Epilogue

The Final Return?

This epilogue moves beyond the book's primary point of chronological focus, the 1960s to the 1980s, by reflecting on the past thirty years, from the early 1990s until today. It reexamines the four core themes laid out in the introduction – return migration and transnational lives, estrangement from "home," racism and the history of 1980s West Germany, and the inclusion of Turks and Muslims in European society – with an eye toward applying the analysis put forth in the previous six chapters to contemporary developments. Temporally, the first point of departure is the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the reunification of Germany in 1990. These events have long been viewed as a point of rupture in German history – a new sort of "zero hour" (*Stunde Null*) that ushered in a fundamentally different era in which liberal democracy – encapsulated in the Federal Republic – triumphed joyously over the former East Germany. Recently, though, historians like Jennifer Allen have emphasized the continuities that persisted across the 1989/1990 divide.[1] And, as Paul Betts has argued, the confusion and upheaval throughout Europe at the end of the Cold War led many Germans to fear the rise of a newly oppressive regime, perhaps even a Fourth Reich.[2]

[1] Allen, "Against the 1989–1990 Ending Myth."

[2] Paul Betts, "1989 at Thirty: A Recast Legacy," *Past and Present* 244, no. 1 (2019): 279. See also: Philipp Ther, *Europe since 1989: A History,* trans. Charlotte Hughes-Kreutzmiller (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016 [2014]). On the anxieties of West German liberal intellectuals, including Günter Grass and Jürgen Habermas, see: Jan-Werner Müller, *Another Country: German Intellectuals, Unification, and National Identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). For German, European, and international responses to German unification, see: Harold James and Marla Stone, eds., *When the Wall Came Down: Reactions to German Unification* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

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Especially pertinent to this book's narrative is the explosion of racist violence following reunification, which many migrants experienced as both a continuation and an intensification of the racism of the 1980s.[3] While some West Germans felt closer to Turkish migrants than to the more than 150,000 East Germans who crossed the inter-German border, Turks, Black Germans, Jews, Roma, and other so-called "foreigners" felt increasingly – and violently – marginalized.[4] As the renowned Afro-German poet May Ayim wrote, "A reunited Germany / celebrates itself in 1990 / without its immigrants, refugees, Jewish, and Black people. / It celebrates in its intimate circle. / It celebrates in white."[5] Turkish migrants summed up this sense of marginalization in the phrase "the Wall fell on us" (*duvar bizim üstümüze düştü*).[6] While four major anti-foreigner attacks received widespread attention – in Hoyerswerda (1991), Rostock (1992), Mölln (1992), and Solingen (1993) – thousands of lesser-known incidents turned sidewalks, streets, train stations, restaurants, community centers, refugee homes, and private residences into spaces of danger.[7] Crucially, two of the four major attacks – Mölln and Solingen – took place in the west. This geography alone complicates the prevailing notion that the explosion of violence in the early 1990s was primarily perpetrated by East German neo-Nazis. By highlighting the prevalence of racism in 1980s West Germany, this book has shown on a deeper level that it is no longer possible to absolve West Germans of guilt by dismissing the post-reunification violence solely as an East German import. On the contrary, racism, right-wing extremism, and violence are deeply rooted in the history of the Federal Republic.

The attacks of the early 1990s also remind us of the transnational character of this history. Immediately following the Mölln attack, for example, the Turkish parliament expressed its desire to form a committee to investigate the situation of the 1.8 million Turks living in Germany, and Turkey's Human Rights Committee traveled to Germany for a week.[8] The Turkish

[3] Molnar, "Asylum Seekers"; Adaire, "This Other Germany, the Dark One."

[4] Sheffer, *Burned Bridge,* 238. On Turks' feelings of marginalization, see: Nevim Çil, *Topographie des Außenseiters. Türkische Generationen und der deutsch-deutsche Wiedervereinigungsprozess* (Berlin: Hans Schiler Verlag, 2007).

[5] May Ayim, "blues in black and white" (1990), in *Blues in Black and White: A Collection of Essays, Poetry, and Conversations,* trans. by Anne V. Adams (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003), 4.

[6] Mandel, *Cosmopolitan Anxieties,* 31.

[7] Rita Chin and Heide Fehrenbach, "German Democracy and the Question of Difference, 1945–1995," in Chin et al., *After the Nazi Racial State*, 102–36.

[8] "Keine heiße Spur nach Möllner Morden," *KSA,* 1992.

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media, like in the early 1980s, continually compared the attacks to Nazi atrocities. One *Milliyet* headline called the Mölln attack an example of "Nazi brutality" and featured a photograph of German youths performing the Hitler salute. Another, on the front page, reported that Jews living near Mölln had begun to arm themselves.[9] West German reporters were likewise fixated on the attack, with some expressing a fascination with the migrants' home country, traveling to villages to interview the victims' families. Several newspapers published the same quotation – the murderers should be punished, "otherwise our pain will never end" – from the relatives of the Aslam and Yılmaz families murdered in Mölln, who lived on the Black Sea coast.[10] In the most extensive report, broadcast on the German television station ARD, a reporter traveled to Mercimek, the home village of the Genç family, five of whose members had been murdered in Solingen. Many of the interviewed villagers had themselves been guest workers before remigrating from West Germany amid the mass exodus of 1984. All feared for the safety of family members who were still in Germany. One man noted that he called his children every day and that "they could hardly speak without crying."[11]

On the policy level, the nexus between racism and return migration also reigned supreme – this time, increasingly targeting other minority groups. In January 1990, partially beholden to the whims of the West German government in the lead-up to eventual reunification, East German Prime Minister Lothar de Maizière implemented a version of the 1983 remigration law to reduce the number of unemployed "contract workers" (*Vertragsarbeiter*) from communist, socialist, and nonaligned countries.[12] As was the case in West Germany, the East German program was called "remigration assistance" (*Rückkehrhilfe*) and operated on the principle of "voluntary" return – all the more problematic because the GDR orchestrated unemployment from above. By October 3, the official date of reunification, the East German government had terminated the jobs of 60 percent of the country's 90,000 contract workers, primarily those from

[9] "Almanya'da Nazi Vahşeti," *Milliyet,* November 26, 1992, 12; "Yahudiler silahlanıyor," *Milliyet,* November 24, 1992, 1.

[10] "Türken in Sorge um Angehörige in Deutschland," *WAZ,* November 25, 1992.

[11] Dieter Sauter, television report about Mercimek, *ARD,* 1993, DOMiD-Archiv, VI 0134.

[12] Christiane Mende, "Lebensrealitäten der DDR-Arbeitsmigrant_innen nach 1989 – Zwischen Hochkonjunktur des Rassismus und dem Kampf um Rechte," in *Kritische Migrationsforschung? Da kann ja jeder kommen*, eds. Franziska Brückner et al. (Berlin: Netzwerk Mira, 2012), 108.

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Mozambique, Angola, and Vietnam.[13] But the stipulations for acquiring the GDR remigration premium were even harsher than those set by the Federal Republic in 1983, and its benefits were even lower. Contract workers fired by the GDR had just three months to decide whether to return home with only 70 percent of the previous year's salary, a one-time "money for integration" (*Eingliederungsgeld*) stipend of 3,000 DM, and tickets for their homeward flight.[14] Reflecting ten years later, *Der Spiegel* called the contract workers "the first victims of reunification."[15]

More broadly, within several decades, paying unwanted foreigners to "voluntarily" leave became standard practice for dealing with asylum seekers – not only in Germany but also throughout Europe. This approach assumed an increasingly transnational character upon the founding of the European Union (EU) in 1993 and the Schengen Area in 1995, whereby member states turned their attention to policing the *external* borders of what has been called "Fortress Europe."[16] West Germany's 1979 REAG/GARP program, which laid the foundation for the 1983 remigration law, became the inspiration for the EU's 2008–2013 European Return Fund, which in 2014 was recommissioned as part of the newly named Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF).[17] Like in the 1980s, these programs have come under fire for violating migrants' human rights and not actually being voluntary. Since the early 2000s, Human Rights Watch has denounced the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as having "no formal mandate to monitor human rights abuses" in the migrants' home countries nor to determine whether asylum seekers' remigration decisions were in fact voluntary and not made "under duress" or "coercive circumstances."[18] In matters of return migration, therefore, Germany and the EU have remained susceptible to criticism.

[13] Steven Geyer, "Die ersten Opfer der Wende," *Der Spiegel,* May 23, 2001.

[14] "Rückkehrhilfe geplant," *KSA,* September 21, 1990.

[15] Geyer, "Die ersten Opfer der Wende."

[16] On the EU's migration policy, see among many others: Andrew Geddes, *Immigration and European Integration: Beyond Fortress Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008); Christof Roos, *The EU and Immigration Policies: Cracks in the Walls of Fortress Europe?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Katharina Eisele, *The External Dimension of the EU's Migration Policy: Different Legal Positions of Third-Country Nationals in the EU: A Comparative Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

[17] "Decision No 575/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23, May 2007 establishing the European Return Fund for the period 2008 to 2013 as part of the General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows,'" *Official Journal of the European Union,* May 23, 2007, eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2007/575/oj.

[18] Human Rights Watch, "The International Organization for Migration and Human Rights Protection in the Field: Current Concerns," IOM Governing Council Meeting,

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In the new millennium, Germany has experienced new heightened moments of racial reckoning that recall the tensions of biological versus cultural racism in the 1980s. In 2010, former chancellor Angela Merkel notoriously claimed that multiculturalism, or the toleration of "cultural difference" rather than the promotion of integration or assimilation, had "utterly failed" – a statement echoed shortly thereafter by British and French leaders in reference to their own countries.[19] These debates were amplified by the simultaneous publication of the inflammatory tome *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (Germany Abolishes Itself) by Thilo Sarrazin, an SPD member and the former head of the German Federal Bank. Eerily reminiscent of the racist letters written by "ordinary Germans" to West German President Carstens in the 1980s, Sarrazin's book attributed Germany's allegedly declining intellectual stock and inauspicious future to the high birthrates of Turks and Arabs.[20] As Michael Meng has explained, Sarrazin's book, which sold a remarkable 1.3 million copies, revealed the continued silence around racism in Germany: public critiques of the book's overt racism were overshadowed by mainstream German discourse, which portrayed it as "a generally useful, if times errant, examination of the 'problem' of failed integration."[21] Intriguingly, Sarrazin's initial manuscript repeatedly invoked the word "race" (*Rasse*), but, at his publisher's urging, he replaced it with "ethnicity" (*Ethnizität*).[22]

Several years later, Germans transposed the call "Turks out!" onto a new Muslim enemy: asylum seekers fleeing the 2011 Syrian Civil War. Leading the charge against Syrians was the Dresden-based Islamophobic organization Patriotic Europeans against the Islamicization of the Occident (Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlands, PEGIDA), whose rallies attracted up to 20,000 Germans at its peak. The racist backlash also fueled the rise of Germany's far-right Alternative

86th Session, November 2003, 18–21, www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/migrants/iom-submission-1103.htm.

[19] On the longer history of debates surrounding multiculturalism, particularly the more recent view that multiculturalism is a "failure," see: Chin, *The Crisis of Multiculturalism,* chapter 5.

[20] Thilo Sarrazin, *Deutschland schafft sich ab: Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2010).

[21] Meng, "Silences about Sarrazin's Racism," 105. See also: Christoph Butterwege, "Sarrazynismus, Rechtspopulismus und Sprechen über Migration und Integration," in Hans-Joachim Roth, Henrike Terhart, and Charis Anastasopoulos, eds., *Sprache und Sprechen im Kontext von Migration. Worüber man sprechen kann und worüber man sprechen (nicht) soll* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2013), 85–102.

[22] Ibid., 108.

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for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD), a welcome home to neo-Nazis and Holocaust deniers, which in 2017 became the third largest party in the Bundestag.[23] In 2016, as politics shifted further to the right, Merkel stepped back from her previous "welcoming culture" (*Willkommenskultur*) by telling asylum seekers to "go back to your home country" once "there is peace in Syria again, once ISIS has been defeated in Iraq."[24] As in the past, Germany has continued to offer financial incentives for "voluntary return," although very few Syrians chose to take up the offer – just under 450 people in 2018, for example.[25]

This book's transnational narrative also provides insights for understanding Turkey's increasingly volatile relationship to Germany, Europe, and the diaspora today. During the 1980s, at the height of the debates surrounding racism and return migration, there was a distinct possibility that Turkey might join the European Economic Community, with its accession planned to take effect in 1986. Turkey signed a customs agreement with the EU in 1995 and in 1999 was recognized as a candidate for full membership. Although serious negotiations for Turkey's full membership began in 2005, these stalled due in part to Turkey's continued human rights violations and Europeans' growing concerns about Islam following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Turkey's relationship to Europe worsened considerably amid the county's turn to authoritarianism under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who served as prime minister from 2003 to 2014 and then, in a controversial and fraudulent election, became president.[26]

[23] I discuss the AfD and PEGIDA's efforts to "tiptoe around Nazism" here: Michelle Lynn Kahn, "Antisemitism, Holocaust Denial, and Germany's Far Right: How the AfD Tiptoes around Nazism," *The Journal of Holocaust Research* 36, no. 2–3 (2022): 164–85. See also: Alexander Häusler, ed., *Die Alternative für Deutschland. Programmatik, Entwicklung und politische Verortung* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2016); Eric Langenbacher, ed., *Twilight of the Merkel Era: Power and Politics in Germany after the 2017 Bundestag Election* (New York: Berghahn, 2019); Jay Julian Rosselini, *The German New Right: AfD, PEGIDA, and the Re-Imagining of National Identity* (London: Hurst and Company, 2019); Thomas Klikauer, *The AfD: Germany's New Nazis or Another Populist Party?* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2020).

[24] Andreas Rinke and Michelle Martin, "Merkel: Refugees Must Return Home Once the War Is Over," *Reuters,* January 30, 2016, www.businessinsider.com/merkel-refugees-must-return-home-once-war-over-2016-1.

[25] Choukri Chebbi, "Syrian Refugees in Germany Contemplate Return Home," *DW,* January 27, 2017, www.dw.com/en/syrian-refugees-in-germany-contemplate-return-home/a-37305045; Benjamin Bathke, "Very Few Syrians Accept German State Support to Return Home," *InfoMigrants,* April 23, 2019, www.infomigrants.net/en/post/16462/very-few-syrians-accept-german-state-support-to-return-home.

[26] On the AKP, see: William M. Hale and Ergun Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy, and Liberalism in Turkey: The Case of the AKP* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Kerem

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Tensions were especially high after Erdoğan's attempted 2016 military coup, which prompted unsavory memories of the 1980 coup that fueled Germans' growing concerns about Turkish authoritarianism.[27] In 2018, the EU's General Affairs Council put it bluntly: "Turkey has been moving further away from the European Union."[28]

What do these vast geopolitical developments mean for the 3 million Turks who still live in Germany today, and for the hundreds of thousands who have returned? The question of citizenship, for one, has become paramount. In the first decade after the 1990 revision to the German Foreigner Law, 410,000 individuals of Turkish descent – approximately 20 percent of the population – applied for German citizenship.[29] They did so at far higher rates than other migrant groups, accounting for 44 percent of all naturalized immigrants by the year 2000.[30] Naturalizations rose upon the landmark 1999 revision to the German Nationality Law, which allowed individuals born in Germany to naturalize under certain conditions regardless of ethnic heritage.[31] Still, the debate about dual citizenship – prohibited by the 1999 German citizenship reform, though allowed in Turkey since 1981 – raged on.[32] In 2014, Germany finally abandoned its so-called "option obligation" (*Optionspflicht*) – which had controversially forced individuals born in Germany to choose only one citizenship by age twenty-three – and began offering dual citizenship

Öktem, *Angry Nation: Turkey since 1989* (London: Zed Books, 2011); Ümit Cizre, ed., *The Turkish AK Party and its Leader: Criticism, Opposition, and Dissent* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Bahar Başer and Ahmet Erdi Öztürk, *Authoritarian Politics in Turkey: Elections, Resistance, and the AKP* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2017); M. Hakan Yavuz and Ahmet Erdi Öztürk, *Erdoğan's Turkey: Islamism, Identity, and Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2022).

[27] Feride Çiçekoğlu and Ömer Turan, eds., *The Dubious Case of a Failed Coup: Militarism, Masculinities, and 15 July in Turkey* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

[28] Council of the European Union, "Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process – Council Conclusions," June 26, 2018, 13, www.consilium.europa.eu/media/35863/st10555-en18.pdf.

[29] Ayhan Kaya, "Transnational Citizenship: German-Turks and Liberalizing Citizenship Regimes," *Citizenship Studies* 16, no. 2 (2012): 153–72.

[30] Max Friedrich Steinhardt, "Does Citizenship Matter? The Economic Impact of Naturalizations in Germany," *Labour Economics* 19, no. 6 (December 2012): 813–23.

[31] Merih Anil, "No More Foreigners? The Remaking of German Naturalization and Citizenship Law, 1990–2000," *Dialectical Anthropology* 9, no. 3/4 (2005): 453–70.

[32] Simon Green, "Between Ideology and Pragmatism: The Politics of Dual Nationality in Germany," *International Migration Review* 39, no. 4 (2005): 921–52; Karen Schönwälder and Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos, "A Bridge or Barrier to Incorporation?: Germany's 1999 Citizenship Reform in Critical Perspective," *German Politics and Society* 30, no. 1 (2012): 52–70.

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to those who had completed secondary school or vocational training in Germany, or who had lived there for at least eight years before reaching age twenty-two.[33] But many of those who have obtained legal citizenship continue to experience discrimination, racism, and identity conflicts. The Turkish-German rap group Karakan captured this paradox in a mid-1990s song, tellingly titled "Almancı Yabancı": "Even if there is a German flag on my passport, I cannot be German because my hair is black. … Wherever we are, we don't fit anywhere. Turkey? Is it Germany? Where is our homeland?"[34]

Just like their decisions to travel to Germany and back, Turks' citizenship decisions have been heavily influenced not only by their enduring emotional, material, and financial ties to their home country but also by the reciprocal nature of Turkish and German policy. In 1995, Turkey introduced the "pink card" (*pembe kart*) – since 2004 called the blue card (*mavi kart*) – to provide limited rights to individuals who had relinquished their Turkish citizenship, a concept that Ayşe Çağlar has called "citizenship light."[35] These rights – which include property ownership and inheritance, but not suffrage or the right to join the civil service – reflect Turkey's desire to retain connections to one-time citizens and its hesitation to cast them out as foreigners. In 2010, the AKP systematized these connections by establishing the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı) as an umbrella organization to coordinate the various official diaspora policy groups. This organization's motto reflects the ongoing – and politicized – perception that the migrants, despite their physical and cultural estrangement, are still part of the Turkish nation: "Wherever we have a citizen, kin, or relative, there we are."[36]

Whereas Turkey previously had little concrete policy toward the migrants abroad (besides courting their Deutschmarks), Erdoğan and the

[33] Elke Winter, Annkathrin Diehl, and Anke Patzelt, "Ethnic Nation No More? Making Sense of Germany's New Stance on Dual Citizenship by Birth," *Review of European and Russian Affairs* 9, no. 1 (2015); Susan Willis McFadden, "German Citizenship Law and the Turkish Diaspora," *German Law Journal* 20, no. 1 (2019): 72–88.

[34] Karakan, "Almancı Yabancı," *Al Sana Karakan*, Neşe Müzik, 1997.

[35] Ayşe S. Çağlar, "'Citizenship Light': Transnational Ties, Multiple Rules of Membership, and the 'Pink Card,'" in Jonathan Friedman and Shalina Randeria, eds., *Worlds on the Move: Globalization, Migration, and Cultural Security* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), 273–91; Zeynep Kadırbeyoğlu, "National Transnationalism: Dual Citizenship in Turkey," in Thomas Faist, ed., *Dual Citizenship in Europe: From Nationhood to Societal Integration* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), 127–46.

[36] Pusch and Splitt, "Binding the Almancı to the 'Homeland,'" 144.

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AKP have been much more proactive. As Ayca Arkilic has explained, since the 1990s the Turkish government has increasingly pandered to Turks abroad not because of their *financial* value – since remittances currently account for only 0.1 percent of Turkey's GDP – but rather because of their *political* value, as they are a crucial voting bloc in Erdoğan's quest for power.[37] In 2008, in response to long-term lobbying among the diaspora, Turkey began allowing citizens abroad to vote in referenda and elections by post or electronically without needing to be physically present in Turkey on election day. Since then, Erdoğan's rampant campaigning in Germany has enflamed bilateral tensions, with Turkey flinging the types of rhetorical jabs that it hurled at Germany in the 1980s. In 2017, for example, after the German government canceled one of Erdoğan's rallies, the right-wing, pro-Erdoğan Turkish tabloid *Güneş* photoshopped a Hitler mustache and an SS uniform onto a photograph of Merkel and captioned the new image "Frau Hitler."[38] Amid these tensions, the relative strength of the diaspora's support for Erdoğan has added a new layer of meaning to the term *Almancı*: that they are excessively clinging to their Turkish identity and failing to integrate in Germany. This view, which inadvertently reiterates longstanding racist German tropes about migrants' perceived failure to integrate, reflects a paradox: to be a "Germanized Turk," in this sense, is also to be a Turk who has still failed to "Germanize."

Within the last twenty years, the so-called *Almancı* have been returning at much higher rates – though never to the extent of the mass exodus of 1984.[39] An estimated three-quarters of these returnees are between 25 and 50 years old, representing guest workers' children and grandchildren.[40] This new wave of return migration has captured attention in Germany. A 2014 German government report divided returnees into two categories – "*Almancı* born in Turkey" and "*Almancı* born in Germany" – testifying to the persistence of the moniker.[41] A well-publicized 2016

[37] Ayca Arkilic, *Diaspora Diplomacy: The Politics of Turkish Emigration to Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022). Statistic from: World Bank, "Personal Remittances, Received (% of GDP) – Turkey," data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=TR.

[38] "Dişi Hitler. #Frau Hitler," *Güneş*, March 17, 2017.

[39] Yaşar Aydın, "The Germany-Turkey Migration Corridor: Refitting Policies for a Transnational Age" (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2016), 7.

[40] Pusch and Splitt, "Binding the Almancı to the 'Homeland,'" 137.

[41] Stefan Alscher and Axel Kreienbrink, eds., *Abwanderung von Türkeistämmigen. Wer verlässt Deutschland und warum?* (Nuremberg: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2014), 7–23.

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German documentary titled *Tschüss Deutschland* (Goodbye, Germany) profiled these "educated," "well integrated," and "emancipated" *Almancı* who wished to "return to the land of their forefathers" – adding dramatically, "Not for vacations. Forever."[42] As Yaşar Aydın has shown, their motivations for returning vary greatly – from family reasons, missing "home," and cultural identity, to concerns about racism and the perception of better economic opportunities in Turkey.[43]

With the proliferation of cell phones and the advent of social media, today's return migrants experience fewer difficulties than the archetypically unhappy "return children" of the 1980s. Like the train stations where guest workers regularly gathered in the 1960s and 1970s, Facebook groups provide young and middle-aged return migrants a forum for networking with one another and exchanging information.[44] The groups' thousands of members regularly post questions in both languages on a variety of logistical and mundane topics: Where can I find a three-bedroom apartment in Istanbul? What paperwork do I need to fill out to bring a cat to Turkey? Can I watch Netflix shows in German, or do I have to watch them in Turkish? How can I watch German soccer games in Turkey?[45] Also advertised in these Facebook groups are in-person happy hours and meetups with other returnees (*Rückkehrer-Stammtische*), the first and most prominent of which was founded in Istanbul in 2006. These meetups, as Susan Rottmann has shown, provide a crucial forum for returnees to forge friendships and vent their frustrations about life in Turkey, from their criticism of Turkish politics to their ostracization as *Almancı* by non-migrants.[46] One can imagine that if these communities had existed in the 1980s, the guest workers and their children who returned to Turkey following the 1983 remigration law might not have felt so isolated.

[42] Ute Jurkovis and Özgür Uludağ, dirs., *Tschüss Deutschland,* Norddeutscher Rundfunk, 2006; Cirstin Listing, "Wenn Deutschtürken lieber in die Türkei zurück wollen," *Die Welt,* January 15, 2016, www.welt.de/vermischtes/article151066217/Wenn-Deutschtuerken-lieber-in-die-Tuerkei-zurueck-wollen.html.

[43] Barbara Pusch and Yaşar Aydın, "Migration of Highly Qualified German Citizens with Turkish Background from Germany to Turkey: Socio-Political Factors and Individual Motives," *International Journal of Business and Globalization* 8, no. 4 (2012): 471–90.

[44] See the Facebook groups: "Türkei-Rückkehrer / Türkiye'ye dönüş," "Deutsche und Rückkehrer in Istanbul," "Izmir Rückkehrer Stammtisch," "RückkehrerStammtisch," and "Deutsche und Rückkehrer in Antalya."

[45] On the "Rückkehrer-Stammtisch" in Istanbul, see: Rottmann, *In Pursuit of Belonging.* On return migrants in Antalya, see: Nilay Kılınç and Russell King, "The Quest for a 'Better Life': Second-Generation Turkish-Germans 'Return' to 'Paradise,'" *Demographic Research* 36, no. 49 (2017): 1491–514.

[46] Rottmann, *In Pursuit of Belonging,* 126.

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The guest workers themselves, now in their twilight years, also have enduring connections to both countries. Although never to the same extent as following the 1983 remigration law, up to an average of 14,000 per year have opted to return to Turkey since 2007.[47] To be sure, some leave Germany and never look back – "I left for a reason!" shouted one of my interview partners in the beach town of Şarköy. But for many elderly returnees, vacations remain a crucial part of life. Unlike in the 1960s and 1980s, former guest workers living in Turkey travel in the opposite direction – flying to Germany to visit their children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews who remain there. As the aging first generation finds it increasingly difficult to travel, visits from these relatives living in Germany become crucial. Another subset are the "circular migrants" who alternate, spending six months in Germany and then six months in Turkey, and who typically own or rent homes in both countries.[48] This option is especially popular among elderly migrants who rely on what they believe to be superior health care in Germany but wish to escape the cold weather.[49]

As elderly migrants contemplate their mortality, the question of where they wished to be buried is central. German cemeteries have proven unpopular options, as they have historically banned Muslim burial practices such as being buried in a loin cloth.[50] Although Turkish organizations have lobbied for reforms, most elderly migrants still wish to be buried in their home villages, where their bodies can rest alongside those of their parents and ancestors. The repatriation process is complex. The German authorities are notified of a death only after the deceased's body has been ritually washed. The deceased's documents are then submitted to the Turkish consulate, after which the casket may be driven to the airport, where it is sealed in bubble wrap, weighed, and placed into the cargo hold of a Turkish Airlines plane en route to Turkey. To facilitate the process, the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (Diyanet

[47] I have estimated this figure based on the statistics in Alscher and Kreienbrink, eds., *Abwanderung von Türkeistämmigen*. The report notes that, between 2007 and 2012, an estimated 14,000 to 17,000 individuals of Turkish migration background returned annually. Around 20 percent were second or third generation.

[48] Sarina Strumpen, *Ältere Pendelmigranten aus der Türkei. Alters- und Versorgungserwartungen im Kontext von Migration, Kultur und Religion* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2018).

[49] Necla and Ünsal Ö., interview.

[50] Gerhard Höpp and Gerdien Jonker, eds., *In fremder Erde. Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart der islamischen Bestattung in Deutschland* (Berlin: Das Arabisches Buch, 1996).

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İşleri Türk-İslam Birliği, DİTİB) has offered the opportunity to buy into a "funeral fund" (*Bestattungshilfe-Fond; Cenaze Fonu*) since 1992.[51] As of 2011, 200,000 people had purchased this funeral insurance for the affordable price of 50 Euros per year.[52]

For many Turkish migrants, only death and repatriation provide a sense of completion – a truly final return. By the early 2000s, elderly migrants expressed this sentiment with a darkly humorous saying: "We came by plane on the seats above, and we will go back in the cargo hold underneath."[53] While morbid, the notion of death as a final return to the home country marks not a break from the migrants' past but rather a comforting continuity. It is the poetic culmination of a lifelong transnational journey of moving back and forth between the two countries they considered home but from which they, to outside observers, had become gradually estranged.

Ultimately, it is worth meditating on what the word "return" actually means. As this book has shown, in the six-plus decades since the guest worker program began in 1961, the idea of return has been both politically and emotionally charged, public and private, voluntary and coercive, temporary and permanent. Among the many sorts of returns that this book has charted – from returns within the heart, to returns on vacations, to returns amid the mass exodus of the 1980s – it is the idea of permanence and finality that looms the most. But what does it really mean to make one's "final return," the *endgültige Rückkehr* or *kesin dönüs* that so dominated discussions in both countries in the 1980s? What does it mean to go back *permanently* to a place that one, at least physically, had left behind? Where does the line between temporariness and permanence lie? What does it mean to go "home," when the very notion of home is shifting and contingent? These are not questions that can be answered by policy or dictated from above. They are matters of the heart, matters of the soul, and matters of human beings who all shape their own stories.

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By following the migrants as they moved back and forth across borders, this book has highlighted their agency and their emotional lives. From 1961 to 1990, guest workers and their children navigated the constraints

[51] DİTİB Sosyal Dayanışma Merkezi, "Cenaze Fonu," www.cenazefonu.eu/.

[52] Başak Özay, "Letzte Ruhestätte in Deutschland oder daheim?" *DW*, December 15, 2011, www.dw.com/de/letzte-ruhest%C3%A4tte-in-deutschland-oder-daheim/a-15473330.

[53] Mektube Taşçi, quoted in Ayhan Salar, "In Fremder Erde," Salar Film Produktion, 2000, VHS, DOMiD-Archiv, VI 0063.

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of both German and Turkish domestic and international politics and economics as both countries' governments strove to police their cross-border movement – with the German government trying to *promote* their return, and the Turkish government trying to *prevent* it. But return migration was both physical and emotional. All migrants – even those who stayed in Germany – grappled with their changing relationships to their identities, their sense of "home," and the people whom they left behind. Every day was a journey back and forth between two countries, leading many to question where they belonged. Physically traveling to Turkey was not always a *return* to a static "homeland," but rather a journey to a place that had transformed in their absence and from which they had become increasingly estranged.

In the end, however, there was no such thing as a "final return." Even for those who returned to Turkey following the 1983 remigration law, whose residence permits were stamped "invalid" at the border, the attachment to Germany remained. These "permanent returnees," or *kesin dönüsçü,* remained forever connected to West Germany – in how they saw themselves, and how non-migrants in Turkey saw them. Ostracized as *Almancı*, they could never shake the association with Germany, even if they tried to hide it. It was inescapable: Germany had become part of them, and they had become part of Germany. These separation anxieties developed over time on overlapping levels, from the family and local community to the nation. And they intersected with a variety of issues: gender and sexuality, vacations across Cold War Europe, global finance and development, West German popular and state-sanctioned racism, and education. The result was that the migrants felt a parallel sense of exclusion in both countries. For them, *integrating* in Germany was just one side of the story. *Reintegrating* in Turkey posed another set of challenges.

On a larger scale, the experiences of guest workers force us to consider Turkish history as part of German history – and vice versa. Rather than a peripheral "bridge" across continents, Turkey was a crucial actor that exerted much power *vis-à-vis* Germany. By decrying the migrants as Germanized, individuals in Turkey – from policymakers and journalists to even the poorest of villagers – dictated the contours of West German national identity from afar. By comparing anti-Turkish racism to antisemitism under Nazism, Turks continually exposed the hypocrisy of West German liberalism. And Turkey's mistreatment of returning migrants, especially children following the 1980 military coup, amplified ongoing contestations over West German democracy and Turkish

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authoritarianism. Debates surrounding racism and return migration were fundamentally connected to larger questions about Turkey's integration into European supranational institutions and the idea of "Europe." Although migration undoubtedly tied the two countries together, it also pulled them apart – with enduring consequences today.

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