

MIGRATION WITHOUT INTEGRATION? POLISH SEASONAL LABOUR MIGRANTS IN TODAY'S GERMANY

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Wanderungen ohne Integrierung? Saisonbedingte polnische Arbeitswanderer in dem heutigen Deutschland. Seit 1989 sind die Einwanderungssysteme in Europa in einer Übergangsphase. Das Merkmal, das am meisten auffällt, ist die neue Ost-West Wanderung aus den Transformationsländern, die sehr häufig eine zeitweilige Arbeitswanderung ist. Die Migration der polnischen Saisonarbeiter nach Deutschland macht einen großen Anteil dieser Wanderung aus. Die neuen Einwanderer sind schlechteren Stellungen ausgesetzt, ohne eine Eingliederung in das Sozialversicherungssystem oder andere Bestandteile eines Wohlfahrtsstaates. Diese Arbeit setzt sich mit der sich ändernden institutionellen Ordnung auseinander, die die Wanderungs- und Integrierungsvorgänge regelt.

LABOUR MIGRATION AS TEMPORARY MIGRATION

Between 2004 and 2007 a number of countries in Central and Eastern Europe joined the European Union (EU). The run-up to the EU enlargement was almost entirely characterised by discussions about equality between the employees of new member countries and the employees of the old EU countries. In the end, it was left to the individual states to fix certain periods of interim regulations before the complete freedom of movement for employees is permitted.

In Germany, one can identify at least two contrary opinions within this debate. On the one hand, there is a culturalist position that wants to protect Germany from an “immigration flood” and from “cultural foreign infiltration”. On the other hand, there is the perspective applying more economic arguments to plead for more immigration due to some gaps within certain segments of the labour market.

This discussion has largely ignored a special development since the beginning of the 1990s that fulfils the conditions of both opinions: temporary labour migration. This kind of labour migration can satisfy the labour demand of some segments of the labour market and, at the same time, it can avoid problems of integration and other similar problems.

Polish seasonal workers stay in Germany for no longer than three months, concentrated in a few agricultural sectors, and after this period they return to their home country. Working in Germany, they occupy those segments of the labour market that are not attractive to the local labour force and do not obtain rights of residence and labour for longer than this period. So, one can observe the formation of a typical temporary labour migration system.

However, temporary labour migration is neither a new phenomenon nor one that has only recently been studied by social sciences during the last few years. Max Weber and Karl Kaerger already drew attention to this special form of migration from the East to the West in their well-known studies published at the end of the nineteenth century (Kaerger 1890; Weber 1892). Furthermore, a number of new publications refer to the fact that the social history of Germany is closely connected with temporary migration from Poland (Bade 1983; Herbert 1986).

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Nevertheless, the phenomenon of temporary labour migration is rarely studied in German migration research literature, perhaps for two reasons: firstly, the end of the guest worker recruitment system in 1973 halted attempts to build a circular migration system; secondly, from the 1970s on, migration research on Germany developed into a kind of social-technological integration research. Migration was mainly perceived as a single-direction movement from point A to point B with the consequence of permanent resettlement, integration and assimilation. It is only since the 1990s that the political changes in central and Eastern Europe have made temporary labour migration a central subject of migration research.

One can observe that due to the new developments in migration processes, the theoretical perspectives of migration research have also changed. At the same time the different kinds of integration concepts that had dominated migration policy for many years has weakened. Before this change, the terms “integration”, “assimilation”, “marginality”, “disadvantaging” and “discrimination” were typical in migration research. Now, migration research is dominated by terms like “ethnicity”, “transnationality” and “migration networks”.

With the formation of the “new migration”, migration research now poses the question of whether state, institutional and cultural requirements and expectations concerning any kind of assimilation and integration can still exist within a pluralised and globalised world. Because of the creation and multiplication of new forms of migration, with the development of ethnic communities and transnational migration networks, it is necessary to abandon the old, static and one-sided migration research perspectives (Massey 1998; Portes 1999; Pries 2001; Miera 1997, 2001).

This article intends to contribute to this debate, less with regard to the theoretical content of new and old perspectives, than to the empirical formation of a new kind of international labour migration. Temporary labour migration is understood as a specific kind of migration structured by institutional arrangements and mainly based on labour demand. The recruitment of labour is initiated by the employing enterprises and is regulated by the relevant states through industrial law and the right of residence (OECD 1998; Cyrus 2001a, 2001b).

WHO ARE THEY? SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL STATISTICS

The starting point of our empirical considerations is a settlement in northern Germany, one that is little known to either the general public in northern Germany nor geographers.

The name of this settlement is Warnsdorf. It is a quiet, predominantly agricultural village with about 400 inhabitants and is situated within the county of Ostholstein near the old Baltic port city of Lübeck. Very few tourists ever come to Warnsdorf as the nearby traditional seaside resorts of Niendorf and Travemünde attract most of the visitors to the area. However, once a year the number of inhabitants triple – in June and July as a rule – when strawberries are picked. At that time, about 800 labourers come from Poland in order to pick the ripe fruit from sunrise to sunset and to load it onto trucks to be traded.

How can this group of Polish pickers and seasonal labour migrants be described? Official statistics cannot be used to find an answer, as they do not exist. Since 1995 the Federal Republic of Germany’s Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs has carried out representative surveys regarding the situation of the foreign labour force and their families in Germany. Although these surveys cover Polish seasonal labourers, their sample is so small (less than 100) that it cannot be regarded as representative. We carried out our own survey, although it is also small and, therefore, not representative in many respects. However, it consists of interviews with 240 Polish seasonal labour migrants. We will, first of all, describe this group with some data and then address the question of how the seasonal workers get their jobs and what their motives for migrating are.

The following statistics are based on a survey of Polish seasonal workers in Warnsdorf in June 2002. The survey was carried out using a standardised questionnaire which was distributed to Polish seasonal workers. Its language was Polish, and it contained 25 questions which concerned the

following subjects: statistical data of the social structure of the interviewees, education and occupational status, reasons for the seasonal work in Germany, job orientated plans, and the embeddedness in migration networks.

During the harvest season of 2002 all 777 Polish seasonal workers at a large agricultural enterprise were asked to complete questionnaires. 240 answered questionnaires could be utilised for the evaluation. There was no indication of a systematic bias of the values of the sample compared with the values of all the Polish seasonal workers at the enterprise. The values of both categories correspond with the important statistical data of the social structure, for example, age and sex.

With regard to the statistical data:

Table 1

Age and sex of the Polish seasonal labour migrants in Warnsdorf (Ostholstein) in 2002

Age-group	Sex				Total	
	female		male		absolute number	%
	absolute number	per cent	absolute number	%		
<25	14	8.8	6	7.8	20	16.6
25–34	45	28.1	22	28.6	67	56.7
35–44	59	36.9	29	37.6	88	74.5
45–54	37	23.1	18	23.4	55	46.5
55–64	5	3.1	2	2.6	7	5.7
Total	160	100.0	77	100.0	237	100.0
Survey:	Jörg Becker 2002					

Many authors argue that the new migration is a female one (Hess 2001; Newcombe 2004) and this evaluation is correct with regard to the example of Warnsdorf. More than two thirds (67.5 percent) of the seasonal workers at the enterprise studied are women. One can accept this fact as an empirical piece of evidence for the above mentioned thesis, but this excludes others factors from consideration. The actual reason for the large share of female workers is the fact that the entrepreneur prefers female workers for the harvest season. He thinks that women are better suited to picking strawberries because they are faster and more circumspect, and make fewer mistakes than their male colleagues. So, men work mainly at preparing the harvest, controlling the picked quantities of strawberries, and packing and transporting them.

The age distribution of both sexes is rather similar. Nearly 90 percent of the interviewees fall under the age group between 25 and 54 years. The age group, from 35 to 44, makes up the largest for both females and males.

Table 2

Marital status of the Polish seasonal labour migrants in Warnsdorf (Ostholstein) in 2002

Marital status	absolute number	%
married	197	82.4
single	22	9.2
divorced	7	2.9
cohabitation	1	0.4
widowed	8	3.3
permanently separated	4	1.7
Total	239	100.0
Survey:	Jörg Becker 2002	

Conventional wisdom holds that unmarried persons are more mobile than married. This is not the case with regard to temporary labour migration from Poland to Germany. On the contrary, it seems

as if marital status is a requirement for this specific kind of labour mobility. Only 22 persons, about 9 percent, declare themselves to be single.

Table 3

Size of the home locality of the Polish seasonal migrants in Warnsdorf (Ostholstein) in 2002

Size	absolute number	%
< 2,000 inh.	156	65.0
2,001–5,000 inh.	21	8.8
5,001–7,000 inh.	6	2.5
7,001–10,000 inh.	8	3.3
10,001–20,000 inh.	21	8.8
20,001–50,000 inh.	11	4.6
50,001–100,000 inh.	7	2.9
100,001–200,000 inh.	5	2.1
> 200,000 inh.	2	0.8
Total	240	100.0
Survey:	Jörg Becker 2002	

The overwhelming majority of the Polish seasonal workers at Warnsdorf reside in rural Poland. 80 percent of the interviewees live in settlements with less than 10,000 inhabitants and 65 percent live in villages with less than 2,000 inhabitants.

It seems that the large proportion of rural residents among the seasonal workers corresponds to the specific recruitment wishes of the German entrepreneur. He thinks that the inhabitants of rural Poland have a greater affinity to agriculture and horticulture, and so he prefers to take on rural people. Therefore, the proportion of people from middle-sized and large cities is very small.

Table 4

Monthly net income of the Polish seasonal migrants in Warnsdorf (Ostholstein) in Poland (2002)

Monthly net income in Poland	absolute number	%
< 400 zł	67	27.9
401–800zł	46	19.2
801–1,200zł	40	16.7
1,201–1,600zł	11	4.6
1,601–2,000 zł	6	2.5
2,001–2,400zł	2	0.8
2,401–2,800 zł	1	0.4
no answer	67	27.9
Total	239	100.0
Survey:	Jörg Becker 2002	

In the discussion about the new migration it is often argued that the one-sided explanations of the old migration theories are insufficient and unable to explain the new phenomena. One of these inadequate attempts is to use the difference between the salaries in the region of origin and the region of destination to explain migration. But it seems that the example of Warnsdorf confirms this assumption. If one does not consider the 67 refusals to answer this question, the monthly income of 98 percent of the interviewees is less than 2,000 zł (€420). This sum represents the Polish income average. Nearly 40 percent of the interviewees have a monthly income of less than 400 zł (€85). During the harvest season of 2002 in Warnsdorf the average salary of the seasonal workers amounted to about €1,000. So, it is evident that the different wage levels are very important with regard to the motivation to temporarily migrate.

Table 5

Domestic occupational status in Poland of the Polish seasonal migrants in Warnsdorf (Ostholstein) in 2002

Position	absolute number	%
unqualified worker	14	5.8
semi-skilled worker	6	2.5
skilled worker	27	11.3
foreman, forewoman	5	2.1
master	4	1.7
salaried employee	21	8.8
self employed person	14	5.8
civil servant	7	2.9
schoolboy/schoolgirl/student	10	4.2
housewife/househus band	85	35.4
pensioner	18	7.5
not working	23	9.6
no answer	6	2.5
Total	240	100.0
Survey:	Jörg Becker 2002	

The occupational status or the unemployment of the seasonal workers corresponds to their low income. About 35 percent of the interviewees declared themselves to be housewives or househusbands, and nearly 10 percent described themselves as not working. If one adds the pensioners, schoolboys, schoolgirls and students to these two groups, then nearly 57 percent of the seasonal migrants are not working in Poland.

Table 6

Level of education of the Polish seasonal migrants in Warnsdorf (Ostholstein) in 2002

Highest level of education	absolute number	%
elementary school	36	15.0
elementary vocational school (skilled worker)	89	37.1
technical college (high skilled worker)	74	30.8
high school	13	5.4
special school (after high school)	13	5.4
college/university	12	5.0
no answer	3	1.3
Total	240	100.0
Survey:	Jörg Becker 2002	

In general the interviewees have a good education. 15 percent had completed the eight years of Polish elementary school; 37 percent attended an elementary vocational school and attained the level of a skilled worker; 31 percent graduated from technical college and reached the level of a high-skilled worker; 5 percent hold a university degree.

At the beginning of the German-Polish agreement on seasonal workers in the early 1990s, a large proportion of the harvest workers had been educated at university. But ten years later, the lower level of educational attainment of the seasonal workers reflects the economic development in Poland, where the income situation and the opportunities to earn money have improved for the very well educated and qualified section of the population. On the other hand, people with an average level of education are increasingly dependent on sources of income outside of Poland.

This completes the basic data on the social structure characterising the Polish seasonal migrants in Warnsdorf. Now, we would like to present some statistical data which describe the migration of the Polish seasonal workers to Germany. The first question that arose was "How did the Polish seasonal migrants find their job in Warnsdorf?"

Table 7

How did the Polish seasonal migrants find their job in Warnsdorf (Ostholstein)?

Finding of the job	absolute number	%
by support of friends in Germany	23	9.6
private employment agency	11	4.6
by support of friends in Poland	175	72.9
own contact to the employer (strawberry farm)	26	10.8
no answer	5	2.1
Total	240	100.0
Survey:	Jörg Becker 2002	

It is conspicuous that none of the interviewees said he found his job with the aid of an official institution such as, for example, a job centre. The overwhelming majority of the migrants, 72.9 percent, found their job through the support of friends in Poland. About 10 percent were informed by friends in Germany about the job opportunity in Warnsdorf, and another 10 percent found the job by contacting the employer directly. Private employment agencies only play a minor role.

Table 8

Relations of the Polish seasonal migrants to the person/institution who/which arranged the employment or who/which helped to find the job in Warnsdorf (Ostholstein)

Relations	absolute number	%
no answer	33	13.8
husband, wife, live-in partner	19	7.9
dose relative	77	32.2
good friend	20	8.4
friend	12	5.0
acquaintance	65	27.2
no relations	13	5.4
Total	239	100.0
Survey:	Jörg Becker 2002	

When one looks more carefully at this question and asks what the relationships of the Polish seasonal migrants are to the persons who helped them find the job, then one sees that there are both close and casual relationships. On the one hand, nearly half of all the interviewees found their job with the help of husbands, wives, life partners, close relatives and good friends, and on the other hand, about one third found their job with the help of casual friends and acquaintances, and about 5 percent used no such relationships at all.

Table 9

Primary reasons of the Polish seasonal migrants for labour migration to Warnsdorf (Ostholstein) in 2002

Primary reason	absolute number	%
unemployment in Poland	78	32.5
no perspectives to find a job in Poland	24	10.0
increase of the household income	188	78.3
holiday job	17	7.0
opportunity arranged by friends etc.	40	16.6
other immediate causes	14	5.8
Total of the interviewees	240	100.0
(*) multiple answers		
Survey:	Jörg Becker 2002	

It seems that the “strength of weak ties” thesis (Granovetter 1974, 1977) concerning the procedure of arranging employment can no longer be regarded as correct. Whereas Granovetter favours acquaintances as persons who help to find a job, the interviewees use their direct personal environment. They do not mention acquaintances as providing the main opportunities for finding a job, but rather close relatives and good friends. They use personal, private networks to achieve temporary migration.

The Polish seasonal workers in Warnsdorf were asked about their reasons for working in Germany by means of the following question: “There are different reasons for Polish citizens to migrate as seasonal workers to Germany. Can you answer the question, which of the following reasons apply to you?”

The primary reason given for their stay in Warnsdorf was, first of all, the opportunity to increase the household income. Second was unemployment in Poland, and the third reason (16.6 percent of the interviewees) was the opportunity offered by friends to go to Germany in order to work.

Table 10

Motivation of the Polish seasonal migrants in Warnsdorf (Ostholstein)
to take a job in Germany in 2002

Motivation	absolute number (*)	%
interest in the job	13	5.4
to become acquainted with new skills	9	3.8
continuation of one's professional education	5	2.1
to earn money	219	91.3
to become acquainted with the market economy	6	2.5
to win knowledge	6	2.5
to get to know the country and its inhabitants	52	21.7
to advance in Poland	2	0.8
Total of the interviewees	240	100.0
(*) multiple answers		
Survey:	Jörg Becker 2002	

With regard to that answer, the motive “to earn money” plays by far the most important role in seeking a job in Germany. But it is worth mentioning that 52 migrants indicated an aspiration to get to know the country and its inhabitants in combination with their job.

One can summarise the typical Polish harvester in Germany as follows:

The seasonal labourer is female, married, between 35 and 44 years of age, comes from a village with less than 2,000 inhabitants, and has a monthly income of below 800 zł. She is a housewife or unemployed, and she attended an elementary vocational school or a technical college. She found her job in Germany with the support of close relatives or distant acquaintances. Her dominant motive in applying for a job in Germany was the opportunity to earn money.

These are some of the results of the empirical study conducted in Warnsdorf. We would now like to leave this concrete example and come to a more general view. First, we want to explain the political and juridical requirements for Polish seasonal labour in Germany.

POLITICAL AND JURIDICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SEASONAL LABOUR IN GERMANY

The legal basis for permission to work for foreign labour from outside the European Union is established by different laws and decrees. Foreigners from these countries always need a work permit from the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit (BA)* (Federal Labour Office). Since 1973 a foreign labour recruitment freeze has been in force – in principle. But this regulation can be handled in an increasingly flexible manner when it comes to new needs that arise within the labour market.

As the legal requirements for residence and work permits are very complicated, we would like to address them in more detail. As a rule, the granting of a work permit is refused by the local labour office if there are other persons privileged by law who want to obtain the same job. Foreigners from non-EU countries are allowed to enter Germany for the purpose of work if there is a special case, according to an official regulation which has been in force since 1991 (“*Anwerbestoppausnahmereordnung*”). This regulation allows for the granting of exceptions to the recruitment freeze for foreign workers. According to the spirit of this regulation, these exceptions concern different groups. The largest group is represented by seasonal workers.

According to the regulation, Polish seasonal workers can get a work permit for a period of three months annually. But they do not gain any more rights concerning their residency in Germany. The permission to stay legally in Germany is connected with the permission to do a certain job. After the employment period is finished the seasonal workers have to leave the country. For the first time in the history of the employment of foreigners in the Federal Republic of Germany an obligation to return has been established by this regulation. The model for this regulation is the system of state regulations concerning the employment of workers from Poland, which had already existed under the German Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The government of the Federal Republic of Germany has made arrangements for the employment of seasonal workers with several central and eastern European countries (Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovenia, and Bulgaria). These arrangements include some rules of procedure concerning the recruitment and migration of labour. The governmental agreement of December 1990 between Poland and Germany emphasises that the labour of Polish workers in Germany shall promote mutual rapprochement, the continuation of professional training and language education, as well as of interpersonal contacts (Korczyńska 2001). Apart from these reasons for labour migration, characterised by the metaphoric language of governments, one can also cite some political and economic reasons that are useful to the Polish as well as to the German side. For example, the Council of Europe points out that these arrangements would contribute to supporting the central and eastern European countries with regard to their transformation processes, and in this way help them to reach the usual social and economic standards of the market economy. In addition, the establishment of a temporary migration system would reduce the migration pressure concerning permanent migration (Council of Europe n.d.; OECD 1998).

The introduction of the regulation for granting exceptions to the foreign labour recruitment freeze in Germany legalised procedures that had already existed for years within a framework that was in part not protected by law and, therefore, precarious.

As socialist Poland also had relatively liberal conditions for emigration in comparison to other socialist countries, during the 1970s and 1980s Polish citizens had already entered the Federal Republic of Germany to work. At that time they played a particular role in agriculture and the building and construction industry. During the 1980s between 20,000 and 50,000 labour migrants stayed in West Germany each year (Spahn 1999). These numbers are estimations. Precise statistical data with regard to these periods do not exist.

The legalisation of the former illegal migration from Poland to Germany is a means of attempting to regulate the influx of labour. Obviously a continuous and important demand for this labour force exists in Germany. It was employers’ associations in agriculture and horticulture that first demanded the legalisation of the recruitment of foreign labour. They had two intentions: firstly, they wanted to make sure that a sufficient amount of labour was available; secondly, they wanted to prevent distortions to competition among the employers caused by the illegal employment of foreign workers.

The temporary labour migration provides a certain relief to the weak domestic labour market in Poland and an annual income transfer of €640 million. This corresponds to about 5 percent of the

annual amount of exports to Germany. So the size of the transfer of income is important to the national economy, because this transfer creates an important increase in spending power and economic growth in Poland. Furthermore, it is expected that the growing migration movements will accelerate the transformation process in Poland and will contribute to a faster integration of Poland into the enlarged European Union.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF POLISH SEASONAL LABOUR FOR THE LABOUR MARKET IN GERMANY

Before we come to the significance of Polish seasonal employment for the labour market in Germany we want to show the increase in the number of applications for granting work permits to Polish seasonal workers in Germany since 1991.

In 1991 the Polish-German agreement concerning seasonal workers came into force. Since that time the annual number of jobs offered to Polish seasonal workers has tripled. Whereas in 1991 the number was about 79,000, in 2002 it was more than 250,000. The reason for the increasing number is the growing demand in German agriculture for seasonal workers.

The decrease in 1994 compared with the previous year is not due to a decline in the number of employment in agriculture but only to changed statistical procedures. Up until June 1993 all economic sectors were allowed to hire seasonal workers from foreign countries. Since then this has been restricted to agriculture, forestry, hotels and catering, fruit and vegetables processing, and the trade of showmen.

About 90 to 95 percent of the applications concern agriculture. The reason for the decline in the overall number of applications in 1998 compared with the previous year is not due to a decrease in applications concerning agriculture but to a decrease in other sectors.

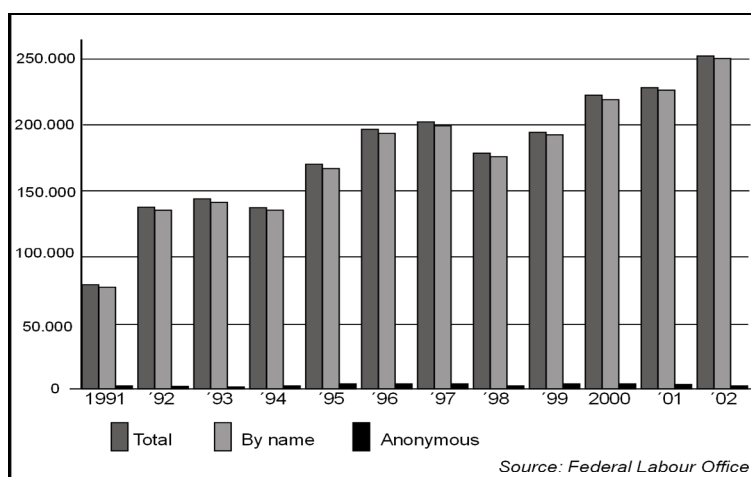


Fig. 1 – Number of the applications to give permission to work to Polish seasonal workers in Germany 1991–2002.

There are two kinds of applications: in the first kind the enterprise that is offering a job to a seasonal worker reports the name of that worker to the labour office. In the second, the enterprise only informs the labour office about its request for seasonal workers. Because it does not yet have a certain person in mind, it asks the office for an arrangement. This second kind of application is termed anonymous and it only plays a very minor role. Anonymous applications decreased from about 2 percent of all applications in 1991 to less than 1 percent in 2002. Most of the contacts between the

employers and the Polish seasonal workers are made directly. A varied structured network of Polish migrants enables the recruitment of enough labour, and so the network can easily satisfy the German demand for seasonal workers.

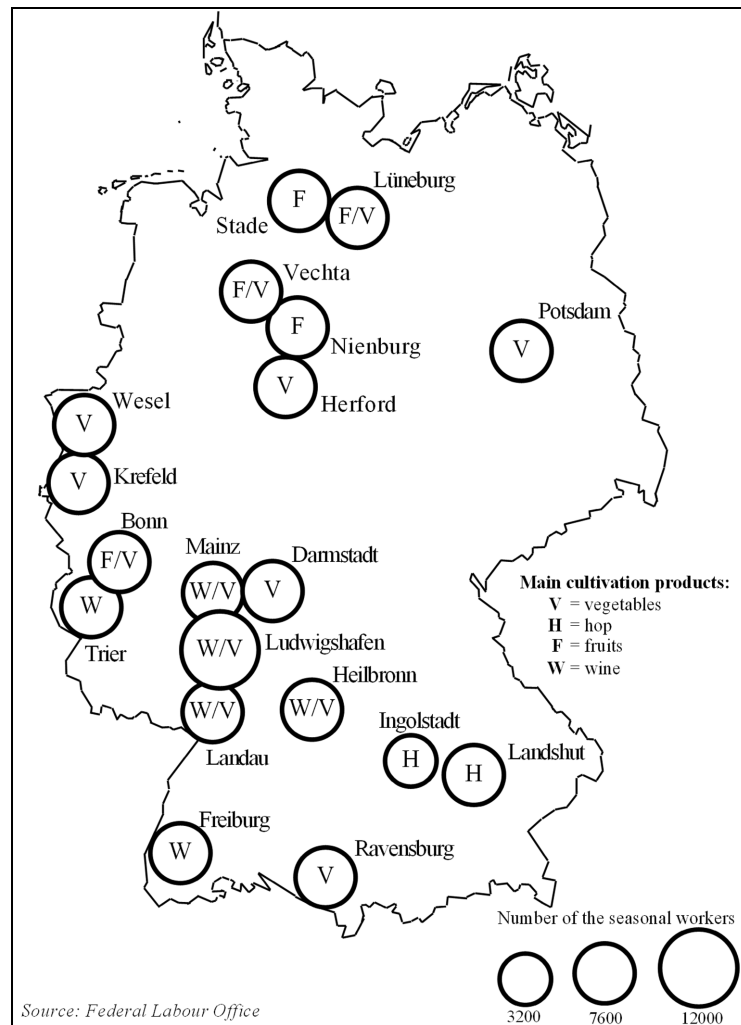


Fig. 2 – Regional concentrations of the employment of Polish seasonal workers in Germany (2002).

According to the regulation, Polish seasonal workers are not allowed to stay in Germany for longer than three months. Many workers have to leave earlier, once the harvest is completed. The harvesters only work for an average of two months a year. If one were to calculate the number of the 252,000 seasonal workers as full time workers, then it would be the equivalent of about 42,000. That is a very small number compared with the 36 million employed persons in Germany. So the labour of Polish seasonal workers cannot be said to represent an important factor in the German labour market. However, if one considers the fact that there are significant concentrations of seasonal workers in particular economic sectors and regions then the importance of Polish seasonal labour appears in a different light.

The employment of Polish seasonal workers is spatially concentrated in a few regions. In 2002, more than 50 percent of the Polish seasonal workers were registered at just 19 labour office districts, which one can see on the map. There are a total of 177 labour office districts in Germany. The Polish

migrants mostly pick fruit, wine grapes, berries and hops, dig vegetables or work in the plantation of ornamental plants.

With regard to economic sectors, Polish seasonal workers are concentrated in the labour-intensive fields of agriculture and horticulture, and above all in the peak periods of picking and digging. The employment of Polish seasonal workers is not well balanced in agriculture and horticulture. They are rarely found in stock breeding, whereas they represent the highest proportion of workers in fruit, vegetable and other specialist plantations. So if one considers the regional and sectoral concentrations with regard to the significance of the Polish seasonal labour, one can come to the conclusion that – at least for some agricultural segments – Polish seasonal workers form the main pool of labour.

In 1997 the German government announced its intention to restrict the seasonal employment of foreign labour. The reason was the high unemployment rate among German workers. The government thought that as a result of the restriction unemployed German persons would find jobs. But German agricultural enterprises and their associations protested vehemently against this decision. They argued that agriculture could not do without foreign seasonal workers. The president of a farmers' association of the Lower Rhine region estimated that in 1997 Polish seasonal workers dug and picked 95 percent of the annual value of agricultural products sold by the largest German marketing organisation for fruit and vegetables in the federal state of North Rhine Westphalia (*Neue Rhein-Zeitung*: 11 July 1997). At the time this yielded a turnover of more than 1 billion DM.

It is very difficult to hire German workers for digging and picking for two reasons: firstly, the labour is very hard and, secondly, the wages are too low. The workers have to do their job under harsh conditions because the harvest period is limited. They have to work even when it rains heavily or is 35 degrees Celsius, sometimes for 12 hours a day. The work also suffers from a poor image. The wage amounts to only a little over €4 net per hour. These conditions are not hindrances for Polish workers. The above-mentioned president of the farmer's association said "A man worked with us who only earns 170 DM monthly as a caretaker in Poland (converted). Here he earns about 2,000 DM. And because of this difference the people do a good job here." (Helmes 1997).

Perhaps it is not at all exaggerated to say that without the Polish seasonal workers one could not buy strawberries, asparagus, carrots, cucumbers, wine grapes and similar items that have been grown in Germany. The Polish seasonal workers form a permanent reliable labour force within those agricultural segments where the mechanisation of production is not yet very well developed. The seasonal workers contribute to the national and international competitiveness of the agricultural enterprises because they accept the difficult working conditions and low wages.

Time and again the question arises amongst the general public as to whether the employment of Polish seasonal workers would oust German workers or workers from other European Union member countries. But this is not the case. On the contrary, it seems that the employment of Polish seasonal workers causes an enlargement of production which not only protects the existence of the enterprises but also creates qualified jobs on the input and on the output side of production.

SUMMARY – INTEGRATION OR DISINTEGRATION?

In the last section of this article we would like to ask what questions the empirical research on temporary labour migration poses or can pose for migration research.

The mainstream of German-speaking migration research comprehends migration research as integration research. The act of immigration is understood as inclusion into a larger entity. As a rule this larger entity is conceived as national society (or nation). The migrant moves by crossing the border from one national society to another, one which is also more or less homogenous with regard to social structures, economy, culture, law, among others. In this case, for the migrants, integration

means the work of adjustment and for the receiving society the offer of opportunities to participate. According to this view, integration has at least two dimensions: it takes place on both a cultural and a socio-structural level. On a socio-structural level the migrants are integrated to such a degree that they have the opportunity to climb the ladder of social status. Cultural integration depends on the extent of common norms and values. One can apply this picture to empirical research if one structures integration into different sub-spheres of the social sphere, e.g. integration into the education system, into the political and administrative, as well as legal system, into the labour market, into the housing market, into institutions of leisure or into informal communication and interaction systems like friendships, neighbourhoods etc. (Eichener 1988). In doing so it should be possible to construct indices of integration which are suited to measuring the integration of individuals or groups into the receiving society. The integration approach comprehends the different levels and dimensions as variables depending on one another.

The socio-structural integration promotes cultural assimilation. Inversely socio-structural marginalisation threatens processes of cultural integration (Berger 1990). The connection between the socio-structural level and the cultural one seems to be plausible because, for example, the interrelationship between opportunities of participation within the educational sector and the chances of finding employment in the labour market are evident. But a theory-based migration research would pose the question: under what conditions and in what way does the empirical coupling between different fields and dimensions of integration take place? It seems to us that this is not done explicitly by the integration research approach.

Up to now our remarks have tried to show the importance of Polish seasonal workers to certain parts of the German labour market. Without Polish seasonal workers it would be very difficult for some agricultural enterprises and even for some sectors to find enough labour for peak season work. Therefore the questions arise as to whether the Polish seasonal workers are integrated into the receiving society, whether it is possible to measure the degree of integration, and whether the above-mentioned assumptions of the integration approach should be examined critically in view of the existing and functioning system of temporary labour migration as the integration approach only looks for the degree of the integration of the Polish seasonal workers into a larger entity – the receiving society.

According to the integration research approach, the national society of the Federal Republic of Germany is understood as this entity. This approach comprehends social structures as structures of communities. It explains social actions with regard to these structures of communities. Correspondingly it uses the bipolar concept of the national societies of the country of origin and of the country of immigration. So it conceives migration as a move from one structure of community to another. It assumes more or less without referring to any analysis that the process of integration occurs as a result of the movement. And the integration approach understands integration as a process of assimilation which can be more or less rapid and successful. The migration researchers who apply this integration approach ought to explain to whom or to what the immigrants become similar and in what respect the increasing similarity between the immigrants and the local society takes place (Bommes 2002).

We would now like to make some comments in order to try to clarify what we mean:

Polish seasonal workers in Germany go through diverse processes of adjustment to German society. On the one hand they undergo a process of enlistment and selection laid down by the German authorities, they apply to get a visa to stay and a work permit, and they adjust to a rhythm of work characterised by the needs of agriculture. On the other hand they dominate some segments of the labour market because the demand for labour could not be satisfied without them. Do these circumstances allow for a successful integration? In answering this question the advocates of the integration approach proceed in the following way: they consider the whole society and come to the

conclusion that a certain integration takes place with regard to the labour market but not concerning the entire social sphere of the society because seasonal workers are not included into social sectors like supplementary benefits or the education system.

Against this background the question arises of whether the integration approach is able to adequately address the phenomenon of temporary labour migration as a central theme. One can ask whether the premises of this approach preclude the researcher from having an unprejudiced view of this part of social reality. The integration approach cannot explain temporary labour migration, because the basic question of this approach does not deal with the real situation of the seasonal migrants from their perspective. In fact, the dominant question of integration research is whether integration is successful or not.

If one used another theoretical frame and moved from a theory of social and cultural integration to a theory of functional subsystems then one could come to following conclusions:

Firstly, the functional differentiation into institutions like those of law, economy, politics and the labour market does not affect the person, the individual, as a whole (Nassehi 1997) but only partially. That means: the individual is affected by the functional differentiation only specifically with regard to his situation and his role. If one takes such a perspective, temporary labour migration is not a specific problem of the local society (the receiving society) but one of the many opportunities for individuals to manage their life.

Secondly, this change of perspective would include the possibility of seeing that the endeavours of migrants and local inhabitants to adjust to institutions differ from each other perhaps not principally but only partially.

Thirdly, the change of perspective could lead to the conclusion that the question of the integration of immigrants is too general, and it is more a problem of social justice than of a scientific approach which should be able to lead to analyses of precise distinctions between the situations and roles of individuals within the socio-economic and cultural contexts.

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