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## **MIGRATION – GERMANY’S PAST AND PRESENT THOUGHTS AND FIGURES<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract.** In this article, the history of emigration from Germany and the immigration to Germany especially in relation to its changing borders in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is discussed. After 1945 Germany was confronted with the integration of a million German refugees. Starting in the 1950s, Germany intentionally attracted foreign workers, and integrated them fairly well. The article analyses the current discussions in Germany in relation to the impact of massive immigration of refugees from non-European areas around 2015. It concludes with a position that in the time of globalisation migration needs a society-focussed and political learning process which has not yet ended and will require more learning. But countries with a declining population are well advised to see immigration as an opportunity for future growth and social diversity.

**Key words:** Germany, migration, emigration, immigration, statistical data, share of foreigners, attitudes toward foreigners, acceptance of migration, political aspects, moral aspects.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

According to an estimation by the German Federal Statistical Office in 2019 more than 83 million people were living in Germany, a slight increase compared to the previous year. The increases over the last years were mostly supported by migration to Germany as the German birth rate has for a long time exceeded the mortality rate. According to another additional estimation, more than 20% of the total population have a personal migration history or background (“Migrationshinter-

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<sup>1</sup> This article comes from the BBSR, a federal research institute which focuses on the analysis of urban and spatial developments of Germany in almost all sectors. The institute and its institutional forerunners have for a long time been analysing the demographic development of the foreign population in Germany. Cf. BfLR (1985), Strubelt/Veith (1997), BBSR (2014).

grund”). They are persons whose parents were born with a different citizenship than German. And even if they had been born in Germany, they would not be automatically entitled to German citizenship because for a long time this was only automatically possible according to the “*ius sanguinis*” (i.e. for people with some sort of German descent) and not according to the “*ius soli*” (i.e. for those who were born on German soil). Only since 2000 has it been possible, according to a new law, to opt for German citizenship if somebody was born in Germany with parents not having the German citizenship. But there is no automatic mechanism. In so far, regarding migration, Germany has been quite a peculiar case. Despite the growing numbers of people of “non-German” backgrounds, the Federal Government did not want, due to political reasons, for Germany to become a target country for migration. Non-permanent migration into Germany, i.e. “*Zuwanderung*” (in-migration), was allowed without the right to be legally accepted in the process to receive German citizenship, i.e. “*Einwanderung*” (immigration). The English word “immigration” used for these two German terms in countries with English as the official language does not reflect these political and legal differences in German legal terminology.

According to an international analysis done by the Pew Research Centre (Pew-global, 2019), in

2017 .....17% (12.1 million)

of the German population were not born in Germany. Since 1990, the percentage has more than doubled and has continued to grow:

1990 .....8% (5.9 million)

2000 .....11% (8.9 million)

2010 .....12% (9.8 million)

All these figures indicate that, in the last 25 years, Germany’s population was characterised by a considerable degree of migration (immigration) and not only since 2015, when, on account of civil wars and other unfavourable international circumstances, the wave of refugees from Syria and other Asian and African countries came over the Balkan Route or the Mediterranean Sea to Europe and especially to Germany based on a political decision of Chancellor Merkel in 2015. Compared to other OECD member states it can even be said: “Permanent migration flows have sharply risen in Germany and Sweden in recent years (in the last five years. E./St.) giving both countries a place among the top five OECD countries in terms of immigration as a proportion of the population.” (OECD, 2019, p. 78). This is all the more evident if one compares it with the average of the OECD or the EU in toto. That means that Italy, Spain, France and the UK have quite a lower percentage, not to mention Hungary, Poland or even the US.

This political decision by Chancellor Angela Merkel was a humanitarian act and it has since raised considerable discussions and reactions in Europe and naturally in Germany as well. The decision to let a very large number of refugees cross German borders was in 2015 even considered to be unlawful. But by now, it has been agreed that the “order” by Chancellor Merkel was not a violation of the existing legal regulations but that it was covered by law through the right to act under pressure (executive privilege) (cf. Detjen and Steinbeis, 2019) as a rather justified political decision. However, on account of the accusation, the decision by Chancellor Merkel was attacked by politicians and political forces on all federal levels and by the public, especially via the social media from the point of view of breaking the existing law to the populist objection of being a “Volksverräterin” (a traitor in relation to the interest of the people – a common and a legal term from the Third Reich!). Eventually, those questions or objections have never been taken to court, but they gave the public or political discussions a more than negative touch, they turned out to be a political confusion purposefully and intensively used by the rising groups of right-wing populists or nationalists. All these discussions proved to be fora for the so-called “silent masses” to have some concrete topics with which they could identify. It is not surprising that the topic of German identity in relation to foreign refugees became the focus of discussion and even action.

All that influenced elections and dominated the public discussions, and eventually created or strengthened political, mainly populist orientations or groups (parties) in Germany and in other European countries. The increases in the share of the number of people with migration background are not a peculiar or even singular German issue. It has been a European “cause célèbre”. But compared to other EU Member States, Germany “excels” in that.

This can be easily seen if one compares the German share of people with migration background with the percentages of other countries, especially European states, from 1990 onwards.

Table 1. Share of people (in percent) with migration background

Country	1990	2000	2010	2017
Germany	8	11	12	17
Austria	10	12	15	19
France	10	11	11	12
Great Britain	6	8	12	13
Italy	3	4	4	10
Norway	5	6	11	15
Poland	3	2	2	2
Spain	2	4	13	13

Table 1. (cont.)

Country	1990	2000	2010	2017
Sweden	9	11	14	18
Switzerland	21	22	26	30
USA	8	11	13	14
Canada	16	18	20	22
Japan	1	1	2	2
Russia	8	8	8	8
Australia	23	23	27	29

Source: Pewglobal, 2019.

However, these figures show quite impressively that Germany as a country has for a long time had an immigration history (DHM, 2005) similar to other European countries like France and Great Britain or even similar to the US, but less like Austria and Switzerland. This shows that over time Germany has become an immigration country (“Einwanderungsland”), but that for a long time it had refused to accept that as its political and legal status. It officially denied this designation. Only with the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this has become more or less accepted, politically and legally, but generally restricted by some sorts of acceptance regulations. The right to seek asylum in Germany due to racial or political persecution, however, remains untouched – a lesson learned after 1945 in reaction to the totalitarian Nazi regime. According to the UN migration report from 2017, Germany is now the third most popular country for migration on an international level after the USA and Saudi Arabia (cf. United Nations, 2017, p. 6). However, the share of foreign-born people has been rising in all European countries over the last ten years with the exception of post-socialist countries like Poland or Russia. Considering the development of migration since 2015 with the new “waves” of refugees from Syria and other Asian states over the so-called Balkan Route and from Africa over the Mediterranean Sea, this has been an extraordinary event with a considerable impact on Germany and its people. However, it was just a temporary but an enormous increase in time with regard to the national and social background of these immigrants. In a short period of time it was a sudden moment of confrontation with international, even global movements, which seemed to have happened only far away. It was an overspill of migration movements which did not touch Europe in the same way as Syria’s neighbouring countries like Jordan, Lebanon or Turkey. For the first time, Germany was confronted with real refugees due to a military conflict not in its vicinity but from distant regions. They were perceived at least as rather distant although they were located no more than three hours of flight away. Thus, they were more foreign than those foreigners who came as refugees during the war in the context of the disso-

lution of Yugoslavia. It changed, as already mentioned, the political culture insofar as the migration and the accompanying problems became a topos which allowed especially the former silent level of nationalist attitudes to become public, not at least supported by social media. For quite a long time, it was the number one topic of national public discussions, not just regional or local. The reason for that was the problem with securing places/homes for the incoming refugees including the problem of acceptance – refugees were not always welcome, rather detested which was shown in aggressive actions, e.g. by burning down refugee hostels.

However, Germany after 1945 was a country of mass immigration from regions which Germany had lost. That caused millions of Germans to come as refugees to East and West Germany in various continuous waves from there and, after 1989, from regions of the former Soviet bloc; not to speak of the continuous escapes from East Germans to West Germany between 1949 and 1961. Germany in toto and especially West Germany has since 1945 faced an enormous influx of refugees and the connected problems of, e.g. integration. However, they all spoke German and they sought a new home (Heimat). They had been expelled from their former native countries/regions, (“Heimatvertriebene”) thinking that they were coming to a familiar German environment, which was altogether not always the case. It required long processes of integration of the newcomers with the local population. In some way it could be said that those refugees came to some sort of a “cold belonging” (Kossert, 2008). However, they, the refugees, changed the German society in East and West Germany quite intensively, e.g. in changing the religious composition, and they helped through their ability and their skills to rebuild Germany after the Second World War in West and East Germany (Schreyer, 1969; Kornrumpf, 1979). One should neither forget the large number of refugees who left the former German Democratic Republic and settled in the Federal Republic of Germany, stabilizing the West, but destabilising the East of Germany. All those movements accompanied and characterised the social and political groups or better structure of Germany after the Second World War (DHM, 2005; Chaliand, 1994) in East and West Germany, but with that mixed population, it also followed a route of modernisation which in this context cannot be discussed in detail.

## **2. A SHORT OVERVIEW OF MIGRATION FROM AND TO GERMANY IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AND IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

Generally one can say that in the 18<sup>th</sup> century German regions – one can only speak of Germany for the time from 1871, i.e. the foundation of the second German Reich – were more characterised by emigration (Auswanderung) from Germany to the east and the south-east of Europe, less to North and South Americas,

than by immigration to Germany, with the exception of immigration to Prussia. That changed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the United States became the dominant destination for migration from Europe with Germans having the dominant share (Chaliand, 1994, especially chapter “La Grande Migration Trans-Océane, p. 69ff.). But in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the growth of centres of industrial development and the accompanying urbanisation, e.g. Berlin and the Ruhr area, resulted in quite an intensive migration into Germany, not to forget the effects triggered by the modernisation of the agricultural sector forcing many peasants to leave and seek a better life in cities (“Landflucht”) (Oltmer, 2017). At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the First World War caused migration waves all over the territories of the fighting nations. The loss of territories in Germany after 1918 was followed by minor migration movements. About one million people moved from former German territories to the spatially newly configured Germany (Oltmer, 2017, p. 132) – in some way, the prelude for the migration after the Second World War. However, the new German spatial configuration also resulted in decreasing the number of minorities in Germany.

The period between 1933 and 1945, the time of the so-called Third Reich, the Hitler regime, was a time of emigration of political opponents and of Jews and a time of killing the remaining opponents and Jews. Not to forget the movement of people enforced by military action of the Allies – basically non-voluntary relocations of people. It is estimated that between 1939 and 1943 – the phase of military expansion by the Nazi regime – about 30 million people became refugees, were expelled or deported (Oltmer, 2017, p. 144). The deportation of people to Germany played an enormous part in sustaining the industrial production during the war by involving them as “Zwangsarbeitskräfte” or “Fremdarbeiter” – a working force sentenced to hard labour from inside or outside Germany. Moreover, deportations ended in the systemic killing of more than 5 million people in concentration camps, mostly Jews from all over Europe.

When the Second World War ended, between 10 and 12 million people left the Nazi camps alive (Oltmer, 2017, p. 151). They were the so-called “displaced persons”. The Allies took care of them with the aim to return them to their native countries. We mention this without further analytical details in order to stress their fates, which should not be forgotten in relation to the many Germans who had to leave former German territories, because it demonstrates the enormous amount of migration movements caused by the Nazi regime during the Second World War and after 1945. All those migrations were part of the great migrations of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in which Europe was the main area, but not the only one (Chaliand, 1994; especially “Les Grandes Migrations du XX<sup>e</sup> Siècle”, pp. 108–109). The effects of those migrations were long-lasting for the different regions and nation states all over Europe, not to forget the social impacts and the individual fortunes.

### 3. THE MIGRATION SITUATION IN GERMANY AFTER 1945

Coming back to the German situation after 1945 the loss of German territories in the East caused millions of German people (approx. 12.5 million) to leave their former territory more or less voluntarily due to approaching fighting or, more often, by force. They escaped or were expelled to Germany, to the four sectors ruled by the Allies, most of them to the three Western sectors, the later Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), as “Heimatvertriebene” (expellees), but a considerable amount, even the largest share in comparison to the population, to the Soviet sector, the later German Democratic Republic (GDR) (Oltmer, p. 155). In the GDR, they were called “Umsiedler” (resettled persons) because their former German “Heimat” (belonging/home) territory was politically not considered or even recognized as a German territory anymore. In the FRG the loss of those former territories was for a long time legally and politically not accepted. Last but not least, the returning soldiers should not be forgotten, if and when they had been released by the Allies – more than one million from the Soviet Union, more than half a million from France, a bit less from Great Britain and only about 30,000 from the US. The last ones (“Die Heimkehr der 10.000” – the return of the ten thousand based on an agreement by Chancellor Adenauer with the leaders of the Soviet Union without any participation of East Germany) were released in 1955/1956 by the Soviet Union and returned to the FRG. It was an important moment, in some way an end of the immediate post-WWII time. But another group should not be forgotten because, immediately after the end of the war, there was a group of people having been evacuated during the war on account of city bombardments, who wanted to go back to their former homes.

All these movements, escapes, returns or migrations naturally affected the moving people and the remaining population differently, because it affected those who lost their former territories or homes considerably more than those who could have stayed in their places and immediately after the war were involuntarily relocated. A group which demanded acceptance and tolerance and the ability for the migrants to tackle completely new circumstances, which was quite appropriately described as a confrontation with a cold homeland (“Kalte Heimat”) (Kossert, 2008). Elisabeth Pfeil had analysed the social concept immediately after the war in her almost classical book “Der Flüchtling” (The refugee). She compared the situation of a refugee with a crustacean having lost its shell and having to find or create a new shell (Pfeil, 1949, p. 83) – a concept often reflected in literature, fiction or non-fiction (Dornemann, 2018).

We mentioned these social events or processes after 1945 in order to show that Germany, East and West, were characterised by the presence of refugees in all regions and on all levels – a social experience or memorial background which in some ways favoured the social acceptance of those new refugee waves but also fostered the attitude of not wanting to share the achievements reached.



Still, on account of the growing economy in the FRG, commonly called the “Wirtschaftswunder”, the economic living circumstances of all those migrants (refugees) gradually improved, e.g. by public support offered by taxing those people who had not lost their homes by a national regulation (law) called “Lastenausgleich”, that means sharing the burden of the effects of the lost war nationwide (Kornrumpf, 1979). Furthermore, they were improved by tax reductions or national subsidies if someone was accepted with his or her former social status as a classified refugee. A problem concept of integration for the refugees (or “Neusiedler” as they were called) the former GDR had to tackle as well and accompanied it for quite a long time not at least with the endeavour to create enough housing while offering social infrastructure and enough jobs in a centrally planned political system. And it was the political system which especially in the beginning suffered much more from reparations demanded by the Soviet Union than in the Western (the French, the British and the American) sectors (Lowe, 2014; Bade und Oltmer in: DHM, 2005, pp. 20–49).

All in all, Germany, i.e. the two Germanies (FRG and GDR), after the Second World War in many respects was a territory on the “move”. A country being divided into two quite different parts, which has not to be stressed in this context; a country in reconstruction, politically, socially and economically in two quite differing ways, confronted with migration from outside as well as from inside. “Inside” must be explained, because, on the one hand, it meant separate movements within the FRG or the GDR. On the other hand, it meant larger and quite more relevant movements from the GDR to the FRG in quantitative and qualitative terms, which were not simple movements but rather escapes caused by political and social inconvenience or just individual aspirations for a better life, which, however, were motivated or interpreted politically. A mixture of reasons one could observe among the migrants of today from all over the world. Between 1949 and 1961, when the Berlin Wall was erected and obstructed any further easy escapes via Berlin, more than 3 million people escaped from the GDR to the FRG, but it should not be forgotten that more than half a million moved from the FRG to the GDR (Oltmer, 2017, p. 163). For the FRG with its growing economy, those refugees from the GDR meant a constant stream of aspiring and well-educated people. That was not the slightest reason for the GDR to stop the effect of bleeding of its economy and endangering the stability of its social and political system. But between 1961 and the end of 1988, altogether about 600,000 people were able to move from the GDR to the FRG (cf. Oltmer, 2017, p. 164). However, most of them were retired or not working people and therefore did not have a bleeding effect for the economy of the GDR. They even redirected the social costs of retirement payments from the GDR to the FRG.

With the unification of Germany, this type of migration or escape movements between the FRG and the GDR in the form of movements between two opposite political systems ceased, though in some way not exactly as they rather changed into interstate movements with their own histories and developments which we cannot treat in more detail in the context of this paper.



However, one should not forget those types of migrants who, since the 1950s, have come to the FRG as people with German descent from countries of Eastern Europe – approx. 4.5 million with a peak of about 2.5 million after the breakdown of the former Soviet Union (Worbs *et al.*, 2013).

All those migrants had to be integrated into the German society and economy. And it could be said that those integration processes did not function smoothly nor immediately in all respects; it took time and demanded adjustment processes by both sides between those who came and those already present. Yet considering all circumstances, it can be said that it was a national success story. It demanded a collective effort and in almost all regions of the FRG it formed a new population mixture, a new social system, a new social configuration, in some way, as already mentioned, a process of modernisation. West Germany, the FRG, received a new structure, a new face, and a new appearance. It was not just a modernisation or just a way to westernise and to develop a new identity, it was a development to continue the modernisation process which had already started in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and was continued in the Weimar Republic. Even in the short period of the Nazi regime, a modernisation process was aimed at mobilising the German society and its economic structure for preparing the Second World War and it was implemented by robbing the resources of other regions or countries after the military conquest.

#### 4. IMMIGRATION OF A FOREIGN WORKFORCE

However, this new formation of the German society after the Second World War would be incomplete if one failed to consider the movement of people from other, mainly South European countries, who came to work in Germany because the growing economy needed more workforce (BfLR, 1985; Häußermann and Oswald, 1997; DHM, 2005).

They came from Italy, Spain, Portugal, Yugoslavia and, especially, from Turkey. They were officially hired through intergovernmental agreements and they were supposed to stay only some years according to their contracts. They were called “Gastarbeiter” meaning guest worker. This denomination was purposely selected because it should be positively distinguished against the denomination “Fremdarbeiter” (alien worker) which was used during the Nazi regime. Due to this policy, procedures for integration did not exist or were not intentionally established. There were even no programmes for teaching German because people thought that no elaborate level of understanding and speaking German was needed for their level of work (Can, 2018; Abdel-Samad, 2018).

But as Max Frisch, a Swiss author, already noticed in 1965 with regard to the immigration of people from Italy and Spain into Switzerland: “Wir riefen

Arbeitskräfte, und es kamen Menschen.” (We were looking for working force and people (human beings) came). The concept of self-induced immigration contrary to the official federal policies. And in the case of Germany that was quite similar, but there it mostly applied to Turkish people. They came as a workforce but gradually, by taking their wives and kids to Germany, became the largest group of foreigners living in Germany – which is in contrast to, e.g. the enactment of 1973 of stopping the recruitment of workers from outside the EU (Strubelt/Veith, 1997; BfLR, 1985; BBSR, 2013 and 2014). It took quite a long time for the German politics and the German society to accept that. And the result was a large group of foreigners living in Germany, not well integrated, but creating a new German society, a new Germany with different and many cultural backgrounds (“Multikulti” – a common term used in Germany) (BfLR, 1985; Kalter, 2008). This development was highly discussed and all over the public and on all political and public levels. Naturally, this was not a concept for creating a soft and adjusted integration process, but over time Germany, that means the FRG, changed its appearance, became a more and more multicultural social setting especially in urban areas, not a real multicultural society (Häußermann and Ostwald, 1997). There was still some hostility towards those foreigners, described as “Überfremdung” (foreign infiltration – the English term is less negative than the German having a real negative undertone), but the acceptance of those non-Germans was growing, also because living together more or less meant living side by side, more or less without close social contacts. But the results of empirical research showed that the more German people came across or had contact with foreigners, the more positively they were oriented toward them (Böltken, 2003; Ripl, 2008). Naturally, that rather applies to West Germany and less to East Germany, where foreign workers from Vietnam, Cuba or some African countries were only in very small numbers present and more or less concentrated in their living circumstances without contact with their German environment. It would be too easy to take this as the only and single reason that East Germany was more opposed to foreign people than West Germany because there is another important factor that should be considered: the fact that, due to the individual effects of unification and globalisation, there is a growing share of German people feeling social insecurity and anxiety about their own future and the future of their children (see German “Angst” (Biess, 2019)), but “Angst” is not restricted to Germany, if we look to, e.g. France and the “gilet jaune” (yellow vest) movement). And when comparing the West to the East, one must realise a comparative advantage of the West in relation to the East in an economic context, collectively and individually. In total, one could see that many people think that their national government should first of all care for their citizens and only secondly, if at all, for foreign immigrants. This opinion has been spurred by a new wave of populism all over Europe, which is reflected by growing anti-immigration policies in almost all European countries, e.g. included in the arguments for the Brexit or expressed in the Nordic countries popular for their

humanitarian approach to accepting refugees, not to mention the hostility toward foreigners, if not even xenophobia in some new EU Member States.

This became evident when, through the international migration caused by war in the Middle East and in Africa, more and more refugees appeared at the frontiers of Europe and were heading towards countries which they assumed to be more friendly towards them or which would give them a chance for future well-being. The fact that that had to do with the special social development of those countries while others were not prepared or structured to accept immigrants should at least be mentioned. This reflects the concept or outcome of the “Ungleichzeitigkeit des Gleichzeitigen” (The non-simultaneity of the simultaneous – a topic developed by the art historian Wilhelm Pinder and taken up by Karl Mannheim for the social analysis of generations) – a common phenomenon observable in different historical developments in societies over time, e.g. the difference between Eastern and Western countries in Europe, which followed or are still following quite different pathways on account of their different historical developments (Koselleck, 2000).

This was especially obvious around 2015 when Chancellor Merkel allowed refugees from countries suffering from civil wars within a humanitarian act to come to Germany and created a new national policy with the words “Wir schaffen das” (We will manage). This was not accepted well by other European countries and also not by the more conservative political forces in Germany. The reasons were that the former feared a new hegemony by Germany (Hofbauer, 2018, p. 146) while the latter feared the negative effects for them and their children (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 405)

## 5. IMMIGRATION OF REFUGEES IN RECENT PAST

No other migration movement had challenged Germany to such an extent like the immigration streams of war refugees in 2015, especially from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. This becomes evident (Kalter, 2008; BBSR, 2017; Oltmer, 2017) when comparing them to other migration flows caused by

- the recruitment agreement for the so-called “guest workers” (1955 to 1973),
- family reunifications with foreigners already living in Germany (especially between 1973 and 1985, but also today),
- the immigration of resettlers of German descent, especially between 1987 and 1999,
- the immigration of refugees in the late-1980s and the early-1990s because of the war in the Balkans,
- the free movement of EU citizens since 1957 and after the expiration of the transitional arrangements with the countries that joined the EU in 2004 (the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia) and in 2007 (Romania, Bulgaria).

Table 2. Immigration, emigration, net migration and surplus of the born or deceased with a long-term perspective in Germany 1950 to 2017

Year	Immigration	Emigrations	Net Migration	Surplus of the born or deceased	Year	Immigration	Emigrations	Net Migration	Surplus of the born or deceased
1950	96,140.00	78,148	+17,992	+368,372	1984	410,387.00	604,832.00	-194,445	-105,007
1951	88,349.00	126,071	-37,722	+353,683	1985	480,872.00	425,313.00	+55,559	-115,846
1952	88,089.00	135,796	-47,707	+337,445	1986	567,215.00	407,139.00	+160,076	-77,194
1953	101,599.00	122,264	-20,665	+304,375	1987	591,765.00	398,518.00	+193,247	-33,322
1954	111,490.00	136,212	-24,722	+334,452	1988	860,578.00	419,439.00	+441,139	-7,634
1955	127,921.00	136,977	-9,056	+317,470	1989	1,133,794.00	539,832.00	+593,962	-22,982
1956	159,086.00	168,101	-9,015	+325,058	1990	1,256,250.00	574,378.00	+681,872	-15,770
1957	200,142.00	173,171	+26,971	+325,360	1991	1,198,978.00	596,455.00	+602,523	-81,226
1958	212,520.00	161,865	+50,655	+357,452	1992	1,502,198.00	720,127.00	+782,071	-76,329
1959	227,600.00	178,864	+48,736	+408,520	1993	1,277,408.00	815,312.00	+462,096	-98,823
1960	395,016.00	218,574	+176,442	+384,893	1994	1,082,553.00	767,555.00	+314,998	-115,058
1961	489,423.00	266,536	+222,887	+463,205	1995	1,096,048.00	698,113.00	+397,935	-119,367
1962	566,465.00	326,339	+240,126	+437,720	1996	959,691.00	677,494.00	+282,197	-86,830
1963	576,951.00	426,767	+150,184	+460,525	1997	840,633.00	746,969.00	+93,664	-48,216
1964	698,609.00	457,767	+240,842	+486,985	1998	802,456.00	755,358.00	+47,098	-67,348
1965	791,737.00	489,503	+302,234	+417,504	1999	874,023.00	672,048.00	+201,975	-75,586
1966	702,337.00	608,775	+93,562	+406,319	2000	841,158.00	674,038.00	+167,120	-71,798
1967	398,403.00	604,211	-205,808	+357,859	2001	879,217.00	606,494.00	+272,723	-94,066
1968	657,513.00	404,301	+253,212	+238,447	2002	842,543.00	623,255.00	+219,288	-122,436

Year	Immigration	Emigrations	Net Migration	Surplus of the born or deceased	Year	Immigration	Emigrations	Net Migration	Surplus of the born or deceased
1969	980,731.00	436,685	+544,046	+154,274	2003	768,975.00	626,330.00	+142,645	-147,225
1970	1,042,760.00	495,675	+547,085	+72,073	2004	780,175.00	697,632.00	+82,543	-112,649
1971	936,349.00	554,280	+382,069	+47,773	2005	707,352.00	628,399.00	+78,953	-144,432
1972	852,549.00	568,610	+283,939	-64,032	2006	661,855.00	639,064.00	+22,791	-148,903
1973	932,583.00	580,019	+352,564	-147,019	2007	680,766.00	636,854.00	+43,912	-142,293
1974	601,013.00	635,613	-34,600	-151,073	2008	682,146.00	737,889.00	-55,743	-161,925
1975	429,064.00	652,966	-223,902	-207,339	2009	721,014.00	733,796.00	-12,782	-189,418
1976	476,286.00	569,133	-92,847	-168,539	2010	798,282.00	670,605.00	+127,677	-180,821
1977	522,611.00	505,696	+16,915	-125,659	2011	958,299.00	678,969.00	+279,330	-189,643
1978	559,620.00	458,769	+100,851	-146,931	2012	1,080,936.00	711,991.00	+368,945	-196,038
1979	649,832.00	419,091	+230,741	-127,257	2013	1,226,493.00	797,886.00	+428,607	-211,756
1980	736,362.00	439,571	+296,791	-86,582	2014	1,464,724.00	914,241.00	+550,483	-153,429
1981	605,629.00	470,525	+135,104	-92,336	2015	2,136,954.00	997,552.00	+1,139,402	-187,625
1982	404,019.00	493,495	-89,476	-82,557	2016	1,865,122.00	1,365,178.00	+499,944	-119,000
1983	354,496.00	487,268	-132,772	-113,099	2017	1,550,721.00	1,134,641.00	+416,080	-148,000

Source: own work, Federal Statistical Office.

Table 2 presents the different phases of migration since 1950. In the 68 years considered, there was a positive migration balance in 53 years. Political processes formed Germany to be a country of immigration rather than of emigration. Between 1950 and 2017 around 13.7 million people moved to Germany.

With the beginning of the full freedom of movement for those European Member States which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007, a positive net migration balance began in 2010, reaching a historical peak of a positive migration balance of 1.1 million in 2015, particularly caused by immigrations from countries suffering from civil wars, i.e. Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2016 alone, 722,370 initial applications were submitted as a result of the refugee immigration in 2015 under the German Asylum Act. Due to political decisions such as the agreement with Turkey or the closure of the so-called “Balkan Route”, the inflow of refugees after 2016 fell sharply. While between 2015 and 2016 441,899 initial applications for asylum were filed, the number fell to 198,317 applications in 2017 and 161,931 in 2018. Between 2014 and 2018, about one third of the asylum seekers came from Syria, followed by Afghanistan (11%) and Iraq (10%). In the wake of that sharp decline, the positive migration balance also decreased to 416,000 in 2017. Current estimates of the Federal Statistical Office for 2018 assume a net migration of 386,000 persons.

On the one hand – and this should at least be noticed and appreciated – the immigration wave which started in 2015 triggered solidarity among the German population, yet also great anxiety among some Germans arising from the daily press coverage and the posts in social media about migration issues. Those images gave the impression of a disorderly, even uncontrolled inflow of immigrants to Germany.

People had the impression that the authorities were not capable of handling the immigration which caused sorrows among the population and even fears of foreign infiltration. Furthermore, immigration from Syria, Afghanistan and Iran applied to parts of the world not belonging to the European cultural circle defined as the “christlich-jüdische Abendland” (the Judeo-Christian Occident) which was necessary to be defended.<sup>2</sup> Among all the cultural differences of faith and religion or the people’s attitude towards democratic systems, particularly the relationship of men and women was perceived as a problem for a barrier-free communication between refugees and the domestic population. The fact that, at the beginning of the refugee inflow, predominantly young men had arrived without their families additionally increased security concerns. It is worth noting that these concerns

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<sup>2</sup> This was the purpose of a movement which arose in Dresden and called itself PEGIDA, the acronym for – “Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes” (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident) founded in an area of Germany where a proportionally small number of foreigners live and where the religious definition of the Occident had little foundation in religious connections or even activities.

were stronger among the part of the German population which relied on social benefits. Those people were afraid of having to share their limited benefits with large numbers of new potential service recipients. Although social benefits were not cut for any of existing recipients, the question arose in the group of German welfare recipients why and how the Federal Government was able to spend vast amounts of money on additional social benefits for the immigrants and why and how the Federal Government at the same time could argue that it was not able to raise these benefits for the native population. Stichweh (2017, p. 66ff) described those conflicting issues in his essay “Fremdenangst und Fremdenfeindlichkeit” (English: “xenophobia”)<sup>3</sup> using such terms as “competition of resources” and “collective identities”. He wrote: “The entry of foreigners can be understood as a threat to collective identities and life forms linked to them.” The “competition of resources” was in the short term repeated by the accusation “There is enough money for others yet not for us.” This accusation referred to the experience during the days of the European and international bankruptcy when hundreds of billions of euros were made available in times of financial and economic crisis after 2008 to save the banking system. Due to the bailout and the high earnings of managers, those billions were made available almost overnight, while tough and long political disputes were waged over every increase in social transfers. This perceived unequal treatment led to a sense of powerlessness among many people who rely on social transfers. That generated mistrust in the public.

Table 3. The ten largest application groups by nationalities from 2014 to 2018 (initial applications for asylum)

Country	Total					2014–2018	
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total	In percent
Syria, Arab. Republic	39,332	158,657	266,250	48,974	44,167	557,380	41.6
Afghanistan	9,115	31,382	127,012	16,423	9,942	193,874	14.5
Iraq	5,345	29,784	96,116	21,930	16,333	169,508	12.7
Albania	7,865	53,805	14,853			76,523	5.7
Serbia	17,172	16,700				33,872	2.5
Eritrea	13,198	10,876	18,854	10,226	5,571	58,725	4.4
Iran, Islam. republic			26,426	8,608	10,857	45,891	3.4
Kosovo	6,908	33,427				40,335	3.0

<sup>3</sup> In German, the English term “xenophobia” can be translated as a fear of the foreign and hatred against the foreign. In German: “Das Hinzutreten von Fremden kann als eine Bedrohung kollektiver Identitäten und mit ihnen verknüpfter Lebensformen verstanden werden.”



Table 3. (cont.)

Country	Total					2014–2018	
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total	In percent
Russian Federation			10,985	4,884	3,938	19,807	1.5
Unknown		11,721	14,659	4,067	4,220	34,667	2.6
Pakistan		8,199	14,484			22,683	1.7
Nigeria			12,709	7,811	10,168	30,688	2.3
Macedonia	5,614	9,083				14,697	1.1
Somalia	5,528			6,836	5,073	17,437	1.3
Turkey				8,027	10,160	18,187	1.4
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5,705					5,705	0.4
Vietnam						0	0.0
India						0	0.0
Sum Top 10	115,782	363,634	602,348	137,786	120,429	1,339,979	100.0
Initial applications for asylum in total	173,072	441,899	722,370	198,317	161,931	1,697,589	

Source: Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2018 (The Federal Office in figures 2018, Nuremberg 2019, p. 17).

At the beginning of the strong immigration by civilian war refugees, the focus was placed on safeguarding the existential living conditions of these people, with an emphasis on housing. However, the question of their rapid integration into the German society became gradually the focus of the socio-political discussion. The geographic distribution of such numbers of people occurred after registration in a federal country like Germany in its 16 federal states. After having been registered centrally, the refugees were distributed over the 16 federal states where they were cared for. In the federal states they were distributed more or less evenly throughout cities and municipalities. The distribution was essentially proportional as per populations among the federal states. Within those, the distribution to cities and municipalities was almost equal. Initially, due to strict time constraints, the accommodation in the so-called shared accommodations was dominant. They were mostly gymnasiums of schools. Furthermore, decentralised accommodation in individual apartments were found. In order to create additional space for accommodation, temporary regulations were created in the German Federal Building Code. Since the beginning, the housing, provisioning, education, and integration of refugees has been a joint task of the German federal system including the

national, the federal and the local level. Since 2017 alone, the Federal Government has been contributing around 15 billion euros per annum to refugee-related benefits. The focus of this expenditure has been divided between the fight against the causes of flight in the countries of origin, the admission and registration, as well as the integration of asylum seekers with right of residence ([www.bundesfinanzministerium.de](http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de), 2019).

After the peaks in 2015 and 2016, one can observe a sharp decline in the number of refugees. Still, for quite a long time, it was the main public concerns and led to fervent discussions and protests, not only verbal but with physical attacks as well.<sup>4</sup> Last but not least, that was the reason for raising and reassessing the immigration policies politically. For example, the coalition agreement between the CDU, the CSU and the SPD (Coalition Agreement between CDU, CSU and SPD 2017, 19<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary Term, p. 103) stated: “We continue our efforts to avoid a repetition of the situation in 2015: for that reason, efforts for appropriate taxation and restriction of migration, including improvement of development efforts, expansion of humanitarian commitments, extension of peacekeeping commitments, fair trade agreements, increased climate protection and no export of arms to troubled regions. We note that the immigration figures, based on the experiences of the last twenty years and in view of the agreed policies and the directly taxable percentage of immigrations, are not exceeding the rate of between 180,000 and 220,000 annually.” Politically this was quite a turn from a policy of welcome to a more restrictive one. But a political compromise was needed to appease the public dissent and to channel the whole process of managing the refugee problem in a proper and accepted form all over Germany and not leaving the part of acceptance and friendship to the engaged persons in the civil society.

At the same time, an agreement was reached through this coalition agreement to solve a deficit in the German immigration legislation. It is true that within the EU the free movement of citizens applies, however, this legislation excludes the cases of immigration from outside the EU. In principle, the legal basis for recognition as a refugee or asylum seeker in Germany is only a temporary right of residence (see BAMF, 2016, p. 17ff). Many of the refugees, some of whom have been able to find their family members in Germany who had fled to Germany as well, have learned

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<sup>4</sup> This was especially the case after such incidents like young male immigrants attacking young women in public places or during public events, like the celebration of the 2015 New Year's Eve in Cologne, or like the case of young girls murdered by immigrants in the city of Freiburg or in the small town of Kandel. Those incidents caused outrage in social media and in tabloids. Those were very serious crimes. The German Federal Criminal Police Office will achieve the following results in 2019 for an overall analysis: “The evolution of the past four years (around 1.52 million asylum seekers in total) had an impact on the crime situation in 2018 both in the area of general crime and politically motivated crime. However, the vast majority of asylum seekers who came to Germany does not commit any criminal offenses” (Germany's Federal Criminal Police Office, 2019, p. 59). Violence against refugees should not be ignored.

the German language, their children go to school, they have a job, go through a vocational training or enter higher education (Schmal *et al.*, 2016; Meier-Braun, 2013). Therefore, for the first time in Germany the current political coalition has agreed on the establishment/enactment of a skill-based labour immigration law:

„We regulate the immigration of skilled workers: skilled worker immigration act. It regulates the increasing demand for skilled workers through labour migration in a new and transparent way. It provides clear indication of economic requirements as well as a qualification, age, language, proof of an actual job, and safeguarding of subsistence costs.” (p. 16) The German economy needs skilled workers now and it will need then in the future due to the demographic change.

As we have showed earlier, Germany has been characterised by a negative natural balance since 1972, i.e. there have been more people dying than being born. Thus, the more or less stable demographic development in Germany was and is only the result of immigration from the outside. The fact that Germany had around 83 million inhabitants in 2018 had not been foreseeable ten years ago. Many population forecasts for Germany saw strongly declining population figures, but above all rapid aging. Against the background of these changing demographic processes, immigration in Germany is being discussed again, whereby the permanent right of residence for qualified skilled workers is now in the focus of the discussion. The concept now is: by accepting immigration not only restricted to asylums seekers, it should be generally possible to accept trained immigrants as such like in other countries, e.g. Canada. The reason is that in the next few years, i.e. soon, the so-called baby boomers (people born between 1958 and 1967) will leave the labour market consequently creating a big gap in the workforce. It is therefore not only necessary to compensate at least partially for this gap, but also to ensure that the social security systems and above all the retirement pension system are financially stable. Already by now, a gradual increase in the retirement age has affected the pensioning system. For people born in 1964 onwards, basically only a pension entry age of 67 will be able to sustain the system. That means it is necessary to discuss the problem of immigration not only as a challenge from the outside but rather from the inside as an opportunity for future development.

Politically, there is currently a struggle over how qualified specialists from recent refugee immigration can be granted a permanent right of residence. After all, 300,000 people in this group are in employment and subject to social security contributions (Federal Employment Agency, 2019, p. 12). This is strongly supported by employers because they are in actual need for trained employees.

Finally, a spatial aspect of refugee migration should not be ignored. Thus, especially in rural areas with greater population losses, immigration has contributed to the fact that institutions of general interest such as kindergartens or schools have again reached their viability and therefore might not be closed. For the quality of life in these areas, this was and is a gain, as longer commutes to the next kindergarten or school can be avoided. Some individual cities such as the city of Altena,

a small town in North Rhine-Westfalia, have even considered the refugee immigration to be a great opportunity for the town and its local community facing a sharp decline of the population. The town offered an excellent example of international solidarity, but that has not been generally the case. This commitment of citizens and the mayor – a member of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), i.e. the more conservative party – for the benefit of the refugees and the city, among other things, caused the mayor of Altena to be the European finalist of the Nansen Refugee Award of the UNHCR. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) justified this selection as follows: “When many politicians hesitated and the social sentiment worsened, Dr. Hollstein together with the many volunteers from Altena created an exemplary model of integration – for the benefit of the refugees and their city (...) The action of Dr. Hollstein is characterised by solidarity, humanism and decisiveness, but by a commitment to his city as well: The mayor knew that a successful integration is benefitting everyone. He has proved that taking in and promoting young, committed refugees can positively shape the future of cities and communities” (see [altena.de](http://altena.de), accessed on 4 May 2019). It should be said, though, that Altena as a positive example does not stand for the local level in Germany in toto. Nonetheless, it has set a strong example and it can be supplemented with a lot more examples in the German society for a positive commitment for refugees, both individually and collectively. Yet there still exists a basis for prejudice and hate towards refugees stemming from with incidences like in Freiburg or Kandel. And in Altena, Mayor Dr. Hollstein was not only a target of crude insults in social media, he was directly attacked with a knife. The problem-solving of the immigration of 2015/2016 has not yet ended, but it changed in topics, character and agenda. The immediate problems of feeding and sheltering the refugees are solved, but now the more intricate problems of integrating refugees exist. It is still not possible to conclude that they are solved. Their resolution will be a continuing and challenging task for all, the society and politics, institutions and people (Treibel, 2015; Meier-Braun, 2013 and 2018; Abdel-Samad, 2018).

The nationwide discussions about immigrants have now, (2019) almost 4 years after the peak in 2015, more or less calmed down. But from time to time, in relation to current events and due to the fact that large parts of the population stay aside or are reluctant to accept the new social structure or are still hostile to any immigration, some people use it to fuel their populist and nationalistic attitudes or political orientations which had existed before 2015. However, it is now used as a factor of acceleration for their community and political aims (Heitmeyer, 2018, p. 344ff). Now they favour a closure and strict control of the borders like in many other EU Member States. It is still a social and political challenge, a national issue not only in relation to the future of the very political system and the structure of the society, both nationally and in the context of a more and more globalised world, but it touches the moral and ethical basis of our societies. Their future may be more than we are willing to accept or even discuss.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

External inflow of people has been characteristic for Germany for over seventy years. It was caused by political, economic or humane factors. In times of political uncertainty in the world, the number of those fleeing has reached a considerable volume. According to the UNHCR, by the end of 2017, 68.5 million people worldwide were “on the run”. Around 25.4 million of those people were refugees fleeing from armed conflicts, persecution or serious human rights’ violations, or just seeking better living conditions, which is quite understandable. However, the last group is quite unfairly disqualified as “Wirtschaftsflüchtlinge” in German. Half of the world’s refugees are children under the age of 18. 40.0 million people are internally displaced persons, i.e. people who flee within their country. 3.1 million people out of the 68.5 million are asylum seekers ([www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org), 2019). The majority of those refugees find shelter and refuge outside Europe. Despite many endeavours to tackle the causes of people fleeing their homes, the economic gap between the wealthy and poor nations will always be an incentive to seek a better life. Modern forms of communication, worldwide networking within seconds, the high proportion of young people and, above all, mobile people will continue to keep immigration on the agenda in the future. In addition to the search for a better life, escaping war and displacement or ethnic conflicts, there is even a greater danger that, in the future, the consequences of climate change will cause migration in the world. Prolonged heat spells, water scarcity and insufficiency of food can significantly increase the pressure on those countries that still have prosperity in climatically balanced conditions. Europe is one of those regions in the world. A European long-term strategy is needed to balance the current extremely diverse positions within the EU and to form a political and community position in relation to growing differences worldwide. Admittedly, that is a major politically challenging task.

No country can exclude itself from these challenges in the long run. Every society has to face the moral and ethical questions when it comes to accepting people who seek protection from war and expulsion.

In the short term and with regard to the forthcoming Brexit, it has to be observed how migration flows will spread across the EU 27 when Great Britain and Northern Ireland drop out as countries of immigration. Above all, citizens from the Eastern European EU Member States have sought a new home in Great Britain. The question will be where in Europe they will live in the near future. The question will now be whether new nations, regions and cities of immigration are sought. In Germany, it can also lead to more immigration due to the persisting prosperity gap to the Eastern European countries, but also due to the great need for skilled workers in the industry or in the service sector.

Thus, the integration of refugees and immigrants into the German society is not only a moral or ethical approach but a political perspective to be followed

for the future of a country that has been on the move for a long time, as we have shown and argued. And all prejudice or fears of some groups of the population, not only of extremists, about the decrease of the Germans by biological descent – almost impossible to define – and a very dangerous taking up or a revival of Nazi practices to define Arians and their fear of a “Bevölkerungsaustausch” (an exchange of Germans or replacement by immigrants) are mostly based on ignorance or fake news or theories of conspiracy. However, such opinions, publicly or silently uttered or expressed in more or less closed social media channels, are present, not only in Germany but all over Europe. They have to be approached and tackled publicly in an open social discourse.

We would like to close our argumentation by citing two thinkers who perfectly argued in this direction. The first one is Sigmund Freud whom Walter Siebel already in 1997 considered in his discussion (Siebel in Häußermann/Ostwald, 1997, p. 41): “Eine Kultur, die eine große Zahl von Menschen ausgrenzt, hat keine Zukunft und verdient auch keine“ (A civilization which excludes large numbers of human beings does not have a future and does not deserve one).

The second is Hannah Arendt who in 1943 wrote an article entitled “We refugees” about her personal experience with the situation as a migrant. In the little booklet of the German translation, which appeared in 2016, she was quoted with a remark during a radio discussion from 1963 saying: “Die für den Nationalstaat typische Fremdenfeindlichkeit ist unter heutigen Verkehrs- und Bevölkerungsbedingungen so provinziell, dass eine bewusst national orientierte Kultur sehr schnell auf den Stand der Folklore und der Heimatkunst herabsinken dürfte.” (Under today's circumstances of traffic and demographic developments, the hostility to strangers (xenophobia), typical for the nation state, is based on such a provincial attitude that a wilfully nationally oriented culture will descend to a status of folklore and localism) (Arendt, 2016, pp. 55–56).

Both statements speak for themselves but considering the current discussions in EU Member States in relation to the problem of immigration makes one use a common saying: “You cannot eat your cake and have it, too”.

We hope to have demonstrated that Germany has long been a nation characterised by all sorts of migration, inwards and outwards, both voluntary and forced. We could observe and demonstrate that the development over time, the social and political developments have not been easy and were not following clear and direct directions, but at least they have indicated a learning process which has not yet ended and will require more learning. But examples like the one from Altena or publications like *Making Heimat. Germany arrival country*, the catalogue for the German exhibition at “La Biennale di Venezia” 2016 (Schmal *et al.*, 2016) or architectural designs for creating homes for refugees (Friedrich *et al.*, 2015) constitute signs of positive developments towards the future. Thus, the notion proposed by a Canadian author Doug Saunders in his book *Arrival City* which he clarified in his subtitle: “How the largest migration in history is reshaping our world” is



to be taken seriously. The German subtitle of his book is more future-oriented: “Über alle Grenzen hinweg ziehen Millionen Menschen von Land in die Städte. Von ihnen hängt unsere Zukunft ab” (Million of human beings are moving from the country into cities. Our future is depending on them) (Saunders, 2011). This is a positive, future-oriented statement but a realistic one as well. The objective of tomorrow is to face it realistically and tackle the consequences within an open society. To counter it with nationalistic or egocentric (= nation) attitudes or orientations is narrow-minded.

To follow this realistic and future-oriented route can be the role of Germany in the EU and in the world. Even if there is a fear of Germany becoming a new hegemon in Europe, especially after the Brexit, there is also a fear that Germany is too reluctant to take on an active role in international politics as well, and especially in the field of migration. Not an easy position for Germany in Europe and in the world – externally and internally, now and in future.

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