

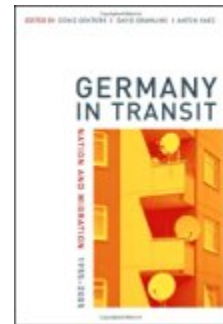
H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences



Deniz Göktürk, David Gramling, Anton Kaes, eds. *Germany in Transit: Nation and Migration, 1955-2005*. Weimar and Now: University of California Press, 2007. xxii + 588 pp. \$70.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-520-24893-9; \$31.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-520-24894-6.

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The Changing Face of Germany in the Postwar Period

This primary source reader is a much welcome, much overdue addition to the growing literature on ethnicity and migration in Germany. Covering the period 1955 to 2005, it makes the texts it includes available to an English-speaking audience for the first time. At over 550 pages, it is also an incredibly ambitious compendium, covering a wide variety of topics, published sources, and approaches. While many texts are drawn from newspapers, other sources include music lyrics, political tracts, legal documents, pamphlets, and literary essays, to name only a few.

Within each thematic chapter the sources are organized in rough chronological order. In addition to the ten thematic segments that make up the bulk of the book—each with its own helpful mini-introduction to orient the reader and frame the various texts—the editors further add a chronology spanning the fifty years between 1955 and 2005. The first two chapters of the anthology deal with the period of foreign labor recruitment and migration to West and East Germany respectively, thus providing an opportunity for comparative evaluation of migration under the two state systems. Subsequent chapters focus on xenophobia, racism, violence, the legal aspects of national identity, religion, family and community, and “Turkish Germany.” More theoretically informed chapters offer material on multiculturalism, (guiding) culture, and aspects of immigrant literature. Finally, in the epilogue, various authors contemplate the tensions between global and national forces in divided as well as reunited Germany.

The collection’s greatest strength lies in its focus on texts dealing with changing conceptions of national identity and multiculturalism in Germany since the 1970s, with a critical mass of sources focused on the 1990s and the years since 2000. Aside from a number of documents, scattered throughout the chapters, evaluating the relative merit of and charting the shifting opinions about the usefulness of binary categories such as “self” and “other,” the book also presents a number of (immigrant, native, political, cultural, and economic) voices that critically interrogate concepts such as multiculturalism or the idea of “in-betweenness.” Thus, many of the texts included here question the simplistic notion that immigrants—particularly the second and third generation—are rooted neither in their parents’ nor in German culture.

This strength in the post-oil crisis period, however, is accompanied by a relative dearth of sources dealing with the postwar years of active foreign labor recruitment—the period of the traditional guest worker program. Even before the early 1970s, concerns about the place of (male) guest workers in Germany society, for example, were voiced in newspapers and various studies, particularly in the context of interethnic relationships between male guest workers and German women. In this regard, although some fine examples included, a wider range of sources dealing with sexuality and gender would have provided a better sense of these factors within the migration debate. After all, concerns about national identity and integration, for example, are often intimately linked to anxieties about low birth rates, interethnic relation-

ships, and family migration, to name a few themes. Another theme that would have merited greater representation in the collection's treatment of the earlier period is the role of the Protestant and Catholic churches. While these groups and their affiliated organizations had become key centers of courageous and creative antiracist activism by the 1970s—as the documents provided here suggest—their attitudes toward migrants were initially ambivalent, not least because they still harbored a host of prejudices. The collection might have acknowledged

more fully the evolution of thinking in the churches about national, cultural, and racial difference that took place before these institutions developed a more sure-footed, outspoken stance on guestworker issues.

These reservations do not, however, detract from this collection's highly worthy offerings to those teaching classes on ethnicity and migration in Germany. Overall, *Germany in Transit* provides our students with valuable access to the various debates, past and present, that have shaped the discourse in this context.

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