point, while Gökçe Yurdakul and others have highlighted the importance of the September 11, 2001, terror attacks. Brian Van Wyck has added importantly that being labeled as Muslim "had quite different stakes depending on who was making it." Gökçe Yurdakul, *From Guest Workers into Muslims: The Transformation of Turkish Immigrant Associations in Germany* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2009); Brian Van Wyck, "Turkish Teachers and Imams and the Making of Turkish German Difference" (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 2019), 205. On the longer history of postwar Muslim migration, see: Elizabeth Howell, forthcoming PhD dissertation at Northwestern University.

Because of its prevalence, this myth has influenced the writing of history.[31] Historians have generally treated Turkish-German migration as a one-directional process, whereby the migrants left Turkey, arrived in Germany, and did not return. Early studies situated the guest worker program within the longer history of labor migration and Germans' experiences with ethnic minorities.[32] Thanks to more recent histories by Karin Hunn, Rita Chin, Sarah Hackett, Brittany Lehman, Jennifer Miller, Sarah Thomsen Vierra, Lauren Stokes, and Stefan Zeppenfeld, we now know much about West German migration policies and changing attitudes toward Turkish migrants, how the tensions of integration played out on the ground, how migrants experienced their daily lives, and how they negotiated their belonging with nuanced attention to gender and generational divides.[33] Brian J. K. Miller and Brian Van

[31] Nonetheless, the importance of return migration at the time is evidenced by the numerous sociological studies from the 1970s through the 1990s that took it as their subject. Ethnographic interviews included in these studies appear throughout this book, and their findings inform my work more generally. Among others, see: Nermin Abadan-Unat, et al., *Göç ve Gelişme: Uluslararası İşgücü Göçünün Boğazlıyan İlçesi Üzerindeki Etkilerine İlişkin Bir Araştırma* (Ankara: Ajans-Türk Matbaacılık Sanayii, 1976); Werner Schiffauer, *Die Migranten aus Subay: Türken in Deutschland: Eine Ethnographie* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1991); Barbara Wolbert, *Der getötete Paß. Rückkehr in die Türkei. Eine ethnologische Migrationsstudie* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995). Moreover, countless studies in disciplines outside history have testified to the value of transnational approaches to Turkish-German migration. Betigül Ercan Argun, *Turkey in Germany: The Transnational Sphere of Deutschkei* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Eva Østergaard-Nielsen, *Transnational Politics: Turks and Kurds in Germany* (London: Routledge, 2003); Martin Sökefeld, *Struggling for Recognition: The Alevi Movement in Germany and in Transnational Space* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008); Barbara Pusch, ed., *Transnationale Migration am Beispiel Deutschland und Türkei* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2012); Bahar Başer and Paul T. Levin, *Migration from Turkey to Sweden: Integration, Belonging, and Transnational Community* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2017); Ayhan Kaya, *Turkish Origin Migrants and their Descendants: Hyphenated Identities in Transnational Space* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2018).

[32] Klaus Bade, ed., *Auswanderer – Wanderarbeiter – Gastarbeiter. Bevölkerung, Arbeitsmarkt und Wanderung in Deutschland seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Ostfildern: Scripta Mercaturae, 1984); Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880–1980: Seasonal Workers/Forced Laborers/Guest Workers,* trans. William Templer (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990); Panikos Panayi, *Ethnic Minorities in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany: Jews, Gypsies, Poles, Turks and Others* (Harlow: Pearson, 2000).

[33] Hunn, *»Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück…«*; Chin, *The Guest Worker Question;* Sarah E. Hackett, *Foreigners, Minorities, and Integration: The Muslim Immigrant Experience in Britain and Germany* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013); Brittany Lehman, *Teaching Migrant Children in West Germany and Europe, 1949–1992* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); J. Miller, *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany*; Sarah

Wyck have illuminated the Turkish government's motivations and its role in shaping the migrants' lives in Germany.[34] Overall, however, the Turkish and German sides of the story – at least within the discipline of history – have largely been viewed as separate rather than inextricably linked.[35]

In this book, I bridge this divide by taking readers on a back-and-forth transnational journey between Turkey and Germany, revealing that Turkish-German migration history is far more vibrant and dynamic than typically told. The core argument is the following: return migration was *not* an illusion or an unrealized dream but rather a core component of all migrants' lives, and Turkish-German migration was *never* a one-directional process, but rather a transnational process of reciprocal exchange that fundamentally reshaped both countries' politics, societies, economies, and cultures. We cannot understand how the labor migration impacted Germany without understanding how it impacted Turkey. We cannot understand German migration policy without understanding Turkish policy and how the two were constituted mutually. And we

Thomsen Vierra, *Turkish Germans in the Federal Republic of Germany: Immigration, Space, and Belonging, 1961–1990* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Stefan Zeppenfeld, *Vom Gast zum Gastwirt? Türkische Arbeitswelten in West-Berlin* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2021); Lauren Stokes, *Fear of the Family: Guest Workers and Family Migration in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

[34] B. Miller, "Reshaping the Turkish Nation-State"; Van Wyck, "Turkish Teachers and Imams." For other interdisciplinary accounts of the Turkish side, see: Levent Soysal, "The Migration Story of Turks in Germany: From the Beginning to the End," in Reşat Kasaba, ed., *Turkey in the World,* Vol. 4 of *The Cambridge History of Turkey* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 199–225; Ahmet Akgündüz, *Labour Migration from Turkey to Western Europe, 1960–1974: A Multidisciplinary Analysis* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008).

[35] Return migration, while minimally discussed in the historical scholarship on Turkish-German migration, has been the focus of important studies of other cases of migration across the globe. The case of Mexican labor migration to the United States, which became institutionalized with the 1942–1964 *Bracero* program, bears an especially fruitful point of comparison and has been instrumental to my thinking. See, among others: Francisco E. Balerrama and Raymond Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s*, revised ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006); Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in the Postwar United States and Mexico* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Ana Elizabeth Rosas, *Abrazando El Espíritu: Bracero Families Confront the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); Sarah Lynn Lopez, *The Remittance Landscape: Spaces of Migration in Rural Mexico and Urban USA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Ana Raquel Minian, *Undocumented Lives: The Untold Story of Mexican Migration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).

cannot understand the migrants' experiences *integrating* in Germany without understanding their experiences *reintegrating* in Turkey. By unifying these two histories, this book expands our definition of "Europe" to include Turkey, provides a fuller understanding of migrants' lives, and shows how migration – and migrants themselves – transformed both countries.

Far from oppressed industrial cogs tethered to their workplaces and factory dormitories, guest workers and their families were highly mobile border crossers. They did not stay put in West Germany but rather returned both temporarily and permanently to Turkey. They took advantage of affordable sightseeing opportunities throughout Western Europe, and each year many vacationed back in Turkey, typically traveling there by car on a 3,000-kilometer international highway that traversed the Cold War border checkpoints of Austria, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria. Once they arrived, they reunited with friends, relatives, and neighbors, built houses, invested money in their homeland, and shared stories of life in Germany. Hundreds of thousands, moreover, packed their bags, relinquished their West German residence permits, and remigrated to Turkey permanently, making their long deferred "final return" (in Turkish *kesin dönüş*, and in German *endgültige Rückkehr*). Around 500,000 of the 867,000 Turkish citizens who migrated to Germany between 1961 and 1973 eventually returned as expected, as did tens of thousands more who arrived in the 1970s through family reunification.[36] Returning to Turkey, and their journeys of return, were just as important to guest workers and their families as their time in West Germany (Figure I.4).

Guest workers' decisions to stay or leave were also shaped by pressures from above. Both countries' governments were deeply invested – both metaphorically and financially – in the question of the migrants' return. Crucially, however, their goals differed: whereas West Germany strove to *promote* the migrants' return, Turkey strove to *prevent* it. Racked by skyrocketing unemployment, hyperinflation, and foreign debt in the 1970s, the Turkish government changed its previously enthusiastic stance toward return migration, fearing that a mass return of guest workers would overburden the labor market and cut off the stream of remittance payments. Bilateral tensions climaxed when West Germany passed a controversial 1983 law that paid guest workers and their family

[36] Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, "Die Anwerbung türkischer Arbeitnehmer und ihre Folgen," August 5, 2014, www.bpb.de/internationales/europa/tuerkei/184981/gastarbeit.

FIGURE I.4 Vacationing guest workers wait at the Düsseldorf airport for their flight back to Istanbul, 1970. © dpa picture alliance/Alamy Stock Foto, used with permission.

members to leave immediately. The result of this law, which critics in both countries decried as a blatant attempt to "kick out the Turks" and "violate their human rights," was one of the largest and fastest remigrations in modern European history. In 1984, within just ten months, 15 percent of the Turkish migrant population – 250,000 men, women, and children – packed their bags, crammed into cars and airplanes, and journeyed across Cold War Europe back to Turkey, with their residence permits stamped "invalid" at the border.

Crucial to this transnational story is the fraught, elusive, and highly politicized concept of "integration." Beginning in the mid-1970s, Germans used "integration" (*Integration* or *Eingliederung*) to describe a linear process by which migrants should become part of German society by abandoning the features that make them different.[37] All three major political parties distinguished "integration" from another loaded term – "assimilation" (*Assimilation*) – on the grounds that the latter could slip into "forced Germanization" (*Zwangsgermanisierung*), a term that recalled the Nazis' brutal "Germanization" of 200,000 Polish children

[37] Vierra, *Turkish Germans in the Federal Republic of Germany*, 11.

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by ripping them from their homes and giving them to German families on the basis that they had blonde hair and blue eyes and were thus "racially valuable."[38] By contrast, postwar Germans considered "integration" more palatable because, at least in theory, it implied a "give-or-take process" in which both the migrants and Germans shared responsibility.[39] In practice, however, the rhetoric of integration gave rise to the expectation of assimilation: Germans blamed Turks for not "integrating" rather than acknowledging that they had done little to "integrate" them.

Viewed in a transnational frame, debates about "integration" were also fundamentally tied to return migration and to Turkish expectations about the role of the migrants in relation to their home country. One of the German conservatives' arguments against "Germanization" was that it would be detrimental to the migrants – and to West German efforts to kick them out – as it would erase their Turkish cultural identities and thereby impede them from "reintegrating" upon their return. And, in fact, that turned out to be the case. Turks in the home country, as this book reveals, invoked the language of "Germanization" to express their concerns about the opposite problem: excessive integration into West Germany and the loss of Turkish identity. The transnational history of return migration thus shows how the migrants were caught not only between two countries but also between two opposing sets of multifaceted, shifting, and unachievable expectations about who they were at their very core: how they were supposed to act, what clothes they were supposed to wear, how much money they were supposed to spend, whom they were supposed to have sex with, what their moral and religious values were supposed to be, and ultimately where they belonged.

Placing the migrants at the center of this story, this book highlights their agency as they navigated both countries' attempts to police their mobility, define their identities, and embrace or exclude them over three decades. It also reveals, however, that the very act of returning "home" was not always the joyous occasion that they had dreamed of. Instead of enjoying a happy homecoming, many found themselves socially ostracized and economically worse off than they had been in West Germany.

[38] Catherine Epstein, *Model Nazi: Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Bradley Jared Nichols, "The Hunt for Lost Blood: Nazi Germanization Policy in Occupied Europe" (PhD diss., University of Tennessee at Knoxville, 2016); Janina Kostkiewicz, *Crime Without Punishment: The Extermination and Suffering of Polish Children During the German Occupation, 1939–1945* (Krakow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2021).

[39] Chin, *The Guest Worker Question*, 99.

In this sense, physically traveling to Turkey was not always a *return* to a static homeland but rather a journey to a place that had transformed in their absence and from which, over years and decades, they had become gradually estranged. For them, the challenge became not only how to *integrate* into Germany but also how to *reintegrate* into Turkey.

GRADUAL ESTRANGEMENT FROM "HOME"

Focusing on return migration not only highlights the migrants' agency but also shows how migration shaped the lives of ordinary people in Turkey. When we think of migration only in terms of the people on the move, we tend to overlook a crucial reality: for every guest worker who went to Germany, there were dozens of friends, neighbors, and family members who stayed behind in Turkey. Even though many of them would never set foot in Germany, individuals in the homeland also had a stake in the guest worker program. Placing their hopes and dreams in the guest workers' hands, they sent them off with not only physical but also emotional baggage. The expectations were clear: work hard, send money home, keep in touch, and return quickly. But the reality was complicated. Migration fundamentally disrupted the lives of those left behind, from their day-to-day activities and financial security to their relationships with relatives near and far. Just as the migrants had to adjust to their new lives in Germany, so too did individuals in Turkey have to adjust to their absence. Rethinking migration from their point of view underscores the inescapable dualities. Arrival meant departure. Immigration meant emigration. Presence meant absence.

Part I of the book, "Separation Anxieties," shows how, through the everyday act of repeatedly crossing the two countries' borders, guest workers and their children transformed their home country and destabilized dominant understandings of German, Turkish, and European identities from the 1960s through the 1990s. During this period, migrants became targets and carriers of difference and ambivalence in Turkish understandings of identity, as both the migrants themselves and observers in Turkey struggled to rethink their relationship to their homeland (*vatan*) while they lived, at least temporarily, 3,000 kilometers away.[40] While most guest workers yearned to return to the *vatan,* their children

[40] On the idea of the *vatan* and the territoriality of modern Turkish identity, see: Behlül Özkan, *From the Abode of Islam to the Turkish Vatan: The Making of a National Homeland in Turkey* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 1–11.

born or raised in Germany frequently questioned whether the *vatan* was truly their homeland or rather just a faraway place they knew from their vacations and their parents' stories. Although they always remained an extension of the nation, they gradually became estranged from it as the discomfort surrounding them grew.[41] And because migration was circular, marked by frequent returns to Turkey for both short and longer periods of time, the distinction between "migrants" and "nonmigrants" also blurred. All at once, a person could feel – and be treated as – both uprooted and left behind.

The history of Turkish migrants' dual estrangement is in many respects the history of emotions.[42] Anger, sadness, fear, joy, envy – all of these are fundamental parts of the human story told in this book. Emotions are socially constructed and dynamic, changing over time in response to circumstances and expectations. Still, understanding the migrants' emotions does not always require reading between the lines. Instead, migrants explicitly expressed their emotions in the countless sources they produced: oral histories, handwritten letters, poetry, folk songs, love ballads, memoirs, novels, films, interviews with journalists, and petitions to government officials. They did so not only to express themselves, but also to gain sympathy, effect change, and achieve certain strategic aims in the process. At times, they also performed their emotions, attempting to appear happier or sadder than they actually were.[43] One guest worker staged happy photographs to send to worried loved ones, even though she felt miserable and homesick. Another pretended to cry on the train to Germany just to fit in with her fellow passengers, even though she was delighted to leave Turkey. Moreover, observers in both countries leveraged the migrants' emotions toward political goals. Lamenting the sorrow of guest workers' children became an especially powerful tool for opponents of immigration restrictions to express their discontent – albeit

[41] I am particularly inspired here by Werner Schiffauer's ethnography of returning guest workers in the early 1990s. Schiffauer, *Die Migranten aus Subay*.

[42] On theorizing the history of emotions, see among others: Ute Frevert, "Angst vor Gefühlen? Die Geschichtsmächtigkeit von Emotionen im 20. Jahrhundert," in Paul Nolte, Manfred Hettling, Frank-Michael Kuhlemann, Hans-Walter Schmuhl, eds., *Perspektiven der Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2000), 95–111; William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," *American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (2002): 821–45.

[43] This performance of emotions recalls the conflict between the expected "emotional regime" (the expectation that a person is normatively supposed to display) versus the actual emotional experience.

in ways that sometimes inadvertently diminished the migrants' agency and perpetuated discrimination. The migrants' emotions, in this sense, became a tool for reinforcing uneven power dynamics.

Turkish guest workers and their children were not a homogenous population, even though both countries largely tended to treat them as such. Although guest workers overwhelmingly came from rural parts of Anatolia, most of the early migrants came from major cities such as Istanbul. While guest workers have been stereotyped as male, women accounted for 8 percent in 1961, tripling to 24 percent in 1975 – a statistic reflecting firms' desire to employ women, whose smaller hands made them better suited for delicate piecework.[44] Women who migrated formally as guest workers had different experiences than those who migrated through family reunification, as did children who spent most of their lives in Turkey versus children born and raised primarily in West Germany. Nor was the guest worker population ethnically, religiously, or politically homogenous. While Turkish guest workers were primarily Sunni Muslim, they also included internal minorities such as Kurds, Alevis, and Armenians, all of whom suffered a long history of persecution under Ottoman and Turkish rule.[45] Labor migration also overlapped with other forms of migrations, since applying for the guest worker program became a pathway for political dissidents and ethnic minorities to flee Turkey.[46] After the 1980 military coup, as the Turkish government perpetrated rampant human rights violations, the demographics of West Germany's Turkish population further transformed,

[44] On female guest workers, see: Monika Mattes, *»Gastarbeiterinnen« in der Bundesrepublik: Anwerbepolitik, Migration und Geschlecht in den 50er bis 70er Jahren* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2005).

[45] There remains much historical work to be done on the unique experiences of Kurdish, Alevi, and Armenian guest workers. Other disciplines, however, have produced many important studies on these groups, particularly in the context of asylum-seeker migration since the 2000s. See, among others: Argun, *Turkey in Germany;* Østergaard-Nielsen, *Transnational Politics*; İbrahim Sirkeci, *The Environment of Insecurity in Turkey and the Emigration of Turkish Kurds to Germany* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006); Sökefeld, *Struggling for Recognition*; Ararat Göçmen, "Hay, Yabancı, Mensch: National Difference and Multinational Society in the Political Thought of Armenian Workers from Turkey in Postwar Germany" (MA thesis, Queen Mary University of London, 2021).

[46] In his study of Yugoslav migration to West Germany, Christopher Molnar exemplifies new thinking about the "blurred borders" across multiple "waves of migration": displaced persons, asylum seekers, labor migrants, and refugees. Christopher A. Molnar, *Memory, Politics, and Yugoslav Migrations to Postwar Germany* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018). See also: Brigitte Le Normand, *Citizens Without Borders: Yugoslavia and its Migrant Workers in Western Europe* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021).

leading to contestations among Turkish nationalists, Kurds, and leftists that played out on West German soil. By the early 1980s, the backlash against Kurdish asylum seekers amplified the existing criticism of Turkish guest workers, becoming another potent weapon in the arsenal of those who wanted to "kick out" the Turks.

Each time guest workers and their children journeyed back to Turkey, they encountered a "homeland" that was not static but rather ever-changing. With the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk sought to build a new identity for Turkey that was rooted in modernization and "Turkishness." The 1924 constitution bestowed citizenship to individuals born in Turkey regardless of their religion and race if they embraced Turkish culture and language.[47] Yet the Kemalist utopia of a singular Turkish nation belied the reality that Turkey remained politically, socially, and culturally fragmented and racked by economic turmoil. During the period covered by this book, Turkey experienced three military coups: in 1960 (just one year before the first guest workers arrived in West Germany), 1971, and – most crucially for this book's narrative – 1980. Struggling to position Turkey in the increasingly neoliberal global economy, policymakers found themselves in a virtually perpetual state of economic crisis that intensified amid the global recession of the 1970s. Especially central to the migrants' experiences – and to transnational attitudes about them – was the continued social, economic, and cultural gap between Turkish cities and the countryside.[48]

Rather than passively responding to these vast changes, guest workers and their children played active roles in accelerating them.[49] Alongside

[47] The government enacted this cultural homogeneity often violently through state-sponsored forced assimilation of ethnic and religious minority groups – a process that, as an intriguing counterpoint to discourses surrounding migrants' "Germanization," was called "Turkification" (*Turkleştirme*). *The New Constitution of Turkey (1924)*, Art. 88, www.worldstatesmen.org/Turkeyconstitution1924.pdf.; Amy Mills, *Streets of Memory: Landscape, Tolerance, and National Identity in Istanbul* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010); Ayhan Aktar, *Nationalism and Non-Muslim Minorities in Turkey, 1915–1950* (London: Transnational Press, 2021).

[48] On the rural-urban divide as a post-Ottoman legacy, see: Şerif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989); Michael Meeker, *A Nation of Empire: The Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

[49] Nermin Abadan-Unat, "Impact of External Migration on Rural Turkey," in Paul Stirling, ed., *Culture and Economy: Changes in Turkish Villages* (Cambridgeshire: The Eothen Press, 1993), 201–15; quoted in Argun, *Turkey in Germany*, 59.

guest workers' contributions to Turkey's economy, society, culture, and identities, this book examines the historical process by which guest workers and their children introduced new categories of ambivalence and exclusion in Turkey. To anchor this analysis, the book traces the origins of the most contentious Turkish term for classifying the migrants: *Almancı*. Crucially, the term has not been used to describe all Turks living in Germany, a group that even before the 1960s included diplomats, students, and white-collar professionals. Rather, it initially emerged as a more particular reflection of Turkish ideas about guest workers, class, and socioeconomic difference. The economic connotations of the term, which does not translate smoothly into English, are evident in its etymology. *Almancı* combines the Turkish adjective *Alman* (German) with the suffix "*-cı*." Most akin to the English "-er" or "-ist," this suffix typically creates a noun identifying a person by their professional occupation or how they make a living (a basketball player is a *basketbolcu*, a taxi driver is a *taksici*, an antiques dealer is an *antikacı*).[50] By this logic, an *Almancı* is simply a person who makes a living out of Germany. But the meaning of the term – often interchanged with *Almanyalı* and *Alamancı* – is complex. Noting the term's derogatory connotation, Ruth Mandel has defined it as "German-like," while Susan Rottmann has interpreted it as "becoming a 'professional German' and thus faking or putting-on German-ness."[51]

In this book, I deliberately define *Almancı* as "Germanized Turk," and I investigate from a historical perspective how the term and its associated stereotypes developed from 1961 to 1990. Given its derogatory connotation, I do not use the word when referring to the migrants, but rather place it in quotation marks when discussing the home country's explicit or implied perceptions of them. Though contested in both countries, the word "Germanized" is more suitable for this book than "German-like" because it underscores Turks' concerns at the time that the migrants were undergoing a process of gradual estrangement – that

[50] Gerjan van Schaaik, *The Oxford Turkish Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 457.

[51] Ruth Mandel, *Cosmopolitan Anxieties: Turkish Challenges to Citizenship and Belonging in Germany* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 57; Rottmann, *Forging an Ethical Life*, 15. See also: Kevin Robins and David Morley, "Almancı, Yabancı," *Cultural Studies* 10, no. 2 (2006): 248–54; Barbara Pusch and Julia Splitt, "Binding the *Almancı* to the 'Homeland' – Notes from Turkey," *Perceptions* 18, no. 3 (2013): 129–66; Filiz Kunuroğlu, Kutlay Yağmur, Fons J. R. van de Vijver, and Sjaak Kroon, "Consequences of Turkish Return Migration from Western Europe," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 49 (2015): 198–211.

they were transforming, to a certain extent, from Turks into Germans.[52] The emphasis on the historical process of *becoming* an *Almancı* reflects the dual character of discourses surrounding the contentious concept of "integration." Whereas West Germans complained about Turkish migrants' *insufficient* integration, the Turkish government, media, and population worried about *excessive* integration – that long-term exposure to West Germany had estranged the migrants from Turkey, making them unable to *reintegrate*. In its most virulent uses, the term *Almancı* blamed the migrants for their own estrangement: not only had the migrants absorbed German culture through osmosis, but they had also made an active choice – a choice for Germany over Turkey, and a choice for abandoning those at home.

Whether out of hostility or jest, the term *Almancı* also projected Turks' anxieties about the country's external and internal transformations in a globalizing Cold War world, particularly regarding "Westernization" and urbanization. This point recalls Ayşe Kadıroğlu's suggestion that "the Turkish psyche has been burdened with the difficult task of achieving a balance between the Western civilization and the Turkish culture."[53] In this sense, when viewed in a geopolitical frame, concerns about the migrants' "Germanization" and loss of Turkish identity reflected Turks' broader ambivalence about their own country's "Westernization," "modernization," and "Europeanization" during the 1960s through the 1980s.[54] But these tensions also reflected ambivalence about Turkey's rural–urban divide, especially amid the internal seasonal labor migration that both preceded and overlapped with guest worker migration abroad.[55] When

[52] Several other scholars of Turkish-German migration have used the term "Germanization." Patricia Ehrkamp, "'We Turks are no Germans': Assimilation Discourses and the Dialectical Construction of Identities in Germany," *Environment and Planning A* 38 (2006): 1673–92; Susan Beth Rottmann, "Negotiating Modernity and Europeanness in the Germany-Turkey Transnational Social Field," *Insight Turkey* 16, no. 4 (2014): 143–58; Aylın Yıldırım Tschoepe, "Locating the German-Turks: Transnational Migration to Turkey and Constructions of Identity and Space," in M. Ersoy and E. Özyürek, eds., *Contemporary Turkey at a Glance II: Turkey Transformed? Power, History, Culture* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2017), 113–30.

[53] Ayşe Kadıroğlu, "The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity," *Middle Eastern Studies* 32, no. 2 (1996): 177–93.

[54] In many respects, "Germanized Turk" was really a proxy for "Europeanized Turk." Although variations of the term existed – such as *Hollandcı* for those in the Netherlands, or *Fransızcı* for those in France – *Almancı* was a catch-all term indiscriminately applied to all guest workers in Europe.

[55] Kemal Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

Turkish urbanites denigrated *Almancı*, they often recycled stereotypes about the rural labor migrants they encountered in Turkish cities, whom they – like Germans – disparaged as poor, backwards, and traditional. For villagers, by contrast, "Germanization" was a proxy for urbanization. Having already observed changes in the behaviors of seasonal migrants who returned from Turkish cities, villagers worried that migrants in West Germany would succumb to the seedy underbelly of urban life, drink alcohol, engage in sex and adultery, and abandon Islam.[56] As psychologist Gündüz Vassaf observed in his 1983 book on guest workers' children, Turks' previous experience with internal migration had already bred concerns that Anatolians were "Istanbulizing" (*İstanbullarırken*) and that Istanbulites were "Anatolianizing" (*Anadolululaşıyor*).

These separation anxieties, I argue, were inextricably linked to return migration, for it was during vacations and permanent remigration that guest workers reunited face-to-face with those in Turkey. Within the scope of transnational mobility, numerous crosscutting themes – at the levels of the family, community, and nation – all contributed to the development of the idea that the migrants had "Germanized" and become culturally estranged. Chapter 1, "Sex, Lies, and Abandoned Families," traces the process of gradual estrangement in the migrants' intimate and emotional lives, viewing them not as nameless, faceless proletarian workers but rather as spouses, parents, children, lovers, and friends. In the formal recruitment years of the 1960s and 1970s, guest workers tried to maintain close contact with their loved ones at home. Still, homesickness and fears of abandonment spread across borders. Amid West Germany's sexual revolution, rumors about male guest workers having sex with buxom blonde German women, cheating on their wives, and abandoning their children spread like wildfire throughout Turkey, becoming core themes in Turkish media, films, and folkloric songs. Amid the rising family migration of the 1970s, guest workers' children came to be seen in both countries as at once victims and threats. While Germans complained about migrant children as "illiterate in two languages," Turks in the home country worried that they had excessively "Germanized." These "*Almancı* children" (*Almancı çocukları*) were stereotyped as dressing and acting like Western Europeans, abandoning their Muslim faith, and barely speaking the Turkish language. Far more so than their parents, these children faced harsher social difficulties *reintegrating* into Turkey upon their return.

[56] Gündüz Vassaf, *Daha Sesimizi Duyurmadık: Avrupa'da Türk İşçi Çocukları,* 2nd ed. (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2010[1983]), 207.

Ironically, the migrants' growing emotional estrangement from their friends, neighbors, and relatives at home was largely attributable to the times when they physically reunited face-to-face. Chapter 2, "Vacations across Cold War Europe," examines the significance of the seemingly mundane act of temporarily returning "home." Every year, as a small seasonal remigration, guest workers embarked upon a three-day, 3,000-kilometer road trip from West Germany to Turkey, passing through Austria, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria at the height of the Cold War. Their unsavory experiences driving through Yugoslavia and Bulgaria reinforced their disdain for life east of the Iron Curtain and solidified their self-identification with the modernity and prosperity of Germany and "the West." Moreover, the cars and consumer goods they brought from West Germany on their vacations played a significant role in external processes of identity formation. By the 1970s, those in the home country came to view guest workers as a *nouveau-riche* class of gaudy, superfluous spenders, or "little capitalists," who neglected the financial needs of struggling local economies and had adopted the habit of conspicuous consumption – a trait that villagers associated with West Germany and Western Europe at the time.[57]

Crucially, guest workers were one of the strongest backbones of the Turkish economy at a time of great economic crisis. Chapter 3, "Remittance Machines," investigates how the growing rift between guest workers and their home country was tied up in the transnational circulation of finances amid an increasingly globalizing neoliberal economy. Government officials and journalists regularly referred to guest workers as "Turks working/living in Germany" (*Almanya'da çalışan/yaşayan Türkler*) and "our workers in Germany" (*Almanya'daki işçimiz*), the latter of which reflected the importance of guest workers' economic contributions – not only to their own wallets but also to the entire nation. Each Turk working abroad, after all, was one less person to tally as unemployed. Likewise important were their remittance payments: cash transfers from West Germany to Turkey in Deutschmarks, a much more valuable currency than the hyperinflated Turkish lira. Guest workers sent remittances to their families on a regular basis, and tens of thousands invested in factories to be built in Turkey, often in their home regions. But, as this chapter reveals, Turkey's dependence on – and cultural obsession with – guest workers' Deutschmarks created a conflict between self

[57] On consumption in West and East Germany, see: David F. Crew, ed., *Consuming Germany in the Cold War* (Oxford: Berg, 2003).

and nation, especially regarding return migration.[58] The Turkish government was so desperate for remittance payments that it began to oppose the migrants' return, even when it countered their best interests. Many migrants thus felt like "remittance machines," unwanted not only in West Germany but also by their own government.

Although the *Almancı* label is primarily defined externally and used derogatorily, and largely based on stereotypes, the Turkish discourse about the migrants' "Germanization" reveals an important point: whereas Germans have historically harbored anxieties about migrants' inability to "integrate," members of societies with high rates of outward migration, like Turkey, have developed fears of the opposite – and have responded with nationalist discourses according to which emigrants betray some or all of their identity by leaving their country of origin, choosing to remain abroad, and assimilating excessively. The very notion of "Germanization" casts migrants not as isolated "foreigners" (*Ausländer*), but as fundamentally German actors, exposing the reality that nineteenth-century notions of blood-based German citizenship no longer fit the dynamics of a migratory postwar world. In this way, the term "Germanization" itself suggests that Germans have not had a singular claim to delineating the contours of what it means to be German. Rather, both the Turkish migrants themselves and the populations of their home country, from the government and media to even the poorest of villagers, have been able to influence debates about German national belonging and the disputed role of Turkey in "Europe."

Likewise, the idea of the *Almancı* encourages us to destabilize the directional categories we use to discuss migration. When they traveled back to Turkey for their so-called "permanent return," they could be considered not as *immigrants to* but rather as *emigrants from* Germany. Although this interpretation falls shorter for guest workers and their children who were born in Turkey, it does apply to the experiences of thousands of children who were born or raised primarily abroad, and who knew Turkey only as a vacation destination or from their parents' stories. One of my interview partners, Murad B., who was born in

[58] In his 1991 ethnography, German anthropologist Werner Schiffauer also emphasized the conflict between self and nation (represented by the metaphorical son and father) as central to the migrants' relationship to their home country. Schiffauer, *Die Migranten aus Subay*. See my analysis of this theme in Schiffauer's work: Michelle Lynn Kahn, "Rebels against the Homeland: Turkish Guest Workers in 1980s West German Anthropology," *Migrant Knowledge*, October 23, 2019, migrantknowledge.org/2019/10/23/rebels-against-the-homeland/.

Germany, and whose parents shuttled him back and forth between the two countries before finally sending him to live with his grandparents in Istanbul, expressed this sentiment eloquently: "I think the term 'going back' to Turkey is so inappropriate, because I was never *there* to be back there … It's not a 'going *back*' to somewhere. It's a 'going *to*' somewhere that was completely strange."[59]

RACISM AND THE HISTORY OF 1980S WEST GERMANY

Part II of this book, "Kicking out the Turks," writes the history of racism into the history of West Germany. Whereas the entire book spans 1961 to 1990, the second part focuses exclusively on the 1980s, a decade about which histories are still begging to be written. Thematically, Part II explores the nexus between return migration and what I call West Germany's "racial reckoning" of the 1980s: a turning point at which Germans, Turkish migrants, and individuals in the migrants' home country grappled, in both public and private, sometimes self-consciously, and sometimes not, with the very existence and nature of West German racism itself and especially the continuities between anti-Turkish racism and the Nazi past. This racial reckoning was motivated by a confluence of factors. As the demand "Turks out!" was amplified in the early 1980s, popular racism exploded with an intensity unprecedented in the Federal Republic's history, second only to the surge in neo-Nazi violence in the early 1990s.[60] At precisely the same moment, West German intellectuals began publicly debating the role of the Third Reich and the Holocaust in German historiography and identity, sparking what became known as the "historians' dispute" (*Historikerstreit*) of the 1980s.[61] As rising anti-Turkish racism was mapped onto the growing public attention to Holocaust memory, it became a tense part of Germans' process of coming to terms with the past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*).

Racism is not static across time and space. Rather, the historian's task is to examine how racism has manifested in different contexts – how racist discourses, targets of racism, and experiences of racism have evolved over time. For historians of postwar Germany, this task is especially

[59] Murad B., interview by author, Cologne, February 11, 2017.

[60] Christopher A. Molnar, "Asylum Seekers, Antiforeigner Violence, and Coming to Terms with the Past after German Reunification," *The Journal of Modern History* 94, no. 1 (2022): 86–126.

[61] Charles Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

challenging due to the prominence of the Holocaust in German understandings of racism. The emphasis on the singularity of the Holocaust, which was reaffirmed in the 1980s at the exact same time that Germans were debating how to kick out the Turks, inadvertently bolstered postwar Germans' reluctance to acknowledge the varying forms of racism that have existed both before and after Hitler.[62] Moreover, the prominence of Holocaust education and memorial sites in Germany from the 1990s onward has made it easier to celebrate Germany as a success story when compared to other countries, particularly the United States, that have long repressed histories of imperialism, enslavement, and genocide.[63] But, as this book shows, the intensification of both state-sponsored and everyday racism in the 1980s, as well as the prevalence of overt Holocaust comparisons in public discourse, challenges the portrayal of the Federal Republic as a success story and questions the image of the 1980s as the decade during which West Germany stabilized, turned toward postnationalism, and acknowledged its collective guilt for the Holocaust.[64] West Germany was not only the liberal democratic precursor to reunified Germany in 1990; it was also a country of great darkness, fear, extremism, and racism, whose history could have turned out quite differently (Figure I.5).

Engaging further with the history of emotions, this book shows how both racism and migrants' experiences of racism were both fundamentally connected to fears of the future and memories of the past. Its interpretation thus reinforces Frank Biess's and Monica Black's respective conclusions that West Germany was riddled with "German *Angst*," during

[62] This point relates to one of the most recent historiographical debates among Germanists, the "Historikerstreit 2.0" or "Catechism Debate" sparked by Dirk Moses's controversial essay: "The German Catechism," *Geschichte der Gegenwart*, May 23, 2021, www.geschichtedergegenwart.ch/the-german-catechism/. In the summer of 2021, *The New Fascism Syllabus* solicited and published a series of essays by scholars of twentieth-century Germany, Black Studies, critical theory, and the history of empire in direct response to Moses: Jennifer V. Evans and Brian J. Griffith, eds., "The Catechism Debate," *The New Fascism Syllabus*, 2021, www.newfascismsyllabus.com/category/opinions/the-catechism-debate/.

[63] This interpretation is most strongly argued in: Susan Neiman, *Learning from the Germans: Race and the Memory of Evil* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019). The comparison between the memory politics of the Holocaust and American slavery is also made in: Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

[64] On the call to push beyond this success-story narrative, see: Frank Biess and Astrid M. Eckert, "Introduction: Why Do We Need New Narratives for the History of the Federal Republic?" *Central European History* 52, no. 1 (2019): 1–18.

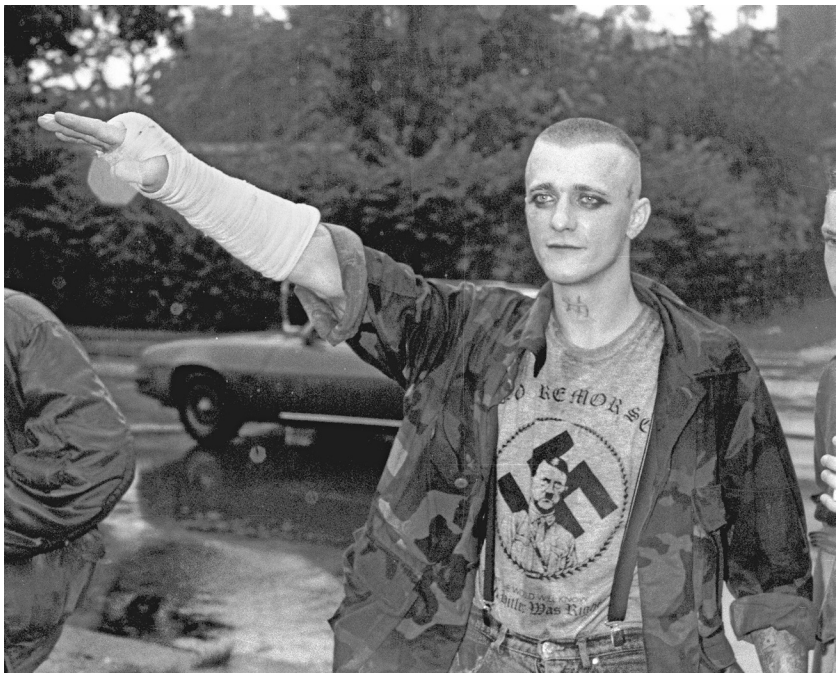

FIGURE I.5 A West German neo-Nazi performs the Hitler salute, 1987. His shirt depicts Hitler and a swastika with the accompanying English-language text: "No remorse" and "The world will know Hitler was right." © picture alliance/dpa, used with permission.

which the "ghosts of the past" conjured existential fears about the stability of democracy itself.[65] As Biess explains, the key questions here are not only "how did West Germans make sense of the past?" but also "how did West German memories of their past inform anticipations of the future?"[66] Amid the Cold War, contemporary West Germans feared not only left-wing communism but also the resurgence of right-wing extremism and the possible coming of a Fourth Reich. Moreover, when West Germans expressed existential fears of migrants taking over German society and committing a "genocide" against the German *Volk*, they placed their anxieties about the future in relation to their memory and forgetting

[65] Frank Biess, *German Angst: Fear and Democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); Monica Black, *A Demon-Haunted Land: Witches, Wonder Doctors, and the Ghosts of the Past in Post-WWII Germany* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2020).

[66] Biess, *German Angst*, 14.

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of the Holocaust. Migrants, too, must be included in the entangled histories of fear and racism. By the early 1980s, guest workers and their children increasingly feared that they would be fired from their jobs, evicted from their apartments, deported, or separated from their families. They feared that they would become the targets of verbal and physical violence, explicitly contextualizing West German racism as a continuity of the Nazis' treatment of Jews. Return migration, too, provoked fear, as Turkish guest workers wondered what would happen to them if they returned to a homeland racked by a military coup and an economic crisis.

The dominant idea of the Federal Republic as a success story was rooted both in Cold War posturing and in postwar Germans' efforts to distance themselves from the Nazi past.[67] Per this mythology, the stroke of midnight on May 8, 1945, the formal end of World War II, marked a "zero hour" (*Stunde Null*) at which Nazism disappeared and Germany was reborn. From 1945 to 1949, the Allied occupation governments reinforced this myth by overpraising their denazification programs.[68] The limited number of high-ranking Nazis indicted and sentenced in the 1945–1946 Nuremberg Trials, moreover, seemed to absolve ordinary Germans of guilt and to portray them as victims of Hitler and his henchmen. This victimhood myth was reinforced by ordinary Germans' real trauma immediately after the war. Millions of German men were dead, in prisoner-of-war camps, or unaccounted for, and returning soldiers suffered physical and psychological scars.[69] Until the 1948 currency stabilization, Germans hungered on meager rations and resorted to trading on the black market.[70] The underground bomb shelters remained, in Jennifer Evans's words, places of "predation, crisis, death, and decay."[71] Up to two million women were raped by the "liberating" Soviet Red Army, while the iconic "rubble women" (*Trümmerfrauen*) searched through the ashes of their

[67] In Anglo-American discourse, among the main proponents of this narrative were Dennis Bark and David Gress, who insisted that "shadows no longer haunt Germany" and dismissed any criticism of Nazi continuities as the ramblings of disaffected "leftists." Dennis L. Bark and David R. Gress, *A History of West Germany, Volume 1: From Shadow to Substance, 1945–1963*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993), lvi.

[68] Mikkel Dack, *Everyday Denazification in Postwar Germany: The Fragebogen and Political Screening during the Allied Occupation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

[69] Frank Biess, *Homecomings: Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[70] Paul Steege, *Black Market, Cold War: Everyday Life in Berlin, 1946–1949* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[71] Jennifer V. Evans, *Life among the Ruins: Cityscape and Sexuality in Cold War Berlin* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 45.

homes, rebuilding Germany stone by stone.[72] Millions of ethnic German expellees (*Heimatvertriebene*) from Eastern Europe hurried across German borders, fleeing territories under Soviet control.[73] The thousands of Black "occupation babies" born to German women and African American soldiers in the U.S. occupation zone became the targets of a new iteration of centuries-long anxiety about "race-mixing" (*Rassenschande*) that the Nazis had taken to a genocidal extreme.[74] The division of Germany into two separate countries in 1949 provided further fodder for narratives of victimhood, as the new border walls physically bifurcated communities and separated family members from one another.[75] Well into the postwar period, Germans clung to these "war stories," as Robert Moeller has called them, to reject the accusation of collective guilt.[76]

As Germans attempted to "recivilize" themselves after Nazism, memories of the Third Reich and the immediate postwar period shaped the way that Germans viewed guest workers and the ways in which they articulated their racism.[77] Rita Chin and Heide Fehrenbach have criticized

[72] Atina Grossmann, "A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Occupation Soldiers," *October* 72 (Spring 1995): 43–63; Elizabeth Heineman, "The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity," in Hanna Schissler, ed., *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 21–56; Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945–1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Leonie Treber, *Mythos Trümmerfrauen: Vor der Trümmerbeseitigung in der Kriegs- und Nachkriegszeit und der Entstehung eines deutschen Erinnerungsortes* (Essen: Klartext, 2014).

[73] Andrew Demshuk, *The Lost German East: Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945–1970* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Peter Gengler, "'New Citizens' or 'Community of Fate'? Early Discourses and Policies on 'Flight and Expulsion' in the Two Postwar Germanies," *Central European History* 53, no. 2 (August 2020): 314–34.

[74] Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Julia Roos, "The Race to Forget? Bi-Racial Descendants of the First Rhineland Occupation in 1950s West German Debates about the Children of African American GIs," *German History* 37, no. 4 (2019): 517–39.

[75] Edith Sheffer, *Burned Bridge: How East and West Germans Made the Iron Curtain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Astrid M. Eckert, *West Germany and the Iron Curtain: Environment, Economy, and Culture in the Borderlands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Demshuk, *The Lost German East*.

[76] Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Bill Niven, ed., *Germans and Victims: Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

[77] Konrad Jarausch, *After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945–1995*, trans. Brandon Hunziker (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Paul Betts, *Ruin and Renewal: Civilizing Europe after World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 2020).

postwar German historians' reluctance to critically engage with the categories of "race" (*Rasse*) and "racism" (*Rassismus*), which had become taboo and silenced after the biologically based racism of the Nazis.[78] Postwar Germans, they emphasized, overwhelmingly eschewed the term *Rassismus*, which connotated discrimination based on biological race, and instead favored *Ausländerfeindlichkeit*, literally "anti-foreigner sentiment" or "hostility against foreigners," sometimes translated as "xenophobia."[79] Though a contentious term itself, *Ausländerfeindlichkeit* appeared more palatable than *Rassismus* because it implied a "legitimate" or "rational" criticism of foreigners grounded in socioeconomic problems and "cultural difference" (*kulturelle Unterschiede*) rather than biological or racial inferiority. This condemnation of migrants on the basis of culture rather than biology was part of a broader trend emerging across Western Europe in the 1980s, which scholars have called a "new racism," "neo-racism," "cultural racism," and "racism without races."[80] Many have provided strong theorizations of this development in the German case, with Maria Alexopoulou, in particular, arguing that the word *Ausländer* (foreigner) itself was racialized: after all, *Ausländerfeindlichkeit* is not used to target White migrants from countries like Sweden, Switzerland, or Australia.[81] Michael Meng, Christopher Molnar, and Lauren Stokes have further

[78] Rita Chin and Heide Fehrenbach, "Introduction: What's Race Got to Do With It? Postwar German History in Context," in Rita Chin, Heide Fehrenbach, Geoff Eley, and Atina Grossmann, *After the Nazi Racial State: Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 1–29; Rita Chin, "Thinking Difference in Postwar Germany: Some Epistemological Obstacles around 'Race,'" in Cornelia Wilhelm, ed., *Migration, Memory, and Diversity: Germany from 1945 to the Present* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 206–32.

[79] Because this term is so contentious and does not translate smoothly, I leave it in the original German throughout this book.

[80] Martin Barker, *The New Racism: Conservatives and the Ideology of the Tribe* (London: Junction, 1981); Étienne Balibar, "Is There a 'Neo-Racism'?" in Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 1991 [1988]), 17–28.

[81] Maria Alexopoulou, "'Ausländer' – A Racialized Concept? 'Race' as an Analytical Concept in Contemporary German Immigration History," in Mahmoud Arghavan et al., eds., *Who Can Speak and Who Is Heard/Hurt? Facing Problems of Race, Racism, and Ethnic Diversity in the Humanities in Germany* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2019), 45–67; Maria Alexopoulou, *Deutschland und die Migration. Geschichte einer Einwanderungsgesellschaft wider Willen* (Ditzingen: Reclam, 2020). For other critiques of racism and racialization in the Federal Republic by German scholars and journalists, see: Alex Demirović and Manuela Bojadžijev, eds., *Konjunkturen des Rassismus* (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2002); Christine Morgenstern, *Rassismus – Konturen einer Ideologie. Einwanderung im politischen Diskurs der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Hamburg: Argument Verlag, 2002); Maureen Maisha Eggers, Grada Kilomba, Peggy Piesche, and Susan Arndt, eds., *Mythen, Masken und Subjekte. Kristische Weißseinsforschung in Deutschland,* 4th ed. (Münster: UNRAST, 2020 [2005]);

illuminated how anti-Turkish racism was central to the Federal Republic's history both before and after reunification, describing the nuances with which Germans expressed racism in both cultural and biological terms.[82] The growing emphasis on excavating racism from the migrants' perspectives speaks to the broader postcolonial imperative to decolonize European history and owes much to the work of scholars of Black German Studies.[83]

Building on their work, this book highlights the prevalence not only of cultural but also biological racism in discussions in the early 1980s about whether and how West Germany could convince the Turks to "get out!" and "go home!" In Chapter 4, "Racism in Hitler's Shadow," the book traces the historical genealogy of the terms that West Germans used to discuss racism, citing the early 1980s as the critical moment at which *Ausländerfeindlichkeit,* previously virtually nonexistent in the German lexicon, came to dominate public discussions of racism. But, as much as they tried to deny and deflect the terms *Rasse* and *Rassismus,* both right-wing extremists and ordinary Germans alike continued to condemn Turks, Black Germans, asylum seekers, and other groups of "foreigners" by using the language of biology, skin color, and genetic inferiority.[84] While only a minority of Germans expressed overtly biological racism, the prevalence of such rhetoric alongside the rising neo-Nazi violence forced West Germans

Noah Sow, *Deutschland Schwarz Weiß: Der alltägliche Rassismus* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 2008); Fatima El-Tayeb, *Undeutsch: Die Konstruktion des Anderen in der postmigrantischen Gesellschaft* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2016); Fatma Aydemir and Hengameh Yaghoobifarah, eds., *Eure Heimat ist unser Albtraum* (Berlin: Ullstein, 2019); Vojin Saša Vukadinović, ed., *Rassismus: Von der frühen Bundesrepublik bis zur Gegenwart* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022). On race and whiteness throughout Europe, see: Hans Kundnani, *Eurowhiteness: Culture, Empire and Race in the European Project* (London: Hurst, 2023).

[82] Michael Meng, "Silences about Sarrazin's Racism in Contemporary Germany," *The Journal of Modern History* 87, no. 1 (2015): 102–35; Christopher Molnar, "'Greetings from the Apocalypse': Race, Migration, and Fear after German Reunification," *Central European History* 54, no. 3 (2021): 491–515; Stokes, *Fear of the Family*.

[83] On postcolonial approaches to Europe, see: Salman Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (New York: Zed Books, 1997); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Fatima El-Tayeb, *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011). On Black German studies, see: Patricia Mazón and Reinhild Steingröver, eds., *Not so Plain as Black and White: Afro-German Culture and History* (Rochester: University of Rochester, 2005); Tiffany N. Florvil and Vanessa Plumly, eds., *Rethinking Black German Studies: Approaches, Interventions, and Histories* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2018).

[84] On right-wing extremism in the Federal Republic, see among many others: Gideon Botsch, *Die extreme Rechte in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: 1949 bis heute* (Bonn: wbg academic, 2012); Norbert Frei, Christina Morina, Franka Maubach, and Maik Tändler, *Zur rechten Zeit: Wider die Rückkehr des Nationalismus* (Berlin: Ullstein Verlag, 2019).

to reckon with the very existence and nature of racism itself in a country that praised itself as liberal, democratic, and committed to human rights.[85] This racial reckoning also reverberated transnationally, even creating conflict in official international affairs. Despite harboring their own ambivalent views toward the migrants, Turks in their home country exposed the hypocrisy of West German liberalism by accusing West Germans of abusing Turks, just as they had done to the Jews in the 1930s, and by comparing various West German chancellors to Adolf Hitler.[86] In line with Michael Rothberg's concept of "multidirectional memory," the Holocaust became a usable past that Turks could use to fight German racism in the present.[87]

Anxieties about Nazi continuities were not only abstract, but also had real policy implications when it came to the legal enactment of state-sanctioned racism. The centerpiece of Chapter 5, "The Mass Exodus," is the November 28, 1983, Law for the Promotion of the Voluntary Return of Foreigners (*Rückkehrförderungsgesetz*) – or the remigration law, as I call it. Initially developed during the late 1970s by the center-left Social Democratic Party (SPD), the law did not become a reality until after October 1982, when the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) took the reins of government. The CDU made "promoting return migration" (*Rückkehrförderung*) a core plank of its platform, and newly elected chancellor Helmut Kohl secretly expressed his desire to reduce the Turkish population by 50 percent. To fend off allegations of racism, the government's solution was to apply what political scientists have called "checkbook diplomacy" to domestic policy.[88]

[85] On human rights, see: Lora Wildenthal, *The Language of Human Rights in West Germany* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); Ned Richardson-Little, *The Human Rights Dictatorship: Socialism, Global Solidarity, and Revolution in East Germany* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

[86] Gökçe Yurdakul has examined how German Turks have employed the "German Jewish trope" as a discursive analogy since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks: Gökçe Yurdakul, "'We Don't Want To Be the Jews of Tomorrow': Jews and Turks in Germany after 9/11," *German Politics and Society* 24, no. 2 (2006): 44–67. On Muslims and Holocaust memory, see: Esra Özyürek, "Rethinking Empathy: Emotions Triggered by the Holocaust among the Muslim-Minority in Germany," *Anthropological Theory* 18, no. 4 (2018): 456–77 and "Muslim Minorities as Germany's Past Future: Islam Critics, Holocaust Memory, and Immigrant Integration," *Memory Studies* 15, no. 1 (2019): 139–54. See also: Mandel, *Cosmopolitan Anxieties,* chapter 4.

[87] Although Rothberg writes about Holocaust memory and decolonization, his interpretation can be applied to migration as well. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory.*

[88] The concept of "checkbook diplomacy" is typically applied to Germany's approach to the 1991 Gulf War, but it had already been a common feature of the 1980s under Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Eric Langenbacher, for example, has called checkbook diplomacy "a German specialty." Eric Langenbacher, *The German Polity*, 12th ed. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2021), 346.

Building on earlier failed attempts to financially incentivize return migration through the provision of bilateral development aid to Turkey, the 1983 remigration law unilaterally offered unemployed former guest workers a so-called remigration premium (*Rückkehrprämie*) of 10,500 DM, plus 1,500 for every child under age eighteen, to voluntarily leave the country by a strict deadline: ten months later. Although the law failed to achieve Kohl's goal of repatriating half the Turks, it did lead to the mass exodus of 15 percent of the Turkish migrant population – 250,000 men, women, and children – in 1984 alone. Many who left amid this mass exodus, however, soon ended up regretting their decision. After years of ostracization as *Almancı* – and with no hope of assistance from the Turkish government, which had long opposed their return – they encountered both social and financial difficulties *reintegrating* into Turkey.

Far more so than their parents, children who returned amid the mass exodus of 1984 faced difficulties reintegrating into Turkey and became political tools in West German efforts to deny and deflect their racism. Stressing the importance of generational difference, Chapter 6, "Unhappy in the Homeland," examines guest workers' children who returned to Turkey in the 1980s, in many cases against their will, when their parents decided to leave. As the Turkish Education Ministry scrambled to "re-Turkify" these so-called "return children" (*Rückkehrkinder*) or "*Almancı* children" in special "re-adaptation courses," the West German government, press, and population watched closely. Widespread reports of the children's struggles reintegrating into their authoritarian homeland after the 1980 military coup contributed strongly to West Germans' negative perceptions of Turkish guest worker families. By 1990, sympathy for the children's plight compelled a rare relaxation of West German immigration policy. Just seven years after kicking them out, the government made a landmark revision to its citizenship law and allowed the children to return once again – this time to West Germany, the country that many called home. By deflecting the children's problems onto Turkey and portraying themselves as the children's savior, West Germans further obfuscated their own racism and reinforced their self-definition as liberal and democratic at the very moment that the Cold War ended, East Germany dissolved, and the reunified Federal Republic emerged.

Ultimately, by rethinking the early 1980s in terms of a racial reckoning, this book further challenges our idea of German identity itself. Amid the *Historikerstreit* of the 1980s, the renowned West German philosopher Jürgen Habermas argued that West Germans needed to further

embrace what he called "postnationalism" and "constitutional patriotism": an attachment to a country grounded not in a sense of ethnic or cultural identity, but rather in an appreciation for liberal democracy and the constitution itself.[89] This basis for national identity, he maintained, would make German society more politically inclusive and tie it closer to European supranational institutions. Despite backlash, the idea of a "postnational" Germany gained traction, especially among migration scholars who have cited the liberalization of Germany's blood-based citizenship law in the 1990s and 2000s as evidence that Germany had, in fact, turned toward postnationalism.[90] But, as this book reminds us, the 1980s were not the 2000s. Amid the racial reckoning of the early 1980s, West Germans clung so ardently to their national and ethnoracial identity that they weaponized it – both rhetorically and violently – against the guest workers whom they had welcomed just two decades before. Back then, the debate centered not on whether to grant migrants citizenship, but rather – as embodied in the 1983 remigration law – on how to kick them out.

This reality also forces us to revise our interpretation of the onslaught of rightwing violence and far-right politics in more recent German history. One of the founding myths of the post-reunification Federal Republic is that racism was an East German import, whereby upon the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, socioeconomically downtrodden former East Germans rushed across the border, turned toward neo-Nazism, and enacted their revenge against foreigners.[91] While this interpretation holds true in certain respects, dismissing racism, right-wing extremism, and anti-migrant violence as East German imports points to an outdated Cold War mindset that views East Germans as "backward" in comparison to "liberal" West Germans and perpetuates the longstanding West German pattern of

[89] Among his many writings on the subject, see: Jürgen Habermas, *Die postnationale Konstellation: Politische Essays* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2001). On "constitutional patriotism," see: Jan-Werner Müller, *Constitutional Patriotism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

[90] Yasemin Nuhoğlu Sosyal, *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). Critiquing Sosyal, see: Christian Joppke, "From Postnational Membership to Citizenship: Germany," in *Immigration and the Nation-State: The United States, Germany, and Great Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 186–222. For a broader critique of postnationalism, see: El-Tayeb, *Undeutsch*.

[91] On the memory of the post-reunification violence, see: Esther Adaire, "'This Other Germany, the Dark One': Post-Wall Memory Politics Surrounding the Neo-Nazi Riots in Rostock and Hoyerswerda," *German Politics and Society* 37, no. 4 (2019): 43–57; Molnar, "Asylum Seekers."

denying and deflecting racism. By complicating the post–Cold War transition, this book thus joins Jennifer Allen's recent work in showing that, just like the mythical "zero hour" in 1945, the "fetishized" fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification in 1989 and 1990, respectively, marked not only a new era of history but also a continuity.[92] The new iteration of the Federal Republic inherited not only democracy but also the inescapable shadow of darkness, racism, and fear that had plagued West Germany for decades. And even if West Germans were not willing to admit it, Turkish migrants and their home country had been exposing this fact all along.

MUSLIMS, TURKS, AND THE BOUNDARIES OF "EUROPE"

Finally, by tying Germany and Turkey together, this book contributes to the postcolonial project of decentering Europe and expanding its imagined boundaries.[93] It shows how studying migrants' fluid identities can change our conception of both countries' geographic space. Here, the home country's assertion that the migrants had transformed into "Germanized Turks," or *Almancı*, is crucial. If we consider Turkish migrants as German actors (either self-identifying as German or being externally identified as *Almancı*), then we can broaden our scope of Germany to include Turkey. Turkey, after all, was the site of the migrants' lives before they joined the guest worker program, as well as the place where the migrants – once they had already begun to be viewed as "Germanized" – traveled upon their temporary or permanent returns. Moreover, following the migrants on the journey itself also encourages us to consider the geographic space *between* Turkey and Germany as part of the two countries' shared geography and history.[94] As they traveled on cars, trains, and airplanes across Austria, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia during the Cold War, the migrants transformed a series of seemingly distinct border checkpoints into a unified migration space, where contestations over their mobility both reinforced and eroded imagined divides.

Including Muslims and Turks as part of European history addresses what Mark Mazower has called the "basic historiographical question": how to integrate the Ottoman Empire and its legacy into the broader

[92] Jennifer L. Allen, "Against the 1989–1990 Ending Myth," *Central European History* 52, no. 1 (2019): 125–47.

[93] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*.

[94] I elaborate on this argument in a previous article: Michelle Lynn Kahn, "Rethinking Central Europe as a Migration Space: From the Ottoman Empire through the Cold War and the Refugee Crisis," *Central European History* 55, no. 1 (2022): 118–37.

narrative of European history.[95] In this task, the book speaks to scholars beyond migration studies who, amid the rise of global history, have contributed substantially to the revision of Eurocentrism by highlighting Ottoman and Turkish ties to Germany and Europe.[96] Stefan Ihrig, for one, has traced the centuries-long history of Turkish-German affairs from ancient times to the present day, while Emily Greble has argued more broadly that Islam was "indigenous" to Europe and that Muslims were crucial to "the making of modern Europe."[97] Building on these contributions and more, this book further shows that Turkey was likewise crucial to the making of modern Germany – and vice versa.[98] The guest worker program, which sparked an unprecedented movement of people between the two countries, was pivotal to this relationship. While migration inextricably tied the two countries closer together, it also pulled them apart. As the migrants' integration into West Germany became a proxy for Turkey's integration into European supranational institutions, both Germans and Turks questioned where the physical and imagined boundaries of "Europe" lay and how malleable they could – and should – be.

The year 1961, which marked the signing of the recruitment agreement, was neither the start of migration between the two countries nor of Turkish-German entangled history. Rather, it emerged from centuries of diplomatic, intellectual, commercial, and cultural exchange. In the seventeenth century, when the Ottoman Empire was at its height, it ruled over a quarter of the European continent and was multiethnic, multilingual, multiracial, and multireligious.[99] In the eighteenth century, Ottomans

[95] Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: A Short History* (New York: Random House, 2007), xl.

[96] See among others: Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpakli, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early Modern Ottoman and European Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Sibel Zandi-Sayek, *Ottoman Izmir: The Rise of a Cosmopolitan Port, 1840–1880* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire and Europe: The Ottoman Empire and Its Place in European History* (Istanbul: Kronik, 2017); Gábor Ágoston, *The Last Muslim Conquest: The Ottoman Empire and Its Wars in Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021).

[97] Emily Greble, *Muslims and the Making of Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

[98] I am also inspired by the growing scholarship on Ottoman migration history. For one important recent study, see: Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky, *Empire of Refugees: North Caucasian Muslims and the Late Ottoman State* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2024).

[99] Marc David Baer, *The Ottomans: Khans, Caesars, and Caliphs* (New York: Basic Books, 2021), 3.

were crucial actors in the Enlightenment, the Age of Revolutions, and the development of modern science.[100] Intellectual and ideological entanglements intensified during the Tanzimat period (1839–1876), when Ottoman administrators sought to centralize power and "modernize" and "westernize" the state by implementing reforms heavily influenced by European ideas and international pressure.[101] Yet overwhelmingly, Europeans came to homogenize Ottomans into a Muslim, Turkish "other," or even worse into "Oriental despots" and "bloodthirsty Turks."[102] These tensions were heightened by the brutal Habsburg-Ottoman wars and nineteenth-century Balkan nationalist movements that sought to break free from the so-called "Ottoman yoke."[103]

Despite these Europe-wide tensions, the particular relationship between Turks and Germans has often been described with fondness and cordiality – so much so that individuals in both countries at the time praised the guest worker program as the outgrowth of a centuries-long history of friendship.[104] This rhetorical trope of "friendship" was grounded in a long history of Germans' extensive military, economic, and diplomatic ties to the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, which complicates Edward Said's assertion that Germans did not have a "protracted sustained national interest" in the "Orient."[105] In 1835, Prussian officers

[100] Miri Shefer-Mossensohn, *Science among the Ottomans: The Cultural Creation and Exchange of Knowledge* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015); Ali Yaycıoğlu, *Partners of the Empire: The Crisis of the Ottoman Order in the Age of Revolutions* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016); Christopher de Bellaigue, *The Islamic Enlightenment: The Modern Struggle Between Faith and Reason* (New York: Random House, 2017); Alexander Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters: Islam and the European Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018); Duygu Yıldırım, "The Age of the Perplexed: Translating Nature and Bodies between the Ottoman Empire and Europe, 1650–1730" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2021).

[101] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 72–108; Yonca Köksal, *The Ottoman Empire in the Tanzimat Era: Provincial Perspectives from Ankara to Edirne* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

[102] Božidar Jezernik, ed., *Imagining "The Turk"* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).

[103] Vera Mutafchieva, "The Notion of the 'Other' in Bulgaria: The Turks. A Historical Study," *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 4, no. 2 (1995): 53–74; Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Edin Hajdarpašić, "Out of the Ruins of the Ottoman Empire: Reflections on the Ottoman Legacy in South-eastern Europe," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 5 (2008): 715–34.

[104] The concept of Turkish-German "friendship," or rather "limited friendship," is emphasized in: Sabine Mangold-Will, *Begrenzte Freundschaft. Deutschland und die Türkei 1918–1933* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2013).

[105] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

began traveling to Istanbul to help "reform" the Ottoman army.[106] During the long nineteenth century, German intellectuals in the academic discipline of Oriental Studies (*Orientalistik*) harbored a curious fascination with Ottomans.[107] The Berlin–Baghdad railway, whose construction began in 1903, further tied Ottomans and Germans together commercially.[108] After the demise of the Ottoman Empire in 1923, Turkish Republican founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who had trained under Prussian military officers in the Ottoman army's military academy, drew inspiration from Germany and Europe and channeled it into his top-down "modernization" campaigns.[109] The two countries also shared a long history of migration even before the guest worker program: since the nineteenth century, Ottomans and Turks had been a sizeable presence in Prussia and Germany, coming to Berlin in particular as diplomats, politicians, military officers, academics, journalists, and artists.[110]

But this history of "friendship" was tainted with collaborations that ended in violence and genocide. During World War I, the Ottomans swiftly allied with Germany under the command of Enver Pasha, a leading perpetrator of the 1915–1916 Armenian Genocide, whom one Turkish scholar later referred to as an *Almancı* due to his close ties to German diplomats and intellectuals.[111] Many Germans, moreover, sympathized with the Armenian Genocide, denigrating Armenians as the "Jews of Europe."[112] Prussian companies and military officials were even complicit

[106] Gerhard Grüßhaber, *The "German Spirit" in the Ottoman and Turkish Army, 1908–1938: A History of Military Knowledge Transfer* (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2018).

[107] Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Race, Religion, and Scholarship* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Ursula Wokoeck, *German Orientalism: The Study of the Middle East and Islam from 1800 to 1945* (London: Routledge, 2009). In the field of literature, see: Todd Kontje, *German Orientalisms* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

[108] Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany's Bid for World Power* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 2010); Murat Özyüksel, *The Berlin-Baghdad Railway and the Ottoman Empire: Industrialization, Imperial Germany, and the Middle East* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016).

[109] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, "*Das Volk in Waffen*: The Formation of an Ottoman Officer," in *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 31–47.

[110] Ingeborg Böer, Ruth Haerkötter, and Petra Kappert, eds., *Türken in Berlin 1871–1945. Eine Metropole in den Erinnerungen osmanischer und türkischer Zeitzeugen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002).

[111] Mustafa Müftüoğlu, *Yalan Söyleyen Tarih Utansın* (Istanbul: Çile, 1977), 175.

[112] Stefan Ihrig, *Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016). On Armenian Genocide denial, see: Taner Akçam, *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha's Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide*

by providing guns and, in rare cases, participating in or witnessing the shootings.[113] Moreover, as Stefan Ihrig has shown, Atatürk was praised in the "Nazi imagination" – and even served as an inspiration for Hitler – for his bold leadership in fostering Turkish nationalism and ethnic exclusivity through ruthlessly suppressing minority groups.[114] During the Third Reich, German intellectuals fleeing Nazism found a welcome refuge in Turkey, where many continued to study eugenics and "race science" alongside Turkish professors.[115] Turkey maintained neutrality during World War II until, upon the certainty of German defeat, it joined the side of the Allies in February 1945. Although Turkey had no official antisemitic policies, and despite rescuing some European Holocaust refugees, Turkey still persecuted the 75,000 Jews within its borders.[116] Both the memory of Ottoman atrocities and Turkey's relationship to Nazi Germany shaped the way that observers in both countries in the 1980s discussed Germans' anti-Turkish racism and return migration policies. This shared history of genocide became a political tool that could be condemned, whitewashed, denied, and deflected – all in the service of debating migration.

The Cold War was the key backdrop for the guest worker program, as it ushered in a new era of especially close ties between Turkey, West

(New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Marc David Baer, *Sultanic Saviors and Tolerant Turks: Writing Ottoman Jewish History, Denying the Armenian Genocide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020).

[113] The anti-arms trade organization Global Net produced this widely publicized report. See: Ben Knight, "New Report Details Germany's Role in Armenian Genocide," *Deutsche Welle* (*DW*), April 5, 2018, www.dw.com/en/new-report-details-germanys-role-in-armenian-genocide/a-43268266.

[114] Stefan Ihrig, *Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

[115] Murat Ergin, *"Is the Turk a White Man?": Race and Modernity in the Making of Turkish Identity* (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Horst Widmann, *Exil und Bildungshilfe. Die deutschsprächige akademische Emigration in die Türken nach 1933* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1973).

[116] Corry Guttstadt, *Turkey, the Jews, and the Holocaust*, trans. Kathleen M. Dell'Orto, Sabine Bartel, and Michelle Miles (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013); İ. İzzet Bahar, *Turkey and the Rescue of European Jews* (London: Routledge, 2015); Marc David Baer, "Turk and Jew in Berlin: The First Turkish Migration to Germany and the Shoah," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55, no. 2 (2013): 330–55. These works contradict the much rosier – and verging on apologetic – argument of Stanford Shaw, who has come under fire for denying the Armenian Genocide and exhibiting a pro-Turkish bias. Stanford J. Shaw, *Turkey and the Holocaust: Turkey's Role in Rescuing Turkish and European Jewry from Nazi Persecution, 1933–1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993). On Turks living in Nazi Germany, see: Marc David Baer, "Mistaken for Jews: Turkish PhD Students in Nazi Germany," *German Studies Review* 41, no. 1 (2018): 19–39.

Germany, and Western Europe as a whole.[117] Rather than being a peripheral actor in the grand narrative of Cold War Europe, Turkey was a crucial Western ally and bulwark against communism, as it shared land borders with the Soviet Union and the oil-rich Middle East. Turkey joined the Council of Europe in 1950, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952, and the European Economic Community (EEC) as an associate member in 1963.[118] Although it never materialized, the prospect of Turkey's becoming an EEC member state remained very real until the late 1980s, with freedom of movement between the two countries being planned for 1986 but never implemented. Throughout the Cold War, moreover, Turkey increasingly relied on European and American loans and development aid to mitigate its economic crisis. By 1980, West Germany was Turkey's largest trading partner, which became especially important amid the "Third World" debt crisis that devastated the Turkish economy. Although Turks often viewed these European and American ties with skepticism and debated the merits of "Westernization" and the peculiar nature of Turkish "modernity," the overall trend was a deepening relationship throughout much of the late twentieth century.[119] Significantly, in dictating the contours of this relationship, Turkey was neither submissive nor passive. Rather, Turkish officials exerted their interests so strongly – especially their opposition to return migration – that their West German counterparts were left frustrated, frazzled, tongue-tied, and scrambling to keep up.

Ultimately, this history of "friendship" soured during the 1980s, due partly, as this book argues, to the dual swords of racism and return migration. Especially important is that West Germany passed the remigration law just three years after Turkey's September 12, 1980, military coup, as the military dictatorship was committing rampant human rights violations against political leftists, Kurds, and other internal ethnic minorities. While historical examinations of this watershed moment largely remain to be written, this book centers the 1980 coup in nearly every chapter as a fundamental but underacknowledged part of

[117] On the Cold War context's significance for migration to West Germany, see: Alexander Clarkson, *Fragmented Fatherland: Immigration and Cold War Conflict in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1945–1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[118] Şaban Halis Çaliş, *Turkey's Cold War: Foreign Policy and Western Alignment in the Modern Republic* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2017).

[119] Mehmet Döşemeci, *Debating Turkish Modernity: Civilization, Nationalism, and the EEC* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Turkish-German migration history and transnational European history writ large.[120] Even from afar, the postcoup regime impacted migrants' lives and return migration decisions, especially when it came to matters of education and mandatory military service for guest workers' children. Geopolitically, tensions about the coup also trickled down into the newly overlapping contestations about return migration and asylum policies, forcing West Germany onto a shaky diplomatic tightrope. As the Turkish government assailed West German racism and strove to prevent return migration at all costs, West German officials had to balance their domestic and international interests: kicking out Turkish guest workers and preventing an influx of asylum seekers, while simultaneously appeasing a military dictatorship that, despite its human rights violations, was crucial to its Cold War geopolitical goals. As the battle over racism and return migration evolved into a battle over human rights, democracy, and authoritarianism, debates about the migrants' integration in Germany became inextricably linked to debates about Turkey's integration into European institutions and the ever-changing idea of "Europe" itself.

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Migration is, in many respects, a universal story. For thousands of years, human beings have been on the move, encountering new places, peoples, ecologies, and cultures. Amid the heightened globalization of the twentieth century, the increased access to trains, planes, and automobiles made crossing national borders a core aspect of modern life. Even today, the lines between voluntary and forced migration are often blurred, as individuals make their decisions to leave – and to return to – their homes amid uncontrollable pressures from above: global capitalism, government policies, wars, genocides, and, increasingly, environmental catastrophes. So, too, has the very idea of "home" become murky. Even as new technologies provide opportunities for bridging physical distance, emotional

[120] A valuable historical account of the 1980 coup in relation to West German affairs is: Tim Szatkowski, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und die Türkei 1978–1983* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016). On the collective memory of the coup, see: Elifcan Karacan, *Remembering the 1980 Turkish Military Coup d'État: Memory, Violence, and Trauma* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2015); Göze Orhon, *The Weight of the Past: Memory and Turkey's 12 September Coup* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015). On coups in Turkish history, see: Ümit Cizre, "Ideology, Context and Interest: The Turkish Military," in Reşat Kasaba, ed., *Turkey in the Modern World,* vol. 4 of *The Cambridge History of Turkey* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 301–31.

distance can widen, and migrants' relationships to themselves, their new milieus, and the people they leave behind remain ever-changing. Within this particular story about Turkish migration to Germany, readers may thus find parallels to other cases of migration across time and space, or perhaps to their own experiences or deeper family histories. While appreciating the uniqueness of every individual's migration story, I encourage readers to contemplate and sit with these parallels long after turning this book's final page.

Above all, this book is fundamentally influenced by how the migrants themselves have told and preserved their own stories – not only during our oral history interviews but also in the very structure of archives themselves. Alongside government and private archives, I conducted most of the research for this book at Germany's migration museum, DOMiD e.V., which was founded in 1990 by a group of Turkish guest workers who wished to preserve their own history. At first just scraps of paper and objects collected from neighbors and friends, DOMiD is now home to hundreds of thousands of sources that counter the myth of non-return and other top-down narratives of the guest worker program. The very structure of the DOMiD archive – which includes categories like "Connections to the Homeland," "Vacations," and "Return Migration" – reflects the continued presence of the Turkish *vatan* in their lives. Turkey was a place that they always returned to, not only with their hearts and minds but also with their physical bodies. It is my hope that this book honors them, gives them voice and agency, and does justice to what truly are transnational lives.