

The Guest Worker Question
in Postwar Germany

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 **CAMBRIDGE**
UNIVERSITY PRESS

ספריית הר הצופים
למודעי חרות והחברה

Introduction

Conceptualizing the "Guest Worker" Question

The One-Millionth Guest Worker

On 10 September 1964, fewer than twenty years after the end of the Second World War, the one-millionth guest worker arrived in the Federal Republic of Germany. His name was Armando Rodrigues, and he came from the village of Vale de Madeiros in central Portugal. Like the hundreds of thousands of labor migrants who preceded him, Rodrigues moved to West Germany to work in its factories. He was part of a massive foreign labor recruitment program, which began in 1955, to ensure a continuous supply of manpower for the postwar economic miracle. With limited prospects for employment in his homeland, he applied to the Federal Republic as a guest worker and eventually obtained an assignment. His plan was to return from West Germany after a few years with more money than he could save in a lifetime of labor at home. Forsaking family, friends, and familiar surroundings, Rodrigues embarked on a forty-eight-hour train journey into the unknown.

In many ways, Rodrigues fit the typical profile of a guest worker entering the Federal Republic during the mid-1960s. He came alone, leaving his wife and two children in the village. At age thirty-eight, he cut an impressive figure – strong, well-built, in the prime of his life. He possessed precisely the kind of vigorous male body that West German government and industry officials sought to fuel the boom economy. Rodrigues was

NOTE: In the first drafts of this book, I deliberately placed quotation marks around "guest worker" and "foreigner" in order to emphasize the socially constructed and euphemistic nature of these terms. While I have removed the quotation marks from the final version, readers should continue to think of these terms as under interrogation.

part of a vast wave of workers from the rural regions of southern Europe, including Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. But he did not belong to a dominant national group within the broader demographic spectrum of recruitment. During the 1950s, Italians constituted the largest percentage of workers, while from the late 1960s on, Turks outpaced all other nationalities, eventually coming to personify the very image of the guest worker in German public discussions of migration.

Before his arrival, Rodrigues's journey followed the same anonymous trajectory experienced by most guest workers on their way to the Federal Republic. First he traveled within his home country from his village to the urban center where an auxiliary branch of the German Federal Labor Office (Bundesanstalt für Arbeit) had been opened. Next he filed an application for work, underwent physical tests, and endured a long waiting period until he received a job assignment. Finally he embarked for West Germany on a train reserved exclusively for guest workers, with a ticket paid for by his future employer. In Rodrigues's case, however, the endpoint of the migration journey was far from ordinary. Once the train carrying twelve hundred Spanish and Portuguese workers pulled into the station on the outskirts of Cologne, Rodrigues was whisked away from his countrymen by German officials, led across the platform, and positioned in front of flags and laurel trees for a photo opportunity. These "strange men," according to press reports, "presented him with a bouquet of carnations and steered him to the seat of a motorcycle. 'This belongs to you,' they said. 'You are the one-millionth guest worker in the Federal Republic.'"¹ As newspaper photographers' flashbulbs went off, a workers' band from a Cologne cable factory struck up the German and Portuguese national anthems. Journalists on the scene claimed that Rodrigues's fellow passengers let out a cheer: "Viva Alemania!"²

This public fanfare signaled a new kind of self-consciousness about the scope and significance of Germany's massive labor recruitment. The event was planned and staged by the Federal Organization of German Employers' Associations, with a host of industry dignitaries and government representatives (including the Minister of Labor) in attendance. Using the celebration to highlight the program's indisputable success, these officials emphasized the crucial role of the guest workers in the triumph of the economic miracle. "Without their collaboration," declared the president of the Employers' Association of the Metal Industry, "this

¹ Fritz Mörschbach, "Großer Bahnhof für Armando: Der millionste Gastarbeiter in Köln feierlich empfangen," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 11 September 1964, 20.

² Ibid.

development is unthinkable."³ The thrust of the message was that West German prosperity directly depended on foreign laborers such as Rodrigues and that recruitment was working out well for all involved.

In 1964, government and business leaders had little sense of the labor migration's long-term social and cultural impacts. Again and again they insisted that guest workers would return home once the economy no longer required supplementary manpower. But, in fact, many foreign laborers chose to remain and eventually sent for their spouses and children. By 1990, well over five million migrants claimed permanent resident status, making West Germany home to the largest foreign population in Europe.⁴ This demographic transformation included a second and third generation, which had been born, raised, and educated in Germany with little or no immediate knowledge of their nominal homelands. In practical terms, if not according to official rhetoric, the Federal Republic had become a "country of immigration."

It is important here to consider a second level of historical meaning in the Rodrigues celebration, what might be described as the ideological construction of the guest worker in rhetoric and imagery. Indeed, the very need for a public performance – the fact that German industry and government leaders felt compelled to convince the public of the recruitment's vital importance – suggests that the larger historical significance of the migration cannot be reduced to labor shortages, policymaking, and demographic shifts (even though early government officials certainly tried to do so). It was this media spectacle at the Cologne train station, in fact, that crystallized the initial official position on the guest worker question, conveying very specific messages about the role of foreign laborers in West Germany.

A Deutsche Presse-Agentur photograph (Figure 1), taken at Rodrigues's arrival, documents the event. It shows Rodrigues perched on top of the gleaming new motorcycle, surrounded by a crowd of applauding German dignitaries. Among these officials is the president of the Employers' Association of the Metal Industry, who leans against a podium and prepares to deliver a speech. This carefully scripted scene presents Rodrigues as the guest worker par excellence: he stands for the 999,999 imported

³ Wolfgang Kuballa, "Großer Bahnhof für Armando Sá Rodrigues: Der millionste Gastarbeiter in der Bundesrepublik mit einer Feier in Köln begrüßt," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 11 September 1964.

⁴ In 1990, the Federal Republic had a foreign population of 5,242,000. France had the next highest number of foreigners at 3,597,000. See Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 3rd ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), 81.



FIGURE 1. Armando Rodrigues atop the motorcycle presented to him upon arrival at the Cologne-Dietz train station for being the one-millionth guest worker in the Federal Republic. Courtesy of dpa/Landov.

laborers who have come before him, but he also serves as an ideal type. He is mature, but still young enough to perform the hard work that will be required of him. Neatly yet humbly dressed, he looks like a man of modest means who will apply himself industriously to the job ahead. The fact that the pageant took place at a train station – as opposed to a factory or worker barracks – underscores his status as a transitional, mobile figure who is not permanently rooted in West German society. The motorbike serves as Rodrigues's metaphoric vehicle on the road to prosperity, a promise of the material benefits available to all hardworking recruits. This object simultaneously symbolizes the Federal Republic's phoenix-like recovery from wartime destruction and an emerging era of affluence. Above all, the scene suggests a mantra of mutual benefits: government leaders would maintain national prosperity, business leaders would obtain much-needed manpower, and guest workers would gain access to a higher standard of living.⁵

By its very nature, this public performance served to exclude any of the social and cultural issues that might have undermined the overwhelmingly positive representation. There is no indication here, for example, of the physical dislocation, separation from family, or fear of the unknown that Rodrigues had undoubtedly experienced on the way to Cologne. There is no sign of the strenuous labor, cramped living quarters, meager wages, and social isolation that await him after the ceremony. There is no explanation of Rodrigues's life before his arrival or what he hoped to gain by coming. There is no hint of potential workplace conflict, xenophobia, or public anxiety about the presence of hundreds of thousands of foreigners on West German soil. The media event at the train station, in short, offered a highly circumscribed view of the guest worker question. And the photograph itself reinforced the ideological frame constructed by German officials, quite literally cutting off Rodrigues's past and future. The most famous journalistic image of the guest worker program thus represented the recruitment as a mass-cultural moment of smiles, applause, gift giving, and optimism.

Reports of this remarkable event appeared in virtually every newspaper across West Germany, including regional papers such as *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* and nationally distributed papers such as *Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and *Der Tagesspiegel*, as well as the

⁵ Gail Wise has offered an alternative reading of this photo that stresses the anonymity and exchangeability of the foreign worker. See Gail Wise, "Ali in Wonderland: German Representations of Foreign Workers" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1995), 12–13.

highly popular national tabloid *Bild-Zeitung*.⁶ Rodrigues, in turn, quickly became the labor migration's first national icon. This transformation of labor policy into mass-cultural spectacle cut in two directions. On the one hand, the replication and distribution of the photo all over the country served to disseminate an official narrative of recruitment on a dramatic new scale. For the first time, Germans had a common image – and explanation – of the process that was reshaping the nation. On the other hand, mass circulation carried with it at least the possibility of further ideological complexity.⁷ In stark contrast to the hundreds of thousands of nameless, faceless recruits who had come previously, here finally was a guest worker with a public persona – a human being rather than a statistic in a labor report. This process implicitly led to a much more specific set of questions: Who was Rodrigues? What motivated him to leave his homeland for Germany? How was he experiencing his new life as guest worker?

The event, in other words, marked the beginning of a truly public and increasingly multivocal dialogue on the guest worker question in Germany. This is not to suggest that there had been no public comments on the recruitment previously. As soon as the first labor treaty went into effect, the federal government's Press and Information Office issued regular bulletins about foreign workers, replete with statistics and figures that provided economic justification of the program.⁸ Popular news magazines such as *Der Spiegel* also started to publish sporadic articles on the labor recruitment and guest workers.⁹ Nor do I mean to suggest that ideological struggle and contest began only in the mid-1960s. Italian recruits, for instance, founded the newspaper *Corriere d'Italia* for their own guest worker community a decade earlier. And from the very start,

⁶ Mörschbach, "Großer Bahnhof für Armando"; Kuballa, "Großer Bahnhof für Armando Sá Rodrigues"; n.a., "Großer Bahnhof für den millionsten Gastarbeiter," *Der Tagesspiegel*, 11 September 1964, 5; n.a., "Gastarbeiter Nr. 1000000," *Bild-Zeitung*, 11 September 1964, 1; n.a., "Großer Bahnhof erschreckte den Zimmermann aus Portugal," *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 11 September 1964, 3.

⁷ I use the concept of ideology in the sense established by Stuart Hall, which includes the mental frameworks (especially the languages, concepts, categories, images of thought, and systems of representation) that different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of and define the way society works. See Stuart Hall, "The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees," in David Morely and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds., *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1996), 25–27.

⁸ See, for example, "Ausländische Arbeitnehmer in der Bundesrepublik," *Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesrepublik*, 30 March 1965.

⁹ See, for example, n.a., "Fremdarbeiter," *Der Spiegel*, 24 August 1955, 17; n.a., "Italien – Saisonarbeiter – Musterung in Mailand," *Der Spiegel*, 4 April 1956, 34–35; n.a., "Arbeitsmarkt – Fremdarbeiter – Export aus Südtirol," *Der Spiegel*, 2 May, 24–25.

workers from multiple backgrounds commented on their day-to-day experiences in letters home, in diaries, and within their ethnic enclaves. A 1998 exhibition on the history of Turkish emigration held at the Ruhrland Museum in Essen included pages from the journal of a Metin Çağlar, documenting his arrival in Germany in December 1963.¹⁰ By the end of the 1960s, small numbers of minority writers who had come to the Federal Republic as migrants began to question the specific terms of public debate, self-consciously re-presenting the guest worker as something more than a beneficiary of the postwar economic boom or a victim of industrial capitalist exploitation. In the photograph of the one-millionth guest worker, then, we can begin to see the intersection of the three major trajectories that comprise the central themes of this book: the labor migration itself, the public discourse and debate surrounding the migration, and the emergence of a primarily Turkish minority intelligentsia dedicated (at least initially) to critiquing what could be said about guest workers.

Guest Workers in West German History

The national debate about the postwar labor migration has often treated the presence of guest workers as tangential (an issue of manpower and labor markets) rather than central to the primary concerns of the Federal Republic. In this respect, the media event around the 1964 arrival of Rodrigues served as part of a larger containment strategy to limit public discussion of guest workers to the issue of mutually beneficial economics. For precisely this reason, it has been difficult to recognize just how crucial the migration has been to the definition and disposition of West German society. Despite such efforts to contain the impacts of guest workers, I argue that the foreign labor recruitment program ultimately produced the opposite effect, a broader and much more consequential debate about the parameters of German identity and the prospect of a new multiethnic nation. Guest workers, in other words, were never marginal to the core concerns of German society. Rather, these migrants occupied a central place in the most important and enduring question of the postwar period: How would West German national identity be reconstituted after the Third Reich?

¹⁰ Aytaç Eryılmaz and Mathilde Jamin, eds., *Fremde Heimat-Yaban Silban Olur: Eine Geschichte der Einwanderung aus der Türkei* (Essen: Klartext, 1998). This is the catalogue from the exhibition at the Ruhrland Museum in Essen, which was held from 15 February to 2 August 1998.

In this sense, the postwar labor migration served as the Federal Republic's primary route into the more heterogeneous demographic and cultural landscape we now often describe as the New Europe. In France and Great Britain, such heterogeneity was inextricably linked to the collapse of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century empires, which fed the movement of long-standing colonial subjects into the metropole. West Germany's late twentieth-century diversity, however, did not result from its abbreviated colonial experience. Instead, it grew out of a federal response to economic crisis that targeted foreign populations with which Germans were mostly unfamiliar. The migration of guest workers after 1945 ultimately created the conditions for a major and largely unexpected social-historical transformation – a multinational, multiethnic German society.

It is important to be clear here that the practice of employing foreign labor in Germany was by no means new. Between 1880 and 1914, the eastern agricultural regions and coal mines of the Ruhr valley relied on Poles from Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire to supplement the native workforce.¹¹ And during both world wars, Germany exploited tens of thousands of foreigners as forced labor (*Fremdarbeiter*) to keep industrial production going while its own men fought at the front.¹² Nevertheless, there are crucial distinctions between these earlier uses of foreign labor and the post-1945 guest worker recruitment. Poles entering Germany as seasonal workers during the 1880s, for instance, had specific historical and cultural ties to Prussian Poles, who possessed German citizenship as a result of the Polish partitions at the end of the eighteenth century.¹³ By contrast, no group of guest workers in the Federal Republic

¹¹ For more on Polish workers during the Wilhelmine period, see Christoph Kleßmann, *Polnische Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet, 1870–1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978); Richard C. Murphy, *Gastarbeiter im Deutschen Reich. Polen in Bottrop, 1891–1933* (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, 1982); Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerbeschäftigung in Deutschland, 1880 bis 1980* (Bonn: Verlag J. H. W. Dietz, 1986), trans. by William Templer as *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880–1980: Seasonal Workers/Forced Laborers/Guest Workers* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), especially Chapter 1; John J. Kulczycki, *The Foreign Worker and the German Labor Movement: Xenophobia and Solidarity in the Coal Fields of the Ruhr, 1871–1914* (Oxford: Berg, 1994); John J. Kulczycki, *The Polish Coal Miners' Union and the German Labor Movement in the Ruhr, 1902–1934: National and Social Solidarity* (Oxford: Berg, 1997).

¹² Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerbeschäftigung*, especially Chapters 2 and 4. See also Ulrich Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter: Politik und Praxis des "Ausländer-Einsatzes" in der Kriegswirtschaft des Dritten Reiches* (Berlin: J. H. W. Dietz, 1999).

¹³ Germany, in fact, had a sizable Polish population due to the partitions of the Kingdom of Poland in 1772, 1794, and 1795 by Prussia, Austria, and Russia. The Poles

had long-standing connections to Germany. And at least one major group was perceived as a qualitatively different population: Turks came from a country outside of Europe, practiced a non-Christian religion, and possessed a non-European ethnicity. As far back as the early modern period, in fact, Turks had been understood as the primary social and cultural Other that served to define and consolidate Europe as a historical whole.¹⁴ Furthermore, unlike *Fremdarbeiter*, culled from foreigners already in Germany such as Polish seasonal laborers (in the case of World War I) or enemies and prisoners of war (in the case of World War II) and compelled against their will to work, postwar *Gastarbeiter* (guest

who had been acquired as a result of these annexations were citizens of the German Reich, whereas those who came as temporary workers during the 1880s were not. The fact that these two legally distinct groups could not be easily distinguished from one another physically or culturally, however, did create major anxiety about the Polish population as a whole. See William W. Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews: The Nationality Conflict in the Prussian East, 1772–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Richard Blanke, *Prussian Poland in the German Empire, 1871–1900* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1981); Klaus J. Bade, ed., *Auswanderer, Wanderarbeiter, Gastarbeiter: Bevölkerung, Arbeitsmarkt und Wanderung in Deutschland seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Ostfildern: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, 1984). The situation of the seasonal Polish workers, in fact, was quite complicated vis-à-vis their Polish-German brothers. Moreover, during the period of highest demand for foreign labor, Otto von Bismarck was in the process of waging the *Kulturkampf*. One effect of this policy was an attempt to Germanize the Reich's Polish population. For more on the *Kulturkampf* specifically, see Margaret L. Anderson, *Windthorst: A Political Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), and Helmut Walser Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1871–1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

¹⁴ In the Middle Ages, it is important to note, Islam's otherness was seen primarily in terms of religion, but it also presented a military threat (most of Christendom fell into Muslim hands in the seventh and eighth centuries) and an intellectual challenge (Muslim science and philosophy were heavily influenced by Greek, Persian, and Hindu learning inaccessible to the Latin West until the twelfth century). For a useful discussion of the perceptions of Islam during the medieval period, see John Victor Tolan, ed., *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam: A Book of Essays* (New York: Garland, 1996). The classic statement on the perception of Ottomans by Europeans in the early modern period is Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk, 1453–1517* (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1967). More recent scholarship in this area includes: David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto, eds., *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Ash Çırakman, *From the "Terror of the World" to the "Sick Man of Europe": European Images of Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth* (New York: P. Lang, 2002); Almut Höfert, *Den Feind beschreiben: "Türkengefahr" und europäisches Wissen über das Osmanische Reich, 1450–1600* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2003). For a specific examination of the Habsburg view of Islam and the Turks, see Charles Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1618–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For a broader discussion of the place of the Near Eastern Orient in the imagination of the West, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

workers) came to the Federal Republic voluntarily, with employment and residence permits, under the protection of bilateral recruitment treaties.¹⁵ These crucial differences, along with the fact that the post-1945 importation of guest workers took place in a country where the preceding regime had attempted to eradicate its minorities, produced a unique situation in which the development of a multiethnic society seemed particularly improbable.

This book explores the postwar labor migration and its consequences over a thirty-five-year period, concluding with German reunification in 1990. It is a history that includes a number of crucial milestones. The first and most obvious came in 1955, when the Federal Republic formalized its program of importing foreign workers by signing a labor recruitment treaty with Italy. This agreement set out the legal parameters and procedures for West German employers hiring Italians and became the model for subsequent treaties with other southern European nations. It initially offered work permits for one year, establishing an expectation that foreign laborers would be sojourners. At this point, the central concern of government and business leaders was to keep the economic miracle going, which led them, in turn, to advocate recruitment unequivocally, emphasizing labor statistics and productivity levels in their public presentation of the program.

Another important turning point was the 1973 oil crisis and the economic recession it provoked. In response to rising unemployment, the Federal Republic halted the labor recruitment program and encouraged guest workers to go back to their countries of origin. Efforts to reduce the numbers of foreigners, however, inadvertently produced a net increase in alien residents. Faced with the prospect of restricted access to Germany, many foreign laborers – especially Turks – applied for visas so their families could join them. During the same period, migrant intellectuals, such as the Turkish-German poet Aras Ören, began to enter the national debate about guest workers, publishing texts in German that challenged the predominant stereotypes and assumptions about foreign laborers.

A third pivotal moment occurred in the late 1970s. It was at this time that West Germany first acknowledged the continuing presence of over two million foreigners and initiated a formal policy of "integration." This new era of self-conscious integration witnessed a number of important

¹⁵ Historian Ulrich Herbert has written a useful study of Germany's long pattern of employing foreign labor, but a more specific analysis of the similarities and differences across these periods remains to be done. See Herbert, *History of Foreign Labor*.

developments involving demographics and representation. The federal government's policy shift reframed the guest worker question as a vital domestic concern, rather than merely a problem of economics or labor, and spurred a growing public interest in the lives of guest workers. Such an orientation helped create a market for so-called *Ausländerliteratur* (foreigner literature), a genre which German academics originally constructed and promoted as a tool for integration. By the middle of the decade, moreover, Turks had replaced Italians as the largest group of foreign settlers, a trend triggered in part by the establishment of the European Economic Community. The EEC's policy of granting citizens of member states reciprocal labor rights meant that Italians (and eventually Spaniards and Portuguese) could work in the Federal Republic without special permits and thus come and go quite easily. Turks, by contrast, were reluctant to leave, fearing that they might not be able to return. This demographic pattern, coupled with the government's new emphasis on integration, produced a kind of misremembering of the labor migration's early history. The multinational character of the guest worker population increasingly receded as the somewhat more alien cultural and religious practices of Muslim Turks took center stage in policy debates and public discussions.¹⁶ It was around this moment, too, that migrant artists such as the author Saliha Scheinhardt and film maker Tevfik Başer began to focus their texts more squarely on women and gender relations, inadvertently fueling doubts about the capacity of Turks to adapt. In all of these respects, the advent of self-conscious integration policies produced fundamental tensions around the long-term impacts of migrants on a society that continued to describe itself as a "nonimmigration country."

The reunification of East and West Germany marks a final watershed in this book's trajectory. The turbulent aftermath of this long-anticipated event placed migrants in a precarious position. Above all, the social and ideological work of reconstituting a collective German national identity threatened to override the integrationist impulses of the 1970s, as well as the broad public discussions of West German multiculturalism that emerged in the late 1980s. In addition, a growing wave of antforeigner violence, especially in the former East, led many politicians and government leaders to campaign for and endorse a restriction on the number

¹⁶ Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Yugoslavian, and Greek guest workers, of course, did not disappear from West Germany. My point is simply that public discourse began to emphasize Turks to such an extent that by the mid-1980s, the multinational character of guest worker migration was largely forgotten.

of asylum seekers. This policy served to deflect attention away from the more systemic problem of xenophobia, the virulent resurfacing of which was itself a particularly troubling product of the unification process.

Guest workers and their descendants, then, have been present in German society for virtually the entire postwar period. They began arriving in the aftermath of World War II, before the last traces of the physical destruction had been cleared away. But the seeds of their recruitment were sown in advance of the official treaties by the demographic catastrophe (well over three million German male casualties) wrought by the conflict itself. Multiple generations of migrants lived through every major event in the history of West Germany, from the Grand Coalition and the 1968 student protests to the kidnappings by the Red Army Faction and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Their numbers, moreover, continue to grow (primarily through new births, but also through marriage with foreign nationals) in the unified Federal Republic.

Yet, with a few key exceptions, what is immediately striking about the historiography of the postwar period is the curious absence of guest workers.¹⁷ For the most part, scholarship on the labor migration and

¹⁷ Among German academics, Klaus Bade and Ulrich Herbert have considered the postwar labor recruitment from a historical perspective. See Klaus J. Bade, ed., *Auswanderer, Wanderarbeiter, Gastarbeiter*; Klaus J. Bade, *Population, Labour, and Migration in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987); Klaus J. Bade, ed., *Deutsche im Ausland. Fremde in Deutschland. Migration in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Munich: Beck, 1992); Klaus J. Bade and Myron Weiner, eds., *Migration Past, Migration Future: Germany and the United States* (Providence: Berghahn, 1997); Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor*. Bade's work looks at the larger phenomenon of migration to and from Germany, while Herbert's scholarship examines foreign workers throughout German history. Neither of them focuses specifically on the postwar labor recruitment. In the last couple of years, however, a younger generation of scholars has begun to address this topic more directly. See Jan Motte, Rainer Ohliger, and Anne von Oswald, eds., *Fünfzig Jahre Bundesrepublik, Fünfzig Jahre Einwanderung: Nachkriegsgeschichte als Migrationsgeschichte* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1999); Ulrich Herbert and Karin Hunn, "Guest Workers and Policy on Guest Workers in the Federal Republic: From the Beginning of Recruitment in 1955 until Its Halt in 1973," in Hanna Schissler, ed., *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 187–218; Karen Schönwälder, *Einwanderung und ethnische Pluralität: Politische Entscheidungen und öffentliche Debatten in Großbritannien und der Bundesrepublik von den 1950er bis zu den 1970er Jahren* (Essen: Klartext, 2001); and Anne von Oswald, Karen Schönwälder, and Barbara Sonnenberger, "Einwanderungsland Deutschland: A New Look at Its Postwar History," in Rainer Ohliger, Karen Schönwälder, and Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos, eds., *European Encounters: Migrants, Migration, and European Society since 1945* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 19–37.

Generally speaking, German historians in Germany have recently begun to examine the post-1945 period, but they remain curiously resistant to addressing the labor recruitment and guest workers. By contrast, the fields of politics, sociology, anthropology, and

its effects has been understood as peripheral to the master narratives of West German history such as Allied occupation, democratization, and the problem of two states and one nation. The labor recruitment has been conceptualized instead as part of a separate field of "migration" or "minority" studies. My goal, by contrast, is to demonstrate some of the ways in which the guest worker question was inextricably bound up with the central issues of German social, political, and cultural history after 1945. How, for instance, might we understand the labor recruitment as a key component of the Federal Republic's early efforts to establish a politically stable state in the aftermath of the Third Reich? Why did normative, German conceptions of gender roles become the primary standard for determining the capacity of migrants to integrate? What role did the enduring desire for a reunified Germany (and the particular notion of Germanness it signified) play in the deep reluctance to expand the boundaries of identity and citizenship to include guest workers and their descendants?

The Guest Worker Question, Racial Formation, and the Public Sphere

Before we can begin to answer these questions, however, it is important to think through the modes of interrogation that help us to connect the migration itself with a broader set of historical issues and problems. The very notion of a guest worker *question* serves as a crucial conceptual tool because it brings together two modes of analysis that have often remained isolated from one another in previous works on the labor migration.¹⁸ Whereas social scientists have tended to focus exclusively on policymaking, economics, and demographic changes, literary critics and

literature all have well-developed literatures on the postwar migration. German historians in the United States, too, have been remarkably silent on this topic, although it is worth noting that the sociologist Ray Rist offered a chronology of the labor migration in one of the earliest English-language studies of the phenomenon. See Ray C. Rist, *Guestworkers in Germany: Prospects for Pluralism* (New York: Praeger, 1978).

¹⁸ Stuart Hall has argued that a "politics of representation" and its "discursive machineries" are absolutely crucial to understanding the relationship between identity, ethnicity, and cultural production. See, in particular, Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities," in Morley and Chen, eds., *Stuart Hall*, 441–49. Key discussions of the importance of discourse in cultural history include: John Toews, "Intellectual History Takes a Linguistic Turn: The Autonomy of Meaning and the Irreducibility of Experience," *American Historical Review* 4 (1987): 879–907; Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989); Sarah Maza, "Stories in History: Cultural Narratives in Recent Works in European History," *American Historical Review* 4 (1996): 1493–515.

cultural analysts have generally treated the labor agreements, government policies, and economic rationales as relatively straightforward and static contexts for minority artistic expression and counternarratives.¹⁹ Both policymaking and cultural production, I want to suggest, need to be understood as constituent parts of an ongoing, continually shifting public dialogue on the guest worker question. But discursive analysis is not an end in itself here. Rather, my approach is to follow the public discourse on the guest worker as a narrative thread linking key historical interchanges between labor policy, cultural production, social welfare, and the media. In its most basic form, the larger argument of this book is that debates about the place of the guest worker forced a major rethinking of the definitions of German identity and culture. What began as a policy initiative to fuel the economic miracle ultimately became a much broader discussion about the parameters of a distinctly German brand of multiculturalism.

Between 1955 and 1990, there were several key words consistently utilized in the public debates for designating and explicating difference as embodied in the people who had come to the Federal Republic as part of the labor recruitment. They included "guest worker" (*Gastarbeiter*), "foreigner" (*Ausländer*), and "foreign fellow citizen" (*ausländischer Mitbürger*). Over the course of this period, however, these terms were wielded in constantly shifting ways. At some moments they were used as if their meanings were self-evident, a pattern which both continued and reaffirmed much older conventions of defining German identity through blood and familial lineage. Yet one of the benefits of historicizing the public discourse is that it allows us to see how these assumptions shifted

¹⁹ For examples of social-scientific scholarship on the labor recruitment and migration, see Marios Nikolinakos, *Politische Ökonomie der Gastarbeiterfrage. Migration und Kapitalismus* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1973); Rist, *Guestworkers in Germany*; Klaus Unger, *Ausländerpolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Saarbrücken: Breitenbach, 1980); Knuth Dohse, *Ausländische Arbeitnehmer und bürgerlicher Staat* (Königstein: Hain, 1981); Bade, *Auswanderer, Wanderarbeiter, Gastarbeiter*; Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerbeschäftigung in Deutschland*; Rainer Münz and Ralf Ulrich, "Changing Patterns of Immigration to Germany, 1945–1995: Ethnic Origins, Demographic Structure, Future Prospects," in Bade and Weiner, eds., *Migration Past, Migration Future*, 65–119. For examples of cultural studies work in the same vein, see Peter Seibert, "Zur 'Rettung der Zungen': Ausländerliteratur in ihren konzeptionellen Ansätzen," *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 56 (1984): 40–61; Monika Frederking, *Schreiben gegen Vorurteile: Literatur türkischer Migranten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Berlin: Express Edition, 1985); Arlene Teraoka, "Gastarbeiterliteratur: The Other Speaks Back," *Cultural Critique* 7 (1987): 77–101; Heidrun Suhr, "Ausländerliteratur: Minority Literature in the Federal Republic of Germany," *New German Critique* 46 (1989): 71–103; Carmine Chiellino, *Interkulturelle Literatur in Deutschland: Ein Handbuch* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2001).

and evolved over time. By the 1980s, older assumptions about the constitution of West German identity were increasingly a matter of debate, to be argued or justified among a range of possible models for explaining the boundaries of national belonging. Even during the earliest phases of the labor migration at least a few public commentators drew self-conscious attention to the terms themselves, questioning whether "guest worker," for example, constituted an accurate label for the complex socioeconomic transformations reshaping West German society in the postwar period.

As much as possible, then, I attempt to contextualize these labels and treat them as historical objects, worthy of analysis in and of themselves. The reason is simple: in many cases, the labels represented convenient shorthands for much larger sets of ideological assumptions about West German history, culture, and identity, as well as competing policy approaches to the labor migration. I have also chosen quite deliberately to deploy the labels as they were used in the sources, rather than substitute analytic categories more consistent with contemporary expectations and sensibilities. Throughout this study, for instance, I rarely employ terms such as "race" and "ethnicity" because they seldom, if ever, appeared in West German discussions about the guest worker question.

Here again, the reason grows out of a particular set of historical circumstances. Historian Heide Fehrenbach has demonstrated recently that the word "race" (*Rasse*) carried especially vexing associations in West Germany after the Second World War.²⁰ For most of the population, this was a term linked to Nazi genocide and therefore one to be avoided, if at all possible. Yet it did not disappear from popular discourse right away. In the immediate postwar period, public debate about racial difference shifted from Jews, the Nazis' ultimate racialized Other, to the offspring of German women and African-American GIs, the so-called *Mischlingskinder*.²¹ This displacement of race onto a different set of bodies, according to Fehrenbach, occurred as West Germans quickly absorbed American racial assumptions based on a white/black binary, a model far removed from Germany's own. But because the numbers of *Mischlingskinder* were relatively small (about three thousand in 1950), West German social policymakers declared the problem solved by the early 1960s, as the black occupation children reached young adulthood

²⁰ See Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

²¹ *Mischlinge*, or "mixed bloods," had originally been applied to half-Jews, but it came to connote blacks after 1945. *Ibid.*, 8, 87–88.

and were successfully integrated into the workforce. At that point, the word "race" largely vanished from the public sphere.²² When Afro-German activists adopted terms that explicitly referenced phenotype – including "black" (*schwarze Deutsche*) and "of color" (*farbige Deutsche*) – as self-conscious appellations during the early 1980s, they did so both to draw attention to their own historical erasure and to forge a common identity among those of African descent in Germany.²³

The fact that the use of the word "race" waned, however, did not mean that assumptions of racial difference were concomitantly eliminated from public discourse. The very category of guest worker, for instance, presumed clear, immutable distinctions between native and foreigner, permanent resident and transitory laborer. And, as we shall see, one major development in the history of the guest worker question was the emergence of new, more explicitly *racialized* ways of talking about migrant cultures during the 1980s. A good example of this process can be found in texts produced by West German social workers, which sometimes attempted to explain the perceived failure of integration in relation to Muslim religious practices. For these critics, religious differences seemed to indicate an essential incapacity of Turks to integrate into West German society. Thus, if we are to understand German conceptions of difference through apparently neutral terms such as guest worker, foreigner, and migrant, it is important to absorb the crucial lessons that have come out of critical race theory from the United States and Great Britain. This scholarship has powerfully historicized categories of difference that had previously been understood as natural and self-evident. Such work helps us to see that these categories – like their more obvious "racial" counterparts – operate as ideological constructs with very particular implications for how social hierarchy is developed and regulated.²⁴

²² Ibid., especially Chapters 3 and 4. Fehrenbach notes (74–75) that even though the numbers of biracial occupation children were small, the figures were grossly exaggerated in contemporary media reports.

²³ May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz, eds., *Farbe bekennen: Afro-deutsche Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte* (Berlin: Orlanda Frauenverlag, 1986), trans. by Anne V. Adams as *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992). For more on Afro-German activism in the 1980s, see Tina M. Campt, "Reading the Black German Experience: An Introduction," *Callaloo* 26.2 (2003): 288–94; and Fatima El-Tayeb, "If You Can't Pronounce My Name, You Can Just Call Me Pride: Afro-German Activism, Gender, and Hip Hop," *Gender and History* 15.3 (2003): 460–86.

²⁴ My work here thus occupies a somewhat paradoxical position. A vast body of scholarship has demonstrated the social construction of race and ethnicity. See, for example, Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities"; Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Michael

Precisely because the guest worker question highlights ideologies and dominant rhetorics, its history does not simply line up in neat chronological order, with one set of assumptions emerging as another disappears. Rather, it is more accurate to say that one issue became increasingly prevalent during certain moments, overshadowing other issues that faded from view, even as they remained viable positions within the larger debate. Recognizing the discourse around the guest worker as a debate, in other words, allows us to see that there were always multiple issues and categories in play. The chapters in this book are arranged in roughly chronological order around key flashpoints in the ongoing public discussion. Together they offer a historical study of the shifts and emphases within a larger debate, rather than a neat catalogue of successive positions.

This framework also raises some basic issues about scope, participation, and location: if the labor recruitment sparked a national dialogue about the guest worker, who was this "public" that struggled over the meanings of the migration? And through what kinds of institutional, economic, and cultural matrices were such conversations articulated? Or to put it another way: what do we mean by "public" in this particular context? The obvious theoretical touchstone here is Jürgen Habermas's 1962 *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, which sought to explain the social conditions for open debate about matters of public interest by private individuals.²⁵ For the purposes of this study, three particular

Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1999); Matthew Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); and Gail Lewis, "Race," *Gender, and Social Welfare: Encounters in a Postcolonial Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000). On the other hand, many of these conventional assumptions have been very slow to find their way into the standard practice of modern German history, and for this reason, it seems necessary to rehearse some of the key ideas here. My hope is that this study will contribute to a larger project of approaching questions of nation, culture, and citizenship with the same careful attention to identity formation that has become typical in other contexts.

²⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Newied: Luchterhand, 1962), trans. by Thomas Burger as *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). Habermas's seminal argument about the public sphere has inspired a number of important recent histories. See, for example, Dena Goodman, "Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime," *History and Theory* 31 (1992): 1–20; Belinda Davis, "Reconsidering Habermas, Gender, and the Public Sphere: The Case of Wilhelmine Germany," in Geoff Eley, ed., *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870–1930* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 397–426; Steven Pinchus, "'Coffee Politicians Does Create': Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture,"

issues within the larger scholarly literature on Habermas seem especially relevant.

The first involves the historical trajectory of the public sphere. In Habermas's telling, the bourgeois public sphere emerged as a counterweight to both the absolutist state and the private interests of civil society. This historical ideal relied upon private citizens bracketing their individual concerns in order to engage in rational discussion of matters of common interest. The outcome of such discourse was public opinion, defined as a consensus about the common good. Habermas presented his trajectory of the bourgeois public sphere as a story of transformation and decline in which the possibility for democratic public discourse was increasingly compromised over the course of the nineteenth century. This ideal began to erode once social divisions within civil society and private (especially capitalist market) interests seeped into the public discussion. More recent scholars have rejected this view, emphasizing instead that the public sphere was a site of social and discursive conflict from its very inception, as women and workers devised new political strategies for making their voices heard.²⁶ The development of the guest worker question

Journal of Modern History 67 (1995): 807–34; John Brewer, "This, That, and the Other: Public, Social, and Private in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in Dario Castiglione and Leslie Sharpe, eds., *Shifting the Boundaries* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1995); Margaret C. Jacob, "The Mental Landscape of the Public Sphere: A European Perspective," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28 (1994): 95–113. Theoretical critiques, especially from a feminist perspective, include: Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell, eds., *Feminism as Critique: On the Politics of Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 56–80. Perhaps the most wide-ranging collection of engagements with Habermas's idea of the public sphere is Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992). For a useful discussion of the current state of scholarship inspired by Habermas's public sphere, see Geoff Eley, "Politics, Culture, and the Public Sphere," *positions* 10 (2002): 219–36.

²⁶ Many scholars have pointed to the exclusions and elisions built into Habermas's idealized public sphere. Feminist historians, in particular, have emphasized the ways that Habermas's conception of the public sphere excludes women. See Joan Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988). Other historians have argued that alternative publics and counterpublics emerged even during the height of the bourgeois public sphere. See Mary P. Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825–1880* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century," in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 289–339. These critics also reject Habermas's narrative of an idealized historical moment of the bourgeois public sphere, which declined in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and lost legitimacy under the weight of capitalist society's growing contradictions.

affirms this long history of discursive struggle, but it also complicates the leading critiques of Habermas. The revisionist scholarship has tended to focus on the conventional modes of nineteenth-century protest: strikes, demonstrations in the streets, and grassroots labor activism initiated by those cut off from the electoral process and established channels of economic power. The late-twentieth-century struggles over the guest worker question, by contrast, cut across a somewhat broader terrain. Indeed, as the Rodrigues photograph suggests, these debates played out simultaneously at the levels of labor policy, mass media, and cultural representation. In this sense, the history of the guest worker question helps us to see that ideology and discourse are never confined to the neat disciplinary categories favored by scholars. What the Rodrigues photo demonstrates above all is the interconnectedness of politics, economics, and culture in postwar discussions about the labor migration.²⁷

This leads to a second major set of questions: What kinds of voices weighed in on the guest worker question? What sorts of publics did they seek to reach? And what modes of address did they employ? Here the recent work of literary scholar Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, is especially helpful.²⁸ In the broadest sense, the range of voices commenting on the labor recruitment was almost infinite: from German chancellors to immigrant children, virtually every member of West German society during this period no doubt thought about and weighed in on the labor migration in some mode or context. Yet not all of these modes had the same kind of efficacy, and some contexts for public discourse were more engaged with questions of national identity and culture than others. Thus, it is important to be clear about what this

²⁷ Geoff Eley points in this direction when he defines the public sphere "as the structured setting where cultural and ideological contest or negotiation among a variety of publics takes place." Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures," 303–304, 306. Over the past decade, scholars have increasingly rejected false separations between political economy and cultural production. See, for example, Miriam Hansen, "Unstable Mixtures, Dilated Spheres: Negt's and Kluge's *The Public Sphere and Experience* Twenty Years Later," *Public Culture* 5 (1993): 179–212; Lawrence Grossberg, "Cultural Studies vs. Political Economy," in John Storey, ed., *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998); and Geoff Eley, "On Your Marx: From Cultural History to the History of Society," in George Steinmetz, ed., *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences: Positivism and Its Epistemological Others* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005). My work here represents an attempt to trace an ideological history across interpretive categories and subfields.

²⁸ Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002). I thank Jay Cook for making me aware of this important work and pointing out its larger implications for my project.

book does and does not attempt to explicate. Many of the workers themselves, for example, discussed the terms of the recruitment program and the everyday experience of living in Germany, but they did so informally, mostly in conversation and letters circulated within immigrant enclaves.²⁹ My central concern, by contrast, is with the specific forms and evolution of a self-consciously public debate on diversity that understood itself as national in scope. I am thus interested in those who oriented themselves to a broader public. Although some of these minority voices did not always achieve a national or mass public (especially early on), they were explicitly expansionist in intent, aiming for as wide an audience as possible.

This approach requires us to be particularly sensitive to what Warner describes as the "notional" and "material" qualities of public-making.³⁰ Many of the documents produced by government officials on the labor recruitment, for instance, cannot simply be taken as transparent, internal records of day-to-day bureaucratic decisions. Rather, they must be understood as self-consciously public statements designed to persuade particular constituencies (e.g., other government officials or the nation as a whole) that importing foreign laborers was necessary for economic productivity or that integration was the only viable option for dealing with permanent guest worker residence. At the same time, greater attention to modes of discourse or address requires us to be precise about the kinds of voices that had access to a broader public. As Warner notes: "To address a public or to think of oneself as belonging to a public is to be a certain kind of person, to inhabit a certain kind of social world, to have at one's disposal certain media and genres, to be motivated by a certain normative horizon, and to speak within a certain language ideology."³¹ Migrants striving to reach a national audience needed to employ a specific set of tools: they had to adopt German, frame their statements in terms of personal experience, and use textual genres that could be reproduced and circulated through mainstream channels such as publishing houses, newspapers, and movie theaters. By its very nature, then, this book's emphasis on competing efforts to address a broad German public on the guest worker question means that I focus on individuals (artists, intellectuals, journalists, etc.) who primarily expressed themselves in German and generally used broadly distributed forms of communication.

²⁹ Ibid., 56–57.

³⁰ Ibid., 67–74.

³¹ Ibid., 10.

But these patterns of uneven access and visibility should not lead us to assume that people such as factory workers who did not adopt modes of public address were voiceless; rather, they registered their feelings and concerns about the labor migration in other, more localized ways. At various points in the pages that follow, I try to note where labor actions on the shop floor and community activism in neighborhoods intersected with the shifting contours of national debates about the guest worker question. My point is not to privilege one sort of questioning over another, but rather to be clear about the specific ways in which I have tried to understand the larger significance of the labor recruitment for postwar West German history. A study of the labor migration from the perspective of workers' experiences would provide an important counterpart to the national debates that I follow here.

The preconditions for addressing a national audience lead to a third basic question: is it even possible for public debates conducted through mass-circulated media to register oppositional perspectives in any kind of meaningful or efficacious way? To be sure, access and differential power relations are invariably asymmetrical. But my story – which focuses on literature and film, but does not cover television or popular music – also suggests that oppositional voices do operate within market mechanisms and mass-mediated forms of discussion. In this sense, I am trying to build on the insight of Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge in *Public Sphere and Experience* that it is precisely through market-driven modes of discussion that alternative perspectives and subordinate social groups – previously elided in the classical liberal-bourgeois public sphere – often become visible and audible.³²

The notion of ideological struggle through market mechanisms runs counter to one of our conventional assumptions about the public sphere. In Habermas's framework, the public sphere ideal relies on setting aside social and economic status to create a forum for open and free discussion. The historical expansion of market capitalism and its encroachment on the liberal public sphere thus spelled decline and impeded truly egalitarian communication. By contrast, Negt and Kluge insist that the commercial

³² Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972), trans. by Peter Labanyi, Jamie Daniel, and Assenka Oksiloff as *The Public Sphere and Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 12–18. This work represents one of the earliest critiques of Habermas's theory of the public sphere. It has recently been the object of renewed academic interest. See Miriam Hansen, "Foreword," in Negt and Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience*, ix–xli.

aspects of mass-mediated forms of publicity can no longer be separated from the public spheres that they enable. What makes this insight politically significant, according to literary scholar Miriam Hansen, is that "industrial-commercial public spheres depend, for economic reasons, upon a maximum of inclusion": in the effort to extract the greatest possible profit, markets constantly seek new audiences by incorporating social groups and experience previously excluded from representation. Market-driven modes of publicity unwittingly bring into view new "horizons of experience."³³ In the late-twentieth-century history of the guest worker question, the market provided opportunities for minorities to be seen and heard well before they had access to citizenship or voting rights.³⁴ The question of guest workers entered the public sphere through the mass media – for example, in the media spectacle surrounding the one-millionth guest worker – and in the years that followed, minority intellectuals turned to the cultural marketplace as one of the primary ways to contest and represent the images produced by government officials, business leaders, and journalists.

This route into the public sphere, it is worth stressing, was particularly important for labor migrants in West Germany precisely because they had no claim to citizenship.³⁵ Indeed, the guest worker program presumed a basic rejection of permanent immigration, making access to German citizenship an irrelevant issue. Yet the actual practice of foreign labor recruitment created a paradoxical situation: taxpaying migrants permanently settled in the Federal Republic, but were excluded from political

³³ Hansen, "Foreword," xxx. "Horizons of experience" here suggests the potential to enlarge one's view and go beyond what one already knows. The phrase actually comes from Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979), trans. by Keith Tribe as *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985). For an interesting recent exploration of Koselleck's "horizon of experience" concept and its theoretical implications, see Michael Pickering, "Experience as Horizon: Koselleck, Expectation and Historical Time," *Cultural Studies* 18.2–3 (2004): 271–89.

³⁴ An interesting parallel here would be the case of elite African-American artists and intellectuals during the early twentieth century, a period in which legal segregation and ground-level disenfranchisement coexisted with the rise of a "New Negro Renaissance." David Levering Lewis has famously described this mode of cultural politics as "civil rights by copyright." See David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (New York: Knopf, 1981).

³⁵ Most of the non-European laborers employed in France and Britain, by contrast, were former colonials who enjoyed citizenship or the right to permanent residence based on this status.

representation. During the period examined in this book, German citizenship continued to be defined by blood, and even children of guest workers born and raised in West Germany did not have the right to be naturalized. It was not until the year 2000 that the Federal Republic revised its citizenship law to incorporate labor migrants and their descendants. Thus, the ideological work of writing and representing alternative conceptions of the nation through market channels was absolutely crucial for initiating critical dialogue on the place of labor migrants in postwar German society.³⁶

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that the mass marketplace was always structured by an unequal set of power relations. The market, by definition, only supported those voices and products that it could sell. Consequently, commercial matrices tended to favor cultural images that recapitulated stereotypes and legitimized political and economic subjugation. On the other hand, the mass marketplace often facilitated a much broader circulation of migrant issues than did the voices in the factory barracks and urban tenements. And it also served as the site of the creation of new cultural categories (e.g., the genre of foreigner literature) that enabled ruptures and discontinuities in conventional public discourse.³⁷ A key aspect of my analysis of minority interventions in German public debate, then, involves tracing this dialectic over time in order to illuminate some of the fraught choices migrant artists and intellectuals encountered as they struggled to reframe the guest worker question in more complex, humane terms.

³⁶ This is not to suggest that cultural production is more important than suffrage or that culture and politics are not always interconnected. It was precisely the reformulation of German national boundaries that was at stake in these debates. Thus, all of the cultural work led to the more sweeping ideological shifts that were necessary to produce a reformulation of the polity. Still, I would suggest that there is a kind of urgency attached to these cultural struggles, which in many ways resembles the situation of African-Americans in the early twentieth century more than that confronting postcolonial migrants in France and Britain. In the German case, as in the American case, the cultural debates took place in a context where the most basic access to suffrage was still uncertain.

³⁷ My understanding of the market as a multivalent tool for ideological struggle builds upon the recent work of Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall, both of whom have emphasized the possibilities for black agency in the culture industries and electronic media of late twentieth-century Britain. See especially Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, Chapter 5; and Stuart Hall's discussion of the politics of representation in "New Ethnicities." For both authors, the story is never simply a straightforward replacement of hegemonic images with minority counterimages. Rather they emphasize the dialectical, ongoing process of intervention and reappropriation that the market fosters.

Migration to Western Europe in the Postwar Period

At this point, it is helpful to situate Rodrigues's story within the larger context of postwar migration to Western Europe. A thorough consideration of the many varieties and histories of migrant experience in the New Europe would require much lengthier analysis. Still, it is possible to point to a number of basic patterns that help us to frame and differentiate the German case. Generally speaking, there were three types of population movements to Western Europe between 1945 and 1990: guest worker migration, postcolonial migration, and the migration of asylum seekers and refugees. These are, of course, ideal types, and the boundaries between them were not always firm. But virtually every nation in the northwestern part of Europe experienced at least one of these influxes. Along with the creation of the European Union and a common currency, migration has had perhaps the most dramatic transformative effect on Western Europe in the second half of the twentieth century. It is a defining feature of the New Europe, the driving force behind the development of more ethnically diverse cultures and societies.

The Federal Republic was not the only Western European nation to implement a guest worker program during the postwar boom years. Foreign, supplemental manpower was also imported by Switzerland and Austria and, to a lesser extent, by every other highly industrialized nation in Europe. Switzerland, in fact, was the first country to adopt this practice, beginning immediately after the war. But its program differed from that of the Federal Republic in two key respects. First, while Germany designed a recruitment apparatus administered through the Ministry of Labor, Switzerland relied on employing firms to find workers on their own and regulated the flow of incoming foreigners on an ad hoc basis. The Swiss government introduced employer-specific quotas for guest workers in 1963 and a countrywide quota on the total number of foreign laborers seven years later. Second, unlike Germany, which eventually drew the bulk of its recruits from Turkey, Switzerland relied primarily on its immediate neighbors, especially Italy, for supplemental manpower. In 1960, Italians made up 60 percent of the foreigners in the country, and until the late 1980s, three out of five Swiss immigrants came from adjacent nations (Italy, France, Germany, and Austria).³⁸ Austria, by contrast, followed the

³⁸ For more on the Swiss guest worker system and its social impacts, see Rudolf Braun, *Sozio-kulturelle Probleme der Eingliederung italienischer Arbeitskräfte in der Schweiz* (Zurich: Eugen Rentsch, 1970); Hans-Joachim Hoffmann-Nowotny, *Soziologie des Fremdarbeiterproblems: eine theoretische und empirische Analyse am Beispiel der*

West German model more closely. It signed treaties with Turkey (1964) and Yugoslavia (1966) and quickly set up government recruitment offices in those countries to screen potential laborers. Just a decade later, however, Austria officially ended its guest worker program and enacted a law that severely restricted the access of foreigners to employment.

Each of these histories followed a paradoxical pattern that has come to define postwar guest worker migration. On the one hand, Switzerland, Austria, and the Federal Republic all imported laborers as a temporary economic measure and vehemently rejected the idea of permanent immigration. On the other hand, they increasingly found themselves unable to prevent workers from extending their stays or bringing their families, and thus were forced to confront the unintended and unwelcome consequences of shortsighted labor policies – the long-term settlement of migrant groups, which visibly transformed the demographic makeup of largely homogeneous populations. Among these three nations most commonly associated with guest worker recruitment, West Germany developed the system to its fullest extent. In terms of sheer numbers, the Federal Republic enlisted more foreign laborers than any other country in Europe. At the same time, it was perhaps the most resistant to legal changes that would make long-time foreign residents a formal part of the polity.

Other countries that imported foreign labor during the same period included Belgium, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. But for various reasons, these nations do not quite fit the classic guest worker recruitment model. The Scandinavian countries, for instance, were generally quicker to acknowledge the demographic and social changes produced by labor migration. Sweden and Denmark formulated an official immigrant policy at the tail end of recruitment, giving foreign workers and their families the right to vote and stand for election at the local and regional levels as early as 1975.³⁹ Sweden, moreover, acknowledged imported laborers as potential immigrants and encouraged them to naturalize.⁴⁰ Belgium recruited guest workers from Italy,

Schweiz (Stuttgart: Enke, 1973); Hans-Joachim Hoffmann-Nowotny, ed., *Ausländer in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in der Schweiz: Segregation und Integration: eine vergleichende Untersuchung* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1982), 32–113.

³⁹ For an English-language discussion of Denmark's postwar immigrants, see Jonathan M. Schwartz, *Reluctant Hosts: Denmark's Reception of Guest Workers* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1985).

⁴⁰ For more on the Swedish guest worker program and its consequences, see Tomas Hammar, "Sweden" in Tomas Hammar, ed., *European Immigration Policy: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Charles Westin, *Settlement and*

Morocco, and other southern European countries for its coal, iron, and steel industries, but it also experienced an influx of postcolonial migrants in the form of political exiles from among the elite classes fleeing the newly independent Democratic Republic of Congo. Other nations with colonial legacies only used guest workers for a short period after the war, relying on postcolonial migrants to meet the bulk of their labor need. Britain, for example, recruited refugees and Italians through the European Voluntary Worker system, which bound laborers to specific jobs and prevented them from bringing their families.⁴¹ But the program was largely abandoned by 1951, when former colonials began to arrive in increasingly large numbers.

Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium have been more closely linked to postcolonial migration. In contrast to the German model of government-sponsored recruitment of guest workers, this second type of migration was in large part spontaneous, fueled by former colonials who enjoyed the right of entry (and thus did not require visas) in the metropole. Britain received immigrants from the so-called New Commonwealth, especially the Caribbean, the Indian subcontinent, Africa, and Asia. These migrants began to arrive soon after the war, expanding in number (541,000 in 1961) until the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, which made it particularly difficult for unskilled postcolonials to enter the country. In France, North and West Africans came for work even before independence and entered as French nationals. After decolonization the stream of immigrants persisted, but Algerians received special status that gave them an ongoing claim to nationality because Algeria had previously been considered an extension of the metropole. The number of former colonials in France reached nearly 800,000 by 1970. The Netherlands experienced two major influxes of migrants. Between 1945 and 1960, it took in 300,000 repatriates from the former Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). Most of these migrants had been born overseas, and many were of mixed Dutch and Indonesian parentage, but they all possessed Dutch citizenship. After 1965, workers from the former colony of

Integration Policies towards Immigrants and their Descendants in Sweden (Geneva: ILO, 2000).

⁴¹ For more on the European Voluntary Worker system in Britain, see Robert Miles and Diana Kay, "The TUC, Foreign Labour and the Labour Government, 1945-1951," *Immigrants and Minorities* 9.1 (1990): 85-108; and Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in Postwar Britain* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 85-88. The numbers of people recruited through the EVW scheme diverge significantly, anywhere from 90,000 (Paul) to 180,000 up to 350,000 (Miles and Kay).

Surinam in South America constituted the primary group of migrants to the Netherlands.

The colonial relationship was a crucial factor in setting the terms for this type of migration. Besides free entry and claim to nationality, most postcolonial migrants possessed at least a rudimentary knowledge of the metropolitan language, customs, and values. Some even followed lines of communication and settlement developed during the colonial period. This stands in stark contrast to the German guest worker model, in which migrants had little or no familiarity with Germany. At the same time, the colonial relationship meant that postcolonial migrants were often subjected to older, entrenched social, economic, and racial hierarchies. Their minority status within Europe was defined not so much by being foreign as by widespread discrimination, both institutional and informal.

Asylum seekers comprised the third major migrant group in Europe during the postwar period. Their numbers remained relatively modest until the mid-1980s, when people from Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East began to arrive in larger waves, fleeing civil wars, ethnic conflicts, and political persecution in their countries of origin. The figure spiked again after 1989 with the collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the war in Yugoslavia. Between 1985 and 2000, hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers came to Western Europe in search of protection, but their migration situation was quite unlike that experienced by postcolonials or even guest workers. Most nations required them to live in barracks or hostels and barred them from working until their refugee status was formally approved, a process which typically had only a 10 percent success rate and often took many years.

At the same time, asylum became a major political issue throughout Western Europe. In France, Britain, and Germany, in particular, ordinary citizens expressed fear that refugees represented a drain on social resources. Nowhere was this phenomenon as acute as in the Federal Republic. Between 1979 and 1981 alone, over 200,000 people sought refugee status in West Germany. Perhaps the most significant reason for this disproportionate number was Germany's generous asylum provision. As part of the effort to atone for its National Socialist past, the Federal Republic introduced the most liberal asylum law on the continent, which guaranteed refuge for anyone claiming political persecution in his or her country of origin. The 1980s influx of asylum seekers, coupled with already high levels of anxiety about the continuing presence of guest workers, led many Germans to complain that their country was

being "overrun" by foreigners. Some critics made little effort to distinguish between those who had recently arrived and those who had resided in the Federal Republic for several decades. Asylum seekers and recruited labor migrants occupied the same fundamental category: they were foreigners who did not belong in German society.

Within this broad spectrum of postwar migration, the Federal Republic established the largest temporary labor recruitment program, importing more guest workers than any other Western European nation. It also outpaced every other country on the continent in terms of its sheer numbers of foreign residents, a fact which immediately disrupts our conventional portrait of Germany as one of the least diverse nations within the New Europe. Yet a large part of the reason that it had such a high number of residents categorized as foreign was its stringent citizenship law, which discouraged many long-term migrants from naturalizing. France and Britain, by contrast, extended comparatively expansive citizenship rights to former colonial migrants and, even after these countries ended automatic citizenship, they urged migrants to naturalize. This is not to suggest that citizenship can be equated with social equality or inclusion and, in fact, a growing scholarship suggests just how contested the process of redefining Frenchness or Britishness has been in the face of non-white migration.⁴² Nevertheless, the differences among legal frameworks in Germany, France, and Britain do suggest the need for a deeper sense of how the diversification of postwar Europe proceeded in multiple contexts, a story that has been far less rigorously explored in German historiography. The contradictory combination of large numbers of migrants and highly restrictive rules about foreigners becoming part of the polity made Germany distinctive among Western European nations. It was precisely this paradox, moreover, that constituted the key point of contention in public debates about the labor migration.

What the German case demonstrates is just how tricky it is to generalize about the position of minority groups in different national contexts.

⁴² Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*; Stuart Hall, "Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance," in *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism* (Paris: Unesco, 1980), 305–45; Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*; Maxim Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation: Immigration, Racism, and Citizenship in Modern France* (London: Routledge, 1992); Patrick Weil, *La France et ses étrangers: l'aventure d'une politique de l'immigration, 1938–1991* (Paris: Calman-Lévy, 1991); Patrick Weil, *La république et sa diversité: Immigration, intégration, discrimination* (Paris: Seuil, 2005); Gérard Noiriel, *Le creuset français: Histoire de l'immigration aux XIX–XX siècles* (Paris: Seuil, 1988), trans. by Geoffroy de Laforcade as *The French Melting Pot: Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

Country of origin, reasons for leaving, and specific legal parameters of residence all shaped the experience of those who settled in postwar Western Europe in vastly different ways. Still, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that these distinctive migration histories overlapped in significant respects as well. In Britain, West Germany, and the Netherlands during the 1980s, for instance, Muslim migrants of different backgrounds experienced what Martin Barker has called the "new racism," a pattern of racialized bigotry in which religion and culture often served as the basis for essentialized claims of incommensurable difference. And the specific patterns of xenophobia and backlash frequently had ripple effects across national boundaries. As we shall see, the so-called Rushdie Affair became a major topic of public discussion in the Federal Republic as German commentators struggled to define the specific terms upon which an increasingly multiethnic society might be understood.

The events of 9/11, of course, emphasized this continuity even more, focusing intense public scrutiny on the Muslim identities of migrants across Europe. Since then, Western European nations have become preoccupied with questions of Islam, fundamentalism, and a perceived clash of civilizations.⁴³ In Germany, the Turkish community has been increasingly discussed in terms of a "Muslim problem," an ideological development that has spurred renewed public debate about the thresholds of assimilation, integration, and belonging. For precisely this reason, it is crucial to push beyond the visceral reactions of recent years and develop a more nuanced, comparative understanding of migrant experiences of Muslim groups throughout the New Europe. One danger of 9/11 has been our tendency to characterize the challenges of cross-cultural coexistence as singular, or as part of an entirely new political imperative.

For almost half a century, the Federal Republic has struggled to come to terms with the growing diversity fueled by its postwar labor recruitment. Ultimately, then, this is not simply a study of demographic change and its social, political, and cultural impacts. It is also a history of that most elusive of things – a specifically German multiculturalism.

⁴³ See, for instance, Daniel Levy, Max Pensky, and John Torpey, eds., *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War* (London: Verso, 2005). This collection of essays by prominent Western European intellectuals includes several pieces that define a Judeo-Christian European identity in opposition to Islam and Muslims.