

The Guest Worker Myth

How Turkish Immigrant Communities Rebuilt West Berlin 1960s - 1980s

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**truly hospitable
these germans are
they christened us
guest workers**

-Yüksel Pazarkaya¹

Introduction

In the 1960s and 1970s, West Berlin was at the center of the world's attention. Plagued by Cold War divisions, all eyes were focused on the city's seemingly miraculous physical and economic renewal. Modern housing compounds by world famous Bauhaus émigrés drew visitors and press attention, and the currency reform of 1948 had seemingly sparked an economic miracle (*Wirtschaftswunder*). However, there is an essential story that is often only a footnote in this history of urban renewal: the so-called “guest workers” (*Gastarbeiter*). From the 1950s until 1973, Germany recruited thousands of foreign workers from countries like Spain, Yugoslavia, and Turkey to temporarily increase their production capacity. The workers were hired upon a rotation principle – after just a few years, they were to return home and make space for new recruits. Living in dormitories under strict curfews and restrictions, a far cry from the city's modernist housing complexes that advertised freedom and democracy, the *Gastarbeiter* were seen as easily replaceable participants in the German economic miracle.

This thesis elaborates on the story of West Berlin's transformation from the 1960s through the 1980s by complicating conventional macro-narratives of urban transformations. It moves beyond West Berlin's origin myths in order to acknowledge Turkish immigrants as central and active agents in West Berlin's evolution. Drawing on archival research in Germany, each chapter approaches West Berlin's story from two perspectives. First, I discuss big picture

¹ Yüksel Pazarkaya “gastarbeiter” 1989, DOMiD.

changes in the city, addressing flashy building expositions and ambitious top-down policy initiatives. With this framework in place, each section then zeroes in on the lives of Turkish guest workers living in the city. From the long train ride to Germany, to the founding of so-called “backyard mosques” (*Hinterhofmoscheen*) and small businesses, these sections round out the story of Germany’s island of democracy in the East. It is impossible to fully understand the larger-scale changes happening in West Berlin without investigating the influence of the Turkish immigrants in the city, and vice versa.

This entanglement complicates the preconception that Turkish immigrants lived in isolated “parallel societies” within German borders. Although Turkish modes of belonging diverged from common political definitions of integration, the “guest workers” were never simply economic contributors. Since their arrival, Turkish immigrants have influenced their surroundings and shaped urban spaces to fit their needs. This happened in conversation with German institutions and residents, not in complete isolation. Investigating these tangled narratives contributes to a more holistic understanding of the relationship between immigrants and their newfound communities.

Taking Stock and Notes on Methodology

In the more than 50 years since Germany began recruiting Turkish ‘guest workers,’ a quickly growing body of work has analyzed the success, or more commonly the failure, of Germany’s immigration policy. Much of this work, in the fields of sociology, political science, and history, seeks to apply either micro- or macro-level theory to the processes of Turkish migration and integration.² Historian Rita Chin, for example, has published enormously

² **Influential macro-level works include:** Karin Hunn, “*Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück--*”: *die Geschichte der türkischen “Gastarbeiter” in der Bundesrepublik* (Wallstein Verlag, 2005).; Annika Hinze, *Turkish Berlin: Integration Policy and Urban Space*, *Globalization and Community*; Volume 21 (Minneapolis: University of

influential work studying the role of Turkish cultural elites as well as the roles of democracy and race in ‘guest worker’ integration.³ Much of the existing literature has also focused on the period post-1973, after recruitment officially ended. For example, several socio-cultural analyses, including musicologist Thomas Solomon’s investigation of transnational Turkish-German rap, have focused on Turkish identity formation related to “Muslim-ness” in 1990s Germany.⁴ More recently, historians have adopted a more ethnographic-centered *Alltagsgeschichte* (everyday history) approach that addressed the early experiences of ‘guest workers’ in West Germany. In 2018, for example, historians Sarah Thomsen Vierra and Jennifer Miller both published insightful books about Turkish migrants’ lived experiences.⁵ These two works fold in concepts like spatiality and identity-building that I incorporate in this work as well. I draw much of my *Alltagsgeschichte* analytical framework from geographer Patricia Ehrkamp’s spatial analysis of 1990s Marxloh, a predominantly Turkish neighborhood in Cologne.⁶ Ehrkamp questions assimilationist discourses in order to re-evaluate the interactions between immigrants and immigrant-receiving communities.⁷

Minnesota Press, 2013).; Mark E. Spicka, “Guest Workers, Social Order, and West German Municipalities, 1960–7,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 54, no. 3 (July 2019): 619–39.

Influential ethnographic/*Alltagsgeschichte* works include: Wolfgang Kil and Hilary Silver, “From Kreuzberg to Marzahn: New Migrant Communities in Berlin,” *German Politics and Society* 24, no. 4 (December 1, 2006): 95–121.; Gökçe Yurdakul, *From Guest Workers into Muslims: The Transformation of Turkish Immigrant Associations in Germany* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Pub., 2009).

³ Rita Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).; Rita Chin, Eley, Geoff, and Grossman, Atina, *After the Nazi Racial State: Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009).

⁴ Thomas Solomon, “Hardcore Muslims: Islamic Themes in Turkish Rap in Diaspora and in the Homeland,” *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 38 (2006): 59–78. Patricia Ehrkamp, “‘We Turks Are No Germans’: Assimilation Discourses and the Dialectical Construction of Identities in Germany,” *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 38, no. 9 (September 2006): 1673–92.

⁵ Sarah Thomsen Vierra, *Turkish Germans in the Federal Republic of Germany: Immigration, Space, and Belonging 1961-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).; Jennifer A. Miller, *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany: Hidden Lives and Contested Borders, 1960s to 1980s* (Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 2018).

⁶ Patricia Ehrkamp, “‘We Turks Are No Germans.’”

⁷ Ibid.

This project is in close conversation with this evolving research, and contributes to the field through a unique presentation of the *Gastarbeiter* story. The structure is strictly chronological, and extends from the moment of recruitment in Turkey to the fall of the Berlin Wall. I made the conscious decision to move away from a thematic approach in order to emphasize the *evolution* of West Berlin alongside the ‘guest worker’ experience.⁸ Each chapter approaches a specific time period using two analytical frameworks. The first perspective integrates the city- and nation-wide scales; this includes landmark government immigration policy, the West German *zeitgeist*, and trends in West Berlin’s city planning. The second side of the story is the *Alltagsgeschichte*, the everyday experiences of immigrants. These individual stories, several of which I found doing archival research, question oversimplified government narratives and challenge assumptions enveloped in the ‘guest worker’ myth.

This thesis is by no means a comprehensive account of what it means, or has meant, to be a ‘guest worker’ in Germany. Firstly, this study focuses exclusively on ‘Turkish’ immigrants.⁹ This focus is both narrow and broad; narrow in that ‘guest workers’ came from a wide range of countries, and broad in that the term ‘Turkish’ can mean many things. Using the term ‘Turkish’ is not meant to leave out minority groups like the Kurds, nor is it meant to gloss over intracultural differences. It is, unfortunately, a term of convenience in the history that follows. Secondly, although this project weaves in broad themes that transcend the city-level, West Berlin is the centerpiece. This history is not meant to stand in for other German regions with high numbers of immigrants, like the Ruhrgebiet. Berlin is the city where I conducted my research,

⁸In *Turkish Germans in the Federal Republic of Germany*, for example, Vierra divides her analysis onto spaces that Turkish ‘guest workers’ encountered in the FRG.

⁹It is important to note that the German government did not use the term ‘migrant’ or ‘immigrant’ to refer to Turkish ‘guest workers’ – instead, the term ‘foreigner’ was common. In this project, I choose to use the terms ‘guest worker’ in quotation marks, migrant, and immigrant interchangeably. I feel that this reflects the complicated status that these people and families had in Germany.

and it is also the place where space and power were mostly intimately intertwined in Cold War Germany.¹⁰ As such it became a central location for the formation of Germany's post-war identity, especially on an international scale.¹¹ It is also home to Kreuzberg 36, a zip code within a working class Berlin neighborhood alongside the Berlin Wall, that became the most emblematic 'Turkish' neighborhood in Germany. Because West Berlin holds so much symbolic weight, both for European and Turkish-German histories in the mid- to late-20th century, it is the ideal location to dig deeper into the intricate stories behind sweeping narratives.

Stunde Null, the Wirtschaftswunder, and the Gastarbeiter: West Berlin's Origin Myths

In order to contextualize this project, which ties West Berlin's development to the development of the Turkish immigrant community, it is necessary to understand the location of the 'guest worker' in West Germany's post-war consciousness. The following section argues that three origin myths shaped West Berlin's post-WWII revival and evolution: *Stunde Null* (hour zero), the *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) and the *Gastarbeiter* (guest worker).¹² They are myths not in that they are devoid of the truth, but rather in that they are too often stand-ins for the more complicated history of West Germany's long post-war period.¹³ Existing literature typically addresses each of these critical phenomena in isolation, but without understanding each element in the context of the other two, the picture will always be incomplete. As historians Rita Chin and Heide Fehrenbach so aptly noted: "As transient beings, labor recruits were not associated with such longer-term processes as social reconstruction or democratization."¹⁴ This

¹⁰ Emily Pugh, *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014).

¹¹ Hinze, *Turkish Berlin*, xxiv.

¹² These myths are not novel – they have been reiterated in many contexts and in many forms. I hope to repurpose them to provide context for the location of the imagined 'guest worker' in post-war Germany's history.

¹³ For a discussion of the "long post-war" see Tony Judt, *Postwar* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005).

¹⁴ Rita Chin and Heide Fehrenbach, "German Democracy and the Question of Difference, 1945-1995, in *After the Nazi Racial State: Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe*, eds. Rita Chin, Eley, Geoff, and Grossman, Atina (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 107.

introduction seeks to draw these connections, showing how entangled “guest worker” recruitment was with the Cold War projects of democracy and economic growth.

Introducing and (Dis)entangling the Three Myths of the Post-War Order

The first myth of post-war West Germany was *Stunde Null* (hour zero). At its core, this narrative implied that Germany emerged from the devastation of WWII with a blank slate. Because levels of physical and psychological destruction during the world war had been so horrifying, and so widespread, a primarily forward-looking mindset was appealing. The escalating Cold War politics of the 1950s quickly filled in this tabula rasa. The goal of both the West and the East was to ground the lofty political ideologies of democracy and communism respectively in the everyday actions and lives of citizens – a battle between “ways of life.” Because Berlin had been divided into occupation zones after the war, both the Western and Eastern blocs used the visibility of Berlin’s cityscape as a weapon in an ideological battle.¹⁵

In order to instill democratic values in the landscape, the West Berlin Senate supported a resurgence of modernist architecture. This wave of modernism touted wide streets perfect for cars, more greenspaces, less-dense housing blocks, and segregation of housing from other city functions. It sought to leave the old city, known for its blocks of dense tenement apartments, behind. Famous architects and public building exhibitions branded modernism as part of West Germany’s democratic turn. The enclave was the *Schaufenster des Westens*, or show window of the West, and the world’s eyes were watching.

The second myth of post-war West Germany was the *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle). After the devastation of war, Germany bounced back economically from the 1950s through the 1960s in what was often called a “miracle.” The most common touchpoint for the

¹⁵ See, for example, Jeffrey M. Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

beginning of the economic upswing was (and still is) Minister of Economic Affairs Ludwig Erhard's 1948 currency reform (*Währungsreform*), which introduced the German mark in West Germany. Erhard, under Germany's first post-war chancellor Conrad Adenauer, introduced West Germany to a social market economy.¹⁶

This shift towards a (regulated) free market supported the Cold War projects of the Western block, who wanted to hold up a democratic West Germany as a successful example of prosperity. It was also essential for Germany's identity as a nation of innovation and hard work. Economic Minister Erhard captured some of this sentiment: "...it was everything besides a miracle. It was only consequence of the honest effort of an entire people."¹⁷ This perception of German hard work (*Fleiß*) withstood the test of time. A 1997 history textbook in Bavaria (southern Germany) stated: "The Germans largely generated this miracle themselves, by being extremely hard-working and undertaking enormous hardships."¹⁸ This homegrown miracle, grounded in the hard work and entrepreneurship of Germans across the country, has dominated the memory of the 1950s and 1960s.

Finally, the third myth of the *Gastarbeiter* (guest worker) both intersects with and undermines the previous two. From the very beginning, recruitment was tied to rebuilding West Germany and to the economic miracle. Germany's guest worker program was a series of bilateral

¹⁶ Economic historians have questioned the *Wirtschaftswunder*'s origins in Germany's Social Market Economy. Economic historian Tamas Vonyo has argued that the conditions of war themselves, like a pre-existing industrial capacity and a flow of workers from the East, contributed more to the boom than the false specter of the Social Market Economy. Additionally, the corporatism of the post-war order benefitted the industry that remained from the Nazi state. For more information, see Tamás Vonyó, *The Economic Consequences of the War: West Germany's Growth Miracle after 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).; Geoff Eley, *Corporatism and the Social Democratic Moment: The Postwar Settlement, 1945–1973*, ed. Dan Stone, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199560981.013.0002>.

¹⁷ Ludwig Erhard and Wolfram Langer, *Wohlstand für alle*, [1. Aufl.]. (Düsseldorf: Econ-Verlag, 1957), 157.; It is worth noting that in the original German, Erhard uses the word "Volk," which I have translated as "people."

¹⁸ Part of an exhibit titled "German Myths since 1945" by the Haus der Geschichte museum in Bonn <https://www.hdg.de/en/haus-der-geschichte/exhibitions/german-myths-since-1945/>

agreements; the earliest agreement was with Italy in 1955, and Spain and Greece followed. These foreigners joined the immigrants, mostly from the East, who were fueling the German workforce. The construction of the Berlin Wall almost overnight in August 1961, and the militarized fence running the length of the country, stymied the steady flow of workers from the East. This same year, the West German government signed a contract with Turkey – Turkish migrants soon became the largest group of foreign workers living in Germany.

Because the economic need was temporary, the foreign worker program was envisaged as temporary as well. The *Rotationsprinzip* (rotation principle) granted workers short-term contracts with German firms on the condition that they would return home after only a couple of years. This led to the myth of the *Gastarbeiter* as an unattached male, a welcome and short-term guest who would contribute to Germany in only an economic sense. When the millionth guest worker Armando Rodrigues de Sá of Portugal arrived in 1964, and the millionth worker from southern Europe Ismail Bahadir came in 1969, their reception reflected this status in the German imaginary. Photographers snapped photos of the men on train platforms, and, to display their thanks, the German government presented them with a moped and a television set respectively. They were symbolic of the economic upswing, not of any permanent change to the country. This could not have been further from the truth.

By researching how Turkish immigrants negotiated with the city around them, developing their own identities in conversation with the *Gastarbeiter* myth, introduces interesting perspectives on informal urbanism in relation to the urban planning establishment. It is clear that the Turkish population was essential for rebuilding West Berlin *outside of* the Wirtschaftswunder factories, and that the West Berlin government's grand urban renewal plans were ultimately foiled by an ever evolving city. Modernism did not turn out to be the way

forward –instead, West Berlin’s important changes were more linked to a diversifying city and a changing culture. Urban renewal is one way to rebuild a city. In the central neighborhoods like Kreuzberg, however, the influx of immigrants was centrally productive of West Berlin’s new form and culture. This “border culture,” nestled between the symbolic wall and the modernist icons of democracy, was equally as defining as either of these larger than life motifs.

Chapter 1 An Introduction to Recruitment

The story of Turkish guest workers starts not in West Germany, but in Turkey itself. The existing literature typically glosses over the process of recruitment, but this experience holds invaluable information about making the transcontinental move.¹⁹ This short chapter clarifies common misconceptions about the recruitment process, and then introduces one woman's memories of her trip from Istanbul to West Berlin.

A series of bilateral agreements between Germany and Italy (1955), Spain (1960), Greece (1960), and Turkey (1961) constituted the beginnings of the 'guest worker' program. Early analyses of these contracts assumed that they were impulsive and unilateral decisions on the part of West Germany in order to quickly boost their labor reserves. Historian Johannes-Dieter Steinert's groundbreaking analysis corrected these misconceptions.²⁰ His research, first published in 1995, established the agency of the sending countries in 'guest worker' recruitment.²¹ Turkish officials began to consider the potential benefits of emigration around 1960, when the country forecasted an economic shift away from agriculture.²² Temporary emigration would lead to remittances streaming into Turkey, as well as free training for unskilled workers, who could eventually return home and boost Turkey's skilled labor pool.²³ Both Germany *and* Turkey, then, had an interest in maintaining a two-year 'rotation principal' (*Rotationsprinzip*) that prevented long-term migration to Germany.

¹⁹ For a notable exception, see Miller, "Turkish guest workers in Germany."

²⁰ Johannes-Dieter Steinert, "Migration and Migration Policy: West Germany and the Recruitment of Foreign Labour, 1945–61," *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 1 (January 2014): 9–27.

²¹ Johannes-Dieter Steinert, *Migration und Politik: Westdeutschland - Europa - Übersee 1945-1961* (Osnabrück: Secolo Verlag, 1995).

²² Steinert, "Migration and Migration Policy," 18.

²³ Steinert, "Migration and Migration Policy," 18.; See also Hunn, "Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück--."

Additionally, both Turkey and Germany played a role in administering the recruitment process. The node of recruitment was Istanbul, and three-quarters of Turkish ‘guest workers’ made their way to Germany through the offices set up in the city.²⁴ The official *Deutsche Verbindungsstelle* (liaison office), part of the German Employment Ministry, opened there in July 1960, and almost immediately thousands came to apply for jobs abroad.²⁵ German firms sent contracts to the office, and the *Verbindungsstelle* set out to find qualified workers to fill the positions. This involved skill tests and health examinations for applicants before they signed contracts and received work visas. These offices, staffed by Germans, were the first point of contact between jobseekers and their future neighbors.



Figure 1: Applicants gather outside the German liaison office in Istanbul, 1962²⁶

From Istanbul to West Berlin

The memories of Filiz Y., one of the first Turkish ‘guest workers’ to arrive in West Berlin, illuminates a more personal perspective of the recruitment process.²⁷ Her story also defies

²⁴ Yunus Ulosoy, “From Guest Worker Migration to Transmigration: The German-Turkish Migratory Movements and the Special Role of Istanbul and the Ruhr,” in Darja Reuschke, Monika Salzbrunn, and Korinna Schönhärl, eds. *The Economies of Urban Diversity: Ruhr Area and Istanbul* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 76.

²⁵ Steinert, “Migration and Migration Policy,” 23.

²⁶ Jean Mohr/DOMiD-Archiv, Köln, BT 0535,0002

²⁷ I have transcribed this story from an oral interview that the FHXB museum conducted with Filiz Yüreklik. Since conducting further research, I have found that this same story appears in most recent histories of guest worker

the assumptions of the Gastarbeiter myth – that ‘guest workers’ were male, unattached, unskilled laborers whose only prerogative was to make money to send home to Turkey.

Filiz was 20-years-old when she decided to apply for a job abroad at the employment bureau in Istanbul.²⁸ Over the course of fourteen days, she completed an at times extremely uncomfortable bureaucratic process. Something that stood out in her memory was the in-depth health examination that was common practice for applicants in Turkey (and in other ‘guest worker’ sending countries). Filiz completed a long list of health requirements – a urine sample, x-rays, a gynecologist visit, and even a teeth check.

"I mean, they controlled everything from A to Z, our hair, our feet, our fingers, our nails, everything... We were totally naked, only with our underwear during the health examinations... It is like they were buying animals"²⁹

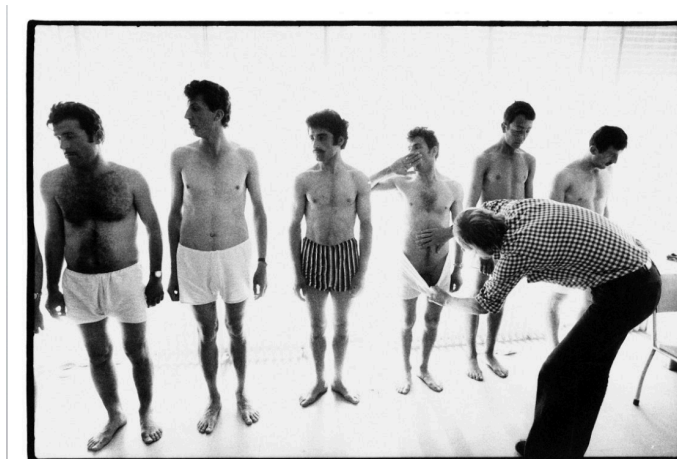


Figure 2: Invasive health examinations at the German liaison office in Istanbul, 1973³⁰

This was a common process for potential workers – their output as workers was at stake

recruitment (often under a pseudonym). It seems as if Filiz’s story has become a myth in itself and it is a shame that there are not more accessible oral histories from different perspectives. Nevertheless, I find her experiences very informative and powerful, especially for questioning dominant assumptions about ‘guest workers.’

²⁸ Oral interview conducted by K. Akgün and Martin Düspohl (German language) with Filiz Yüreklik, for an exhibit titled “Wir waren die ersten...Türkiye’den Berlin’e” (2000-2002) at the Friedrichshain Kreuzberg Museum Bezirksmuseum Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. Time stamp: 00:12:34

²⁹ Ibid. Yüreklik 2002

³⁰ DOMiD-Archiv Photo, Jean Mohr/ DOMiD-Archiv, Köln, BT 0536,0001

for German firms, and the large number of applicants gave the *Verbindungsstelle* significant discretion as to which workers received visas. For example, the Istanbul office used a spirometer to measure the lung volume of potential miners, which was a common job opening in Germany's Ruhrgebiet mining region.³¹ Filiz, on the other hand, found out that Telefunken's Berlin factory was looking for workers and made a hasty decision to commit to this contract. She started her application in September 1964 and set off from Istanbul on November 10th of the same year. In 1964, she was one of around 5,000 Turkish women who came to Germany through the *Verbindungsstelle* in Istanbul – women made up around 9 percent of the total number of workers.³²

Filiz's family was surprised at her choice to move to Berlin, because she was well-trained as a seamstress and had already completed an apprenticeship. Contrary to popular belief, it was actually very common for 'guest workers' to already have training, especially because German firms put out requests for specific professions. For example, in October of 1961 there were 2,421 outstanding commissions in Istanbul: 59% for metal craftsmen, 25% for miners, 11% for builders, and 2% for female textile workers.³³ Filiz perceived her move to Germany not solely in terms of making money, as is the common perception of 'guest workers,' but as a way to gain personal freedoms and new experiences.

This freedom was, however, limited from the moment she began her move. Departing from Istanbul's Sirkeci train station (see Figure 2), Filiz's mother, two brothers, and aunt came to see her off on her journey. In early morning, the train arrived in Sofia, Bulgaria. However, having signed contracts, they were unable to disembark the train after the long journey. Filiz

³¹ DOMiD-Archiv, SD 0351,0001

³² Hunn, "Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück--," 77.

³³ Hunn, "Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück--," 61.

describes this feeling: “We were like slaves, because we had a contract.” Unable to even lie down, the passengers rested their heads on each other’s shoulders as the train continued north through Yugoslavia, arriving in Austria the second night.



Figure 3: A train leaves from the Istanbul-Sirkeci train station, 1964³⁴

There was a sense of a common fate on the train, as passengers swapped food and slowly got to know one another. Filiz recalls the drama of the situation as well, remembering the sobs of a crying woman who had left her four children behind in Turkey. Her car was full of other women – the wagons were divided by gender.³⁵ The train arrived in Munich around dawn, and Filiz and seven other women who had also signed contracts with Telefunken continued on to their final destination – West Berlin. The train to Hannover was better outfitted than the previous train, and when they arrived a woman brought them to a railway mission (*Bahnhofsmmission*) to spend the night – Filiz shared a bed with her newfound friend Nica that night, because there were too few sleeping spaces. The next morning, all of the women boarded a plane for the very first

³⁴ DOMiD-Archiv Köln, E 1211,0001

³⁵ Original interview in Turkish, 1996 DOMiD-Archiv, Köln, ON 53734; Interviewee Alaattin I. came to Germany in 1965 and worked in a factory for a few years before becoming the Kapellmeister des Fanfarenzugs Graf Zeppelin in Friedrichshafen.

time for a short flight to West Berlin. Finally, touching down in Tempelhof, the women had arrived at their final destination. This group of women, some of whom had children at home or were educated with career training, defy the generalization of the single male Gastarbeiter.

Chapter 2

Hansaviertel and Heime: Modernist Revival and Guest Worker Dormitories

What kind of a city did Turkish “guest workers” encounter when they came to West Berlin in the early 1960s? This chapter contrasts the housing experiences of Turkish workers with the modernist, forward-looking building exhibitions that the West Berlin government constructed and projected on the world stage. While the city government built a series of modernist housing complexes from scratch as evidence of the country’s new beginning and economic progress, migrants lived in cramped dormitories that were often the antithesis of West Berlin’s modernist showpieces. In order to set up this contrast, the following section explores the centerpiece of West Berlin’s post-war modernist turn: the 1957 International Building Exhibition, or Interbau.

Interbau’s mission was to completely rebuild Hansaviertel, a neighborhood that had been hard hit during WWII, as an interactive exhibit and as a model for West Berlin’s future neighborhoods. But Hansaviertel’s emergence from the rubble was a symbolic rebirth. The exhibition was part of a Europe-wide trend to use architecture and urban planning as publicity centerpieces during the early years of the Cold War, and the West Berlin Senate explicitly used Interbau’s modernist orientation to ground the narratives of “hour zero” and the economic miracle in the consciousness of Berliners and the rest of the world.³⁶ They wanted to replace the cramped tenement housing of the inner city with new spaces that represented progress and democracy; the old was to be left behind (“zero hour”) utilizing new technology and ideas (economic miracle).

³⁶ Pugh, *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*, 58.

Although the Senate marketed Interbau as the “future” of the city for everyone, the exhibition was never the reality for much of West Berlin’s population – especially for the ‘guest workers’ who arrived shortly after Interbau’s international debut. A closer examination reveals how the government and media used workers’ dormitories (*Heime*) to envelop the Gastarbeiter myth in the post-war modernist turn.

The City of Yesterday: Interbau and Modernism’s Second Chance

On July 6th 1957, thousands streamed through West Berlin’s Hansaviertel. Several square blocks were part of this public neighborhood exhibition called Interbau, and visitors had come from the East and West to experience the new “model city.”³⁷ This small district nestled in the middle of Berlin was not just something to admire from afar; it was a curated, interactive spectacle meant to involve participants in an experience.³⁸ A show crane and a cable car provided aerial, 360 degree views of the new Hansaviertel. From this vantage point, the dispersed 10 story high rises and the meandering green spaces appeared as part of a grand modernist panorama.³⁹ Interbau was West Berlin’s crowning exhibit of the 1950s. By its conclusion, around 1.3 million people had visited the Hansaviertel and participated in the modernity-experience.⁴⁰

In reality, the West Berlin Senate’s intended audience was much larger than the number of in-person visitors. Interbau was a way to internationally project West Germany’s progress and democratic turn; in doing so, Interbau embraced the narratives of “hour zero” and the economic miracle as central themes of the exhibition. The Senate did so without resorting to overt

³⁷ E.P., “Musterstadt von heute: Europäisches Gemeinschaftswerk auf der Interbau,” Schwäb.Donau-Ztg.Ulm, July 3, 1957. Akademie der Künste (AdK) Bestand Hans-Scharoun-Archiv/ Signatur Scharoun 4176; The same text was also published in the Dtsch.Volksbl. Stuttgart.

³⁸ Pugh, *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*, 58.

³⁹ Sandra Wagner-Conzelmann, *Die Interbau 1957 in Berlin: Stadt von heute-- Stadt von morgen: Städtebau und Gesellschaftskritik der 50er Jahre* (Petersberg: M. Imhof, 2007).

⁴⁰ Wagner-Conzelmann, *Die Interbau 1957*, 9.

propaganda; instead, these ideas were embedded in the conception and implementation of the expo.⁴¹

Interbau organizers upheld the ‘hour zero’ myth by explicitly avoiding historical references to both West Berlin’s recent Nazi past and the interwar precedent of modernist architecture. In order to achieve an exclusively forward-looking aesthetic effect, Interbau planners utilized the strategy of complete demolition (*Kahlschlagsanierung*), which was common in Germany’s postwar urban planning establishment. The central targets of destruction were the *Mietskasernen*, or tenement houses. After the war, there were many competing visions for the future of the city – but the destruction of the ‘tenement city’ was the single unifying factor.⁴² Politicians and architects were painfully aware of these buildings’ legacies, and Berlin’s reputation as a cramped, dark “*steinerne Stadt*” (stone city).⁴³ Interbau countered this architectural heritage.

It is true that the war demolished much of Hansaviertel years before Interbau took place; only 13% of the neighborhood’s housing stock had survived WWII.⁴⁴ But it was not a completely clean slate. The “rubble” of the Hansaviertel housed 741 people and 20 businesses when the complete redevelopment scheme came about.⁴⁵ Even in cases where the buildings themselves were unsalvageable, basements and plumbing systems and street networks remained largely viable.⁴⁶ Traces of the neighborhood’s past as a well-to-do but diverse neighborhood, full

⁴¹ Pugh, *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*, 58.

⁴² Josef Paul Kleihues et al., *750 Jahre Architektur und Städtebau in Berlin: die Internationale Bauausstellung im Kontext der Baugeschichte Berlins* (Stuttgart: G. Hatje, 1987), 214.

⁴³ 33. Sitzung Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin, speech made by Schwedler (Senator of Construction and Housing, Social Democrat), June 18 1964, Landesarchiv (LArch) B Rep 001 / 439.

⁴⁴ Harald Bodenschatz, *Platz frei für das neue Berlin!: Geschichte der Stadterneuerung in der “größten Mietskasernenstadt der Welt” seit 1871* (Berlin: Transit, 1987), 165.

⁴⁵ Bodenschatz, *Platz Frei*, 165.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

of tenement housing blocks, still remained.⁴⁷ Therefore, starting completely from scratch was not a necessity, but a pointed strategy of *Kahlschlagsanierung*.

One compelling example of Interbau's emphasis on "hour zero" was the West Berlin Senate's demolition of a synagogue on Levetzowstrasse that had formerly served the Hansa district's large Jewish community.⁴⁸ During WWII, the Nazis had coopted the synagogue as a holding cell for Jews before deportation to concentration or death camps. Now, ten years after the end of the war, the Senate ordered it to be torn down; the Interbau exhibit made no mention of the neighborhood's history as a center of Jewish culture, nor did it mention the Levetzowstrasse synagogue.⁴⁹ The historic nature of the neighborhood was irrelevant to its future as the "city of tomorrow." Specifically, the Jewish tradition and the neighborhood's Nazi past were not part of this vision for the future. This 'clear-cutting' was symbolic – it meant erasing the neighborhood's history, and starting over from *Stunde Null*, hour zero.

But once the past had been demolished, what was to replace it? Interbau's answer to this question was "modernism." The central characteristics of architectural modernism were the separation between living spaces and work spaces, wider roads for the free movement of cars, more green spaces, and hollowed out city blocks. The winning proposal for Hansaviertel mirrored all of these characteristics. Green spaces from the adjacent Tiergarten bled into the porous Hansaviertel, integrating the modern high rises with the natural world. Winning designer Jobst described the housing "like people turned to one another in conversation."⁵⁰ Each building was an individual, with its own personality and style. Some were 10 story high-rises, some long

⁴⁷ Sandra Wagner-Conzelmann, "History until 1933," accessed March 15 2020, <https://hansaviertel.berlin/en/geschichte/geschichte-bis-1933/>

⁴⁸ Sandra Wagner-Conzelmann, "Jewish Neighbors," accessed March 15 2020, <https://hansaviertel.berlin/en/geschichte/juedische-nachbarn/>

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Wagner-Conzelmann, *Die Interbau 1957*, 35.

slabs skimming the ground, others low and tight bungalows. And the model city did not stop at single family houses or apartment buildings – every aspect of daily life found its match in the community, which comprised two churches, a school, a library, and a movie theatre.

Although the Interbau exhibit framed modernist architecture as the “future” of West Berlin, Interbau and post-war modernism did not simply arise from the rubble of WWII without historic precedent. Much of the urban design that gained popularity after the war modelled itself after the modernism of the interwar period, a fleeting time of German prosperity and freedom often referred to as the “golden twenties.” Inspired by famous architect Le Corbusier’s principle of functionalism, the German interwar movement called *Neues Bauen* (New Building) represented the city as chaotic and out of control – urban space called out to be tamed by the cool, objective logic of urban planning.⁵¹ Perhaps the most prominent example of interwar modernism was Walter Gropius’ renowned Bauhaus school, which fused a traditional craft-guild education with modern, functional design. The Bauhaus emigres made their modernist mark on the international stage, but the rise of National Socialism halted modernism’s success in Germany itself. The economic prosperity of the golden twenties was transient and the realities of inflation and political turmoil set in. Although the grand plans of the interwar modernists (including Corbusier, Wagner, and Taut) never came to fruition, the post-WWII modernist moment was a second chance to tame a city, now even more hectic than before.

The West Berlin Senate also embraced the narrative of the economic miracle in the execution of the Interbau exhibit. Evidence of West Germany’s economic success after the devastation of war was not only important to encourage homegrown consumption, but also for displaying the benefits of democracy on the world stage; the latter was especially important to

⁵¹ Janet Ward, *Post-Wall Berlin: Borders, Space and Identity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 157.

the Allied forces occupying West Germany. Before construction even started, Interbau reproduced themes of democracy and the free market that embraced the “economic miracle” narrative. For example, a publicized design ‘competition’ implicitly contrasted the authoritarian urban planning of in East Germany. The government committees overseeing Interbau perceived open discussion about the city’s future to be politically important, even if every single submission ultimately reflected the government’s goal to rebuild the Hansaviertel as a modernist centerpiece.⁵² The international coalition that built the exhibit, more than 60 collaborating architects and garden architects spanned 14 countries, was also important for the impression of open dialogue.⁵³ This international collaboration mirrored West Germany’s reintroduction to the Western market as a competitive hub of growth and ideas.

The ‘experience’ of technology during the Interbau exhibition was another way for the planning committee to support the impression of economic progress in West Germany. First, as historian Emily Pugh has noted, Interbau’s visitors did not encounter a polished masterpiece; only one-third of the buildings were finished when the exhibit took place that July.⁵⁴ The *process* of construction itself, evidenced by the half-finished buildings and equipment scattered across the neighborhood, was part of the show. It demystified the enormous amount of physical capital that went into rebuilding an entire neighborhood from scratch, tying Interbau to Germany’s economic growth. Visitors and news media also witnessed the technical ingenuity of the exhibit’s architecture in its many stages. Even in the ways that visitors physically moved around the exhibit, technology was in the spotlight. The *Schaukran* (viewing crane) lifted two egg-shaped baskets into the sky while an elaborate chairlift ferried onlookers around the

⁵² Wagner-Conzelmann, *Die Interbau 1957*, 34.

⁵³ AdK Bestand Hans-Scharoun-Archiv/ Signatur Scharoun 4176

⁵⁴ Pugh, *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*, 51.

neighborhood (See Figure 4). From the elevated benches of the chairlift, visitors could see tractors still overturning earth and unfinished apartment facades. There were also two VW-trains on display – one driving visitors around above ground, one sitting in a Hansaviertel subway tunnel alongside an exhibit about traffic. A central theme of Interbau, and post-war modernism in general, traffic circulation represented a new way for people to interact with the city.⁵⁵ These technological aspects of the exhibit emphasized the economic progress of West Germany.



Figure 4 Chair lift gives visitors a bird's eye view; viewing crane inscribed with the phrase "MONTE AU CIEL" (ascended to heaven)⁵⁶

Ultimately, Interbau displays how the West Berlin Senate's priority was to embrace and reproduce the two founding myths of post-war West Germany: "hour zero" and the economic miracle. This project was not centrally focused on bringing affordable and replicable housing projects to every city resident. In fact, Hansaviertel's reconstruction betrayed the Senate's own policies for affordable housing construction. The housing market in the 1950s was extremely reliant on public funding for construction projects; 79.7% of housing construction funds came from the city's public coffers.⁵⁷ As a result, the Senate stipulated that, in exchange for funding, all of the public-private projects had to offer apartments within a specific range of affordability.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Stadt von Morgen brochure, accessed March 15 2020 <https://hansaviertel.berlin/en/interbau-1957/die-stadt-von-morgen/>

⁵⁶ Visiting Interbau 1957 – Super8, <https://hansaviertel.berlin/en/interbau-1957/impressionen/>

⁵⁷ Elizabeth A. Strom, *Building the New Berlin: The Politics of Urban Development in Germany's Capital City* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2001), 48.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Interbau's modernist landscapes overshot these limitations. The cost of the apartments per square meter in Hansaviertel was well above that of the average social housing project.⁵⁹

The building committees purposefully withheld this financial information until after the exhibition's unveiling, but it did not remain unnoticed for long. The month of the exhibit, an article in the popular German magazine *Der Spiegel* questioned Interbau's compliance with 1953 and 1956 laws that dictated the stipulations attached to public construction money.⁶⁰ Well over a year after Interbau's unveiling, in October 1958, a crowd of over 500 people gathered in West Berlin's Congress Hall to obtain information about the financial backing of Interbau.⁶¹ The Interbau representatives defended the project's cost as a "one-time" expense – the first time is always more expensive, they claimed, as architects and politicians work out the kinks. This explanation omitted the the extra value, in the form of international media attention, that the West Berlin Senate gained from the exhibit.

The claims that Interbau made were radically universal. Hansaviertel was supposed to be a model for future development, enrolling everybody in the modernist mission to bring order to the city.⁶² But even in its own small nook of Berlin this vision was shaky. While the former Hansa neighborhood housed 6,500 residents, the new "city of tomorrow" only had enough space for around 3,500 – this was a sacrifice to increase the ratio of building-to-greenspace from 1:1.5 to 1.5:5.⁶³ A new neighborhood, with less and more expensive housing stock than its previous incarnation, was simply not replicable on the city-scale and did not meet the needs of West

⁵⁹ Senator für Bau- und Wohnungswesen, *Die Interbau wird Diskutiert: Die ersten Ergebnisse* (Wiesbaden and Berlin, 1960), 30.

⁶⁰ "Heiliger Otto," *Der Spiegel*, July 31 1957. <https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-41758146.html>

⁶¹ Günter Lehmann, "Geht die Hansa-Rechnung auf?," September 10, 1958, *Der Tagesspiegel*, and E.P., "Musterstadt von heute: Europäisches Gemeinschaftswerk auf der Interbau," July 3 1957, *Schwäb. Donau-Ztg. Ulm* (also published in the *Dtsch. Volksbl. Stuttgart*) AdK Bestand Hans-Scharoun-Archiv/ Signatur Scharoun 4176

⁶² Stadt von Morgen brochure

⁶³ "Heiliger Otto."

Berlin. Hansaviertel and other modernist housing complexes of the mid-20th century were supposed to model West Berlin's future, and in doing so they ignored its present.

West Berlin's Worker Dormitories

In the years after West Berlin embarked on a modernist public relations campaign that included the Interbau exhibit, thousands of 'guest workers' entered the city to live in cramped and isolated dormitories. This contradiction was inherent to the prevailing narrative of recruitment that addressed foreign workers not as people, but as economic fuel. Historian Rita Chin has described this as a "market discourse."⁶⁴ The ideal Gastarbeiter was male, single, unattached to Germany, and 'rotational.' Building on previous scholarship, I argue that West German political rhetoric wound the Gastarbeiter myth into the pre-existing narratives of progress and economic success that I have discussed in previous sections. The dormitories that most guest workers lived in throughout the 1960s are evidence of this entanglement, as well as of the challenges that 'guest workers' posed to the post-war narratives of "hour zero," economic progress, and democracy.

The contracts that 'guest workers' signed before coming to West Germany typically included housing arrangements alongside the terms of employment, so once migrants arrived in Germany they usually moved into a company-owned dorm (*Arbeitnehmerwohnheim*, or *Heim* for short). Housing conditions varied widely by locale and employer, but most were repurposed structures ranging from former student dormitories to wartime prison or labor housing.⁶⁵ Historian Jennifer Miller has traced these company dormitories to West Germany's housing shortage in the post-war period; it was in the government's interest to prevent extra pressure on

⁶⁴ Chin, "Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race," 84.

⁶⁵ Miller, *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany*, 81.; Vierra, *Turkish Germans in the Federal Republic of Germany*, 66.; See Vierra for a more in-depth discussion of poor condition in the dormitories for miners in the Ruhrgebiet.

local housing markets by requiring companies to provide housing themselves.⁶⁶ This policy relieved foreigners from having to navigate housing markets, but also left them with little room to make independent decisions about their housing.

Modern Evidence of Economic Progress? Poor Conditions in Heime

Interestingly and unexpectedly, the German firms and the news media occasionally used *Heime* as further evidence of West Germany's architectural and economic progress. This theory builds on historian Sarah Vierra's research, which found that German companies like Siemens often promoted their dorm apartments as "cozy and beautiful rooms" with common kitchens and laundry rooms full of the newest home technologies.⁶⁷ The dorms were, after all, a large investment project across the country: in 1960 the construction budget for the dormitories was one hundred million German marks, and in 1963 they allocated *double* that amount.⁶⁸

A specific example of this rhetoric was the renovation of an employee dormitory in Berlin's southeast locality Friedenau. When the *Heim* on Grazer Damm opened in December 1963, newspaper articles touted the project as an architectural success. Designers had transformed former business offices into 300 "modern" housing units, perfectly situated for the 44,000 foreign workers that had arrived in Berlin thus far.⁶⁹ The Senate and the news media also used these new workers' quarters as evidence of the collaboration between government financing and free enterprise, another centerpiece of the recently inaugurated social market economy. In this way, local officials and news outlets attempted to control the narrative of the dormitories to fit the ideals of modernism and progress.

⁶⁶ Miller, *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany*, 83.

⁶⁷ Vierra, *Turkish Germans in the Federal Republic of Germany*, 62.

⁶⁸ Miller, *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany*, 84.

⁶⁹ Newspaper clipping *Der Abend* December 13 1963 and newspaper clipping *Spandauer Volksblatt* December 13, 1963 18. Jahrgang/Nr.5333/Seite 7, LArch B Rep 008 / 1231.

Upon closer inspection, the *Heim* on Grazer Damm betrayed the media's rosy portrayal. Unlike the buildings in Interbau's Hansaviertel, which incorporated the modernist principles of light, air, and green space, the Grazer Damm dorm actually hailed from the period of National Socialism. Built between 1938 and 1940, the settlement (*Siedlung*) on Grazer Damm consisted of uniform and stiff five-story buildings, with none of the balconies typical of interwar modernism.⁷⁰ Looming on both sides of the street, the stark building fit with Nazi architect Albert Speer's monumental vision for the "*Welthauptstadt Germania*" – not with the modern "city of tomorrow." In July 1964, *Bild* magazine editorial staffer Kurt Lüsebrinck wrote a concerned letter to the Senator of Labor and Social Affairs about the Grazer Damm dormitory.⁷¹ Lüsebrinck had talked with a "*Gastarbeiter*," a term which he himself puts in quotation marks, named Melzer who lived in *Arbeitnehmerwohnheim* II Grazer Damm 127a. Melzer lived in a room of about 18.5 square meters that he shared with two other workers, for which each of them paid 65 DM every month. Lüsebrinck described the dormitory as, without exaggeration, close to a barrack. He also noted the number of rules for residents, including mandatory house meetings. In response to Lüsebrinck's complaint, the Senator rejected the term "barracks" and continued to emphasize the modernity of the *Heim*.⁷² The Senator's response focused on the "cozy and suitable design of the rooms," including light-colored wallpaper that matched the curtains and modern furniture. The letter also emphasized the communal living spaces available, like reading rooms and kitchens.

In the following years, more people placed complaints about Grazer Damm 127a. During a visit to Grazer Damm 127a in October of 1969, the Youth Social Services found that most of

⁷⁰ Matthias Donath and Berlin Landesdenkmalamt, *Architektur in Berlin 1933-1945: ein Stadtführer* (Berlin: Lukas-Verlag, 2007), 51.

⁷¹ LArch B Rep 008 / 1231

⁷² *Ibid.*

the kitchen stovetops were not working, and that there were many other necessary repairs.⁷³ The note mentioned that the dorm made “a poor impression.” In February of the following year, an angry postcard addressed to the Senator for Labor, Health, and Social Services described the dorm conditions in reviling detail.⁷⁴ According to the scrawled note, the rent prices were “profiteering,” with three men per room, each paying 240 DM for “soiled mattresses” (“*bespiste und bekotste und beschissene Matratzen.*”) At the end of the short postcard, written in broken German sentences, the resident stated: “An advertisement for Berlin!!!” Grazer Damm is an important reminder that for many parts of West Berlin, there was no starting from scratch, from *Stunde Null*. Remnants of the city’s past remained engrained in the physical landscape. The majority of guest workers who came to West Berlin in the 1960s lived in the midst of this history, in what remained of the city after the battle was over. I will expand on this trend in chapter 3, when I investigate home life outside of the dormitories.

Towards Democracy? Isolation and Control in Heime

Just as businesses and companies used themes of modernism and technology to control the rhetoric surrounding dormitory construction, they also used dormitories as a way to ground the myth of the economic and unattached *Gastarbeiter*. The company-owned *Heime* ultimately gave businesses and the West German government a lot of sway over the daily lives of ‘guest workers.’ For one, the dorms were often spatially isolated from host communities, as the main priority was for workers to live near the workplace. Even when *Heime* were proximal to existing cities or neighborhoods, as was often the case in West Berlin, strict curfews for all tenants

⁷³ In Filiz’s recollections of her stay in the Telefunken *Wohnheim*, her most negative associations are with the kitchen. As she remembers it, there were only four cooking stations for 30 residents. Because all of the women in her dorm worked the same hours, she recalls the pileup in the kitchen at night.

⁷⁴ LArch B Rep 008 / 1231

limited any interactions with Germans or community members. This isolation supported the narrative that the ‘guest workers’ were solely in Germany as economic fuel.

Secondly, the dormitories consciously limited any cross-gender interactions in order to prevent relationships or familial ties from forming. Companies strictly separated male and female apartments, and no visitors of the opposite gender were allowed into the dorms. Historian Jennifer Miller found additional evidence of this in “*Hallo Mustafa!*”, a guide book that the West German government published in Turkish for foreign workers in the 1960s: “It is not true, that women are always the best use of time. Every meeting with a woman demands tact and good manners. I would also like to warn you about sexually transmitted diseases, but that matter mainly for a specific category of women.”⁷⁵ The gender-divided dormitories, that discouraged any relationship-building, were a way for West Germany to maintain the image of workers as ‘unattached’ and single.

These themes feature prominently in the memories of Filiz Y., the Turkish woman whose train ride from Istanbul to Berlin was featured in the introductory chapter.⁷⁶ Filiz had a contract with Telefunken, a West German telephone company, and when she arrived at the West Berlin airport, her Turkish home director (*Heimleiterin*) was waiting to escort her to her new home. The Telefunken residence hall was located in Kreuzberg, and seemed to Filiz to be a normal apartment building. However, the house rules were certainly out of the ordinary for an apartment in democratic Berlin. A universal curfew of 10 p.m. on weekdays and midnight on the weekends significantly restricted the women’s freedom of movement. Furthermore, there were no guests

⁷⁵ Dr Giacomo Maturi, Willi Baumgartner, Stefan Bobolis, Konstantin Kustas, Vittorio Bedolli, Guillermo Arrillage, and Sümer Göksüyer, ed.s, *Hallo Mustafa! Günther Türk arkadası ile konusuyor* [Hello Mustafa! Günther speaks with his Turkish friends], illustrations Richard Haschberger (Heidelberg: Dr Curt Haefner Verlag, 1966), 34. Cited in Miller *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany*, 101.

⁷⁶ Interview with Filiz Yureklik, FHXB Digitales Archiv.

allowed in the dormitories, restricting the social relationships that the women had – men were especially “taboo,” but even female friends were not allowed. In order to cope with her restricted movement and relationships, Filiz imagined that she was a student going to school during the day and coming home to sleep in a “boarding school” (*Internat*).⁷⁷ Although Filiz’s experiences cannot possibly represent the broad range of dormitory conditions, they do bring to light factors that united most *Heime*: overcrowded sleeping and living spaces, strict rules and oversight, and separation by gender.

These conditions were essential for upholding the *Gastarbeiter* myth. The rules and isolation of the *Heime* molded the migrants’ actions to fit the preconceived image of an unattached, low-skilled worker who was part of West Germany’s ‘economic miracle’ and pivot towards democracy. The next chapter delves deeper into the 1960s in West Berlin, and pulls out how migrants reacted to their living conditions and often resisted the expectations of the *Gastarbeiter* myth both from within, and outside of, the dormitories.

⁷⁷ Interview with Filiz Yureklik, FHXB Digitales Archiv, time stamp: 47:30.

Chapter 3
Urban Renewal and Life on the Border in the 1960s: Remaking the City from Above and Below

Turkish workers influenced West Berlin from the moment they arrived in 1961. Although the *Heime* molded workers to fit the Gastarbeiter myth, Turkish communities began to challenge this narrative within, and outside of, these limiting spaces. This agency is too often missing in existing literature, which tends to focus on the 1970s as the absolute starting point of Turkish influence on West Germany.⁷⁸ This oversimplification ignores the earlier experiences of workers navigating their uncertain identities in a divided West Berlin. Although the available primary and secondary source materials on the early years of recruitment are regrettably scant, it warrants a brief discussion here and certainly more future inquiry.

In addition to acknowledging this early influence of Turkish guest workers, the 1960s were a time of immense spatial change for the city of West Berlin as a whole. The Turkish Gastarbeiter arrived in a divided city. When the Berlin Wall went up in 1961, entire parts of the city were transformed into borderlands overnight. The West Berlin city government saw these neighborhoods, which the city's division had thrown into stark relief, as an opportunity to continue Interbau's modernist agenda. This chapter demonstrates how this ambitious top-down endeavor ultimately failed to reinvigorate West Berlin's inner city. Instead, these 1960s urban renewal policies primed neighborhoods for an influx of Turkish migrants who negotiated their identities outside of workers' dormitories as longer-term residents of the city.

Renewing the Inner City

For the rest of the world, the Berlin Wall was symbolic. It represented the hardening of two Cold War camps and irreconcilable political differences between East and West Germany.

⁷⁸ Notable exceptions are the recent works, Vierra *Turkish Germans in the Federal Republic of Germany* and Miller *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany*, which address earlier immigrant experiences like dormitories.

But the physical structure also had very tangible effects on West Berlin's inner city neighborhoods-turned-borderlands. The Berlin Wall was a physical fact of life. It infringed upon parts of Kreuzberg and Neukölln, squeezing districts that were already slowly leaking residents (See Figures 5 and 6). The population in Kreuzberg, for example, had fallen 6.2% between 1956 and 1961, while the average population loss across Berlin neighborhoods was only 1.1% during this same time period. These neighborhoods were traditionally working class and still consisted of the tenement housing (*Mietskasernen*) that the modernist Interbau exhibit had hoped to eradicate from the cityscape. The wall exacerbated the already dilapidated neighborhoods. Those who could do so continued the exodus, many moving to newer housing complexes, leaving the poor and the elderly behind.⁷⁹



Figure 5 A map of Berlin's neighborhoods, divided by the Berlin Wall. Note Kreuzberg's position on the border, alongside the wall.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Hanno Hochmuth, *Kiezesgeschichte: Friedrichshain und Kreuzberg im geteilten Berlin* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2017), 75.

⁸⁰ Pugh, "Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin."



Figure 6: A street view of the Berlin Wall in Kreuzberg⁸¹

The Berlin city government noticed the sinking population in these inner city neighborhoods and feared “*Slumbildung*” (slum formation) and further decay.⁸² The Social Democratic Party, under the leadership of charismatic mayor Willy Brandt, embarked on a mission to restore vitality to the inner city. A 1961 government investigation deemed 470,000 pre-WWI houses in need of renewal and 430,000 in need of repair or demolition.⁸³ Less than two years after the wall went up, on March 18th 1963, Brandt officially announced a new program of *Stadterneuerung* (urban renewal). This project was set to renovate six Berlin neighborhoods: Tiergarten, Wedding, Kreuzberg, Charlottenburg, Schöneberg and Neukölln. The Kreuzberg District Mayor Abendroth ambitiously announced that within the next ten years the neighborhood would be “completely redesigned” (“*vollig neu gestalten*”).⁸⁴

⁸¹ Fotografien der Sebastianstraße vom 18. Februar 1976. Henschel-Fotobestand, Signatur: K01_0054_24-28, FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum Digitales Archiv.

⁸² LArch B Rep 001: 439

⁸³ LArch B Rep 001: 439

⁸⁴ H.G., "Optimismus in der Friedrichstadt: Langfristige Pläne sehen eine moderne und lebendige Kreuzberger City vor," *Der Tagesspiegel*, October 31 1964, LArch B Rep 206: 2712.

From a political perspective, these neighborhoods were the perfect chance to make a statement about West Germany's successful future-oriented development. The Berlin Wall had thrown the city's political division into concrete relief on the world stage, and urban renewal was a way for the city government to represent the West's economic and political process in stark contrast to those of the East. The physical proximity of the two Berlins made for a black and white comparison.

The city government utilized the same principles as the Interbau project of the 1950s, drawing on postwar modernism to physically portray democracy and technological progress. They wanted to rid the inner city of mixed use areas, integrate light and air into crowded blocks, and hollow out dense streets. In a June 1964 speech in front of the Berlin House of Representatives, the Social Democratic Senator of Building und Housing Schwedler stated:

“Berlin has a worldwide reputation as a ‘stone city.’ The rear buildings (*Hinterhäuser*) and light shafts of the Berlin tenement houses are presented to generations of architecture students as a warning and as a bad example...”⁸⁵

The West Berlin government recognized the international importance of the cityscape. Schwedler saw Berlin's future in the genius designs of Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius, banished architects who would come back to destroy the alleys and courtyards that were so infamous as to be pedagogical warnings.⁸⁶

In order to implement these modernist principles in the decaying inner city, the city government saw the greatest potential value in *Kahlschlagsanierung* (complete renewal). Early city reports deemed the partial renovation of decades old inner city buildings to be “uneconomical and unsatisfactory in effect.”⁸⁷ This statement indicates that economic

⁸⁵ LArch B Rep 001: 439.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

considerations were only part of the calculus. The tenement housing represented the past and no amount of renovations could have altered this ingrained perception; complete demolition thus trumped the preservation of existing structure or materials.

The Social Democratic Party shared this vision of demolition with a broad “growth coalition” consisting of public housing companies and banks.⁸⁸ This public-private partnership was essential for carrying out the urban renewal project. The city provided funding for the projects, offering more money for complete demolition than for repairs.⁸⁹ This incentivized housing companies to purchase property with the end goal of tearing down the buildings and starting over from scratch.

The process often stalled before demolition ever took place, however, and the tenement houses waited in limbo. In the meantime, landlords and real estate developers rented the dilapidated properties to vulnerable populations (like foreign workers) looking for low-rent options.⁹⁰ Housing companies saw these transitory residents as easy profit; the companies collected rent without having to invest in or renovate the soon-to-be rubble. In the foreseeable future, the guest workers would move back to Turkey, and the Berlin government could transform Kreuzberg and other inner city neighborhoods into modernist centerpieces of a democratic city.

This transformation never occurred. Despite ambitious talk of rebuilding the inner city, much of the economic and international focus during this time period was on higher-profile

⁸⁸ Strom, *Building the New Berlin*, 49.

⁸⁹ Christopher Klemek, *The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal: Postwar Urbanism from New York to Berlin* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 226, 229. Strom, *Building the New Berlin*, 49.; In other cities, the public housing companies were under more oversight from the city government, while in Berlin they had a large degree of autonomy. Despite this autonomy, they still received more funding than average from the public coffers.

⁹⁰ J.H.P. Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik, “Community change and invasion: the case of Turkish guest workers,” in *Spatial disparities and social behavior: a reader in urban research*, ed. J. Friedrichs (Hamburg: Christians, 1982), 121.

projects. In 1963, for example, the city government built a new cultural center to replace the former museum island, which had been choked by the city's division.⁹¹ It poured resources into an impressive state library and museums.⁹² These city centerpieces showcased Prussian artifacts and heritage in West Berlin, serving as new focal points to "counteract the 'decay of the inner-city areas.'"⁹³ Other modernist housing projects also occupied large amounts of the growth coalition's time and money. The towering apartment buildings of the brand new Märkisches Viertel, Gropiusstadt, and Falkenhagener Feld formed a modernist ring around the city.⁹⁴

The tall towers of the new modernist housing developments were ideally situated to house the thousands of residents fleeing the tenement neighborhoods. According to urban planner Harald Bodenschatz, this specific migration flow from the crumbling inner city to the modernist ring was far from accidental.⁹⁵ The building developers capitalized on the Berlin Wall and urban renewal programs as an impetus for moving residents to their newer developments – they needed to fill spaces in their large and more expensive new communities. By labelling those six inner city neighborhoods as "*Sanierungsgebiete*," they sped up the evacuation. Only those with few options remained.

West Berlin's inner city changed drastically during the 1960s, as the Berlin Wall explicitly altered the city's spatial flow and redirected attention to the new border. The Social Democrats and private developers positioned themselves to transform insulated borderlands into the "city of the future," a display of democracy and progress. However, upon closer inspection,

⁹¹ Pugh, *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*, 88-9.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Cited in Pugh *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*, 89.; The SPK was founded in 1955 with the mission of reviving Prussian culture. See Pugh for a discussion of how Prussian cultural heritage, often associated with WWII and Nazism, actually became a political tool to emphasize West Germany's unity and assert its connection with positive aspects of Prussian history (pp. 87-9).

⁹⁴ Kleihues et al., *750 Jahre Architektur und Städtebau in Berlin*, 227.

⁹⁵ Bodenschatz, *Platz frei für das neue Berlin!*, 177-8. This theory was also put forth in Kleihues et al., *750 Jahre Architektur und Städtebau in Berlin*, 226.

these projects were unrealistic from the start. The model of total demolition was simply not feasible, especially given the high demand for affordable housing in West Berlin – by 1969 only 1,976 new homes had been built, which was nowhere near the target.⁹⁶ The growth coalition and urban renewal did, however, leave the border districts wide open for change. District Mayor Abdendroth’s prediction that Kreuzberg would be “completely redesigned” (“*vollig neu gestalten*”) within ten years *did* come true, but not solely through the modern building projects that he predicted.⁹⁷ Instead, the residents who moved into inner-city neighborhoods like Kreuzberg became agents of urban renewal in their own right.

Changes from Below: Questions of Permanence and a New Border Culture

When landlords in urban renewal districts rented their apartments to Turkish immigrants, it was under the assumption that the ‘guest workers’ would soon return home. In the 1960s and 1970s, this was a common understanding among both Germans and migrants themselves. Neither party perceived the migration to be permanent. The institutions that the West German government established for migrants reflected this ‘temporary’ status, as the previous chapter’s discussion of *Heime* indicated. But this supposition of temporariness coexisted with another circumstance: the rotation principle was not enforced throughout most of the 1960s. As a result of this contradiction, the resources available did not match the needs of many migrants who wound up staying on in Germany year after year. This section investigates how Turkish workers reacted to these contradicting aspects of recruitment policy and traces ‘guest worker’ resistance from the *Heime* to religious spaces in West Berlin’s inner city neighborhoods.

It is first important to expand on the practical failures of the rotation principle – why did Turkish ‘guest workers’ stay longer than their initial 2-year contracts? The bilateral agreement

⁹⁶ Bodenschatz, *Platz frei für das neue Berlin!*, 176.

⁹⁷ LArch B Rep 206: 2712

that Germany and Turkey signed in 1961 spelled out the 2-year contractual limitation, which also included a prohibition on family reunification. In 1961 this was in the interest of both countries: Turkey wanted to train its population abroad before bringing them home to work, and Germany wanted a temporary, flexible workforce to support the economic miracle.⁹⁸ All parties involved soon recognized the inefficiency of the rotation principle. By as early as 1962 it was clear that Turkey's plan to train unskilled abroad was largely ineffective; that year, around around 47% of the Turkish 'guest workers' that German companies hired through recruitment offices were skilled, which was significantly higher than in other recruitment countries like Italy and Spain.⁹⁹ Turkey's priorities also shifted to increasing out-migration, as their population continued to grow and unemployment in cities increased.¹⁰⁰ This caused the country to reconsider the original contract's restrictions.

From the perspective of German companies, shorter contracts meant sending trained workers home too quickly. And for migrants living in Germany, who had started a job and developed relationships both within and outside of the *Heime*, it was difficult to leave after only two years. Both German companies and Turkish migrants complained about the 2-year limit to the Federal Labor Service (*Bundesanstalt für Arbeit*).¹⁰¹ Eventually, German government agencies also came around to the idea of altering the 1961 contract to reduce restrictions. The Ministry of Economy (*Wirtschaftsministerium*) maintained that, because limited housing could serve as a natural check on family reunification, the government should avoid the bad press of limiting Turkish family reunification.¹⁰² Other arguments from German agencies included that

⁹⁸ Hunn, "Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück--," 59.

⁹⁹ Hunn, "Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück--," 61.

¹⁰⁰ Hunn, "Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück--," 62,

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Hunn, "Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück--," 66.

the Spanish and Greek guest workers could already bring their families, and that Turkish workers had made public complaints early in 1962 about unfair treatment in comparison to these other groups of ‘guest workers.’¹⁰³ After deliberations, West Germany and Turkey signed a new contract on April 30th 1964 that removed the ‘rotation principle’ and the clause restricting family reunification.

These policy changes did not, however, significantly alter the infrastructures available for Turkish workers while they worked in Germany. The myth of the ‘temporary’ guest worker lingered ideologically even after the end of the rotation principle. As the previous chapter discussed, most ‘guest workers’ had no choice but to live in the workers’ dormitories (*Arbeitnehmerwohnheime*). The dorms were meant to be transit zones, impermanent homes. They took on new meaning after the legal limits of the rotation principle had been officially lifted. Without the limits of the original 1961 contract, the curfews, rules, and isolation inherent to the dorms were essential for preventing any long-term connections between workers’ and their new communities. The dorms continued to enforce the myth of the unattached ‘worker.’

Within the rule-bound dormitories, however, there were frequent opportunities for migrants to reject their limiting identity as ‘workers.’ Historian Jennifer Miller has addressed how “...workers made dormitories their homes when they took steps to create a social environment, carved out private time, and broke rules about visitors.”¹⁰⁴ The dorms’ lack of privacy, which in many instances felt oppressing, was also a chance for more social interaction. Far from home and family, *Heime* were often the social nodes of workers’ lives. Immigrants formed groups of friends and support systems within the dorms. According to one interview, some dorm residents resisted curfew restrictions by spending the weekend away and coming

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Miller, *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany*, 97.

home for the Monday curfew.¹⁰⁵ These small patterns of resistance indicate that even this spatial control of the ‘guest worker’ population was not enough to completely prevent more substantive interaction with the cities and communities that migrants lived in.

Many migrants also looked for housing outside of the company-sponsored *Heime*. The dormitories appealed to foreign workers with the stable rents and accessibility, but the return on the monthly rent was low. Cramped sleeping and cooking quarters were less than ideal, even for workers centrally focused on earning a living. Filiz Y., the woman who came to West Berlin to work for Telefunken, found herself in this situation in 1966.¹⁰⁶ By this time, Filiz had met her future husband in Berlin. She decided to leave Telefunken and the accompanying living arrangements in order to found the first Turkish flat-share community in Berlin with her significant other and two friends. In Filiz’s words, they wanted their own roof over their heads.¹⁰⁷ They quit their jobs at Telefunken and signed contracts with new firms (without dorms) on their own initiative; Filiz worked for a textile manufacturer for a short time, and then spent five years in plastic manufacturing for Robert Bosch. Filiz resisted the restrictions of the company-owned *Heime* by founding her own flat-share and seeking out her own employment in the city. Her experience also shows how the relationships that migrants formed often threatened the ‘myth’ of the unattached worker.

Filiz’s memories also counter histories that only acknowledge *Gastarbeiter* identity-building *after* family reunification in the 1970s. Although many foreign workers remained in the *Wohnheime* throughout the 1960s, others sought affordable housing as an alternative. As the previous section illustrated, this is where the large-scale city planning policy intersected with the

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Sevim Özel, cited in: Vierra, *Turkish Germans in the Federal Republic of Germany*, 68.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Filiz Yüreklik, FHXB Digitales Archiv, time stamp: 1:18:40.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Filiz Yüreklik, FHXB Digitales Archiv, time stamp: 1:19:00.

decision-making of Turkish immigrants. The only viable option for most migrants looking to leave the *Heime* was the inexpensive housing stock in the city-designated *Sanierungsgebiete* (renovation districts), as it was the future prey of urban renewal and in an undesirable location along the Berlin Wall. ‘Guest workers’ joined the working class and elderly residents in the broken down housing and a Turkish community on the border of West Berlin emerged. In 1968, immigrants made up 6% of the housing stock of the renewal districts; by the end of 1974 that percentage had increased to around 37%.¹⁰⁸

Migrants made their own mark on the neighborhoods that the city had designated for ‘renewal’ as existing urban infrastructures shapeshifted along with the demographic changes. The early history of West Berlin’s *Hinterhofmoscheen* (backyard mosques) is emblematic of this bottom-up influence, which happened in conversation with the political and economic forces of the city’s Cold War development. Although a later chapter will expand on Islam in Germany in the 1980s, it is valuable to introduce the topic here in order to connect early Turkish influence with the urban renewal architecture of West Berlin.

Turkish migrants came to Germany from a country that Atatürk had secularized during his extensive 1920s reforms.¹⁰⁹ Although this generation of Turkish guest workers was not particularly religious, significant portions of Turkey’s population resented Atatürk’s strict secular reforms. Many migrants were practicing Muslims and some even saw their move to Germany as an opportunity to connect with their religious practices. There was, however, very

¹⁰⁸ Bodenschatz, *Platz frei für das neue Berlin!*, 178.

¹⁰⁹ Atatürk’s reforms, often called “Kemalism,” were an attempt to modernize Turkey and distance the country from the Ottoman past (the Ottoman Empire dissolved after WWI). These reforms included rejecting Turkey’s identification with Islam. Forceful policies of secularization included banning Islamic schools called *madrasas*, doing away with the caliphate (a political manifestation of Islam), and banning traditional Ottoman dress and Arabic instruction. These secular policies were far from universally popular. For more information, see: <https://tcf.org/content/report/turkeys-troubled-experiment-secularism/?agreed=1>

little corresponding Muslim infrastructure in Germany at the time.¹¹⁰ In the Islamic tradition, these prayer spaces do not have to be ordained as a religious space or organized in any way.¹¹¹ This allowed workers to be flexible, finding small spaces to conduct their daily prayer. Some companies and dormitories also designated prayer space for their Muslim employees and residents. Eventually, demand for more organized spaces appropriate for Friday prayer services grew.

For Turkish migrants, the only readily available parts of the city were often the abandoned workshops and basements of the *Sanierungsgebiete*. And so the derogatory terminology “*Hinterhofmoschee*” (backyard mosque) emerged.¹¹² The *Hinterhöfe*, loosely translated as ‘backyards,’ were the mazes of alleys and courtyards that filled in the dense tenement housing blocks. This was the same infamous architectural feature that the design establishment categorically rejected during the post-war modernist revival and urban renewal campaign. But these rejected spaces were opportunities to repurpose the parts of the city accessible to *Gastarbeiter*. The new Turkish migrant population founded their first mosque in 1968.¹¹³ From the street, these places of worship were not immediately recognizable. One had to know where the ‘backyard mosques’ were, or recognize them based upon a small sign adorning the outside of the building.

Even though German society saw Turkish migrants almost exclusively as laborers, the slow beginnings of a semi-permanent home began as early as the 1960s. Although many of the more obvious future-oriented shifts in the *Gastarbeiter* community came in the following

¹¹⁰ See Beinbauer-Köhler, *Von der unsichtbaren zur sichtbaren Religion Räume*, 414-5 for an early history of Islam in Germany, dating back to the 18th century.

¹¹¹ Beinbauer-Köhler, *Von der unsichtbaren zur sichtbaren Religion Räume*, 418.

¹¹² I have been unable to identify the exact origins of this phrase, although the connection with the generally looked-down-upon “*Hinterhof*” implies a negative connotation. This could be an interesting area for further research.

¹¹³ Gerdien Jonker and Andreas Kapphan, *Moscheen und islamisches Leben in Berlin* (Berlin: Die Ausländerbeauftragte des Senats, 1999).

decade, tensions between theories of rotational recruitment and the actual circumstances of guest workers led to community developments that warrant more in-depth academic attention. Initially, these changes were largely hidden from view. The *Hinterhofmoscheen* and the community networks forming in the *Heime* were out of sight; they did not visibly disrupt the rotation narrative. Because the *Gastarbeiter* myth fit with the government's narrative of progress and economic growth, there was very little conflict surrounding their daily presence in factories or cities. Historian Rita Chin has argued that "[a]s long as guest workers were not understood as immigrants, it was possible to suspend the whole question of difference, or more specifically, to explain it away using the language of market expediency and a rationale of mutual benefits."¹¹⁴ This changed in the 1970s, when the visibility of Turkish migrant communities unmistakably threatened the 'guest worker' myth.

¹¹⁴ Chin, "Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race," 82.

Chapter 4
**Collapse of the Guest Worker Myth: Housing Discrimination, “Ghettoization,” and
 Resistance in 1970s West Berlin**

The 1970s marked an important transition period for Turkish workers in West Berlin. As the illusion of temporariness wore off, Turkish families reunited in Germany and began to set down more social and economic roots. But country-wide economic uncertainty and growing community ties stoked fears among Germans who perceived threats to their financial security and cultural identity. In response to these fears, government officials and community members attempted to use urban space as a way to manage cultural difference and lay out an idealized path to integration. In many cases, however, migrants formed their *own* connections to West Berlin. Reframing the so-called Turkish “ghettoes” as important cultural enclaves questions the validity of the integration narrative popular in the 1970s and 80s.¹¹⁵ This chapter discusses the economic and cultural context that framed integration debates, several unsuccessful spatial integration tactics, and finally the migrant population’s negotiation with these techniques of power.¹¹⁶

Introduction: Economic Uncertainty and the Anwerbestopp

In 1969, the German economy stuttered; after the 1973 oil embargo, the *Wirtschaftswunder* came to a full halt. The economic downturn spurred on by global energy uncertainty brought the state’s implicit assumptions about the guest worker program to the fore. If the workers’ sole purpose was to fuel the economy, it logically followed that they would return to Turkey when the economy weakened. Although the state calculus demanded emigration, workers performed their own calculations. Their reaction to financial insecurity was predicated

¹¹⁵ Rauf Ceylan has set an important precedent for this type of analysis with his work *Ethnische Kolonien: Entstehung, Funktion und Wandel am Beispiel türkischer Moscheen und Cafés* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006).

¹¹⁶ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Second Vintage books edition. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 22.

on their uncertain legal relationship with West Germany. *Jus sanguini* citizenship laws, which restricted citizenship status to hereditary ties as opposed to birth on German soil, were at the heart of this relationship. Christian Joppke attributes Germany's steadfast adherence to "genealogical" citizenship laws to the country's Cold War division; if German-ness was defined through blood rather than national borders, there was a national unity that overrode the Berlin Wall.¹¹⁷ The *jus sanguini* definition necessarily excluded any foreign workers and their children, born on German soil. The migrants from Turkey faced an additional challenge – because Turkey was not part of the European Economic Community (EEC), Turkish workers had to consider the possibility of not being let back into Germany once they had left the borders of 'Europe.'¹¹⁸

Because of this precarious legal position, Turkish workers were afraid of losing access to their jobs and new communities. Instead of returning home to visit their families, and risking being unable to return to Germany, their families came to them. This 'family reunification' picked up speed in the early 1970s and refuted a central part of the 'guest worker' narrative: that the 'guests' were all independent young men, unencumbered by the responsibility of partners or children. This assumption had made it easier to view people exclusively as workers. In reality, many workers that came to Germany through recruitment had made the difficult decision to leave loved ones behind in Turkey. As anxieties about their future prospects in Germany, and in a politically unstable Turkey, increased, so too did the number of family members who came to reunite with the pioneering FRG workers.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Christian Joppke, "Mobilization of culture and the reform of citizenship law: Germany and the United States," in *Challenging Immigration and Ethnic Relations Politics: Comparative European Perspectives*, eds. Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham (Oxford University Press, 2000), 151-2.

¹¹⁸ Chin, "Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race," 86.

¹¹⁹ In 1971, a military coup ousted the democratically elected regime and ruled Turkey under martial law. A 1973 election restored a democratic presidency but political unrest continued throughout the 1970s. In 1978, an armed conflict between the Turkish government and Kurdish minority groups broke out. This violence also influenced refugees to flee to Germany, which by that point already had a stable Turkish population.

In an effort to enforce some semblance of the original two-year rotation principle, the West German government instituted the 1973 *Anwerbestopp* (recruitment stop). This policy officially ended the recruitment of all foreign workers. In the midst of an oil embargo-induced financial crisis, the FRG hoped not to *stabilize* the foreign worker population, but to *decrease* it. However, just as the late 1960s and early 1970s market forces had failed to usher workers homeward, so too did the *Anwerbestopp*. This measure did decrease the number of immigrants in the short-term.¹²⁰ In the long-run, however, it stoked existing uncertainties among the foreign worker community and family reunifications continued to increase throughout the 1970s.

As it became clear that the foreign workers were not just ‘guests,’ but rather immigrants, fears surrounding their presence rose. In the minds of many Germans, the Turkish workers had transformed not only into economic liabilities, but also into cultural anomalies; their differences could no longer be ignored or contained to the *Hinterhöfe*. The way that German society articulated this threat is important. ‘Race’ was an unspeakable characteristic given the country’s recent Nazi past. Instead, what historian Rita Chin calls the “racialization of culture” emerged.¹²¹ The rhetoric of the state and public discourse focused on the Turkish population’s *cultural* difference, which they understood to be inherently incompatible with German society. Therefore, the government plan beginning in the early 1970s was a strong push towards integration that looked very much like one-sided assimilation.

In the memories of Filiz Y., the Turkish immigrant whose story the previous chapters began, this shift in public perception was palpable. In her account of the 1970s she pinpointed the distinct shift in climate that occurred after the economic downturns of the late 1960s and

¹²⁰ Chin, “Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race,” 86.

¹²¹ Chin, “Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race,” 90.

1973.¹²² She experienced the financial crisis not only in terms of fewer job opportunities in West Berlin, but also in the way that she was treated in her day to day life. When she first arrived as a ‘guest worker,’ which was safe and even lauded by German society, she felt respected. In December 1964, for example, the Berlin Senate’s Minister of Labor invited Filiz and other early guest workers to have coffee and cake. Before they arrived in the congress hall for the meeting they went on a guided city tour in a modern bus. Filiz described the general sentiment as: “You are guests, we are hosts, that’s how it is!”¹²³ In the workplace, her coworkers helped teach her German and were always friendly with her, giving her the nickname “little mouse.”¹²⁴ But this friendly and welcoming atmosphere, which existed when the workers were considered ‘guests,’ dissipated once some Germans felt that they had overstayed their welcome.

Rita Chin has collected evidence of this shift by analyzing the the language of politicians. In 1971, for example, one Employers’ Associations representative expressed concern about the rising costs of ‘guest workers’ in Germany and specifically noted the “cost of public investment, far greater than when foreign workers live here housed in communal hostels.”¹²⁵ Increasing rates of unemployment throughout the country, which disproportionately affected the immigrant populations, exacerbated this sense of financial burden on Germany.¹²⁶

Fear of a Cultural Other: The Family Unit and Ghettoization

Growing discomfort with the Turkish ‘cultural other’ played out in the realm of urban space. German politicians and media outlets mapped the fear of Turkish ‘guest workers’ onto the cityscape through the rhetoric of ‘ghettos’ and slums. Districts with large migrant populations,

¹²² Interview with Filiz Yüraklık, FHXB Digitales Archiv, time stamp: 1:39:30.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Chin, “Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race,” 85.

¹²⁶ Chin, “Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race,” 86.

like West Berlin's Kreuzberg, were clear examples of how temporary economic migrants had overstayed their welcome and had begun to develop communities. These social ties, especially the image of the family, were a threat in a way that single, unattached workers confined to *Arbeitnehmerwohnheime* had never been. In reaction to this fear, the West Berlin city government attempted to manipulate urban space as a strategy of integration. One such policy tactic was the very direct *Zuzugssperre* (moving ban), which legally forbade foreigners from moving into areas deemed to be 'slums.' Other attempts were subtler; the 1977 Strategies for Kreuzberg urban planning competition encouraged assimilation among "problematic" Turkish populations. This section discusses the government's theory of integration and why these two spatial tactics were largely unsuccessful in supporting the Turkish community's transition from 'guest worker' to 'immigrant' during the 1970s.

In June of 1971, the West Berlin Senate established a planning team in under the name "Integration of foreign workers and their families" ("*Eingliederung der ausländischen Arbeitnehmer und ihrer Familien.*")¹²⁷ Their task was to develop a comprehensive plan for integrating 'guest workers,' representing the beginnings of an ideological shift away from more "differentialist" policies.¹²⁸ In September of 1972 the team presented their final report to the Senate. By this time there were 30,827 Turkish workers living in West Berlin, making up 41% of all foreign workers; 20,000 additional Turks fell outside of this worker category, presumably

¹²⁷ LArch B Rep 002: 17175.

¹²⁸ It is important to note that this shift in rhetoric towards assimilation was not accompanied by a push towards naturalization for Turkish immigrants. They were still very much considered to be "Ausländer" (foreigners). See Rogers Brubaker, "The Return of Assimilation? Changing Perspectives on Immigration and Its Sequels in France, Germany, and the United States," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24, no. 4 (2001): 531–48.

including family members and the unemployed.¹²⁹ Family reunification threatened to increase these numbers further.

The report's section on housing focused primarily on the concentration (*Ballung*) of West Berlin's foreign population, which it perceived as a threat to integration.¹³⁰ The report succinctly summarized the problem: "Limiting as well as decreasing the concentration = requirement of successful integration politics."¹³¹ As practical constraints to this goal, the report listed the state's inability to control who private homeowners rented to, the Turks' proclivity to *Ballung*, and the Turks' low motivation to pay appropriate rents for enough room to live.¹³² Instead of acknowledging long-term structural problems or discriminatory housing policies (which the next section discusses further), the government commission blamed characteristics they saw as inherent to the Turkish population, like a low standard of living. As another example, the commission stated that the "Housing problems for foreign workers primarily stem from family reunification."¹³³ The report explicitly problematized the *family unit* – a ubiquitous trope during the 1970s period of family reunification.

The press and public opinion mirrored the government's perception of growing foreign families and communities as threats. A newspaper article published the same year as the Senate committee's report began with the title "The Turks on the Spree live like they're in a ghetto" ("*Die Türken an der Spree leben wie im Ghetto*") and described Turkish children playing in the *Hinterhof* among garbage and debris.¹³⁴ This focus on children was not accidental – second-

¹²⁹ LArch B Rep 004: 4993.

¹³⁰ I have been unable to find research about the origins of the term "*Ballung*," but have found at least one reference to its use during National Socialism to refer to the "*Ballung der Juden*" (Concentration of the Jews) in the context of Jewish ghettos. This reference was found here: Dan Michman, *The Emergence of Jewish Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 49.

¹³¹ LArch B Rep 004: 4993.

¹³² LArch B Rep 004: 4993.

¹³³ LArch B Rep 002: 17175

¹³⁴ LArch B Rep 002: 10433

generation Turkish migrants represented the “liminal” state of the Turkish community and insurmountable cultural differences.¹³⁵ A popular trope was that Turkish children were “illiterate in two languages,” implying that they were caught between two cultures. One 1973 newspaper article, published in the popular paper *Der Stern*, was titled “Turks – the N*ggers of Berlin: How Kreuzberg became a slum through bad planning” (“*Türken – die N*gger von Berlin: Wie aus dem Stadtteil Kreuzberg durch Fehlplanungen ein Slum wird.*”)¹³⁶ In the article, a quote from Kreuzberg city councilman Hans Hänelt compared the Kreuzberg neighborhoods to the predominantly black New York City neighborhood Harlem. Racialized language in the article, like “Kümmeltürken” (literally ‘caraway Turks’) and “Türkenpack” (‘Turk pack’ or ‘vermin’), signifies the shift that Rita Chin discusses from worker to culturally different immigrant.¹³⁷

This same news story also humanized the narrative of demographic change by telling the story of 65-year-old Mathilde Donnet, who had lived in her Kreuzberg apartment for 20 years.¹³⁸ Large Turkish families had replaced her former neighbors. Now that 18 out of 22 apartments in her Lausitzer Straße building had been taken over by immigrants, she felt “lonely in a once in familiar environment.” According to a survey cited in the article, Mathilde Donnet was not alone in her sense of isolation and fear; 52% of Berliners would have rejected “collegial, friendly or familial contact” with Turks, 11% perceived Turkish people as “clean,” and only 6% took Turks to be “reliable.”¹³⁹ Mathilde Donnet’s story reflected the fears of many working class Germans living in Kreuzberg – already threatened by the economic downturn, they felt that incoming foreign workers were also destabilizing their cultural ties to the city.

¹³⁵ Chin, “Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race,” 87.

¹³⁶ Jochen Kummer, “Türken - die Neger von Berlin: Wie aus dem Stadtteil Kreuzberg durch Fehlplanungen ein Slum wird,” *Der Stern*, Nr. 43 October 18 1973, LArch B Rep 002: 17172.

¹³⁷ Chin, “Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race,” 87.

¹³⁸ LArch B Rep 002: 17172.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

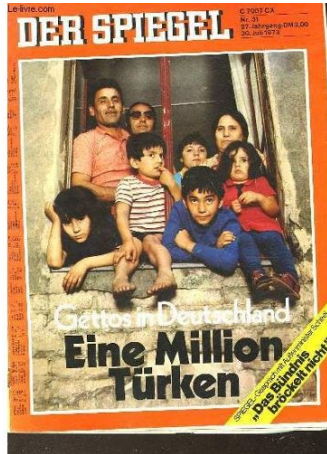


Figure 7: Cover of *Der Spiegel* Magazine in 1973: “Ghettos in Germany: One Million Turks”¹⁴⁰

A longer 1973 expose that appeared in the center-left magazine *Der Spiegel* explicitly made the connection between physical urban decay and the large number of Turkish *families* living in German cities. On the magazine cover (Figure 7), a large family of immigrants crowded together in a dilapidated window behind the title “Ghettos in Germany: One Million Turks.”¹⁴¹ The corresponding title piece of the magazine issue was even more provocative: “The Turks are coming – save yourself if you can” (“Die Türken kommen – rette sich, wer kann.”) This sense of impending doom was consistent throughout the piece, which warned of the masses “swarming” to West Germany “from the shores of the Bosphorus and from the highland of Anatolia.”¹⁴² According to the author, inner-city neighborhoods across Germany had not yet been completely destroyed, but the “Harlem-Symptoms” of ghettoization were already visible and were a valid warning for remaining German residents to get out while they were still able.¹⁴³ This analysis exaggerated the rate of Turkish families’ growth and ignored the fact that the so-called “ghettos” were already dilapidated before foreign families moved in. This sampling of news media

¹⁴⁰ “Die Türken kommen – rette sich, wer kann,” *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 31/1973 July 30 1973.

¹⁴¹ <https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/index-1973-31.html>

¹⁴² “Die Türken kommen – rette sich, wer kann,” 25.

¹⁴³ “Die Türken kommen – rette sich, wer kann,” 26.

demonstrates the increasing fear and paranoia about the future of German cities in the early 1970s, with a special eye to the growth of the family unit and ghettoization.

The Problem with Kreuzberg: The Zuzugssperre and Other (Failed) ‘Strategies for Kreuzberg’

At the same time that this fear of the ‘cultural other’ increased in the public sphere, political and community leaders implemented policies to counter the ‘self-segregation’ of migrant communities. The political culmination of this mindset was the *Zuzugssperre* (moving ban). Instituted on January 1, 1975 this regulation forbade foreigners from moving into neighborhoods that the government had labelled as “*Ballungsgebiete*” (concentration districts).¹⁴⁴ The government deemed districts with 12% foreign population to be *Ballungsgebiete*; in West Berlin these neighborhoods were Kreuzberg, Tiergarten and Wedding.¹⁴⁵ Once again, the government rhetoric zeroed in on family reunification and the high rate of reproduction as the central factors for ghettoization instead of acknowledging financial limits to mobility or the benefits of community building.

The movement ban for foreigners is especially intriguing in that it marks a shift away from the policies of the 1960s. As previous chapters demonstrated, the initial infrastructure for the *Gastarbeiter* was premised on exclusion and isolation. Now the role of the foreign workers had changed – they were visible and a threat, and therefore the government strategy vis a vis migrant communities shifted to one of dispersal. The *Zuzugssperre* limited migrants’ freedom of movement in order to water down migrants’ visibility and cultural difference.

¹⁴⁴ LArch B Rep 002: 17176.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

The court system ultimately overturned the *Zuzugssperre* in 1979.¹⁴⁶ Berlin's Higher Administrative Court found the ban to be "unsuccessful, unlawful, and not practical" in December of 1979.¹⁴⁷ The court had heard eight different cases relating to the restrictions, and ruled against the *Ausländerbehörde* (Foreigners Registration Office). One court case was lobbied by a foreign worker whose family had lived in Kreuzberg since 1974, but had recently moved to Wedding. Because of his son's illness and a desire for his old neighborhood, he wanted to return to his former home; the *Zuzugssperre* stopped him. Rather than successfully encouraging 'integration,' the *Zuzugssperre* placed yet another restriction on foreign workers' living arrangements.

Around the time that the *Zuzugssperre* went into effect, changes were happening in the urban planning community. Politicians and community members alike recognized the deficits inherent in top-down measures that placed little value on community experience. A major impetus for this was the 1969-1974 construction of the Kreuzberger Center (Figure 8), a massive modernist housing project in the heart of Kreuzberg at Kottbusser Tor.¹⁴⁸ The housing complex was an example of the Berlin Senate's overreach; it pushed the development through even though borough representatives (*Bezirksverordnetenversammlung*) opposed the project.¹⁴⁹ The building also symbolized "misguided urban development" – there were no windows along its entire Northern face because of a proposed highway that never came to fruition.¹⁵⁰ The Senate

¹⁴⁶ By mid-year 1976, the statistics showed only a very slight decrease in percentage of foreigners living in Tiergarten, Wedding, and Kreuzberg. In Kreuzberg, the percentage decreased from 25.5 before the *Zuzugssperre* to 24.5 by June of 1976. (LA 17177)

¹⁴⁷ "Zuzugssperre scharf kritisiert: Verhandlung vor dem Oberverwaltungsgericht - Heute Entscheidung," July 12 1979. LArch B Rep 002: 17180

¹⁴⁸ Fotografien der Adalbertstraße vom 6. Oktober 1975. Henschel-Fotobestand, Signatur: K01_0031_22-26, FHXB Digitales Archiv.

¹⁴⁹ Hochmuth, *Kiezgeschichte*, 78.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*; The Senate wanted to build the highway even though the Berlin Wall would have prevented its utility. The highway never went up.

prioritized the highway over the residents' wants and needs. The NKZ sparked a shift towards a more participatory model in the mid-1970s, as the city government reckoned with residents' perspectives and increasing neighborhood activism. The 1977 urban planning competition called Strategies for Kreuzberg (*Strategien für Kreuzberg*), which differed significantly from the 1957 Interbau expo and the 1960s urban renewal programs, was part of this turning point.



Figure 8 Photo of the New Kreuzberg Center (NKZ) from Adalbertstraße, taken in 1975, one year after completion

'Strategies for Kreuzberg' was a district-focused competition that prioritized the needs of the neighborhood over those of the urban planning establishment. The original proponent of the competition was Klaus Duntze, a priest in Kreuzberg's Martha parish. He had witnessed the negative influence of the Senate's growth coalition on the community's fabric and wanted to encourage Kreuzberg residents to advocate for themselves.¹⁵¹ He sought alternatives to the "Sanierung" (renovation) partnership between the state and private housing corporations. After Duntze discussed his plans with the national church (*Landeskirche*) and the Senate

¹⁵¹ <http://www.stthomas-berlin.de/seite/287296/aktuelles.html>

Administration for Building and Housing, the Senate decided to take over the financing and submission evaluation for Strategies for Kreuzberg.¹⁵²

The Senate's leadership contradicted the local participation that Duntze wanted. Although the planning commission consisted of a 2:1 ratio of community members to government officials, distrust of the Senate plagued the competition.¹⁵³ Members of the commission worried about using funding to tear down the *Hinterhöfe*, a fear that the government only confirmed by demolishing an old gas station and fire station.¹⁵⁴ This mistrust, however, resulted in lasting institutionalization of community participation in city planning. A discussion group that broke away from the main planning commission ultimately evolved into the *Bürgerinitiative SO 36* (citizens' initiative SO36), named after southeast Kreuzberg's zip code.¹⁵⁵ This group of activists began to publish their own district newspaper in December 1977 titled *Südost Express* (Southeast Express) and remained influential for decades.¹⁵⁶

Although most of the winning 'strategies' were never executed, the competition built a broad coalition of Kreuzbergers who were dedicated to fighting against urban renewal. Highly visible actors at the time were the church, politically motivated students who sought inexpensive housing, and activist-minded West Germans. This collaboration proved important for the squatter movement of the early 1980s, which I will discuss in the next section. But this early history of neighborhood activism leaves out two important groups: the inner city's original working class and the Turkish foreign workers.

¹⁵² Hochmuth, *Kiezgeschichte*, 209.

¹⁵³ Carmen Hass-Klau, "Berlin: 'Soft' Urban Renewal in Kreuzberg," *Built Environment* (1978-) 12, no. 3 (1986), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23286697>, 172.; See also Hochmuth, *Kiezgeschichte*, 210.

¹⁵⁴ Hochmuth, *Kiezgeschichte*, 211.

¹⁵⁵ Hochmuth, *Kiezgeschichte*, 212.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

As urban planner Carmen Hass-Klau has noted, most of the “traditional” residents had long since moved to other neighborhoods in the face of urban renewal plans and spatial isolation.¹⁵⁷ Those who remained were much more connected to Kreuzberg’s past as a blue collar community than to its present as a hub of counterculture and protest.¹⁵⁸ While the number of original residents was shrinking, the Turkish population was growing. Strategies for Kreuzberg openly acknowledged and sought to work with Turkish residents. The goal of the project was to engage *all* parties in the diverse district, and by the late 1970s the Turkish foreign workers were impossible to ignore.¹⁵⁹ However, the competition’s language framed this demographic change largely as a problem to be solved. Strategies for Kreuzberg wanted to “revitalize” the district.¹⁶⁰ These goals reproduced the trope of the city as a diseased space that needed to be cleansed.¹⁶¹ This rhetoric carried over from the days of Interbau and post-war modernism.

Although the competition made progress towards inclusivity, the underlying assumption about the Turkish community had not substantially shifted. A brochure that the Senate Administration for Building and Housing gave out in 1979 claimed that Turkish residents had difficulties connecting to the district’s history, and also had no “perspective for a future” there.¹⁶² Pastor Duntze reiterated this sentiment when he described Turkish communities as having “no other relationship to the quarter than this: It provides cheap living space...For them it means pure present tense, no past, no future.”¹⁶³ Later in this same statement, however, Duntze contradicted himself. He also acknowledged the existence of a “fully functioning sub-culture

¹⁵⁷ Hass-Klau, Berlin: ‘Soft’ Urban Renewal, 174.

¹⁵⁸ Hinze, *Turkish Berlin*, 126.

¹⁵⁹ Archiv: Konvolut Verein SO 36, lfd. Nr. 353 FHXB

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Pugh, *Architecture, politics, and identity in divided Berlin*, 234.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Interview with Klaus Duntze 1977, quoted in Düspohl 2009, 136, quoted in Hinze, *Turkish Berlin*, 123.

with its own meeting points, information systems, and civic organizations.”¹⁶⁴ Turkish migrants *did* invest in the future of the community. This investment in West Berlin’s inner city arguably played a larger role in urban development than the Senate’s failed manipulations of urban space.

From Below: Housing Discrimination and Revitalizing Kreuzberg

In order to understand the formation of so-called Turkish “ghettos,” it is necessary to view West Berlin’s housing situation not from the perspective of the state but from the perspective of foreign workers. It was easy for government reports to tell stories of Turkish self-isolation and lower housing standards, but this leaves out systemic housing discrimination and the failure of urban renewal policies – both of which limited the mobility of Turkish migrants and their families. It is also useful to question the inner-city “slums” as inherently isolating. With these alternative points of analyses in mind, it is possible to understand Turkish communities as a catalyst for change on the border of West Berlin. The familial, social, and economic ties that formed in the 1970s threatened the German conception of citizenship and countered the government’s definition of ‘integration.’

First, it is useful to reconsider the city reports that blamed “slum” formation on Turks’ unwillingness to spend more money on nicer housing and their lower standards of living. While it is certainly true that most workers and their families could not have afforded expensive housing options, this does not indicate any level of satisfaction with, or apathy regarding, their less than ideal living situations. In fact, a survey presented to the Berlin Senate contradicted this perception. Between February 9th and 20th 1972, Mr. Nezhil Manyas conducted interviews with 119 Turkish workers.¹⁶⁵ The report provides valuable insight into the lived experiences of

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Nezhil Manyas, "Bericht über Gespräche mit Türkischen Arbeitnehmern und Ihren Familien in Berlin" (Roy Blumenthal International Associates Inc NY, NY February 1972), LArch B Rep 002: 17170.

housing in West Berlin. According to the interview summary, *none* of the respondents were happy with their living situations, complaining about the condition of the buildings and high rents. If they could have moved elsewhere, interviewees claimed, they would have – but they could not afford anything else. One respondent succinctly stated the deficits of the city’s urban renewal program: “If we could find housing, it would only be housing that has already been deemed unfit for the German population.” The only available option for workers with low budgets was to fill in gaps in renewal districts. This housing stock was often run down, and a lack of renovation left leaky pipes and notoriously moist and moldy walls.¹⁶⁶ These conditions were not ideal for anyone – even those who were saving money for remittances or worked a low-wage job.

Turkish families also faced widespread, overt discrimination and it was difficult to find German landlords willing to rent to them. According to one interviewee, there was a list in the Counselor for Turkish Workers that listed select German real estate firms that were willing to rent apartments to foreigners.¹⁶⁷ Even names on this list, however, had turned away the interviewee in the past. Another one of Manyas’ interviewees stated: “I can tell you names and address of real estate agents, whose windows have signs that say ‘We don’t broker for foreigners’ or ‘We don’t have anything for foreigners.’” These de facto discriminatory housing policies did not only stem from the racism of individual brokers – German residents often pressured landlords in ‘renewal’ districts to maintain ethnically homogenous rentals. This influence often came from single and elderly German renters – the primary demographic of the remaining original Kreuzbergers. Although some original residents welcomed the changes in the

¹⁶⁶ Viktor Augustin and Hartwig Berger, *Einwanderung and Alltagskultur: Die Forster Straße in Berlin-Kreuzberg* (Berlin: publica Verlagsgesellschaft, 1984), 62.

¹⁶⁷ Nezhil Manyas, “Bericht über Gespräche mit Türkischen Arbeitnehmern,” LArch B Rep 002: 17170.

neighborhood, others saw the demographic shift as an upheaval of values that compounded the isolation of their socioeconomic status. Landlords frequently heeded these resident complaints, purposefully excluding Turkish tenants from the outset or using renovations as an excuse to evict Turkish renters.¹⁶⁸ Landlords ultimately factored in the potential threat to their apartments' values when they decided whether or not to rent to Turkish families. For many, it was not worth it to risk renter complaints or a negative reputation.

Once they had managed to rent a home in this hostile market, immigrants often found that existing housing regulations challenged their expanding families. One respondent to Manyas' 1972 survey explained that many families rented homes that were too small.¹⁶⁹ They then had to report a smaller number of children to the police than they actually had in order to stay in the apartment. These unregistered children were disadvantaged when it came to, for example, registering for kindergarten. However, the respondent was convinced that his children would not have been accepted into a kindergarten even if they had been registered. In Wedding, the report claims, there were more than 2,000 Turkish children on a Kindergarten waiting list.¹⁷⁰ This impact on children's education exemplifies the far-reaching effects of housing deficits, and the general lack of infrastructure that existed in the neighborhoods with high immigrant populations.

Despite limiting structural factors, many Turkish workers and families recognized the injustice of their living conditions and advocated for themselves in the 1970s. Figure 9 depicts Turkish demonstrators in Berlin who participated in a May 1970 demonstration. One sign, written in Turkish, reads "Tuvaletli ev istiyoruz" – "We want a house with a toilet." Much of the housing in the renewal districts that landlords were willing to rent to Turks had no bathrooms

¹⁶⁸ Augustin, *Einwanderung und Alltagskultur*, 62-3.

¹⁶⁹ Nezh Manyas, "Bericht über Gespräche mit Türkischen Arbeitnehmern," LArch B Rep 002: 17170.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

inside of individual apartments. The toilets were shared, either in the hallway or an outhouse. Another sign read “Patrondan yana degil işçiden yana tercuman istiyoruz” – “We want a translator for the worker, not the boss.” This sign hints at the difficulties that Turkish workers experienced in the workplace, unable to communicate with their bosses at will because of language barriers.¹⁷¹ The boss was the one with the translator, presumably granting him control over when and how communications took place. These Turkish Berliners were likely taking part in a Berlin-wide protest on May 1st, which spanned topics ranging from workers’ rights to the war in Vietnam. Housing struggles were on the top of many foreign workers’ minds.



Figure 9 May 1970 Turkish migrants protest for better living conditions in Kreuzberg¹⁷²

Although this protest is just one isolated incident of Turkish engagement with German society, there are innumerable examples of migrant resistance during the 1970s. Some of the

¹⁷¹ For more on workplace discrimination and Turkish activism, see Yurdakul, *From Guest Workers into Muslims*.

¹⁷² Demonstration, 1. Mai 1970 Berlin DOMID-Archiv, Köln, E 0031,0032

most compelling examples were not public demonstrations, but rather economic and cultural contributions to a growing Turkish community. Turkish residents in West Berlin's inner city brought new opportunities to neighborhoods that had been hemorrhaging business and population in the previous decades. One example is the transformation of what is now called the "Türkenmarkt" (Turkish market), or Oriental Market. This outdoor street market was originally called the Market on the Maybachufer when it was founded in 1887. In the 1920s, the market was extraordinarily popular, and 800 stands set up along the bank of the canal every week.¹⁷³ The market predictably struggled in the years after WWII and the Berlin Wall only worsened circumstances, as it did for many small businesses that relied on patrons from the east side of the city. By the end of the 1960s, there were only 20 stands left standing. There was a turnaround, however. According to an ethnographic study of the market published in 1988, it had once again become the most popular outdoor market in Neukölln.¹⁷⁴ What changed during the 1970s and early 1980s? Turkish migrants had moved in.

In the middle of the 1970s, Turkish workers started to open up their own stands at the market (See Figure 10). This process was notably difficult for foreigners. In order to obtain a business license, one had to prove either eight years of residence in Berlin or a strong existing interest for the business.¹⁷⁵ Even for those who had lived in Berlin for the requisite length of time, the license was not a given; they also had to prove that the business would not upset the existing urban economic balance. Some Turkish stand owners managed to obtain official licensure while other skirted regulations by renting stands from Germans. By 1983, 20% of the 68 long-term stands were owned by Turks. By 1985 the official number increased again to more

¹⁷³ Ulrike Spies, *Der "Türkenmarkt" am Maybachufer (Kreuzberg, Neukölln)*. Occasional paper / Geographisches Institut, Freie Universität Berlin ; Heft 3. (Berlin: Geographisches Institut, Freie Universität Berlin, 1988), 3.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ulrike Spies, *Der "Türkenmarkt" am Maybachufer*, 5.

than 30% of 82 regular stands.¹⁷⁶ However, upon paying a visit to the *Türkenmarkt* in 1985, a researcher discovered that Turks were actually running 36 out of 74 stands – almost half.



Figure 10 Turkish and German market goers shop at the *Türkenmarkt* on the *Maybachufer*¹⁷⁷

Not only did Turkish migrants own and manage businesses alongside their German peers, but most of the stands geared their wares towards foreign consumers. Some stands sold Mediterranean olives and sheep’s cheese, Turkish bread and tea, lamb, and packaged products like chickpeas, legumes and rice that appealed to non-German consumers and were difficult to find elsewhere in the city. According to the 1988 report, the fruit stands even avoided selling products like strawberries and rhubarb, which did not fit well with the migrant populations’ demands.¹⁷⁸ This market’s transformation evidences a highly visible economic and cultural shift in Berlin’s inner city neighborhoods that quite literally played out on the streets.

In an oral interview, Turkish immigrant Zuhale Özver told her own personal history of entrepreneurship in 1970s West Berlin. She moved to Germany as a student in 1968 and lived in a Charlottenburg dorm. Zuhale chose not to take part in the demonstrations – they just “were not

¹⁷⁶ Ulrike Spies, *Der “Türkenmarkt” am Maybachufer*, 4.

¹⁷⁷ FHXB Fotosammlungen 2085/1270 “Fotografien des Wochenmarkts am Maybachufer vom 6. Juli 1979” Jürgen Henschel

¹⁷⁸ Ulrike Spies, *Der “Türkenmarkt” am Maybachufer*, 5.

her thing.”¹⁷⁹ But she changed West Berlin in another way. She met her husband in the student dormitory, and the two of them noticed that there were very few cultural activities for Turks to engage in.¹⁸⁰ They decided to make a change. In April 1974 they opened up their first Turkish language movie theatre on Kreuzberg’s Dresdener Street. In preparation for the opening they stuck flyers into mailboxes on streets they knew to be primarily Turkish.¹⁸¹ They further attracted this crowd by serving Turkish snacks at the theatre during intermission.¹⁸² According to Zuhail, they gained a lot of success within the community and even opened up another theatre in Wedding in 1977. Zuhail’s story is one of many, but it displays the entrepreneurship of Turkish immigrants in the 1970s. From the changing market on the Maybachufer to Turkish language movie theatres, Turkish immigrants were shaping West Berlin’s development trajectory.

Despite these strides in the public sphere, many Turkish Berliners lived in dilapidated housing. The urban renewal programs had failed to revolutionize the tenement neighborhoods of West Berlin – this is where the squatter’s movement stepped in. The Strategies for Kreuzberg competition had planted the seeds of bottom-up spatial activism in the minds of many residents, and between 1979 and 1983 this manifested itself in the unlawful occupancy of many dilapidated neighborhoods buildings. The goal of squatting was generally to renovate houses while living in them, completing the projects that the city government and the housing companies never accomplished. In many cases, squatter hoped to save the buildings from demolition.

The ‘squatters’ are usually depicted as bohemian students or young artists – representatives of the Berlin counterculture that was flourishing at the time. But one of the first instances of squatting in Kreuzberg was actually executed almost entirely by Turkish and

¹⁷⁹ Zeitzeuginneninterview mit Zuhail Özver FHXB, time stamp: 14:25.

¹⁸⁰ Zeitzeuginneninterview mit Zuhail Özver FHXB, time stamp: 18:45.

¹⁸¹ Zeitzeuginneninterview mit Zuhail Özver FHXB, time stamp: 21:00.

¹⁸² Zeitzeuginneninterview mit Zuhail Özver FHXB, time stamp: 24:00.

Kurdish immigrants.¹⁸³ It took place on Forster Straße, a small two-block street in Kreuzberg³⁶ that stretched between the Landwehr Canal and Görlitzer Park. Turkish families had begun to move onto the street in the early 1970s. Although the street had a reputation for being a “Türkenboulevard” (Turk-boulevard), the area was a diverse mix of original residents, immigrants, and students. Some houses were primarily Turkish due to their exceedingly poor conditions, others were mixed, other landlords purposefully kept their buildings German – and some houses stood completely empty.

But the empty buildings were not simply abandoned; the city had bought them and evicted the residents, planning to expand the Paul-Dohrmann-Schule that was housed in Forster Straße 15.¹⁸⁴ In order to complete the project, almost the entire block was earmarked for demolition. In the years following the proposal, Turkish and German residents collaborated to start a tenants’ group to protest the construction. However, the negotiations between the Senate and the residents fell through in 1980. That November, squatters, most of whom were Turkish, took over occupancy of Forster Straße 16 and 17. Most of the squatters moved from house 18 next door, where the apartments were overcrowded.¹⁸⁵ As Figure 11 shows, they hung signs outside of the house in both Turkish and German, declaring “*yikmaya Karsiyiz evleri terketmeyecegiz*” (“We will not abandon homes”) and “*Kein Abriss! Wir bleiben drin!*” (“No demolition! We will stay inside!”)

¹⁸³ At the time that they occupied Forster Straße, there were under 20 other squats going on simultaneously in the neighborhood – it was towards the beginning of the movement. See Pierpaolo Mudu and Sutapa Chattopadhyay, eds., *Migration, Squatting and Radical Autonomy: Resistance and Destabilization of Racist Regulatory Policies and b/Ordering Mechanisms*, (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY : Routledge, 2017), 116.

¹⁸⁴ <http://www.komsu-kinder.de/konzeption.htm>; FHXB p. 209

¹⁸⁵ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 443, FHXB, 32.



Figure 11 Signs in Turkish and German outside of the Forster Straße squat¹⁸⁶

This takeover succeeded, and the Berlin Senate gave the tenants' group temporary rights to the house. Turkish families officially had the capacity to divide and manage the building as well as organize repairs.¹⁸⁷ As the reparations commenced from the inside, the city of Berlin bore the costs of repairing the roof and operating expenses. The residents took financial responsibility for other projects, including building toilets and baths inside of the house.¹⁸⁸ As the signs hanging from the side of the Forster Straße building indicate (Figure 10), the squat was also an opportunity for Turkish residents to assert their identity on the streetscape. One Turkish woman responsible for initiating the squat remarked upon the “breakfasts and festivals on the street.”¹⁸⁹

This same squat participant also reflected on the collaboration among students and Turkish residents, as well as the communication and support the residents found among other

¹⁸⁶ Fotografien der Forster Str. 16, 40, 42 vom 25. November 1981. Henschel-Fotobestand, Signatur: K02_0330_17-27, FHXB.

¹⁸⁷ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 443, FHXB, 35.

¹⁸⁸ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 443, FHXB, 37, 209.

¹⁸⁹ Mudu, *Migration, Squatting and Radical Autonomy*, 113.

squats. The tenants kept these partnerships alive by founding an intercultural day nursery in the ground floor of the occupied buildings. This daycare sought to break down the neighborhood divide between migrants and native Germans.¹⁹⁰ German kids joined the primarily Turkish-speaking kids of migrant backgrounds from Forster Straße 16, 17 and 18 to form a class of around 30.¹⁹¹ The Berlin Senate financed the daycare as a “parent-initiative-daycare” and the school opened its doors in February of 1982. After almost three years of operation, the Senate finally legalized the “self-help contracts” that the tenants had signed, solidifying the future of the daycare, which still exists on the next block over to this day.

These instances of protest, and of forming economic and social community bonds, display the undeniable influence that migrant workers and families had on the development of West Berlin. They also problematize labelling the neighborhoods of Kreuzberg and Neukölln as “ghettos.” In fact, these districts were extraordinarily diverse. The fact that German policymakers and media labelled these “slums” as barriers to integration when they were largely *means* of integration exposes the restrictive definition of belonging that they were working with. In comparison to the workers’ dormitories, Turkish families in West Berlin were much more free to develop family ties and relationships with neighbors and start small businesses. They could make their presence known on the street. These factors were all ways to tie immigrants to their new home. Bringing attention to these successes is not to understate the factors working against the migrants. Rather, analyzing their resistance exposes the very societal and legal limitations that they were fighting against; the unsatisfactory housing conditions, the discriminatory landlords, the difficulty obtaining business permits.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ <http://www.komsu-kinder.de/konzeption.htm>

¹⁹¹ <http://www.komsu-kinder.de/konzeption.htm>

¹⁹² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.

Chapter 5
Integration, Religion, and Advocacy: Participatory Urban Planning in Theory and in Practice

‘Gastarbeiter’ in 1980s West Berlin

In October 1982, the recently inaugurated West German chancellor Helmut Kohl met with UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Both represented political shifts to the right in their respective countries; Kohl was part of the more conservative Christian Democratic party and Thatcher stood at the helm of the Conservative Party. According to notes taken during their meeting, which the British National Archive recently declassified, Kohl broached his plan to decrease West Germany’s foreign population.¹⁹³ He singled out the Turkish population as problematic. The scribe present at the meeting quoted Kohl: “Germany does not have a problem with the Portuguese or the Italians, even the Southeast Asians, because these communities integrate themselves well. But the Turks come from a very different culture.”¹⁹⁴ It was insufficient for Kohl to prevent additional Turkish immigrants from entering Germany. Instead, he voiced his plan to *halve* the Turkish population.

In the almost ten years since the 1973 recruitment halt, the Turkish population had only continued to increase. Families reunited, new families grew, and chain migration made asylum seekers from an unstable Turkey likely to seek refuge in West Germany.¹⁹⁵ The West German economy had not improved since the oil crisis of the 70s and an unemployment rate of around 4% held steady until around 1982, when a recession sent the percentage of unemployed up to

¹⁹³ Claus Hecking, “Kohl wollte offenbar jeden zweiten Türken loswerden,” *Der Spiegel Online*, August 1 2013, <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/kohl-wollte-jeden-zweiten-tuerken-in-deutschland-loswerden-a-914318.html>

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Refugee seekers came from Turkey in 1980, fleeing a politically and economically unstable country. A 1980 military coup was a central impetus for this movement. Many of the refugees who fled to Germany during this time period were Kurdish, fleeing a violent conflict between the Turkish government and the Kurdish minority population.

around 7.5%.¹⁹⁶ Kohl felt pressure to free up scarce jobs for German citizens, but the rhetoric was no longer solely about economic gains and losses.

Kohl's Christian Democratic party had begun to develop a platform that contrasted with the Social Democrats' strategy of "mutual integration."¹⁹⁷ Immigrants who retained any cultural differences, CDU members claimed, could never really be German – and were thus a threat to Germany's national identity.¹⁹⁸ As a visible non-European and non-Christian 'other,' the CDU singled out the Turkish population as unassimilable; the Turkish slums in cities across the country were the realization of this difference.¹⁹⁹

A year after Kohl's meeting with Thatcher, the West German Parliament passed a repatriation law (*Rückkehrförderungsgesetz*). The legislation provided a monetary incentive of 10,500 German marks, plus 500 marks per child, to any foreigner returning home.²⁰⁰ The offer was valid until June 30, 1984 but relatively few people took advantage of the government's proposal. By the time the offer expired, only approximately 100,000 Turks out of the 1.5 million living in West Germany at the time had returned to Turkey. One 1985 article from the popular newspaper *Die Zeit* hints at some of the reasons that Chancellor Kohl's goal of halving the Turkish population was ultimately unsuccessful. For one, although the unemployment rate among Turkish West Germans was disproportionately high at around 15%, this was still lower than Turkey's overall unemployment rate of 20%.²⁰¹ Even if Turks were having difficulties

¹⁹⁶ Jutta Hinrichs and Elvira Giebel-Felten, "Die Entwicklung des Arbeitsmarkts" (Sankt Augustin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.). https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=21593393-4d59-3806-114c-17d164465456&groupId=252038

¹⁹⁷ Chin, "Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race," 90.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Chin, "Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race," 91.

²⁰⁰ https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBI&jumpTo=bgbl183s1377.pdf#_bgbl_%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl183s1377.pdf%27%5D__1584560336944

²⁰¹ Petra Lehnert, "Reise ohne Wiederkehr," *Zeit Online*, May 11 1984, <https://www.zeit.de/1984/20/reise-ohne-wiederkehr/komplettansicht>.

finding work in West Germany, the situation ‘at home’ was not much better. Leaving Germany also meant losing things that migrants had worked hard to attain, like a long-term retirement fund.

The *Rückkehrförderungsgesetz* underscores the extent to which Turkish workers were seen as *cultural* outsiders.²⁰² Although many Turkish workers had been German residents for more than a decade, they were legally foreigners (because of Germany’s strict citizenship laws) and perceived to be culturally unassimilable.²⁰³ In the midst of the economic and social disruption that plagued West Germany in the 1980s, the Turkish ‘other’ remained a ‘problem’ for a newly elected Christian Democratic government to solve. A significant part of what set the Turkish minority apart was their identity as religious ‘others.’

Although the history of Islam in West Germany is complicated and contains much more nuance than can be possibly be expressed in this section, an overview will be useful to briefly contextualize the case study that follows.²⁰⁴ Islam first appeared in German cityscapes beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as an increase in Muslim workers from Turkey required space to practice their religion.²⁰⁵ As the second chapter discussed, Muslim residents often established prayer spaces in nontraditional, unused urban spaces such as factories or apartments. These were called “*Hinterhofmoscheen*” (backyard mosques).

During the 1970s and 1980s the number of mosque congregations increased sharply; in the 1970s, 193 new congregations were founded, and in the 1980s the number of new

²⁰² Hinze, *Turkish Berlin*, 9.

²⁰³ See Roger Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992.

²⁰⁴ For more on Islam in Germany, see: Beinhauer-Köhler, *Von der unsichtbaren zur sichtbaren Religion*; Gerdien Jonker, and Andreas Kapphan, *Moscheen Und Islamisches Leben in Berlin. Miteinander Leben in Berlin* (Berlin: Die Ausländerbeauftragte des Senats, 1999).

²⁰⁵ Beinhauer-Köhler *Von der unsichtbaren zur sichtbaren Religion*, 418.

congregations rose to 386.²⁰⁶ According to the 1987 census, there were 1.3 million Muslim Turks and around 280,000 other Muslims living in Germany at the time.²⁰⁷ These mosques served not only as a place for communal Friday prayers, but also as community centers. Although Turkish immigrants and their families were not the only Muslims living in Germany, the mosque communities and larger associations were typically culturally homogenous. It was therefore common for Islamic organizations to meet the cultural needs of the Turkish immigrant community.²⁰⁸ They were often meeting places for families and sites for giving advice and for passing along religious knowledge.²⁰⁹ For immigrants, these religious communities were often a sign of deepening roots and connections to Germany.

As more mosques developed, they sought rights as communities. Germany's constitution includes provisions for *recognized* religious communities. If a group can obtain this public law status, they gain access to a wealth of resources they otherwise cannot receive. This not only includes financial subsidies from the state, but also the ability to include religious lessons in public schools and other public institutions.²¹⁰ Muslim organizations began to lobby the state to obtain this status in the 1980s.

This trend played out in West Berlin as well. In 1980, a group of 26 associations founded the Federation of Islamic Organizations and Congregations in Berlin.²¹¹ Leaders of the organization advocated for Muslim residents of West Berlin, and one of their central goals was teaching about Turkish culture and Islam in public schools. The year of its founding, the group wrote to the Berlin Senate multiple times to express this wish, and in February of 1981 a lawyer

²⁰⁶ Mathias Rohe, *Der Islam in Deutschland Eine Bestandsaufnahme* (Verlag C.H.BECK oHG, 2016), 119.

²⁰⁷ Rohe, *Der Islam in Deutschland*, 67.

²⁰⁸ Rohe, *Der Islam in Deutschland*, 68.

²⁰⁹ Jonker, *Moscheen und islamisches Leben in Berlin*, 14.

²¹⁰ Mathew Andrews, "Building Institutional Trust in Germany: Relative Success of the Gülen and Milli Görüş," *Turkish Studies* 12, no. 3 (2011): 511–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2011.604206>.

²¹¹ <http://www.if-berlin.de/ueber-die-ifb.html>

wrote to the Senate on the Federation's behalf.²¹² The Senator of Education responded with a rejection; his primary reason for the denial was that the Federation was not an officially recognized religious community. He also noted that tensions could arise between the values of the German constitution and Islamic religious schooling.

These questions were certainly on the Senate's mind. While the Islamic Federation was arguing for their status as an official religious community, the Senate had commissioned a study titled: "Influences of the Islamic religion on the ability of foreign workers and their family members to integrate."²¹³ The report stated that "[t]he tendency of ghetto formation can only be understood as a replacement for real integration," implying that community ties were so strong because they could not find sufficient support elsewhere.²¹⁴ The report also emphasized the community ties of Islam and deemed it to be more public and communal than Christianity, citing the extent to which it influenced everyday life.²¹⁵ Beyond these assumptions, the Berlin Senate's investigation did bring up the nuances of diverse sects and congregations in West Berlin's Muslim community. It also acknowledged the multiplicity of Muslim immigrants' experiences, including increasing secularism among some and increasing religiosity among others.²¹⁶ But most importantly, within the context of West Berlin's mission of integration, the report indicates that the Berlin Senate and academics were seriously questioning how Islam would affect the potential integration of a growing Muslim population; the consensus was that it would be a challenge to overcome. These connections between integration and Islam surface in the analysis

²¹² LArch B Rep 004: 1147.

²¹³ LArch B Rep 004: 1148.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

that follows, which tells the story of a wide range of community actors negotiating the visible spaces that defined Kreuzberg.

The International Building Exhibition of 1984/7: Successes and Shortcomings of Participatory Planning

By the 1980s, the urban planning establishment and the Berlin city government had transitioned away from *Kahlschlagsanierung* (demolition) and towards a more cautious strategy of urban renewal.²¹⁷ The squatters movement and community agitation had proved resilient even in the face of the CDU administration's attempts to oust illegal settlements, and the city was forced to legalize many of the squats.²¹⁸ The Berlin Senate institutionalized this value-shift towards preservation in 1982 when it passed the "Twelve principles of cautious city development." These guidelines celebrated the unique character of the inner-city as well as commended community participation in the re-development process.

The government-sponsored 1984/7 International Building Exhibition, often called IBA, was an attempt to ground these values in practice. This grand architectural expo was similar in pomp and circumstance to the post-WWII Interbau but differed in both mood and locale.²¹⁹ Interbau had optimistically served as a model for rebuilding a modern Berlin from the ground up; a top-down apparatus guided the carefully planned, prototypical communities. IBA, on the other hand, emphasized a tradition of citizen participation that had its roots in the squatter and self-help movements, as well as in the Strategies for Kreuzberg competition discussed in the previous chapter. And while IBA's 1980s reincarnation *did* include plans for new buildings, a guiding

²¹⁷ Klemek, *The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal*.

²¹⁸ Hochmuth, *Kiezgeschichte*, 79.

²¹⁹ The IBA was part of West Berlin's 750th anniversary celebrations. As such, it was a big event with lots of connections throughout the entire city that are too extensive to delve into in this project.

slogan was “The inner-city as residence.”²²⁰ Instead of rejecting the tenements of the inner-city as unlivable, as Interbau had, IBA sought to unify West Berlin’s architectural past with its future.

To serve this goal, IBA included an entire division focused on restoring old buildings. The head of this IBA Altbau (IBA Old construction) division was Hardt-Waltherr Hämer, an architect who had long been committed to renovating old housing stock.²²¹ Hämer saw tenement housing as an important part of West Berlin’s city fabric and thus championed a new policy called cautious urban renewal (*behutsame Stadterneuerung*). In language that mirrored that of the extremely influential Jane Jacobs, who is known for saving New York City’s Lower East Side from destructive urban renewal policies, Hämer praised the cultural livelihood of the inner city’s streets.²²² He saw value in the unique “*Kreuzberger Mischung*” (Kreuzberg mix), a convergence of diverse cultural and social attributes that made Kreuzberg stand out from the neatly relegated functionalism of post-war modernism.²²³

It is unsurprising, although often overlooked, that another part of IBA Altbau’s mission was integration.²²⁴ The planning process for the expo began in the late 1970s, as the discourse surrounding ‘guest workers’ was shifting into the socio-cultural domain.²²⁵ Immigrant populations made up significant portions of the inner-city neighborhoods and had historically been left out of the planning process. IBA’s participatory model seemed like an ideal way to engage these unheard voices. Urban planning was once again a means for politicians to interact with foreign populations and dictate integration policy.²²⁶ Urban space, particularly the relevant

²²⁰ FHXB archive

²²¹ Esra Akcan, *Open Architecture: Migration, Citizenship and the Urban Renewal of Berlin-Kreuzberg by Iba 1984/87* (Basel: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2018), 212.

²²² Kleihues, *750 Jahre Architektur Und Städtebau in Berlin*; See Klemek for a discussion of the urban renewal policies in New York City and how they related to those in Berlin

²²³ Hochmuth, *Kiezgeschichte*, 80.

²²⁴ Akcan, *Open Architecture*, 218.

²²⁵ Chin, “Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race,” 89.

²²⁶ Akcan, *Open Architecture*, 218.

issue of housing policy, was a way for the local government to assertively frame the “problem” with Kreuzberg in a politically expedient manner.

The IBA was a very high-profile event and its status was also tied to Berlin’s 750th anniversary event. Therefore, it was a chance for the city to publicly reassert a positive image of the city that transcended societal unrest and the counterculture movement.²²⁷ It was no longer in vogue, however, for the political and urban planning establishments to speak for the entirety of West Berlin. Instead, IBA focused on buzzwords like “dialogue” and “diversity” that acknowledged some of the conflict within the city.²²⁸ According to historian Emily Pugh, the IBA was, like the post-war Interbau exhibit, largely a success in terms of drawing global attention to West Germany’s innovation.²²⁹ The exhibit drew a lot of media buzz in the international architectural arena. But at home in West Berlin, many who lived in the target neighborhoods critiqued the outcomes; the squatters’ qualms had not been settled.²³⁰ IBA’s “aesthetic” changes did not significantly impact the way that the housing market functioned, nor did they alter systematic inequalities.²³¹

Art historian Esra Akcan’s multi-scale history of IBA, which attends to “noncitizen” residents as well as policymakers, recounts another perspective of the Senate-directed exhibition.²³² Her detailed ethnographic research, which entailed interviews with many Turkish residents of Kreuzberg and IBA leaders, concludes that many IBA Altbau participants rejected the general discourse about the dangers of ‘ghettoization.’ For example, when the Senate instituted the Zuzugssperre, it dictated that foreign residents in Berlin’s neighborhoods should

²²⁷ Pugh, *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*, 251.

²²⁸ Pugh, *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*, 252.

²²⁹ Pugh, *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*, 267.

²³⁰ Pugh, *Architecture, Politics, and Identity in Divided Berlin*, 261.

²³¹ *Ibid.*; Klemek, *The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal*, 235.

²³² Akcan, *Open Architecture*.

ideally be limited to 10% of the population. However, when modernizing Kreuzberg's housing stock, IBA Altbau made a concerted effort to make only the changes that the residents could afford in order to avoid displacing these populations.²³³ During construction, residents were often able to move into neighboring units or buildings to minimize disruption to their families. IBA's attempts to slow gentrification and keep Turkish families in their existing communities starkly contrasts with the *Zuzugsperr*e's logic, which sought to disperse the city's ghettos.

In order to make these decisions, Altbau workers set up meetings in every building that they worked on, inviting tenant advisors, residents, and translators to the open discussions.²³⁴ This was remarkable – in Turkish architect Cihan Arin's 1980 assessment of the renovation district, he noted that only one Turkish-run organization, "Otur ve Yasa" (Housing and Living), provided any explanation of renters' rights or urban renewal to the Turkish community.²³⁵ Other German groups, like SO 36, provided some support in this area but lacked sufficient resources for the task at hand.²³⁶ Another important detail of IBA Altbau construction was that the needs of individual families significantly influenced building renovations; the current tenants were the priority, not theoretical residents down the line. Because of this, there was no universal renovation model for apartments and many IBA Altbau projects retained unique characteristics.

Akcan does note, however, that the participation of Turkish families was primarily limited to these house-level meetings.²³⁷ They did not typically engage in the larger-scale projects that impacted the entire community. In these cases, IBA Altbau's participatory structure more effectively reached the already involved activist and student populations.²³⁸ The following

²³³ Akcan, *Open Architecture*, 240.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 185, FHXB.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Akcan, *Open Architecture*, 240.

²³⁸ Akcan, *Open Architecture*, 241.

section addresses how IBA and Kreuzberg's district government reacted to Turkish voices and cultural difference.

Religion and Integration: Görlitzer Bahnhof's Unrealized Turkish Cultural Center

Among the Turkish voices involved in IBA, those of Kreuzberg's working class are the most difficult to find. They frequently participated in the tenant meetings that Azcan described but were more reluctant to engage publically with West Berlin's urban planning bureaucracy. One instance, however, stands out as an exception: Görlitzer Park. Analyzing this unique case, which pushed IBA's participatory apparatus to its edge, reveals the limits of the Turkish community's input. Although IBA Altbau claimed to celebrate diversity and dialogue, when Turkish citizens voiced their desire for a mosque and cultural center in Kreuzberg's Görlitzer Park they were met with rejection. This rebuff makes sense in the context of West Germany's skepticism surrounding the cultural "other." According to the guiding logic of the time period, cultural difference, including religion, acted as a barrier to integration.²³⁹ It is, however, possible to reframe this fight for a cultural and religious touchstone as a means of *integration* into the city rather than one of isolation and difference.

Görlitzer Bahnhof was an abandoned train station in eastern Kreuzberg, only a few long blocks away from the Berlin Wall, that had languished unused since WWII. The idea to transition the unusable station into a park had been around since the 1950s, but the city had been preserving the land in hopes of building a highway that never came to fruition.²⁴⁰ The idea came to the fore during the Strategies for Kreuzberg competition in the mid-1970s, but bureaucratic barriers had always been in the way. IBA seemed like the right time for the project to finally come to fruition.

²³⁹ Chin, "Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race," 90.

²⁴⁰ Learning from IBA p. 117

In 1982, a Kreuzberg district parliament resolution founded the working group Görlitzer Bahnhof to take charge of the transition.²⁴¹ Members of the working group included district politicians from all parties, resident initiatives like SO36, and IBA representatives.²⁴² The committee members knew they wanted to transform the train station into a large park, providing green space that the neighborhood lacked. In order to make sure that everyone in the neighborhood could “identify with the Park,” the working group emphasized the importance of resident participation and used the motto: “The Görlitzer Park is for everyone!”²⁴³ This fit with IBA’s model of participatory planning. As the park planning progressed it became clear that the working group was more interested in the *theory* of resident participation than the *practice*, and their goals for the park were mostly set in stone from the outset. Although 40% of the residents neighboring the Bahnhof were Turkish, the IBA committee and local urban planning establishment often discounted voices of the immigrant working class when it came to making important decisions.

The first conflict surrounded creating community gardens in the park. The Neighborhood Association Forster Street (*Nachbarschaftsverein Forsterstraße*), the group of Turkish and German residents who participated in the squat discussed in the previous chapter, wrote to the working group Görlitzer Park in October of 1983 to voice a request: the Turkish members of the neighborhood association were particularly interested in having a gardening area in Görlitzer Park that could be tended by about 20 neighborhood families.²⁴⁴ However, when a Forster Street representative voiced this desire at an October symposium, the response was: we are glad to hear Turkish voices participating, *but* we absolutely do not want to turn the train station into a “big

²⁴¹ Archiv: Konvolut Verein SO 36, lfd. Nr. 226 FHXB.

²⁴² Archiv: Konvolut Verein SO 36, lfd. Nr. 226 FHXB.

²⁴³ Archiv: Konvolut Verein SO 36, lfd. Nr. 226 FHXB.; Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB.

²⁴⁴ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB.

allotment.”²⁴⁵ The working group Görlitzer Park held fast to its initial plan for an open and hilly landscape free of any particular “service offerings,” like a garden.²⁴⁶ They maintained this plan despite community interest in a community garden - something quite common in many German cities.

Although the working group had effectively quashed the proposed gardens, a new discussion about a potential Turkish cultural center arose that proved harder to deny. Representatives of a mosque that was already located on the Bahnhof initiated these negotiations. The Fatih-Congregation, a religious group associated with Berlin’s Islamic Federation, had occupied a storage shed at the site of the former Görlitzer train station (see Figure 12) in August of 1981 because their prior space, like many other ‘backyard mosques,’ was too small.²⁴⁷ According to a newspaper article from that year, members of the Islamic Federation put 1,700 hours of work and 60,000 marks into transforming a former potato storage area into a prayer space.²⁴⁸ By 1984 the new, larger mosque at the former train station had over 100 regular visitors and thousands during important holidays.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Archiv: Konvolut Verein SO 36, lfd. Nr. 226 FHXB

²⁴⁷ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.



Figure 12: Fatih Moschee on the Görlitzer Bahnhof site, pictured in 1983

The Fatih-mosque was not ready to evacuate, and at first it appeared they might not have to. The first public discussion about the train station’s future took place in February of 1984, and the “overwhelmingly German” attendees of the meeting, alongside some representatives of the mosque, voted that the Fatih-mosque should be able to stay on the land.²⁵⁰ There was even discussion about constructing a new building to house the growing congregation. Even at this meeting, though, there were some dissenting voices. One attendee from the working group Görlitzer Bahnhof reminded everyone that the mosque had been “besetzt” (occupied).²⁵¹ Another attendee ironically stated that it would be too much of an “annoyance” (Belästigung) to have a mosque so close to homes; he ignored the fact that many of the “backyard mosques” were in fact located in tight quarters inside tenement apartments or storefronts.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Archiv: Konvolut Verein SO 36, lfd. Nr. 226 FHXB.

²⁵² Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 7; IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 1040, 17.

At this point, a new collection of community voices entered the debate: AG Ausländer (working group foreigners), part of the neighborhood organization SO36. Two-thirds of the group were Turkish, and most were well-educated and politically engaged Kreuzbergers.²⁵³ They wanted to represent the interests of Turkish residents who were not engaged in the planning process.²⁵⁴ This working group was interested in the proposals of the Fatih-mosque, but many members were skeptical about letting the mosque take the reins on the project. The Fatih-congregation was part of the larger Islamic Federation, a group that had a reputation for being further to the right than the members of the AG Ausländer. The AG came up with a new plan that they hoped could represent the Turkish community at large: building a Turkish cultural center with an attached prayer space. For the members of the AG, including Turkish tenant advisor Özcan Ayanoglu, the center would primarily serve as a site of *identification*.²⁵⁵ It was a way to stabilize the diverse Turkish community and provide younger generations with a connection to their culture.²⁵⁶

When the AG Ausländer presented their proposal during a March of 1984 town hall meeting, the “German” reaction was almost universally “defensive.”²⁵⁷ Many attendees immediately suggested that, while they did not necessarily want to stop the cultural center altogether, it should be located elsewhere. A suggestion for another location, at Moritzplatz, disappointed the Turkish representatives at the meeting – the Fatih-mosque’s congregation did not live near this alternate site. Despite some immediate pushback from the urban planning apparatus, AG Ausländer met with representatives of the Fatih congregation the following

²⁵³ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 8.

²⁵⁴ Zeitzeugeninterview mit Özcan Ayanoglu, deutschsprachig FHXB

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 44.

²⁵⁷ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 18.

month, hoping to solidify common ground between the two groups' different visions for the park.²⁵⁸ After a lot of debate among interested Turkish parties, the broad coalition submitted a proposal for a "Cultural Center with Prayer Space" to the IBA competition in June of 1984.

In retrospect, members of AG Ausländer saw this submission as momentous. The groups that came together to work on the project had extremely different political and religious orientations, and this was likely the first time that such a broad group of Turkish organizations in West Berlin had unified for a singular purpose.²⁵⁹ The final project proposal included a cultural center and mosque that were adjacent, but distinct, entities. The buildings were to include a large gathering space in the mosque; five small rooms for learning, advising, crafting, playing and conducting language courses; and two small libraries.²⁶⁰ Architecturally, it was important for the structures to be well integrated with both the neighborhood and the park, while making sure that the cultural identification of buildings' outside matched that of the inside.²⁶¹ In the end, the organizers foresaw the entire complex occupying only 10,000 square meters out of the 140,000 square meter Görlitzer Bahnhof.²⁶²

The district committee held a special meeting in July of 1984, where most of the interested parties came together: AG Görlitzer Park, IBA representatives, local government representatives, AG Ausländer, and members of SO 36.²⁶³ At this meeting the "German" political and urban planning representatives unified against the project, leading the Turkish parties (who often disagreed ideologically) to feel unified in the face of what they perceived to

²⁵⁸ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 14.

²⁵⁹ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 14.

²⁶⁰ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 26.

²⁶¹ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 82.

²⁶² Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 23.

²⁶³ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 22.

be discrimination. The day after the meeting, the working group Görlitzer Park decided to preemptively remove the project proposal from the IBA competition.²⁶⁴

The trajectory of the cultural center illuminates some of the deficiencies of participatory planning in Kreuzberg. In a 2011 interview, AG Ausländer member Özcan Ayanoglu reflected on the dynamic between the Turkish representatives and the German-led committees as fraught.²⁶⁵ As long as the Turkish community voices concurred with the German committees, Ayanoglu remembers, the committees were happy to listen. However, as soon as the AG Ausländer laid out the plan for the cultural center, the administrative bodies of the City Planning Office or the Senate Administration for Urban Development rejected the plans outright.²⁶⁶

In February and March of 1985, Özcan Ayanoglu and other members of AG Ausländer decided to forge ahead with the community discussions that they had started. They wanted to find out whether the cultural center was necessary, and what function it could serve in the neighborhood. The report they compiled revealed the diverse opinions of Turkish political organizations, religious groups, and families. While most of the people the AG interviewed supported some form a cultural center with a prayer space, what this step meant for each individual was different. A representative from the *Türkischer Bund in Berlin* (Turkish Union in Berlin, or BTT) emphasized the center's symbolic nature, signaling "that we (we as Turks) are here."²⁶⁷ Someone from the *Türkenzentrum* (Turkish center, TZ) emphasized that it wasn't enough to have a *representation* of cultural harmony – the center would have to be a place for serious discussions and cultural exchange.²⁶⁸ A member of the *Progressive Volkseinheit der*

²⁶⁴ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 25.

²⁶⁵ Zeitzeugeninterview mit Özcan Ayanoglu, deutschsprachig FHXB.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 59.

²⁶⁸ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 87.

Türkei (Progressive Union of Turkey, or HDB) feared that the Turkish community was not ready to make this communal step because they were just beginning the phase of dialogue.²⁶⁹ A representative of Komkar (Federation of the Working Associations from Kurdistan in the FRG) expressed his hope that Islam could bring diverse groups together, including the Kurdish members of Komkar.²⁷⁰

Interviews with families from the neighborhood also revealed personal investment in the future of the project. One family member wanted a Hammam (steam bath) like they had in Turkey, because their family had to bathe publically in the city bath houses.²⁷¹ They also wanted Koran courses for their children, as it was hard to find somewhere with empty space in the neighborhood. They imagined working in a garden attached to the center, growing food to provide at these courses. The AG also interviewed a Kurdish Kreuzberg resident who feared that the Turkish community would not always accept fellow Kurds, but also saw potential for dialogue; “For all of us...there should be a cultural center,” they remarked.²⁷²

These diverse responses among Turkish residents, as well as the divides between the AG Ausländer and the Fatih-Moschee that surfaced earlier in the analysis, reveal the diverse ways in which migrants understood their identities in the city. There was no widespread agreement among the Turkish residents in Kreuzberg as to what defined a ‘German’ Turk²⁷³ – some felt that religion unified them all, some felt that religion isolated them from their community, others felt that the only way to express their identity was through visible reference to Turkey. Although the AG’s report exposed many of the differences within the Turkish communities, and emphasized

²⁶⁹ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 63.

²⁷⁰ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 93.

²⁷¹ Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 103.

²⁷² Archiv: IBA-Archiv, Lfd. Nr. 710 FHXB, 108.

²⁷³ Ehrkamp, “We Turks are No Germans,” 1688.

the difficulty of coming to an agreement (especially about the religious role of the community center), the ultimate conclusion was to hold fast. The AG and the coalition were unwilling to compromise and move the center elsewhere.

Although the cultural center never came to fruition, due both to organizational difficulties on the part of the Turkish community and bureaucratic barriers on behalf of the IBA and West Berlin's local government, this case study nonetheless reveals shifts occurring in 1980s Kreuzberg. Groups who had never before worked together collaborated towards a common goal, and local leaders made their voices heard. Although these diverse opinions had different goals, most everyone involved sought some physical, and visible, connection to the Görlitzer Bahnhof. A representation of belonging was at stake in the physical design of the Kreuzberg park. As the neighborhood changed, Turkish voices continued to make their mark on the cityscape.

Epilogue: Reflections on Integration and “German” identity

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, and thousands of East Germans streamed in from the former Eastern bloc, Germany reasserted to the world what it meant to be “German.” As sociologist Rogers Brubaker has noted, the former Cold War opponents were, without hesitation, accepted as citizens of the Federal Republic.²⁷⁴ This welcoming stance threw the Turkish reality into harsh relief. Turkish so-called ‘guest workers’ who had been living in West Germany for decades, and their children who were born on German soil, were less “German” than the incoming East Germans and the refugees from the Eastern bloc.²⁷⁵ According to popular conception, Turks were still part of a “parallel society” that, while spatially within Germany, had a completely separate identity.

In its structure, this thesis has nominally mirrored the notion of a parallel society; the chapters distinguish between the “German” spatial evolution and the lived experiences of Turks in West Berlin. My analysis, however, complicates the notion of a “parallel society” at its core. It is impossible to understand Germany’s history without the ‘guest workers’ just as it is impossible to understand the history of Turkish communities in West Berlin without understanding the evolution of the city itself. Starting in 1961, in the isolated *Heime*, Turkish immigrants have been undeniably entangled with German politics, culture, and history. The role of ‘guest workers’ was never exclusively economic – it was never limited to factories or supporting the *Wirtschaftswunder*.

It is too simple to assess the identity of an entire immigrant population by a simple “success” or “failure” to integrate – especially when it is impossible to define the desired form of

²⁷⁴ Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, 174. Brubaker astutely noted that it is not that Germany is not a land of immigrants, it is that they are not a land of *non-German* immigrants.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

integration from the outset. Looking at country-level immigration policy, naturalization rates, and unemployment statistics can never stand in for understanding how an immigrant population relates to the immigrant-receiving country. As this project has shown, Turkish workers were able to influence their surroundings in West Berlin, and build spaces they felt comfortable in and could identify with, without conforming to the norms of integration that the city governments and German society expected and aimed for.²⁷⁶ These processes happened in constant relation to the institutions and residents of West Berlin, not in a vacuum or a completely isolated “parallel society.” Landmark historical events are often taken at face value. By analyzing them from multiple perspectives, the ‘myths’ that stand in for more complex stories start to unravel.

²⁷⁶ Ehrkamp, “We Turks are No Germans,” 1674.

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