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Femina migrans

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Mobility has a long tradition on the European continent. Recent historical research shows migration as a "normal and structural element of human societies throughout history. $^{"1}$ Among these people on the move were young men and women working as servants and domestics in farm or urban households. Before the nineteenth century most of them covered shorter distances and thus participated in a rural-rural movement, not yet fully explored by historical research.² Beginning in the late eighteenth century the steady extension of a bourgeois lifestyle imitating noble habits lead to an increasing demand for domestics in many urban middle-class households. 3 Due to rural overpopulation and the poverty that accompanied it, the nineteenth century saw a rising number of single young women migrating mostly--but not exclusively--from the countryside to the towns. The improved transportation infrastructure supported this migration movement. Thus, domestic work became the main way of integrating young rural women into urban wage-working. It was also the main reason for women to migrate. 4 In the 1880s between 30 percent and 40 percent of all women employed in Europe were working in city households. 5 Working as a domestic was hence an experience shared by great numbers of young women in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Long unattended by historical research, migration of women and especially of domestics is now explored through family, cultural, gender, and transnational history, as well as historical demography. 6 Femina migrans was a decisive agent. 7 Women acted

independently and were as aware of their labor market value and the higher wages they could realize abroad as their male counterparts."8

This article aims to take a close look at German-speaking domestics in Paris from 1870 to 1914. Although the labor market for foreign domestics, it was said, was firmly ruled by the German Fräulein, this migration is nowadays almost forgotten. German domestics in Paris shared to a large extent the same experiences as other migrant domestic servants elsewhere in Europe at that time. Yet the hostile political background after the Franco-German war in 1870-71 distinguished the German domestic's stay in Paris considerably from the experience of other national groups in other countries. Based on some rare autobiographical sources presented in the first part of the article, several points brought up by recent research on migration and domestics can be confirmed and explored throughout this article: German domestics in Paris showed high mobility and adaptability to the labor market as well as to actual (political) circumstances. They also built and maintained long-lasting informal networks that helped them get along in a strange and often hostile environment. Migrant domestics' agency can therefore be strongly highlighted. German domestics experienced differences on a social, religious, and gender level, and they were especially exposed to the effects of growing nationalism in France and in Germany in the aftermath of the war in 1870-71. Not only did nation and language play the most important roles in the development of the young women's identities, but they also caused German charitable institutions to strengthen the links of the migrants with the newly founded Kaiserreich.

<A>Sources

Any historical work on the Germans in Paris in the nineteenth century is based on incomplete sources--due to fires during the Paris Commune and two waves of expulsion of the German population from Paris, once during the Franco-German war of 1870-71 and again at the beginning of World War I. 9 As a

result of these enforced, hasty departures many documents are now lost.

Although they are somewhat dispersed, there are, however, sources on German maids living in Paris. These can be arranged into four groups:

autobiographical sources, charity organization sources, contemporary observers' sources, and official statistics.

There are very few autobiographical sources--letters written and received by young women, personal diaries and accounts -- even though reading and writing were important parts of a maid's life. 10 They were a means of passing the time before and after work and during a break. Writing was also, and perhaps most importantly, a means of staying in contact with family and friends and exchanging information. There are a large number of names mentioned in these letters, demonstrating the significance of this type of communication. News is often requested and sent between friends, brothers, sisters, and other members of the family or from employers and their children, along with photos and information about available positions. The subjective element to these emigrants' letters has been the subject of several historical essays. 11 Autobiographical texts always involve some sort of mise-en-scène by the author, as do photographs, which were becoming increasingly popular among domestics at the end of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, these texts provide a wealth of information about these women's daily lives, their hopes and fears. Therefore, the correspondence of the German governess Jenny Schaumann, who lived in Paris between 1881 and 1888, warrants an in-depth study and can be used to follow the trajectory and relations of this young woman during and after her time in France. 12 We also have letters from German-speaking young women from Luxembourg and postcards and other pieces of writing from Alsatian women in Paris. 13

Most of the sources on German maids in Paris come from the Paris

Protestant German Church's charities. These include reports, articles, and

letters from German pastors stationed in Paris. 14 The purpose of these

documents was to ask for money to provide assistance to German women in distress in the capital. Entire "fundraising trips" (Kollektenreisen) were organized throughout German-speaking countries for this purpose. It is in the very nature of these documents—aimed at raising as much money as possible—to only present the misery of the maids' lives and the moral dangers to which they were exposed. These sources therefore generally provide an external and moralistic view of the maids. The negative side of domestic service is predominant in these documents. Contemporaries saw domestic service as the cause of the depopulation of the countryside, leaving only the men behind. This viewpoint is reinforced by a "moralistic wave founded by sex scandals" at the end of the century. Stories of innocent young country girls being perverted by the big city and forced to become prostitutes were being told all over Europe.

We also have documents on the "Residence for German Maids and Teachers."
This hostel for unemployed maids and teachers was run by the German
Protestant Church in Batignolles in the North of Paris from 1886. The two
hostels were directed by a sister, a deaconess from the Sarepta house in
Bielefeld. The director's work, assisted by a secretary, was monitored by a
committee presided over by the German pastor of Paris. Among Sarepta's
archives and Bodelschwingh's archives in Bielefeld are several letters from
deaconesses, payments for both hostels, and instructions for the director.
These archives also have both foyers' annual reports, including several
statistics and letters from the pastor to the founder of the German
Protestant commune, Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, who at the time maintained
his charity work in Germany. It is the few documents and letters written for
internal use that provide a behind-the-scenes glimpse of women's lives .
However, all correspondence sent to the Paris hostels, as well as all the
files kept on site, have disappeared.

<A>Working in Paris: Hope of Liberty and Social Ascension Around 1900 several thousand German women left their homes for Paris every year in order to find jobs as domestics, nannies, governesses, teachers, or cooks. Many French bourgeois or noble families had a German domestic who was to teach the children the language. 15 German was considered to be a language of cultural value, and so German nannies were preferably hired to look after the children. Furthermore, judgment of character was based on national background: German women were said to be hardworking, credible, clean, robust, and physically strong--which were the usual stereotypes of Germans at that time (and maybe still today). They also accepted lower wages than their French counterparts, as quoted in a text on German migrants in Paris from 1862: "German cooks and domestics are loved in Paris. They work more and more assiduously, are more solid, quiet, honest, reliable and simple, and are easier to gratify than the French demoiselles, who cannot easily be bound through service, and who love freedom more than it is good." German women, with 43 percent of all foreign domestics in Paris in 1901, represented by far the largest plurality. As shown in table 1, of all German working women 63 percent were employed as domestics.

<T1>

Next to alternatives like working in factories, sweatshops, or department stores, domestic work was popular because it did not require any special training. The young women could start working immediately. Neither money nor an apartment nor a room was needed. As in-house domestics the women stayed with the family they served and were provided with food and a small salary. Perceived as unskilled and invisible labor, domestic work was (and still is) often undervalued. Yet the majority of the young women had gone through a training period at home or on a nearby farm and knew at least

partly how to run a household, how to clean, cook, and sometimes even sew.

Nevertheless, their qualifications were most of the time neither socially nor financially honored. The private space, with its lack of regulation, encouraged the inequity of demanding manifold skills and experiences from the employees without defining or paying for them. For many women, however, going to the city to work as a domestic was a career move with an economic agenda based either on individual motivation or on a family decision.

Due to the lack of sources and statistics, it is impossible to get an exact profile of the German domestics in Paris around 1900. Comparing the data we have with the overall statistics on domestics in Germany and France at the end of the nineteenth century, some conclusions can be drawn. In general more than 90 percent of the domestics in France and Germany were of rural origin. As daughters of peasants they left school at the age of fourteen or fifteen. In both countries 75 percent of the domestics were between fifteen and thirty years old. Governesses and teachers were slightly older as they sometimes had a gymnasium baccalaureate or a university degree. They also came from a modest social background or from the petite bourgeoisie. The huge majority of these women—domestics or teachers—were single and therefore responded to the demand for urban domestic servants.

The general observations concerning the profile of domestics are confirmed by the Paris census data of 1901: 40 percent of the German women in the French capital were between twenty-one and thirty years old. This is true for only 28 percent of the Austrian women, 27 percent of the English, twenty-six percent of the Italian, and 21 percent of the Belgian. The German migrants thus formed the youngest community in Paris. At the same time the percentage of the active population was very high: 74 percent of the German women were employed, compared to 66 percent of the Luxemburg women, 61 percent of the Swiss, 56 percent of the Belgian, 51 percent of the Austrian, 49 percent of the Italian, and 43 percent of the English and Spanish. In 1901

German women represented 63 percent of all German migrants in Paris, the gender ratio much higher than in other migrant communities. These figures confirm that there was hardly any family migration at the turn of the century. Most of the German women came on their own, in order to live independently and to earn their own livelihoods. It also confirms the observation that we find more female migrants than male migrants in towns with a high quantity of domestic servants. Table 2 shows clearly the low percentage of male German domestics, compared to other nationalities. Due to the tense French-German relations of that time German men were probably underrepresented, migrating to cities other than the French capital in order to avoid being exposed to anti-German attacks.

<T2>

Many reasons induced women to go to Paris, reasons that differed according to their individual backgrounds. The scale of the social settings of these women was large. Yet what they had in common was the hope of social ascension through this temporary migration. Paris was attractive because domestic workers were paid higher wages than in Germany. Compared to wages in Berlin, a bonne à tout faire earned almost double in Paris— amounting to between 360 and 480 francs a year. The women wanted to save money for a dowry or send it back home to their parents. Sending a daughter to Paris was part of a family strategy, with the aim of having one less mouth to feed and receiving remittances at the same time. It could also be a personal strategy. For orphans working as a domestic was a way to earn money and gain independence, as shown by the multiple examples from the Protestant orphanage in Neuhof near Strasburg. Other women used the money to buy clothes and hats in the latest Parisian style in order to externalize their new social status.

Hats were an important sign of urban experience, since women in the countryside mostly wore head scarves.

Another important reason to migrate to Paris was to learn French. Having served in Paris and thus knowing French customs and language was profitable on both the employment and the marriage market once back home. A stay abroad for several years was perceived as a career move in order to find a better job upon return. Especially for language teachers it was indispensable to have lived in the country whose language they wanted to teach. In addition to the language service allowed the domestics to acquire household skills that were necessary to find a better position. 22

Besides, Paris offered the chance to lead a self-determined life, at least for a certain time. Young women migrated because they were longing for freedom, personal autonomy, and adventure. They wanted to escape their parents' authority or run away from an arranged marriage with a peasant. Instead they aimed to see the world before getting married, go to theaters or to dance halls, and have fun with people of their own age. The autonomy and self-determination were most important: "It is so nice to be free, to be my own master, and to see the world," wrote Jenny Schaumann, a governess from Holstein serving in a French noble family from 1881 to 1888. Working as a domestic was for many women their only opportunity to get away from home and to leave parental supervision. The families for their part expected a daughter to leave home because there was hardly another choice to find work and because the money she would send back home was needed.

The image of Paris as the European capital of the nineteenth century and the center of the belle époque also accounts for the fact that so many young women-despite the warnings in German newspapers--migrated there every year. While it was true for earlier centuries that "servants did not go far," the long-distance migrations became a step in the career of domestics in the nineteenth century: from maidservant, to maid-of-all-work, to parlor maid in

middle-class households, and to cook in urban bourgeois or noble houses--each occupation was a step up in the domestic hierarchy. ²⁶ The market for domestics all over Europe was unflagging throughout the nineteenth century.

<A>Agency, Adaptability, and Lasting Informal Networks
Although migrating without a male protector, women "usually moved under the protection and supervision of family members" or moved as part of a network or a chain migration.²⁷ As shown by Simone Wegge through the examples of Hessian women, half of the women migrating were related to another individual migrating at an earlier or later point in time.²⁸ This is also true for the migration of German women to Paris: we often see two women--sisters, cousins, or friends--going abroad together and thus protecting and helping each other.
Some of them were astonishingly young, like Hélène Schöttler from Greifswald on the Baltic Sea, who migrated to Bordeaux at the age of fifteen together with her sister Hermine, seventeen years old.²⁹ In the papers of the Parisian court we find the Prussian domestic Adèle Schemann, nineteen years old, condemned for burglary together with her sister Caroline, who was suspected of being her accomplice.³⁰

Four different types of migration can be distinguished: first, the young woman arrived with a German or French family that was moving to Paris; second, she already had a place waiting for her before migrating; third, she joined relatives or friends who helped her find a job; or finally, she arrived "absolutely alone and we will find her on the platform of a Parisian station, confronting her illusions with the reality of a big city." According to the German Protestant Church, numerous women seem to have chosen the fourth way and to have come to Paris "without connection, without language skills, and without any protection." They migrated only with the conviction that in a big town like Paris they would surely find a job. The German Protestant hostel in Batignolles, a neighborhood in the north of

Paris, received "hundreds of letters" every year from young women asking about the possibility of living and working in Paris.³³ In 1905 the parish even had to apply for a full-time employee to answer all these letters. Even though the church complained about the naïvety of the young women, the large number of letters proved, on the contrary, that many were trying to prepare for their stay in Paris and asking for information before they left home. It shows that the women were handling their migration responsibly and autonomously.

However, the starting position for many women was rather disadvantageous. They were young and single, they lacked money and command of French, and they had never been in a big city before. Therefore, they were seen as easy "prey" for the recruiters waiting for them on the platform when the trains arrived. Some of the recruiters offered jobs for an exorbitant charge, jobs that did not even exist. Others promised cheap accommodation, made the women borrow money, and finally forced them into prostitution. To warn the young women at their time of arrival, German parishes sent nuns to the stations. Forming their own welcoming committee, the nuns made sure that the newly arrived women made their first contact with the voluntary associations and did not fall into the wrong hands. Here though danger existed, the warnings were probably exaggerated. An Austrian journal advised its female readers longing to go to Paris to rent a room in a furnished hotel. The author of the article confirmed that hundreds of young foreign women lived like that in Paris without having lost their "honesty."

Some of the women seem to have had at least one address to turn to upon arrival in Paris. We do not have absolute numbers, and it is therefore impossible to state their proportion among all newcomers. It was advantageous to take over the place of a sister or a friend or to serve in a household known because of a recommendation. The exchange of letters between the women abroad and those at home show that a network existed, in which domestics

informed relatives and friends about jobs available. In preserved domestics' letters there is often a cousin or a friend who wants to work in France as well and asks for advice. In Alsace some villages had the nickname "Petit Paris" as most of the young girls went to work in the French capital. Next to the "uncle in America" there was the "aunt in Paris," a first contact point for migrating girls helping them with accommodation, placement, shelter, and initiation in urban life. An available opening in a neighboring family was communicated to friends; a woman leaving a family for another job or going home recommended her replacement; another woman took over the place of her ill sister as a sort of indemnification for the family.

Jenny Schaumann's letters prove the amount of information she held about her colleagues changing jobs, following closely her friends' and acquaintances' professional routes from family to family and from job to job. She was part of a large network of teachers, so that even more than ten years after she returned to Germany, she claimed to be able to find a job in Paris for a younger successor. This time period seems astonishingly long and proves that relationships were maintained throughout the years. This sort of chain migration was advantageous for both the domestics and the families they served in. The women received information about their future job and about life in Paris, and the families hired domestics they could trust more easily. Besides, this sort of recruitment was free of charge for both sides.

Other ways of getting a job were advertisements in newspapers and lists of addresses in special guidebooks or the often totally overpriced commercial employment agencies, the <u>bureaux de placement</u>. The agencies had a very bad reputation and were considered parasites. An inscription fee of about two francs had to be paid, as well as another fee that was up to 3 to 5 percent of an annual salary when a placement was arranged. For a domestic earning forty francs a month, the fee could be up to twenty-five francs and had to be paid only eight days after starting the new job. Since the agencies earned

money with each change of employment, they were not interested in arranging good and lasting jobs. Very often the women paid their fee but found themselves on the street again only two weeks later, and the whole process had to start again. The parishes, domestic journals, and newspapers all warned domestics not to use the help of such agencies. Not only were they overpriced, but often they proposed jobs that did not exist in order to get more women to pay the registration fee. Some agencies also encouraged women to prostitute themselves. The French agencies eventually became subject to regulation in 1904. From then on it was the employer's duty to pay the placement fee. ³⁹ The municipal agencies, as well as those of the German parishes, were cheaper alternatives.

Since domestic servants frequently changed jobs, seeking new positions occupied a large place in their lives. They had to survive for an undetermined time with as little money as possible. It could take weeks or months before a new job was found, and life in Paris was expensive. The hostel had to be paid every day, and meals had to be purchased, and at the end there was probably not enough money left to buy a return ticket. The church, newspapers, and special guides for domestics warned the young women not to leave for Paris without having a prospective position and enough money to get along for at least three months. Despite these warnings women used agencies in order to find a job. From a contemporary observer we know that many German women registered themselves with five or six agencies. 40 Anna Schwirtz, a German-speaking domestic from Luxemburg, and a young woman from Tyrol were registered in not fewer than fifteen agencies at the same time. Every day they went to the agencies in order to check new job offers. During the afternoon they stayed in the agencies, where future employers passed by to look at the domestics. 41 This daily procedure points to the endurance of these young women, who also thought of another strategy in order to get a job: Anna Schwirtz did not have any references from former employers, so she

asked a friend back home in Luxemburg to write her a false letter. This manoeuver finally led to her first job in Paris. 42

<A>Experiencing Difference: Social, Religious, and Gender Aspects In Paris German women of rural origin were confronted with a modern, urban, and differently structured society and had to deal with the customs of French, mostly Catholic, bourgeois, or noble households. They experienced national, linguistic, social, and religious differences and were confronted with different gender role models. The class distinction, for example, was far more pronounced in France, and even in small bourgeois households the domestic ate and lived separately, in the chambre de bonnes, the cluster of small rooms under the roof of Parisian houses built in the nineteenth century. The whole sixth floor was reserved for domestics' rooms. A separate stairway led to these garrets, which had no electricity or water and were badly isolated and furnished. The bad hygienic and sanitary conditions were often criticized by the French authorities, but the situation never improved. 43 The lodging of the domestics -- male and female together -- in the chambre de bonnes not only isolated the domestics from the family but was also considered a moral danger for the domestics. 44 The German pastor Friedrich von Bodelschwingh wrote: "The domestics of the big houses with apartments for twenty to thirty families all get their room under the roof, female and male domestics without any difference. I do not have to say more. $^{"45}$ Next to shady intermediaries and unverifiable newspaper advertisements this was another danger that the young German women needed to be protected from in the eyes of contemporary observers.

Other than the spatial separation, the equipment and the living conditions made clear the social distance between the domestics and their masters. The domestics had the function of representing a noble or bourgeois lifestyle, which made a symbolic and real separation in the household

necessary. 46 Jenny Schaumann, the governess from Holstein, seems to have lived in Paris very comfortably, in a room nicely furnished by her employers. Yet this was different in the chateau in the countryside where the family spent their holidays. In her letters Jenny compares the lustrous wardrobe of the ladies with her own room and claims that all the chairs in her room were broken. 47 For the employers, aware of their social habits, a trouble-free execution of work was much more important than any personal contact with their domestics. Despite her employers' kindness, Jenny writes in one of her letters, she was always reminded that she was only a governess, a "necessary evil."48 At the same time the domestics also kept their distance. Jenny often criticizes her employers' exaggerated costly lifestyle on the one hand and their thriftiness in small things on the other hand. 49 The experience of social discomfort made Jenny homesick. "I will always prefer my simple German environment," she writes. She also missed food from home. 50 Despite the "truly sumptuous meals," she longed for the "ordinary and simple food" she remembered from Germany. 51

Social distance also existed between domestics. As a matter of fact, this was especially important for teachers and governesses, who did not want to be put on the same social level with nannies and maids. The Protestant hostel, for instance, refounded in 1886 under the name Doppelwohnheim für Erzieherinnen und Dienstmädchen, was located in the north of Paris on the corner of two streets and had two separate entrances for domestics and governesses. The separate entrances and the two different letterheads were meant to suggest that two separate institutions existed. The houses, however, were under the same administration, and the women shared the dining room. Finally, in 1900, the hostel changed its name. The word Doppelheim was not used anymore. Instead, two names were given to underline the separate characters of the houses, even though they were still under one administration.

When the hostel wanted to reunify its placement agencies for maids and governesses, a harsh dispute emerged that even involved the association of German teachers in London. 52 Feelings ran high, as the assiduously emphasized social difference between simple domestics and educated governesses was at risk. The latter feared a blurring between skilled and unskilled work, with consequences for the orientation of jobs and levels of payment. In this regard France was already a difficult place because of the imbroglio caused by false translation: in French a gouvernante was a "nanny," not a houseteacher, as in German. Some educated governesses did not discover until their first working day that the family was only looking for a "maid with fine education." 53 The teachers were treated as domestics, "no matter how high the demands on formation and knowledge" of the women were. 54 Other teachers were asked to look after the children, to sew, wash, and tidy the rooms, something that not only caused disappointment but also made many change their jobs in order to find something better. 55 The frustration often described in domestics' letters not only shows the danger of being exploited but underlines further their form of career planning. The German women wanted to cash in on their highest value, the command of the German language, and therefore wanted to work as better-paid nannies rather than as maids. Often the jobs consisted of a mixture of both, and the proposed salary did not meet the expectations of the women.

In their letters German domestics generally complain about their homesickness and loneliness. The feeling of solitude could get worse when a domestic fell ill. The German governess Else, a friend of Jenny Schaumann, left Paris after only three months because of an illness that reinforced her homesickness. 56 Being ill could present a major problem. Alone in their rooms on the sixth floor, domestics often did not receive any medical care. What was worse, they also risked dismissal. One week of illness was normally accepted by the employer, but there was no regulation by the law. Anna

Schwirtz, for example, was dismissed because she passed out during her working hours. Her employers also informed the agency that placed her, advising it not to recommend her again. 57 According to the German Protestant pastors, many German women ended their lives in a hospital in Paris, "alone and forgotten." A young woman from Thuringia spent three months in a hospital in Paris "without a word of consolation." 58 In certain hospitals a service in German was established as the need for religious support became important. 59 The German parishes also founded associations like the Protestant Elisabethverein in 1904 for "mutual assistance in case of illness." 60 For other women becoming ill was less threatening. Jenny, for example, was sent to a doctor, and the bill was even paid by her employers. She only had to pay the fees for the dentist she once had to visit. 61 Again, because of the lack of regulation, much depended on the will of the family, and experiences could therefore differ enormously.

Pregnancy was also a reason for being dismissed. Women therefore often tried to hide a pregnancy or had an abortion. Once a child was born, the mother could not keep it in her chambre de bonne. It was either baptized by German pastors and sent to the countryside for someone else to look after or abandoned in front of an orphanage. Some mothers even resorted to killing their newborns. Fin general domestics were overrepresented in the registration lists of maternity units and the asylums for homeless and pregnant women, but we lack any statistical sources concerning Germans in Paris. Fig. 163

For many women the descent began when they lost their job for whatever reason. Protection against dismissal did not exist. The women could be kicked out from one day to another or sometimes even at night because of "family arguments or caprices." But what is often overlooked is that the women could also quit a job that had become unbearable. Departure was an attempt at liberation and often the women's only chance to take their lives back into

their own hands. The women did not quit their occupation as such, however, but looked for their next job in another household and stayed in service. 65

Once jobless, they had to start the costly and ever-recurring process of finding other employment. This could take months, and those who did not want to "go back home remorseful" tried to make money by selling their belongings to a pawn shop or by prostituting themselves. According to Anne Schwirtz, one Luxemburg woman became the mistress of a rich man, whereas another "did the boulevard" for eight months. 66 The linkage between domestics and prostitution in the nineteenth century is well known. In Berlin and Paris up to 50 percent of prostitutes were former domestics. Prostitution often was temporary for domestics and started between jobs. German pastors reckoned that "uncountable women perished like that." 67 Some French observers estimated that German prostitutes in Paris numbered up to twenty thousand, certainly an excessive figure, coming from the Conservative movement, which was impregnated with anti-German feelings after the Franco-German war of 1870-71. 68 It is, however, likely that around 1900 some four thousand German women tried to earn their livings as prostitutes, at least for a certain time. 69

Recent studies concerning the domestics' idea of gender roles show that they oscillated between tradition and modernity. The wish to emigrate, for instance, itself relates traditional feminine role models with new alternatives. Big cities especially provided manifold possibilities in terms of jobs, entertainment, and personal freedom. Emigrating was therefore always a means of emancipation. During the process of migrating women were subject to special dangers and discrimination. Ideally, the family a woman worked for was supposed to protect its domestic servants, a function, however, it could not or would not always fulfill.

The relationship between women and men in France was closely observed by German domestics and compared to role models in Germany. Jenny Schaumann viewed French women as "vain and coquettish." She also criticized the way

women and men dealt with each other in France. From her point of view a

French man always had to jump up and do what his wife wanted. He was more of
her valet and the target of her mockery then her master and ruler. The Conversely, she writes in another letter, French women felt sorry for their
German counterparts, as German men were not their wives' friends but their
masters (maîtres). In her letters Jenny supports the German role model and
adheres to what was traditional for her. Being confronted by other
conceptions served to strengthen her previous point of view rather than
calling it into question. She sees her own future as a nonmarried nurse, a
concept that does not challenge prevalent gender role models in Germany but
contests marriage as the sole purpose of a woman's life. For freedom, she
writes in 1883, after turning twenty-five years old, is something splendid,
and men are actually superficial, because alone she can travel the world. The

<A>Language, Nation, and the Impact of War

During the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 German migrants were forced to leave Paris within seventy-two hours. Approximately sixty thousand German immigrants were affected, including many domestic servants. Luxemburg women apparently took advantage of the "massive dismissal" of their German colleagues. On the other hand, many French families asked their German domestics to stay despite the war, believing that it would not last long and promising to protect the young women. Because of their good relations with their family, many German women thus ignored the command to leave the French capital. Denounced by neighbors later on, when French defeat became apparent, they were put in prison as enemies of the nation and illegal immigrants.

After the Franco-German war of 1870-71 many German women came back to work in Paris. The demand for German nannies and teachers was still high, as German was still considered a language of cultural value. The German pastor Frisius reported in 1888 that these German women did not suffer from the

animosity of the French population. The Yet the women sensed the hostility. Anna Schwirtz relates several stories of being turned away by potential employers who explained that they did not like strangers, especially Germans. The narrative "La gouvernante allemande," published in 1887, summarizes perfectly the widespread belief concerning the untrustworthiness of German domestics. In the story a German nanny disappears all of a sudden during a parade, with the boy she is taking care of. Searches for both of them are in vain until similar happenings uncover a conspiracy. The villain turns out to be a German woman whose brother and father had been killed during the war of 1870-71. She has been kidnapping French children for revanche, planning to educate them as Germans and make them fight one day against France.

Because of the tense French-German relationship one observation appears consistently in the contemporary sources. After 1870 German migrants in Paris were living "dispersed and reclusive" lives and hiding their national identity by not speaking German in public and by presenting themselves during job interviews as Swiss, Austrian, or Luxemburger. They did so in order to avoid possible French feelings of hatred and desire for revanche toward the Prussians. In fact, to teach children the German language, the women had to be German speaking but did not need to come from the German Empire. Confusion about national and regional origin and language was common. French civil servants were expressly instructed not to confuse German-speaking migrants from Alsace and Luxemburg with those from the Kaiserreich. The French press denounced the German migrants' practice of denying their national origin. It was known that German migrants falsified French census data. This led to highly exaggerated estimates of the number of German migrants in Paris and especially of women allegedly working as prostitutes. It also reinforced the widespread idea of Prussian agents being omnipresent in Paris. 78

At the same time the denial of nationality shows that the women invented their own strategies in order to get jobs and that they handled their

migration with a clear understanding of self-interest. War and unification of the German Kaiserreich were obstacles to the women's desire to find jobs in Paris. Regional consciousness was bolstered, and the women insisted either truly or falsely on a regional origin that was not identical with "Germany." The idea was to bring out their most important asset—the command of the German language—without provoking the negative effects of their origin in the country newly labeled as a "hereditary enemy." This strategy seems to have worked due to the positive stereotypes linked to a general perception of "being German." Even the French used this way of thinking: Jenny Schaumann, born in a small village in Holstein under Danish rule before it became Prussian in 1866, was declared Danish and not German by the grandfather of the family she was serving in. The apparently needed this interpretation to accept her—a German enemy by definition—in his house.

Between learning French and teaching the German language, German nannies often found a conflict of interest. The families wanted the Fräulein to speak German to their children so that they would learn the language, but the German women wanted to practice their French. They often complained about the lack of opportunities to improve their French, especially since they had little spare time to go out and make new friends. 80 Moreover, questions about the standard of the language teaching can be raised. Apart from the teachers, who had an education, the women working as nannies were not trained to teach their language. Coming from a rural background, some of them likely spoke a local German dialect and were not apt to teach the children grammatically correct German. 81 In 1905 Pariser Zeitung wrote, "Even educated French are unable to tell if a domestic speaks bad or good German." It is therefore likely that some French children learned sloppy German with some strong regional dialect. 82 At the same time some sources suggest that the German women themselves only learned "gutter French," which they heard from their French domestic colleagues. 83 Nevertheless, a cultural transfer took place

through the telling of fairy tales and histories or educational and behavioral norms. Jenny Schaumann writes that she and another German governess were teaching their delighted French family a German card game called "Schwarzer Peter." These aspects of cultural transfer and the learning of language need further exploration and research.

During the same period enthusiasm for the new fatherland aroused the migrants, and strong efforts were made to create national cohesion and consciousness among German migrants through festivals and associations. In Paris German churches as well as wealthy merchants and the German embassy organized material and moral help for women in distress. The Catholic parish in the south of Paris was the first to found an aid association, the Annaverein, in 1855. The German Protestant Church, which did not want to fall behind or lose Protestant women to the Catholic Church, opened a hostel for domestics in 1869. Closed during the war of 1870-71, it was only reopened in 1886. Such church organizations perfectly linked the two aims of charity and patriotism. Not only did church leaders want to help German migrants in difficulty and therefore prevent them from disgracing their fatherland, but they also wanted to strengthen the links among migrants in order to shape a national identity they could refer to far away from home. 85 The Catholic Church wanted to "watch over Germany's daughters with patriotic love" and incite them to "keep up with German convention and German faithfulness."86 Therefore, hostels and other associations organized language courses and Bible and prayer hours, as well as sewing and knitting meetings. They also had a small library with "good German literature." These offers were specially adapted to the women's circumstances: the meetings were always held on a Sunday afternoon, in general the domestic's free afternoon, while the hostels and churches were located in the areas where most of the domestics were employed. The proposals for these meetings came from the women themselves, who wanted to escape their isolation and keep in contact even

after they had left the hostels and found a job. 88 Up to forty women came to the Kaffeekränzchen of the Protestant Church on Sunday afternoons in 1902.

Some women were repelled by the rigid rules of these ecclesiastic communities, which conflicted with their longing for freedom. In 1900 the year of the world exhibition in Paris, the number of domestics asking for help declined for the first time since the opening of the Protestant hostel. According to the head of the asylum, this was because the domestics were not allowed to go out after dinner at seven p.m. The unemployed girls would have preferred "to enjoy freely the delightfulness of the exhibition even late in the evening." This example shows that living a self-determined life was an important goal for the women to realize during their stay abroad. Having fled the narrowness at home, they were not willing to be locked up in Paris while unemployed. In addition, it proves that the women were able to find other accommodation that allowed them more freedom than the Protestant hostel.

<A>Conclusion

Although many German domestics seem to have had little information concerning their migration to Paris, this form of migration was a career move with a clear economic agenda, flanked by the desire for freedom and adventure. The migrants' ability to determine their own actions can clearly been detected. Young women were not only passive victims, as the church described them, but people who actively developed their own strategies and forms of resistance in order to ameliorate their situation. The presumed ease of this migration attracted a large number of women who established their own informal and lasting networks.

Despite the problems the women may have encountered, most of them seem to have judged their stay in Paris as "positive and enriching." The favorable narrative of the returnees may have incited more women to take their turn and leave for Paris as well. We do not, however, have any

statistics or other data to be able to judge the success of this migration. Theresa McBride found that, in general, one-third of domestics raised their social status; one-third stayed on the same social level; and one-third ended in poverty, alcoholism, or prostitution. 91 Nevertheless, on a personal level the conclusions might have been different since the "best benefit of a stay in France" was a broadening of horizons, irrespective of whether the desired social ascension could be realized. 92 Working abroad allowed the women to have manifold experiences and to acquire skills they could use later. The process of cultural transfer continued once the women were back home. The young women brought back the modernity they had already talked about in their letters. Often they had difficulties reintegrating into the rural lifestyle. The accusation was common that the returnees played the "Parisian," which also points out that the change they had undergone was perceptible and seen as a threat. After their stay in Paris these domestic servants often had different expectations for their own lives. Their ideas had changed about whom to choose as a partner but also about the age for marriage, the education of children, gender roles, and food.

However, in the summer of 1914, with the beginning of World War I, Germans were expelled from Paris again and had to leave the French capital within forty-eight hours. All the inhabitants of the Protestant hostel left on the evening of August 1, 1914. The hostel was closed and would never open again. Thousands of Germans, especially women, were interned in camps in the south of France. 93 World War I put an end to the mass migration of German women who were taking up employment opportunities, acquiring skills, or achieving personal independence in the French capital.

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 <u>History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives</u>, 2nd ed. (Bern: Peter Lang,

 1999), 9.
- 2. Steve Hochstadt, Mobility and Modernity: Migration in Germany 1820-1989 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 71-72.
- 3. Sylvia Hahn, <u>Migration--Arbeit--Geschlecht</u>. <u>Arbeitsmigration in</u>

 <u>Mitteleuropa vom 17. bis zum Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts</u> (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2008), 207.
- 4. Karin Walser, <u>Dienstmädchen: Frauenarbeit und Weiblichkeitsbilder um 1900</u>
 (Frankfurt [a.M.]: Extrabuch-Verl., 1985), 17-21; Abel Chatelain, "Migrations et domesticité féminine urbaine en France, XVIIIe siècle<EN>XXe siècle,"
 Revue d'histoire économique et sociale 4 (1969) 506.
- 5. Gunilla-Friederike Budde, "Das Dienstmädchen," in <u>Der Mensch des 19.</u>

 <u>Jahrhunderts</u>, ed. Ute Frevert and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (Essen: Magnus Verlag, 2004), 153.
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- 7. Christiane Harzig, "Women Migrants as Global and Local Agents: New Research Strategies on Gender and Migration," in Women, Gender and Labour Migration: Historical and Global Perspectives, ed. Pamela Sharpe (London: Routledge, 2001), 15-28; Marita Krauss and Holger Sonnabend, eds., Frauen und Migration (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2001).
- 8. Harzig, "Women Migrants as Global and Local Agents," 18.

- 9. For developments to the German community in Paris in the nineteenth century see Mareike König, "Brüche als gestaltendes Element: Die Deutschen in Paris im 19. Jahrhundert," in <u>Deutsche Handwerker</u>, Arbeiter und <u>Dienstmädchen in Paris</u>. Eine vergessene Migration im 19. Jahrhundert, ed. Mareike König (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003), 9-26.
- 10. Marina Tichy, Alltag und Traum. Leben und Lektüre der Dienstmädchen im Wien der Jahrhundertwende (Wien: Böhlau, 1984).
- 11. Silke Wehner-Franco, <u>Deutsche Dienstmädchen in Amerika 1850-1914</u>
 (Münster, NY: Waxmann, 1994), 16-18.
- 12. The seventy-seven letters Jenny Schaumann wrote from 1881 to 1904 to her former employer in Glückstadt, some of them more than ten pages long, are held in the Deutsches Tagebucharchiv e.V. in Emmendingen (DTA), 54, 1.
- 13. See Germaine Goetzinger, "Les servantes luxembourgeoises à Bruxelles,"

 Sextant. Revue du Groupe interdisciplinaire d'Études sur les Femmes 15-16

 (2001): 83-100; Jean Haubenestel, "Active, propre, honnête." Jeunes filles alsaciennes en place à Paris 1900-1960 (Strassburg: J. Haubenestel, 2002).
- 14. The archives of the German Protestant Church, rue Blanche, Paris (Archiv Christuskirche), hold a small collection of articles on the German community and a few extracts of reviews from Protestant parishes in Germany. See also Wilhelm von der Recke, ed., "Fluctuat nec mergitur . . ." Deutsche

 Evangelische Christuskirche Paris 1894-1994. Beiträge zur Geschichte der lutherischen Gemeinden deutscher Sprache in Paris und Frankreich (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke Verlag, 1994).
- 15. Guy Thuillier and Pierre Guiral, <u>La vie quotidienne des domestiques en</u> France au XIXe siècle (Paris: Hachette, 1978), 167.
- 16. "Man liebt in Paris deutsche Köchinnen und Dienstmädchen. Sie arbeiten mehr und fleißiger, sind solider und ruhiger, redlich, verlässlich und einfach und leichter zu befriedigen, als die französischen Demoiselles, die nicht leicht durch einen Dienst sich verpflichten lassen und die

Ungebundenheit mehr als gut ist lieben." <u>Die Deutschen in Paris. Vom Verfasser der Rundschau</u> (Freiburg, 1862), 41-42. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the German are my own.

- 17. Claudia Huerkamp, "Die Lehrerin," in Frevert and Haupt, <u>Der Mensch des</u>
 19. Jahrhunderts, 176-200.
- 18. Hahn, Migration--Arbeit--Geschlecht, 89.
- 19. Mareike König, "Bonnes à tout faire": Deutsche Dienstmädchen in Paris um 1900," in König, Deutsche Handwerker, 69-92.
- 20. Haubenestel, "Active, propre, honnête," 20-22.
- 21. König, "Deutsche Dienstmädchen in Paris um 1900," 74; Irene Hardach-Pinke, <u>Die Gouvernante: Geschichte eines Frauenberufs</u> (Frankfurt am Main: Campus-Verlag, 1993), 227.
- 22. Theresa McBride, "Social Mobility for the Lower Classes: Domestic Service in Nineteenth-Century France," Journal of Social History 8 (1974): 64.
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- 24. Henri Wehenkel, "La Tour de France d'un typographe luxembourgeois," in Luxembourg-Paris-Luxembourg. Migrations au temps de la Commune, ed. Henri Wehenkel (Luxemburg: 2001), 84.
- 25. "Wie schön es ist, frei und sein eigener Herr zu sein und sich die Welt ein wenig anzusehen": letter of Jenny Schaumann, s.d. 1881, DTA, 54, 1.
- 26. Leslie Page Moch, Moving Europeans: Migration in Western Europe since

 1650 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 34; Hahn, Migration—

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- 27. Moch, Moving Europeans, 15. See also Leslie Page Moch, "Networks among Bretons? The Evidence for Paris, 1875-1925," Continuity and Change 18, no. 3 (2003): 431-55.

- 28. Simone Wegge, "A Historical Perspective on Female Migrants: Motivations and Strategies of Nineteenth-century Hessians," in Sharpe, Women Gender and Labour Migration, 181.
- 29. Michel Espagne, Bordeaux-Baltique (Paris: Edition du CNRS, 1991), 198-99.
- 30. König, "Deutsche Dienstmädchen in Paris um 1900," 77.
- 31. "Absolument seule, et nous la retrouverons alors sur le quai d'une gare parisienne, confrontant ses illusions à la réalité de la grande ville." Anne Martin-Fugier, <u>La place des bonnes. La domesticité féminine à Paris en 1900,</u> 2nd ed. (Paris: Édition Perrin, 2004, 2), 41.
- 32. "Ohne Anhalt, ohne Kenntniß der Sprache, ohne irgend welchen Schutz": Kollektenreise, Oct. 1885, Archiv Christuskirche Paris, 110-11.
- 33. Sechzehnter Jahresbericht des deutschen Mädchenheims zu Paris, Apr. 1<EN>Mar. 31, 1901, Sarepta-Archiv Bielefeld, 1/257.
- 34. This is how the railway mission was found in 1905. See Barbara Henkes, Heimat in Holland (Straelen: Straelener Ms.-Verlag, 1998), 48-49.
- 35. "Anständigkeit": Henriette Heider, "Ratschläge für den Aufenthalt in Paris," Österreichische Frauen-Rundschau, no. 76, Aug. 1, 1910.
- 36. Haubenestel, "Active, propre, honnête," 128.
- 37. Letters of Jenny Schaumann, Oct. 6, 1898, Mar. 13, 1901, Apr. 13, 1904, DTA, 54, 1.
- 38. Thuillier and Guiral, La vie quotidienne des domestiques, 228.
- 39. Martin-Fugier, La place des bonnes, 58-59.
- 40. Arthur Mennell, Pariser Luft (Leipzig: A. Unflad, 1885), 67.
- 41. Germaine Goetzinger, "Zur Sozial-und Alltagsgeschichte der Dienstmädchen," in "Wenn nur wir Frauen auch das Wort ergreifen . . ." Frauen in Luxemburg-Femmes au Luxembourg 1880-1950, ed. Germaine Goetzinger and Antoinette Lorang (Luxemburg: Publications Nationales, Ministère de la Culture 1997), 194.
- 42. Goetzinger, "Zur Sozial-und Alltagsgeschichte der Dienstmädchen," 195.

- 43. Piette, <u>Domestiques et servantes</u>, 203; Martin-Fugier, <u>La place des bonnes</u>, 125-48; Thuillier and Guiral, <u>La vie quotidienne des domestiques</u>, 37-44.
- 44. Käthe Schirmacher, <u>Paris!</u> (Berlin, 1900), 259; <u>Evangelisches Monatsblatt</u> für Westfalen (1896), HBA 2/90-297.
- 45. "Die Dienstboten bekommen in den grossen Häusern, die Wohnungen für 20 bis 30 Familien haben, alle zusammen ihre Schlafkammer unter dem Dach angewiesen--weibliche und männliche Dienstboten ohne Unterschied. Mehr braucht nicht gesagt zu werden": Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, "Dringende Bitte um Errichtung einer evangelischen Mägdeherberge in Paris,"

 <u>Evangelisches Monatsblatt für Westfalen</u> (1896), HBA 2/90-29 7.
- 46. Schulte, "Dienstmädchen im herrschaftlichen Haushalt," 883.
- 47. König, "Konfliktbeladene Kulturvermittlung," 244.
- 48. Letter of Jenny Schaumann, May 27, 1885, DTA, 54, 1.
- 49. "Stets werde ich meine einfachen deutschen Verhältnisse vorziehen": letter of Jenny Schaumann, Mar. 7, 1885, DTA, 54, 1.
- 50. Letter of Jenny Schaumann, Nov. 9, 1881, DTA, 54, 1.
- 51. Letter of Jenny Schaumann, May 27, 1885, DTA, 54, 1.
- 52. Rudolf Muhs, "Eine Stütze für Germanias "Töchter in der Fremde." Der "Vereinsbote aus London," Ariadne 44 (2003): 42.
- 53. "Dienstmädchen mit feiner Bildung": Kollektenreise, May 1886, Archiv Christuskirche Paris, 110-11.
- 54. "Wie groß auch im Übrigen die Ansprüche seien, die man an Bildung und Wissen des fraglichen Mädchens stellt": Mennell, Pariser Luft, 63.
- 55. König, "Konfliktbeladene Kulturvermittlung," 245.
- 56. Letter of Jenny Schaumann, Apr. 13, 1904, DTA, 54, 1.
- 57. Goetzinger, "Zur Sozial-und Alltagsgeschichte der Dienstmädchen," 196-97.
- 58. "Ohne ein Wort des Trostes": <u>Nachbar für Sachsen</u>, Nov. 9, 1885, Archiv Christuskirche Paris.

- 59. Schifflein Christi, no. 7, June 1864, Archiv Christuskirche Paris.
- 60. von der Recke, "Fluctuat nec mergitur . . . ," 324.
- 61. Letters of Jenny Schaumann, Oct. 30, 1882, Dec. 28, 1882, DTA, 54, 1.
- 62. Schifflein Christi, no. 6, May 1866, p. 87, Archiv Christuskirche Paris.
- 63. Rachel G. Fuchs and Leslie Page Moch, "Pregnant, Single, and Far from Home: Migrant Women in Nineteenth Century Paris," American Historical Review 95 (1995): 1007-31.
- 64. "beim Ausbruch etwaiger Familienstreitigkeiten oder Launen": Kollektenreise, Oct. 1885, Archiv Christuskirche Paris, 110-11.
- 65. Schulte, "Dienstmädchen im herrschaftlichen Haushalt," 906.
- 66. Goetzinger, "Zur Sozial-und Alltagsgeschichte der Dienstmädchen", 201. The French expression was faire le trottoir.
- 67. "Unzählige gehen so zu Grunde": Kollektenreise, May 1886, Archiv Christuskirche Paris, 110-11.
- 68. Lucien Nicot, L'Allemagne à Paris (Paris: Dentu 1887), 105.
- 69. König, "Deutsche Dienstmädchen in Paris um 1900," 85-86.
- 70. Wehner-Franco, Deutsche Dienstmädchen in Amerika, 280.
- 71. Letter of Jenny Schaumann, May 1, 1884, DTA, 54, 1.
- 72. Letter of Jenny Schaumann, May 27, 1885, DTA, 54, 1.
- 73. Letter of Jenny Schaumann, Feb. 4, 1883, DTA, 54, 1.
- 74. "Renvoi massif": Antoinette Reuter, "Les Luxembourgeois en France et à Paris (XIXe siècle)," Migrance 20 (2002): 58.
- 75. Mareike König, "Les immigrés allemands: entre expulsion, naturalisation et lutte sur les barricades," Migrance 35 (2010): 60-70.
- 76. "Erbitterung der Franzosen" (newspaper article), Feb. 12, 1888 (no source title noted), from Pastor Frisius and August Klattenhoff, Archiv Christuskirche Paris, 110-11.
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- 79. Letter of Jenny Schaumann, Dec. 20, 1885, DTA, 54, 1.
- 80. König, "Deutsche Dienstmädchen in Paris um 1900," 90-91.
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 (Berlin: Inst. für Bibl.-Wiss. d. Humboldt-Univ., 2007),

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- 89. "Auch noch abends spät die 'Herrlichkeiten, der Ausstellung in voller Freiheit zu genießen": Sechzehnter Jahresbericht des deutschen Mädchenheims in Paris 1900/1901, Sarepta-Archiv Bielefeld, 1/257.
- 89. Haubenestel, "Active, propre, honnête," 126, 137.
- 91. McBride, Domestic Revolution.
- 92. "Ratschläge für die deutsche Lehrerin in Frankreich," <u>Die Lehrerin in</u> Schule und Haus 23 (1909-10): 668.

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