

# **Migration Processes – Challenges for German Cities<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract:** In recent years, demographic processes have rightly attracted growing attention. In addition to the natural development of the population (with the phenomena of population decline and over aging), the various forms of migration (international and inter-regional migration, core city-periphery migration) present cities with a number of political challenges. This paper describes some of the important trends, induced problems, and options for action with regard to Germany.

## 1. Natural Population Development

The population develops in number and structure in two processes that initially have relatively little to do with one another. We thus distinguish between natural population development and migration.<sup>2</sup>

Natural population development is based on births and deaths. Demography uses a large number of variables and ratios to describe, explain, and forecast natural population development. Traditional data such as that related to marrying age and frequency, and children per family, etc., is now of only limited use owing to changes in partnership behaviour. Apart from the net reproduction rate, the most informative measure is the birth rate, where a figure below 2.1 children per woman signals decline. At present, the figure in Germany is between 1.3 and 1.4, which means that at generational intervals, each succeeding generation would be one third smaller. In only two generations, from grandparents to grandchildren, the population would be halved.

In comparison with migration trends, natural population development over longer periods exceeding 10 or 15 years can be forecast with a certain degree of reliability because behaviour changes relatively slowly.

Germany, however, has experienced two exceptions since the Second World War (see figure 1):

- The sudden drop in the birth rate in the 1960s (the so-called ‘Pillenknick’ or ‘pill kink’) registered in both West and East Germany – since the mid-1960s natural population development has been negative.
- The – quantitatively still more dramatic – ‘unification kink’, a sudden decline in the birth rate in the new Länder. Within three years, births halved, from 220,000 in 1989 to 110,000 in 1992, and they are only gradually catching up again with West German figures, which are already too low. It is interesting that neither the two world wars nor the Great Depression provoked a demographic reaction as dramatic as that prompted by German unification.<sup>3</sup>

Such major changes in behaviour are not currently to be expected, so that we can regard natural population development over the coming decades as relatively predictable. The Federal Statistical Office’s July 2000 ‘9<sup>th</sup> Coordinated Population Projection’ predicts that by 2050 Germany’s population of 82 million (1999) will fall by 23 million<sup>4</sup> or 28 % if no immigration occurs.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. International Migration

Migration is a complex factor subject to a multitude of ‘motive forces’ and often to substantial fluctuation, and even medium-term forecasts are not at all dependable.

- Only the balance of international migration directly affects the volume of national population.<sup>6</sup> But there are two underlying components, international emigration and immigration. Even if the balance is zero, the volume of inward and outward migration can be considerable and can cause con-

tinuous structural shifts: for example, the proportion of foreigners in the resident population generally increases.

- This brings us to structural considerations. Extremely important in this regard is, who is going? Who is coming? And are the people who come, for example:
  - Recruited ‘guest workers’ as in the 1960s and 1970s, or members of their families joining them?
  - Are they (foreign) EU citizens entering by right of the freedom of movement, or ethnic German immigrants and displaced persons (*Aussiedler* and *Umsiedler*)?
  - Or, finally, are they civil war refugees or asylum seekers?

## 2.1 In Retrospect

The balance of migration between Germany and other countries has seen drastic changes and structural shifts over the past four decades (cf. figure 2):

- The predominating phases of net immigration have been interspersed by shorter phases of net emigration related to economic developments: ‘Between 1960 and 1998 the Federal Republic of Germany registered, on average, a positive annual migration balance of 165,000 foreign arrivals.’<sup>7</sup>
- Between 1988 and 1993 alone, net immigration to Germany was 3.6 million.<sup>8</sup>
- From the 1990 peak of 1 million, net immigration fell almost continuously throughout the 1990s to about 47,000 in 1998 and some 202,000 in 1999.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.2 Outlook

Against this background all forecasts on international migration are highly uncertain. The absolute weight of international migration is particularly apparent in a figure recorded by the last population projection of the Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (BBR): ‘For the period 1998 to 2015, the estimated 29.5 million births and deaths will be paralleled by just as many migratory movements to and from the Federal Republic of Germany.’<sup>10</sup>

All serious forecasts now assume that the downward immigration trend of the 1990s will *not* continue and that Germany will record a notable and stable positive international migration balance.

The Federal Statistical Office’s 9<sup>th</sup> Coordinated Population Projection of July 2000 is based on alternative net immigration figures by 2050 of 100,000 or 200,000. In the first case the population of Germany would fall from today’s 82 million to 65 million, and in the second case to ‘only’ 70.4 million (cf. figure 3).

However, as table 1 shows, there are strong differences between East and West. Net migration is concentrated almost completely in the West, where it is twice as high as the natural decrease (the excess of deaths over births); according to the BBR with regard to regionalised population projection up to 2015, it would add 2.6 million to the western population by that date. In the East, positive net migration will be very low,

and unable to compensate for the natural decrease, so that the population there would fall by 1.2 million.

### 2.3 Consequences

What do these national developments mean for the cities?

- First of all it should be stressed that the links between population and the housing market are 'loose' rather than compelling. At least as important for housing demand and for changes in population volume are the interrelated changes in age structure, in family structure, and in household size. From 1970 to 2000, the number of single-person households in West Germany doubled, while the average household size fell from 2.8 to 2.2 persons. Per capita living space has also doubled.
- Despite these expansive demand-side forces, the housing market throughout Germany has tended to ease over the past decade. From 2020 the demand for living space could stagnate as a whole because the decline in population will be offset by growing per-capita demand.
- Nevertheless the Ifo Institute, for example, maintains that about 1 million dwelling units are currently lacking in Germany (FAZ 12 May 2000). However positive the improvement on the housing market may seem, certain demand groups dependent on low-cost housing do not benefit from the easier situation in the upper and middle market segments. And there are further serious discrepancies between housing supply and demand, for example with regard to unit size.<sup>11</sup>
- The 5.5 million net immigrants to Germany by 2015 will be much younger than the population in place. In the future, too, immigrants are unfortunately more likely to be unemployed and dependent on social assistance because of their lower (formal) qualifications. Foreigner households will have a markedly lower average income and a lower per capita demand for living space than German households, and will tend to depend on the low-cost housing market.
- For an immigration surplus (of 250,000), Birg some time ago projected a 'share of immigrant population and their offspring, including foreigners already resident in the country of 20.4% by 2030 and 39.1% by 2050' (FAZ 10 May 1996).
- Regardless of any initial policy to this end, these immigrants will not settle evenly throughout Germany. They will tend to concentrate in the West rather than the East and in agglomerations rather than in rural areas.
- And in the cities they will cluster in certain areas, in old inner city neighbourhoods or the big housing estates built in the 1960s and 1970s. Ethnic segregation will be both superimposed on and go hand in hand with social segregation. German parents and well-established foreigners will start thinking about moving out of the area at the very latest when half their children's primary school classmates are foreigners. Intraregional out-mobility will reinforce the segregation that sets it in motion.

This invites the following interim conclusion:

The anticipated immigration is not so much a quantitative problem for cities and the housing industry. Demand will tend to concentrate on existing living space at the bottom end of the quality scale. However, housing companies will face growing management problems, especially in unattractive stock and the big estates. They will have to contribute actively to a mobilising and integrative policy like that commended by the new Federal-Länder housing development promotion programme 'Urban Districts with Special Development Needs – The Socially Integrative City.'

The 'integration engine' that is the city<sup>12</sup> therefore faces a rather new challenge. Migration is a major problem for local government that affects many policy areas from education to the fight against crime.

### **3. Interregional Migration (East – West)**

Another important migration issue is that of interregional movements within Germany. Scholars agree that this extensive flow of migration is motivated in peacetime by differences in the economic situation (labour market, income).

#### **3.1 In Retrospect**

Following German unification, migration between the old and new Länder is of particular interest (see figure 4).

- Out-migration from the new Länder and East Berlin reached a dramatic peak in 1990 ('If the Deutsche Mark doesn't come to us, then we'll go to it') when 400,000 people moved, falling rapidly within two or three years to about 180,000, where it still remained in 1998.
- In-migration to the new Länder and East Berlin initially increased rapidly until 1996, and then more slowly to about 150,000.
- Thus the adverse balance for the East dropped from an initial 360,000 to a mere 10,000 by 1997, but the subsequent relatively unfavourable development of the economy provoked a marked rise to about 60,000 in 2000. It must continue to be watched, because out-migration to the West hits many cities and the sparsely populated Länder such as Mecklenburg-West Pomerania particularly hard, imposing new burdens on the local infrastructure.
- It should also be noted that East-West migration, too, is selective. Those who move are mainly young economically active males, making it more difficult for the areas they leave to catch up economically.
- Out-migration from East to West must finally be seen in the context of the historic and internationally unprecedented decline in the birth rate that occurred in the new Länder.

Map 1 shows the regional differences in interplay between natural population development and migration.

The population in the whole of West Germany grew during the 1990s. Often migration gains and natural increase accumulated (red). In other areas migration gains were higher than the natural decrease (yellow). Since 1980 the whole of West Germany has recorded an 8 % gain in population.<sup>13</sup>

All of East Germany (with the exception of western Brandenburg) registered a population decline, partly with gains from migration (green), but mostly coupled with migration losses (blue). The population of most cities has fallen by 10 % to 20 %. Since 1980 the new Länder as a whole have lost about 6 % of their population.<sup>14</sup>

This movement shifted the weight of population westwards. The share of the new Länder in the national population dropped from 22.8 % in 1990 to 21 % in 1997. Migration and natural population development have thus further widened the gap in population density, which in 1990 had been 250 per km<sup>2</sup> in the West and 150 per km<sup>2</sup> in the East.

### 3.2 Outlook

My forecast for the period up to 2015 takes account of the results of the latest BBR population projection.

Map 2 shows the regional differences in interaction between natural population development and migration. The forecast patterns up to 2015 also differ significantly in West and East Germany. With few exceptions, notably the old industrialised regions Bremen, the Ruhr District and Saarland, all of West Germany will still experience an increase in population. And with the sole exception of western Brandenburg, all East Germany will suffer a decline. Regions with net migration losses will be found only in the East (light blue). As in the 1990s, albeit at a slower rate, the weight of population will continue to shift westwards. East Germany's share of the population, which fell by 1.5 % between 1990 and 1997, will fall a further 1.7 % from 21.3 % to 19.6 %.

### 3.3 Consequences

- There is a favourable aspect to East-West migration in that it relieves eastern labour markets and lowers the unemployment rate, but it also constitutes a selective 'brain drain,' which hinders eastern efforts to catch up economically, impairs the quality of life in many ways, and exacerbates the problems of local government.
- Demography-related new housing construction will take place only in western agglomerations and in rural areas. In the East a further migration-related increase in the vacancy problem can be expected. A million dwellings are unoccupied, and in 2000 a commission recommended the demolition of 300,000 to 400,000 units. A Federal-Länder programme 'Urban Restructuring East' is planned to help finance this measure, to tie it in with urban development concepts, and to associate it with neighbourhood upgrading.

In comparison with international migration, this interregional migration, due primarily to differences in economic development, allows cities and regions greater scope for applying a strategy that tackles the root causes of such problems.

## 4. Central City – Periphery Migration

Migration from the core city to outlying areas can be regarded as the quantitatively most significant lasting internal migration phenomenon in Germany.<sup>15</sup>

The ‘motive forces’ (pull factors to the urban periphery, push factors out of the central city) are – unlike the economic factors of extensive migration – mainly residence related.

### 4.1 In Retrospect

The process of suburbanisation began in the last century. In the 1960s in West Germany it set in fully in the form of all-pervasive home building.<sup>16</sup> For many reasons, residents everywhere have since then been moving from the core cities to surrounding areas. Only since unification however has this been the case in East Germany.

For the territory of the old West Germany, the results have been as follows:

In the 1960s and 1970s, the ‘golden age of residential suburbanisation,’<sup>17</sup> the process was characterised by centrifugal migration from the core to the periphery. The growth of the region was a consequence of the growth of the city. The city ‘overflowed’ like a basin of water.

In the 1980s, suburbanisation in the West generally slackened off, shifting from the inner to the outer ring of suburban or exurban territory. In the 1990s, however, it stepped up again. In the 1980s and 1990s regional development lost its dependence on the core. To an increasing extent, international and interregional inward migration is strengthening more outlying areas directly.

Figure 5 gives an overview of the results of the suburbanisation processes in West Germany between 1980 and 1997.

- Over the 17-year period, the population in agglomerations grew on average by 5.9 %. The number of residents in core cities fell slightly, but increased about twice as strongly in surrounding districts and in agglomerations as a whole.
- This was also the case in urbanised areas. With a much higher population growth of 10.6 %, core cities did not reach even a fifth of this average (1.9 %), whereas surrounding districts registered above average increases. In both types of region, the types of district with the lowest population density grew fastest: a sign of small-space de-concentration.

Net losses in migratory exchanges with the urban periphery and gains in international exchanges were converse, and total migration balances were low at a high volume of migration.

Figure 6 shows the processes in East Germany. It is based only on post-unification data from the period 1990 to 1997.

- The population in agglomeration areas fell by 1.6 % over the 7 year period, with above average decline in core cities and very densely settled districts, and a below average decrease in rural districts.
- In urbanised areas, too, where the population decline was much steeper, the core city was worst hit (-11%) while the periphery suffered below average losses.

High losses in the migration balance with the periphery were paralleled by losses from East-West migration; the overall migration balance was high at a low volume of migration.<sup>18</sup>

#### 4.2 Outlook

The BBR projections to 2015 foresee no fundamental change occurring in these processes, although since 1999 the 'pull' of development policy is no longer a factor. Suburbanisation will remain the dominant spatial trend in German conurbations.

- In West German agglomeration areas (figure 7), a 2.4 % increase in population can be expected by 2015. The number of central city residents will drop more strongly while densely settled districts and rural districts will gain about 10 %.
- In West German urbanised areas, the population can be expected to increase by 6.1% over the same period. All three district types will experience growth, but the rate will increase from the core outwards.
- In East Germany (figure 8) the situation will become acute particularly in urbanised areas, which are likely to suffer double-digit decline. Core cities will be dramatically affected, with a 19.5 % loss. Together with the -11.6 % loss over the period 1990-1997, the total loss since the change in regime will be over 30 %.

#### 4.3 Consequences

The following challenges can be expected to emerge in the future:

1. In West German cities, losses through suburbanisation will, on average, be compensated chiefly by international migration, which will generate a growing demand for low-price rental housing.
2. In outlying areas of West German cities, continuing suburbanisation processes will generate growing demand for owner-occupier single-family and semi-detached homes, even though most migrants will (have to) move into second-hand rental accommodation.<sup>19</sup>
3. In East German cities, where on the whole settlement pressure will be lacking and the housing market quiet, continuing suburbanisation in conjunction with other demographic processes will lead to a decrease in population<sup>20</sup> and higher vacancy rates (especially in old housing and the big prefabricated high-rise housing estates) without parallel in West Germany. The worst hit Land is Saxony, where every sixth dwelling unit is vacant, and the city most affected is Leipzig, where about every third unit is vacant (SZ 28 April 2000). At the same time, the housing stock continues to require replacement, so that demolition and new construction

will be found side by side.<sup>21</sup>

4. In the environs of East German cities, these suburbanisation processes will often inversely generate a growing demand for owner-occupier single-family and semi-detached homes.

The consequences of suburbanisation for urban and regional development cover a wide range. Frequently mentioned are the following:

1. Social polarisation and segregation
2. Land consumption, scarcity of open spaces
3. Separation of functions
4. Increasing commuting distances and growth in traffic
5. Additional infrastructural needs
6. Problems with local government finances
7. Problems with urban development design
8. Threats to local recreational amenities
9. Thinning out of residential use and 'desolation' of the inner cities
10. Dissolution of the identity of the city.

While the decisions taken by households and businesses serve individual goal attainment, public goods are impaired and societal goals placed in jeopardy by negative external effects.

This is neither the place to supply empirical evidence on consequences nor to derive detailed innovative and apposite urban strategies, or to discuss successful examples. But it should have become clear that we are dealing with a complex field of action in which, under the given legal and financial conditions, cities will not find success dropping into their laps. Any achievement will very largely depend on the action taken by the federal government (eco-tax, property tax) and the Länder (stringency of Land and regional planning, housing policy).

## **5. Conclusion**

1. At the national level, international migration will be just as important quantitatively as natural population change. Although it will not suffice to compensate for natural decrease, it will however help to slow population decline.
2. Over the period to 2015, natural population development and migration will increase the population and the proportion of foreigners in West Germany, but decrease the East German population.
3. Suburbanisation will everywhere continue within conurbations. The West's 'lead' will be reduced.
4. The main quantitative issue for the housing industry will be the vacancy problem in more and more East German cities and towns, and the chief qualitative problem

will be managing socially problematic neighbourhoods in both West and East Germany, whose situation will be influenced by segregative migratory movements (often even within a community).

5. The main problems for cities will lie in the financial and urban-development / ecological consequences of suburbanisation for core cities in West and East Germany, and, particularly in the West, in the dangers to social integration arising from a growing proportion of migrant residents.

Figure 1

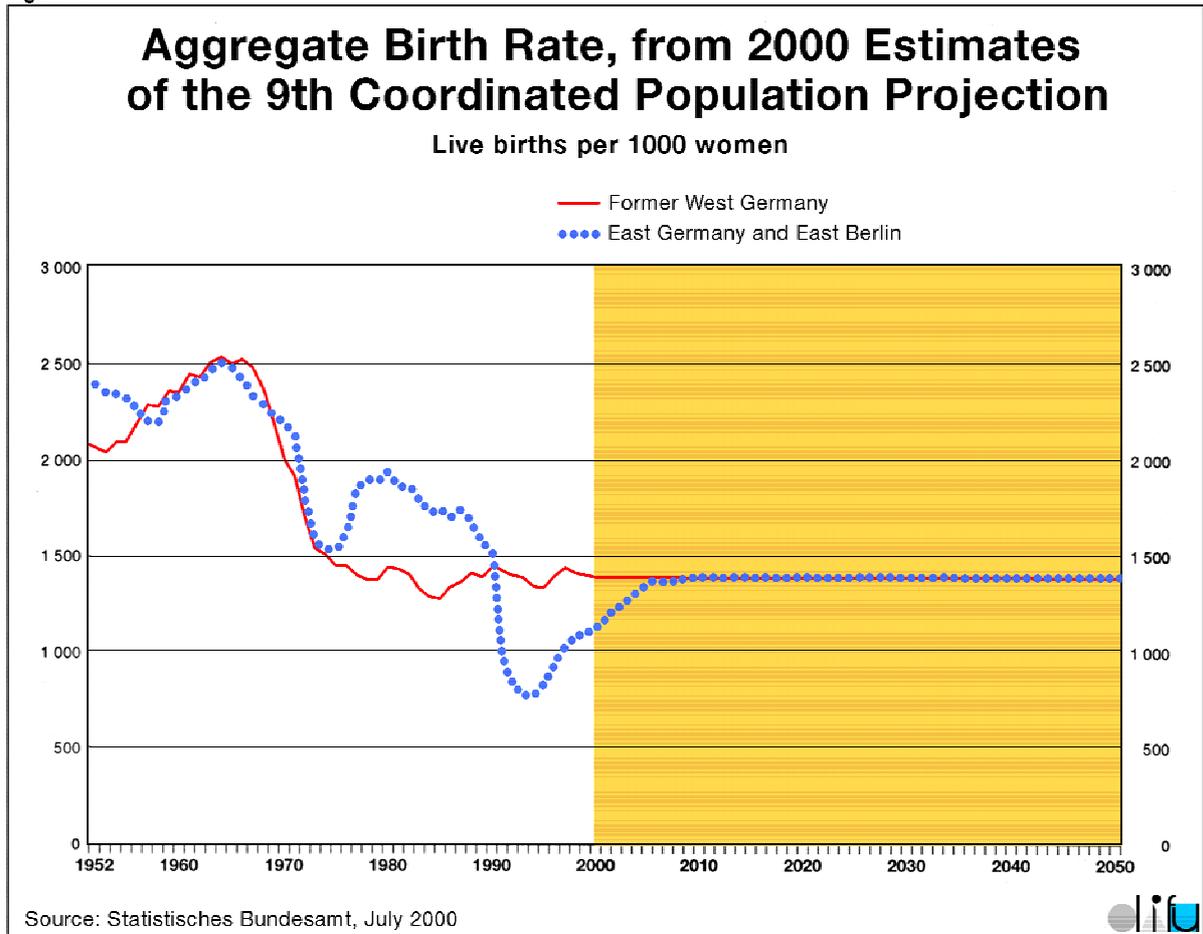
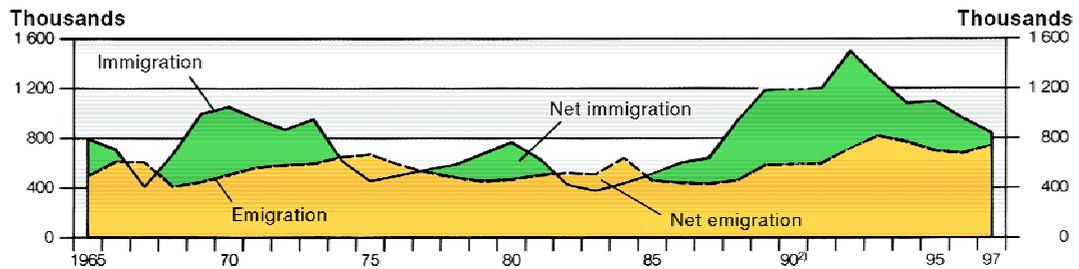


Figure 2

## Migration between Germany and Abroad, 1965-1997



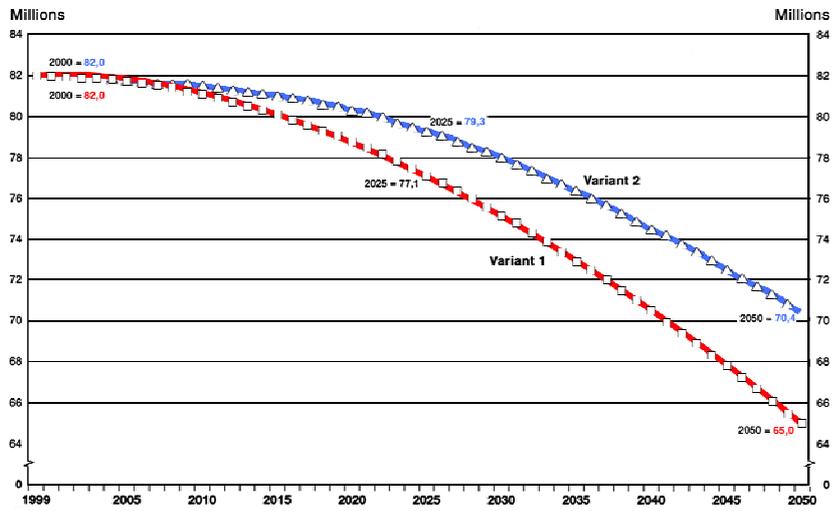
- 1) From 1991 incl. cases in which the country of origin or destination is unclear or where information is not available.
- 2) For 1990 there is not figure for the whole of Germany.

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Yearbook 1999, p. 81



Figure 3

## Population Development in Germany to 2050 9th Coordinated Population Projection



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, July 2000



Table 1

## Dynamics of Population Movements in West and East Germany, 1996-2015

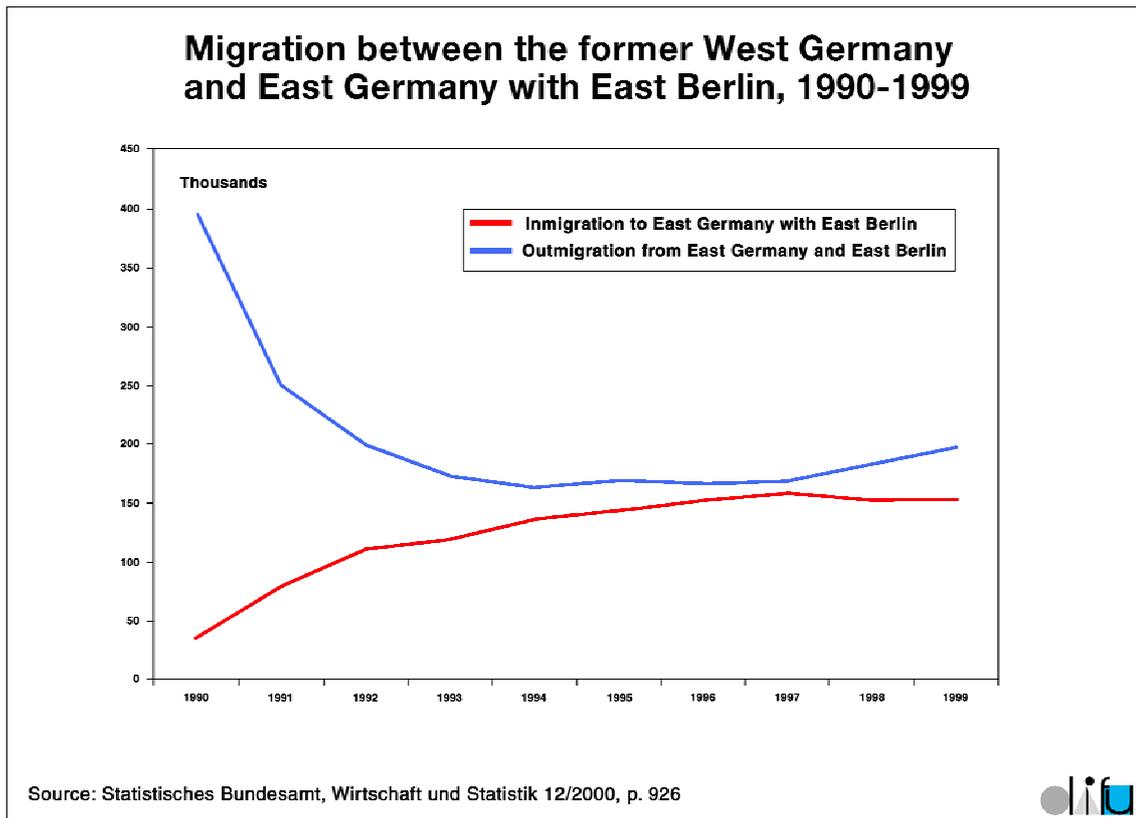
(cumulative) (in millions)

	<b>West</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>Germany</b>
Natural decrease	2,7	1,6	4,2
Net migration	5,2	0,4	5,5
Balance	<b>+2,6</b>	<b>-1,2</b>	<b>+1,4</b>

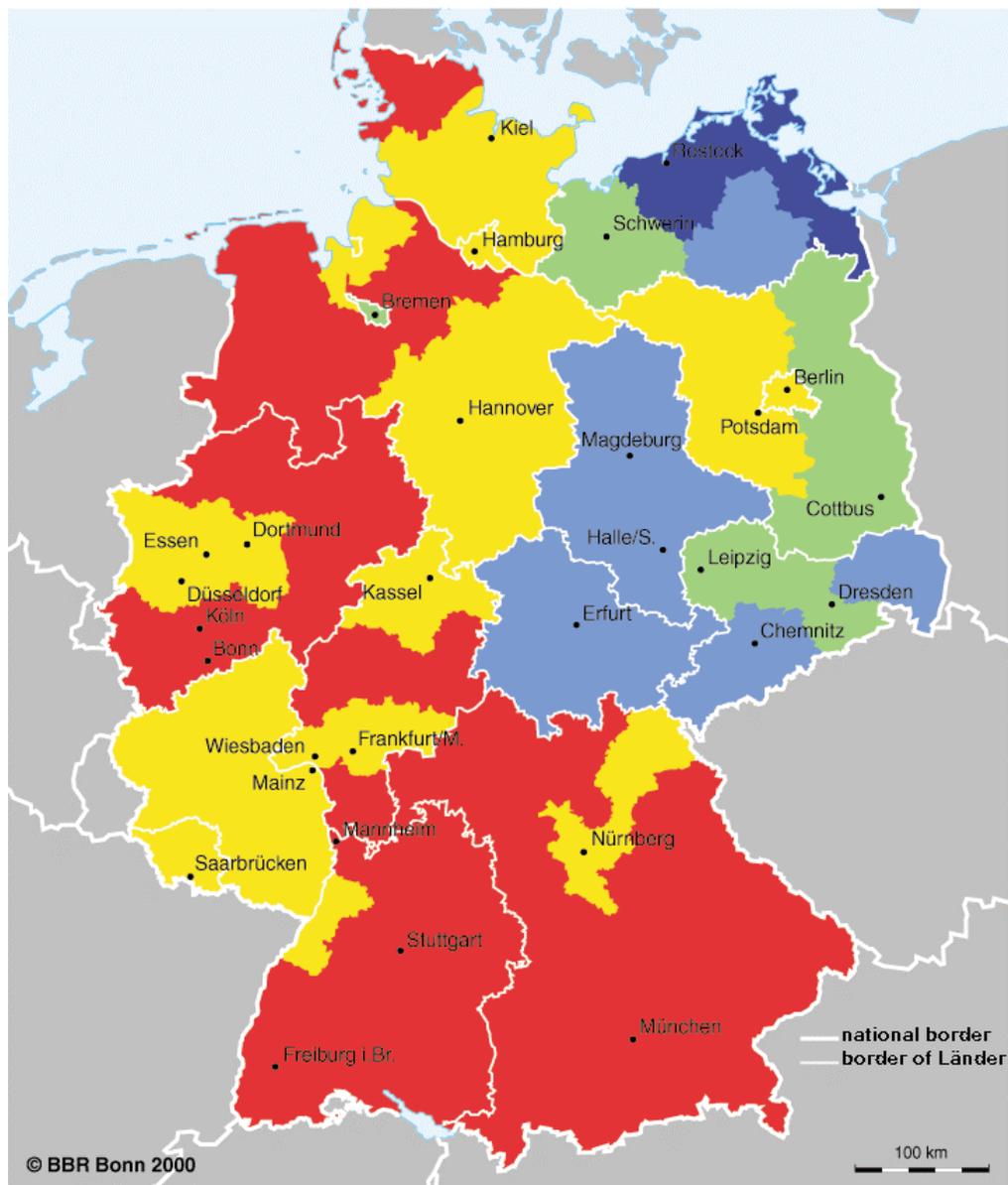
Source: Informationen zur Raumentwicklung, 11-12/1999, p.765



Figure 4



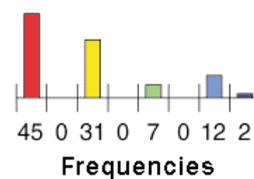
**Map 1 Historical Dynamics of Spatial Population Development and Their Causes, 1991 to 1997**



**Types of region by contribution of natural and migration balance 1991-1997 to population development 1991-1997**

**Population growth**

- Migration gain > natural increase
- Natural increase > migration gain
- Migration gain > natural decrease
- Natural increase > migration loss

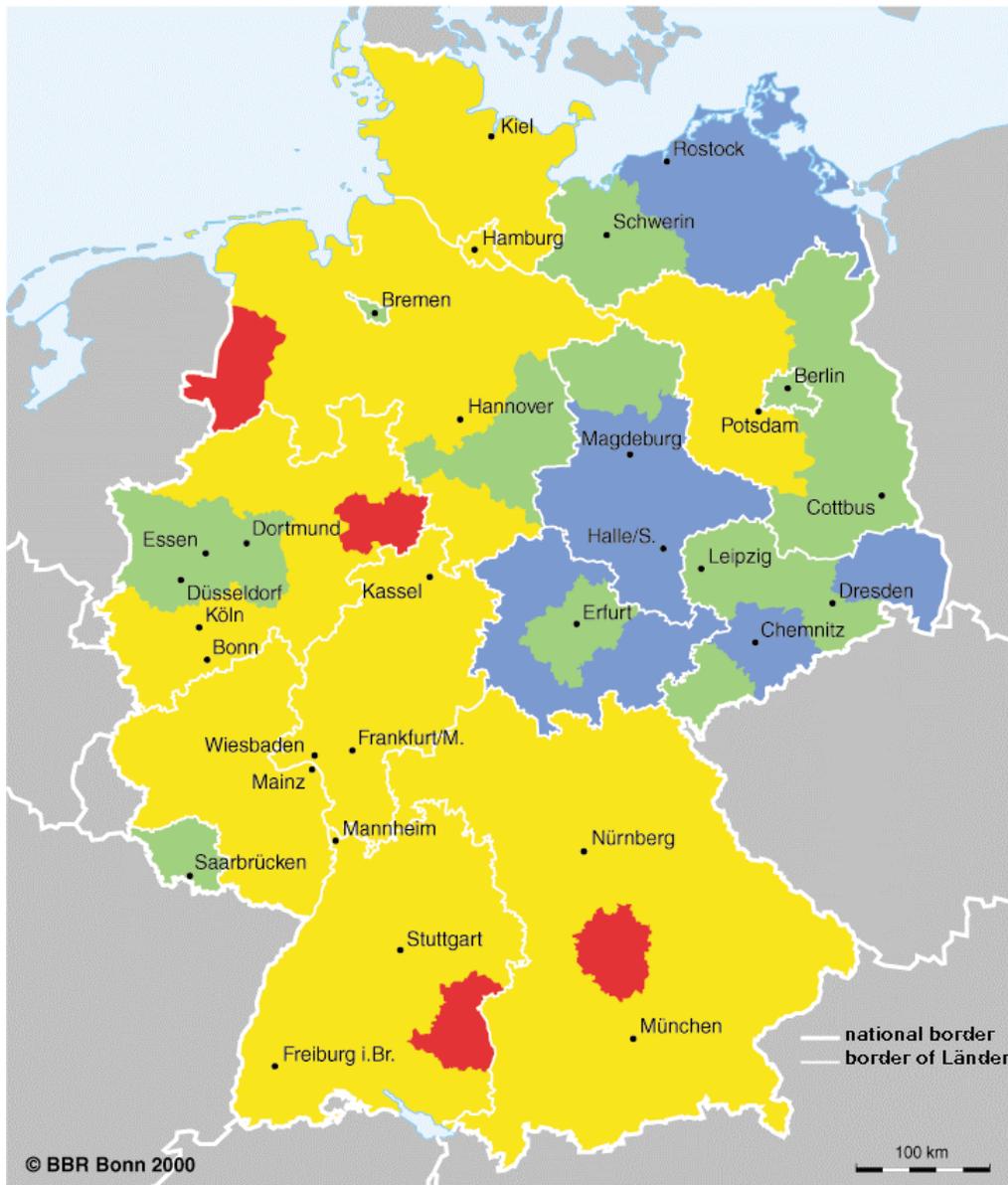


**Population decline**

- Natural decrease > migration gain
- Migration gain > natural increase
- Natural decrease > migration loss
- Migration loss > natural decrease

Data base: Laufende Raubeobachtung des BBR, Raumordnungsregionen 1 January 1996

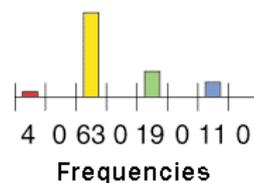
**Map 2 Future dynamics of spatial population development and their causes, 1997 to 2015**



**Types of region by contribution of natural and migration balances 1997-2015 to population development 1997-2015**

**Population growth**

- Migration gain > natural increase
- Natural increase > migration gain
- Migration gain > natural decrease
- Natural increase > migration loss



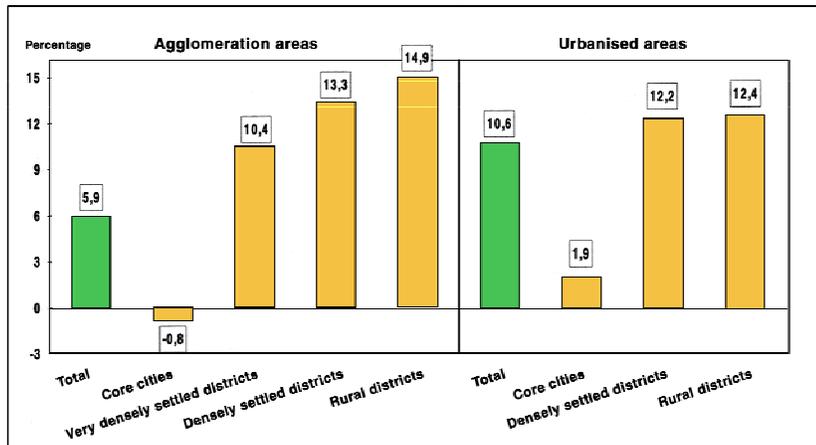
**Population decline**

- Natural decrease > migration gain
- Migration gain > natural increase
- Natural decrease > migration loss
- Migration loss > natural decrease

Data base: BBR Bevölkerungsprognose 1996-2015/ROP, Raumordnungsregionen 1 January 1996

Figure 5

## Suburbanisation of the West German Population 1980-1997 by Region and District Type (percentage population changes)

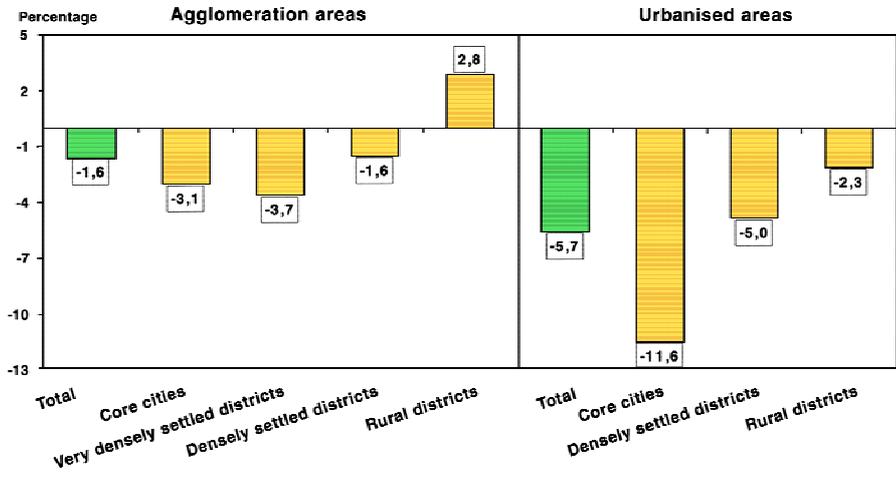


Source: BBR, Aktuelle Daten zur Entwicklung der Städte, Kreise und Gemeinden, ed. 1999 Berichte vol. 3., Bonn 1999



Figure 6

## Suburbanisation of the East German Population 1990-1997 by Region and District Type (percentage population changes)

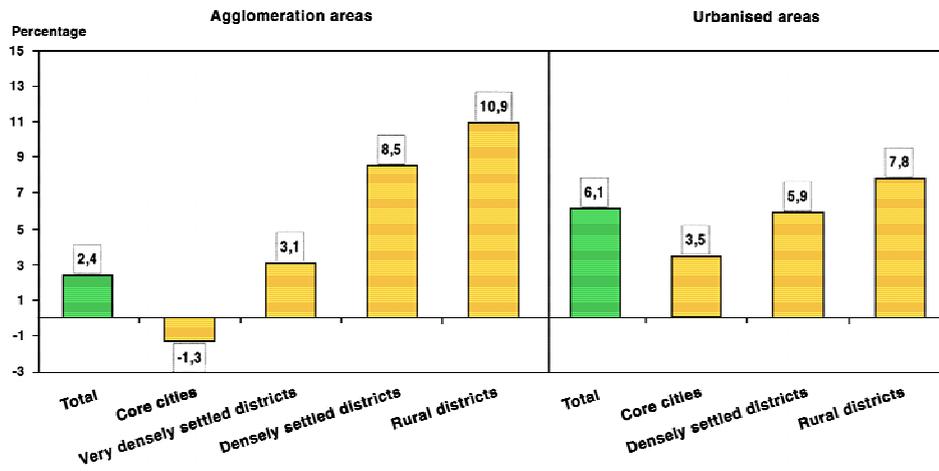


Source: BBR, Aktuelle Daten zur Entwicklung der Städte, Kreise und Gemeinden, ed. 1999, Berichte vol. 3., Bonn 1999



Figure 7

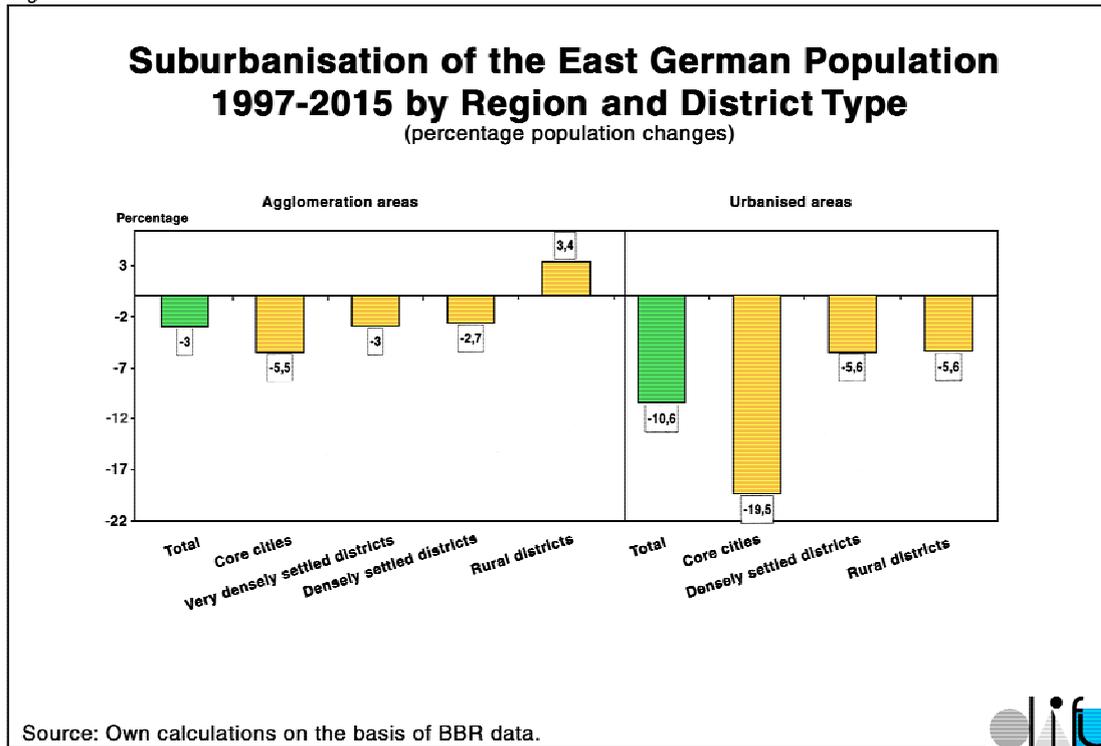
## Suburbanisation of the West German Population 1997-2015 by Region and District Type (percentage population changes)



Source: Own calculations on the basis of BBR data.



Figure 8



## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on the presentation to the Conference on Spatial Development in Europe at Nordregio in Stockholm in January 2002, held in connection with the first editorial board meeting of the European Journal of Spatial Development.

<sup>2</sup> However, the two processes do interlock: the current trend in natural population development towards an 'ageing society' is prompting increasing demands to facilitate immigration, not least to stabilise social systems.

<sup>3</sup> Bucher/Kocks 1999, p. 756.

<sup>4</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt 2000, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> A similar projection for the EU estimates that without immigration the present population of 370 million will drop to 310 million by 2050 (FAZ 31 July 2000).

<sup>6</sup> The reproductive behaviour of immigrants (and emigrants) affects population development indirectly.

<sup>7</sup> Migration und Bevölkerung, July 2000, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Gans/Kemper 1999, p. 80.

<sup>9</sup> Sommer/Voith 1999, p. 852; Sommer/Voith 2000, p. 924.

<sup>10</sup> Bucher/Kocks 1999, p. 766.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Empirica quoted in FAZ, 24 Sept. 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Heitmeyer 1998.

<sup>13</sup> BBR 1999, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> BBR 1999, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Herfert (1998, p. 763) calls it 'the constant underlying motif of spatial development in the old Länder.' For a detailed treatment cf. Brake/Dangschat/Herfert (eds.) 2001.

<sup>16</sup> Cf., inter alia, Heuer/Schäfer 1978, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Herfert 1998, p. 763.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Herfert 1998, p. 765.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Herfert 1998, p. 770. In housing construction the ratio of single-family home to multiple-family buildings is about 250,000 to 150,000. Cf. Rußig 2000, p. 63.

<sup>20</sup> Wolfen lost almost a third of its population in the 1990s (SZ 18 August 2000).

<sup>21</sup> With the draft urban development plan Housing Construction and Urban Renewal (Leipzig 2000) Leipzig was the first East German city to elaborate an integrated development concept for residential housing under conditions of population decrease.

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