German
Historical
Institute
London

German Historical Institute London Bulletin

Review of Lauren Stokes, *Fear of the Family: Guest Workers and Family Migration in the Federal Republic of Germany*

by Özkan Ezli

German Historical Institute London Bulletin
Vol. XLVI, No. 2 (November 2024), 119–30

ISSN 0269-8552

LAUREN STOKES, *Fear of the Family: Guest Workers and Family Migration in the Federal Republic of Germany*, Oxford Studies in International History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 304 pp. ISBN 978 0 197 55841 6. £27.99

In her book, Lauren Stokes describes how a political culture of fear of the foreign family became the basis of family policy in general in the Federal Republic of Germany. The seven chapters of her book take seriously German fears of foreign families, which in turn created fear within immigrant families (p. 2). She explores this culture of fear in relation to questions of family reunion—specifically grandparents moving to Germany for childcare purposes in the 1960s (ch. 1), the arrival of husbands (ch. 4), the age at which children could be brought to Germany (ch. 7, pp. 196–9), and their right of return in the 1980s (ch. 5)—and in relation to changes to nationality law in 2000 and 2014 (ch. 7, pp. 212–16). This sequence of legal changes could actually be told as a history of progress from tolerance to dual nationality, such as we find in the work of legal scholar Daniel Thym from 2010 onwards.[1] However, Stokes notes in several places in her book, and prominently in her introduction, that the German state's restrictive migration policy legitimized its own conservative, paternalistic, and ultimately racist societal structure—its 'master race' attitude (p. 6) towards foreign families. The fact that Stokes makes no distinction here and elsewhere between fear (affect) and political strategy (agency), or between paternalism (the father) and racism (the oppressor or exploiter), is a central methodological problem in this work, but more on this later.

In essence, as Stokes continues in her introduction, her book aims to provide 'four interrelated arguments' (p. 4) for her fundamental thesis—arguments that go far beyond accretions of fear in the context of migration. First, through its notions about foreign families, the German state 'enforce[d] its own ideas about the appropriate gendered division of labor' (p. 4). Second, this led to the category of family becoming 'a

---

Translated by Jozef van der Voort (GHIL).

[1] See Daniel Thym, *Migrationsverwaltungsrecht* (Tübingen, 2010); Daniel Thym, 'Migrationsfolgenrecht', *Veröffentlichungen der Vereinigung der Deutschen Staatsrechtler*, 76 (2017), 169–216.

key site for the production of ideas about racialized difference. In regulating family migration, West Germans thought in racialized categories without using the word "race"' (p. 4). Third, the fact that this racism was not openly addressed had to do with the German state's reluctance to dip rhetorically into the troubled waters of its Nazi past. Fourth and finally, the category of the family made it possible to pursue a neoliberal policy that conformed to the demands of the market and the economy, under which social responsibility was shifted from the state to families. Later in the book, Stokes also presents the last of these points as a forerunner of Germany's Hartz IV policy from the 2000s onwards (p. 142). The introduction to the book thus makes it clear that she intends to make a decisive intervention in the history of migration policy.

Stokes does not share other scholars' focus on the changing political and historical use of terms (as in Ulrich Herbert's *Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland*), on a particular phase or the history of a particular group (as in the work of Karin Hunn and Rita Chin), or on the interplay between debates and political decisions (as in Karen Schönwälder's political science study of migration policy in Germany and Great Britain).[2] Rather, in her study of psychological and social phenomena and problems—of fear (affect) and the family—she is far more interested in the much broader relationship between people who immigrate and the societies that do or do not accept them. As such, her focus is not simply on questions of how German governments regulate migration on the basis of legislation and court decisions (as in Daniel Thym's work), or how politicians have negotiated this discursively (as in Karen Schönwälder's book). The broad and methodologically undifferentiated framing of fear and family means that her work centres not on specific issues, but on the far more general inference that fear of the foreign family determined the migration policy of the Federal Republic of Germany from the 1960s, and continues to determine it today; moreover, that this fear should not be dismissed as mere xenophobia, as has been the case up to now, but should be clearly labelled as racism (pp. 6–7 and 142–3, among others).

---

[2] Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland: Saisonarbeiter, Zwangsarbeiter, Gastarbeiter, Flüchtlinge* (Munich, 2001); Karin Hunn, *'Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück . . .': Die Geschichte der türkischen 'Gastarbeiter' in der Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen, 2005); Rita Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge, 2007); Karen Schönwälder, *Einwanderung und ethnische Pluralität: Politische Entscheidungen und öffentliche Debatten in Großbritannien und der Bundesrepublik von den 1950er bis zu den 1970er Jahren* (Essen, 2001).

Yet Stokes makes no further attempt to delineate or define either 'fear' or 'racism'. Furthermore, the relationship between the two terms remains completely unclear throughout the book's 226 pages. The affect that stands at the heart of her study is given no analytical foundation, whether cultural, socio-psychological, or psychological. This inevitably raises the question of whether the arguments Stokes sets out in her introduction can be reliably demonstrated on such a precarious definitional basis—one made up more of assertions than clearly elucidated terms. The standard distinction made in cultural theory and social psychology between concrete and abstract fear is not mentioned in Stokes' book; nor is the axiom of cultural history that phenomena such as fear must be situated within specific historical and cultural contexts.[3] But before I overtax the methodology behind *Fear of the Family*, I would first like to describe the history of fear that Stokes has presented in her book and consider the extent to which it is a history at all.

In addition to the introduction and conclusion, her work is divided into seven chronologically organized chapters. Chapter one, 'The "Market-Conforming Family" in the Era of Labor Recruitment', focuses on the guest worker recruitment phase between 1955 and 1973. Here, Stokes draws attention to an interesting political contradiction between the West German interior and labour ministries. While the former ruled out permanent residence for citizens of the Eastern Bloc and non-EEC countries, such as Yugoslavians, Portuguese, Turks, and Spaniards, the latter was interested in workers who would prove their worth to the economy in the long run. Therefore, according to Stokes, families in the first decade of labour migration were seen 'as a solution rather than as a problem' (p. 25). The inclusion of grandparents in labour migration gave a boost to guest workers who were parents. Indeed, when the 1961 labour recruitment agreement between Turkey and Germany was revised in 1964, restrictions on contract length were eased and the first family reunions were made possible. However, instead of breaking down the tensions of this situation in detail, as

---

[3] Lars Koch (ed.), *Angst: Ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch* (Stuttgart, 2013), 31.

Karin Hunn has done in her work, Stokes fixates on stereotypes—for instance, that German social workers are said to have warned German women against marrying guest workers—without providing broad source evidence (p. 36). She also sees the interior ministry's refusal to grant permanent residence to people from the Eastern Bloc or to non-EEC citizens as clear proof of 'racism of the bureaucracy' (p. 22). Given the political context at the time—namely, a newly formed EEC made up of only six European states (1957), the de facto inner-German division caused by the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the most intense phase of the Cold War, and the guiding West German political principle of integration with the West—this claim is at the very least open to question. In fact, the word 'integration' was understood primarily in economic terms in the 1960s and early 1970s.[4] In any case, Stokes does not provide a comparable outline of the political and cultural environments of this period that would serve as a historical frame.

Instead of detailing this cultural historical context, Stokes extends the racism narrative to the labour market by interpreting the increased recruitment of female guest workers in the mid and late 1960s as a policy of not letting 'the German woman' work in order to preserve the 'conservative familial welfare state' (p. 26). But she also provides an alternative explanation by noting that West Berlin had the largest number of female guest workers at this time 'because of its electronics and textile industries' (p. 39). It can be assumed that Berlin was no exception in this regard, and that such companies were also the reason for the recruitment of female workers in other cities. Indeed, this is reflected in works of literature.[5] Yet instead of outlining this complex political and occupational reality, Stokes concludes very firmly that 'while the idea that German and Southern families were mutually incomprehensible might appear benign when used to promote policies favorable for family unity, the pervasive assumption of different family values was a form of racialization that could be turned against the best interests of migrants' (p. 26). Stokes' claims are flatly contradicted by the fact that the 1960s and 1970s in particular are associated with many reforms in German family law, introduced under both liberal–conservative and liberal–social democratic governments—including the liberalization of marriage and divorce law.

---

[4] Valentin Rauer, 'Integrationsdebatten in der deutschen Öffentlichkeit (1947–2012): Ein umstrittenes Konzept zwischen "region-building" und "nation-saving"', in Özkan Ezli et al. (eds.), *Die Integrationsdebatte zwischen Assimilation und Diversität: Grenzziehungen in Theorie, Kunst und Gesellschaft* (Bielefeld, 2013), 51–86; Özkan Ezli, *Narrative der Migration: Eine andere deutsche Kulturgeschichte* (Berlin, 2022).

[5] Emine Sevgi Özdamar, *Die Brücken vom Goldenen Horn* (Cologne, 1998); Bekir Yıldız, *Türkler Almanya'da* (Istanbul, 2012).

Yet for Stokes, left–liberal forces were by no means free of racism, as they too 'argued that guest workers came from cultures where the family was particularly important' (pp. 23–6; quotation on p. 25). In addition to German social workers, Stokes also refers to the Italian-born social worker Giacomo Maturi, who saw his compatriots as more emotional than the sober and rational Germans (p. 26). The problem with Stokes' understanding of racism is that every form of stereotyping is treated as racist. From this perspective, the body of literature written in the 1970s and 1980s by guest workers and their descendants would also have to be declared racist, as it produces just as many stereotypes about Germans. The central question about stereotypes, however, is how do they relate to social practices? Are they tools of degradation, unequal treatment, and oppression, or are they motivated by a desire to get to know and understand the other? The last of these impulses generates socio-psychological movements that generally lead, and have led, to the breaking of stereotypes and thus ultimately to a reduction in fear.[6]

The equivalence between stereotyping and racism continues seamlessly into the second chapter, 'The Racialization of Space: Family Housing and Anti-Ghettoization Policy'. Stokes initially attributes the racialization of public space to two political directives relating to guest workers: first, the rule that stipulated a minimum amount of living space in the 1970s in order for any family members to be brought to Germany;

---

[6] One example from everyday life is the emergence of the Intercultural Weeks in 1975, which are still organized today and involve five thousand events in five hundred cities. The breaking and negotiating of stereotypes in the context of migration are also central themes in literature and film. On the former, see Özkan Ezli, *Die Politik der Geselligkeit: Gegenwart und Geschichte der 'Interkulturellen Woche'. Eine vergleichende kulturwissenschaftliche Untersuchung zu den Mittel- und Großstädten Gera, Jena, Konstanz und Offenbach*, Expertise im Auftrag des Sachverständigenrats für Integration und Migration für das SVR-Jahresgutachten (Berlin, 2021); on the latter, see Ezli, *Narrative der Migration*.

and second, anti-ghettoization measures from the mid 1970s onwards, implemented primarily in Berlin, which were designed to prevent the emergence of highly concentrated nationally and ethnically homogeneous neighbourhoods, like Harlem in New York (pp. 48 and 58–9). The first of these measures was a problem for guest workers not so much because of the existence of standoffish or sometimes outright xenophobic German landlords, but because the guest workers either could not afford higher rents or did not want to pay them, preferring to save their hard-earned money for their return to Turkey, Portugal, or Italy. By the time recruitment was stopped in 1973, two-thirds of the guest workers who had immigrated between 1955 and 1973 had returned to their countries of origin. It was not only the German government that saw the recruitment of guest workers as temporary, but also the guest workers themselves and, in particular, the nations they came from. From the 1970s onwards, labour migrants from Turkey made up the largest group of foreigners in Germany—over one million people—and among this population, the slogan *nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück* ('next year we'll go back') retained its force until the 1990s. After all, they wanted to invest their hard-earned money in their own futures back in their countries of origin, whose governments were also very interested in an influx of cash. In the meantime, if it was possible to move to a neighbourhood whose residents spoke the same language, so much the better.

However, Stokes does not acknowledge this larger motivational context. Instead, she concentrates on the unquantifiable phenomenon of the 'unreported foreign child' (p. 55) in cases where guest workers lacked space in their homes and were afraid that their landlords might report them. This is certainly not a negligible aspect of the issue, but it can hardly be taken as representative of the period as a whole. This is shown simply by the fact that after recruitment stopped, the number of foreigners rose from 2.7 million to 4.5 million by the early 1980s as a result of family reunions.[7] These figures go unmentioned in Stokes' book. In contrast, the phenomenon of the 'unreported child' is linked to a report from a meeting at the labour ministry on March 1972 whose problematic phrasing, in Stokes' view, reflects the true basis of German immigration policy: 'Creating space [*Lebensraum*] for the foreign workers who stay would mean limiting the space [*Lebensraum*] of the other people who live in the Federal Republic' (p. 58). Here Stokes draws particular attention to the report's use of a National Socialist term.

---

[7] Schönwälder, *Einwanderung und ethnische Pluralität*, 628; Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Thomas Schmid, *Heimat Babylon: Das Wagnis der multikulturellen Demokratie* (Hamburg, 1993), 340; Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 'Soziale Situation in Deutschland: Ausländische Bevölkerung', *kurz&knapp*, 1 Jan. 2022, at [https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/zahlen-und-fakten/soziale-situation-in-deutschland/61622/auslaendische-bevoelkerung], accessed 15 Aug. 2024.

Stokes then moves on to the second measure she considers important in the 1970s—namely, anti-ghettoization. In 1975, Berlin became the first federal state to ban foreigners from moving to particular neighbourhoods—specifically Kreuzberg, Wedding, and Tiergarten. The aim, as the author notes, was 'to prevent the creation of "American-style" ghettos' (p. 63). For Stokes, the problem with the measure was that, unlike similar bans elsewhere in Germany, it affected not only the immigration of guest workers' extended families, but also their spouses and children. Stokes refers to just one source here. However, a simple internet search reveals that exceptions could be made in cases of hardship, as reported in the *Berliner Morgenpost*.[8] In fact, 46 per cent of residents in these districts were foreigners. The ban, which remained in place until the early 1980s, could therefore also be seen as societally integrative; indeed, similar arguments have been made for the decentralized distribution of refugees since 2016.[9] But Stokes interprets it differently. Whereas 'the "adequate housing" requirement supposedly protected foreigners from living in flats that were too small', the real motivation for anti-ghettoization is clear: it 'protected foreigners from living with their family members so that society would not see them as a threatening mass' (p. 67).

It is true that the Federal Republic of Germany did not see itself politically as a country of immigration, and also acted restrictively with regard to the consequences of labour migration. But it is also true that measures were adopted which to an extent acknowledged the new reality of immigration. For instance, a rule was introduced in Berlin 'that publicly subsidized housing associations must allocate to foreign citizens 15 per cent of the homes they renovate or build in what at the time were peripheral areas, such as Britz, Buckow, Rudow, the Märkisches Viertel, Mariendorf, and Lichtenrade.'[10] Another example is the establishment in 1975 of the Intercultural Weeks, an accessible cultural event whose main aim was to pose an enlightened counterpoint to the polarizing debates surrounding immigration.[11] These positive, social aspects go unmentioned by Stokes. Instead, government restrictions and support alike are subsumed under the effects of structural racism—a thread that runs through the book until the final chapter, and also shapes the epilogue.

---

[8] 'Gescheitert: Zuzugssperre gegen Ghettobildung', *Berliner Morgenpost*, 6 Mar. 2003, at [https://www.morgenpost.de/printarchiv/berlin/article102204468/Gescheitert-Zuzugssperre-gegen-Ghettobildung.html], accessed 18 July 2024.

[9] Jürgen Friedrichs, Felix Leßke, and Vera Schwarzenberg, 'Sozialräumliche Integration von Flüchtlingen: Das Beispiel Hamburg-Harvesthude', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* (2017), at [https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/apuz/251223/sozialraeumliche-integration-von-fluechtlingen-das-beispiel-hamburg-harvestehude], accessed 15 August 2024.

This is emphatically demonstrated in the fifth and longest chapter, '"Foreign Parents Violate the Rights of the Children": Restricting Child Migration in the Name of Child Welfare', which focuses on the 1980s—a period labelled in many works as the lost decade of integration.[12] With the foreign population rising from 2.7 to 4.5 million, the Federal Republic became a de facto country of immigration. At the same time, the 1980s were the decade in which the dictum that the Federal Republic was not a country of immigration was most strongly articulated politically. Evidence of this can be seen in the 1983 law promoting the decision to return (*Gesetz zur Förderung der Rückkehrentscheidung*), with which Chancellor Helmut Kohl sought to halve the number of foreigners in Germany. Yet in contrast to the recently reported 'remigration plans' of the Alternative für Deutschland and the right-wing extremist Martin Sellner, there was no obligation to emigrate; instead, individuals opting to return were given a one-off payment of up to 10,000 Deutschmarks. Very few foreigners took up the offer, however.

---

[10] 'Gescheitert: Zuzugssperre gegen Ghettobildung'.

[11] Ezli, *Die Politik der Geselligkeit*, 33.

[12] Klaus Bade, *Vom Auswanderungsland zum Einwanderungsland? Deutschland 1880–1980* (Berlin, 1983); Klaus Bade, *Migration – Flucht – Integration: Kritische Politikbegleitung von der 'Gastarbeiterfrage' bis zur 'Flüchtlingskrise'. Erinnerungen und Beiträge* (Karlsruhe, 2017).

In fact, the discourse in the 1980s was marked by religious national ascriptions and self-descriptions, for cultural essentialism did not solely emanate from the German side; many Turks did not want to become German citizens either. This is reflected in the founding of religious and nationalist associations on the one hand, and the increase in Turkish coffee-houses and grocery shops as a self-imposed form of cultural essentialism on the other.[13] But here, too, Stokes unfortunately only sees cultural ascriptions from the German side at work, and she links these very closely with family law issues, such as the two-year waiting period for newly arrived children and young people (p. 117). The fact that this waiting period was tied to preparatory classes, which many participants described as important for getting settled in Germany,[14] is hinted at by Stokes, but not meaningfully considered. Concrete, positive statements like these play no role at all; instead, Stokes writes once again of xenophobia and ultimately racism disguised as humanism in the spirit of Western values (p. 142). The subtitle of the fifth chapter forcefully demonstrates how Stokes hammers home her core claim that the Germans have always seen themselves as a 'master race'.

This disregard for historical specifics in favour of abstractions and sweeping statements also comes up when Stokes addresses the topic of the second generation. Here, she accuses the authors Achim Schrader, Bruno W. Nikles, and Hartmut M. Griese, like Germany's government and politicians before them, of making racist arguments without once using the word 'racism' (p. 144). It is certainly true that the three sociologists contrasted the 'foreign' with the 'German', and viewed the former term as carrying some stigma. However, their actual focus was on socialization processes, such as facilitating contact with Germans and promoting language acquisition. They understood stigmatization as a product of social interactions—as being connected to a process, and possible to overcome. In their work, 'German' is a placeholder for a linguistic and social mode of acquiring the public lingua franca.[15] Stokes at no point acknowledges the difficulties that arise when a child or young person is uprooted from their familiar surroundings and arrives in another country where they are unfamiliar with the language and customs. Immigrants do not stand at the centre of her work; instead, she focuses on what Germans said and what they really meant by it.[16]

---

[13] Rauf Ceylan, *Ethnische Kolonien: Entstehung, Funktion und Wandel am Beispiel türkischer Moscheen und Cafés* (Wiesbaden, 2006).

[14] Consider e.g. the Turkish immigrants who arrived in the 1970s and 1980s whom I interviewed for my current project 'Gefühlskulturen in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft zwischen Verweigerung und Teilhabe' (2021–5), in partnership with Levent Tezcan and funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research.

In the process, Stokes often indiscriminately mixes legal texts with political discourse, as with the protracted debates about the maximum immigration age for children and adolescents in the 1980s. Although the idea of reducing the age limit to six was never brought into law, it plays an unduly prominent role in the second third of the book (pp. 159–201). This is probably because two of her central theses converge here: first, she sees the idea as confirming the German fear of foreigners, and especially of their children; and second, she posits that it revealed the true racist attitude of the Federal Republic, because this and other legislative proposals have always been justified as being in the best interests of the child or the family. However, the supposedly decisive role played by fear as a political emotion is undermined by the fact that no such law was ever passed.

Indeed, Stokes' book is consistently distant from reality and everyday life. This is also evident in the sixth chapter, 'Marriage, Deportation, and the Politics of Vulnerability'. Although the topic of violence by male Turkish guest workers against their wives is touched upon here with reference to women's shelters, her conclusion, as in the previous chapters, is: 'All of these women experienced West German migration policy, not Turkish culture, as an obstacle to their self-fulfillment' (p. 176). Yet, after carrying out more than seventy qualitative interviews, I have found that the majority of first- and second-generation women with a Turkish or Arab background say the exact opposite: their problem was not the German state, but rather the

---

[15] Achim Schrader, Bruno W. Nikles, and Hartmut M. Gries, *Die Zweite Generation: Sozialisation und Akkulturation ausländischer Kinder in der Bundesrepublik* (Kronberg, 1976), 194.

[16] The voices of immigrants remain marginal; see e.g. Aras Ören, *Die Fremde ist auch ein Haus: Berlin-Poem*, trans. Gisela Kraft (Berlin, 1980), or Şerif Gören's 1979 film *Almanya Aci Vatan* ('Germany, Bitter Homeland').

'imported Turkish groom [*ithal damat*]' who substantially restricted their lives in Germany.[17]

In the last part of her book, Stokes again addresses the fact that prior to the amendment of the law on foreigners (*Ausländergesetz*), immigrants could bring their spouses to Germany after eight years of residence, but not their children if they were over 16 (p. 202). Stokes sees both the immigration age limit of 16 and the right of children of guest workers to return to Germany between the ages of 18 and 21 (the latter established with the 1990 amendment) as restrictive. In other words, a measure tending in the opposite direction and giving young people the opportunity to *return* to Germany within a three-year window is presented as another form of restriction. Stokes explains that the right to return removes children from their parents and thus 'irrevocably split[s] the family within migration policy' (p. 215). However, this option can also be understood quite differently: as a means of recognizing foreign adults who have spent time living in Germany as children, and of legally granting them the opportunity to make a decision rather than depriving them of it. Although Stokes mentions this autonomy, in the same sentence she turns it into a negative and links it to the theme of her book by emphasizing that 'Children who used the "return option" were unable to sponsor their parents or siblings for family migration' (p. 215).

Stokes concludes with a similarly problematic and decontextualized discussion of the changes in nationality law between 1999 and 2014—from *jus sanguinis*, via the option model, to dual citizenship (pp. 207–16). Here, the acquisition of a residence permit by an 18-year-old in 1981 is treated as equivalent to the attainment of dual citizenship in 2014. This dismissal of critical developments in migration and nationality law, which form the basis for the 2016 integration act (*Integrationsgesetz*) and the new naturalization act passed in 2024, is reiterated in Stokes' conclusion. There, she writes about the treatment of Syrian refugees: 'while many politicians have insisted that their actions since the summer of 2015 have been reactions to an unprecedented "refugee crisis", *Fear of the Family* has shown that these lawmakers are in fact drawing on a repertoire of arguments that has existed for decades' (p. 225).

---

[17] Ezli and Tezcan, 'Gefühlskulturen in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft zwischen Verweigerung und Teilhabe' (2021–5).

If this is Stokes' core claim, can we really call *Fear of the Family* a work of (cultural) history? Unfortunately, we cannot. Rather than a nuanced study that cleaves close to facts and context, it should be seen as an activist one that substitutes certainty for complexity, and paints a picture of stasis and restriction instead of dynamic change. This book supposedly shows that German political culture has liberalized and westernized, 'but . . . that this process entailed adopting the exclusions of gender and race inherent to liberalism' (p. 217). But Stokes does not show us how racism and freedom are connected; how legal reliefs for foreigners and their children, the replacement of *jus sanguinis* with options for dual nationality, and the introduction of anti-discrimination laws at federal and state level are fundamentally racist and sexist; or how all this is linked to fear of the family. The history of structurally democratic developments suggests rather the opposite—namely, the overcoming of xenophobia and racism. When these sentiments do emerge, such as in the National Socialist Underground or at the Potsdam meeting in November 2023, it is for different reasons: these actors fear and hate not only immigrants, but also the German democratic state.

ÖZKAN EZLI is a literary and cultural scholar specializing in cultural theory and practices with a focus on transcultural and mobility-related studies of literature, film, society, debates, theory, and material culture. His doctorate, a comparative cultural analysis of Turkish, Arabic, and German autobiographies and travelogues from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was published in 2012 as *Grenzen der Kultur: Autobiographien und Reisebeschreibungen zwischen Okzident und Orient*. His habilitation thesis, *Narrative der Migration: Eine andere deutsche Kulturgeschichte*, was awarded the 2020 Augsburg Prize for Intercultural Studies and the 2021 De Gruyter Open Access Prize. Ezli is currently a Senior Lecturer (*Privatdozent*) in the German Department at the University of Tübingen. His current research project at the University of Münster's Institute of Sociology explores 'Emotional Cultures in the Immigration Society between Rejection and Participation'.