Kristin Bail

INT 400

Dr. Kurt Jefferson

Final Draft—Research Paper

**Piecing Together the Immigration Puzzle: Immigration and the EU**

Few things in the world have remained as constant as the ebb and flow of people moving about the world, in some countries and out of others. The history of migration is a long one, ranging from nomadic peoples roaming a continent to large numbers of families leaving behind their homes in one country for the promise of a new life in another land. Always controversial, immigration continues to be a key topic for policy formation around the world.

On the heels of recent terrorist attacks by extremist religious groups in Europe, countries such as Germany and France are currently experiencing renewed anti-immigration sentiment. In this paper I will attempt to investigate how the two European powerhouses handle immigration and the reasons behind it. I will first lay out the history of immigration, detailing to some extent the current sentiment and policies regarding immigration in major countries such as Germany and France. I will close by summarizing my conclusions and giving recommendations as to what future research may be done on the topic.

**Immigration as a Concept**

The concept of immigration is not new to most people. Immigration can generally be said to be the introduction of people into a new population or geographical location. There is, of course, a distinction between emigration, which is what happens when someone leaves what is usually their home country, and immigration, which is generally thought to be the act of moving into a country to set up a new permanent residence.

One general theory behind immigration, called the “Push-Pull Theory,” distinguishes between two types factors. The first type, called push factors, typically refer to the reasons or motivations for emigration from a person’s country of origin. These could be economic or social causes. Oftentimes what is considered to be a push factor also doubles as a pull factor, or incentives, both economic or social, pulling a migrant from his homeland to a new one. In the case of economic migration, which is usually related to the labor force in some way, opportunities for better wages in another country are the primary reason for migrating (Ben-David 2009). Economic expansion in the U.S. during the time of the Industrial Revolution is widely thought to be the most powerful influence behind the increased immigrant flow the country experienced at the time. Individuals choose to move only when the costs of doing so are not too high. Explicit costs (travel costs) and implicit costs (the loss of work time and community ties) together play integral roles in pulling emigrants away from their first homes. When the opportunity costs are lower, immigration rates tend to be higher (Ben-David 2009).

We have already discussed the availability of jobs as a pull factor, but for some migrants education is considered to be the primary pull factor, although most international students are not considered immigrants. Lower costs of living are also considered a pull factor. Retirement migration from rich countries to lower-cost countries with better climates has emerged as a new type of international migration (Ben-David 2009).

There are also several factors, legal, natural, and social, which might act as barriers to immigration. The social and familial ties that are cut when one leaves his or her country are especially powerful. This type of move often requires a person to give up his culture, friends, family, and entire support network—not something easily done by most people. Most also need to liquidate their assets, oftentimes at a huge loss, to accommodate the expense of moving (Ben-David 2009). Once a person arrives in his new host country, a whole new host of problems opens up—in addition to finding work, there always obstacles such as new laws, new cultural norms, finding a place to live, and language or accent (Ben-David 2009).

**Immigration Then**

**Guest Worker Programs**

Approximately fifteen years after the end of World War II, European countries such as Belgium, France, and Germany experienced major economic booms. It is contended that at one point, Germany had more jobs available than there were unemployed people in the country (Shullo 2008). To accommodate this growth, companies began petitioning the government for permission to open their borders and economies to immigrants, first from struggling southern European countries such as Spain and Italy, then countries along the Mediterranean shoreline. At this same time the UK began attracting foreigners from within the former British Empire; Indians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis came at a steady rate between the 1950s to the 1970s. Like the Brits, the French, German, and Dutch also attracted immigrants from within their former colonies (Ben-David 2009).

Germany being the first government to implement the program, these immigrants were granted entrance on the understanding that they would reside as temporary guest workers. According to Esther Ben-David, the perception that the workers would live temporarily in the host countries was shared mutually both by the host country and the visitors (Ben-David 2009). The main premise behind the program was that these workers would be employed for one or two years within their host countries and then sojourn back to Yugoslavia, Italy, or whichever country was their homeland with their savings and newly acquired skills, resulting in a valuable labor exchange (Shullo 2008).

As the 1970s approached, however, and the majority of European nations experienced economic stagnation in the form of an oil crisis, many European policymakers became disenchanted with their nations’ immigration policies and, beginning around 1972, multitudes of foreign workers found themselves unemployed (Shullo 2008). Rather than returning to their home countries as originally planned, many of the then estimated 2.6 million guest workers chose not return to their native countries where the opportunity of employment was even more bleak (Shullo 2008). In an effort to counterbalance these requests, between 1973 and 1975, several Western European governments implemented “immigration stops” which consisted of restrictive measures meant to deter immigration and a ceasing of foreign labor recruitment (Ben-David 2009).

While the immigration stops were effective in reducing the number of foreign workers migrating to Europe, they also had unintended consequences. Migrants already residing in Europe could sponsor their extended family’s immigration through family reunification visas, perpetuating the migration dynamic (Ben-David 2009). Fearing that their way to Europe would soon be closed forever, migrants rushed to move the rest of their families. Consequently, the number of immigrants actually increased more in the decades following the stop than in the timeframe of the guest worker programs. Germany’s situation at that time is particularly telling: despite the stops, between 1973 and 1999 the number of foreigners in Germany increased by 82% while the number of foreigners in the workforce declined by 23% (Shullo 2008).

The dynamic of immigrants living in Europe changed dramatically after the stops were implemented. Now, whole families, as opposed to individuals, were moving to and living in new countries. Whereas individuals were more likely to assimilate and adopt the customs of their host country, the entrance of whole families peaked the interest of immigrant communities in healthcare, housing, and schooling (Ben-David 2009). Additionally, migrant families were more concerned than their predecessors with the preservation of their native culture and its traditions. Immigrants who made the trek alone were more likely to adopt a more liberal lifestyle, whereas the new immigrants, especially Muslim families, were instead heavily invested in upholding their culture’s code of honor and standards of modesty; they fully expected to take advantage of the opportunities a Western lifestyle offered them but did not want them to become victims of the Western hedonistic lifestyle (Ben-David 2009). Futhermore, as Muslim families grew in number, the basement mosques that had been widely used before the 1970s became unacceptable and the number of mosques and other public places of worship increased in number (Ben-David 2009).

**Immigration Now**

According to data compiled by the British news source, *The Guardian*, in 2009, there are approximately 31,860,300 foreign citizens residing in the EU27 today (The Guardian 2009). Germany has the highest number of foreign citizens with 7.2 million, while Latvia sits with the highest number of non-EU citizens at 17.5% (The Guardian 2009). A chart depicting the data, also taken from the Guardian, is displayed below.

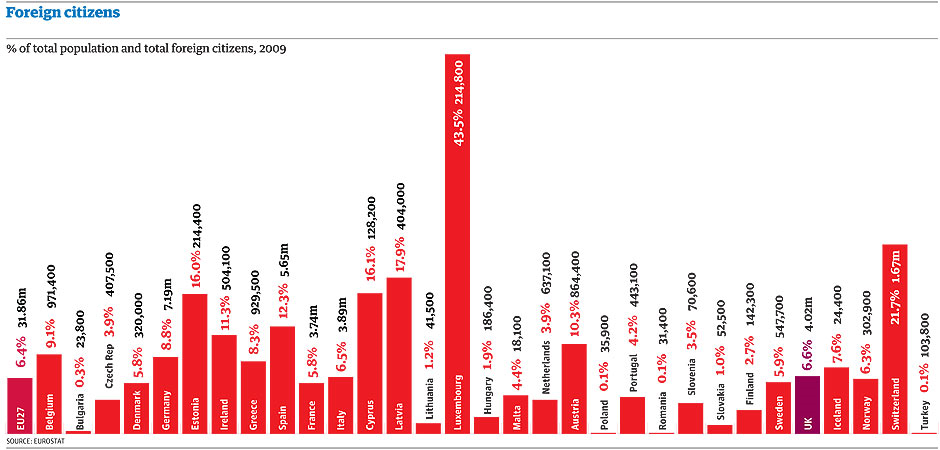


Chart provided by the Guardian, 2009

The continent of Europe is unique in the fact that, being far closer than major immigration countries such as the United States, Australia, and Canada, it can easily be reached from North Africa and Turkey without air travel. Further, the fluidity of movement between European states makes the journey to a migrant’s true destination simpler (Ben-David 2009). This migration is made possible by utilizing many channels: family reunification and marriage immigration, asylum, employment or student permits for skilled workers, or through the most feared, illegal immigration.

**Family Reunification**

One of the most common paths of immigration to Europe is family reunification (Ben-David 2009). As mentioned earlier, traditional values have become more important than they had previously, driving women to seek open and educated men from “back home” and men to desire traditional women (Ben-David 2009). This mentality, when combined with cousin marriages, perpetuates marriage immigration. While cousin marriages may seem perverse or strange to many Westerners, they are a common way for individuals to aid their extended family or keep resources within the familial unit. The Western legal system further encourages these tribal marriage patterns by giving powerful incentives to use marriage as a means of working around the European immigration system (Ben-David 2009).

**Asylum**

After marriage immigration and family reunification, hopeful immigrants seek to enter many European countries through asylum. The status of asylum seeker was traditionally reserved for and thought of as those who are fleeing persecution, ethnical, religious, or otherwise, in their home countries (Ben-David 2009). Unfortunately, today the asylum process is often chosen regardless of the situation in the home country. This process goes back many years to before the immigration stops were enacted in the 1970s. Before the stops were put into place, numerous economic immigrants would enter on the grounds of asylum without going through the proper channels of reaching refugee status. After the stops, the process changed and, in a “consciously planned act of subversion,” those same economic immigrants began posing as refugees (Ben-David 2009). Today only a small portion of asylum seekers are recognized by the United Nations with refugee status as having stayed in refugee camps before their travel to Europe (Ben-David 2009).

The majority of “refugees” cross into Europe illegally, often paying smugglers for assistance. These emigrants sometimes obtain fake documents and destroy their real papers in order to obtain the ultimate goal of building a new life in Europe. Their stories are often exaggerated to emphasize persecution (Ben-David 2009). Generally, asylum seekers try to make their way to countries that are most likely to accept their application such as Sweden and Norway who have notoriously relaxed or “liberal” immigration laws (Ben-David 2009).

Even with many of these immigrants being disingenuous refugees, several in the past few decades were legitimately seeking refuge from political persecution (Ben-David 2009). The most controversial of these emigrated from Muslim countries and settled largely in Germany to take advantage of Germany’s technical universities. Toward the 1980s and 90s, Islamist activists continued to flee countries such as Syria, Egypt, and North African countries (Ben-David 2009). Rather than fleeing oppression, however, these activists utilized the liberal values afforded by European societies to plot the overthrow of the secular governments of their former homes and replace them with religiously-based regimes. As this immigration progressed, it became the basis for the contemporary European Muslim terrorist networks (Ben-David 2009). The repercussions of this movement is now being clearly manifested as Germany struggles with what are referred to as homegrown terrorist networks that target Western states specifically.

Along with producing refugees seeking political asylum from secular governments, Muslim countries also produce those fleeing strict application of Islamic law. These persecuted people are usually minorities such as the Yemeni Jews, homosexuals, and those who have converted from Islam to another faith (Ben-David 2009). A large number of those claiming persecution are genuine, but as pointed out before, the claim on asylum is often abused. People often report doubtful stories, professing to be homosexuals or converts, but are not often turned away by countries like Norway (Ben-David 2009).

Although many applications for residence, either through marriage, family reunification, or asylum, are approved in EU countries every year, many are denied. Despite these denials, however, many applicants continue to stay in Europe after their initial rejection. The reasons for this are manifold; oftentimes, the way the European court systems are structured allows for multiple appeals and reviews after the initial decision (Ben-David 2009). Further, circumstances seen as inhumane by Europeans in the applicant’s home country, such as death sentences, or the home country’s refusal to readmit its citizens, frequently prevent deportation. Those who don’t appeal and delay sometimes simply disappear and live in the country as illegal immigrants (Ben-David 2009).

After the entrance of many Eastern European countries into the EU, including Poland, in 2004, many governments greatly underestimated the number of new migrants they’d receive as a result of the relaxed travel restrictions. The British government projected the entrance of approximately 15,000 immigrants annually, but what actually happened was several times that number—the British government approved over 430,000 residence applications in a two-year period (Ben-David 2009). While this number may seem large, it does not even include those immigrants who, being self-employed, were able to resettle without requesting a work permit.

Now, community members often pave the way for their compatriots in a new country, consequently changing the immigration dynamic. The more people emigrate from a certain village or town, it becomes increasingly likely that their children or neighbors will follow. This results in neighbors effectively being transported directly from the home country to the new host country (Ben-David 2009). Also in consequence, several generations of people in Third World towns and villages grow up with the knowledge that, at some point in the future, they are likely to emigrate by either marrying a cousin or other common means (Ben-David 2009).

Not only are whole villages and towns now emigrating, but those emigrants are bringing their cultures with them. Whereas past immigrants had few alternatives but to assimilate into their adoptive cultures, today’s technological advances allow them to retain their native identities while shunning the national identity of their host country. Intricate telephone systems and the internet allow individuals to stay in constant contact with their home countries and satellite technology allows foreign channels to be beamed directly to residences in foreign lands (Ben-David 2009).

Whereas journeys to new countries might have taken weeks or months, European airlines now offer flights directly to Asia and the Middle East. This allows people, including the nearly 32 million foreigners coming from traditionally Muslim regions, who have left to return to their home countries often, frequently allowing émigrés to set up two residences, splitting time between the homeland and his new country (Ben-David 2009). These sojourns constantly remind their compatriots of the wealth that immigration has to offer. When in conjunction with being perpetually in touch with the home country and culture, there are numerous negative impacts on migration and also hinders assimilation (Ben-David 2009).

Further, immigration has morphed into a self-perpetuating entity; studies show that the longer an immigrant woman stays in Europe, the age at which she becomes a mother increases and the number of children she has decreases (Ben-David 2009). While second and third generation immigrant women adopt behavior closer to that of European women, marriage immigration encourages behavior closer to the women of her native country (Ben-David 2009). Because family reunification is the primary means of legal immigration, high levels of fertility amongst the immigrant population are almost guaranteed.

**Current Sentiment**

The politics of immigration have increasingly become associated with other issues, such as terrorism, national security, and in Western Europe particularly, with the presence of Islam as a new major religion. The long-lasting effects of the guest worker programs conjoined with a tremendous influx of Muslim immigrants has engendered in most Western European countries anti-immigration movements. These sentiments have manifested themselves in the recent electoral successes of many right-wing political parties in Western European countries with anti-immigration platforms. According to Shullo, as Europeans continue to turn away from Christianity, or religion in general, as a part of national identity, Europeans focus more and more on a shared history, language, and culture as parts of national identity. With this new emphasis on national identity, nationalistic ideals have become the lynchpin in the lives of many Europeans who have become increasingly resentful and jaded toward immigrants. As unemployment numbers remain high, the newcomers fail to assimilate, and nationalist sentiment amplifies, it is likely that these parties gain further support (Shullo).

Now I will do an analysis of two of Western Europe’s countries in which the most heated immigration debate is taking place: Germany and France.

**Germany**

While countries like Sweden and Norway are widely considered to have the most progressive and open immigration policies, Germany is now home to over seven million foreigners, more than any other European country (The Guardian 2009). As mentioned formerly, in the 1950s and 1960s West Germany experienced a period of economic prosperity that was referred to as the Wirtschaftswunder, or economic miracle. To supply workers the West German government signed bilateral agreements first with Italy in 1955, then with Greece in 1960, Turkey in 1961, Morocco in 1963, Portugal in 1964, Tunisia in 1965, and finally with Yugoslavia in 1968 (Ungureanu 2010). The new Gastarbeiters were meant to work in the industrial sectors at jobs that required little education or skill. Ideally the workers would reside within Germany for one to two years and then return to their homelands with their newly acquired skills. Although the children of these guest workers were granted the right to reside within the country, many never left and still live in Germany, picking up German citizenship along the way. (Ungureanu 2010)

In my mind’s eye it is difficult to conceptualize a Germany that was separated into East and West, but much like their economies the immigration pools between the two countries during this time of economic upswing was distinctly different. Whereas West Germany recruited from largely within Europe, the GDR recruited from countries such as Vietnam, Cuba, North Korea, Mozambique, and Angola. After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the two German republics unified, the population of guest workers remaining in the former GDR faced premature discontinuation of residence and work permits, deportation, and open discrimination in the workplace.

Approximately two-thirds of Germany’s foreign population was born in Germany. This large foreign population is generally thought to consist of four migrant groups: the labor migrants who were recruited from the 1950s to the mid-1970s; asylum seekers; ethnic Germans who can prove they are of German origin and today tend to migrate from the former USSR (Germany has received about 1.8 million ethnic Germans in the last decade); and “continent refugees” who are refugees granted a permanent staying permit because of various international treaties (Hegen 2001). As of 2007, approximately 62% of immigrants living in Germany were of European descent. The breakdown of immigrant demographics within Germany is as follows: Turkish (14.2% of all immigrants), Russian (9.4%), Polish (6.9%), and Italian (4.2%). (Ungureanu 2010)

**Turks in Germany**

The largest number or German immigrants being of Turkish descent, I believe their role in German society deserves particular attention. As of 2010, an estimated 3.5 million people of Turkish origin were believed to be living in Germany (Ungureanu 2010). They overwhelmingly live in urban centers, with the majority finding it preferable to live in large cities, Stuttgart, Munich, and Cologne included, in the West (Ungureanu 2010).

At the same time Germany was experiencing its shortages in labor, Turkey was experiencing tremendous unemployment. These two things being the case, Germany and Turkey soon began what was viewed by both as a mutually beneficial relationship (Ungureanu 2010). Not everyone was in favor of the agreements, however. Theodor Blank, Secretary of State for Employment at the time, was openly opposed to the agreements, claiming that the cultural gap between the Germans and Turks was insurmountable and that Germany had enough unemployed workers, particularly in its poorer regions, to fill the available positions (Ungureanu 2010). The United States, who wanted a stable Turkey, pressured Germany politically and soon afterwards, by 1961, an agreement between the two countries was reached. Further pressure from German companies between 1962 and 1963 removed the two-year limit on the time the Gastarbeiters were allowed to stay in West Germany. The 1961 recruitment treaties listed Germany as the primary host country for the guest workers, and by 1973 approximately 80% of the Turks living in Western Europe resided in Germany, decreasing to 70% by 1990 (Ungureanu 2010).

Before entering the country, most Turks were under the impression that they were granted only temporary residence and that would eventually return to Turkey to work and build new lives with their newfound wealth. During and after the recession of 1966-67, and again during the oil crisis of 1973, the number of Turks leaving Germany increased significantly while the overall numbers of immigrants in Europe decreased (Ungureanu 2010). When mass unemployment hit Germany in the early 1980s, the government tried to encourage Turkish emigration back to Turkey by giving monetary incentives, but these incentives did very little in reducing the overall Turkish population in Germany overall (Ungureanu 2010).

Even as many Turks were leaving Germany, several who decided to stay were using family reunification as a means of bringing others over. Between 1974-1988, the number of Turks in Germany nearly doubled (Ungureanu 2010). Although recruitment had been discontinued during the recessions, throughout the 70s labor shortages continued in the low-paying, low-status services and industries so that by 1976, as the single men who had lived in the immigrant worker hostiles and dormitories brought over wives and other family members continued to be granted work permits, 27% of Turks in Western Germany were women (Ungureanu 2010).

### Fall of the Berlin Wall

As Germany attempted to reunify itself in 1989, a debate arose around what its national identity ought to be, future citizenship requirements, and what the role of immigrants was to be in all of this (The Economist 2007). The debate became host to various expressions of xenophobia, especially in the former East Germany, and some ethnic violence that unfortunately targeted the Turkish population in particular (The Economist 2007).

In reaction to the anti-foreigner political rhetoric that arose from these debates, many liberal Germans threw their support behind the immigrant populations, calling for a multicultural society. Today, many of the second-generation Turks are opting for German citizenship and have become more involved in the political process than their parents had been (The Economist 2007).

**Integration**

Because Turks were only meant to be temporary residents, no structures or programs were implemented to facilitate their integration into German society, nor did the Turks work especially hard to become “German.” Turks, even second-generation Turks, are still perceived to be the “most foreign” group in Germany, largely because the Turkish religion and culture is seen as totally apart from the German culture. Despite their long-term residency, many Turks continue to face discrimination and the label of “Auslander.” (The Economist 2007)

**German Immigration Policy**

Before the 1990s, Germany operated under a jus sanguinis citizenship system, meaning that only those with a German blood connection were entitled to German citizenship. In 1991 and 1999, following particularly fierce debates about the German national identity, legislation was drafted that altered the policy from jus sanguinis to jus soli, granting citizenship to people born on German soil. Further legislation was passed in 2000 that streamlined the naturalization process, although the rights of dual citizenship were granted only to the citizens of the EU and Switzerland, forcing people of other nationalities to choose which they retain.

Immigrants are able to receive citizenship through naturalization. Requirements include a minimum permanent residence of eight years, a proficiency in the German language, and the means to support oneself without dependence upon welfare. Normally, applicants are expected to have renounced their previous nationality or plan to do so upon naturalization. In the case of refugees, who may not be able to give up their citizenship easily, exceptions are often made. There are some exceptions to this rule: those who have completed an integration course may have the residence requirement reduced to seven years, refugees or stateless persons may apply after a residence of six years, and the spouse of a German citizen, after being married for at least two years, may be naturalized after only three years of residence.

**Current German Sentiment**

As with many other countries, a rise in nationalism and unemployment has led to the emergence of what is arguably the most frightening anti-immigration movement in Europe. Germany’s anti-immigration party, the German National Democratic Party, recently won 7.3% of the vote in one region of Germany, garnering more than enough votes for seats in the Bundestag (Shullo 2008). What is significant in this scenario is not that the party won seats, but that support for their cause is growing rapidly, receiving over twice as many votes as they had in the previous election, a fact German Chancellor Angela Merkel called regrettable (Shullo 2008).

A recent interview of Udo Voigt, the leader of the National Democratic Party, revealed what the party would hope to accomplish should it come into majority. What can be inferred from the interview is that, under his kind of Germany, German families and citizens would have a prominent and exclusive role in the German society and economy. While foreigners would be welcome as guests to the country, they would not be allowed to live or work within German society (Shullo 2008).

Although views like that of Voigt are considered by the larger population to be extreme, the German people do seem to want their politicians to be taking a firmer stance on the issue. Even as the German economy grows faster than its neighbors, unemployment remains high. The debate heated up again when Thilo Srrazin, a senior official at Germany’s central bank claimed that Muslims far outstrip all other immigrant groups in the strength of its connections and claims on the welfare state and crime (BBC World News 2010). Srrazin went further by saying, "A large number of Arabs and Turks have no productive function other than in the fruit and vegetable trade." (BBC World News 2010)

After being accused of being too moderate for her conservative party, Angela Merkel declared at an October 2010 Christian Democratic Union rally that the multicultural concept that had been adopted in the 1990s had failed. Rather than hoping all the nation’s integration problems will be solved by living side-by-side, immigrants need to do more to integrate into the German society, in particular learn German, Merkel claimed (BBC World News 2010). These statements come at a time when, according to the BBC, a recent survey conducted within the country revealed that up to 30% of those surveyed believed the country to be “overrun by foreigners.” This same survey also showed that over 25% of those polled believed that the primary reason Germany’s 16 million residents came to the country are to exploit its social benefits (BBC World News 2010).

Despite these rather pessimistic words, Chancellor Merkel was sure to point out that immigrants were in fact welcome in the country, saying "We should not be a country either which gives the impression to the outside world that those who don't speak German immediately or who were not raised speaking German are not welcome here." (BBC World News 2010) Politicians are increasingly being pressured to take a stance that requires immigrants, particularly those of Turkish and Arab descent, to adapt to German society. The German President, Horst Seehofer, took special care to encourage integration of Germany’s over 2 million Turkish immigrants. He admitted that differences in culture made integration more difficult, saying, immigrants from different cultures like Turkey and Arab countries, all in all, find it harder" to integrate, but that this alone should not deter the country from its assimilation efforts (BBC World News 2010).

All of that, some might say, is simply politicians being political. The numbers cited above are simply minority views. In a BBC article, author Stephen Evans speculates that, while the numbers suggest it is merely a fringe view, it is an outlook that is continuing to seep into the mainstream, which is where the core of voters resides (Evans 2010). According to Evans, the image of a country being taken over by an alien culture is one being put forward by the nation’s populist media outlets. Europe’s most popular newspaper, the Bild, has written of the “insanity” of multiculturalism and has splashed its front page with pictures of a block of apartments where a stipulation for renting is that tenants conform to Sharia law (Evans 2010).

Opinion polls cited by Evans show that approximately 55% of those polled view Muslims as a burden on the economy (Evans 2010). How are these opinions formed? Evans speculates that it may have a great deal to do with how the Muslims were invited to the country, which was to work and not to stay. Despite the limitations on residence being removed from the agreements at the insistence of German employers, the impression remains that Turks were in Germany on sufferance, not as long-term residents (Evans 2010). Politicians like Merkel seem to recognize this and acknowledge for the public’s sake that multiculturalism has not worked. She is sly in adding the caveat that, although it has not worked, it needs to, and the first step towards improvement is learning the language (Evans 2010).

**France**

According the Guardian’s 2009 numbers, France is currently home to over 3.74 million foreigners, or 5.8% of its population (The Guardian 2009). The French statistical institution, the INSEE, claims that as of 1999 approximately 6.7 million of France’s citizens have foreign origins—President Nicolas Sakozy being among them (Le Gouvernement Francais 2010). Most of France’s immigrant population is of European descent, coming from countries such as Portugal, Spain, Italy, Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Poland, and the former Yugoslavia. It does, however, have a sizable population of Berbers, Arabs, and Sub-Saharan Africans from its former colonies (Le Gouvernement Francais 2010). It should be noted, however, that because France does not keep official statistics on race or ethnicity regarding its population, very few official studies have been conducted.

As with the other case studies, the first major wave of immigration to France came with the employment of the guest worker programs. The greatest number of these originated from Portugal and North Africa, with many arriving from Algeria and the Maghreb region (Shullo 2008). Many of the immigrants who entered the country in the 1950s and 1960s came as a result of the decline of the French Empire and needed little time to adjust to French society as they were already culturally French (Shullo 2008).

Due to an economic recession in the late 1970s, immigration policies were tightened in order to protect the domestic labor force. The Pasqua Laws, passed in 1986 and 1993 were a part of these measures. Marking a significant shift in France’s immigration policy, the laws gave the police power to perform random identity checks and to deport immigrants not possessing the proper paperwork. Anti-immigration sentiments were reinforced by the 1986 terrorist attacks in Paris that were later contributed to Muslim immigrants (Shullo 2008). Also during this time, immigration into the country was restricted only to family reunification or those seeking asylum. As French immigration policy became more rigid, illegal immigration increased significantly. The French Ministry of the Interior estimated in 2006 that between 80,000-100,000 people enter France illegally each year (Shullo 2008).

Continued from the 1970s into the 1990s were France’s efforts to minimize the number of migrants entering their country. After the enactment of the Pasqua laws, anti-immigration sentiments started to manifest themselves in the public. France is currently experiencing less economic prosperity than its European neighbors and consequently has struggled with relatively high unemployment for the past two decades. As in Germany, unemployment rates among immigrants tend to be much higher than for the national population; in 2008 the immigrant unemployment rate in France was twice the national population at a startling 13% (Shullo 2008). In the case of immigrants, length of education can be directly linked to unemployment, with unemployment rates decreasing as a person’s education becomes more advanced (Shullo 2008).

While France has reported an overall lower rate of immigration from the EU since 1975, it has seen an increase in the number of African immigrants. After the induction of several Eastern European countries to the European Union in 2004, many countries such as the UK, Ireland, and Sweden did not impose restrictions on the number of newly-minted EU residents coming into their countries (Shullo 2008). France, however, sought to further curb immigration and put strict limitations on Eastern European migration.

**Islam in France**

The large waves of people arriving in France from Islamic countries has created quite the uproar. The November 2005 riots in Parisian suburbs highlighted the problems that have been an institutional part of French society (Shullo 2008). Although the French are willing to place the blame on the inability of the Muslim community members to integrate and assimilate, there is irrefutable evidence that within these suburbs, many immigrants live apart from society in subpar conditions with very few opportunities to better their own positions (Shullo 2008). The schooling immigrant children receive in these suburbs is often far below what is received by the white French in the city centers. High unemployment rates that seem to be an everyday part of the life of an immigrant finally sparked social unrest not only in the Paris riots of 2005 but again in March of 2009 (Shullo 2008).

**French Immigration Policy**

Following his appointment as president, one of Nicolas Sakrozy’s first acts as president was to create the French Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity, and Co-Development (Le Gouvernement Francais 2010). The Ministry has been charged with implementing a four-pronged policy; it must regulate migratory flows in and out of France, facilitate the integration of immigrants and promote a French identity, honor the French tradition of welcoming those seeking political asylum, and foster solidarity within the immigrant population (the co-development portion) (Le Gouvernement Francais 2010).

France under Sarkozy operates under an immigration law based upon the notion of “chosen immigration.” According to this principle, immigrants may work in select employment sectors. They are oftentimes restricted to industries requiring little education or skill and that promise few opportunities for advancement such as the hotel, restaurant, construction, and seasonable employment industries (Le Gouvernement Francais 2010). Sarkozy later added the stipulation that a worker must have sufficient skills in the French language before being granted a visa. France has made concerted efforts to stem other types of immigration, especially that of family reunification (Le Gouvernement Francais 2010). Most notably, France, along with several other EU countries, has still not signed their agreement to the United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families from 1990, which, in recognition of their human rights, aims to protect the rights of all migrant workers (Shullo 2008).

### Analysis

### Both France and Germany are at very interesting places socially, economically, and politically. Both are facing an aging workforce that is nearing retirement age, retracting economies, and increased numbers of immigrants. The French and German populations are reluctant to allow more immigrants into their societies not only because of the burdens they are perceived to put on the social welfare system, but also because their cultures are often seen as alien and impinging upon the culture of the host country. Europeans claim to be egalitarian and liberal-minded, but in reality there remains a very definite strain of racism.

The immigration policies of both countries are largely ineffective. The French, who have always valued their French-ness, cling to this factor and are wary to let anyone else in. They clutch their untainted culture tightly and are not ashamed of it. This xenophobia sometimes creates controversy within the international community, but the French are unapologetic and at the very least cannot be accused of having nebulous or arbitrary immigration policies. Rather than stemming the flow of immigrants into their country, however, the French’s strict policies simply force the migrants into subversion rather than resolving the issue.

The German situation is, I believe, more complex. Following World War II and the tragedy that was the Holocaust, the German people were judged by the international community to be a racist, murderous people who sought to kill anyone who did not sound or look like them. Ever since Germany has been on a quest to invalidate those perceptions, seeking to be the most fair, the most accepting and tolerant country in the European Union. In seeking to be partial to none, the Germans have left themselves with an arbitrary immigration policy and no clear means of fixing the problem. Rather than acknowledging the country’s history and the sentiment present in the country, politicians and diplomats have sought to stifle anything that could be viewed as ethnocentric. Only now, with anti-immigration sentiments really coming to the forefront of domestic discussion, do we see politicians really take a firm stance on the subject. Until the German government is able to step back and truly evaluate their current situation, the immigration issue in Germany will remain unresolved.

**Solutions**

Many methods, ranging from monetary and economic incentives to scaring prospective immigrants from leaving their home countries, have been utilized to try to fix the problem, all with little success. Even attempts to improve the living conditions of potential migrants by means of foreign aid and welfare have failed (Ben-David 2009). Taking all of these facts into consideration, how does one hope to make any positive change?

In order to reach a conclusion, several factors must be taken into consideration. Ignorance on the part of both migrants and the new host countries continues to be a major contributor to immigration. Studies show that adults and children who have grown up in emigration towns, or a town in which most of the residents already have or plan to emigrate in the future, are largely unaware of the basic facts of European life (Ben-David 2009). They are knowledgeable of the high unemployment benefits and the extensive social welfare system, but are ignorant of the higher cost of living (Ben-David 2009). The circumstances are only abetted by the collecting of remittances and the perceived wealth that emigrants accrue in their host countries.

Attempts on the part of EU countries to stifle immigration have failed largely because the governments are unable to understand the full implications of their policies or programs. In 1977 and again in 2005, France attempted to convince immigrants to vacate their new homes by offering monetary and economic incentives (Ben-David 2009). Unfortunately for France, its plans for departure backfired. Not only were the programs costly, but the incentives convinced those in the home countries that Europe was flush with cash and ripe to be exploited. Additionally, the incentives actually encouraged migration for the purpose of collecting the available benefits (Ben-David 2009).

**Potential Approaches to Success**

Since no methods have thus far been successful, I would like to propose three steps that might be taken in order to facilitate the creation of an effective and lasting immigration policy in the EU. The first of these is to educate prospective migrants on the European lifestyle before they leave their home country. Because children and adults from emigrant towns often grow up seeing their relatives who have emigrated return to visit with fancy cars and enough money to build vacation homes, they frequently operate under the erroneous impression that living exclusively off of social welfare benefits will be enough to sustain them. Factors such as high unemployment rates, difficulties with assimilating, and a higher cost of living are regularly overlooked by those planning to move. Were the prospective emigrants properly educated about the realities of living in Europe, issues surrounding the matter might be minimized.

Home countries taking an active role in the discouragement of emigration would also be effective. Several countries that experience high rates of emigration are beginning to realize that the positive short-term benefits from remittances are far outweighed by the negative long-term effects of a prolonged “brain drain.” In creating real and lasting reasons for citizens to stay in a country, particularly the educated individuals, the country is actually giving itself a better shot in global competition and stability. Some countries have taken an alternate approach to insuring the continued residence of its citizens. For example, in order to stem emigration, Algeria’s Ministry of Religious Affairs recently issued a *fatwa*, or religious edict, declaring that illegal immigrants who die at sea have committed suicide, which is a major sin in Islam (Ben-David 2009).

Lastly, I recommend that the EU, and its member states, tighten and regulate its immigration laws. Sweden, who was long the favorite European destination for Iraqi asylum seekers, saw immigration claims drop drastically after tightening its laws whereas its neighbor Norway saw an increase in asylum claims during that same time period (Ben-David 2009). Likewise, immigration laws specifically targeted at family reunification in both Denmark and the Netherlands saw marriage immigration rates drop drastically, from 60 to 38 percent in Denmark during the years 2001-2005 and from 56 to 27 percent for Dutch Turks in 2001-2006 (Ben-David 2009). Tougher and more consistent laws have been the only dependable way to reduce the number of illegal aliens to enter a country, so it seems likely that when joined with increased education and efforts by home countries some real progress might be made on the matter.

**Conclusion**

As I researched this topic I found myself more and more drawn to the subject of the immigration of Muslims into Europe and the reaction of the “native” Europeans. Because we live in a post-9/11 world, information on the subject was plentiful and the matter soon became a sub-category and major focus of my paper. While there was much to be read about what the white Europeans had to say about the issue, very little could be found about the views of the immigrants themselves. I wanted to know how they reacted upon their first arrival, how they assimilated, and how they reconciled their dual cultural identities, but I was not very successful. Should anyone perform research on the topic of immigration, and I am positive some will be done, the life and socialization of immigrants from the migrant’s point of view would be a good place to start.

# Works Cited

"BBC World News." *Merkel Says German Multicultural Society Has Failed.* October 17, 2010. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11559451 (accessed October 15, 2010).

Ben-David, Esther. "Europe's Shifting Immigration Dynamic." *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2009: 15-24.

Cohen, Roger. "Globalist: On French immigrants, the words left unsaid." *New York Times.* November 11, 2005. http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/11/world/europe/11iht-web.1111globalist.html?\_r=1 (accessed November 14, 2010).

Evans, Stephen. "Germany's Charged Immigration Debate." *BBC World News.* October 17, 2010. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11532699 (accessed October 30, 2010).

Francais, Le Gouvernement. *le Ministere de L'interieur, d'loutre-mer, des collectivites territoriales et de l'immigration.* 2010. http://immigration.gouv.fr/ (accessed December 5, 2010).

Shullo, Christin. "The Rise of Western European Ant-Immigration Movements and What it Means for the Future." *Associated Content.* 2008. http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/700449/the\_rise\_of\_western\_european\_antiimmigration.html (accessed November 14, 2010).

The Economist. "The Trouble With Migrants." *The Economist.* November 22, 2007. http;//www.economist.com/node/10193441/print (accessed November 14, 2010).

The Guardian. *Immigration to Europe: How Many Foreign Citizens Live in Each Country?* 2009. http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2010/sep/07/immigration (accessed November 14, 2010).

Ungureanu, Cristina. *The European Institute.* 2010. http://www.europeaninstitute.org/October-2010/merkel-stokes-immigration-debate-in-germany.html (accessed November 14, 2010).