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# Returns to the East: German internal migrations and local development in East Germany

**Christophe Quéva**

***Abstract***

The paper focuses on the phenomenon of internal migrations in Germany after German Reunification. The eastern part of Germany (the former GDR) lost a large share of its population due to internal migration from East to West Germany, resulting in a concomitant process of demographic and economic decline. However, in recent years, some regions such as rural areas and territories near the former inner-German Border are experiencing a re-migration process (from West to East Germany), with an economic renewal. To what extent could the re-migration to East Germany be considered as a potential demographic and economic resource? The aim of this article is to question the sustainability of return movements in the East at three levels: demographic and migratory dynamics, economic transformations, and public policies which support these mutations.

*East Germany; Internal migrations; Demographic dynamics; Economic transformations; Spatial planning*

***Zusammenfassung***

**Zurück in den Osten: Binnenwanderung und lokale Entwicklung in Ostdeutschland**

Der Artikel betrachtet das Phänomen der Binnenwanderung in Deutschland nach der Wiedervereinigung. Der östliche Teil Deutschlands (ehemalige DDR) verlor einen großen Teil seiner Bevölkerung durch Abwanderung von Ost- nach Westdeutschland.

Die Abwanderung hatte durchaus einen Effekt auf die Wirtschaft (Fachkräftemangel, sinkende Nachfrage im Privatkonsum), und der wirtschaftliche Niedergang der Nachwendezeit bewegte viele Menschen aufgrund der Arbeitslosigkeit zur Abwanderung. Doch in den letzten Jahren erleben einige Regionen wie ländliche Räume und Territorien in der Nähe der ehemaligen innerdeutschen Grenze einen Rückwanderungsprozess (von West- nach Ostdeutschland) mit einer wirtschaftlichen Erneuerung. Inwieweit könnte die Rückwanderung nach Ostdeutschland als demografisches und wirtschaftliches Potenzial betrachtet werden? Ziel dieses Artikels ist, die Nachhaltigkeit von Rückkehrbewegungen im Osten auf drei Ebenen zu hinterfragen: Demographische und Migrationsdynamik, ökonomischer Strukturwandel und öffentliche Politiken, die diese Veränderungen unterstützen.

*Ostdeutschland; Binnenwanderung; demographischer Wandel; ökonomische Veränderungen; Regionalentwicklung*

## Introduction

"Nearly half the people leaving the West to settle in East Germany are originally from the East. Their return stabilises demographic dynamics and the labour market in the new *Länder*", personal translation[1] (Matuschewski 2010).

This statement summarises Anke Matuschewski's article (2010) from the perspective of an economic stabilisation in the new *Länder*, partly linked to the returns to the East. It illustrates what is at stake in terms of migrations: in the current context, East Germany is being marked by demographic decline and population ageing, as well as by high economic fragility. Migrations from West to East Germany are not a new phenomenon, and since the Reunification they have occurred in parallel to the numerous migrations from the East to the West, although to a lesser degree. We can, however, note that there has recently been a double shift in migration dynamics. Statistically, movements to the West have kept decreasing since 2001, whereas movements to the East are stable; indeed, recently they have even tended to increase very slightly. Thus, the gap between migrations to the West and those to the East is continuously narrowing. Moreover, in qualitative terms, going towards the East (*Zurück nach Osten*) or returning to the East (*Zurück in den Osten*) is associated with new motivations; these include family or work migration patterns. Such patterns are much encouraged by public policies, which consider these return movements as a potential demographic and economic resource.

The aim of this article is to analyse the sustainability of these return movements and their implications for the concerned territories. In light of migration statistics, ongoing research projects in Germany, and an increasing number of scientific publications on the returns to the East, we will attempt to identify the extent to which these return movements can be considered as vectors of a progressive readjustment of the demographic and economic fragilities that East Germany has experienced since the Reunification. Given the continuing works undertaken in Germany to address these issues, my hypothesis is that the current dynamics could arise from a structural rather than cyclical logic; this could therefore contribute to the demographic and economic readjustment of a certain number of areas in East Germany that have been weakened by departures to the West and population ageing. However, this logic can only be applied if local stakeholders (migrants, elected representatives, associations, etc.) demonstrate the will and the local capacity to support these return movements. This study thus aims to investigate the demographic sustainability of the returns to the East; this topic implies, as a backdrop, issues of socio-economic sustainability, and even of territorial sustainability. The latter issue involves the intergenerational transmission of socially and economically balanced territories, given that the environmental dimension of sustainability is not directly addressed in this article.

## Understanding returns to the East: time, places and stakeholders

The return movement to the East – *Rückwanderung* – is a recent concept that is complex to comprehend. As a part of global migration dynamics, it is marked by regular and massive population movements between East and West Germany since the Reunification. Moreover, returns to the East are far from concerning all new *Länder*, and are characterised by a fragmentary and complex logic. The process is also generated by individual patterns and motivations; thus, we will attempt to represent these logics in order to grasp their potential similarities.

### *An insight into German migration dynamics*

The Reunification is associated with a vast migration movement from the East to the West, with a million and a half individuals leaving the new *Länder* for the West between 2000 and 2007. Yet, a million people simultaneously went the opposite way, to (re)settle in the East (Herfert 2007). In this context, and without considering the specific situation of the capital, Berlin, we can observe in the graph below (Fig. 1) that, although East-West migrations remained higher than West-East migrations between 1990 and 2015, the total volume of migrants nevertheless tended to converge during the same time period. Moreover, in terms of the balance between East-West and West-East migrants, the fluctuations seen in 1990–1991 and 2000–2001 were replaced with more regular patterns and a progressive decline of this difference up until 2014 (a balance of –4,804 persons in 2015 (–10,497 in 2013) between migrants going West and those going East, excluding Berlin). According to the analyses by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie 2014), from 2014–2015 onwards, the same amount may be reached between the numbers of migrants going to the West and the East.

The tendencies identified could demonstrate a structural change in migration dynamics, in terms of the reduction of departures to the West and a parallel movement of stabilisation or minor increase of returns to the East; though the latter numbers are very low, they are worth noting. According to Anke Matuschewski (2010), a fifth of the individuals who went West after the Reunification have now come back to the East, in or near their region of origin. We shall now try to spatially frame this logic of returns.

### *The spatial logic of return movements*

Although several studies started to address the subject of returns to the East as early as the mid-2000s (Beck 2004; Schulz 2004; Dienel et al. 2007; Jain a. Schmithals 2009; Wiest et al. 2009; Kubis a. Schneider 2010; Matuschewski 2010; Lacquement 2001), the spatial and temporal logics of return movements to the whole of East Germany were largely formalised for the first time in the recent works of a team of researchers from the Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography in Leipzig (Lang a. Hämmerling 2013; Nadler a. Wesling 2013; Nadler a.

1 "Etwa die Hälfte der Menschen, die von West- nach Ostdeutschland umziehen, sind gebürtige Ostdeutsche. Ihre Rückwanderung stabilisiert Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Arbeitsmarkt in den neuen Ländern" (Matuschewski 2010, p. 81).

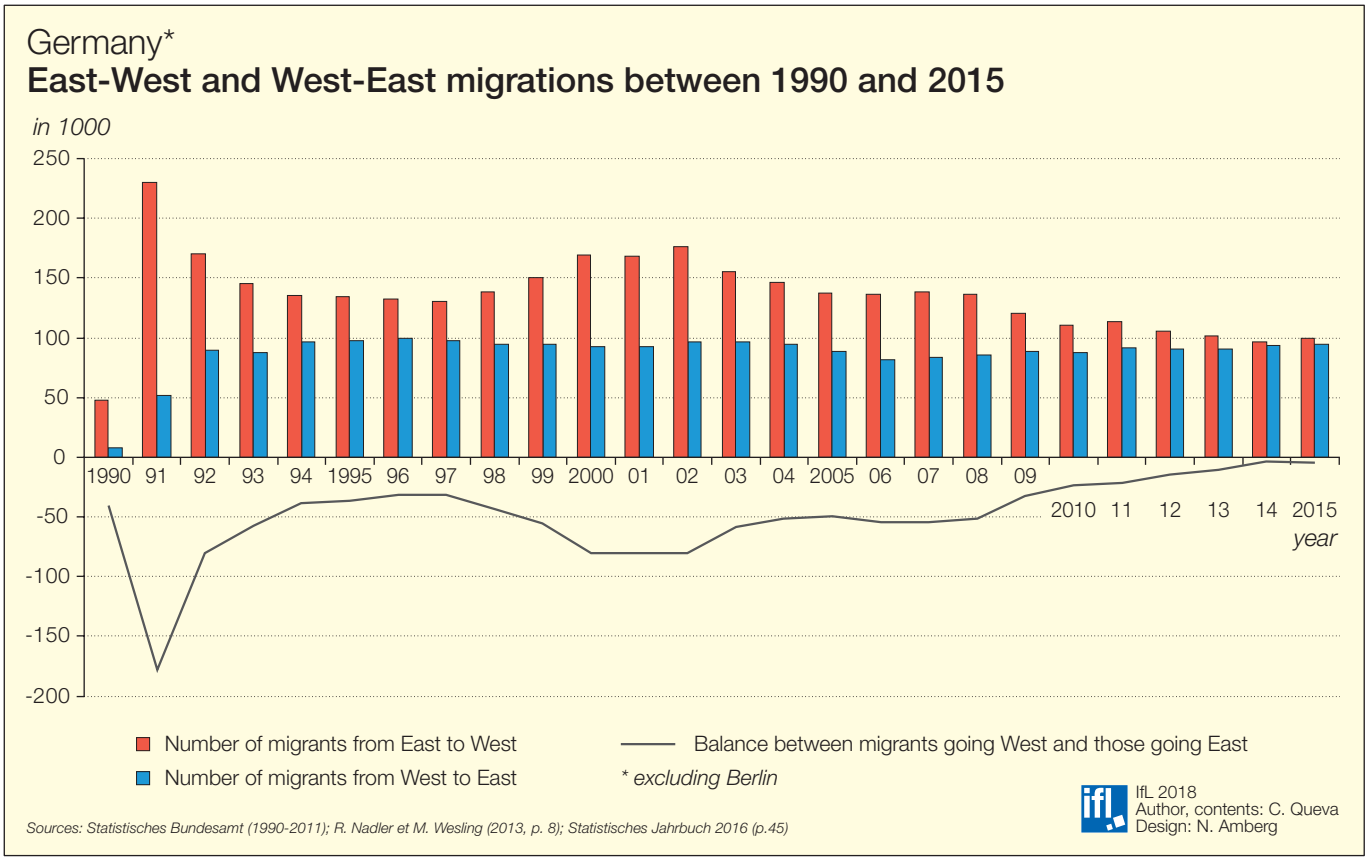


*Fig. 1: East-West and West-East migrations in Germany between 1990 and 2015*

Wesling 2014), in the framework of a European research programme (Re-turn/Regions benefiting from returning migrants, http://www.re-migrants.eu/). Based on a statistical study and a survey of 400 workers who had migrated to the West before resettling in the East between 2000 and 2010, their research was greatly disseminated in the scientific sphere via Nationalatlas Deutschland and the national press (*Die Welt*, *Die Zeit*, etc.). The authors first highlighted the transformation of the areas from which migrations to the East originated. Between 2000 and 2005, the issuing *Länder* mainly bordered East Germany (particularly Schleswig-Holstein, Bremen and Bavaria), whereas between 2006 and 2011, the *Länder* concerned were further away, such as Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland. The comparative map (2001–2005 and 2006–2010) of workers' return movements to the East at a district level (Fig. 2) enables us to pinpoint the settlement patterns of migrants from the West. Besides Berlin, the Saxony and Thuringia *Länder* welcomed the largest numbers of returning migrants, as did the most touristic rural regions, more specifically on the Baltic coast. As for the places of arrival of these return movements, it may be noted that migrants' main destinations in East Germany are the rural areas: "Basically, the return rate in cities is much lower than in rural areas (...). Whether this is due to different framework conditions such as significantly higher cost of living in the cities than in the countryside, or to different individual preferences such as a greater attachment to the region of origin in the countryside, cannot be derived from the data. An independent survey of the returnees would be necessary to establish this" (personal translation)[2] (Fuchs et al. 2017). Between 2001 and 2005, as Robert Nadler and Mirko Wesling remarked, the districts that border older *Länder* were the most attractive, especially in Thuringia, Saxony-Anhalt and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (Nadler a. Wesling 2013, p. 2). These areas are linked to significant daily commuting movements between East and West Germany (Quéva 2017). For instance, in 2012, 15 % of Thuringian employees worked in another *Land* (12 % in 1999, or one out of seven Thuringian workers). These mobilities mainly tended towards older *Länder*: Bavaria first, then Hessen (Quéva 2017). However, as illustrated in Figure 2, between 2006 and 2011 the patterns became more complex, and return movements progressed further than the former inner-German border (Nadler a. Wesling 2013, p. 1). Return movements therefore seemed to spatially expand to a growing part of East Germany, especially in rural areas (Fuchs et al. 2017). Beyond these areas marked by returns to the East and the tendencies mentioned, there are

2 "Grundsätzlich ist die Rückkehrquote in Städten deutlich geringer als in ländlichen Gebieten (...). Ob dies an unterschiedlichen Rahmenbedingungen wie deutlich höheren Lebenshaltungskosten in den Städten als auf dem Land oder an unterschiedlichen individuellen Präferenzen wie eine größere Bindung an den Ursprungskreis auf dem Land liegt, lässt sich aus den Daten nicht ableiten. Hierfür wäre eine eigenständige Befragung der Rückkehrer notwendig)" (Fuchs et al. 2017, p. 2)

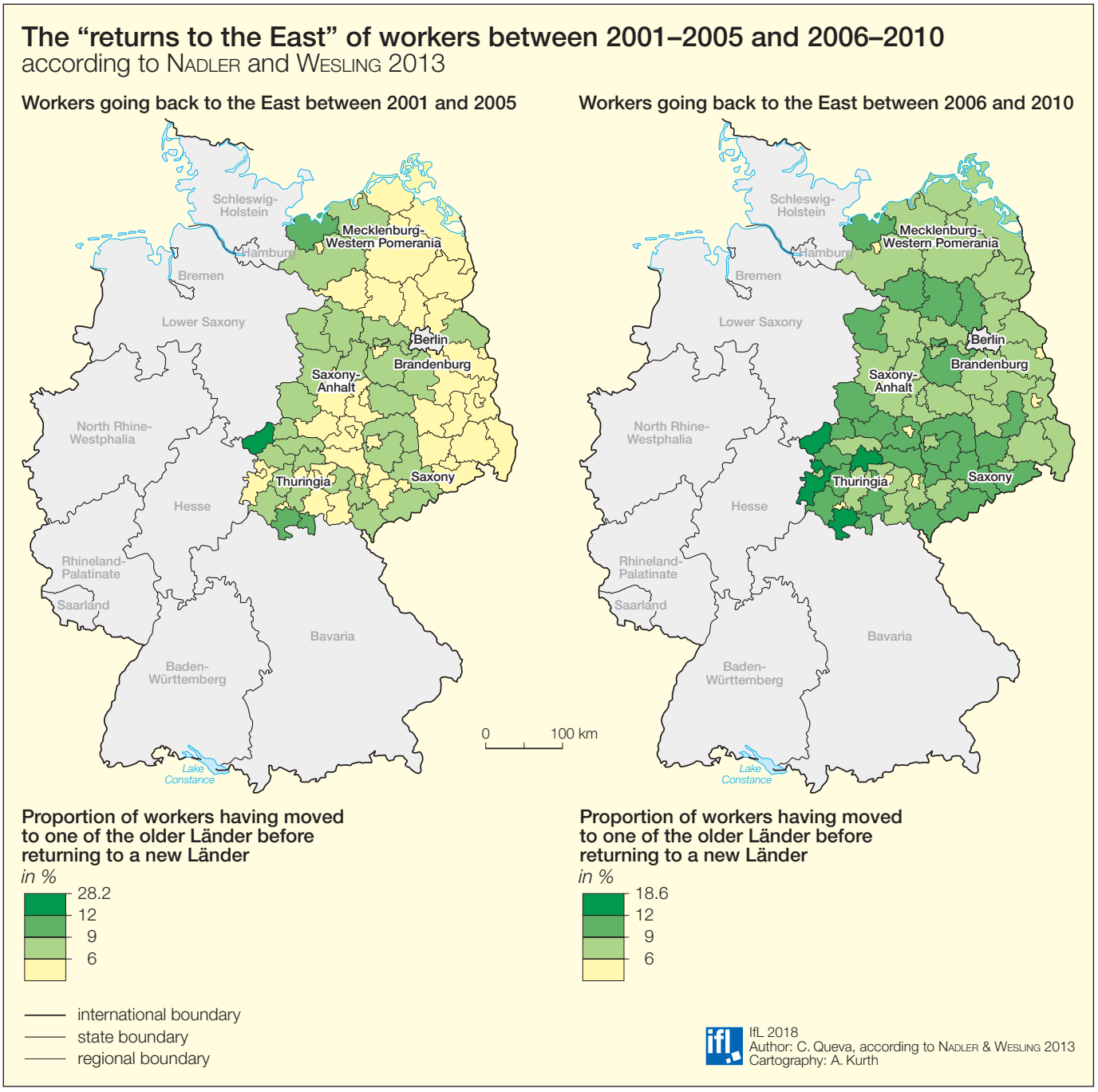


*Fig. 2: The "returns to the East" of workers between 2001–2005 and 2006–2010*

individual trajectories and various motivations that are worth mentioning.

### *Profile and motivations of Rückwanderer*

The profile of *Rückwanderer* – a notion that could be translated as "migrants returning to their region of origin" – has been analysed in several studies and on different time scales (Beck 2004; Jain a. Schmithals 2009; Matuschewski 2010; Nadler a. Wesling 2013; Scheffel 2013). Three main categories identified in these different works are as follows: young graduates (25–35 years old) who left to study in the West before returning to work in the East; people working in the West but living in the East; and retired persons who had left to work in the West but who returned to the East for their retirement. It is difficult to number the proportion of these categories, as the different works dealing with this subject are based on qualitative analyses (surveys) and on limited sample groups. For instance, the survey "Re-Turn" (online questionnaire) implemented by the Leibniz-Institut, Leipzig Institute of Geography, concerned a sample group of 400 individuals. As for the survey of reference in Anke Matuschewski's article (2010), it focused on 50 individuals who had resettled in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Saxony, and on 50 businesspersons from East Germany. We can nevertheless note differences in the locations where

these different categories of *Rückwanderer* settle: large cities for the first group, former inner-German border regions for the second group, and regions of origin (urban or rural) for the last category. However, according to the different surveys carried out in the works mentioned above, the motivations for migration are similar for all three categories. Going to the West is mainly motivated by reasons of salary, career opportunities and training courses, whereas individuals return to the East to reunite with family or friends, or for a better quality of life (cost of living especially). The relationship with the region of origin (the *Heimat*) is thus an important key to understand these return movements; Eastward migrations mostly demonstrate a logic of integration, if not of grounding. This integration is spatial (individuals return to their place of birth, of study, or near where their families live), but also social: "Social networks are often important for individuals who have 'socialised' in the East, and perhaps even more important for West Germans who appear to be more individualistic, according to surveyed participants", personal translation[3] (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie 2014).

This differentiated perception between East and West Germans is paradoxical, as returning migrants also insist on how the West-East dichotomy has now been overcome, in view of the patterns of mutual integration and adaptation (Matuschewski 2010; Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie 2014). Nonetheless, returning movements to the East are based on a perception that life in the West is unsatisfactory. Similarly, differences in mentality between both sides of Germany are highlighted in the surveys implemented by Anke Matuschewski; she explains that the studied employers tried to attract *Rückwanderer* because of their knowledge of the region, of their involvement in the local economy and life, and because there is a lesser chance of them re-emigrating to the West after returnin to the East (Matuschewski 2010). In this respect, we need to assess the economic and political strategies that are implemented to encourage and support return migrations, both before and after people return to the East.

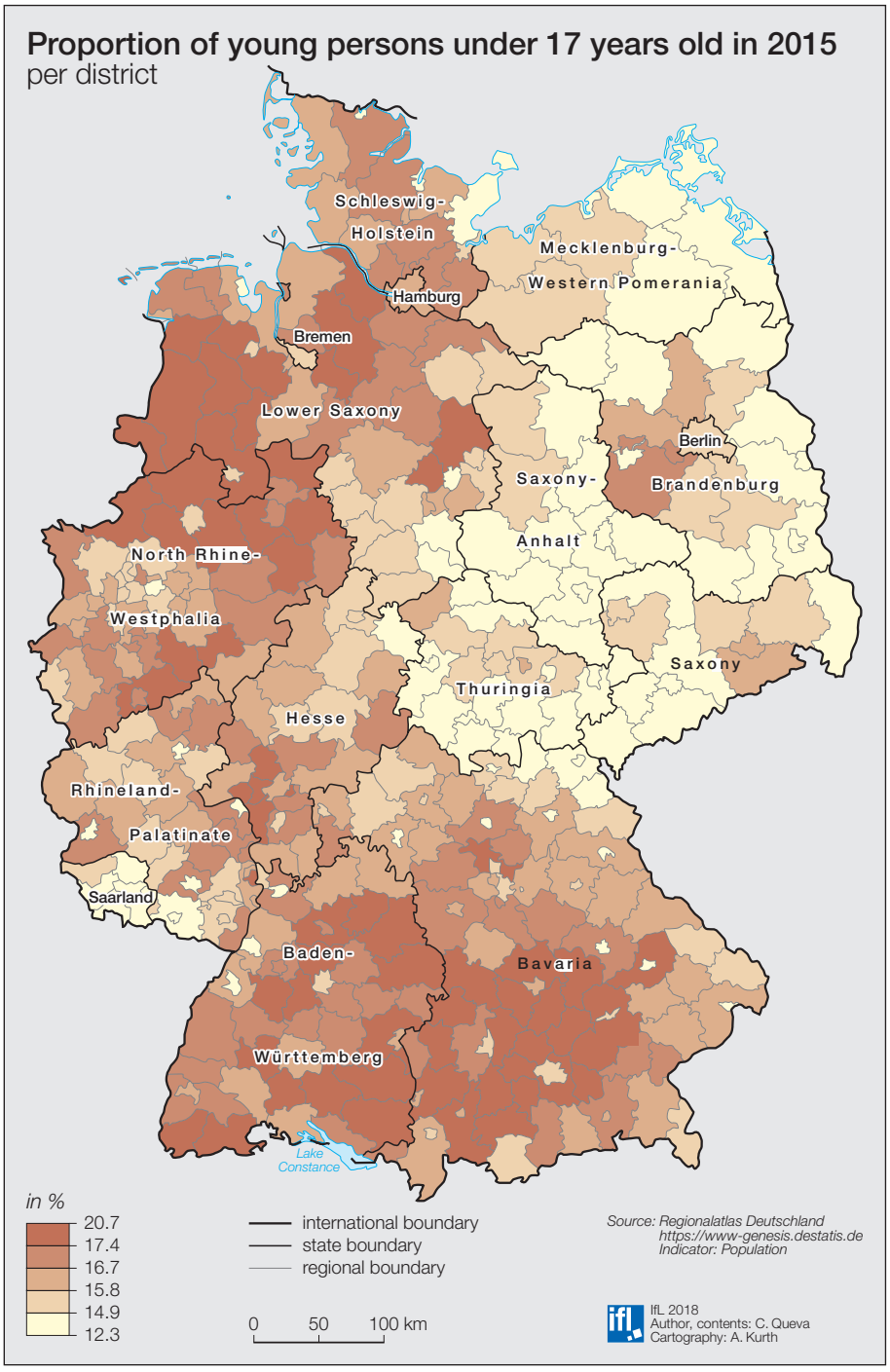


*Fig. 3: Proportion of young persons under 17 years old in 2015*

## Supporting returns to the East: the role of public policies

In addition to the *Rückwanderer*, it is important to consider the role of public and private stakeholders who try to benefit from return migrations. In order to understand their strategies, we will first examine how return migrations can be a potential resource for demography and the economy. We will then be able to

3 "Soziale Netze sind für Menschen, die im Osten sozialisiert wurden, offenbar sehr wichtig möglicherweise auch wichtiger als für Westdeutsche, die nach Eindruck mehrerer Interviewpartnerinnen und -partner stärker individualistisch geprägt sind" (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie 2014).

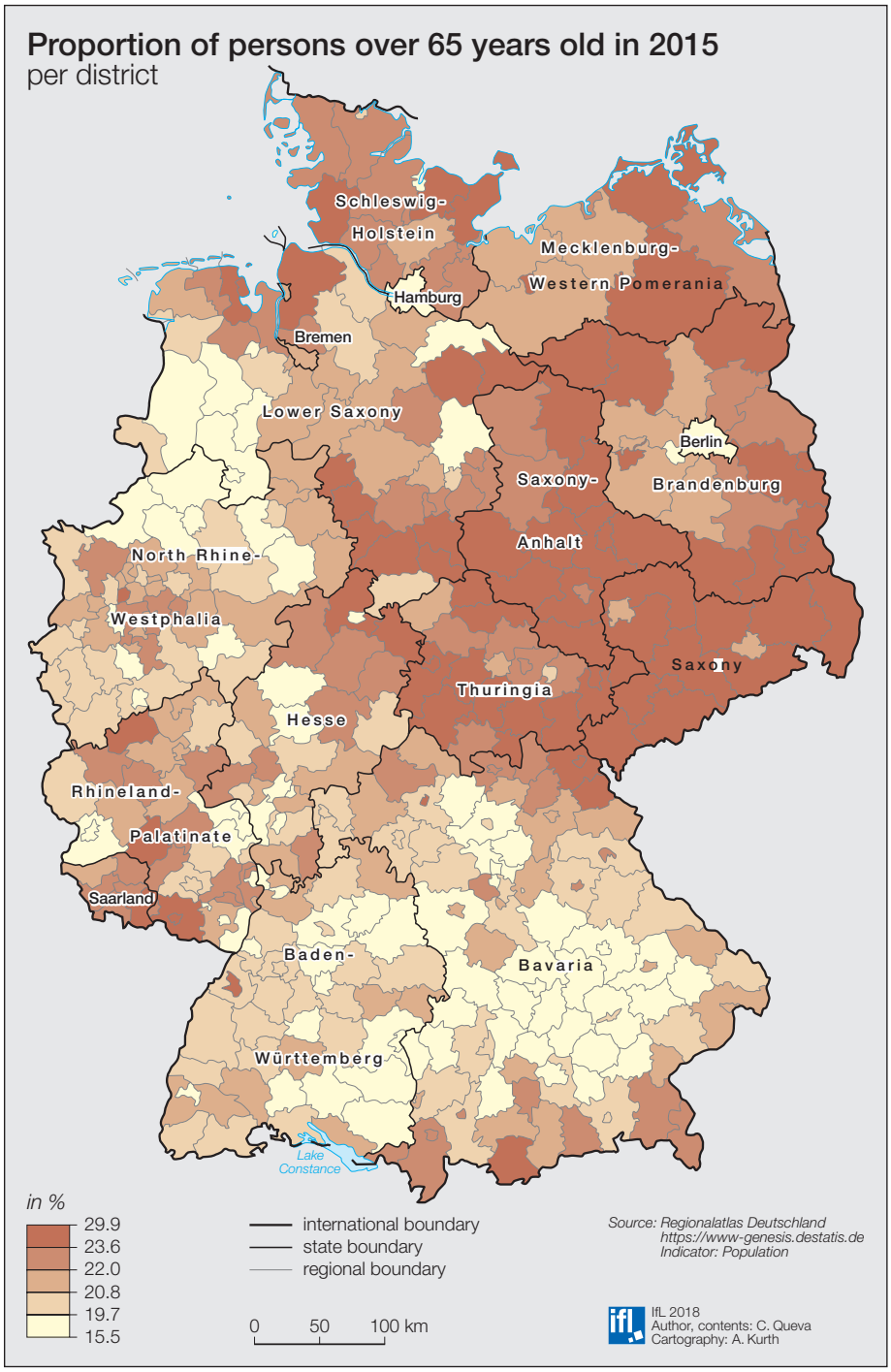


*Fig. 4: Proportion of persons over 65 years old in 2015*

highlight examples of incentives and support for return movements.

**Migration as a potential resource**

In terms of population, Figure 1 illustrates how returns to the East have grown to balance internal migrations in Germany: we have seen that the number of arrivals in older *Länder* tends to fall closer to that of arrivals in new *Länder*, which could demonstrate an ongoing structural trend of rebalancing. Furthermore, as we have also already seen, migrants settling in the East are mostly workers, and fairly young (25–35 years old); this suggests that the population ageing phenomenon, which is often mentioned in studies dealing with East Germany, could be reduced in the long term. However, although East/West inequalities in terms of net migration may diminish, demographic differences are still significant, especially in terms of population ageing. The two maps below (Fig. 3 and 4) illustrate how complicated the generational rebalancing appears to be, with an under-representation of the youth (Fig. 3) and an overrepresentation of the elderly (Fig. 4) in East Germany. Returns to the East must thus be viewed in a demographic perspective.

In economic terms, returns to the East could potentially constitute a real opportunity to maintain employment and to create new activities. As the report by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy explains in relation to the differences in representation between East and West Germany, young companies could benefit from a more favourable context in the East, due to local and family support: "In regions of origin, social networks and local support can be activated more easily for young companies. This is a typical East German factor that is triggered during the setting-up of new companies. Family plays a more important role than in the West", personal translation[4] (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie 2014). This explanation must naturally be nuanced, as the East German context presents an increasingly spatially contrasted labour market: Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the unemployment rates per district at two different points in time. Although in 2006, all districts in the new *Länder* were marked by very high unemployment rates, above 11.4 % and even sometimes over 16 %, in 2014 these rates fell to less than 6.1 % in the western districts of Thuringia (located near the former inner-German border). These numbers must obviously be viewed in the context of the whole country, where the unemployment rate overall decreased between 2006 and 2014 – diminishing during this period from 12 % to 7.5 % in Germany, and from 19.2 % to 11 % in the new *Länder*.

4 "In der Heimat können soziale Netze für das junge Unternehmen besser aktiviert und familiäre Unterstützung mobilisiert werden. Damit ist ein typisch ostdeutsches Element der Gründungsphase angesprochen. Die Familie spielt eine ungleich wichtigere Rolle als im Westen" (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie 2014).

In the context of East Germany, where the unemployment rate was 11 % in 2014 for all new *Länder*, these particularly low rates can largely be explained by the high numbers of return migrations to these districts (see Figure 2) and by daily commuting mobilities between both sides of the former inner-German border (Quéva 2017). For instance, in 2016, the unemployment rates in the "border" districts of Thuringia were 5.1 % for Wartburgkreis, located near Hessen; 4.4 % for the Hildburghausen district (near Bavaria); and even as low as 3.9 % for the Sonneberg district (also near Bavaria). As for the districts in the north of the *Land*, far from the former border and marked by a lower number of returns (Fig. 2), their unemployment rates exceed 9 % in 2016 (9.2 % in Altenburger Land and 9.9 % in Kyffhaüserkreis). Besides these economic advantages of maintaining or creating employment, there are also territorial issues at stake, such as reinforcing access to services, which requires the involvement of public authorities in supporting these return movements.

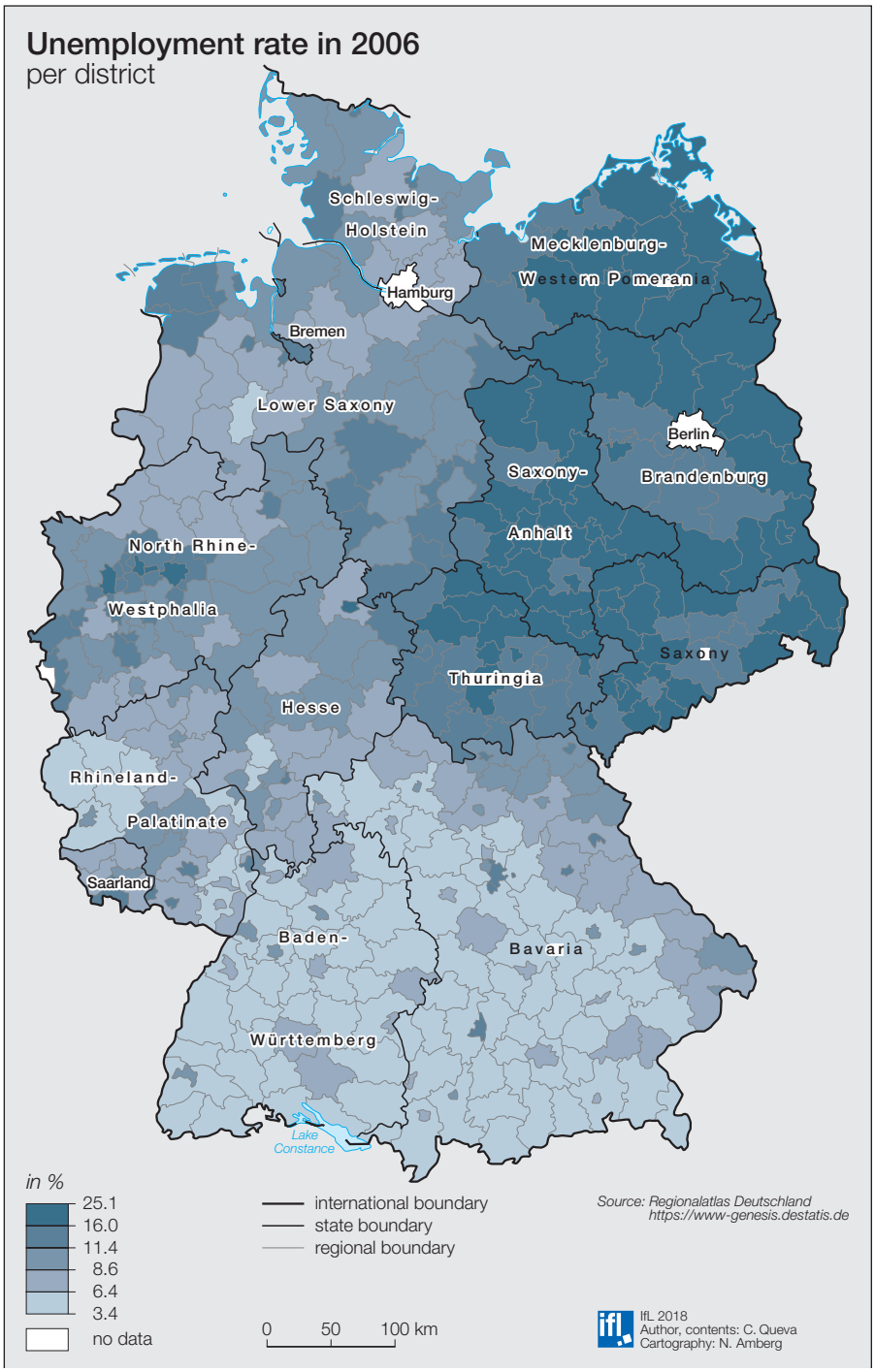


*Fig. 5: Unemployment rate in 2006*

### Towards strategies to encourage returns to the East?

Numerous mechanisms have been implemented in Germany to accompany the country's demographic changes. On a national scale, a financial support scheme (Modellvorhaben "Demografischer Wandel – Region schafft Zukunft"), which focused on service provision in regions marked by demographic weaknesses, was implemented between 2007 and 2011. It is still ongoing today in the rural regions, through the "Aktionsprogramm Daseinsvorsorge", which selected 21 model regions (including nine in East Germany) to receive between 70,000 and 180,000 euros, in order to carry out a sustainable strategy to strengthen service provision (schools, nurseries, healthcare, assistance for seniors, etc.). Concerning the more specific issue of returns to the East, it is often the *Länder* or local authorities themselves who are in charge of implementing projects and strategies to welcome and integrate newcomers, especially the *Rückwanderer*. This is, for example, the case for the Dresden Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in Saxony (Fig. 7): it has created the "Sachse komm zurück" portal, which explicitly refers to return migrations, to "cross-border" mobilities to older *Länder*, and even to the *Heimat*. The region is presented as a booming area, partly due to community relationships.

There are also projects of action research which are directly focused on returns to the East, such as the portal "Menschen für Ostdeutschland" (Fig. 8). This portal reports research carried out in the framework of a programme entitled "Rückwanderung als dynamischer Faktor für ostdeutsche Städte" (Return

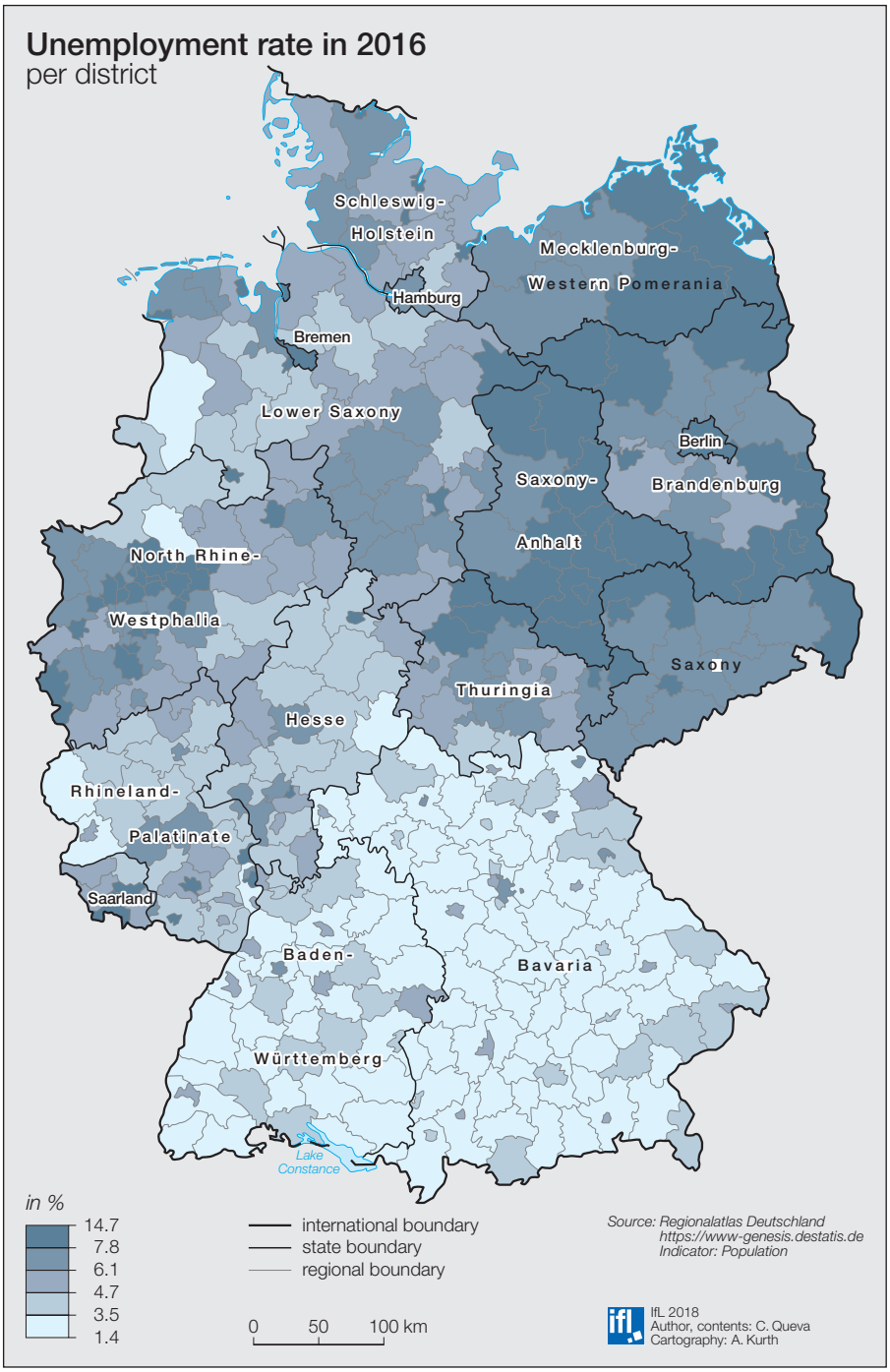


*Fig. 6: Unemployment rate in 2016*

movements as a dynamic factor for East German cities); it aims to demonstrate how *Rückwanderer* constitute a reservoir of resources in terms of experience and know-how for the economic and social revitalisation of their regions of origin, more specifically for the Land of Saxony-Anhalt, around Magdeburg: "It is necessary to show what potentials (in terms of experience, know-how and capital) the *Rückwanderer* bring with them for the economic and social revitalization of their home region", personal translation[5]. In this perspective, these initiatives attempt to constitute a network of relations and dialogue between migrants who have gone to the West and those who have returned to the East, and to link them with local representatives, in order to encourage the (re-)integration of *Rückwanderer* at a local level. Initiatives of this kind are numerous and are developing in the new *Länder*; they concern different territorial levels (the *Land*, districts, towns) and a diversity of stakeholders (public authorities, associations, experts, etc.).

## Conclusion

The recent intensification of scientific study of return movements to the East, combined with action research programmes to support and encourage these returns, underline the importance of this issue in terms of comprehending the current demographic and economic changes in a country in transition, especially in the East and in rural areas. The research carried out since the mid-2000s on return migrations has enabled us to identify the ongoing migration patterns, and to discern a few major categories of *Rückwanderer*. However, the total number of the migrants in question is still relatively small, and insufficient to counterbalance current demographic trends, particularly population ageing. One may wonder if these return movements could lead to greater disparities within the new *Länder*. The migration resource they can be seen to represent is not easily mobilised, as returning migrants are difficult to identify and are often part of the retirement category. Finally, studies show that returning and reintegrating is not as simple as it seems, as stated by a surveyed participant in the report of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy: "It was not a 'return', but rather discovering a new world. The *Land* here, in the East, developed much more rapidly in eleven years than *Länder* in the West during the same time period", personal translation[6] (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie 2014). For workers, returning to the East also means returning to a fragile

5 "Es soll gezeigt werden, welches Potenzial an Erfahrungen, Know-How und Kapital Rückwanderer für die wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Belebung ihrer Heimatregion mitbringen", http://www.partizipative-methoden.de/uploads/pdf/09–09-16_Buergerausstellung_Gesamt_b.pdf

6 "Das war keine Rückkehr, das war wieder eine andere Welt. Das Land hier hat sich ja in den 11 Jahren viel schneller entwickelt, als sich [der Westen] in den 11 Jahren entwickelt hat" (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie 2014).

*Fig. 7: "Sachse komm zurück" portal homepage, created by the Dresden Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Source: https://www.sachsekommzurueck.de/servlet/portal?knoten_id=9320&sprache=deu. Consulted on September 26, 2018.*

labour market, which can explain why certain individuals are reluctant to do so: "Only a quarter of the persons who have already returned to the East assert that their return was difficult or very difficult; but three quarters of individuals ready to go back to the East expect their return to be difficult or very difficult. The main reason mentioned by both groups is the labour market in East Germany", personal translation[7] (Lang a. Hämmerling 2013). The demographic and economic sustainability of the returns to the East will therefore be highly nuanced, and must be considered in a long time-frame. We will only be able to determine if a genuine rebalancing is taking place if we continuously examine these dynamics in the following years

7 "Lediglich ein Viertel der bereits Zurückgekehrten gibt an, dass die Rückkehr (sehr) schwer war. Demgegenüber erwarten fast drei Viertel der Rückkehrbereiten, dass die Rückkehr (sehr) schwer wird. Als Hauptursache für die Schwierigkeiten bei der Rückkehr nennen beide Gruppen die Arbeitsmarktsituation in Ostdeutschland" (Lang a. Hämmerling 2013).

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**Rückwanderung - dynamischer Faktor für ostdeutsche Städte**

Abwanderung aus Ostdeutschen Städten - zumeist in den Westen - geschieht nicht immer freiwillig. Vielmehr resultiert sie oft aus einer Perspektivlosigkeit heraus. Der Wunsch, die Heimat nicht aus den Augen zu verlieren bleibt bestehen. In traditionellen Abwanderungsregionen in Europa spielt die Rückwanderung von Emigranten mittlerweile eine zentrale Rolle bei der Revitalisierung entleerter ländlicher Räume. Ihre Erfahrungen, Know-How und Kapital sind ein wichtiges Potenzial für die wirtschaftliche Belebung der Heimatregion. Die Bedeutung der Rückwanderung für Ostdeutschland ist noch kaum erkannt worden, obwohl sie schon jetzt einen hohen Anteil der Zuzüge in ostdeutsche Regionen ausmacht.

Im Rahmen einer Studie sollen die Chancen einer gezielten Förderung von Rückwanderung am Beispiel der Stadt Magdeburg untersucht werden. Ziel ist, einen auf andere Städte übertragbaren Maßnahmenkatalog für Heimatbindung, Rückwanderungs- und Zuzugsförderung zu entwickeln. Rückwanderung findet nur statt, wenn lebendige Beziehungen zu Heimat aufrecht erhalten werden. Abwanderer-Netzwerke sind die Voraussetzung dafür, produktive Austauschbeziehung zu erhalten. Bei der Implementation der Modellmaßnahmen sollen sowohl öffentliche wie private Arbeitsgeber einbezoge und Institutionen beteiligt werden, in denen junge Menschen ihre Abwanderungsentscheidungen treffen, u.a. Schulen, Hochschulen, Sportvereine, Verbände. Das Projekt kann deshalb nicht nur Wege zeigen, die Rückkehr abgewanderter Menschen in ihre Heimatstadt zu ermöglichen, sondern es trägt auch zur positiven Veränderung des Images ostdeutsch Städte bei. Dies geschieht, indem Halte- bzw. Rückkehrfaktoren identifiziert und Ansätze zur Optimierung der Rückkehrsituation erarbeitet werden.

Auftraggeber: Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Stadtentwicklung
Projektträger: Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung
Laufzeit: 09/2005 - 11/2006
Verantwortliche Mitarbeiterinnen: Dr. Angela Jain, Dipl. Ing. Jenny Schmithals

**Linktipps und Downloads:**
Verbund Rück- und Zuwanderung
Bürgerausstellung "Wandern und Wiederkommen - Magdeburger Rückkehrgeschichten" (pdf, 2 MB)
Auftaktveranstaltung am 07.09.2005 in Magdeburg
30.09.2005: Erster Zwischenbericht (397 KB, pdf)
11/2006: Abschlussbericht (5,3 MB, pdf)

*Fig. 8: "Menschen für Ostdeutschland" portal homepage, created by the Nexus Institute (Institut für Kooperationsmanagement und interdisziplinäre Forschung GmbH), Leipzig University and the Stendhal School of Magdeburg*
*Source: http://nexusinstitut.de/de/arbeits-forschungsbereiche/buergergesellschaft-globalisierung-und-identitaet/41-abgeschlossene-projekte/204-rueckwanderung. Consulted on September 26, 2018*

***Резюме***

Кристоф Кева

**Назад на Восток: внутренняя миграция и локальное развитие Восточной Германии**

В статье рассматривается феномен внутренней миграции после объединения Германии. Восточная часть Германии (бывшая ГДР) потеряла большую часть населения в результате оттока жителей из Восточной в Западную Германию. Отток населения имел серьезные последствия для экономики (нехватка специалистов, снижение спроса на потребительские товары), а экономический спад в годы после объединения Германии, повлекший за собой безработицу, побудил многих людей мигрировать. Однако в последние годы в некоторых регионах, например, в сельских районах и в районах, расположенных рядом с бывшей внутригерманской границей, наблюдается процесс обратной миграции (из Западной Германии в Восточную), сопровождающийся экономическим подъемом. Насколько можно рассматривать обратную миграцию в Восточную Германию как явление, обладающее демографическим и экономическим потенциалом? Цель данной статьи заключается в анализе обратной миграции на восток страны с трех точек зрения: демографической и миграционной динамики, изменения экономической структуры и государственной политики, поддерживающей эти изменения.

*Восточная Германия; внутренняя миграция; демографические изменения; экономические изменения; региональное развитие*

***Résumé***

**Retours à l'Est: migrations de retour et développement local à l'Est de l'Allemagne**

Dans un contexte de fragilité démographique et économique à l'Est de l'Allemagne (ex-RDA), un certain nombre d'espaces connaissent paradoxalement un ralentissement du déclin démographique, parfois accompagné d'un renouveau économique. En effet, si la Réunification s'est associée à un vaste mouvement migratoire de l'Est vers l'Ouest, c'est, en parallèle, un million de personnes qui ont suivi un mouvement inverse, en venant se (ré)installer à l'Est. Dans ce cadre, le mouvement de retour (Rückwanderung) concerne deux principaux types d'espaces: les espaces ruraux et les espaces situés à proximité de l'ancienne frontière interallemande. Ces »retours à l'Est« peuvent-ils être envisagés comme des vecteurs de rééquilibrage progressif des pertes démographiques subies depuis la Réunification? Pourraient-ils également contribuer à restructurer économiquement une partie de ces territoires? L'enjeu de cet article est d'interroger la durabilité des mouvements de retour à l'Est à trois niveaux: celui des dynamiques démographiques et migratoires, celui des transformations économiques, et enfin celui des politiques publiques qui accompagnent l'ensemble de ces mutations.

*Allemagne de l'Est; migrations intérieures; dynamiques démographiques; transformations économiques; aménagement*