

Turks in the New Germany

BY 1991, A YEAR AFTER the Berlin Wall fell, the anesthetizing excitement had worn off and the painful effects of reunification were making themselves felt. In an eastern German cabaret the jokes turned bitter. "They've taken our Karl Marx; the least they could do is leave us some Kapital." "Things were better in the old days. At least we could escape." Europe too was changing, from a common economic market to a political-social union soon to be signed into being at Maastricht. At the same time, nationalist and public sentiment against foreigners reached new heights throughout Europe and ignited in violence.

While Turkish identities in Berlin have their own internal and external dynamics, they also now must be understood within the frame of reunified Germany and the new Europe. Different, though not necessarily coincident, Turkish identities in Germany are forged from class, ethnic, and religious loyalties, from institutional and media ethnoscares (created by Germans and by Turks themselves), from shared regularities of interpersonal expectations of generalized reciprocity, and in reaction to how Turks are defined (and redefined after reunification) by Germans. This latter process is a historical component of identity, the frame of eastern-western German relations, economic decline, and the search for a new German identity within Germany and within Europe. As Stuart Hall (1990) points out, identities, like everything historical, undergo constant transformation, subject to the continual play of history, culture, and power. I would like to suggest, then, that identity has two aspects, framed by history.

First, identity is a dialectic between how people see themselves and how others see them; both are subject to the intervention of historical events. Second, identity has an essentialist or "external" component, visible as ethnic or other named categories and focused on boundary maintenance, but it also has a processual "internal" component, which builds social relations in a changing and unstable social environment. This proces-

sual component of German Turkish identity is generalized reciprocity, an adaptable set of expectations that forges community across boundaries of social class, lifestyle, generation, and even ethnicity. It allows recognition of an "us" that is not straitjacketed by often-divisive external categories and boundaries. Reciprocity is also the ballast for the younger Turkish generation's creole creations of self, linking them to older generations and across social and geographic boundaries.

These positive, community-building, and integration-enhancing effects of processual identity may be missed or even undercut by observers focused on more external behavioral or linguistic characteristics. Contradictions between German and Turkish negotiations of identity at the processual level, particularly as expressed in family expectations and gender roles, may eclipse gains already made in "behavioral" integration and serve to construct Turks as essentially unintegratable. These contradictions between Turkish and German identities, in turn, resonate with tensions between eastern and western Germans in the economic and social trauma following reunification. These tracings of culture—as category and in practice—across the central face of Europe are not unimportant, since culture has become one of the contested grounds for conceptualizing post-1989 Europe.¹

Imagined Coherence

There are nearly 2 million Turks in Germany, 139,000 of them in Berlin alone, making them the largest group of foreign workers (Senat von Berlin 1994). The first workers were recruited to labor-short Germany after 1961 and were greeted with some enthusiasm. They were mostly villagers, rural migrants with dreams of earning money and retiring to a small business and a secure life back in Turkey. Many of their families joined them. In 1973, after the oil crisis, recruitment stopped and many did go home. But a decrease in return migration, the continued flow of family members from Turkey, and a high birth rate kept the population of Turks in Germany high (Kolinsky 1996; Kürsat-Ahlers 1996).

JENNY B. WHITE is an associate professor in the Department of Anthropology, Boston University, Boston, MA 02215.

Many Turks, particularly those of the second and third generations who were born or raised in Germany, have only limited exposure to Turkey. Turkey retains the status of a geographical origin myth, kept alive through the dream of final return, particularly among the first generation, who came to Germany as adults (Wolbert 1996). They plan for a retirement that will take them back to Turkey for good, but older German Turks are starting to retire in Germany (*Spiegel* 1992). They want to be close to their children and grandchildren, the second and third generations, who show little inclination to "return" to a place and a culture with which they are increasingly unfamiliar. They also stay to be closer to good medical care and consumer goods and to be able to share finances with their children.

For many German Turks, ties with the homeland have atrophied or rigidified into calculation through the skewing of reciprocity, so that obligation is no longer horizontal and unspoken (as in Bourdieu's gentle violence of exchange [1977]) but has become an open expectation of patronage and gifts by relatives in Turkey, especially on annual vacation visits from Germany. In Turkey, Turks in Germany are called *Almancilar* ("Germaners"), an often-derogatory badge of difference. In a 1994 survey, 83 percent of Turkish respondents said they were no longer considering a return to Turkey (Goldberg 1996:3). In a recent study, three out of four Turks said they would like German citizenship if they could also keep the Turkish (Goldberg 1996:13).

Over the past three decades Turkey has lost its centrality as a geographical core, that is, as the site of the dominant institutions around which Turks build their lives; it has ceded this centrality to the German Turkish community. German Turks have developed their own institutions, everything from professional organizations and political interest groups to social clubs, newspapers, and television stations. They have turned away from institutions in Turkey, which many now say they find inadequate and compare unfavorably with those in Germany.

Benedict Anderson (1991[1983]) explained that a community or nation consists of linkages among people (and among their quite disparate activities), linkages that must be imagined since they cannot be experienced directly by people who may not know each other. We imagine community in large part by sharing the coherence of events and people created by the media. Indeed, on my first day in Berlin, I stepped into a subway car lined with passengers reading the German edition of *Hürriyet*, a Turkish newspaper. But the creation of a sense of simultaneity and coherence out of arbitrary events and images has gone beyond Anderson's print media to include mass media and popular culture, television and film, as well as the flow of people itself. What is imagined as community today is in large part a prod-

uct of this movement of information, images, and people around the globe, resulting in shifting, interactive ethnoscapas (Appadurai 1991:192).

Turks watch German television stations and Turkish stations broadcasting from Germany and from Turkey. But the images are not drawn solely from Turkey. The German Turkish stations regularly show feature films from India, uncommon in Turkey, where people instead have become addicted to Brazilian and Japanese soap operas. There is a large body of literature by Turks, often written in German, as well as locally produced Turkish film, art, and theater. Clubs, newspapers, and professional organizations are all very much concerned with events occurring in Germany.

But the 2 million Turks in Germany are a disparate community. They identify not only with Turkishness but also or even primarily with their social class, with a particular regional or non-Turkish ethnic origin, or with a transnational creole "third culture." There are now three generations in Germany, with varying degrees of fluency in either language and with widely disparate lifestyles. A variety of migrant organizations represents the political, social, and religious orientations and interests of the Turks. There are few centralized, representative umbrella organizations, a fact that Yasemin Soysal (1994) attributes to the lack of a German institutional system that prescribes and supports centralized organizations by migrants, as is found, for instance, in Sweden and the Netherlands. In Germany, state funding for migrant organizations is funneled through local regional authorities, who allocate money mainly for specific projects, such as cultural organizations, youth job training, and women's centers.

While a German Turkish community with an identity of its own has been constructed at one level, set off against both German and Turkish identities, at closer range this coherence is clearly imagined. The Turkish "community" refracts into numerous subcategories with sometimes substantially different interests and lifestyles: worker, student, Islamist, leftist, Kurd, Alevi, second and third generation, artistic elite, and so on.²

Identity as Process

These categories tell us little about the processes by which ethnic identities are maintained under conditions of flux, competition, and change. Under these centripetal conditions of competing and changing identities and the deterritorialization of national and communal identities through internationalization and migration, what continues to bind Turks together as a community? I suggest that underlying the strategic positionings of ethnic categorization are fundamental processes, regularities that set the parameters for action but are not in

themselves specific in terms of language, ritual, or patterns of social behavior.³ These regularities provide stability and continuity over time while being flexible with regard to all those behaviors and attributes that generally are used to demarcate boundaries of ethnic categories. What I call a processual identity is a kind of root paradigm (V. Turner 1974), a cluster of meanings that acts as a cultural map and enables people to find a path in their own culture, regardless of changes in customs, rules, language, and behaviors.

In the case of the Turkish community, this processual identity is based on participation in generalized reciprocity: someone who shares time, attention, information, and assistance, a person whose "door is always open" and from whom one can borrow money on trust is "one of us," either a Turk or "like a Turk." Processual identity interacts with changing objective conditions to produce new and unpredictable patterns of social behavior and shapes of community that are nevertheless coherent and identifiable as Turkish. Turks can claim Turkish identity so long as they engage one another on the basis of generalized reciprocity, even if they no longer speak Turkish, eat Turkish food, or dress and act in what some would call traditionally Turkish ways (for instance, guarding family honor by constraining women's mobility). People bridge contradictions in their daily practice brought about by economic, geographic, political, or social changes by using the same underlying element of identity—reciprocity—to explain new forms of practice.

Expectations of generalized reciprocity sustain the coherence beneath the fractures, politicization, and differences in Turkish lifestyle. A processual identity is a cultural imperative that is shared despite other differences. It also connects the community to Turkey, from which it has been essentially and categorically alienated. This is an "ethnicity" different from that structured for insertion into the political arena. It is flexible and adaptive, and provides a template for a practical integration into the encompassing German community. It does not replace ethnicity as a strategy for power, but provides a silent accompaniment. Processual identity may give little access to power on the national or international stage but provides the tensile fibers of historical continuity under conditions of challenge and change. In the following sections I will describe the functioning of reciprocity in identity maintenance in Istanbul and Berlin.

Istanbul: Concentric Community

I had come to Berlin to study how money and work fit into Turkish women's perceptions of self. I had just completed two years of research in Turkey among

women who had migrated from the countryside to Istanbul, then a city of 8 million people (White 1994), and I was curious to see whether my observations there held up among working-class women in a different migration setting in a large German city. One observation in Turkey became particularly relevant in Germany for explaining the first half of the identity dialectic: how Turks see themselves.

In Istanbul, family and community membership was expressed and maintained to a large extent through participation in complex networks of generalized reciprocal exchange. That is, people assisted each other in various ways without expectation of return from any particular person, but rather with the more general expectation that, when they needed something, someone in the family or community would provide. Among women, much of this mutual assistance took the form of shared labor: cleaning, food production, or child care. But other important resources, such as food, information, and, more rarely, money, were also shared.

Tourists often reported surprise and puzzlement at how much Turks did for them, going out of their way to help them and then refusing payment. In one case that a disconcerted German couple related, they were given what appeared to be the last egg in a poor village home. Such open-ended generalized reciprocity seemed to imply doing something with no expectation of return. But that is not the case. A great deal is expected, just not immediately and not from any specific individual. Bourdieu calls this symbolic violence "the gentle, invisible form of violence, which is never recognized as such, and is not so much undergone as chosen, the violence of credit, confidence, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, gratitude, [and] piety" (1977:192).

Mutual assistance is not meant to open a ledger for an equal exchange of services and an eventual summing up and closure, but rather to forge ever-new routes of obligation through the social web of community. It is the open-endedness of exchange, the gentle violence of obligation, that creates both solidarity and dependence in social relationships and assures the long-term security of community members. A member of the community has access not only to the assistance and resources of people whom she herself has helped but by virtue of her membership has access to the resources of the entire community, including assistance from people she has never met face-to-face, in any of a series of concentric communities extending outward from the nuclear family (extended family, neighborhood, region, nation, Islam). Family and community identity and solidarity are expressed and maintained through participation in a web of mutual support that characterizes social life in working-class areas and that ensures that individual needs are met by the group.

In Berlin I found, not surprisingly, that reciprocity, or mutual obligation, also underlies social identity among German Turks. But I would also like to suggest two things. First, reciprocity in Germany maintains ethnic identification, acting as a continuous substratum beneath the enormous changes and variety in behavior, gender roles, class affiliation, and structure of community that characterize the Turkish population there. Second, this important component of reciprocal obligation in Turkish women's identity contradicts German constructions of gender and family.

Berlin: Reciprocal Clusters

In Germany an important element of the dialectic of identity has been gender, both in German views of Turks as quintessentially Other and unintegrable and in Turkish constructions of their own difference. Contradictory constructions of community among Germans and Turks intersect with differences in family ideals and gender roles. As a result, family and gender are a focal point of German-Turkish misunderstanding.

Women's wage labor, along with other influences of the German social and institutional environment, has contributed to changes in gender roles and the structure of community among Turks in Germany. Women work outside the home to a much greater extent than in Turkey, where women's labor-force participation is very low, in part due to concerns about women's movement outside the protected domestic sphere and the threat posed by this to the family's honor. In Berlin, on the other hand, one encounters numerous Turkish women riding the subway at 4:00 a.m. to work the early shift in a factory or to clean businesses before they open. In 1990, 36 percent of formally employed Turkish workers in Berlin were female (Lundt et al. 1991), while in Turkish cities only 15.2 percent of all women were formally employed (SIS 1990).⁴

Several authors have pointed out that, in an environment where public scrutiny can no longer be counted on to enforce values such as honor, these values seem to have become increasingly internalized (see Pfluger-Schindlbeck 1989; Schiffauer 1986). Honor remains important in Germany, but it is less dependent on avoiding certain situations (such as being seen in public with unrelated men) and is focused more on individual action, such as premarital chastity and marital fidelity. So to maintain family honor, parents may either attempt to constrain their daughters' movements, something that is not always feasible in Germany (although attempted), or they may trust them and allow certain types of social interaction, such as mixed-gender groups or dancing, which would be unthinkable in many Istanbul migrant communities.

The lack of time for socializing and the pressures of scant housing in Berlin have contributed to a change in the nature of community. The subjective experience of doing fieldwork in Berlin was quite different from my experience in Istanbul. It felt much more fragmented. In Istanbul I would be introduced to a family by either a family friend or relative, someone with whom I already had a relationship, and so I was a known person with some legitimacy and foundation for trust. This family would then introduce me to another family, who would introduce me to another, and so on. Since these families all knew each other and often visited together, I was never a total stranger. Community here may be thought of as a series of concentric circles, where the family at the center knows or at least knows of other families in a spatially and socially continuous community that automatically includes kin and neighbors. For me this meant that my long-term friendships with members of one family, some going back as much as 15 years, gave me a sense of belonging and easy movement among other families in their community and kinship network.

In Berlin, however, I had a great deal of difficulty expanding my network of families. Initially I visited relatives of a friend from Turkey. They introduced me to several other families, whom I also visited, but it took some time until these families introduced me further. And I discovered to my surprise and dismay that this third tier of families had never heard of my friend's relatives. To them I was a complete stranger and at pains to explain my presence and convince them that I was not a German social worker.

As a general pattern, in Berlin families cluster (although they are not necessarily spatially contiguous) rather than being concentrically embedded in a community. That is, a family will generally interact socially with a core group of at least four or more other families that may live in quite different and distant parts of town. The family actually may have very little social contact with some of their relatives or other Turks living in their neighborhood or even in the same building. Contacts with core families, if they are not kin, generally are initiated through friendships between men at their workplaces. Women's workplace friendships with other women rarely develop into family visiting since, according to some women, their husbands "might not like" the husbands of their friends. In Istanbul, by contrast, women initiate their own visiting patterns with other women at their homes during the day. Since these relationships are often based on spatial contiguity, it is not unusual for the husbands to visit one another as well, although usually outside the home in a nearby coffeeshop or workplace. When the families visit one another in the home, as during holiday or other celebrations, men and women often interact separately.⁵

In Berlin, relations among families in a cluster are maintained primarily through the exchange of mixed-gender visits to their homes, for which there is a specific term, *ailece görüş* (*en famille* meeting). This linguistic distinction is less commonly voiced in Istanbul, where visits to the home are a natural part of almost any social interaction between women. In Berlin, women also socialize with women and men with men outside of *ailece görüş*, meeting at work or in the park or coffee shop, but these relationships generally do not involve socializing in the home, particularly if women work and their husbands will be at home in the evening. Such relationships also carry fewer reciprocal obligations.

Ailece görüş families maintain relations through visits and continual mutual assistance, which in Germany focuses particularly on borrowing money and, with kin, on purchasing commodities. Reciprocity has become much more oriented toward money and consumer goods than in Turkey, where women's relative leisure and greater interaction through exchanges of labor and information leads to a broader palette of mutual assistance. In Germany women can buy whatever they need, get information from a variety of formal sources, and, in any case, have little time left over from their jobs to visit informally with other women beyond the *ailece görüş* visits with the families in their cluster.

In Berlin, being able to borrow money is a marker of a close relationship and of community. While money generally is not talked about openly in Turkey, especially among friends and kin, among German Turks it is a constant topic of conversation. Money has become the primary vehicle of reciprocity. It also, therefore, becomes the salient metaphor of differentiation from Germans. A common theme among German Turks is the observation that "a German even lends money to her mother with a signed piece of paper!" One couple, when I asked whether they planned to return to Turkey for good when they retired, answered, sadly, "We'd like to return; but we can't. Who would we borrow money from?"

Even though the range of acceptable social and gender behavior has expanded, the reciprocal expectations at their base still lead to the absorption of women's and children's earnings by the family (Karakasoglu 1996). Both Turkish parents and children, to illustrate to me how close their family was, often pointed out that the children regularly gave their earnings to their parents or bought them large consumer items such as living room furniture sets, televisions, washing machines, and so on. One young woman, an ambitious university student who had only been to Turkey twice on summer vacations, lived at home and worked part-time in a bookstore. That year she used her earnings to buy her parents new living room furniture, although she her-

self did not have a desk in her room until she could save up for one month later.

Community and Exploitation

This kind of mutual support and obligation strikes many Germans as exploitative, as does a variety of other behaviors German scholars tend to ascribe to an idealized traditional Turkish family.⁶ This is an essentialized category derived primarily from studies of Turkish village life and generally ascribed to Islam (Kolinsky 1996). The other "traditional" behaviors that appear prominently in German discourse about the oppressiveness of the traditional Turkish family are arranged marriages, emphasis on girls' virginity and women's honor and the resulting restrictions on mobility, independent decision making, and pursuit of self-fulfillment.

Not surprisingly, much of the German literature about Turkish women is crisis-oriented and interventionist. A large body of literature consists of case studies by social workers operating on the premise that traditional Turkish family expectations are a hindrance to integration, particularly the emphasis on honor and family responsibilities.⁷

The German confusion of reciprocal expectations within the family with individual exploitation derives in part from contradictory constructions of gender and family: one focusing on collective obligation, the other on individualistic goal-oriented behavior. In his analysis of German subjectivity, the anthropologist John Borneman (1992) writes that German women of the second generation after World War II, that is, those who coincide with the first generation of Turkish migrants, swung away from the housewife marriages of their mothers. Beginning in the 1970s, particularly in the more radicalized environment of West Berlin, identity for both women and men became less associated with marriage and having children and more sexuality- and gender-centered. Partnership outside of marriage became the norm. Women tended to marry when they had children, often in order to position themselves legally for better access to state resources and subsidies. Still, 21 percent of women with children did not marry at all (Borneman 1992:272).

German women entered the workforce, but work in general was no longer a central defining feature of identity. Work facilitated the pursuit of pleasure or was pleasurable on its own. Vacation and free time, rather than work, became the important arenas for self-expression and self-fulfillment. Vacation, the nearly sacred *Urlaub*, lasted at least a month and usually involved lengthy, carefully planned trips with one or several friends. During the rest of the year, free-time activity centered around meeting friends at cafes or pub-

like *Kneipen*. Sports, concerts, movies, plays, and neighborhood cultural activities were also important arenas for expressing what Borneman calls the “Germanness” of the second generation.

Having children tended to reduce parents’ free time and shrink their circle of friends. This nuclear family tended to spend its evenings united around the television. Familial networks often were restricted to blood relatives. For an increasing number of German men and women, choosing *not* to become a parent was a conscious and positive part of their identity.⁸ This is in contrast to a continued emphasis among German Turks on marriage and family as primary sources of identification and reciprocal support, even in the second generation.

Integration/Alienation

Rather than promoting a practical integration into German society which would allow Turks to retain the identity and support of Turkish family and community, Germans have constructed integration in opposition to what they perceive to be “traditional” Turkish behavior. Integration generally has been defined by German scholars in terms of cultural behavior (on a bipolar scale between ideal types of traditional Turkish and modern German behavior).⁹ The emphasis on behavior means that the Turkish population is categorized in much of the German literature as being neither Turkish nor German, “between cultures,” or as having a double or schizophrenic identity. It has also led to German attempts to “integrate” individuals by enabling ideal (German) behavior (Horrocks and Kolinsky 1996). As Semra, a young, jeans-clad Turkish student at a German university and a German citizen, put it, by integration, “I think what they want is assimilation. What they want is that there be no more women with headscarves. What they want is that, when you are invited [to dinner], you don’t first ask, ‘Is there any pork?’ I’m sorry; I don’t eat [pork]” (see Figure 1). Integration, in this sense, is taken up by some German politicians as a magic formula for dealing with immigrants without disturbing German identity, that is, without having to become an immigrant nation or a multicultural society.

Turkish families feel the effect of this assimilationist interpretation of integration most intensely in the German social programs that provide assistance to girls if they are dissatisfied with the restrictions put upon them by their family. Several parents told of their daughter or the daughters of acquaintances seeking the assistance of German social agencies to complain about their parents, particularly about restricted lifestyles or an impending arranged marriage. If the girl claims to have been hit by her parents, she may stay in a shelter.



Figure 1

Young Turkish women walking arm-in-arm down a Berlin street, one in the modest dress of a devout Muslim, the other “integrated” in dress, though she probably would not eat pork. The young Turks desire German acceptance of the full range of their dress and behavioral styles. Photo by Jenny B. White.

Her parents are not told where she is, nor are they allowed contact with her until a formal meeting is arranged. If she wishes, the girl is given assistance to enable her to live away from home. These stories have an almost iconic quality to them, as parents believe they illustrate German hostility toward family life and efforts by the German state to break up the Turkish family.¹⁰

The German hope, reflected in social work literature and in popular discourse, is that extracting Turkish women from family expectations and obligations will facilitate independent decision making and the pursuit of individual goals and liberate their resources to this end. While this may increase the young women’s control over their lives, removal from the family and its support network and the questions that arise about the girls’ honor and respectability also undermine their ability to retain membership in the Turkish community, a source

of identity and emotional and economic support. A young Turkish woman at a public hearing on the situation of foreign women and girls pointed out that, while Turkish girls have visions of *Freiheit* (the freedom of German society), their experience is that participation in German society cannot replace the support of the family (Ministry for Youth, Family, Women and Health 1989, 1:59). They are, in any case, denied full entry into German society.

While Turks may become "cocitizens with equal rights" (*Gleichberechtigte Mitbürger*), they can never become "German" or participate fully in German society, regardless of where their behavior falls on the scale. German ethnicity and national identity are based on blood, not on behavior (Forsythe 1989; Wilpert 1993). This is true regardless of citizenship status. One second-generation Turkish man who was born in Germany, had a German passport, spoke flawless German, and had a secure civil-service job was refused an apartment by a landlord who said, "I don't care what your passport says; you're not German."¹¹

Turkish girls removed from their families are alienated from their own community and denied full membership in the dominant one. The unattainability of acceptance is hidden behind a screen of discourse that promises integration in return for behavioral adaptation. The hidden impossibility of this premise perpetuates the image of the Turkish community as essentially Other and unintegrable.

The Other Is Always Foreign

While social workers grapple with Turkish family expectations, other state programs and subsidies are structured to support "ethnic" activities: Turkish theater, Turkish arts, migrant literature, exhibitions of Turkish culture. While in Berlin, I attended a stage production of Garcia Lorca's *Blood Wedding*, performed by a theater troupe from Romania. The play was presented in Roma, a gypsy language, but the presentation was marvelously evocative and clear. The ensuing question-and-answer period between audience and director focused mainly on the question "Why don't you do something from your own culture?" Following the same principle, there is official support primarily for art and other activities that are expressions of an essentially Other ethnic identity (Tan and Waldhoff 1996) (see Figure 2).

Even in the demonstrations against hostility toward foreigners organized by inclusionist progressive groups following a particularly severe wave of anti-foreigner violence in 1992, Turks remained foreigners, at best cocitizens, an essentialized ethnic Other whose plight generally was addressed as a human rights con-

HAMAM

Das Türkische
Bad für Frauen



Figure 2

Brochure for a "traditional" women's *hamam*, or Turkish bath, in Berlin. It is situated in the basement of a former chocolate factory located below a lesbian cafe frequented by Turkish and German lesbians. Although this is the only hamam in Berlin, Turkish women generally do not frequent it. Patrons are mostly German women and "alternative" foreigners. Classes of German schoolchildren are brought in for an "ethnic" experience.

cern rather than as an attack on German residents (Mandel 1994). The Other, even if a German citizen, is always foreign. Witness the caption to an article in the news magazine *Der Spiegel*: "Blacks with German Nationality Organize against Racism" (*Spiegel* 1991:56). The article was talking not about immigrants but about children of mixed parentage who were born German and raised in Germany. One of these, journalist Sheila Mysorekar, said, "Black means for the whites[:] abroad, foreign, not German. That's why supposedly in Germany there is no racism, but only hostility to foreigners (*Ausländerfeindlichkeit*)." The rhetoric of Germany's cultural fundamentalism excludes on the basis of an essential, primordial cultural difference, a rhetoric distinct from (but masking) that of conventional racism, which infers a natural inferiority (Stolcke 1995; Wilpert 1993).

"Nationalism thinks in terms of historical destinies, while racism dreams of eternal contaminations [which are] outside history" (Anderson 1991[1983]:149). Cultural fundamentalism, while based on characteristics perceived to be primordial and unchanging, is itself a product of history and the struggle to define the German nation.

The Essential Turk

Essentialized categories of ethnicity and nationalism are powerful realist forces on the national and international stage. Certain characteristics (social behaviors, language, customs) are attributed to these categories, either by the groups themselves or by others. Categories are often institutionalized and have practical consequences for fostering or excluding ethnic and national groups (Soysal 1993). Groups can situate themselves in terms of identity in order to take advantage of, say, government resources earmarked for particular ethnic categories. Alternatively, groups can be identified in a way that marginalizes them, in what Verena Stolcke (1995) has called Europe's "cultural fundamentalism."

The essentialized identity of Turks in Germany has changed over the past three decades, as Turks have actively defined their own community (within the parameters and opportunities provided by the German state and society) and as Germans have redefined the Turks to meet their own economic and political needs. Over the years, the vocabulary of categorization, how Germans referred to the Turkish population, changed along with economic and political currents: *Fremdarbeiter* (foreign workers) and *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) are terms fallen out of use, replaced in part by *Ausländer* (foreigners) or *ausländische Arbeitnehmer* (foreign employees). A contemporary, more politically correct nomenclature is *Migranten* (migrants) or *ausländische Mitbürger* (foreign cocitizens), never *Immigranten*, as

that would imply the right to remain. Turks, as the Other, have always been considered *ausländer*, and some argue that Germans consider Turks among the most inferior groups of foreigners (which also include long-term pockets of Italians, Spaniards, Greeks, and others), due in no small part to religious differences (Çağlar 1994:194; Mandel 1994:120). Nevertheless, as long-term residents, Turks have until recently occupied a unique, if still negative, place in German discourse about foreigners. A German cartoon (Figure 3) shows two men at a bar: one an archetypal Berliner, the other dark-haired, with a mustache. The Berliner says to the other man, "You a foreigner, eh?" The man answers, "No. Turk." The Berliner looks flustered and apologizes, "Sorry. My mistake. But you do look a little foreign."

In the period shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the status of *unsere Türken* (our Turks) came into competition with the "new" status of eastern Germans, whom many western Germans characterized as culturally inferior, lazy, sly, tight-fisted, and arrogant. Very telling is a joke that was circulating among western Germans around this time, when eastern Germans (derogatorily called "Ossies") packed into cheap shops in the west, such as Aldi, a grocery chain. The joke goes:

A Turk is standing on line at Aldi behind two Ossies. One Ossie complains to the other, "Look at this line. We've been waiting here for hours. I don't know why we came here. It's no different from where we were."

The Turk turns to them and says, "We didn't ask you to come."

In another version of the joke, the Turk also corrects their grammar in German.

Since reunification, however, Turks increasingly are being deconstructed as a category of migrants and "cocitizens" (*ausländer* with a local history) and reassembled in media and government discourse as *ausländer* lumped with non-German asylum seekers and other newly arrived Others such as Poles, Romanian gypsies,



Figure 3

Cartoon by Erich Rauschenbach showing a conversation between a Turk and a Berliner. Used by permission of the artist.

and Yugoslavian refugees. News articles often do not differentiate, shifting from a description of a skinhead attack on a Turkish wedding to a discussion of public outrage over the alleged criminality of Bulgarian asylum seekers or Yugoslavian refugees, linking them in the same article as if the latter explained the former. The categories by which Turks in Germany are labeled and perceived are now in flux, unwound and respun in complex ways on the loom of German and European unification.¹² History is rewritten in subtle ways, through shifts of categorization in the public mind.

The Barbarians at the Gate

In 1991, one year after the wall fell, the East German secret police files were opened to public scrutiny, and television, magazines, and newspapers became steeped in emotional testimonials and confrontations as eastern Germans learned who had spied on and betrayed them, who had made them lose jobs or be put behind bars: husband betrayed wife, children betrayed parents, parents children, friend friend. Victim and perpetrator, as the media called them, were discovered within the same family, the same community. A television camera recorded a victim knocking on his parents' door, asking, "Why did you do it? Why did you turn me in?" The camera then recorded the door being slammed and the victim's still helpless but vindicated shrug. The air was thick with feelings of betrayal, hung out on the public line, eagerly consumed by a mesmerized German press and public.

In November 1991, in a subway station in a prosperous part of western Berlin, a Turkish teenager was battered to death by German youths with a baseball bat. Several weeks later, a young Polish tourist buying a hot dog at a shop in a sedate middle-class shopping area was pulled into the bushes of a small park by skinheads who cut out part of his tongue. In the media the almost Foucaultian mandatory "Ossie" confession and passion play was edged aside by breathless and slightly puzzled rhetoric about the threat of right-wing radicals and skinheads, a public sore on what had been carefully constructed since World War II as a healthy body politic.

More than 5,000 attacks against foreigners were reported in Germany in 1992 alone (Senat von Berlin 1994:33, 78-79). Of these, over 2,000 are proven or suspected to have been motivated by right-wing radicalism, almost double the previous year. According to the police, most of those arrested for antforeigner violence in Berlin were young, unemployed youth. Two-thirds of those sought for right-wing violence were from the east.¹³ While many of those arrested sported right-wing symbols, such as shaved heads, brown shirts, or swasti-

kas, most did not belong to any organized right-wing movement.

While much of the violence was initially directed against asylum seekers and eastern European refugees, it was soon directed as well at members of Germany's long-term Turkish population. Turks have been constructed in the press and in German political rhetoric not only as victims of *ausländerfeindlichkeit* but also as perpetrators. Victim and perpetrator is a seminal set of concepts that lies at the core of much post-World War II German national soul-searching and that has gained new life after reunification as eastern Germans sort out their roles under the old regime and western Germans confront the east's different historical construction of responsibility for the Nazi past and its roles in the post-war present (Heilbrunn 1996). The notion of Turk as perpetrator, as a threat to the welfare of the German nation, as the metaphoric "barbarian at the gate" is, I suggest, a construction that has arisen out of the anxiety of a nation faced with a painful renegotiation of its own identity (and victim/perpetrator roles) amidst economic decline.

Turks have from their earliest migration to Germany been the Other, the foreigner, but over the past three decades that categorization has gained in complexity as Turks became long-term employees and members of German communities and as two generations of Turks attended school and worked or pursued careers in Germany. Reunification brought a consolidation of these identities as Turkish residents became conflated with newly arrived asylum seekers and eastern Europeans as a kind of lumpen foreigner, perceived to be an economic and cultural threat to German national health.¹⁴ The term *Ausländer*, which had become virtually synonymous with the term *Turk*, expanded differentially after reunification to include not only economic and political refugees from the former Soviet sphere but also *Aussiedler* (ethnic Germans from eastern and southeastern Europe and the former Soviet Union). Many of the *aussiedler* lack familiarity with the German language and culture and are dependent on government support and training; they automatically receive German citizenship and full access to Germany's social welfare system (MacEwen 1995; Wilpert 1993). What had been a German-Turk dichotomy increasingly has taken on connotations of "western versus eastern people" (Mandel 1994).

One popular explanation for the increase in attacks against foreigners focused on unemployment, particularly in the east. The "shock therapy" applied to eastern Germany after reunification was brutal. From full employment under the socialist system, by 1991 only half of the workforce of 10 million people was fully employed, a rate of unemployment higher than during the depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s (von Beyme

1992:158). It was argued that unemployment and a severe lack of housing (in both east and west) contributed to a sense of social threat. Foreigners were blamed for taking resources. Asylum seekers were believed to be coddled by the state and were accused of theft. Poles were pictured emptying the shelves of shops like locusts. In reality, foreigners make up a mere 7 percent of the western German population (less in the east). Turks own 40,000 businesses in Germany that generate 168,000 jobs, with an annual turnover of 34 billion German marks.¹⁵ Nevertheless, public discussion quickly refocused on German Turks (assimilated to other *ausländer*) as the major problem (Çağlar 1994:195). Turks then became a target of hatred in the east and arson and other attacks in western Germany.

Terence Turner (1995) and others (Fritzsche 1994; Ostow 1995) have suggested that the foreign immigrants against whom cultural nationalist violence is directed are not its primary targets. Rather, Turner argues, exclusionist nationalist rhetoric and violence are a protest by the relatively disenfranchised, dominated elements of the national population against the dominant political-economic and cultural order, and a claim for "inclusion and integration on more favorable social, political and economic terms" (1995:17). After reunification, as eastern Germans slid into the biggest economic depression in German history (Drost 1993), many felt victimized, first by their own country, the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), and then by the West. Reunification was accompanied by enormous social dislocation, resentment, feelings of guilt, and fear of the Other and the threat that this Other presented to the nation's way of life. For eastern Germans that threat took the shape of an overpowering Western political and consumer culture, for which many were unprepared (see Figures 4 and 5). Eastern Germany and the expense of reunification, on the other hand, were felt to endanger the achievements of postwar western German society (Lewis 1995). The following line heard at an eastern German cabaret expresses the latent hostilities between eastern and western German citizens and hints at their displacement onto Others: "How bad does it have to get for us before we come up with new ideas . . . or very old ones?" And a contrasting line from a western German cabaret: "You just don't know anymore where the borders are, what belongs to you. So you turn into a rabid dog. First you have to piss on the borderposts again." Hostility to foreigners, in this sense, may be understood as a displacement of the victim and perpetrator roles of eastern and western Germany acted out upon a foreign body or a body made foreign for the purpose.

A novel by South African writer J. M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), describes an allegorical frontier settlement. Skirmishes are reported



Figure 4

Dismantling of Lenin statue in eastern Berlin. The construction fence was quickly covered with fresh flowers, red banners, the East German flag, posters of Lenin, and signs protesting this attempt by the "arrogant occupiers" to erase eastern German history. Photo by Jenny B. White.

from over the horizon between the barbarians and the forces of the empire. There is a sense of threat in the town, even though the only "barbarians" in sight are prisoners brought in for interrogation by a colonel of the empire; they appear to be simple fisherfolk, a young boy, a woman. The interrogations are brutal, the prisoners tortured. The questions posed in the book are: Who are the barbarians? Is the threat from the outside, hordes waiting to descend on and plunder the populace? Or are the barbarians within? Who are the perpetrators and who are the victims? The answer in Germany, as in Coetzee's book, is far from clear. Are they the *ausländer*, a threat from the outside, or at least constructed as Other and as foreign? Or are the barbarians within?



Figure 5

To avoid a mass demonstration and media coverage of the decapitation of Lenin's statue, the construction firm shrouded the figure and gave out the wrong time for the beginning of the demolition. Photo by Jenny B. White.

The following apt lines are from the poem "Waiting for the Barbarians," by the 19th-century Ottoman Greek poet Constantine Cavafy:

What are we waiting for, assembled in the forum?
 The barbarians are due here today.
 Why isn't anything going on in the senate?
 Why are the senators sitting there without legislating?
 Because the barbarians are coming today.
 What's the point of senators making laws now?
 Once the barbarians are here, they'll do the legislating.
 ...
 Why this sudden bewilderment, this confusion?
 (How serious people's faces have become.)
 Why are the streets and squares emptying so rapidly,

everyone going home lost in thought?

Because night has fallen and the barbarians haven't come.
 And some of our men just in from the border say
 there are no barbarians any longer.

Now what's going to happen to us without barbarians?

Those people were a kind of solution. [Cavafy 1975:17-18]

The process of imagining community is a dialectical process, the production of a national imaginary (Hamilton 1990). A national imaginary is the means by which contemporary social orders produce images of themselves *and* images of themselves against others. That is, a national or ethnic self distinguishes itself against challenges by social, economic, and political mechanisms. These mechanisms may be those of the state or the minority population, or a result of changes in identity at the transnational level, such as the reinvention of Europe. The media plays a major role in linking and projecting these various images into the national or international imagination.

In imagining the new German nation, western images of the national self are challenged by the east's divergent social and historical imaginary. The image of the foreigner is forged on the anvil of this east-west dialectic, representing a threat to both, against which a nation under siege can be imagined whole. A new right wing of political thought spanning both eastern and western Germany has emerged in the aftermath of reunification. The new Right has imagined a powerful reunited Germany that no longer feels ashamed of its Nazi past or needs to atone for it by opening its borders to those not of its own blood. The movement denounces the United States and Europe for underwriting a "guilt mythology" and for shaming Germany into thinking it must accept foreigners, thus depriving Germans of their Germanness (Heilbrunn 1996). A new, powerful, ethnically homogeneous Germany is imagined against a multicultural national imaginary felt to be enforced by the United States and Europe.

Identities within Europe also are in flux and competition as Europe moves from being structured as an economic community to a European union based more on cultural similarities. This change in the constitution of European identity has repercussions for nations and other communities encompassed or excluded by that definition.¹⁶ So, for example, eastern European states, formerly excluded for ideological and economic reasons, are being considered for inclusion, whereas Turkey, long an associate member of the European Community, has gone to the back of the line for full membership. Much of the rhetoric about the exclusion of Turkey speaks to perceived cultural and religious incompatibility.

By the same token, the identity of Turkish communities within Europe is also transformed. Those who have been guest workers and cocitizens have become

the foreigners within, both in the sight of Germany and Europe. As one young Turkish woman discovered upon applying to a French university, living in Germany most of her life and having a European identity did not make her a citizen of the European Union and eligible to study "abroad." In counterpoint, the decreasing importance of national identity enables noncitizen Turks to legitimate their claim on the German state by reference to abstract, universal rights in a kind of transnational citizenship (Soysal 1994).

Turkish responses to antiforeigner violence (and to German reactions to the violence) also illustrate the principle that social identity is the outcome of a dialectic between images of self and images of self against others. Turkish responses, while varying by generation, social class, and educational level (White 1996), also reflect the availability of both external and internal components of identity (which include reciprocity) for the creation of an ethnic self.

One response has been withdrawal from German culture and consolidation and defense of community boundaries. Turkish working-class youth gangs, for instance, set aside their differences and vowed to work together to defend their neighborhoods (see Figure 6).¹⁷ Some Turks, particularly the educated young, became politicized, expressing a greater interest in obtaining German citizenship, while others gravitated toward a more transnational definition of self that retreated from both Turkish and German identities, drawing upon characteristics of interpersonal relationships—what I call processual identity—to create an "ethnic" community. This community could include not only other Turks but also Iranians, Italians, or anyone who shared, by virtue of their personal history, the characteristics of self by which young educated Turks defined themselves—a bricolage (Çağlar 1990) of what they call "European or German" attributes, like professionalism or being on time, and "oriental or Turkish" attributes, like engaging in generalized reciprocity and "keeping



Figure 6

Turkish youth-gang graffiti in Berlin; the group calls itself Barbaren, German for barbarians. Photo by Jenny B. White.

one's door always open." Not only does this creole ethnic self (Çağlar 1990; Hannerz 1987) provide an identification beyond the unwelcoming nation, but its processual core, reciprocity, simultaneously conserves links to other Turks across boundaries of class, age, education, lifestyle, self-definition, and geographic location.

Like all imagined communities embedded within a dominant nation, the historical trajectory of the German Turkish community will be pulled by the gravity of struggles to redefine and reimagine the German nation and German identity after reunification. The outcome is uncertain, in part because there are so many competing elements: east/west, Turk/foreigner, blood/citizenship, German/European, national/transnational. But the components of community building are also in place. Benedict Anderson, referring to those shared elements of cultural systems through which community may be collectively imagined, wrote, "Through that language encountered at mother's knee and parted with only at the grave, pasts are restored, fellowships are imagined, and futures dreamed" (1991[1983]:154). Reciprocity is such a language, providing a grammar for future community, whatever the vocabulary of change.

Notes

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1. I am grateful to Jon Anderson for this formulation.

2. See Çağlar 1994, Mandel 1989, and Tan and Waldhoff 1996. Sixty-one percent of the Turkish workforce is in the manufacturing industry (Çağlar 1994), and Turks remain disadvantaged in the German job market (Faist 1993; Kolinsky 1996). But entrepreneurship is growing rapidly, with an average of 2,000 new Turkish businesses every year (Şen 1996a:31).

3. Similar to what Bourdieu (1977) has called *habitus*, structured dispositions to behave a certain way that we learn through our daily practice.

4. But this figure does not take into account women's extensive participation in the informal labor market. Much of that work is done in the home or immediate neighborhood, thus not challenging norms disapproving of women's movement in public spaces and interaction with strangers (White 1994). In rural areas, women work in the fields (Delaney 1991) and increasingly engage in piecework, such as weaving carpets, for which they are paid by the knot (Berik 1995). The informal labor market, though it exists in Berlin, is very small due to tight regulation by the German state.

5. There are numerous exceptions to this depending on such factors as social class, religious affiliation, or regional origin. The minority Alevi religious sect is noted for its freedom of social interaction between men and women; migrants from western Turkey tend to be less conservative than those from the east. As migrants move financially and socially into the middle class and as women become educated and take up professions (teacher, pharmacist, and so forth), patterns of gender interaction also change.

6. For an overview of recent literature on Turks in Germany, see White 1995.

7. See de Jong 1984; Hahn 1991; Ministry for Youth, Family, Women and Health 1989; and Schaumann et al. 1988.

8. My own extensive personal experience with German culture generally supports Borneman's observations, although Berlin, as a result of its long geographic isolation and distance from bourgeois West German norms, incubated more extreme versions of the social trends that color the lives of my extended family in a provincial southwestern German city. Village life, on the other hand, seems much more oriented toward marriage and children.

9. For a cogent critique of use of the culture concept in studies of encapsulated migrant communities, see Çağlar 1990.

10. The availability of recourse is important when tensions arise in Turkish families from the quite different life experiences and expectations of three generations. What I am pointing out is the very different construction of gender, family, and the individual in society which underlies German perceptions of Turkish culture as exploitative and oppressive and Turkish perceptions of Germans (and their institutions) as hostile to family life.

11. Forsythe (1989) points out that German identity itself is a problematic categorization. Germanness can be defined neither by consistent geographic boundaries nor by a long history; recent history also is unavailable as a basis for an unproblematic identification. Thus, Germans use categories of purity, language, culture, family, and appearance to define Germanness. They may also react by being nationalist (and acknowledging Germany's recent history as legitimate) or by denying their Germanness or by focusing on other available identities: as Berliners or Europeans.

12. In one of the more bizarre but deliciously significant postreunification developments, Turks cornered the market on Soviet and East German government and military paraphernalia, which they hawked with great bazaar professionalism in the plaza on the east side of the Brandenburg Gate,

formerly the central symbolic locus of the city's Cold War division.

13. Police President Georg Schertz, reported in *Berliner Zeitung* 1991. But see also Goldberg 1996:18.

14. Mattson describes a similarly alarmist "homogeneous mass public discourse shaped out of [the] tremendously heterogeneous population" (1995:82) of refugees and asylum seekers in postreunification Germany. See Faist 1994 on the role of political parties in this process.

15. Şen 1996a:30, 1996b:2; TGBA 1997.

16. See Ruane 1994, Shore and Black 1994, and Wilson 1993.

17. Hermann Tertilt (1996) has written a powerful ethnography of a Turkish youth gang, in which he relates acts of violence by Turkish gang members against German youth to the atmosphere of hostility against foreigners in their German environment.

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