

**Persistence and Change in Class Behaviour During the Labour  
Migration Boom**

**Analysing the Case of Turkish Labour Migrants through the Lens of the  
Nationalist Action Party (1961-1980)**

**Burak Akar**

**S2304872**

**Dr. mult. A.D.J. Shield**

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**Leiden University**

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## **Abstract**

This study examines the relationship between the MHP (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*) and Turkish workers in the FRG in the years 1961-80. Instead of measuring 'integration' in terms of cultural differences between migrants and the native population, this study uses a comparative approach to understand the political behaviour of Turkish migrants. A comparison is made between, firstly, the refugees and expellees who settled in the FRG after World War II and, secondly, internal migrants in Turkey. Although the migration period as well as settlement conditions for the refugees and expellees, and the Turkish workers were different, the similar situation of these groups in the West German labour market enables a comparison between them. The comparison between internal and external migrants of Turkey also enables the evolution of the MHP to be better understood. Moreover, this study uses Turkish workers' relationship with the MHP as a lens to understand their political behaviour. In addition, the paper investigates the changes in government policy in both Turkey and the FRG, and the impact of these policies on the Turkish population. This work uses as its primary sources issues from a Turkish diasporic journal published in 1979 by Turk Federation, an organization affiliated with the MHP, and government reports produced by the Turkish authorities from 1966-78.

*Yes, you who are broken by power,  
You who are absent all day,  
You who are kings for the sake of your children's story,  
The hand of your beggar is burdened down with money,  
The hand of your lover is clay.*

Leonard Cohen, *The Old Revolution*, 1969

# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>2. The Path to Labour Migration: Socio-Economic Transformations of the Federal Republic of Germany and Turkey and Their Experiences with the People on the Move</b> .....	12
<b>2.1. The Federal Republic of Germany</b> .....	12
<b>2.1.1. Political Parties and Trade Unions in the Federal Republic of Germany after WWII</b> 12	
<b>2.1.2. Refugees and Expellees in West German Society and the Labour Market</b> .....	15
<b>2.2. Turkey</b> .....	18
<b>2.2.1. The Multi-Party Era and the Growing Influence of Populist Politics</b> .....	19
<b>2.2.2. The MHP, Its Ideology and Its Supporters</b> .....	22
<b>2.2.3. Rural-Urban Migration and the Reasons behind the Labour Migration from Turkey to the FRG</b> .....	24
<b>3. Turkish Labour Migration during the Economic Boom, The Problems inherent in the Migration Process, and the Political Responses</b> .....	29
<b>3.1. Turkish Population’s Experiences in the FRG and Its Analysis through the MHP</b> .....	30
<b>3.2. Efforts of the Turkish and West German states to Shape the Experiences of Turkish Population in the FRG</b> .....	42
<b>3.2.1. Turkish Side</b> .....	42
<b>3.2.2. West German Side</b> .....	46
<b>4. Conclusion and Discussion</b> .....	50
<b>PRIMARY SOURCES</b> .....	55
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	56

# Persistence and Change in Class Behaviour During the Labour Migration Boom: Analysing the Case of Turkish Labour Migrants through the Lens of the Nationalist Action Party (1961-1980)

## 1. Introduction

Turkish labour migration into the Federal Republic of Germany (hereafter referred as FRG) has been conceptualised in terms of immigrants' abilities to integrate into West German society. Political discussions generally compare two distinct groups of people in order to reveal the differences between two groups and how these differences problematise the integration process. This approach to Turkish labour migration has been replicated in several academic works, which approach the subject through the notion of immigrant integration. In other words, the extent of differences is judged as determining the integration capabilities of Turkish migrants and their families in West German society.<sup>1</sup> Yet the pitfalls inherent in this concept are revealed by social theorist Willem Schinkel in one of his article 'Against "Immigrant Integration."'”<sup>2</sup> According to this work, approaching immigrants as individuals who lack a sense of integration creates a dichotomy between a well-integrated 'society' and individualised, racialised migrants. On the other hand, some Turkish migrant organizations, especially those with affiliations to Turkish political parties, have been regarded as negatively impacting the integration of Turkish migrants and their families. The Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, hereafter referred as the MHP) and its presence in the FRG presents a good example for these kinds of organisations. The MHP has been seen as problematic for integration because of its ideology, organisational structure, and strategies of achieving its political goals. Although it was the subject of many public debates, the case of the MHP in the FRG is under-researched. Some scholars pay attention

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<sup>1</sup> See among others; Barbara E. Schmitter, "Immigrants and Associations: Their Role in the Socio-Political Process of Immigrant Worker Integration in West Germany and Switzerland," *International Migration Review* 14, no. 2 (June 1980): 179–92, <https://doi.org/10.1177/019791838001400201>, Ahmet Yükleven and Gökçe Yurdakul, "Islamic Activism and Immigrant Integration: Turkish Organizations in Germany," *Immigrants & Minorities* 29, no. 1 (March 2011): 64–85, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619288.2011.553134>, and Ulrike Schoeneberg, "Participation in Ethnic Associations: The Case of Immigrants in West Germany," *International Migration Review* 19, no. 3 (1985): 416–437, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2545848>.

<sup>2</sup> Willem Schinkel, "Against 'Immigrant Integration': For an End to Neocolonial Knowledge Production," *Comparative Migration Studies* 6, no. 1 (December 2018): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-018-0095-1>.

to the activities of the MHP in the FRG and therefore mention it in their works,<sup>3</sup> but only in relation to other immigrant political organizations.

The role of the MHP in Turkey and its influence on the country's political life cannot be disregarded. This role and influence has not always been reflected in electoral success.<sup>4</sup> However, the party's ultra-nationalist ideology, self-presentation as both representative of the Turkish nation and protector of the Turkish state, and acceptance by other political actors as an important element in Turkish political life are enough to treat it as a tool to read the evolution of Turkish politics through time. Moreover, the MHP gained importance among the people who were at risk of losing their social status when Turkey became more capitalist, as well as those who migrated from rural regions to bigger cities during the country's internal migration process. The MHP is therefore useful for understanding the political landscape in Turkey. Moreover, by examining the MHP's role, function and activities in the FRG, the migration process from Turkey to the FRG can be analysed. This work therefore aims to understand the relationship between the MHP and the Turkish population in the FRG. By doing this, I aim to reveal and discuss the factors, actors, and events which shaped Turkish labour migrants' and their families' relationship with the MHP, as well as why some workers embraced the ideology of this party. However, rather than approaching the relationship between Turkish labour migrants/their families and the MHP in terms of immigrant integration, which presupposes the differences between newcomers and natives, I focus on the class characteristics of Turkish immigrants. This allows me to understand the impact of Turkish immigrants' position within the West German class structure on the relationship they built with the MHP. Thus in my introduction below, I first consider the relationship between migration and class relations. Second, in order to build on previous discussion of the MHP in the context of Turkish labour migration, I briefly examine the

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<sup>3</sup> See among others Nermin Abadan-Unat, *Bitmeyen Göç: Konuk İşçilikten Ulus-Ötesi Yurttaşlığa*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2002). and Eva Ostergaard-Nielsen, *Trans-State Loyalties and Policies: Turks and Kurds in Germany* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10097341>.

<sup>4</sup> The CKMP and MHP had participated in elections in 1961, 1965, 1969, 1973 and 1977 and its vote ratios in those elections were 14%, 2,2%, 3,0%, 3,4% and 6,4% respectively. Source: "1950-1977 Yılları Arasında Yapılan Milletvekili Genel Seçimleri," Yüksek Seçim Kurulu (The Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey), accessed 21/01/2020, <http://www.ysk.gov.tr/tr/1950-1977-yillari-arasi-milletvekili-genel-secimleri/3007>.

existing studies and their approaches.<sup>5</sup> After this I will mention my planned contribution to the discussion and outline the structure of this work.

One important point regarding the migration process between the FRG and Turkey is that Turkish immigrants had settled in the FRG as workers. The reconstruction process which the FRG underwent after the Second World War led to remarkable growth rates during the 1950s and the expansion of West German industries.<sup>6</sup> This resulted in the search for additional workforce by the West German industries, which struggled to meet their needs from West Germany's population only. In order to offer a solution to this problem, the West German government approached other countries and signed various bilateral agreements with them. Among these countries were Italy (1955), Greece and Spain (1960), Turkey (1961), Portugal (1964), and Yugoslavia (1968).<sup>7</sup> Therefore it would not be wrong to assume that Turkish immigrants had become part of the West German working class, whose structure was changing with the increasing presence of foreign workers. Yet what is important here is that the impact of the changing structure of the working class was reflected in the political behaviour and class consciousness of its members. According to Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, the members of one class have to realize their common interest, as well as the opposing nature of the interests of other classes, in order to act like an organized entity. These scholars also insist on the non-negligible effects of different historical conditions upon the development of class consciousness among the working class.<sup>8</sup> Because it offers the possibility for workers to develop different interests rather than having a common ground for a unified class struggle, the migration process of foreign workers into the FRG can be included among these historical conditions. However, it should also be noted that migration is not the only factor affecting the development of class consciousness. Other important factors include the past experiences of workers in the FRG and

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<sup>5</sup> See Emre Arslan, "Turkish Ultra-Nationalism in Germany: Its Transnational Dimensions," in *Transnational Social Spaces: Agents, Networks and Institutions*, ed. Thomas Faist and Eyüp Özveren, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2017), 111–39, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315235707>. and Jörg Nowak, "Labour Migration, Postcolonial Nationalism and Class Politics beyond Borders: The Case of the Turkish Party MHP in Germany," in *New Border and Citizenship Politics*, ed. Helen Schwenken and Sabine Ruß-Sattar, Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship Series (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 187–204, [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137326638\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137326638_13).

<sup>6</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *A Concise History of Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 230, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511984631>.

<sup>7</sup> Ray C. Rist, *Guestworkers in Germany: The Prospects for Pluralism* (New York: Praeger, 1978), 61.

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe*, 2nd ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 466.

Turkey, as well as the industrial relations of both countries and their impact on the formation of class consciousness before the settlement of Turkish workers in the FRG. In this way, the cumulative causation approach taken by migration scholar Thomas Faist with respect to the development of collective identities in the realms of religion, nation, and ethnicity<sup>9</sup> can be extended to the development of class consciousness both in a transnational migratory context and in the periods when the migration process had not started to take place. In addition, as Castles and Kosack argue, the members of the working class may develop interests in political views and organizations which are not in favour of the emergence of a common interest among the workers.<sup>10</sup> Within this perspective, the MHP's presence among the Turkish workers and their families in the FRG can be analysed. However, my aim is not to approach the MHP as only a political actor in the FRG but also to regard it as an immigrant organization. By doing this, I think, the reasons behind the acceptance of the MHP's ideology by some Turkish workers and their family members can be explained. With the theoretical framework for this study drawn, attention can now be given to the studies which focus on the MHP in the FRG from a transnational perspective, to whose discussions I hope to contribute with this work.

Firstly, Emre Arslan's article 'Turkish Ultra-nationalism in Germany: Its Transnational Dimensions', is worth considering, in particular its discussion of the migration period and the factors involved in migration. Although Arslan discusses the revealing characteristics of followers of the MHP by comparing them with those of fascist parties, and by doing that historicizes the discussion, the work does not analyse the relation between these characteristics of the followers and the reasons why people chose to migrate to the FRG from Turkey. Moreover, although the article uses the notion of transnationalism and transnational space, it neglects the fact that this transnational space was shaped by the politics, actors, and events in the contexts of two countries involved. Rather, the focus is given mostly to the Turkish side which suggests a migration experience shaped only by the sending country. In addition, Arslan argues that the Turkish state did not pay much attention to developing the social conditions of Turkish immigrants in the FRG. However, from the beginning of this migration experience, the Turkish state as well as the respective Turkish governments has involved itself in shaping the social

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Faist, *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces* (Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press, 2000), 226-227.

<sup>10</sup> Castles and Kosack, *Immigrant Workers*, 471-472.



conditions of Turkish immigrants. Moreover, this involvement by the Turkish side is one of the factors behind the MHP's increase in activity when the party became a part of coalition governments during the 1970s. Lastly, Arslan's work focuses on the developments which took place in the labour migration process and hence it disregards the MHP's increasing importance in Turkish political life and clearly cannot build a connection between the role of the MHP in Turkey and in the FRG.

A similar thing can be said for the periodization in Jorge Nowak's article 'Labour Migration, Post-colonial Nationalism and Class Politics beyond Borders: The Case of the Turkish Party MHP in Germany.' The main focus in this article is the years in which the MHP's activities in the FRG reached its climax. Focusing only on the 1970s, this work is inattentive to the factors behind the rising importance of the MHP among Turkish workers and their families. Nowak also uses the notion of transnationalism, yet he does so differently than Arslan. For him, transnationalism also includes an aspect which has not been included in the academic works produced so far and through this aspect 'autonomy of migration' is challenged through various state apparatuses extending beyond borders. Although, this approach opens the way to consider the notion of transnationalism as a mean used by the states to control the migration population, it neglects the role played by the agency of migrants and their experiences in the FRG. Moreover, although he uses the notion of class as a unit of analysis, Nowak does not build a connection between migrants and their class positions, nor consider how this class position took its form in Turkey before the migration event (Arslan similarly neglects this issue).

However, these two articles also offer fruitful arguments for this study's direction. For example, Nowak's use of the notions 'power/historical bloc' and transnationalism is innovative. Similarly, Arslan's analysis of the evolution of the MHP's ideology, in both the Federal Republic and Turkey, provides a beneficial ground for new ideas. Therefore, in line with both the pitfalls and benefits of these works, I will first focus on the history of both countries prior to the labour migration process. The aim of paying attention to pre-migration history is to understand the socio-economic transformations which affected the industrial relations and political life in these two countries, as well as the factors which led to the migration process between them. Moreover, in the Turkish part of the pre-migration analysis, if a connection is established between the factors in migration between the two countries and the reasons behind the rising importance of

the MHP, it becomes easier to see the connection between Turkish labour migrants and the MHP in the FRG. In addition, the Turkish pre-migration history involves another migration experience – an internal one, which can be viewed as first step within the country before some of these internal migrants decided to move into the FRG. Hence an analysis of the MHP’s social base with particular attention paid to the internal migrants could give information about the political views which were brought by Turkish workers into the FRG. For the German part of the pre-migration analysis, the attention will be given to the reconstruction period which took place after the end of WWII. I choose this period not only because this reconstruction led to increased demand for additional workers, but also because it includes the shaping of industrial relations by the respective governments whose aims were to protect positive economic trends. Therefore, it can be argued that the reconstruction period also affected how industrial relations were designed and how trade unions found their place in these relations. The place of trade unions in the industrial relations is important since the relationship between Turkish workers and the trade unions in the FRG has the capability to reveal important factors about the class consciousness of Turkish workers in the FRG. In addition, the pre-migration history of the FRG also involves another settlement experience, that of refugees and expellees<sup>11</sup>, who became an important part of the working class. Their experiences both outside and inside workplaces, and how these experiences were shaped under the legal framework of the FRG, can provide important aspects to further the analysis of Turkish workers and their families in the FRG.

After the analysis of the years prior to the labour migration process in the Federal Republic and Turkey through this framework, I will move on to the next chapter in which the Turkish labour migration process will be analysed on two different levels. These levels are agency of migrants and their first hand experiences; and efforts of the countries involved in shaping these experiences. The first level focuses on issues related to the conditions of Turkish workers inside and outside of their workplaces as well as issues regarding their families. Attention will be given to their experiences in the labour market and the relationship they established with the trade

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<sup>11</sup> I chose to use the term ‘refugees and expellees’ to define the people who settled in West German territories after WWII. The refugees and expellees consisted of people who had either German nationality or German ethnicity. For the sake of simplicity, I include in my definition of ‘refugees and expellees’ other groups who are not usually designated as such but who were ethnic Germans. For example, the *Aussiedler* were ethnic German repatriates from Eastern European countries who settled in West Germany from 1950s onwards. For a discussion on *Aussiedler*, see P.N. Jones and M.T. Wild, “Western Germany’s ‘Third Wave’ of Migrants: The Arrival of the *Aussiedler*,” *Geoforum* 23, no. 1 (February 1992): 1–11, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0016-7185\(92\)90032-Y](https://doi.org/10.1016/0016-7185(92)90032-Y).

unions, their housing conditions and the social contacts that they built with the rest of the population as well as problems related to the family reunification. These issues, I think, had an important impact on the shaping of their political behaviour and the relationship they had with the MHP. After the discussion of these issues, its findings will be analysed with respect to the issues covered in the periodical, *Vatana Hasret*, which was started to be published as a political journal in 1979 by 'Turk Federation,' an organization affiliated with the MHP, in order to understand the meaning attributed by the Turkish workers to the MHP within the borders of the FRG, and how the MHP approached issues related to the Turkish workers and their families. On the second level, attention will be given to the efforts by both Turkish and West German states to control and shape this migration process. For the Turkish part, state efforts will be analysed via various documents, such as books prepared after some study trips to the countries who hosted considerable number of Turkish workers or publications for increasing the efficiency of Turkey's policies regarding Turkish population in Western Europe, published by the Turkish state, in order to understand how the Turkish state's approach evolved throughout the years and how the political changes in Turkey impacted this evolution. This is important since the MHP's rising importance in Turkish political life can also be grasped from these various documents. For the West German part, the focus will be given to the legal framework which regulated the daily and working life of Turkish workers. This will allow a comparison between the legal framework on foreign workers and the one that regulated the lives of refugees and expellees after they had settled in the FRG. Through this comparison, the differences between the rights and freedoms given to these groups will be shown, as well as the impact of these differences on their political behaviour. In addition, the relationship between the MHP and the West German authorities will be discussed, with particular attention given to the charges directed at the MHP in the bill of indictment prepared by the Turkish state after the 1980 coup d'état.

The first aim of this study is to present a ground for comparison between the experiences of refugees and expellees and Turkish workers in the FRG. Although their settlement took place in different time periods and the reasons they settled in the FRG were different, through their comparison the impact of legal framework on the development of different political behaviour can be found. Moreover, these two settlement events are also connected to each other since the refugees and expellees also became a part of working class with a similar employment structure of Turkish workers. In addition, the experiences of internal migrants in the bigger cities of

Turkey and their relationship with the MHP also offer a good analytical point since, albeit differently, they participated in a migration event and also some took this migration experience out of the borders of Turkey. Moreover, the final chapter of this study seeks to understand why some Turkish workers and their families in the FRG were attracted to the MHP's politics and what kind of meaning they attributed to this organization in their new settings. After emphasizing the agency of migrants, the focus will be given to the activities of countries in shaping this migration event in a transnational context. Lastly, although this work will focus on the periods prior to the Turkish labour migration, it will also cover the period when labour migration and family reunifications took place: between 1961, when the bilateral agreement was signed between two countries for labour recruitment, and 1980, when the MHP's activities were banned in Turkey due to the coup d'état.

## **2. The Path to Labour Migration: Socio-Economic Transformations of the Federal Republic of Germany and Turkey and Their Experiences with the People on the Move**

### **2.1. The Federal Republic of Germany**

After WWII, the former Third Reich territories were left under the control of the Allied countries. The economic policies during this era imply a rather restorative trend was taken towards the reconstruction process of the West Germany. One of the most important steps taken by the Allied authorities regarding the economy was the Currency Reform of 1948. The most important results of this reform were the increase in the industrial production levels by 50%, and the overcoming of the scarcity of consumer goods in the shops within the same year the reform was implemented.<sup>12</sup> However, neither of these results would have been attainable without the price liberalization policy of Ludwig Erhard, who was the director of economic administration for the Bizone.<sup>13</sup> Despite their positive effects, these policies helped to secure the existing wealth distribution and the ownership structure of the production facilities.<sup>14</sup> Although there was an explicit restorative trend with regard to the ownership structure, this did not cause any significant reaction among the population. The positive perception of these economic policies by the population turned into support for the political actors who were associated with them. This was of course reflected into the outcomes of the elections in the following years.

#### **2.1.1. Political Parties and Trade Unions in the Federal Republic of Germany after WWII**

After the establishment of the Federal Republic in 1949, the first elections for the federal parliament (*Bundestag*) were held in the same year. While the Christian Democratic Union and its Bavarian sister party the Christian Social Union (the CDU/CSU) gained 31% of the vote making it the largest party in the Bundestag, the Social Democratic Party (the SPD) and the Free Democratic Party (the FDP) received 29.2 and 11.9% of the total votes, respectively.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the following two elections proved that the West German electorate continued to

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<sup>12</sup> Graham Hallett, *The Social Economy of West Germany* (London: Macmillan, 1973), 69.

<sup>13</sup> Anthony J. Nicholls, *The Bonn Republic: West German Democracy, 1945 - 1990* (London: Longman, 1997), 64-65.

<sup>14</sup> Peter G. J. Pulzer, *German Politics, 1945-1995* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 54.

<sup>15</sup> Heinrich August Winkler, *Germany: The Long Road West. Vol. 2: 1933 - 1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 258.

support the way in which the CDU/CSU governments ran the country. After the elections in 1953 and 1957, the CDU/CSU was able to gather 45.2 and 50.2 per cent of the votes, respectively, while the SPD's vote, with the main opposition title, stagnated around 30 per cent during those years.<sup>16</sup> The outcomes of these elections made the SPD realize that its program required a change in order to become a more appealing choice for the electorate. As Kloss demonstrates, the SPD's Godesberg program indicated a major ideological shift within the party by recognizing the success of the capitalist economic order due to the increasing prosperity of the population, while at the same time declaring that the best way to achieve a greater social equality was to implement pragmatic reform programs within the system.<sup>17</sup> This example of the reorientation which the SPD experienced due to its stagnation as the main opposition party in three consecutive elections shows how influential the CDU/CSU governments were on other actors in West German society. Yet the SPD was not the only actor that had been affected by this electoral success. Other actors such as trade unions did feel the pressure to reorient themselves with regard to requirements of the capitalist order so as not to lose their relevancy in the eyes of the population.

Under the rule of the CDU/CSU-led governments during 1950s, the FRG turned into a prosperous example of a free-market order. The FRG took the advantage of the high demand both in the domestic and global arenas which allowed them to restore the economy.<sup>18</sup> The governments' economic policies were shaped to answer this high demand. In order to do that, the policies which were pursued in the 1950s aimed to achieve low tax levels, high interest rates and profits, low wage increases for workers, and a high number of investments. Although these policies can be regarded as successful in terms of their positive impact on the production levels and ability to keep the economy steady, they nonetheless contributed to an increase in the gap between rich and poor.<sup>19</sup> Despite this growing inequality between social groups and the relatively weak position of the working class (vis-à-vis other groups) as a result of the economic policies of the governments, the CDU/CSU was able to widen its electoral base with respect to all social groups. Kloss connects the public acceptance of this type of income policy to various economic

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<sup>16</sup> Pulzer, *German Politics*, 61-62.

<sup>17</sup> Günther Kloss, *West Germany: An Introduction*, 2. ed (Basingstoke: Macmillan Educ, 1990), 52.

<sup>18</sup> Jeremy Leaman, *The Political Economy of West Germany, 1945-1985: An Introduction* (Houndmills; Basingstoke; Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1988), 111-113.

<sup>19</sup> Fulbrook, *A Concise History*, 231.

and social reasons.<sup>20</sup> First of all, income levels for all social groups had rose steadily which, in the end, led to the perception of economic prosperity for all groups. Secondly, the state's spending rose noticeably on social welfare and it was able to control the stability of its currency. Thirdly, the acceptance for this kind of income policy, according to Kloss, arose from a lack of class consciousness among the working population. The last point can be explained with respect to various factors, ranging from individuals' perception of the government's economic policies as successful to the government's industrial policies. The impact of industrial policies can be seen by looking at the evolution of trade unions in the FRG after WWII.

The German Trade Union Federation (*Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* – the DGB) was established in 1949. In its establishment, the former trade union leaders from Weimar Republic had played an important role. They decided that post-war trade union structure should overcome the ideological differences that weakened the trade unions before and be constructed with the principles of industrial and unitary trade unionism.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the DGB declared in its founding congress in Munich that its aim is to achieve economic democracy by integrating co-determination in all industries and through the socialization of the key industries.<sup>22</sup> However the ongoing political atmosphere in the country limited the aims of the DGB towards the economic democracy. In the early 1950s, the government under the leadership of the CDU/CSU enacted laws regarding industrial relations: the Co-Determination Law in the Coal, Iron and Steel Industries in 1951, and the Work Constitution Law in 1952.<sup>23</sup> Although there were positive achievements with these laws, such as that workers started to be represented in equal numbers with the employers in the supervisory boards of the companies from the coal, iron and steel industries,<sup>24</sup> both laws contributed to hindering the collective power of the workers while at the same time created a sense of social partnership in which the DGB was offered a place.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, with the establishment of other representational bodies for workers such as work-councils and supervisory boards, the laws increased the possibility for the development of

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<sup>20</sup> Fulbrook, 118.

<sup>21</sup> Andrei S. Markovits, *The Politics of the West German Trade Unions: Strategies of Class and Interest Representation in Growth and Crisis* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 10.

<sup>22</sup> Markovits, 73.

<sup>23</sup> Leaman, *The Political Economy*, 154.

<sup>24</sup> Pulzer, *German Politics*, 64.

<sup>25</sup> Leaman, *The Political Economy*, 155.

distinctive interests from these bodies other than that of trade unions.<sup>26</sup> In line with these developments, the DGB went into a reorientation process. In this process, the DGB aimed to adapt itself to the increasing contentment of the working class with the country's positive economic conditions by becoming more inclined to maximize its members' short-term benefits rather than working towards establishing economic democracy.<sup>27</sup> While this re-orientation process of the DGB was taking place, the refugees and expellees had already started to settle in the FRG and to participate in the labour market. Yet, the weakening effects of these laws on the DGB as well as on the working class' struggle can be seen in the inability of the DGB and its constituent member unions to deal with the problems posed by foreign workers' presence in the labour market.

### **2.1.2. Refugees and Expellees in West German Society and the Labour Market**

Within the 16 years between the end of WWII and the construction of the Berlin Wall, almost 12 million refugees and expellees had entered into the FRG.<sup>28</sup> During the early years of this settlement, both the newcomers and the native population experienced hardships due to the devastating results of the war. The first problem was the poor condition of housing. The government reacted by implementing a provisional solution in which the native population had to share their houses with the newcomers, a solution which prompted a backlash from some members of society.<sup>29</sup> The problems revolving around housing are important because they also refer to the problems arising from the first social contacts established between the two groups. Although they carried characteristics of social tension arising from the scarcity of the goods, these problematic social contacts were also the result of the native population's fear that the newcomers' cultural and religious customs would undermine their traditional way of life.<sup>30</sup> Herbert indicates that the defensive reactions of the native population against these new groups should be seen as the result of social and cultural tensions as well as the vehement competition

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<sup>26</sup> Markovits, *The Politics of*, 81.

<sup>27</sup> Pulzer, *German Politics*, 65.

<sup>28</sup> Charles P. Kindleberger, *Europe's Postwar Growth: The Role of Labour Supply* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1967), 31.

<sup>29</sup> Ian Connor, *Refugees and Expellees in Post-War Germany* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 69, <https://login.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/login?URL=http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1722513&site=ehost-live> .

<sup>30</sup> Connor, 85.



for the low number of material goods and jobs at that time.<sup>31</sup> With the onset of the 1950s, the government started major housing building programs in particular areas by paying attention to the demands for workforce arising from the dictations of the growing industry.<sup>32</sup> What is important here is that the government approached this problem, first, without separating the refugees and expellees and the native population, by including them altogether as the beneficiaries of this housing programs, and, second, considering a solution of the housing problem with respect to the needs of industry. This was surely reflected by a positive perception of the government's policies by the newcomers.<sup>33</sup>

In terms of the refugees and expellees' position in the labour market, the situation represents a rather complicated case if their employment structure prior to the settlement is considered. As mentioned above, the lack of sufficient job positions in the labour market increased tensions between the native population and the newcomers. However, during the 1950s, this situation had changed and the newcomers were able to find employment. For example, in 1951, out of total 1.7 million unemployed persons in the West Germany, the refugees and expellees comprised around one third of this number.<sup>34</sup> Although they were able to find employment, this process took place in a rather difficult environment for them. According to the figures comparing their occupation status prior to and after their settlement in 1951, the 16 per cent of the refugee and expellee population who were employed in the independent sector decreased to 3%, whereas the 49% of this group who were employed as workers increased to 76% after their settlement.<sup>35</sup> These

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<sup>31</sup> Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1980: Seasonal Workers, Forced Laborers, Guest Workers* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 199.

<sup>32</sup> Herbert, 141.

<sup>33</sup> It could be considered that this acceptance was partially influenced by the similarities of the refugees and expellees to the native population: they shared some cultural similarities, ethnicity and a language. However, the refugees and expellees were still discriminated against by the native population on the ground of perceived cultural differences. Moreover, their acceptance by the authorities was primarily motivated by the social changes in West Germany. Because of the impact of the war, it was not possible for the authorities to treat the refugees and expellees as a separate body, especially since they comprised 22% of the total population in 1957. Also the refugees and expellees could not return to their old homelands whereas the Turkish workers were initially perceived as temporary migrants. Therefore there were some cultural similarities between the refugees and expellees, but this work aims to focus on and compare the issues of government policies rather than measure 'integration' in terms of cultural differences, as I explain in the introduction. Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1980: Seasonal Workers, Forced Laborers, Guest Workers*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 195-200. and S.P. Chablani, "The Rehabilitation of Refugees in the Federal Republic of Germany", *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv* 79 (1957): 281-290.

<sup>34</sup> S.P. Chablani, "The Rehabilitation of Refugees in the Federal Republic of Germany", *Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv* 79 (1957): 295.

<sup>35</sup> Connor, *Refugees and Expellees*, 164.

figures correspond with the general trends in the FRG: as Edding suggests, there was a total increase in the numbers of wage and salary earners due to the growth of the economy.<sup>36</sup> However, the change in their occupation structure also shows that they were in a relatively disadvantageous position in the labour market compared to the native job seekers. This position was the result of their lack of connection vis-à-vis the native population in the labour market, the resistance from the native workers, and their adjusting process to their new environment.<sup>37</sup> As a result of their disadvantageous position, the refugees and expellees experienced downward mobility and they were able to find occupation in manual and unskilled jobs in the first half of the 1950s, whereas the native workers tended to move into better positions, such as managerial and skilled jobs.<sup>38</sup> The effect of this on the structure of the working class was the reinforcement of division between unskilled and skilled jobs by ethnic and family backgrounds. Although it cannot be argued that all native workers moved into better positions, as Harsch suggests, the diversified structure of the working class led to a decrease in the working class culture.<sup>39</sup> The demise of working class culture should also be seen in line with the economic growth and its positive impact on the living conditions of society including refugees and expellees. Therefore, it can be argued that, although the refugees and expellees experienced downward mobility, their increasing life conditions made them content with the ongoing situation. Moreover, the growing West German economy probably gave them the idea that their chances to experience upward mobility were high as it proved by the inclusion of foreign workers in the labour market. The increasing material conditions were reflected into their political behavior, as it happened to the rest of society.

The gradual improvement in their material conditions was mirrored also in the refugees and expellees' political behavior. That is to say, rather than developing interest to mainstream parties in the first place, the refugees and expellees formed their own political associations. Yet this political organizing took place under the disguise of social and fraternal organizations due to the

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<sup>36</sup> Friedrich Edding, *The Refugees as a Burden, a Stimulus and a Challenge to the West German Economy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1951), 34.

<sup>37</sup> Chablani, "The Rehabilitation of Refugees", 296.

<sup>38</sup> U. Kleinert, "Die Flüchtlinge als Arbeitskräfte – zur Eingliederung der Flüchtlinge in Nordrhein-Westfalen nach 1945," in *Neue Heimat im Westen: Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge, Aussiedler*, ed. K. J. Bade (Münster 1990), 50-51 quoted in Connor, *Refugees and Expellees*, 148.

<sup>39</sup> Donna Harsch, "Industrialization, Mass Consumption, Post-Industrial Society," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History*, ed. Helmut Walser Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 670.

ban on refugee political parties.<sup>40</sup> When this ban was lifted in 1950, the Bloc of Expellees and Deprived of Rights (*Block der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten* – the BHE) was established. As well as showing the refugees and expellees’ will to assert themselves politically, the formation of this political party and the ability to participate in the political life of the country without any restriction contributed to their alignment with their new setting. Although the BHE found support from the refugees and expellees who were still experiencing economic hardships, the support remained within the local level.<sup>41</sup> At the federal level, the BHE’s failure to pass the 5% threshold in 1957 *Bundestag* elections shows that there was a shift from its electoral support base to other parties, especially to CDU/CSU, particularly for the 1957 elections.<sup>42</sup> This shift suggests that the relationship between the BHE and the refugees and expellees were not strong, and when their material conditions started to improve their approach towards the BHE changed.<sup>43</sup> Most importantly, their right to vote and participate in the elections contributed to their growing interest in the mainstream political parties. It also paved the way for the mainstream parties to be inclined more with the refugees and expellees’ problems due to the potential support coming from this group. In short, it can be asserted that having the ability to participate in political life was a positive step in their alignment with the FRG, and it also helped them to be taken seriously by the authorities.

## 2.2. Turkey

In order to discuss about reasons behind people’s choice to migrate to the FRG from Turkey as workers, as well as the function of the MHP among the Turkish labour migrants in the FRG, an analysis should be made about how the state and society relations evolved from the first years of the Turkish Republic until the mid-1970s, when the labour migration process was halted by the West German authorities. Through this analysis, it becomes possible to understand how the members of the Turkish society acquired their political behaviors. Moreover, it would help to explain Turkish labour migrants’ political behaviors in the FRG as well why some members of this group did choose to be in close relationship with the MHP.

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<sup>40</sup> Jane Perry and Clark Carey, “Political Organization of the Refugees and Expellees in West Germany,” *Political Science Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (June 1951): 197, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2145501> .

<sup>41</sup> Connor, *Refugees and Expellees*, 129.

<sup>42</sup> Connor, 153-154.

<sup>43</sup> Connor, 151-152.

During the single-party era between 1923 and 1950, Turkey was ruled by the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* – CHP). Albeit other developments, two points related with the economic, and social and cultural policies of the CHP had a significant impact on the country's political life in the following years. With regard to economic policies, during the practice of the 'etatist' developmental pattern (1932-1950)<sup>44</sup> the industrial production increased, which resulted in the further merger of the coalition between the bureaucrats and the manufacturing bourgeoisie, and exploitation of the farmers and workers due to the adopted price and tax policies by the ruling coalition.<sup>45</sup> This exploitation led to a growing discontent, which the regime tried to surpass by imposing cultural and social reforms with the aim of establishing a modern nation-state with a secularist character.<sup>46</sup> However, the people whose life-standards had not experienced any improvement from the reforms, and who were under economic pressure as a consequence of the Great Depression, grew attached to their traditions and religion.<sup>47</sup> To answer this development, the regime tried to impose an understanding of national unity and solidarity among the people with clear conservative religious characteristics.<sup>48</sup> This gave mixed results and the regime actually opened the way for politicization of Islam and made the religion a possible tool for the growing opposition.<sup>49</sup>

### **2.2.1. The Multi-Party Era and the Growing Influence of Populist Politics**

The most important actor in the opposition side, which was able to take the advantage of this resentment, was the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti* – DP). The aim of this party was to diminish the interventionist character of the state by establishing a free-market economy and to improve the rights and liberties of the individual.<sup>50</sup> In a similar line, Keyder argues that, during this era, the opposition was built on the pillars of economic and religious freedom through which the market forces against the state's interventionist policies and the local traditions against the

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<sup>44</sup> For a discussion on etatism in Turkey see Faruk Birtek, "The Rise and Fall of Etatism in Turkey, 1932:1950: The Uncertain Road in the Restructuring of a Semiperipheral Economy," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 8, no. 3 (Winter 1985): 407–38.

<sup>45</sup> Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development* (London ; New York: Verso, 1987), 106-107.

<sup>46</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, *Studies on Turkish Politics and Society: Selected Articles and Essays* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2004), 219, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10089733> .

<sup>47</sup> Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: The Quest for Identity* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003), 88.

<sup>48</sup> Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: a modern history*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (London New York: I.B. Tauris, 2017), 187.

<sup>49</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: a modern*, 194.

<sup>50</sup> Ahmad, *Turkey: The Quest*, 101.

ideological directions of the center were put forward.<sup>51</sup> With this populist attitude, the DP was able to secure its victory in the 1950 general elections against the CHP. The policies of the DP in the first half of the 1950s were shaped by the demographic structure of Turkey. In 1950, Turkey had a population which was showing a greater agrarian characteristic, in which the small-holding peasantry represented a high percentage.<sup>52</sup> Yet the agriculture-oriented growth strategy of the DP government was challenged by the decrease in the prices of agricultural products in the world market.<sup>53</sup> Combined with the lack of clear economic success, this caused a decline in the votes of the DP in the 1957 elections. To answer this decline, the DP tried to expand its populist policies toward the agrarian population and exploit religion for the sake of its political goals.<sup>54</sup> However, the overspending resulting from the populist policies towards the agrarian sector drew the attention of international creditors of Turkey such as the World Bank and led them to urge the government to give planned character to the economy through the import substitution industry (ISI) model.<sup>55</sup> Although this model was welcomed by the manufacturing bourgeoisie, as Savran indicates, it demanded more planning over the economy by showing discontent towards the government's incoherent economic policies.<sup>56</sup> This reveals the inability of the DP to please urban manufacturing groups and the agrarian population at the same time.

Especially in the second half of the 1950s, with the economy not showing a solid performance, the opposition grasped the opportunity to increase its activities against the DP government. The DP's attempts to control the situation by assuming a more authoritarian stance resulted in the estrangement of the earlier supporters such as the press, the universities and the judiciary from the DP's line.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, the opposition to the DP's policies acquired an increasingly urban characteristic, with civil and military bureaucratic personnel, the manufacturing bourgeoisie as well as organized workers joining this camp.<sup>58</sup> This contributed to the growing tension between urban and rural populations by adding a social aspect to the conflicting economic interests between these two groups. At the same time, the DP, having been confronted with the increasing

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<sup>51</sup> Keyder, *State and Class*, 117.

<sup>52</sup> İlkay Sunar, "Populism and Patronage: The Demokrat Party and Its Legacy in Turkey," *Il Politico* 55, no. 4 (October-December 1990): 751.

<sup>53</sup> Sunar, 751.

<sup>54</sup> Ahmad, *Turkey: The Quest*, 114.

<sup>55</sup> Keyder, *State and Class*, 135.

<sup>56</sup> Sunar, "Populism and Patronage," 752.

<sup>57</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: a modern*, 233.

<sup>58</sup> Sunar, "Populism and Patronage," 752.

opposition from groups with urban character, found itself using a religious conservative language by which it blamed the opposition for being communists and unbelievers, while on the other hand trying to widen its support base among the conservative population by supporting the construction of more mosques and the establishment of religious schools.<sup>59</sup> This growing tension in the country led to the military coup d'état on 27 May 1960.

The impact of 1960 coup on the country was significant with regard to its political and economic life. This impact can be seen by looking at the country's new constitution which was written after the coup. Regarding its economic aspect, the constitution of 1960 helped the country to adjust its structure to the needs of industrial capital. According to Keyder, the failures of the DP era show that the 1960 coup occurred as a result of the necessity to adapt the country's legal and political framework to the evolution of a nationally based manufacturing bourgeoisie class.<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, the new constitution prepared the ground for more diversified political life. However, this opportunity offered by the new constitution was started to be utilized by the political actors from the mid-1960s onwards.<sup>61</sup> Before that the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi* – AP), through which the industrial bourgeoisie tried to consolidate its power over the society, was established with the claim of being the successor of the DP.<sup>62</sup> The AP won the majority of the parliament in the 1965 general elections. However the party's problem was not its performances in elections but its structure. That is to say, as Zürcher describes, the structure of the AP was consisted of industrialists, small traders and artisans, small peasants and large landowners, religious conservatives and liberals.<sup>63</sup> However, this structure was challenged by various political organizations both from the left and the right. For example, on the left, Workers' Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi* – TİP) and Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions of Turkey (*Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu* – DİSK) were established in 1961 and 1967, respectively, with the aim of betterment of workers' wages and working conditions through organized actions and strikes, which were clearly against the interests of industrial bourgeoisie.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, this was not the only challenge that the industrial bourgeoisie and the AP had had to

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<sup>59</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: a modern*, 235.

<sup>60</sup> Keyder, *State and Class*, 143.

<sup>61</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: a modern*, 256.

<sup>62</sup> Ahmet Öncü, "Dictatorship Plus Hegemony: A Gramscian Analysis of the Turkish State," *Science&Society* 67, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 319.

<sup>63</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: a modern*, 254.

<sup>64</sup> Sungur Savran, "The Legacy of the Twentieth Century," in *The Politics of Permanent Crisis: Class, Ideology and State in Turkey*, ed. Nesecan Balkan and Sungur Savran (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2002), 12.

face. As Zürcher indicates that the AP's economic policies were mostly in favor of the interests of modern bourgeoisie and big businesses whereas the party's main electoral base consisted of farmers and small businessmen. Yet this made them disappointed regarding the party's choices and these disappointed people became potential supporters for the newly emerging right-wing parties.<sup>65</sup> Among these right-wing parties was the Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* – MHP). Below the MHP's history, its ideology, and its support base will be touched upon.

### 2.2.2. The MHP, Its Ideology and Its Supporters

As the MHP's predecessor, the Republican Peasants' Nation Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi* – CKMP) was established by a former General Fevzi Çakmak in 1948. The CKMP is regarded by some as the first extreme right-wing party of Turkey.<sup>66</sup> During the 1950s, the party became a nationalist-conservative organization with a rural-middle class support base and followed a populist discourse.<sup>67</sup> However, the party experienced a change under a new leadership cadre: Alpaslan Türkeş and his friends<sup>68</sup> entered the party in 1965.<sup>69</sup> After Türkeş's influence over the party began to be felt, the political stance shifted. In his book *The Nine Lights (Dokuz Işık)*, Türkeş describes the principles of his ideology. These principles are nationalism, idealism, moralism, social responsibility, scientific-mindedness, support for freedom, support for peasants, developmentalism, and industrialization/technology.<sup>70</sup> Among these principles, idealism has an important place since its aim is to place the Turkish nation on the top of modern civilizations, and make it a free, independent nation.<sup>71</sup> The importance of national unity was emphasized in the writings of Türkeş as well. He describes the ideal structure of a society when he criticizes both the individualistic emphasis of the liberal-capitalist systems and the class-based approach of Marxism (communism). Importantly, he viewed these ideals as dangerous since they put the

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<sup>65</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: a modern*, 257.

<sup>66</sup> E. Burak Arikan, "Turkish Ultra-Nationalists under Review: A Study of the Nationalist Action Party," *Nations and Nationalism* 8, no. 3 (July 2002): 358, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8219.00055>.

<sup>67</sup> Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet, Ocak, Dergâh: 12 Eylül'den 1990'lara Ülkücü Hareket*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991), 53.

<sup>68</sup> Alpaslan Türkeş and some former lieutenants of Turkish Armed Forces, a group referred as 'the Fourteens'. They were part of the Committee of National Unity (the CNU) which planned and staged the 27 May 1960 coup d'état. Türkeş and his friends were sent to exile by the CNU after the coup. Following their return to Turkey, they involved in politics through the CKMP.

<sup>69</sup> Bülent Aras and Gökhan Bacık, "The Rise of Nationalist Action Party and Turkish Politics," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 6, no. 4 (December 2000): 49, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537110008428611>.

<sup>70</sup> Alpaslan Türkeş, *Milli Doktrin: Dokuz Işık*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (Ludwigshafen am Rhein: Weis und Hameier, 1983).

<sup>71</sup> Türkeş, 17-18.

unity of nations under threat.<sup>72</sup> Therefore a society should be defined not with regard to its class-antagonisms or with an individualistic perspective, but by its totality as a nation. In addition to this ideological framework, the CKMP under the leadership of Türkeş started to put more emphasis on violent nationalism and anti-communism.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, despite the fact that at the beginning of their takeover of the CKMP, Türkeş and his friends distanced themselves from the political Islam, their stance changed especially after the 1967 congress.<sup>74</sup> Bora and Can relate this shift to the efforts of other political actors to mobilize the Muslim population through anti-communist rhetoric, which was already seeing results.<sup>75</sup>

The anti-communist sentiment of the CKMP rested upon the idea of protecting the state against ill-behaved actors and ideology. This not only stayed as a discourse but was actually implemented as a practice. This can be seen in the party's method, starting in 1968, to give paramilitary training to the members (Grey Wolves – *Bozkurtlar*) of its youth organization (Hearths of the Ideal – *Ülkü Ocakları*).<sup>76</sup> The year 1969 hosted two important events for the party. First, its name was changed from CKMP to the MHP and, second, it was accepted as an important figure by the ruling bloc in its fight against the rising leftist politics in Turkey.<sup>77</sup> This did not remain as rhetorical acceptance but also led to a process in which the MHP was invited to join the coalition governments (referred as Nationalist Front governments – *Milliyetçi Cephe*) in 1975 and 1977. According to Zürcher, this gave the MHP an ability to fill the ranks of police and other security forces with its supporters, which in turn strengthened its power to fight against leftist politics.<sup>78</sup>

Regarding the MHP's support base, Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can offer a comprehensive analysis.<sup>79</sup> They perceive the common characteristic of the people belonging to this base as a social status threatened by the economic, social, and cultural changes brought by the capitalist transformation,

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<sup>72</sup> Türkeş, 41.

<sup>73</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: a modern*, 260.

<sup>74</sup> Ali Erken, "Ideological Construction of the Politics of Nationalism in Turkey: The Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP), 1965–1980," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 20, no. 2 (April, 2014): 204, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2014.909159>.

<sup>75</sup> Bora and Can, *Devlet, Ocak, Dergâh*, 54. The authors pay attention to the increasing anti-communist discourses of the right politics in Turkey during 1960s as an effort by right-wing parties to consolidate conservative rural-urban middle classes as well as to decrease the importance of rising left-wing politics. Bora and Can, 56-57.

<sup>76</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: a modern*, 260.

<sup>77</sup> Bora and Can, *Devlet, Ocak, Dergâh*, 59.

<sup>78</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey: a modern*, 265.

<sup>79</sup> Bora and Can, *Devlet, Ocak, Dergâh*, 64-69.



and a view of the MHP as a channel to raise their resentment against this transformation. After highlighting this common ground, they emphasize the differences among the support base regarding people's living environment. In rural regions, the MHP was able to present itself as platform to people who blended their resentment against the threat brought by the capitalist transformation and the big capital with the Islamic overtones. Moreover, they claim that the increased resentment from rural regions also included fears of nontraditional values reaching their environment through interpersonal relations. On the other hand, in the urban setting, Bora and Can's analysis concludes that the most striking difference of this group from the supporters in the rural areas was that the former did not have a status to protect. Rather this group consisted of university students, raised either in rural middle class families supporting the MHP or in working class families who sent their children to cities for higher education. In addition, the MHP struggled to find any strong support from the working class, since leftist politics were on the rise in Turkey during the 1970s, but still it was able to attract workers from the lower strata such as the ones employed in the marginal sector. The MHP in the urban settings provided to its supporters a ground in which they could surpass their precarious situation by being able to continue their community structure and have an identity. Overall, the most striking takeaway from Bora and Can's analysis is the relationship between the MHP's supporter base and the transformation process that Turkey had undergone and its impact on society. In particular, this transformation of Turkey's society and economy led to an internal migration movement mainly with rural to urban character from the 1950s onwards. Below this internal migration and its political implications for Turkish society will be discussed.

### **2.2.3. Rural-Urban Migration and the Reasons behind the Labour Migration from Turkey to the FRG**

Before an analysis of internal migration, it is important to say that for some it was the start of a longer journey. That is to say, their internal migration experience was followed by the decision to join the labour migration movement into Western Europe. As İçduygu asserts, thousands of people first moved within the borders of Turkey and then migrated to other countries in Western Europe.<sup>80</sup> But before moving into the discussion of the reasons of why people decided to

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<sup>80</sup> Ahmet İçduygu, "Population, Poverty, and Culture: Identifying the Economic and Social Mechanisms for Migration in Turkey," (Euroconference on Social Policy in an Environment of Insecurity, Lisbon, 1995), quoted in

participate in this emigration from Turkey to Western European countries, it is important to understand the factors behind the internal migration within Turkey. In order to reveal the impact of internal migration on the structure of Turkey's society, changes in the percentage of rural-urban population can be considered. According to İçduygu and Sirkeci, while in 1950 only the 19% of total population of Turkey was living in urban areas, this number rose to 36% in 1970.<sup>81</sup> This change was primarily influenced by the decision of the rural population to migrate to urban areas. The reasons behind this internal movement can be explained by looking at the capitalist transformation of Turkey. Yet since this transformation project was influential in both rural and urban settings, it is difficult to argue that either the push factors affecting the rural settings or the pull factors defining the urban settings were predominant. Rather, both the push and pull factors were actively involved in the decision-making process of people in the internal migration.<sup>82</sup> What is important here is that the decision to move was related to people's search for improved living conditions.

This rationale is important since it represents the expectation of the people from this migration experience. It is therefore important to consider to what extent these expectations were fulfilled. In order to do this, their conditions in the urban settings and the impact of these positions on their political behavior should be considered. During the first decade of internal migration, roughly between 1950 and 1960, the migrants found employment in various sectors. According to Şenyaplı, in the first years of industrialization process, although Turkey's industry was experiencing lack of information, skills and capital, the internal migrants were not in the position to answer this demand. Rather, they provided their workforce mostly to the secondary sectors such as assembly line jobs, maintenance and repair shops.<sup>83</sup> In addition to these, the construction sector was another important opportunity for the internal migrants to find employment.<sup>84</sup> Although the import-substitution industry model was apprehended as the main strategy in Turkey from the 1960s onwards, this was not fast enough to create enough job opportunities for all

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Ahmet İçduygu and İbrahim Sirkeci, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye'sinde Göç Hareketleri," in *75 Yılda Köylerden Şehirlere*, ed. Oya Köymen (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1999), 253.

<sup>81</sup> İçduygu and Sirkeci, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye'sinde," 250.

<sup>82</sup> Ahmet İçduygu, İbrahim Sirkeci, and İsmail Aydınğün, "Türkiye'de İçgöç ve İçgöçün İşçi Hareketine Etkisi," (Türkiye'de İçgöç: Türkiye'de İçgöç, Sorunsal Alanları ve Araştırma Yöntemleri Konferansı Bolu-Gerede, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1997), 208.

<sup>83</sup> Tansı Şenyaplı, "Yeni Sorunlar/Eski Çözümler: Kentsel Mekanda Bir Gecekondu Yolculuğu," in *Tarihten Günümüze Anadolu'da Konut ve Yerleşme*, ed. Yıldız Sey (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1996), 347.

<sup>84</sup> İçduygu, Sirkeci and Aydınğün, "Türkiye'de İçgöç," 234.

internal migrants. In İçduygu and Sirkeci's discussion of the period between 1960 and 1980, they mention the inability of urban settings to absorb all internal migrants due to the slow industrialization process, and hence the slow increase in the number of jobs as well as an inability by cities to provide adequate housing to migrants. This led to the development of slums in the outskirts of the cities and the increased employment of migrants in secondary sector jobs.<sup>85</sup>

In order to understand the political implications of the conditions of internal migrants, an analysis should be made with consideration of the differences between the members of the working class. First of all, the presence of internal migration and the internal migrants' employment structure contributed to the development of a divided working class, as internal migrants mostly found employment in the secondary and informal sectors.<sup>86</sup> The differing employment structure of internal migrants and urban workforce was reflected in their political behavior. The internal migrants chose to be organized in hometown associations to find solidarity rather than participating in trade unions.<sup>87</sup> However, it would not be completely accurate to argue this for all internal migrants, since some of them were able to find relatively better jobs than others. The differences in employment structure among internal migrants led to the occurrence of different perceptions of their own experiences. In this they compared their situations prior to and after the migration as well as their expectations prior to the migration and their actual conditions in their new places. Therefore it can be said that the way they perceived their migration experience had an impact on people's political choices. Yet various political choices can also be shaped by family and social connections, cultural identity, and prior political views. For example, Keyder argues that, until a certain time in the 1960s, the migrants had still felt the rural-urban divide in the outskirts of the cities, even though now they had settled in the cities and experienced some improvement in their living standards. This, according to him, made the internal migrants feel close to the DP and the AP's populist conservative politics.<sup>88</sup> As discussed above, from the mid-1960s onwards, other political actors representing diverse political interests entered Turkey's political arena. In this atmosphere, the MHP tried to widen its support base yet met with limited success. To recall the earlier discussion of the MHP's support

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<sup>85</sup> İçduygu and Sirkeci, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye'sinde," 252.

<sup>86</sup> İçduygu and Sirkeci, 225.

<sup>87</sup> İçduygu and Sirkeci, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye'sinde," 237.

<sup>88</sup> Keyder, *State and Class*, 137.

base, it consisted of university students and people who migrated to find a job.<sup>89</sup> Importantly, the MHP was unable to attract significant support from workers, except those who found employment in the marginal sectors and those who remained unemployed.<sup>90</sup> This inability of the MHP to widen its support base can be explained by the success of other political organizations (such as DİSK and TİP) which aimed to improve the conditions of the working class. However, since these organizations were offering leftist politics, the MHP still had an important place among the people who distanced themselves from the leftist organizations. What is important here is that knowing the characteristics of the MHP's supporters in Turkey in particular, and the internal migrants in general, enables a comparison with the characteristics of Turkish workers in the FRG. That is to say, by comparing the experiences of the members from these two groups (although some people might have been a member of both groups) would show the factors paved the way for the persistence by some to continue to support the MHP and for the shift by some to embrace the MHP's ideology. But in order to analyze these factors causing the persistence and change in the political behavior of Turkish migrants in the FRG, the migrants' reasons behind the decision to migrate to this country must be touched upon.

Because the internal migration from 1950 onwards in Turkey introduced the notions of social and geographical mobility to its society, it is hard to give consistent information about the place of origin of the Turkish labor migrants in the FRG. Although the percentage of people who migrated to Western Europe from bigger cities such as İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir was high, the presence of internal migrants in these cities and their possible involvement in the external migration to Western Europe should not be overlooked.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, by only looking at the immigrants' place of origin, it is hard to make a comment about their political behavior in the FRG. On the other hand, the different backgrounds and experiences of the immigrants prior to their decision to leave Turkey indicates that they brought different political behaviors to their new countries, including the FRG. This complexity was also reflected in the reasons behind their decision to leave Turkey and to seek employment in Western European countries. Akgündüz indicates that the reasons behind people's decision to migrate to West were varied, according to

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<sup>89</sup> Bora and Can, *Devlet, Ocak, Dergâh*, 54-55.

<sup>90</sup> Bora and Can, 69.

<sup>91</sup> Stephen Castles, Heather Booth, and Tina Wallace, *Here for Good: Western Europe's New Ethnic Minorities* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 121.

his analysis based on former studies by other scholars and surveys held by the Turkish state.<sup>92</sup> According to his study, the main motivation behind migration to the West was to earn additional income for buying new equipment, houses or land, or to raise living standards of their families; these were followed by other motivations such as a positive image of Europe, to obtain vocational training, to see Europe or to learn a new language. As it can be understood from these motivations, Turkish workers' main intentions to migrate to Western European countries were either related with their families' wellbeing in Turkey or with increasing their life standards after their possible return to Turkey. If we only look at these reasons, it is hard to grasp any political implications occurring from them. However, it should also be noted that people's intentions to return to Turkey eventually or to increase the families' life standards imply that their interests in the developments in Turkey would continue. Moreover, people also chose to migrate to Western Europe, in our case the FRG, to develop their professional skills and hence experience an upward mobility. This also coincides with their positive image about Europe. The positive perception of Europe among people made them have higher expectations before the migration and hence increased the chances of being disappointed in the case of any hardships they faced in their new countries. Therefore the motivations of people must be considered when the experiences of Turkish workers in the FRG are discussed, since these are among the factors that shaped their political behavior in the country.

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<sup>92</sup> Ahmet Akgündüz, *Labour Migration from Turkey to Western Europe, 1960-1974: A Multidisciplinary Analysis* (Aldershot, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 163-164. He uses the data from works of scholars such as Yasa and Bozkurt 1974; Penninx and Van Velzen 1976; Engelbrektsson 1978; Abadan 1964; Aker 1972; Kudat and Özkan 1976; Neuloh 1976 and surveys conducted in 1967 and 1974 by *Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı (DPT)* State Planning Organization.

### **3. Turkish Labour Migration during the Economic Boom, The Problems inherent in the Migration Process, and the Political Responses**

This chapter focuses on the evolution of Turkish migrants and their families' political behavior within a transnational context. The notion of transnationalism defines immigrants or “trans-migrants” as a population whose connections, interests, and activities go beyond their sending and receiving countries.<sup>93</sup> Therefore, based upon this definition, the attention will be given to the developments in both sending and receiving countries. That is to say, the following discussion will be built upon, first, an analysis of the experiences of Turkish migrants and their families in the FRG; second, an analysis of the efforts of Turkey and the FRG to regulate the migration event which started with the labour recruitment process between the two countries in 1961 and continued with the family reunifications after the FRG's ban on *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) program. It must be noted that the discussion will not go beyond 1980, although the immigration from Turkey to the FRG continued after that date, because the democratic political process in Turkey was halted by the military coup d'état in 1980. As a result of this event, the characteristics of both the people migrating from Turkey to the FRG and the Turkish migrants and their families' organizations in the FRG underwent various changes.

Since the aim of this chapter is to understand the political behavior of Turkish migrants and their families through the lens of the MHP, a connection between the MHP and the experiences of the Turkish population in the FRG must be established. In order to do this, I first discuss the experiences of the Turkish population through some examples regarding their position in the labour market and their relationship with the trade unions; their housing conditions and the social contacts they built with the native population; and the problems related with their family members. Then the MHP's approach towards these issues as a political actor and migrant organization will be addressed. For this, a periodical, *Vatana Hasret* (Longing for the Homeland), which was published by the Federation of European Democratic Idealist Turkish Federation (*Avrupa Demokratik Ülkücü Türk Dernekleri Federasyonu* – in short Turk Federation) will be used. Although only four issues of this periodical are available in the archive of International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, and hence covered below, they offer

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<sup>93</sup> Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, “Transnationalism: A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration,” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 645, no. 1 (July 1992): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-6632.1992.tb33484.x>.

enough material to elaborate on the stance of this organization towards the problems experienced by Turkish population in the FRG, the policies of the governments of both countries, and the ideology of the MHP. Moreover, the issues were published in 1979 and therefore they provide information about the problems regarding Turkish migrants and their families accumulated up until to that date. What is important here is that while the discussion of the problems that the Turkish population experienced in the FRG will reveal the importance of the agency of migrants, the analysis of the periodical will show how the MHP approached the problems of the Turkish population and how the connection between the MHP and the migrants was established as a result of the stance taken by the MHP. After covering the agency of the Turkish population and how some members of this group started to embrace this political party in the FRG, the focus will be given to the efforts of the Turkish and West German state to shape the transnational field which occurred with the migration process. Firstly, attention will be given to the efforts put forward by the Turkish side to shape the migration process between two countries and regulate the lives of the Turkish population in the FRG. These efforts will be traced through government reports which were retrieved from the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam and the Documentation Center and Museum of Migration in Cologne, published by various state agencies in Turkey between 1966 and 1978. Moreover, these documents show how Turkish policy regarding emigrants has changed over the years. Since the MHP played a relatively important role in the Turkish political life and was able to participate in the governments formed in 1975 and 1977, the analysis of the policy changes will also show the impact of the MHP on these changes. Secondly, the discussion will examine how the West German state regulated the lives of guest workers and shaped the experiences of the Turkish population within its borders through policies and regulations on its laws. These efforts by the West German state did not remain limited to policy but developed into a general practice of engaging with migrants through their different associations, including the MHP and its affiliated organizations.

### **3.1. Turkish Population's Experiences in the FRG and Its Analysis through the MHP**

In order to discuss the experiences of Turkish labour migrants and their families in the FRG and how their political behaviour evolved throughout time in respect to these experiences, one should remember that a highly heterogeneous group of people migrated from Turkey to the FRG. This means that the Turkish population in the FRG consisted of the representatives of almost all social

groups in Turkey. Therefore, from the early years of the labour recruitment process, various political views originating from Turkey also migrated to the FRG with the labour migrants. This naturally led Turkish workers to perceive their new environment through these political views. Moreover, the recruitment of foreign workers was designed as temporary,<sup>94</sup> Turkish workers' aims regarding their migration were short-term, and they were planning to return after achieving these aims – these factors all contributed to the preservation of homeland political views among the workers. On the other hand, as Ögelman states, in the case of a migration process in which a highly contentious group of people migrates to ethnically and culturally dissimilar country, and if the country they settled in shows incapability to incorporate them, persistence towards the political life in the sending country will prevail.<sup>95</sup> Therefore, while the migration process includes the movement of political views alongside with the people, the tendency towards homeland politics is also related with the immigrants' experiences in their new countries. One of the factors that shaped the Turkish population's experiences in the FRG can be analysed by examining the change in terms of the characteristics of the migrants. This change was the result of the FRG's decision regarding guest workers' employment in the country. The recruitment process of the foreign workers was halted due to the impact of the global oil crisis in 1973 and the subsequent economic recession on the FRG's economy.<sup>96</sup> Although this ban stopped the labour migration from Turkey to the FRG, the FRG did not prevent the family reunifications which led to an increase in the numbers of Turkish immigrants in the country.<sup>97</sup> What is important here is that the family reunifications meant a change in the demographic structure of the Turkish population, in which the numbers of dependant people started to occupy an important place. These demographic changes were also reflected in the experiences of the Turkish population: how they perceived their conditions and how the West German society's attitude toward them changed; the way they politically organized; and the regulations under which they were held. Since, as Yurdakul implies, immigrants' political activities are realized

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<sup>94</sup> Amparo González-Ferrer, "The Process of Family Reunification among Original Guest-Workers in Germany," *Zeitschrift Für Familienforschung* 19, no. 1 (2007): 12.

<sup>95</sup> Nedim Ögelman, "Documenting and Explaining the Persistence of Homeland Politics among Germany's Turks," *International Migration Review* 37, no. 1 (February 23, 2006): 163, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2003.tb00133.x>.

<sup>96</sup> James Frank Hollifield, *Immigrants, Markets, and States: The Political Economy of Postwar Europe* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992), 75.

<sup>97</sup> John Bendix, "On the Rights of Foreign Workers in West Germany," in *Turkish Workers in Europe: An Interdisciplinary Study*, ed. İlhan Başgöz and Norman Furniss, (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1985), 29.



through their associations in the host countries, a study focusing on these associations allows one to identify the issues related with the group rights of the immigrants from a broader perspective.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, a study focusing on the migrants' experiences through the lens of migrant associations is not limited to a discussion of group rights but also enables one to understand how migrants reacted to the developments and how their responses were enabled by the relationships they established with their associations. For the specific case of this study, concentrating on the relationship between the Turkish population and the MHP will provide, alongside the issues mentioned above, a chance to compare the positions of Turkish migrants in their respective societies before and after their migration to the FRG and how they established a relationship with the MHP during this time.

To return to the Turkish workers' position in the labour market, the employment structure of Turkish workers, and all other foreign workers employed in the FRG in general, had brought apparent advantages to the native workers. These advantages can be listed as: increases in the wages and social benefits of native workers, who were obliged to work less hours than before; improved possibilities of upward mobility for the native workers, who were able to leave their old positions to foreign workers; and the increased capacity of the FRG's social services and welfare system due to the additional taxes collected from the foreign workers.<sup>99</sup> The employment structure of the foreign workers resulted in a trend in which foreign workers tended to be placed more in the unskilled and semi-skilled manual jobs, whereas the native workers were able to find employment in either higher-status manual or non-manual jobs.<sup>100</sup> This led to a change in the working class structure of the FRG by dividing skilled and unskilled labour along ethnic lines, as

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<sup>98</sup> Gokce Yurdakul, *From Guest Workers into Muslims: The Transformation of Turkish Immigrant Associations in Germany* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Pub., 2009), 10, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=6fadd09f-b50b-4252-80cf-120a3ebbe9ab%40sdc-v-sessmgr01&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZwhvc3QtbG12ZQ%3d%3d#AN=553364&db=nlebk> .

<sup>99</sup> Wolfgang Bodenbender, "Zwischenbilanz der Ausländerpolitik," 1976, cited in Ray C. Rist, *Guestworkers in Germany: The Prospects for Pluralism* (New York: Praeger, 1978), 111-112.

<sup>100</sup> Castles and Kosack, *Immigrant Workers*, 83-84. Although the native workers had the chance to move into positions with better conditions after the start of the Gastarbeiter program, this trend cannot be regarded as all-inclusive for all native workers. That is to say, some native and foreign workers had to share the same jobs. From these situations, sometimes problems arose due to the differences of motivation between these two groups. This was especially the case when workers were employed in the piece-rated jobs, since the remuneration for this kind of job is usually received through the norm system and the foreign workers usually tended to exceed their minimum norms quickly compared to the native workers. This difference in their motivation, because the foreign workers wanted to save money to send to their family members at home, resulted in the increase of complaints by the native workers about the presence of foreign workers. See Jonathan Power and Anna Hardman, "Western Europe's Migrant Workers," (London: Minority Rights Group, 1976), 20.

first native workers, then refugees and expellees, moved into skilled, managerial or supervisory positions.<sup>101</sup> In the case of Turkish workers, some scholars explained their being employed in the lowest strata of occupations in terms of low educational standards and a lack of previous professional skills.<sup>102</sup> There is some basis for this explanation, since the survey held by the DGB in 1973 revealed that 46% of the Turkish workers were employed in Turkey before the migration as factory workers, and 32% and 21% were working as artisans or in agrarian sectors, respectively.<sup>103</sup> The unchanging pattern of the employment structure after their permanent settlement in the FRG implies that there were other reasons behind the lack of significant improvement in their situation. In order to answer this problem, Castles and Kosack analyse the situation of foreign workers in the labour market during the 1970s, and conclude that, although there were some improvements in the situation of foreign workers, they remained inferior vis-à-vis the rest of the labour force as a result of inherent informal and institutional discrimination against the former group.<sup>104</sup> What is important here is that even though the first labour migrants, especially in the case of Turkish workers, did not take the inherent discrimination seriously, since they regarded their presence in the FRG as temporary, the persistence of discriminatory practices in the labour market during the 1970s after their decision of becoming permanent minorities made them realize that these practices would seriously affect both their and their families' social status. That is to say, the people who decided to participate in the migration process from Turkey to the FRG hoped that this participation would benefit both their material conditions as well as future social status, but became trapped in the lowest strata of the working class in a country where they also faced the difficulties of being a minority. This situation was reflected in the way they politically organized in the FRG.

However, before going into details of how the discriminatory practices in the labour market affected some Turkish migrants and their families' relationship with the MHP, attention should be given to the earliest forms of Turkish workers' associations, since these show not only how Turkish workers built contacts with the West German trade unions but also the future

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<sup>101</sup> Harsch, "Industrialization, Mass Consumption," 672.

<sup>102</sup> Nermin Abadan-Unat, "Identity Crisis of Turkish Migrants: First and Second Generation," in *Turkish Workers in Europe: An Interdisciplinary Study*, ed. İlhan Başgöz and Norman Furniss (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1985), 3.

<sup>103</sup> DGB Survey 1973, quoted in Nermin Abadan-Unat, "Turkish Migration to Europe, 1960-1975: A Balance Sheet of Achievements and Failures," in *Turkish Workers in Europe 1960-1975: A Socio-Economic Reappraisal*, ed. by Nermin Abadan-Unat, (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 20.

<sup>104</sup> Castles and Kosack, *Immigrant Workers*, 499.

characteristics of Turkish political organizations in the FRG. The earliest forms of Turkish workers' associations were established to provide to workers a place to socialize with their other Turkish counterparts. They had no intentions towards political mobilization in respect to issues in the FRG since the workers believed their stay in the country was temporary.<sup>105</sup> These associations were also supported by the West German authorities with semi-official funds, and this support was reflected in the increasing number of Turkish workers associations: while in 1963 there were about 20 associations, in 1973 this number increased to 112.<sup>106</sup> Yet the increasing division between left and right-wing politics following the 1960 coup d'état in Turkey was mirrored in these workers' associations, since they were becoming affiliated with the political parties of Turkey from the mid-1960s onwards.<sup>107</sup> These included ones associated with ultra-nationalist ideology of the MHP (then the CKMP, which it was called until 1969), such as Turkish Cultural Centers, Turkish Hearths, Turkish Clubs and National Socialist Worker Organizations.<sup>108</sup> Their aims can be understood by examining the functions of associations with similar ideology established in Turkey. As previously discussed, such associations assumed the role of resisting the increasing influence of leftist ideologies. Given the fact that various Turkish workers associations, representing Turkey's political divisions, were established in the FRG during the same period, the associations supported the MHP-style politics in the FRG can be attributed with a similarly political purpose. Although the associations also assumed other, more culture-related, purposes, these will be discussed later. What is important at this point is to establish a connection between the existence of such homeland oriented political organizations and the West German trade unions.

As claimed by Yurdakul, between 1961 and 1973, Turkish workers were also politically organized under West German trade unions.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, while the percentage of German workers who had trade union membership was around 20 per cent, the membership percentage of

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<sup>105</sup> Eva Ostergaard-Nielsen, *Transnational Politics: The Case of Turks and Kurds in Germany* (London: Routledge, 2002), 46, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203361627>.

<sup>106</sup> Abadan-Unat, "Turkish Migration to Europe, 1960-1975: A Balance Sheet," 15.

<sup>107</sup> Ostergaard-Nielsen, *Transnational Politics*, 47.

<sup>108</sup> Ertekin Özcan, *Türkische Immigrantorganisationen Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Berlin: Hitit Verlag, 1992), cited in Emre Arslan, "Turkish Ultra-Nationalism in Germany: Its Transnational Dimensions," in *Transnational Social Spaces: Agents, Networks and Institutions*, ed. Thomas Faist and Eyüp Özveren, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2017), 121, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315235707>.

<sup>109</sup> Yurdakul, *From Guest Workers into Muslims*, 23.

Turkish workers was 27 per cent.<sup>110</sup> Although this shows that Turkish workers were more interested in trade unions than their German counterparts, these numbers were still low, considering only 1 out of 4 Turkish workers opted for membership. This implies that there was a problematic relationship between Turkish workers and trade unions. One of the reasons for this was the position of trade unions on social partnership. According to this idea, trade unions were adapted to the FRG's capitalist market economy. As discussed above, the DGB agreed to function within the system and aim to realize the short-term interests of the workers. Yet this acceptance also put the trade unions in a dilemma: as Castles and Kosack shows, the idea of social partnership demands that trade unions channel and confine the claims of workers whilst simultaneously maintaining their relevance in the eyes of workers.<sup>111</sup> With the addition of guest workers to this equation, trade unions also had to balance between the potential conflicting interests of native workers and foreign workers, since the foreign workers presented some possible disadvantages – they could potentially keep wages down and offer an alternative workforce in the case of industrial disputes between the government and the native workers.<sup>112</sup> This dilemma of the trade unions actually paved the way for Turkish worker organizations to try to influence trade unions. Among these organizations, the leftist ones, who were affiliated with the leftist political parties and trade unions in Turkey, advocated collaboration with the West German trade unions.<sup>113</sup> The efforts of collaboration with the trade unions by the leftist workers associations can also be seen as a reason why ultra-nationalist associations affiliated with the MHP also advocated the same thing for its members. As it can be seen in the fourth issue of the periodical *Vatana Hasret*, under the article named *Ülkücü Hareket ve İşçi Meseleleri* (Idealist Movement and Labour Issues) in which the MHP's approach to the labour movements was depicted, the emphasis was given to the importance of maintaining the labour-capital accord and how this accord was threatened by the leftist ideologies actively involved in the trade union activities, as quoted from the article:

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<sup>110</sup> Ayşe Kudat and Yılmaz Özkan, *Internal and External Migration Effects on the Experience of Foreign Workers in Europe* (West Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrum, 1976), 65.

<sup>111</sup> Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, "How the Trade Unions Try to Control and Integrate Immigrant Workers in the German Federal Republic," *Race* 15, no. 4 (April 1974): 502, <https://doi.org/10.1177/030639687401500405> .

<sup>112</sup> Castles and Kosack, *Immigrant Workers*, 127-128.

<sup>113</sup> Selcen Öner, "Turkish Community in Germany and the Role of Turkish Community Organisations," *European Scientific Journal* 10, no. 29 (October 2014): 79, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e159/ac0fe0db2031c25dcdae7d5a68c77a4725c3.pdf> .

“Labour-capital accord has turned into a labour-capital conflict with the provocations of followers of the Marxist communist ideology. This situation not only harasses our workers and employers, but also threatens the domestic peace in our country”.<sup>114</sup>

Although this article focuses on Turkish trade unions and employers<sup>115</sup>, it still infers the MHP’s positive perception of the DGB and its constituent unions’ participation in the social partnership with the West German state and the employers. In addition, in the seventh issue of *Vatana Hasret*, an article with the title of ‘*I.G. Metall Aldatılıyor*’ (I.G. Metall is Being Deceived) was published with the aim of warning I.G. Metall, one of the constituent trade unions of the DGB, about leftist members who were trying to take over the union by isolating those who had anti-communist sentiments, the following quote from the article points reservations of the MHP on this issue:

“...we would like to remind the esteemed managers of IG-METALL that pro-Soviet communists who infiltrated into IG-METALL and are engaging in activities, by exploiting the powers and duties assigned to them, are trying to change trade union policies in accordance with the interests of Moscow and to slander and falsely accuse as enemies of the trade union anti-communist people and organizations who do not share the same opinions as them”.<sup>116</sup>

This shows that the MHP not only acted against the activities of leftist Turkish workers associations within the trade unions but also against other non-Turkish leftist organizations

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<sup>114</sup> “Emek-sermaye barışı, Marksist komünist ideoloji mensuplarının tahrikleriyle emek-sermaye çatışması haline dönüşmüştür. Bu durum işçi ve işveren vatandaşlarımızı bizar etmekle kalmamış, memleketimizde iç barış büyük ölçüde tehlikeye girmiştir”. “Ülkücü Hareket ve İşçi Meseleleri”, *Vatana Hasret*, no. 4, 1979, 5. My translation, as are the other translations from Turkish to English in this work, unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>115</sup> It should be noted that the date of publishing this article was 1979, a year before 1980 coup, when the clashes between left and right-wing groups reached its peak in Turkey. Therefore the issues mentioned in this article focused on the problems emerging from the increasing activities of leftist trade unions in industrial relations. Some examples of these issues are: to free the workers from the abuse of political parties and all kinds of foreign ideologies; the existence of more than one trade union with ill-advised aims within single branch of industry economic-activity; the pointless strikes led by leftist trade unions causing decrease in national productivity level, while cannot lead to positive outcomes. “Ülkücü Hareket ve İşçi Meseleleri”, *Vatana Hasret*, no. 4, 1979, 5.

<sup>116</sup> “...IG-METALL’e sızmış Sovyet yanlısı komünistlerin, sendika politikasını Moskova’nın çıkarlarına uygun bir yöne almasını sağlamak ve kendileri gibi düşünmeyen, anti-komünist insan ve kuruluşları, iftira ve yalanlarla sendika düşmanı olarak gösterme gayretiyle, kendilerine verilen yetki ve görevleri istismar ederek, kötülemek için yoğun faaliyetlerin içerisinde bulduklarını, IG-METALL’in haysiyetli yöneticilerine hatırlatmak istiyoruz”. “I.G. Metall Aldatılıyor”, *Vatana Hasret*, no.7, 1979, 7.

which were trying to influence the trade unions' politics. It can therefore be claimed that the MHP started to consider itself not only an immigrant association but also a political actor in the FRG.

This shift in the MHP's self-perception coincided with the decision of Turkish workers to settle permanently in the FRG and reunify with their family members. Although ultra-nationalist Turkish workers associations started their activities in the FRG from the mid-1960s, and the party started to send its representatives to the country in the early 1970s, the MHP's foreign organizations in the FRG were established between 1975 and 1977.<sup>117</sup> However the official foreign organizations of the party were closed down following a decision of the Constitutional Court of Turkey in 1977 to forbid activities of any Turkish political party in foreign countries.<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, in order to break this prohibition, various right-wing associations<sup>119</sup> were gathered under a single roof in 1978 through the Federation of Democratic Turkish Idealist Associations in Europe (*Avrupa Demokratik Ülkücü Türk Dernekleri Federasyonu – ADÜTDF*, mostly referred as Turk Federation) with the aim of preventing the assimilation and integration of the Turkish population with the status of second class citizens.<sup>120</sup> This aim was also reflected in the arguments presented in the periodical *Vatana Hasret*. If the issues of the periodical are viewed from in light of the housing conditions of the immigrants and their social contacts with the rest of the population, this aim of the MHP will become obvious. When the Turkish workers, first, came to the FRG to work, the employers, according to the regulations regarding the recruitment process of Turkish workers, were required to provide accommodations for the workers. They built large, barrack-like dormitories called *Heime* in the industrial zones of the cities.<sup>121</sup> In these facilities, the workers' stay was subjected to certain regulations.<sup>122</sup> For example, women and politics were generally forbidden.<sup>123</sup> The above discussion shows, the no politics rule did not stop workers being active in their associations, as they were affiliated with homeland political

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<sup>117</sup> Arslan, "Turkish Ultra-Nationalism in Germany," 124-126.

<sup>118</sup> Arslan, 124.

<sup>119</sup> These include organizations such as Turkish Community (*Türk Cemaati*), Turkish-Youth (*Türk-Genç*) and the Association of Great Ideal (*Büyük Ülkü Derneği*). See Abadan-Unat, *Bitmeyen Göç*, 225.

<sup>120</sup> Abadan-Unat, *Bitmeyen Göç*, 225.

<sup>121</sup> Rist, *Guestworkers in Germany*, 151.

<sup>122</sup> Elmar Hönekopp and Hans Ullman, "The Status of Immigrant Workers in the Federal Republic of Germany," in *Immigrant Workers in Europe: Their Legal Status: A Comparative Study*, ed. Eric-Jean Thomas (Paris: Unesco Press, 1982), 139.

<sup>123</sup> Power and Hardman, "Western Europe's Migrant", 19.

parties. In addition, the stay of Turkish workers in the company-provided dormitories isolated them from the rest of the population.<sup>124</sup> This also increased the influence of these associations and paved the way for the emergence of socialization practices among workers in compliance with homeland political divisions. As family reunifications increased, this type of housing began to lose its importance. Rather Turkish workers started to look for private apartments where they could live with their family members. However, the change in housing types did not necessarily mean an improvement in housing conditions for Turkish workers, who usually were able to find places in inner-city districts with low standards.<sup>125</sup> Yet their search was obstructed by the West German housing market, where a scarcity of adequate housing and discriminatory practices of renting, such as refusing to rent to Turkish workers or overcharging them, were the norm.<sup>126</sup> This issue also took the attention of the MHP and its foreign organizations and it was addressed in the sixth issue of *Vatana Hasret*. In the article focusing on the housing problems of Turkish workers, the problems of over-pricing and scarcity of houses were mentioned, yet the native population's discriminatory attitudes were emphasized as the main source of the problematic housing situation of the Turkish population.<sup>127</sup> The MHP's interpretation of housing situation shows that the party, rather than demanding solutions for the structural problems inherent in the housing market, chose to emphasize the discriminatory attitudes of the native population as the main problem. The way in which the Turkish population settled in the cities also helped the MHP to broaden its influence among them, albeit indirectly. The concentration of the Turkish population in the inner parts of the cities led to the formation of ghetto-like areas. However, it must be noted that these residential areas did not host a population with a single ethnic background but also contained members of the native population who had a similar social and economic situation to the Turkish workers.<sup>128</sup> Despite the presence of the native population in their residential areas, the Turkish inhabitants used these areas as a refuge where they could develop a sense of community through shops, cafes, mosques and immigrant associations.<sup>129</sup> These tight-knit communities imply a

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<sup>124</sup> John R. Clark, "Residential Patterns and Social Integration of Turks in Cologne," in *Manpower Mobility across Cultural Boundaries: Social, Economic, and Legal Aspects: The Case of Turkey and West Germany*, ed. Ronald E. Krane (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 64.

<sup>125</sup> Castles and Kosack, *Immigrant Workers*, 494.

<sup>126</sup> Rist, *Guestworkers in Germany*, 155.

<sup>127</sup> "Evsizlik İşçilerimizi Perişan Etti", *Vatan Hasret*, no. 6, 1979, 7.

<sup>128</sup> Yvo Dirickx and Ayşe Kudat, *Ghettos: Individual or Systemic Choice* (West Berlin: Wissenschaftszentrum, 1975), 19.

<sup>129</sup> Castles and Kosack, *Immigrant Workers*, 494.

situation similar to that of internal migrants in Turkey on the outskirts of big cities, where the MHP was not able to widen its support base. However, in the case of the FRG, the MHP was able to make use of this relatively segregated settlement structure because of the sense of insecurity and discrimination coming from the presence of the foreign population. Moreover, the MHP actually tried to spread feelings of insecurity among the Turkish population, as can be observed through the ideas published in *Vatana Hasret*. The sixth issue of the periodical with the headline *Türk Gençleri Almanlaştırılmaz* (Turkish Youth Cannot Be Germanized) indicates these efforts. An article in this issue was published with the aim of warning the Turkish population about the dangers threatening their children in order to instil a lifestyle in which social contact between Turks and Germans was discouraged, due to the dangerous habits of Germans, in favour of contact with other Muslim-Turkish families.<sup>130</sup>

The concerns raised by the MHP through the periodical *Vatana Hasret* about the Turkish youth in the FRG did not remain limited to the perceived threats of building contacts with the Germans. With the increasing number of family reunifications, other problems related with the family members of Turkish workers, in particular their children, became explicit. Among these problems were the educational conditions of the Turkish children. The FRG's stance towards this issue can be summarised as a dual strategy of introducing Turkish children to the German school system whilst allowing them to maintain the language and culture of Turkey through Turkish classes.<sup>131</sup> The responses to this issue produced by the MHP illuminate several aspects of its ideology. The most explicit one stemming from *Vatana Hasret* is the organization's twofold perception of the education issue. That is to say, while the problems related with the formal education of Turkish children were emphasized, the importance of religious education was not neglected as well. In the fourth issue of the periodical, an article was published under the name of '*İşçi Çocuklarının Eğitim Problemleri*' (Educational Problems of Workers' Children). This article underlined the importance of preventing the harmful effects of living in the FRG on Turkish children and offering an education program for them under the guidance of the Turkish state. The same article criticised the Turkish government (at that time that of Bülent Ecevit of the CHP), whose policies on this issue the MHP considered ineffective.<sup>132</sup> This criticism of the

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<sup>130</sup> "Din Eğitiminde Bazı Meseleler", *Vatana Hasret*, no. 6, 1979, 13.

<sup>131</sup> Castles and Kosack, *Immigrant Workers*, 501.

<sup>132</sup> "İşçi Çocuklarının Eğitim Problemleri" *Vatana Hasret*, no. 4, 1979, 5.



Turkish government continued in the fifth issue of *Vatana Hasret*, which took as its special topic the inclusion of Islam as an official religion in the FRG. The article ‘*Milli Eğitimimiz ve Yurtdışındaki İşçi Çocukları*’ (Our National Education and Children of Workers Abroad) considered the situation of children in Turkey and abroad. The MHP thought that both groups of children were under threat of ill-advised foreign ideas because the Turkish government was alienated from its national history and culture and lacked the MHP’s commitment to remaining Turks and Muslims, for example:

“Even in our own homeland, where we have hundreds of thousands of young people who cannot find the vocational schools they seek for, and are waiting desperately at the university gates. And where millions of our children are left at the mercy of “militants” who are conditioned to “foreign ideologies” and where there are “cadres” who are arrogant to this situation with their “leftist” and “progressive” ideals. Who would deal with the problems of hundreds of thousands of “children of homeland” who are left unprotected at “abroad?”

It is impossible for the cadres who have become alienated to our history and nationality, our epics, culture and civilization to understand and appreciate the “holy war” that we are giving to remain as Turkish and Muslim”.<sup>133</sup>

This clearly indicates that the MHP perceived the situation at home and abroad as the same and advocated a national program of education in line with its perception of history as struggle between nations. From this perspective of history, in the same article of the same issue, the MHP suggested that the children of Turkish workers in the FRG must not be left to the hands of foreign and Christian teachers.<sup>134</sup> The harmful influence of Christianity over Turkish children was further emphasized in the sixth issue of the periodical with in article named ‘*Din Eğitiminde Bazı Meseleler*’ (Some Issue in Religious Education). The main aim of this article was to advise

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<sup>133</sup> “Kendi yurdunda bile, istediği orta ve yüksek meslek okulunu bulamayan, üniversite kapılarında ümitsiz ve çaresiz bekleyen yüzbinlerce gencimiz varken, yine milyonlarca çocuğumuz “yabancı ideolojilere” şartlanmış “militanların” insafına terkedilmişken ve bu durum karşısında ya “vurdumduymaz” kesinlen veya “ilericilik” ve solculuk” pozları ile ukalalık eden “kadrolar” mevcutken, “yurt dışında” sahipsiz ve himayesiz kalan yüzbinlerce “vatan çocuğunun” derdi ile kim uğraşacaktır?

Tarihimize, milliyetimize, mukaddesatımıza, destanlarımıza, kültür ve medeniyetimize yabancılaşmış kadroların, bizim Türk ve Müslüman kalmak için verdiğimiz “mukaddes savaşı” anlamaları ve takdir etmeleri imkansızdır”. S. Ahmet Arvasi, “Milli Eğitimimiz ve Yurtdışındaki İşçi Çocukları”, *Vatana Hasret*, no. 5, 1979, 5.

<sup>134</sup> Arvasi, *Vatana Hasret*, 5.

Turkish parents in the FRG about the religious education of their children and to underline the role of the family in giving religious morality and information to the children since they were unable to receive these in schools from foreign and Christian teachers, as the following quote shows:

“Moreover, the children sent to the institutions called “Kindergarten” are educated by Christian nuns and taken to churches. Children sent to schools in foreign countries are constantly influenced by Christian knowledge...

Therefore Turkish people in Europe have to be much more cautious about the religious education of their children”.<sup>135</sup>

The MHP in the FRG therefore evolved from a ground for Turkish workers to organize in workers’ associations in the early years of migration to an important political actor with the ability to shape the migrants’ experience in their new country. The increasing influence of the MHP on Turkish population can be understood from the interests of workers in sending letters to the periodical, *Vatana Hasret*, which published the letters under the heading of *Ülküdaş’tan Mektup* (Letter from Idealist Friends). That is to say, while the agency of migrants and the situation they faced inside and outside of their workplaces shaped the way they formed their political views and led some members of the Turkish population to establish close contact with the MHP, at the same time, the MHP by actively trying to confer its ideology to the Turkish population had a significant influence on them. It should also be noted that the MHP mobilized the Turkish population in the FRG by focusing on the situation in both Turkey and the FRG and hence contributed to the persistence of homeland politics among Turkish population. Yet it should not be understated that even an actor like the MHP, which was directly connected to Turkey and its developments, paid great attention to developments in the FRG and became a political actor there, as the above discussion demonstrates. In addition, the policies of the Turkish and West German states regarding the migration process both shaped the experiences of the Turkish population and the activities of the MHP in the FRG. Below, the policies of both states and the MHP’s relationship with them will be discussed.

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<sup>135</sup> “Üstelik “Kindergarten” diye adlandırılan müesseselere gönderilen çocuklar orada Hıristiyan rahibelerin elinden geçiyor ve kiliselere de götürülüyor. Okullarda okuyan çocuklar Hıristiyanlık bilgileri ile devamlı etkilenmeye çalışılıyor... Hal böyle olunca Avrupa’daki Türk insanı çocuğunun dini eğitiminde çok daha titiz olmak mecburiyetindedir”. “Din Eğitiminde Bazı Meseleler”, *Vatana Hasret*, no. 6, 1979, 13.

## **3.2. Efforts of the Turkish and West German states to Shape the Experiences of Turkish Population in the FRG**

The discussion above considered the agency of Turkish migrants in order to understand how their conditions and experiences in the FRG shaped their political behaviour. Since it is not possible to cover all the potential political responses of the migrants to their conditions in the FRG within the scope of this work, the discussion was focused through the lens of the MHP. In addition to this, the case of the MHP is also helpful to understand how an organization can develop from an immigrant association to a political actor. This section will focus on the efforts of the Turkish and West German states to shape the migration experience of the Turkish population. As Jose Itzigsohn claims, migrants challenge the idea of national membership because of their unique relation to both sending and receiving countries (they are members of the former, but become part of the society of the latter). Moreover, they create new political and social linkages which surpass the borders of sending and receiving states.<sup>136</sup> Because of this, both Turkish and West German states attempted to regulate the migration process, and I discuss their efforts in turn below. In both cases, the MHP both directly and indirectly found a place for itself as an actor within the efforts of Turkish and West German authorities.

### **3.2.1. Turkish Side**

From the beginning of the labour migration process, the Turkish state developed policies aiming to regulate the economic, social and political issues of its emigrants. Both its successes and its failures in this regard are important factors behind the emergence of certain types of political behaviour among the Turkish population in the FRG. Moreover, the policies of the Turkish state have been subject to many changes due to various developments both in Turkey and the FRG. As Mügge indicates, the changes in the sending state's policies can be explained by examining the shift in the status of migrants (from sojourn to permanent settlers), a changing political situation in the host country, and developments in the receiving country.<sup>137</sup> While these factors are influential, and indeed can be attributed to the changes in Turkey's policies towards its emigrants

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<sup>136</sup> Jose Itzigsohn, "Immigration and the Boundaries of Citizenship: The Institutions of Immigrants' Political Transnationalism," *International Migration Review* 34, no. 4 (2000): 1126–27, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2675977> .

<sup>137</sup> Liza Mügge, "Managing Transnationalism: Continuity and Change in Turkish State Policy: Managing Transnationalism," *International Migration* 50, no. 1 (February 2012): 33, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2010.00666.x> .

in the FRG, the attitude of sending states towards their emigrants can also be analysed based on its aims for the emigration. The aims of sending countries fall within different domains: economic interests (to attract remittances), political interests (to influence and control political activities among the migrants) and social and welfare rights (including cultural and religious services for the migrant population).<sup>138</sup> In line with these arguments, the intentions of the Turkish state towards its emigrants as expressed in its policies and the factors which led to changes in policies will be discussed through primary sources. These sources consist of four different studies published by the Turkish authorities, conducted to increase the effectiveness of their policies. An analysis of these documents will be used to perceive the changes in policies and how these changes were influenced by the developments in Turkish politics.

The first set of books, under the general title of *Avrupa Memleketlerinde Türk İşçileri ve Problemleri*, were published by the Turkish state after two study trips, in 1966 and 1968, paid to the receiving countries in Western Europe. They met with the authorities and with Turkish workers to discuss matters related with the labour migration process, and developed solutions to the problems discussed during those meetings.<sup>139</sup> It needs to be mentioned that, because both the FRG and Turkey approached the labour migration as a temporary process, the issues discussed during those meetings were related to the short-term aspects of the migration process, for example the daily problems of the workers. This short-term approach can also be seen in the Turkish authorities' requests from West German authorities to extend the opportunities for Turkish workers to improve their skill-sets in anticipation of their return to Turkey. On the other hand, Turkish authorities also met with Turkish workers during events organized in workers' associations. In these meetings, Turkish workers had a chance to speak up about the problems<sup>140</sup> they encountered and to ask for possible solutions from the Turkish authorities. In addition to

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<sup>138</sup> Eva Ostergaard-Nielsen, "Sending Country Policies," in *Integration Processes and Policies in Europe*, ed. Blanca Garcés-Mascareñas and Rinus Penninx (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 149-151, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-21674-4\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-21674-4_9).

<sup>139</sup> İş ve İşçi Bulma Kurumu, *Avrupa memleketlerinde Türk işçileri ve problemleri: Federal Almanya, Hollanda, Belçika, İsviçre ve Avusturya'da yapılan bir inceleme gezisinin notları* (Ankara: Doğuş, 1966) and İş ve İşçi Bulma Kurumu, *Avrupa memleketlerinde Türk işçileri ve sorunları: İsviçre, Hollanda, Belçika, F. Almanya ve Avusturya'da yapılan bir inceleme gezisinin notları: İkinci kitap* (Ankara: Başnur, 1968).

<sup>140</sup> Various problems were raised by the Turkish workers in those meetings. Among them were the problems arising from the regulatory practices of the West German state, their housing conditions, obstacles preventing them to fully benefit from the social services in the FRG, and the difficulties they faced when they were sending money to their families in Turkey. Moreover, some workers expressed their concerns about the ill-behaved activities of some leftist workers and the life styles of some workers which were not suitable for the Turkish customs and traditions.

this, workers also expressed their willingness to return and asked about Turkey's plans to enhance industrial capacity and hence job opportunities on their return. What is important here is that the way in which the Turkish workers regarded Turkey as the authority responsible for solving their problems enabled the Turkish authorities to use this influence to extend their populist political stance outside the borders of Turkey.

The Turkish state continued to involve itself in the migration process and the experiences of the Turkish population in the FRG over the following years. With this aim, in 1972 the Department of Overseas Labour Problems, which was established in 1971 within the Ministry of Labour, published a book named '*Yurtdışındaki İşçilerimizin Temel Sorunları ve Çözüm Yolları*' (The Main Problems of Our Workers Abroad and Solutions).<sup>141</sup> Since the book was published before the decision to halt the labour migration process in the FRG, and Turkish workers as well as the authorities of both countries were still regarding the migration as temporary, one of its aims was the economic and social reintegration of the Turkish workers. Other aims for the Department of Overseas Labour Problems were to optimize emigrants' contribution to the national economy and their benefit to the national employment policy; to increase their knowledge and manners; to strengthen their bonds with the homeland; to solve the problems in the countries in which they work; and to ensure their security. As it can be seen from these aims and the establishment of a special body within the Ministry of Labour for the problems of workers abroad, a systematic approach to the labour migration was beginning to be taken. It should be also noted that the book emphasises the importance of strengthening the migrant workers' bonds with Turkey and protecting them against radical political and religious groups. In addition, cultural differences between migrants and natives are stressed as the cause of the former's feelings of isolation and susceptibility to extreme ideologies or detrimental lifestyles. In its pursuit of solutions, the department analysed the services offered to Spanish workers abroad by their state. This analysis acknowledged the role of Spanish Centres in strengthening workers' attachments to their home country. Importantly, the department's interest in the workers abroad was motivated by its intention to prevent any harmful impact the workers might have on Turkish society after their return.

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<sup>141</sup> Çalışma Bakanlığı, *Yurtdışındaki İşçilerimizin Temel Sorunları ve Çözüm Yolları*, (Ankara: 1972).

Turkey's development of its policies regarding the Turkish population abroad, and in the FRG particularly, was shaped by its own political direction. As discussed above, Turkey experienced a political liberalization process with the start of the multi-party era in the 1950s and an increasing diversification of political life following the 1960 coup. However, with this diversification the polarization between left and right-wing parties increased as well. In addition, there was a growing fear of communism both among the politicians and some of the population. In this atmosphere, a group of intellectuals known as 'nationalist-conservatives' tried to introduce new aspects to the Kemalist interpretation of nationalism by adding Islamic features and hence creating 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis.'<sup>142</sup> In 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis', the main concerns were the emergence of religious carelessness and the growing ignorance among society as a result of the secularist ideals of the state and its bureaucrats, as well as the fear of losing Turkish cultural and social life under the threat of communism.<sup>143</sup> The MHP as a political party, especially after its acceptance of Islam as a part of its ideology, represents the ideals of this synthesis in the political domain. Its aim to fight against leftist parties and the acceptance of the party by the other actors within this field led to the increase in the importance of the MHP in Turkey and allowed it to participate in the governments established in 1975 and 1977. Its participation in the governments granted the MHP the ability to influence policies of the Turkish state.<sup>144</sup> The increasing importance of 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis' and the ability of the MHP to shape state policies was also reflected in the approach of the Turkish state towards the Turkish population in the FRG. In 1978, a book was published by the Department of Overseas Labour Problems within the Ministry of Labour entitled '*Kitle Haberleşme Araçları ve Yurtdışındaki İşçilerimiz*' (Mass Media and Our Workers Abroad). It showed the detrimental effects of mass media on the culture of Turkish people in Western European countries.<sup>145</sup> Although this book reveals the conservative attitude of the Turkish authorities at that time, its emphasis on the transmission of leftist ideas as well as the activities of Christian missionaries among the Turkish population shows that the attitude of the Turkish actors resembled those of both 'Turkish-Islamic synthesis' and the MHP – indeed, the book published in 1978 echoes the topics of *Vatana Hasret*. In addition, there is a

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<sup>142</sup> Gökhan Çetinkaya, "Rethinking Nationalism and Islam: Some Preliminary Notes on the Roots of "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis" in the Modern Turkish Political Thought," *The Muslim World* 89, no. 3–4 (October 1999): 368, [https://www.academia.edu/11735595/Rethinking\\_Nationalism\\_and\\_Islam\\_Some\\_Preliminary\\_Notes\\_on\\_the\\_Roots\\_of\\_Turkish-Islamic\\_Synthesis](https://www.academia.edu/11735595/Rethinking_Nationalism_and_Islam_Some_Preliminary_Notes_on_the_Roots_of_Turkish-Islamic_Synthesis) .

<sup>143</sup> Çetinkaya, "Rethinking Nationalism and Islam," 368-369.

<sup>144</sup> Nowak, "Labour Migration, Postcolonial Nationalism," 199.

<sup>145</sup> Çalışma Bakanlığı, *Kitle Haberleşme Araçları ve Yurtdışındaki İşçilerimiz*, (Ankara: 1978)

great possibility that the mission attributed to the MHP by some actors in Turkey to fight against leftist organizations extended to the FRG. Like *Amicales*, which was regarded as the long arm of the oppressive Moroccan state established to control Moroccan people in Western European countries,<sup>146</sup> the MHP was used by the Turkish authorities to expand its control over the Turkish population in the FRG. This role of the MHP was also exploited by the West German authorities. Yet in order to understand the relationship between the West German authorities and the MHP, the FRG's approach to the Turkish population during the labour and family migration periods should be examined first.

### 3.2.2. West German Side

In order to understand the impact of the FRG's policies on the Turkish population's political behaviour, the focus should be given to the evolution of these policies over the years. At the start of the labour migration process, the government, employers and trade unions in the FRG agreed on the temporariness of the *Gastarbeiter* program.<sup>147</sup> Given the fact that the first bilateral agreement between the FRG and Italy on the recruitment of foreign workers was signed in 1955, a link can be drawn between the actors' consensus and the positive economic situation at that time. However, this consensus started to dissolve with the impact of the 1966/67 economic recession.<sup>148</sup> The economic recession led to growing awareness among the actors of the weaknesses of the *Gastarbeiter* program: they previously thought of foreign workers as a temporary labour army which could be removed in such times, but realised they had become an indistinguishable element of the FRG's industrialized society.<sup>149</sup> Although the bilateral agreement between Turkey and the FRG was signed in 1961, the number of Turkish workers increased significantly after the recession, from 171,018 in 1969 to 617,531 in 1974.<sup>150</sup> Employers realized that foreign workers could not be removed in times of economic setback and did not always enable them to lower wages, since the native workers moved on to more desirable positions rather than competing with the foreigners for jobs.<sup>151</sup> With the support of the media, the employers worked to increase popular resentment against foreign workers, despite their benefits

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<sup>146</sup> Andrew DJ Shield, *Immigrants in the Sexual Revolution* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 122, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-49613-9>.

<sup>147</sup> Castles and Kosack, "How the Trade Unions," 499.

<sup>148</sup> Abadan-Unat, "Turkish Migration to Europe, 1960-1975: A Balance Sheet," 16-17.

<sup>149</sup> Abadan-Unat, 16.

<sup>150</sup> Akgündüz, *Labour Migration*, 104.

<sup>151</sup> Castles and Kosack, "How the Trade Unions," 500.

for the economy, in order to divert attention from the real reasons behind the recession and low wage increases.<sup>152</sup> Therefore it can be said that the settlement of Turkish workers coincided with West Germans' increasing resentment against foreign workers and led them to seek contact with their fellow countrymen.

According to de Haan, European democracies held legislations which subjected foreign populations to their criminal justice system and taxes but at the same time distinguished them socially from its citizens.<sup>153</sup> The relevant legislation in the FRG was the Alien Act of 1965. The FRG continued to subject the workers to this legislation even after it decided to stop the labour recruitment process. Although the Alien Act did not specifically forbid the granting of certain rights to the foreigners, such as freedom of assembly, freedom of movement, and freedom to choose and exercise his/her occupation, it provided an uncertain ground in which those who had the responsibility to administer the Alien Act had discretionary powers.<sup>154</sup> However, being subjected to the discretionary powers of authorities regarding important decisions on their behalf put foreigners in an insecure position.<sup>155</sup> This insecure position resembles that of refugees and displaced persons as depicted by Hannah Arendt in her *Origins of Totalitarianism*. According to her, "[t]he more they were excluded from right in any form, the more they tended to look for a reintegration into a national, into their own national community."<sup>156</sup> Despite the differences between foreigners in the FRG and refugees/displaced persons, who are deprived of their basic rights, the insecurity imposed upon the foreigners in the FRG made the Turkish population organize within groups composed of their co-nationals and look for the protection of the Turkish state. This was also encouraged by the limited political rights granted to the Turkish population in the FRG. The West German constitution prohibits the participation of foreigners in the elections, on the ground that only the German citizens have the right to express their will through election system.<sup>157</sup> While this situation prevented regular contact between the West German political parties and Turkish population, since the former did not find any reason to convince

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<sup>152</sup> Castles and Kosack, 500.

<sup>153</sup> Eberhard de Haan, "Foreign Workers and Social Services in Federal Germany," in *Turkish Workers in Europe 1960-1975: A Socio-Economic Reappraisal*, ed. Nermin Abadan-Unat, (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 346.

<sup>154</sup> Rist, *Guestworkers in Germany*, 135-136.

<sup>155</sup> Hönekopp and Ullman, "The Status of Immigrant Workers," 135-136.

<sup>156</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, 1962), 292.

<sup>157</sup> Rist, *Guestworkers in Germany*, 143.



them for their support, the Turkish population continued to express their political wills through the organizations originating from Turkey.

The MHP benefited from this insecurity stemming from the legal system which distinguishes foreigners from the citizens. In addition to this indirect impact of the legal system, the MHP was also encouraged by some West German authorities to increase its activities among the Turkish population. In order to understand this support, an analysis of the general political atmosphere and the role of the trade unions within this atmosphere should be conducted. To recap, since the establishment of the FRG the country followed a capitalist form of economic growth. This model required the exploitation of the working class. However, the FRG adopted a 'social-partnership' approach in which the workers could raise their demands through the DGB and its constituent unions. However, being a part of this 'social-partnership' made the trade unions restrain the activities of workers which might put the capitalist accumulation in danger.<sup>158</sup> This can also be seen in the transformation of the DGB into an organization seeking to fulfil the day-to-day interests of the workers. Moreover, the interests of foreign workers were excluded from this aim of the trade unions. This can be seen in the discriminatory attitude that some trade unions showed in the representational bodies of the industrial relations. While the DGB followed a policy to support the nomination of foreign workers for the work councils in the factories,<sup>159</sup> constituent trade unions such as I.G. Metall, abstained to follow this policy by excluding migrants from the lists for the elections of work councils.<sup>160</sup> This discriminatory attitude sometimes led to the eruption of unofficial strikes led by the foreign workers. The case of strike at Ford AG factory in Cologne in 1973 can be regarded as a good example for this, as Turkish workers were the main actor in the event. At the start of the strike, the demands of Turkish workers for better working conditions found a response from the native workers, who were demanding better wages, and the trade union responsible for the factory. However, in the meetings between workers' representatives and the factory officials the latter agreed to increase the wages but did not respond the demands of Turkish workers. Despite this omission, the workers' representatives accepted the resolution and called off the strike. However, Turkish workers did not answer this call and continued to their strike and their perseverance was

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<sup>158</sup> Castles and Kosack, "How the Trade Unions," 502.

<sup>159</sup> Hönekopp and Ullman, "The Status of Immigrant Workers," 137.

<sup>160</sup> Power and Hardman, "Western Europe's Migrant," 20.

eventually suppressed by police forces.<sup>161</sup> Turkish workers participated in many other strikes during the 1970s.<sup>162</sup> As their involvement challenged the functioning of the order set up by ‘social-partnership’, the actors who wanted to preserve this order targeted Turkish workers. This was the motivation for the CDU/CSU and the Federal Intelligence Service (*Bundesnachrichtendienst* – BND) to support the establishment of the MHP’s organizations in the FRG.<sup>163</sup> The relationship between these actors and the MHP was proved by the Turkish state in its indictment against the MHP during the judicial process which took place after 1980 coup. Among the considerable evidence used in this indictment, a letter written to Türkeş in 1976 from an party official in the FRG shows that foreign organizations of the MHP were charged with preventing the spread of communism among Turkish workers by the BND.<sup>164</sup> This clearly indicates that the West German actors were inspired by the role attributed to the MHP in Turkey in its fights against leftist groups and assigned the same task to the organization to counter the increasing resentment of Turkish workers during the strike wave of the 1970s.

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<sup>161</sup> Gottfried E. Voelker, “More Foreign Workers - Germany’s Labour Problem No. 1,” in *Turkish Workers in Europe 1960-1975: A Socio-Economic Reappraisal*, by Nermin Abadan-Unat (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 336-337.

<sup>162</sup> Mark J. Miller, *Foreign Workers in Western Europe: An Emerging Political Force* (New York: Praeger, 1981), 104-113.

<sup>163</sup> Nowak, “Labour Migration, Postcolonial Nationalism,” 197.

<sup>164</sup> T.C. Ankara, Çankırı, Kastamonu İlleri Sıkıyönetim Komutanlığı Askeri Savcılığı, “İddianame: M.H.P ve Ülkücü Kuruluşlar,” 1980, 140.

#### 4. Conclusion and Discussion

Now I have explored the migration experiences of not only the Turkish population in the FRG but also refugees and expellees in the FRG and internal migrants in Turkey, the ground is set for me to draw comparisons between them. This comparative approach will allow me to better understand political behaviour of the Turkish population in the FRG and the function of the MHP in this context. In her article “The Comparative Method and Post-structural Structuralism: New Perspectives for Migration Studies”, Nancy L. Green asserts that a comparative perspective serves toward the grasping what is inherent in certain processes while, at the same time, it reveals what is specific for each case.<sup>165</sup> Therefore the discussion of Turkish workers and their families’ relationship with the MHP in the FRG as handled in the way above offers us to compare the experiences of this group to that of other groups, such as refugees and expellees settled in the FRG after the WWII and internal migrants in Turkey. The comparison between refugees and expellees, and Turkish population in the FRG aims to reveal the factors behind the different political behaviour of these groups after their settlement in the FRG. In addition, the discussion revolving around refugees and expellees was kept related with the socio-economic transformation that the FRG underwent after the WWII. The reason for this is to show the socio-economic transformation of the country and the evolution of the actors which would become the relevant authorities in shaping the experiences of Turkish population. On the other hand, the focus was given to the socio-economic transformation of Turkey, especially from the 1950s onwards, to understand its impact on the emergence of various political parties as well as on people’s decisions to migrate inside and outside of Turkey. This opened the way for making a comparison between the relationship of internal and external migrants with the MHP. Through this, it can be seen to what extent internal migrants, and Turkish workers and their families in the FRG established different relationship with the MHP.

Firstly, it is useful to consider why the refugees and expellees developed different political behaviour from the Turkish population in the FRG. Although the time period and the conditions which led the refugees and expellees, and the Turkish population to settle in the FRG were completely different, the fact that they ended up being workers with the similar conditions in the

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<sup>165</sup> Nancy L. Green, “The Comparative Method and Poststructural Structuralism: New Perspectives for Migration Studies,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 13, no. 4 (Summer 1994): 6, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27501896> .

FRG can provide a common ground for the comparison. With that being the case, they actually involved in similar organization structures when they first settled in the country. The refugees and expellees lost interest in their ethnically organized political associations when their material conditions improved; this did not happen for the Turkish population. This does not necessarily mean that the material conditions of the Turkish population did not improve. Rather they were other factors at play. The refugees and expellees were allowed to join the political process and mainstream political parties therefore became interested in their problems. Moreover, the refugees and expellees were approached by the authorities as part of West German society. On the other hand, Turkish workers were given a more marginal place in the society and they were excluded from the political process. This led to the Turkish workers turning to political parties originating from the homeland. The workers also organized social and cultural associations along ethnic lines.

My next point of comparison is the social bases of the MHP in Turkey and in the FRG. In Turkey the characteristics of the MHP supporters differed according to the areas in which they lived; that is, the MHP supporters in the rural areas had a different social base than in the urban areas. In the rural areas, this base consisted of those afraid of losing their traditional way of life under the socio-economic transformation of Turkey. They wanted to use the MHP to express their resistance to these changes. In addition, the rural support had a more religious tone. In the cities, the MHP found support among students and workers. The students either came from conservative religious families or lower-class, low income backgrounds. The workers had jobs in marginal sector and their family background was an influential factor as well. What is important here is that leftist organizations were also successful among the workers in the cities, although the MHP was supported by workers with more unstable working conditions. The point is that the MHP became more successful among Turkish workers in the FRG than in Turkey. Firstly, in the FRG Turkish workers were subject to more discrimination and marginality. More specifically in the case of internal migrants in Turkey when they arrived in their new cities there was a lack of adequate housing and jobs. This led to a clear division between the outer and inner city, and the internal migrants and the rest of the urban population. Nevertheless, because the Turkish workers in the FRG faced discrimination from a foreign population and foreign actors, they formed a stronger relationship with the ultra-nationalist MHP. In addition, the fear of losing their cultural identity attributed to the rural MHP supporters in Turkey, as well as the marginality in the labour

market of the MHP supporting workers, persisted in the FRG. Therefore the characteristics of the different social bases of MHP supporters in Turkey combined in the FRG.

In addition, the reasons for the internal migration can be compared to those for the external migration to the FRG. The internal migrants moved to cities because of the socio-economic transformation of Turkey and they were looking for improved living conditions. The workers who moved to the FRG also hoped to improve their living conditions; however, whereas for the internal migrants the move was more of a necessity, the external migrants were also influenced by highly positive image of Europe. When they discovered this image did not live up to the reality of their migration experience in the FRG, their disappointment made some of the workers more susceptible to the ultra-nationalist ideology of the MHP.

Having shown the agency of the migrants and how their experiences at home and abroad shaped their support for the MHP, the study then explored how the MHP actively shaped the migration experience of the Turkish population in the FRG. Here I used the periodical *Vatana Hasret* to show the MHP's efforts. Firstly, I found that the MHP tried to encourage the workers to identify primarily as Turks and Muslims. They encouraged social contacts with others in this group and discouraged contacts with the rest of the population in the FRG. Similarly, the MHP perceived the problems of the Turkish workers as resulting from national differences rather than the situation of the workers as a whole. In addition, the MHP continued aspects of its mission in Turkey into the FRG. In Turkey, the MHP supported the industrial harmony between employers and workers, and this role persisted in the FRG. As the periodical shows, the MHP encouraged supporters to be involved in West German trade union activities; at the same time, they warned the trade unions as well as their supporters about the efforts of dangerous leftist groups to influence the unions. This shows that the MHP tried to influence West German actors and make them compatible with its ideology.

The Turkish and West German governments also shaped the migration experience of the Turkish workers. The Turkish government tried to influence the migration even from the beginning but these efforts evolved with the political changes in both the FRG and Turkey. The Turkish state originally focused on the economic aspect of the migration, for example sending remittances, and the daily problems of workers, since they believed the migration was temporary. After the workers decided to stay permanently in the FRG, the efforts of the Turkish state became more

about maintaining their cultural and religious identity. This was also shaped by the political changes in Turkey, in particular the increasingly populist politics. The governments tried to suppress leftist groups with religious-conservative rhetoric and they supported the activities of the MHP for this reason. The role of the MHP increased and they became a coalition partner in 1975 and 1977. The MHP's increased importance in Turkey also impacted their activities in the FRG where they continued their fight against leftist groups. The efforts of the West German governments to shape the migration experience of its Turkish population also evolved over time. When they thought the migration was temporary they made decisions according to the needs of industry. Tension emerged with the economic downturn and the governments' realization that the workers were an important part of the economic system. Government policies such as the Alien Act created instability which made workers turn to homeland-based organizations. Moreover, the government used the MHP to influence the Turkish workers, for example in the strikes of the 1970s. The role of the MHP in Turkey influenced the West German authorities who also used it to prevent workers' involvement in activities that could disrupt the 'social partnership' model.

Finally, the relation of the MHP to class consciousness among the Turkish workers in the FRG, as well as its overall function can be gathered. If we see the MHP as an organization who exalts the Turkish nation it would not be wrong to argue that the workers who joined the MHP or followed its ideology failed to achieve class consciousness. That is to say, the MHP did not encourage the Turkish workers to realize their common interests with other workers. This study has shown that some Turkish workers in the FRG were motivated to preserve their national and cultural identity, and they chose the MHP to fulfil this function for them. At the same time the governments of Turkey used the MHP to suppress leftist activities. This function of the MHP evolved in the FRG, where the authorities used the party to prevent Turkish workers realizing their common interest with native workers. So, one could say that the MHP functioned to suppress class consciousness among the workers in both countries, although in slightly different ways.

To conclude, I suggest some future directions for further research based on the findings of this study. This work can be used as a starting point to understand the Turkish-descended population in Germany today and their relation with Turkish political actors and the state. Today this

relation is still shaped by the increasing influence of religious nationalism, a notion already discussed in this work. The population of Turkish origins in the FRG cannot be described as workers because of the changes in both the employment structure and the industrial relations in Germany. Still, I think this study still offers a good starting point to contextualize the political behaviour of the Turkish-descended population and their relationship with the MHP, since the marginalization of this population still persists.

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