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IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Czarina Wilpert

This paper addresses the status of "immigrant women" in a non-immigration country. International migration reflects the need of the receiving country for a certain kind of worker, i.e., workers with a temporary time perspective, and an instrumental orientation toward work, **thus**, flexible, hard-working and cheap, keeping reference groups and delaying gratification for return home. These are at least the initial characteristics which migrants exemplify par excellence. The recruitment and participation of women in the recruitment process should say even more about the work to be done and nature of the receiving society. Although women migrants are present in all contemporary European migratory processes, the Federal Republic of Germany is the country which most officially and systematically recruited and hired foreign women for its workforce before 1973. As potentially the most vulnerable member of the labour force, the status of foreign women in the German labour market may serve as an indicator of transformations in the economy as well as broader societal changes.

The German federal government stopped foreign labour recruitment and banned the legal entry of foreigners as workers in November 1973. The legal inflow of non-German foreigners has not been officially possible since then. Nor have the insitutional conditions effecting the non/EC migrant worker recruitment

nationalities been changed to accomodate a situation of immigration/ settlement. In the meanwhile economic restructuring has made its impact on the labour market and the position of foreigners and especially women therein. In this paper I raise issues about the significance of the institutional arrangements of the guestworker policy for the creation of a mechanism which allows for the reproduction of a migrant worker strata amongst the descendants (here specifically foreign women) of guestworkers. Resting on the assumption that economic restructuring does not eliminate labour market segmentation nor the need for a supply of disponsible labour for the lower segment, under certain conditions the descendants of guestworkers might replace the need for new migrant workers.

This relatively simple hypothesis is, unfortunately, complicated by a number of extenuating events. On the one hand, the recent political changes in Eastern Europe, especially the favoured treatment of East Germans and ethnic Germans emigrating from the Democratic Republic and the old Eastern European German enclaves, which sharply illustrates the discrepancy in the institutional accomodation of questworkers as migrants and ethnic Germans from the East.

On the other hand, loopholes already existed in the official recruitment ban, which have permitted a steady growth in other non-Ec and non-recruitment country nationalities since 1973. One example of this is the case of Poles. Since the early 1980's

an increase of 310% between 1973 - 82
ethnic German Poles 388% growth of non-ECC countries
3rd world - 200 - 87% non recruitment

political and economic turmoil there, as well as the special history of relationships between Germany and Poland has contributed to an increasing presence of Polish workers in the formal and informal economy. While the absolute numbers of Poles and other fourth type country nationals is still relatively small compared to their share of all foreigners, they have the highest official rates of growth in the last decade. And there is good reason to believe that beyond this the new migrants play a significant role in the informal economy. Thus, at least in theory they may be potential competitors with the descendants of the "settled" foreigners to supply manpower for the lower segment of the labour market.

My presentation has three main tasks. First. to clarify the particular conditions which create the context within which migrants from the guestworker communities and their descendants are likely to define their situation. I will briefly outline the essentials of the institutional aspects of guestworker policy, relating these conditions to demographic developments and the associated policy debate, which influence the ideological climate of the foreign issue. Secondly, I will present some of the main effects of economic restructuring for the working life of German and foreign women since 1973. Finally, I will suggest some ~~alternative~~ implications for the future status of immigrant women and their female descendants in the German labour market.

1. Institutional Conditions

The notion of the "guestworker" system is well known to most of you. It may, however, have greater significance for the permanent status of one time migrant workers than originally thought. Briefly, this system authorizes entrance into the country strictly in connection with specific labour market needs on a temporary basis, tying the worker's resident permit to the terms of his or her work permit. It is a system which provides legitimacy to the ideology of return.

In addition to this the existence of a series of international bilateral treaties and the fact of membership or not in the supra-national body of the European Community together have created a stratification of nationalities among the foreign migrant communities. There exist different categories of persons according to national origins which have different legal rights. These differences effect: a) the right to join parents working in Germany; b) the rights of descendants of migrant workers to bring marriage partners from the country of origin: c) conditions attached to the right to a work permit for marriage partners and children joining parents.

Another significant factor for the perceptions of rights to belongingness in German society stems from the **fact that the** German concepts of citizenship and nationality are fundamentally fused. The right to German citizenship is based on ethnic origins (jus sanguinis). According to Article 116 of the Constitution of the

Federal Republic of Germany a German is either a person who de jure holds German citizenship, a spouse or descendant of persons who were settled in the German Reich of 31 December 1937 as well as refugees or deportees with German "Volkszugehörigkeit" (ethnic Germans), settled in German enclaves in Eastern European Socialist countries. It is this last clause which enabled near to 12 million refugees from the former Reich to the East as well as the former Austrian Sudetenland, and "Volksdeutschen" from **the** East, Southeast Europe and the Soviet Union to be integrated into the new Federal Republic. And, it is this phrase in the constitution which has permitted about 12,000 Saxon and Swabian Germans to leave Romania yearly - a country where they first settled in the 12th (Saxons) and 17th (Swabians) century and automatically **enter the** citizenship of the Federal Republic of Germany. These are peoples who were never members of previous German state (Reich). While close to 500,000 persons of German heritage will have fled into the country from Eastern Europe and the German Democratic Republic in 1989, the official policy remains that Germany is not a country of immigration - (especially not for guestworkers and their descendants living in the country for at least three decades). It is the stark contrast in rights which directly influences the status of foreigners and their perceptions of legitimacy in this country.

These conditions together with the governments official refusal to define Germany as a country of immigration for the one-time migrant workers and their families has systematically kept persons

from these origins in a condition of institutional marginality. This has determined perceptions in both German society and amongst foreign nationalities about the desirability of settlement, eliminating the opportunity to consider their participation on equal footing in German society as legitimate.

Although proposals have been made to recognize that the Federal Republic of Germany has become a country of immigration for foreign workers and their families, no government has felt that this would be a politically feasible policy. Instead, since the recruitment stop new ad hoc policy recommendations have continually been made to further control foreign workers and ~~their~~ family members. Before the change in coalitions and during the 1981/82 electoral campaign the political debate focussed on the "foreign worker" problem, vacillating between pleas for integration of the second generation and "assimilation or return".

Today almost a decade later the contradictory positions of control toward the foreign migrants and their descendants (exemplified in proposals for a new alien legislation) and the official welcome offered to ethnic Germans from Eastern European enclaves which were never a part of a modern German state/ (Reich) exemplifies Germany's duality about its willingness to be a country of immigration. (Here a number of other examples could be mentioned which exemplify the significance of racial/cultural distinctions for policies toward the foreign worker nationalities and other basic issues in German society, such as the debate about the German demographic pyramid, but time does not allow.)

2. Immigrant Women in Germany.

Between the early 1960's until about 1973 the German Guestworker system recruited hundreds of thousands of women to work in the least attractive jobs in its harshest industries (plastics, chemicals, metal working, electronics, paper production, food processing, fisheries, canning, etc.). About one-quarter of all workers recruited were women. And, in 1973 women contributed to about one third of the official (socially insured) foreign labour force. Over 70% of the women originated from Turkey (42%) and Yugoslavia (30%). In certain industrial areas jobs for women were, due to the labour market structure and **local** demographic conditions, especially abundant. This was the case in Berlin, where almost one half of all the Yugoslav workers and 40% of the Turkish workers were female. Women who accompanied their husbands had no trouble finding a job. In fact women were often favoured and followed by their husbands or other family members, whose work they later helped to organize.

add here types of women migrants -

Until very recently foreign women had a higher rate of economic activity than their German counterparts. ———— ~~of~~ ————

~~and 47% of German women between~~ ———— ~~05~~ ———— ~~were~~

————— In general foreign women with children were more likely to be economically active than German women with children (Wilpert, 1987, p. 174). According to the latest census estimates ^{however} the economic activity rate of German women had reached 53.8% in 1987, for the first time since the guestworker period

almost 2% higher than that of ~~the socially insured~~ foreign women (52.1%) (Bundesanstalt fuer Arbeit, 1990).

Traditionally foreign women were recruited to work in manufacturing, an area where only one fourth of the economically active German women were employed. When women are employed in industry they are generally at the lower end of the occupational hierarchy. Foreign women, even more so, are **almost twice** as likely to be employed in the lowest strata of unskilled and semi-skilled work than German women. According to a survey of firms in Germany in 1976, firms with a female labour force were characterized by piece work and/or extreme fluctuation of employees. Firms with a very high share of foreign women had both high fluctuation and the greatest share of piece work and premium paid jobs. According to this survey, these working conditions may be found in 44% of firms in the chemical industry, 60% in the electronics industry, and 84% in the textile industry (Fellberg et al, 1980).

Since 1974 the process of economic restructuring has dramatically transformed the organization of work. Since the early 1970s, foreigners, especially foreign women have borne the brunt of redundancies, which have been greatest in manufacturing. Between 1980 and 1985, the absolute number of foreigners in the work force decreased by about one/fifth (Bundesanstalt fuer Arbeit, 1986b). Between 1975 and 1985, more than one/third of all the redundancies among women in manufacturing were among foreign women. Although they suffered the most from reductions, almost half being in

textiles (42%), foreign women remain over/represented in the harshest and the least attractive branches of industry. Thus, the sectoral and occupational segmentation of the labour market continues.

In 1989 foreign women represent 5.9% of the social insured labor force, but they were three to four times more likely than this to be employed in certain occupations than their share. The most recent data shows that about one-fourth of German women, but 44 % of foreign women were to be found in manufacturing. Moreover, 73% of the social insured foreign women, but only 30% of German women were employed as manual workers (Bundesanstalt fuer Arbeit, 1990, Tab. 6). Thus, despite the fact that the share of foreign women in the services has increased, they are more often employed in the manual occupations in the cleaning and service sectors in hospitals, hotels, restaurants, schools, etc. than German women who are employed in the white collar occupations.

~~(BAA - Tab. 6 here)~~

Table : Distribution of Foreign and German Women in the Labor Force According to Sectors of Economic Activity (1989)

Table : Share of Foreign Women in Selected Occupations (1989)

(Cf. Appendix)

In the 1980's the service sector accrued the greatest number of jobs. ^{gender for and 85} Women, with a 27 per cent increase in the number of jobs profited slightly more from this expansion than men, whose participation in the service sector grew by 24%. By contrast the share of foreign women employed in services diminished by 1.2% in

this period. The only occupation within services where their numbers increased was in cleaning and personal services. This tendency indicates the very different role which foreign and German women continue to play in the labour market. Foreign women tend to enter the manual segment of the service sector and German women the white collar positions in banking and other such services.

(Table 2 Appendix - here)

Relative Changes in Number of Employed According to Sectors Between

1976 and 1989 (1976 = 100)		Low Point	
Agricult./ Forestry	105,2	101	(1987/88)
Energy/Mining	90,7		
Manufacturing	98,7	93,9	(1989)
Construction	85,9	81,9	
Commerce	105,9	99,5	(1985)
Transport/Commun.	107,8	95,6	(1985)
Banking/insurance.			(1976)
Services	1 4 5 , 2		(1976)
Gebietskoerper.	150,0		
Others	109,3		
Total	108,4		

Graph : here - Trends in Unemployment - According to Sex and Nationality / BAA

Tables

Table 2

Changes in the Employment of Foreigners According to Sectors between 1976 and 1989 (1976 = 100)

	1989	Lowest since 1976	
Agriculture/Fisheries	78,4	57,5 (1986)	- 21,6
Energy	84,1	(1989)	- 16,9
Manufacturing	77,0	72,5 (1987)	- 33,0
Construction	68,1	61,1 (1986)	- 31,9
Commerce	112,9	95,1 (1985)	+ 12,9
Transport	94,1	82,5 (1986)	- 5,9
Banking	113,8	(1976)	+ 13,8
Services	127,5	103,5 (1985)	+ 27,5
Other private	168,1	(1978)	+ 68,1
Social Insurance	99,7	93,7 (1982)	- 1,3
Total	87,2	79,3 (1985)	- 12,8

N 1976 = 1,937,134

N 1989 = 1,689,289

(Here refer to Graph/BAA / 1990)

Table 3

Changes in the Total Number of Employed and the Relative Share of
all Women and Foreign Women between 1977 and 1989
According to Sector (%)

	Total Change	All Women	Foreign Women	
Agriculture/Forestry				
Fisheries	- 0.7	+ 24.2	+ 9.6	
Energy/Mines	- 6.9	+ 22.7	+ 6.3	
Manufacturing	- 2.2	- 5.6	- 34.8	
Construction	- 15.2	+ 17.7	+ 9.9	
Commerce	+ 6.2	+ 10.5	+ 19.0	
Transport/Commun.	+ 9.7	+ 29.0	+ 22.9	
Banking/Insurance	+ 23.0	+ 25.8	+ 15.4	
Services	+ 41.8	+ 42.8	+ 21.6	
Non-profit Org.	+ 50.5	+ 48.0	+ 55.2	
Civil Service/ Social Insurance	+ 10.1	+ 20.1	+ 16.4	
unkown	- 42.9	+ 11.1	- 35.5	
Total	+ 7.8	+ 17.3	- 12.0	--

Absolute	+ 543 265	+1 296 366	- 70 652	

Since these trends are based on official data for the dependent labour force, who are required to be socially insured, there remain a certain number of unknowns. Official data do not necessarily **reflect the** entire spectrum of growth in part/time employment (less than 19 hours weekly). It is generally recognized that illegal employment has increased. It is likely that many more women, and especially foreigners, are **working than** are officially registered. (The only segment of the working population which steadily grew in number was German women. Their economic activity rate has increased for the first time in the post war period. This is explained by two new trends in Germany / the growth of part time employment and the expansion of the service sector. Contrary to this general trend foreign women lost their share of jobs in the formal economy and have been pushed into the precarious, flexible and informal labour market.)

Current trends in women's employment indicate an ever crasser ethnic segmentation of work. The result is a more sharply accentuated labour market polarization within women's work, where German women increasingly participate in the white collar sector of the services and foreign women at the lower segment of the services and the industrial labour force.

One way to explore the issue of mobility or change in status of immigrant women would be to study generational change among foreign women. Indicators of this would be the occupational position of the

youngest age group at different points in time. Assuming that the youngest (15 to 24 year old) age group in 1985 must be the descendants of the first generation, since no legal migration of workers has been permitted since 1974 when the eldest would have been 13 years of age.

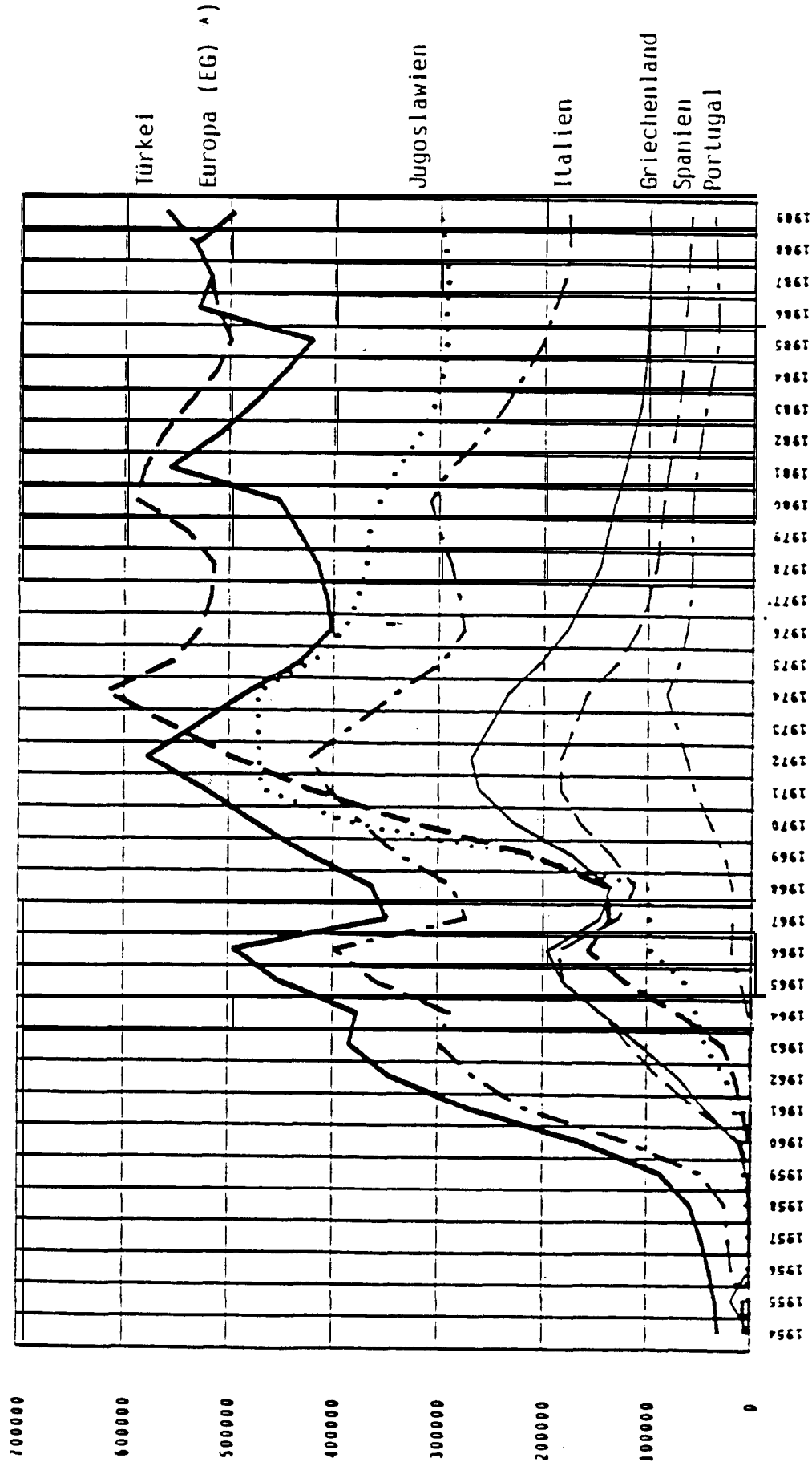
Data is available from four representative studies about the skill level of foreigners according to sex. According to these studies 86% of the foreign women and 90% of the men were employed as workers in 1968. In 1985 this was the case for 83% of the women and 88% of the men. Foreign women were more likely to be employed in white collar positions (12%) ^{instead of} than foreign men (8%) in 1968. By 1985 the share of foreign women classified as white collar had risen to 13,5% and men to 8.4%.

Within the manual occupations foreign women were less likely to be recognized as skilled workers than foreign men. In 1968 22% of the men, but only 4% of the women were considered to be skilled. In 1985 this was true for 32% of the men and 12% of the women of all age groups. The breakdown according to nationalities shows a slightly different picture. ——— ——— ———

Here we see that 43% of the Yugoslav men and 5% of the Yugoslav women entered **as** skilled workers in 1972, but 16% of the Turkish men and 3% of the Turkish women were in this category. The progression from un- and semi-skilled to skilled between 1972 and 1985 was greatest for the Spanish (4 to 28%), Yugoslav (5 to 20%), Greek (1 to 13,7%) and Italian women (1 to 12%). **(Note:**

Übersicht :

Sozialversicherungspflichtig Beschäftigte nach
ausgewählten Nationen ab 1954



*) ab 1981 mit Griechenland. ab 1986 mit Spanien und Portugal

remember that these were the nationalities which showed the greatest share in returns after 1975). But, the share of Turkish women considered to be skilled increased by only 2% in this period. Basically the 15-24 year old women employed in manual occupations show little differences in their level of skills in 1985 when compared to the other age groups. Thus, among those women who have remained in the industrial sector there has been no apparent advantage for the younger age in the period between 1972 and 1985. Until 1985 the only advantage in occupational position has been the gradual increase in the share of foreign women in the younger age groups who have entered white collar positions.

3. Implications for the Future

Official statistics about **the** socially insured labour force do not, however, tell the whole story. Economic restructuring has had the greatest influence on foreign women, especially Turkish women. Official data of the social insured employed indicate the extent to which foreigners, particularly foreign women, have become redundant and forced out of the social security system.

The above discussion on the employment situation of certain sub-groups of the working population in Germany during the past decade or so, **give, s o m e** indications/^{changes} of a number of changes which have occurred in this period. Data on the employed population in various sectors tells more, for instance, than unemployment figures, since these only recognize those searching work, i.e. with rights to benefits. These have masked the real extent of unemployment among foreigners, which is more clearly reflected in

*At least some
were being
returned.*

the migration flows during this period. Nonetheless, the dramatic increase in the unemployment rate of the early eighties began to level off since 1982 for Germans (about 9%) and 1983 for foreigners between 14 and 15%).

It was within the context of the threat of high unemployment, the fear of its duration, as well as the argument for preserving the international competitiveness of the German economy which created a climate permitting what might be called the de-regulation of employment. Legislation became effective in 1985 which has given employer's greater liberation in hiring and firing procedures, opening up several new kinds of work contracts and relaxing restrictions on employers' contracts with their employees. One element is the permission of temporary contracts, which are not subject to the usual constraints, nor the same rights nor access to social benefits which govern permanent contracts (Vogelheim, 1987) Moreover, the new law promotes **part time** work, which is also more likely to be temporary, less well paid and less protected.

Case studies indicate a multiplication of "geringfuegige Beschaeftigten"/ low level employed (persons earning less than DM 470 per month), especially as cleaning persons. Here and in other areas data on temporary and part time employed are not subject to the official statistical records of the national labour office (Bundesanstalt fuer Arbeit).

In Berlin where the cleaning profession has been taken over by private firms, even for all governmental services) it is estimated that 50 to 60% of the employed are considered "low level employed".

To find a job to support her family women are often forced to sign two or three different contracts in this category even within one firm. Immigrant women make up more than one fourth of the 27,000 persons employed in this area.

These observations would support findings elsewhere that immigrant women have had a particular role to play in the contracting labour market. That in the former welfare states of Europe the relationships between employment and unemployment are changing. Certain groups are at risk of not finding permanent employment once becoming unemployed, and therefore they are not in the position to accumulate legal rights and benefits, which are only open to the core labour force. Some observers conclude that welfare **state** policies play a role in the maintenance of inequality and a divided workforce. And, thus, creating **the permanent temporariness** of the lower segment of the segmented labour market for immigrant women.

Here we return to the question of how likely the female descendants of women migrants will be to maintain the mentality of a temporary time perspective and an instrumental attitude toward work enabling them to accept these jobs.

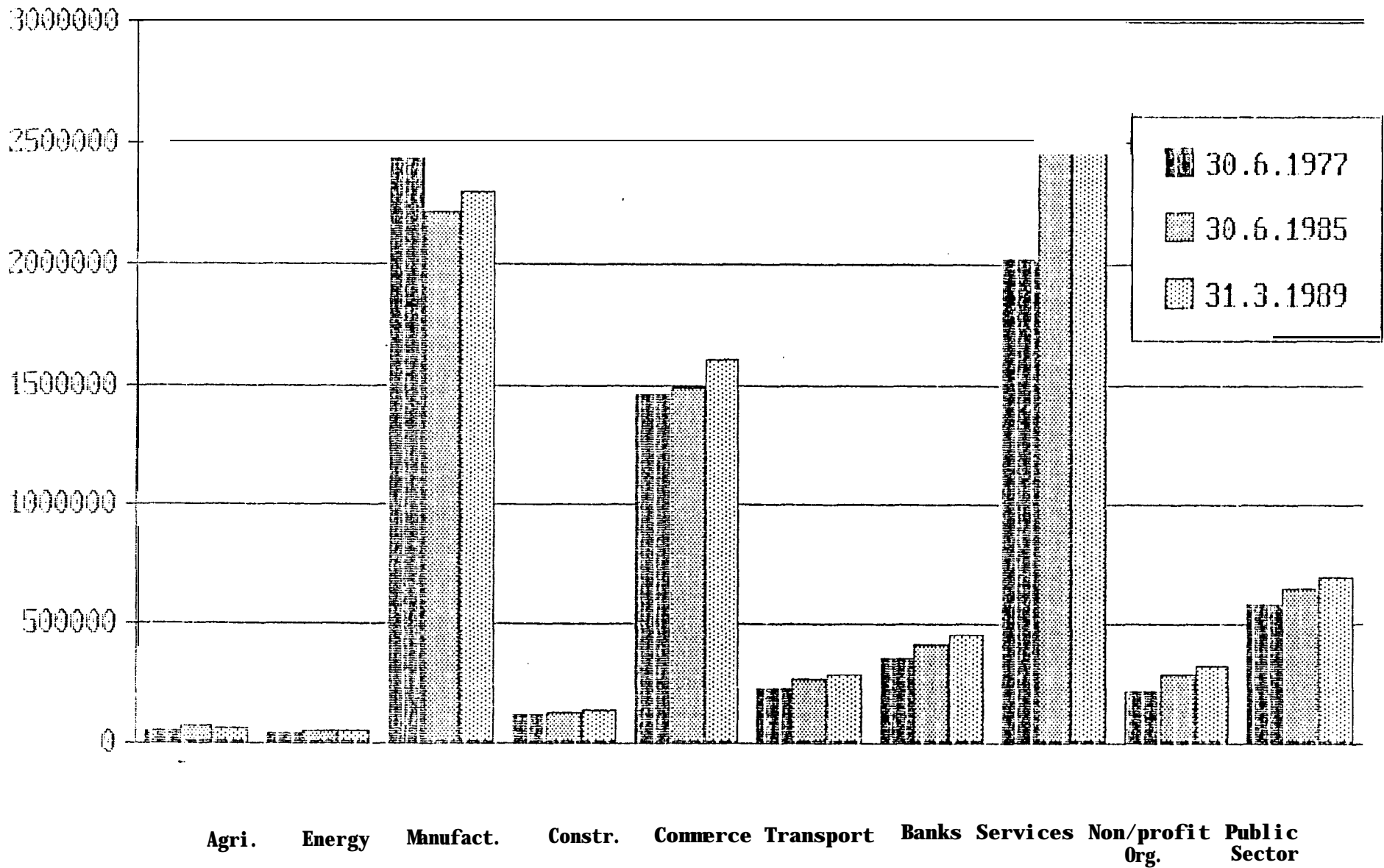
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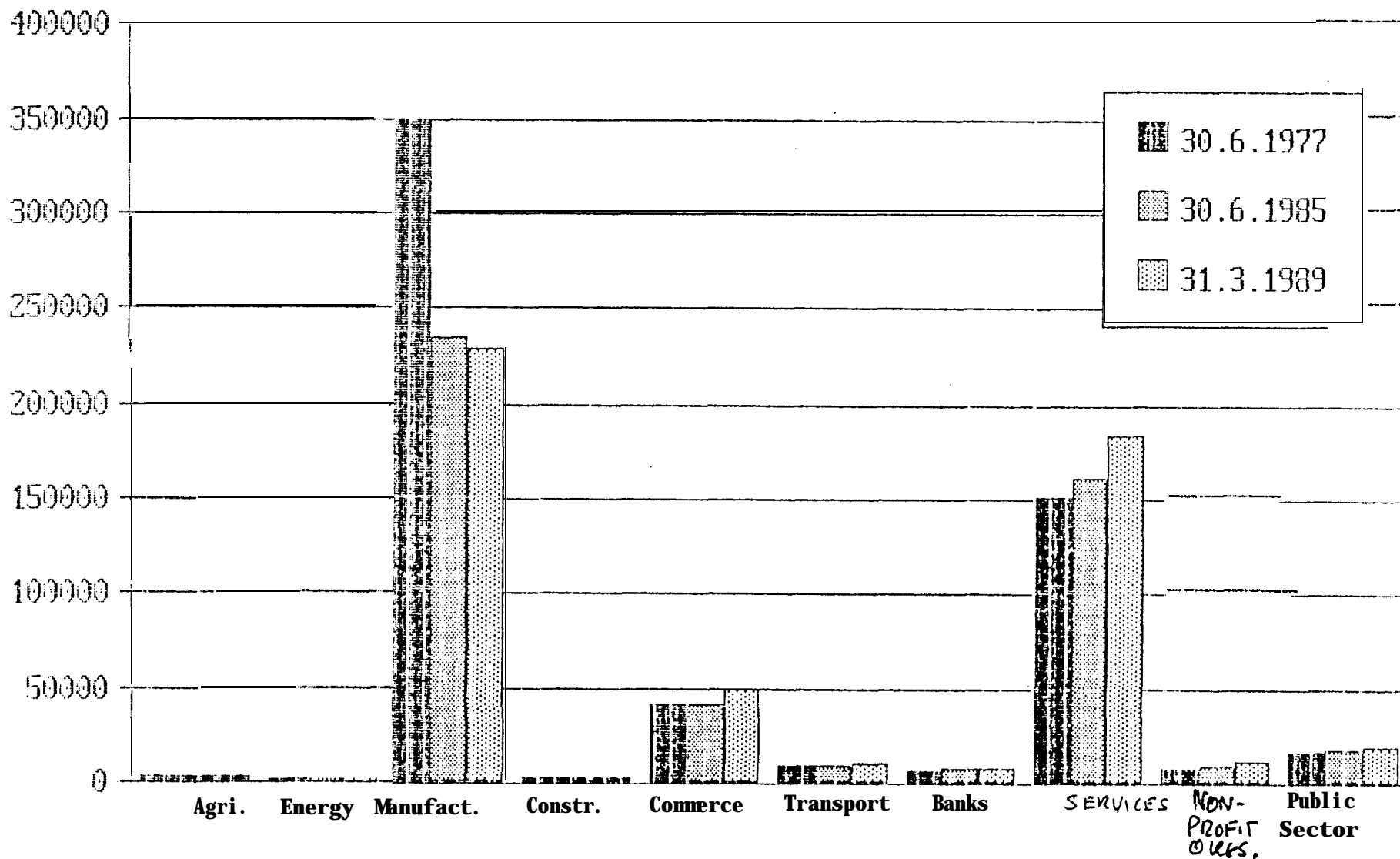
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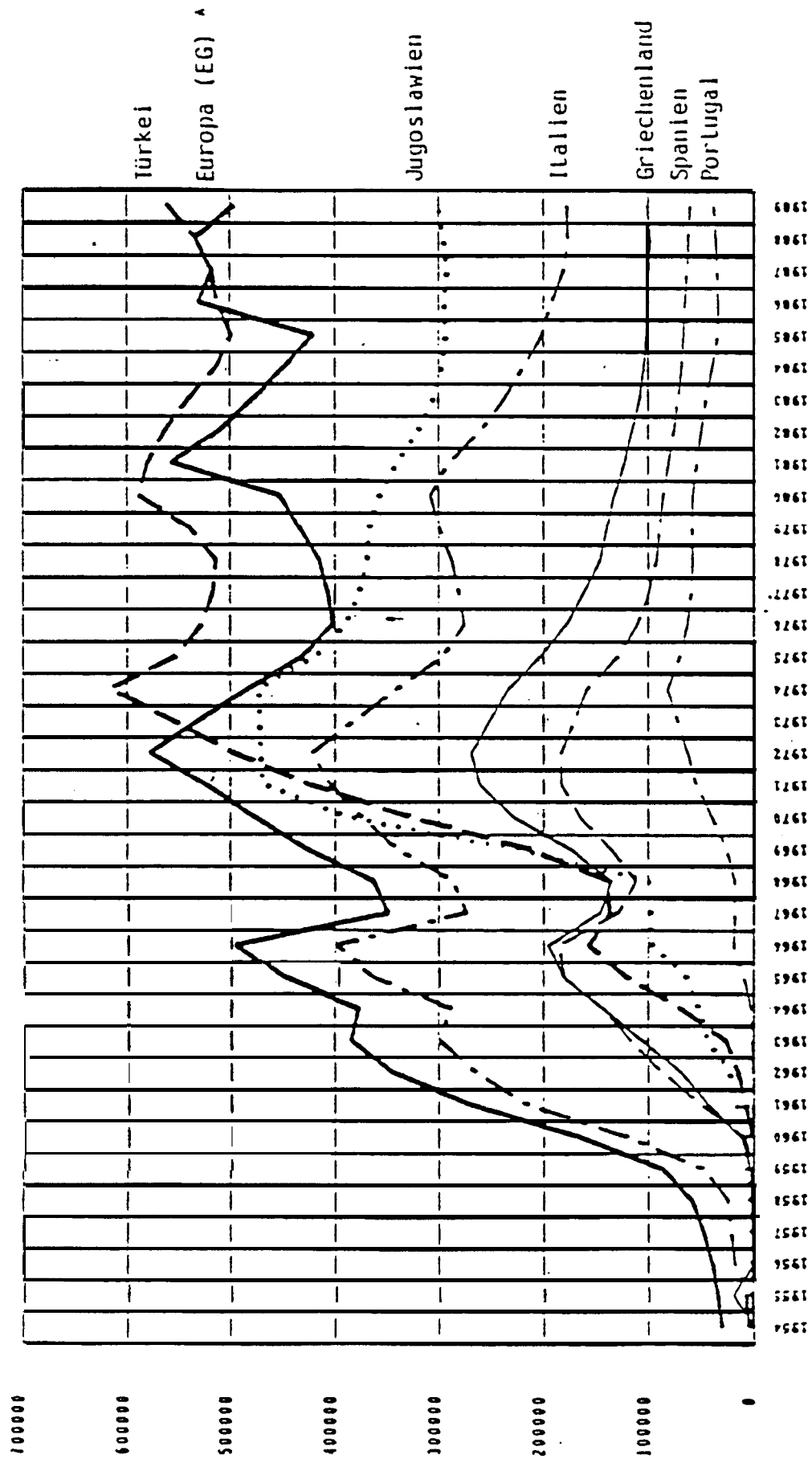
**Absolute Number of Social Insured Women . According to Economic Sectors
For the Years 1977, 1985 and 1989 Federal Republic of Germany**



**Absolute Number of Social Insured Foreign Women according to Economic Sectors
for the years 1977, 1985, 1989 in the Federal Republic of Germany**



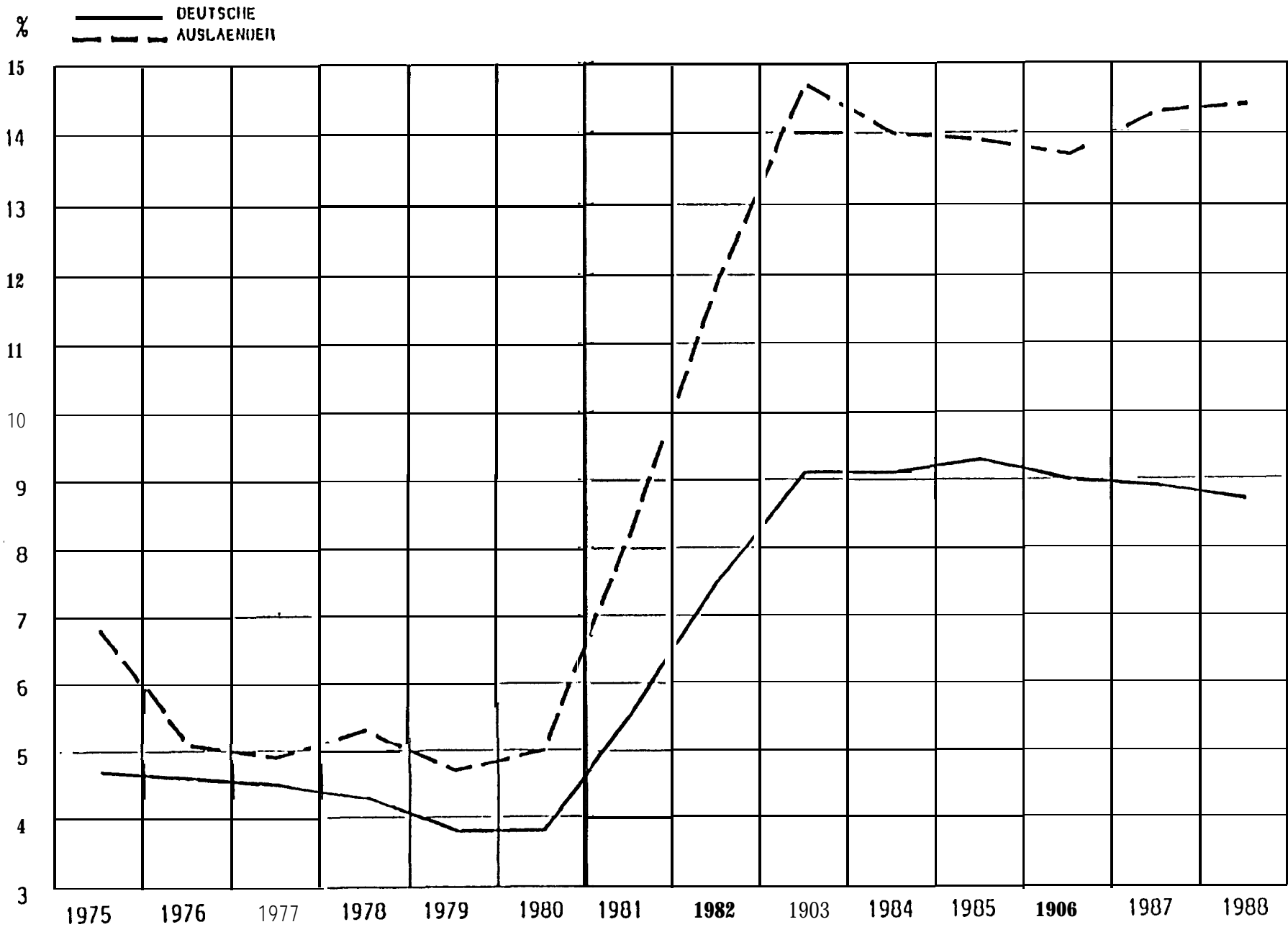
Social Insured Employed according to Nationality since 1954
Federal Republic of Germany



*) ab 1981 mit Griechenland, ab 1986 mit Spanien und Portugal

Development of the Rate of Unemployment for Germans and Foreigners

Since 1975



Quelle: Bundesanstalt für Arbeit