

Germany Democratic Republic

Ethnicity in Germany Democratic Republic

Compared with the German Federal Republic the Socialist German Democratic Republic did not experience a similar immigration of minorities. Beginning in the 1950s several thousand foreign students from other Socialist states used to study in the GDR. The number of non-German minorities increased during the late 1970s when the Socialist regime began to hire foreign workers mostly from Vietnam, Poland, Cuba, Mozambique, and Angola. In 1989 the two largest migrant minorities consisted of 60.000 Vietnamese and 52.000 Poles.

Apart from the new migrant groups the Sorbes constituted a significant ethnic minority. Based on a law in 1948 the Sorbes were formally granted a minority status which obliged the GDR to promote the Sorbe language and culture. The status as a national minority was added to the constitution in 1968. Their ethnically based organization "Domowina", dissolved since 1941, was reestablished in 1945 and supported the Socialist regime. The Domowina was a sub-organization of the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED). It did not advance any political claims based on ethnic identity (¹²⁶⁴). Overall, the ethnic cleavage became never so politicized that it could be considered politically relevant by the EPR coding rules.

¹²⁶⁴ [Sorben, 2015]

In light of the extremely low level of ethnic diversity Rainer Geissler describes the GDR as a "monoethnic society" (¹²⁶⁵, p. 250). By quantitative means ethnicity was never a relevant phenomenon and it also did not play an important role in the GDR's politics. Following the EPR rules ethnicity is therefore judged to be politically "irrelevant".

¹²⁶⁵ [Geissler, 2011]

Bibliography

[Geissler, 2011] Geissler, Rainer. (2006). Die Sozialstruktur Deutschlands. Zur gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung mit einer Bilanz zur Vereinigung. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.

[Sorben, 2015] Wikipedia. (2015). Sorben. Retrieved on 02.04.2015 from: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/SorbenDie_DR – Zeit

Political status of ethnic groups in Germany Democratic Republic

From 1954 until 1989

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Germans	1.0	IRRELEVANT



Figure 290: Political status of ethnic groups in Germany Democratic Republic during 1954-1989.