

## Community change and invasion: the case of Turkish guest workers

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COMMUNITY CHANGE AND INVASION:  
THE CASE OF TURKISH GUEST WORKERS

Jürgen H.P. Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik

1. Problem

The Federal Republic of Germany has had its own racial problems since the mid-1960's.

This is not to say that there had been no "foreign" residents long before this time, but the immigrants in earlier years had also been middle Europeans and, as such, were hardly distinguishable in appearance and behaviour from the majority of the German population. Though immigrants, they were therefore accepted and by the end of the Second World War, at the latest, had become completely assimilated. The post-war relocation of millions of Germans who had to look for new homes in neighbourhoods that were, by necessity, "foreign" to them aided in completing this assimilation.

However, the situation of the guest workers was and is quite a different one: In the mid-1960's, the West German labour force was too small to satisfy the needs of the economy. Workers therefore had to be recruited in a number of southern European countries which had low levels of industrialisation (NIKOLINAKOS 1973:25, 145ff; GEISELBERGER 1972:39ff). These workers were called guest workers ("Gastarbeiter") because of the fact that they were intended as temporary members of the West German labour force, not immigrants. Guest workers, as opposed to immigrants, can be sent back to their native countries during a recession (GEISELBERGER 1972:31ff; KLEE 1972a:29) and new ones recruited again during a boom when they are needed by the economy.

However, this "rotation principle" worked only in theory, for guest workers are also human beings with needs and desires - and families. And so it was not only the workers who had actually been recruited during a boom (presumably to be sent home again during a recession) who came. After a short period of adjustment, their families would follow: first their wives and children, then their siblings, in-laws and cousins - attracted like a magnet. And many who came did not intend returning to the poverty of their native lands. Single workers (i.e. those without families) live in workers' barracks but guest worker families need their own apartments. And because they at first consider themselves "temporary immigrants" they need low-cost housing in order to save as much money (to take "home") as possible. The fact that their search for low-cost housing is usually compatible with the profit-seeking interests of German landlords results in their settling in the

older parts of town bordering on the Central Business District (CBD) - the zone in transition. These housing areas, most of which consist of overcrowded, barrack-like apartment blocks ("Mietskasernen") built in the 19th century (i.e. during the Industrial Revolution) to serve as workers' accommodations, had, to a large extent, become urban renewal areas by the end of the 1960s. In the early 1970s, additional old residential areas near the CBD were declared Future Urban Renewal Areas due to their high concentrations of guest workers. Since then, the term "urban renewal" has become virtually synonymous in West Germany with "slum clearance".

As "temporary immigrants", guest workers have been treated - depending upon their country of origin - as the "blacks of West Germany". Hence, they have settled in ethnic colonies in the old and run-down parts of town near the CBD - after having displaced the lower-class German population that had lived there up until then. The latter thus saw itself compelled to move into other areas.

## 2. Population Succession

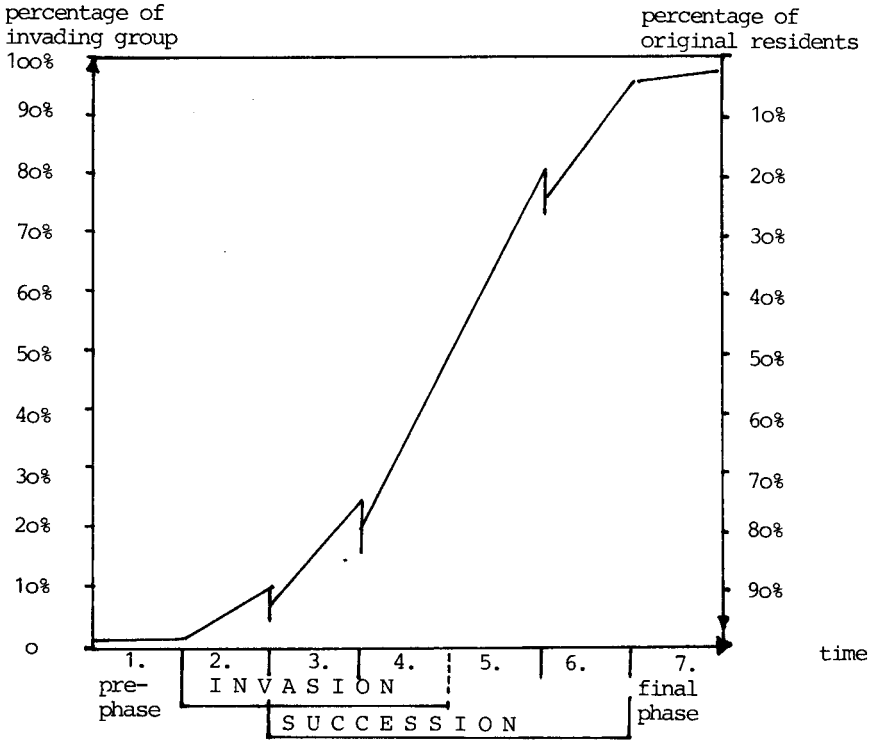
The settling of guest workers in ethnic colonies (i.e. ethnic segregation) is preceded, as a rule, by "Residential Succession", (i.e. the emigration of older residents) which, in turn, is initiated by the process of "Invasion". Thus ethnic segregation in West Germany is also the result of a process of immigration-emigration. Here too, a form of "Population Exchange" takes place: as an ethnic minority penetrates into a residential area, the original residents are displaced and move into other areas more suited to their socio-economic status (SES) (HOFFMEYER-ZLOTNIK 1977; CRESSEY 1938; DUNCAN & DUNCAN 1957). Ethnic minorities are not able, however, to penetrate into white-collar or newly-built residential areas, for as soon as their difference in appearance and customs is noticed, they will not be leased to except in slum areas, where they then settle in colonies (HOFFMEYER-ZLOTNIK 1977:73, 83ff; HOFFMEYER-ZLOTNIK 1979:123ff; MEIER-BRAUN 1980:10; CRESSEY 1938:61). Diagram 1 shows the course taken by this Invasion-Succession Process and indicates the single stages of growth of a colony.

The stages in Diagram 1 signify:

1. Pre-phase: relative stability; unnoticeable, slow infiltration by foreign elements.
2. First Stage of Invasion: proportion of invading group living in or using area increases more rapidly; original residents become aware of foreign element/s.

3. Second Stage of Invasion / First Stage of Succession: beginning emigration of original residents in reaction to invaders; resistance is still possible; end of phase: Tipping Point.
4. Third Stage of Invasion / Second Stage of Succession: "Area of Mixed Residence"; increased emigration of original residents coincides with development of invaders' own infra-structure.
5. Third Stage of Succession: predominance of invaders; increase in invader population through "magnetic attraction".
6. Fourth Stage of Succession: phase of consolidation
7. Final Phase: increasing stability and density.

Diagram 1: Stages of Invasion - Succession Process



Source: HOFFMEYER-ZLOTNIK 1977:26f; compare CRESSEY 1938:62f; DUNCAN & DUNCAN 1957:115ff; SCHIETINGER 1964:88.

Worth mentioning is the fact that the ethnic minority differing most in appearance from the majority of the German population (i.e. Turkish guest workers) is most subject to segregation, has the lowest socioeconomic status, and strives hardest to integrate in order to avoid being deported. Because the Turkish minority is the victim of segregation more often than

Map 1: West Berlin



Map 2: The Kreuzberg district



any other minority in West Germany, the Turkish colony in the Kreuzberg district of West Berlin, was the subject of the present research project.

### 3. The Kreuzberg district in West Berlin

#### Research Area

Kreuzberg (see map 2) was originally a district of Greater Berlin. Since about 1950, i.e. after the post-war partitioning of the city, it has been part of the Working-Class Residential Area, that is, in relation to the centre of West Berlin (i.e. the Kurfürstendamm Area). It was part of the zone of transition prior to 1950, i.e. in relation to the centre of Greater Berlin (see map 1), which today is the centre of East Berlin.

#### Structural Lay-Out

During the Industrial Revolution, apartment blocks ("Mietskasernen") as well as various types of business enterprises (stores, workshops, small factories, etc.) were erected in great numbers and in great density in Kreuzberg and, as a result, the present-day Working-Class Residential Zone is not up to the standards of modern housing: In 1972 80 % of all apartments in the north of the district had been built before 1900, 78 % of all apartments had no bath and no inside toilet facilities. Because they border on West Berlin's downtown area, the old "Mietskasernen" in Kreuzberg are being replaced by new, modern buildings one by one: Urban renewal has been going on in North Kreuzberg since 1962 covering an area of 1.082 sq kilometres; construction of new apartment buildings on the sites of old ones that have been torn down has been going on since 1971.

#### Population

The population density of North Kreuzberg was at its highest level around 1890. Yet at that time it wasn't the purely working-class residential area that it is today. Such heterogeneity at the very time of most density was due in part to the "Mietskaserner" (HEGEMANN 1930:207ff; SCHINZ 1964:121ff, 174ff) concept itself: crowding as many apartments as possible into up to 6 stories within one housing block; comfortable, well-built apartments in the front facing the street, and progressively poorer-built, dark, crowded apartments to the side and rear of the complex, with people of a higher

SES (landlords, owners and managers of the various types of business enterprises) living in the front and those with a lower SES (blue- and white-collar workers) living towards the rear (HOBRECHT 1868:13). The hierarchy among the residents of front, side and rear of the "Mietskaserne" is plain to see. And a hierarchy as such has been maintained up to the present, although its content has changed.

#### Community Change

The population of Kreuzberg has been decreasing during the past 90 years due to the effects of "Evasion". This decline in population is attributable to peripheral migration, which was only possible due to means of transportation such as the street car, the automobile and rapid transit. Hence, the population of Kreuzberg, which of course borders on the CBD, has been declining steadily since 1890, although the total population of Greater Berlin had increased considerably up to the Second World War.

Table 1: Increase and Decrease of Population (in thousand)

Census	total population of	
	Kreuzberg	West Berlin
1910	422	
1925	377	2544
1939	333	2750
1946	205	2013
1950	211	2147
1961	192	2197
1970	158	2129
1978*	148	1909

\* not official census but estimated number (31.12.78)

The process of evasion resulted not only in a decline in population, but also in a sort of "filtering down" in structure: The decline in population has gone hand-in-hand with a decline in SES of the residents remaining in the district; Kreuzberg has been losing status progressively over the last 90 years. In other words, in spite of a steady increase in the proportion of white-collar workers in West German society as a whole, the proportion

of blue-collar workers living in Kreuzberg is still on the rise. Kreuzberg's loss in status and the change in the social structure of its population could not be considered to be the result of succession until the end of the 1960s. On the contrary, it was the result of a "filtering down" caused by the emigration of higher-status people paralleled no doubt by the immigration of lower-status people. The invasion of people with the lowest SES of all, Turkish guest workers, began around 1968.

Table 2: Percentage of blue-collar workers in West Berlin and in the Kreuzberg district

Census	blue-collar worker in Kreuzberg	West Berlin
1939	61.2	50.7
1946	62.0	54.4
1950	58.2	49.6
1961	64.3	49.4
1970	64.0	45.0

#### 4. Invasion of Turkish guest workers

##### Settlement in Urban Renewal Areas

Guest workers from 6 Southern European countries live and work in West Germany, and each nationality has its own place within the social hierarchy, in which the Turks, regardless of whether they were farm labourers or teachers before coming to West Germany, are the lowest of the low in the eyes of German workers. In the effort to emphasise their superior social status by means of geographical separation, every German who can afford it will leave an area invaded by Turkish guest workers.

The foreigners who came to West Germany in the 1960s - to be followed eventually by their families - came with the sole purpose of earning enough money, and then return home. They therefore sought cheap housing because it was low rent that counted, not comfort. This is how apartment buildings in the urban renewal area of Kreuzberg which had been designated to be torn down and had already been vacated came to be leased to guest



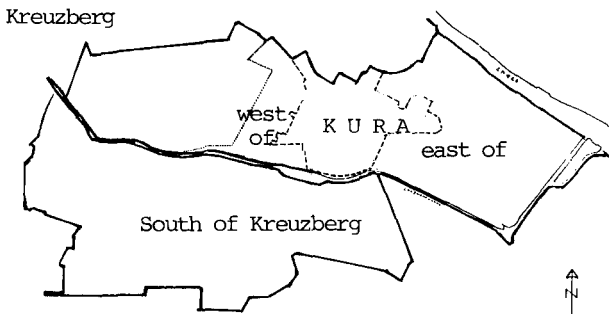
workers on a temporary basis (i.e. with a lease for a stipulated period). Guest workers were allowed to rent apartments in urban renewal areas because this was the only way the landlords in the slum areas could obtain a high return - no one but discriminated minorities would live in such tenements. The landlords were not disturbed in the least by the fact that it was their negligence in repairing and modernising their real estate which caused the buildings as well as the district to turn into slums.

#### Expansion of the Colony Beyond the Urban Renewal Area

As the demolition of dilapidated buildings in Kreuzberg's urban renewal area proceeded, more and more Turks were compelled to abandon the area.

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of German and Non-German Inhabitants of the Kreuzberg district of Berlin

Area	1970	1973	1975	1978
Kreuzberg	8.2	22.4	23.8	22.5
Kreuzberg, urban renewal area (KURA)	13.3	37.7	39.2	34.4
Area of Turkish expansion east of the KURA	8.7	26.2	29.3	30.6
Renewed area west of the KURA	4.4	7.9	5.5	4.9
South of Kreuzberg	5.6	16.9	18.8	18.1



The rough sketch shows the location of several areas in the Kreuzberg district

And because guest workers are not relocated in new tracts on the periphery of the city, as Germans are, they took refuge - and continue to do so - in old buildings in the adjoining district.

The extent of this expansion of the colony - which had originated in the urban renewal area - into the adjoining district while continuing to expand within the urban renewal area, can be seen in the table 3.

The Invasion of Turkish guest workers is paralleled by the emigration of German residents living in the area for many years. Emigration is first initiated by the urban renewal process itself: demolition reduces the number of available apartments. But since the early 1970s, the Turkish families moving into the area have become the main reason for the emigration of older residents. This finding is supported by the following data.

#### Population Exchange

The interrelation of Invasion and Emigration, as observed in Kreuzberg, can be called "Succession".

Succession was already well under way in Kreuzberg before the authorities had come to realize what was taking place, whereas residents and landlords in the Kreuzberg renewal area had long been aware of this development. By the time the authorities became aware of the changes in Kreuzberg, the Tipping Point had already been reached in parts of the district, the Turks had put their stamp on the district's appearance, and it was apparent that they were already developing their own infrastructure.

The disparity in the ability to detect the Invasion of an ethnic minority on the part of the residents on the one hand, and on the part of the authorities on the other, lies in the fact that:

- a) official statistics - as far as they are available on subgroups of the population - contain neither up-to-date data nor have they been analysed in terms of small geographical units,
- b) official statistics are dependent upon data obtained from official registration sources.

But what makes research on Turkish guest workers in Germany so difficult to conduct is the fact that there is such a great disparity in all fields between the data in the official statistics and the data one comes up with when making ones own count. This can be accounted for by the fact that a large number of Turks in the colony is residing in West Germany illegally (i.e. without a residence or work permit). According to conservative estimates there were approximately 30 % more Turks living in Kreuzberg in 1973 than had legally entered the city; the former were therefore not included in

the statistics. This means that not 22 %, but 29 % of the residents of Kreuzberg in 1973 were Turkish. However, it must be taken into consideration that the Turkish population was concentrated in North Kreuzberg in 1973: 3/4 of the Kreuzberg Turkish population lived in North Kreuzberg.

In view of these figures, and considering the fact that it wasn't until 1968 that a sizeable number of Turks came to West Berlin, it is remarkable how rapidly the immigration-emigration process has taken place in Kreuzberg. This leads to the conclusion that the urban renewal measures themselves must have been a precipitating factor in this development, for no such colony-building had taken place up to then.

The Tipping Point in Kreuzberg wasn't reached until 1971. The next year, the phase of Invasion had already come to an end, while the development of the Turkish infrastructure intensified. By 1973 the Turkish population had become dominant. Since 1972, a large number of Turkish shops, restaurants (which serve as centres of communication) and Turkish community services (such as doctors, dentists, various repair shops etc.) had been opened up or bought out from German owners.

As for the authorities, they were even less aware of this developing Turkish infrastructure than they had been of the increasing population. For example, there are about 3 times as many Turkish businesses on the main business street in the urban renewal area than the Business Control Board ("Gewerbeaufsichtsamt") in the City Hall has on its books. As far as Succession, or the concentration of Turks, in the northern part of the district goes, the authorities were aware of this by 1973, for they saw themselves increasingly confronted with the hitherto unseen problem of providing a large number of apartments for Turkish families living in condemned buildings. Otherwise, urban renewal could not have continued. This problem had not been foreseen because the foreign workers had been viewed by politicians and the authorities up to then, and essentially still are, as guest workers, as temporary members of the labour force whose employers were responsible for providing them with barrack-like accommodations. Guest workers were not considered to be people with families who had come to stay - at least for an extended period of time. That just didn't fit into the political picture in 1973.

As the demolition of buildings began, the boundaries of the colony shifted eastwards (cf. Table 3). It is significant that since 1972 it has no longer been the urban renewal area in Kreuzberg that has had the highest influx of Turks, but the district adjoining it to the east.

There are practically no Turks residing in the buildings on the edge of

the Turkish colony which were constructed during urban renewal. But it is a different matter with the partially-renovated building complexes in the centre of the colony. Here the proportion of Turkish tenants (30 %) is lower than in 1973 (50 %). Nevertheless, the proportion of Turkish residents in the partially-renovated blocks is higher than can be expected for new apartments built by construction firms for so-called "social" or low-income housing ("sozialer Wohnungsbau"): the state-owned or partially state-owned low-income housing construction companies make sure that only German low-income families move into state-subsidised housing.

At the beginning of 1975, guest workers were prohibited from moving into several districts in Berlin, included Kreuzberg. This was supposed to be a solution for the colony-problem (i.e. the problem of segregation). But although the rate of newly-immigrating foreigners was kept down by this measure, succession and the accompanying segregation could not be stopped, as Diagram 2 shows.

#### The Problem of Living Together

Today the Rotation Principle must be considered a failure. Guest workers do not behave as originally hoped. They do not all come in order to be a temporary part of the labour force; many bring their families and do not intend to return home to the poverty of their native countries. At present, guest workers are turning into immigrants in an ever-increasing number, esp. the Turks. It is therefore paramount that concepts of living together be developed. The differences between ethnic groups has been over-emphasised by segregation in the past, which intensifies prejudices and discrimination and leads to violence.

Such prejudices and discrimination were encountered during field work for the present project; violence (i.e. violent conflicts between ethnic groups) was not detected. It should be noted that gang wars between Turkish and German youths did not develop until a few years after 1974.

Today, in 1980, the number of foreigners seeking asylum in West Germany is rising rapidly. They not only add to the number of foreigners in the country, but unlike the guest workers they intend to become immigrants from the start, and this on top of the already over-filled labour market. Thus hostility towards foreigners and the fear of being over-run by them is on the rise among Germans. The first incidents of fire-bombings of foreigners' residences occurred in 1980, leaving behind the first fatalities of inter-racial conflict.

Diagram 2: Foreigners, living in the Kreuzberg District 1973, 1975, 1978



With this in mind, when it becomes generally known that the foreigners living in Germany can no longer be deported without substantial problems and that, on the contrary, they can apply for naturalisation after 10 years residence in the Federal Republic of Germany, then a wave of violence, esp. against the most discriminated group of guest workers, the Turks, can be expected to break out. In this case, ignoring the problem of integration will not help in the least; every possible attempt to reduce prejudices and discrimination will be necessary.