

## **From „Guest Workers“ to „Welcoming Culture“ – Germany and Migration.**

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### *Introductory*

This article deals with Germany and various aspects of migration. In common with other essays in this volume the piece will begin with a brief summary of Germany's role in UN agreements and treaties of importance to migratory and refugee movement around the world. This will be followed by an overview of the main features of Germany's migration history, focusing primarily on the post WWII period. At various points in the article attention will be drawn to specific points of comparison between Germany and Poland.

The historical section of the article will review labour migration and the ways in which these have evolved over time, looking in particular at the post-1945 period. A further focus will then be placed on asylum from the end of the 20th century leading in to a consideration of the integration processes following the large inflow of asylum-seekers and refugees in 2014-15. There will then be a section as a case study of training integration looking at the social and vocational training programmes for young asylum seekers in Bavaria – a primary research concern of the author. Reference will be made to the methodology at the beginning of that chapter.

The last section of the article will address issues around racism in German society and take up more recent developments in anti-discrimination initiatives and the efforts to combat right-wing extremist tendencies in German politics and society as both an expression of and a breeding ground for xenophobic tendencies.

A brief word on definitions. We shall be looking at the context of international migration, covering both *emigration* from the territory of Germany (before it became a defined nation-state in the 19th century) and *immigration* to Germany. *International migration* describes movement across borders, *internal migration* is the movement within the borders of a national territory or region. *Remigration* is return to a country or area of origin and *circular migration* describes the process of commuting between two residential areas. *Pioneer migration* is the initial movement of individuals to a target area while, finally, *chain migration* denotes movement based on established social or clan networks (Haug, Schmidbauer, 2019, 2ff).

### *Germany and International Treaties relevant to Migration: the Global Refugee Pact and the Global Migration Pact*

Germany is generally a supportive state in the endorsement and ratification of UN treaties and as a member of the United Nations promotes many strands of international cooperation. Germany has for many decades been a pro-active and „card-carrying and fully paid-up member“ (i.e. willing fund-giver) of various international UN organisations such as UNICEF, the ILO or the IOM. Active engagement in the formulation of international, cooperation-based policy has been an integral part of the German governmental approach.

From a migration perspective Germany has, nonetheless, sometimes been a reluctant member in terms of realising the rights of migrants in the domestic context. One indication of this was the reluctance to apply the provisions of the *International Convention on the Rights of the Child/Kinderrechtskonvention* (1992), to which the government of Helmut Kohl attached a „reservation“ stating that these provisions did not apply for migrants, juridical priority being given to Aliens Law. This was not revoked until 2010.

Equally the *International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers/Wanderarbeitnehmerkonvention* (1990, ratification 2003) was viewed with a similar scepticism by the Kohl administration, because of the legitimation of social rights for undocumented migrants, such as access to health care and to schooling for children, which the Convention expressly promulgated. The human and social rights of undocumented migrants have traditionally given rise to especially controversial debate in Germany.

The *Global Pact on Refugees* was concluded in 2018 and is not legally binding. Germany has been an active supporter of the Pact and the emphasis of the primary aims reflects the interest of the receiving („host“) countries in reducing their burdens of refugee migration and in encouraging them to move on or to return to countries of origin:

„The objectives of the global compact as a whole are to: (i) ease pressures on host countries; (ii) enhance refugee self-reliance; (iii) expand access to third country solutions; and (iv) support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.“ (*Global Pact, 2018, Article 7*)

The Pact outlines a programme of action intended to develop „operational partnerships“ via the UNHCR and IOM with the countries of origin in order to improve conditions so that migration pressure may be reduced. The coordinating body to be set up to monitor and enforce this agenda, the *Global Refugee Forum* has a prevention agenda covering a wide variety of aspects from empowerment, inter-generational justice and gender issues to environmental degradation and climate change. Governmental and civil society actors at local level are to be included on a basis of equity.

The obligations of the host countries relate to a) providing a right to stay and protection for asylum seekers, b) enabling access to education, health care and the labour market and c) enhancing their skills, enabling building of human capital and developing their self-reliance (ibid, p. 56). These are aspects which have proved to be particularly relevant with the large scale influx of asylum-seekers from 2014-15.

Closely bound up with this is the *Global Migration Pact*, which has been less contentious than such Conventions as those mentioned above from the Nineties, possibly reflecting the fact that societal discourse on migration issues has become considerably more mainstream and differentiated in the last twenty years. The Global Pact on Migration, which was promulgated in 2018, has taken up many strands of regulation of migration flows and of human and social rights orientation of those leaving their home areas. Many of these issues have become recognised topics of informed – if controversial – debate over this period.

One major criticism of the Pact, which formulates 23 goals to secure „safe, orderly and regular“ migration, is that it, like the Pact for Refugees, sets a non-legally-binding framework. This means there is no juridical means of compelling nation states to abide by its provisions. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is responsible for its implementation.

A wide range of issues of central importance in global management of migration are covered, from safe migration pathways (Article 5) via security issues around border management (Article 8-12), fair mechanisms of labour market recruitment to enable „decent work“ (Article 6), skills enhancement (Articles 15 and 18), combatting discrimination (Article 17) to, finally, ensuring the safe flow of remittances and boosting financial inclusion (Article 20. Global Pact for Migration, 2018).

In view of its non-binding nature, one of the most important aspects as regards the effectiveness of the pact is the review mechanism, which is to be coordinated by the *Migration Pact Forum* and is conceived to have an analogue function to the forum for the *Sustainability Pact* of 2015. Discussion of the key issues is intended to raise the normative pressure of the Pact's provisions and thus encourage countries to join and implement its articles.

There are particular areas in the Pact which can have an effect on internal policy-making in Germany, such as Article 16 dealing with access to integration courses and vocational training. With the reform of domestic law on the table in 2019-20 enhancing non-nationals access to the labour market and training there is a degree of promotion of the inclusive employment approach. Article 8, too, promoting an economically and politically equitable code of recruitment practice is relevant in this context.

Equally, Article 18 encouraging the recognition of qualifications across borders and their equivalence may well influence the workings of the Specialist Worker Migration Law which came into effect in March 2020. Corona has impeded the monitoring of its immediate effects, but there is a general recognition of the need for improvements in this area.

Article 21 addresses the contentious issue of „dignified return“ of migrants to their home countries/areas of origin, frequently undermined by the de facto practice of removal/deportation. The concept of involving *the whole of society* in this area of migration policy could provide the impulse for the active involvement of various civil society actors in mitigating defensive factors and developing a more humane philosophy and practice of detention and removal.

Promoting migration policy in the European context means that Germany could usefully seek alliances with those of like-minded disposition to take forward the opening of regular migration paths (Article 5), e.g. for lower-qualified migrants, in an international context. German business is often caught in something of a double-bind in this area of policy-making. There are many businesses in the *Mittelstand*, the base of the German economic powerhouse, which recognise the need for a lower-to-medium-range skills labour supply, but official policy remains highly restrictive as regards this target group. This is an issue to which we shall return in the course of this article.

A further highly relevant, if controversial, issue to be addressed is the introduction of binding distribution mechanisms for asylum seekers entering the European Union, in which Germany has, since 2015, taken a pro-active role. A point of comparison with Poland's approach is that the Polish government has, in line with the other Eastern European Visegrad nations, taken a far more restrictive line regarding distribution of asylum-seekers around the EU states. This has to be seen as part of the tableau of humanitarian issues around the effects of denying asylum seekers/migrants entry to Europe via the Mediterranean area.

Article 8 states that saving human lives is an absolute priority, one which confronts the European Union with one of the most painful dilemmas by dint of its restrictive southern borders approach. There is a profound need for a reconsideration of this in many ways literally deadly policy (Angenendt, Koch, 2019). The human rights-led discourse around the Global Pact for Migration may be able to play an enabling function here.

### *A Brief History of Germany's Migration Movements upto 1990*

For a long time Germany was a geographical, linguistic and cultural entity rather than a nation state. For this reason, among others, it was more often a source of emigration as opposed to a goal for immigrants. There were patterns of migration to Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, for example such well-known groups as the *Siebenbürger Sachsen* or the *Donauschwaben*. Later Catherine the Great, a princess originating from a small German principality, encouraged the emigration of her countrymen to Eastern parts of the Tsarist Empire, trusting in their ability to develop agriculture, crafts and networks of local trade with the concession of ten years of tax-free residence.

This was promulgated in an Edict of 1763 with a letter-of-invitation for potential colonists, as part of a policy of settlement also practiced in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in Prussia. It was attractive for many from German territories as they could thus free themselves from serfdom and would enjoy religious freedom. It was followed up by a further edict under Alexander I in 1804 confirming the concessions for settlers. It is estimated that some 50-55,000 Europeans settled in the Ukraine, Moldavia and the Transcaucasus as a result (Krieger, 2017).

Prussia provides a good example of interest in the settlement of qualified immigrants. Following the revocation in 1685 by Louis XIV of France of the Tolerance Edict of Nantes (which had been promulgated in 1598 by Henri IV) the Prussian monarch, the Great Elector Friedrich Wilhelm, encouraged the immigration of French Huguenots into Brandenburg. His Edict of Potsdam of that same year 1685, guaranteeing freedom of religion and civic rights to the French Protestants, was an innovative step at that time and set a conscious counterpoint to the repressive religious policy of the French monarchy.

There was, however, a key economic motive underlying this approach. The Great Elector was particularly interested in drawing on the renowned skills of the Huguenots in textile manufacture to make uniforms for his army and the relatively poor and sparsely-populated Prussian state profited from the immigration of a skilled and cultured elite into Brandenburg over the longer term. This is clearly evident up to the present day in the built-environment heritage of the French Protestant community as represented by the ensemble of the *Gendarmenmarkt* in Berlin – often said to be Berlin's loveliest square (Hanewinkel, Oltmer, 2017).

The most important goal of emigrants from the German lands in the 19th century was of course America. It is estimated that some 20 million people from all over Europe left via the ports of Hamburg, Bremen and Bremerhaven in the course of the century. Some 5,5 million Germans settled in the United States between 1816 and 1914 (Oltmer, 2016). Large populations of emigre Germans also accrued in South America in Brazil, Argentina and also in Canada.

Immigration into the German territories began before the unification of Germany under Prussian suzerainty with the upswing in coal-mining, steel and other heavy industries in the middle of the 19th century. Labour migrants came primarily from Poland to the Ruhr area in the course of the Industrial Revolution. Despite the associated economic boom there was much poverty and unemployment and the factories were run under semi-feudal conditions. Some 40,000 to 50,000 Polish-speaking immigrants lived in the Ruhr area but found themselves confronted with pressure to assimilate to the German language and culture of the ethnic German majority, though there was nonetheless the shared religious faith of Catholicism. A Polish familial and cultural heritage has been evident in the Ruhr area ever since.

Covering migration processes during the First and Second World Wars as well as the inter-war period is beyond the framework of this essay. Nevertheless we should note that part of the xenophobic, „master race“ ideology of the Nazi regime categorized the Poles as slavish „sub-humans“ to be exterminated as part of the broader agenda of the genocide of the Holocaust which – with clear geographical programmatic intent – established the extermination camps in Polish territory. This was the space designated for radical „cleansing“ through extermination of the „racially impure“ (Lehnstaedt, 2017).

At the end of World War II Germany became a huge fulcrum of migratory movement as 12 million displaced persons – concentration camp survivors, former slave labourers and POWs – who were relocated in 1945-47. A similar number of ethnic Germans and refugees came into the core central European German lands from the East, fleeing the advancing Red Army. These numbers of uprooted people presented huge resettlement, logistical and organisational challenges, which the Allies had to deal with following the collapse of Nazi Germany.

The next significant wave of immigration came with the hiring of so-called „guest workers“ on the basis of inter-governmental Employment Agreements, beginning with Italy in 1955. Labour migration was required with the burgeoning „economic miracle“ in West Germany from the late 1950s, and especially from 1961 with the stop to the inflow of people of working age from the GDR through the construction of the Berlin Wall.

Originally workers were hired on the basis of the rotation principle, by which they were supposed to return home after two years. But both the employers and workers set their faces against this as there was little sense in sending workers home once they had acquired the requisite work skills and language basics, only to begin from scratch with the next batch of immigrant workers. Most were young and male (ca. 80%), as a rule they lived in barracks adjacent to their places of work and were employed as unskilled workers in sectors of industry which were unattractive to the resident population on account of low pay and poor working conditions (Berger, Mohr, 2010).

While most returned to their home countries, nonetheless by 1973 some 2.6 million of these „guest workers“ had settled in Germany, when rising unemployment and the oil crisis caused by the Yom Kippur Arab-Israeli war led the German government to terminate the agreements (Anwerbestopp), thus stopping the supply of labour migrants to Germany – officially at least.

Henceforward the only legitimate path for continued immigration was family reunion, meaning that the proportion of the migrant population in gainful employment in Germany steadily decreased over the following years through the immigration of spouses and minors. The only exception to this was the continued immigration of medical and care workers as well

as nurses, of which there was an ongoing shortage, from South Korea, India and the Philippines (Berlinghoff, 2018).



Italian „Guest Workers“ arriving in Germany in the mid-1950s<sup>1</sup>

A brief summary of immigration to the GDR makes plain that 1961 was also a watershed moment for the East German state. Up till the erection of the Wall some 2.7 million East German citizens left for West Germany, many of whom were qualified workers. This gave rise to an increasing skills shortage in Eastern Germany. In the 1970s and 80s there was a limited intake of young people from „socialist brother states“ such as Vietnam, Cuba and Angola, who came to work, do apprenticeships or to study technical subjects such as engineering. Under the terms of these „state agreements“ family reunion was not allowed and the migrants were obliged to return once their contracts (as apprentices or workers) had expired.

A number of exiles from Chile came to East (and West) Germany following Pinochet’s coup against the elected government of Salvador Allende in 1973. Equally, numbers of „boat people“ from Vietnam were given sanctuary in 1978. As a rule both the labour migrants and refugees lived in hostels separate from the majority population, with whom they were only allowed to fraternise with permission. They received a part of their wage only after returning to their homeland and were obliged to hand over a part of their income to their government (ibid). In other words, migration to the GDR was subject to strict surveillance and control.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hdbg.de/bayern-italien/bilder/03-07-g.jpg>

From 1990 and the reunification of modern Germany there were other migratory movements. Apart from the strong internal movement of young people of employable age from the Eastern to Western *Länder* the early Nineties were also characterised by increased immigration of ethnic Germans from the countries of the former Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. Equally there was a rise in the number of asylum seekers. Many came to Germany during the wars and conflicts following the break-up of the former Yugoslavia.

However, increasing global mobility and the development of global migration networks meant that the world was „shrinking“, inasmuch as not only asylum seekers with a clearly defined experience of persecution in the sense of the Geneva Convention (1951), but also many others with complex, multiple motives were on the move in the search of a better, safer life.

One result of these developments was a dramatic increase in the numbers of people applying for asylum in the early 1990 s – legal, alternative channels such as labour migration being largely closed – , as Germany had one of the most generous asylum regimes worldwide as a key element in the legacy of the Nazi period. This migratory „displacement effect“ gave rise to intense and controversial debate in Germany in the early Nineties and resulted in wide-ranging restriction in asylum procedure and recognition practice. This meant the number of those attaining some form of refugee status fell dramatically in the following years (Luft, Schimany, 2014).

From the early Noughties a sea-change in immigration policy gradually became evident, driven by an increasing awareness of demographic change (an ageing native population) and a skills gap – a serious problem for the backbone of the German economy, the *Mittelstand* of small and medium-sized enterprises. Thus, alongside a liberalisation of the rules allowing assumption of German citizenship (1999), there was an encouragement of immigration of the highly-qualified beginning with a *Green Card* regime from 2000 and the ongoing promotion of a somewhat nebulously-defined „welcoming culture“ for immigrants. The key element in this was the rolling out of language course and integration programmes to ease immigrants into the German education and training system, labour market and society (from 2005 onwards).

The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) has since been responsible for the nationwide installation of these programmes to enhance long-term absorption of immigrants in to German society. Since then there has been the development of what may be termed an „integration industry“, i.e. a range of actors in cooperation, from local administration, language course providers, social services, schools and a variety of civil society organisations to the entire gamut of political decision-makers at local authority, *Länder* and federal government level to enable the newly-arrived to adapt, adjust, acquire skills and access the vocational training and labour market.

This is, however, based on the assumption that those concerned have a right to remain. Thus these instruments are not available to asylum-seekers with little prospect of recognition or the right to stay in Germany. Equally those without residential status are excluded – rigorously. Germany is one of the countries adopting a policy of strict denial of residential status and access to social rights to *sans papiers* – though thanks to civil society pressure the undocumented have been allowed limited access to health care and schooling (Anderson, 2011).

*The „summer of migration“: the influx of asylum seekers to Germany in 2015*

It is against this historical background that we should view the dramatic turnaround in asylum policy in Germany which took place in 2015-2016. The following graph gives an idea of the development in the numbers of applications for asylum from the early Nineties to 2019 in Germany.



Table 1 Asylum Application Statistics 1991-2019

As we see, the rise in entry of asylum seekers actually pre-dated the steep increase of 2015. The most important single cause was the collapse of the Syrian state after the failure of the „Arab Spring“ and the descent of the country into a bitter civil war. Millions of people were uprooted, initially seeking refuge in the neighbouring states of Jordan, Libanon and Turkey. There is little doubt that the enormous increase in Mediterranean forced migration movement was to some extent commercially driven: the hugely expanded *demand* for routes to safety from a relatively well-to-do Syrian middle class led to the creation of multi-million large scale professional human smuggling *supply* structures, from which other nationalities – with the financial wherewithal – could equally profit. In the 2010 s the large-scale mafia organisations in the Mediterranean have shifted operations away from drug- to human smuggling – from forced prostitution to up-market provision of guarantee smuggling services to target countries for the monied middle classes (Tinti, Reitano, 2016).

This background context led to the boost in migration pressure in 2013-15. To begin with the northern European countries continued to leave Italy and the other Mediterranean „front line“ countries to deal with these issues alone. Signal moments like intense media coverage of the tragedies off Lampedusa and Pope Francis‘ trenchant critique of the EU’s evasion of human rights responsibility helped prepare a sea-change. Italy in particular was massively overstretched by the numbers of the uprooted arriving, and, understandably, felt abandoned by the northern member states of the European Union in particular.

It was, however, the mass movement of refugees along the Balkan route in 2015 and the impossibility of stopping these human caravans without violence that prompted German



Chancellor Angela Merkel to make what has become a legendary decision in the summer to open the German borders, proclaiming „*Wir schaffen das*“ (*We'll manage it*“).

The significance of this step was huge. A bottleneck had been created by the sheer numbers travelling the Balkan route and the Hungarian government under Victor Orban in particular refused to allow an official uptake of asylum seekers. Chancellor Merkel took the decision for a range of political and other reasons which cannot be treated in detail here. Suffice to say that one factor will have been the acknowledgement that in view of the German past, especially the Nazi period, the Federal Republic could not be seen to be repelling by force masses of refugees who were in evident need and clamouring for entry at its borders.

The images of a broadly-welcoming German society accepting large numbers of refugees from the south went around the world in the summer and autumn of 2015. Within Germany the longer term challenges of absorption and integration have been a prime dimension of migration and integration policy in the country since then.

In the international, and especially the European, context the preparedness of Germany to take on board so many asylum seekers was a novel development in migration and integration policy. The priorities arising out of the hugely-increased inflow of uprooted people at the European level focused from the German governmental point of view on sharing responsibility. Within Europe agreements to distribute numbers of entrants (primarily) from the Mediterranean in the countries of the European Union proved particularly difficult to realise. This approach met with stiff resistance, particularly in Eastern Europe.

Externally, the focus was increasingly on closing down channels of access: shutting off the Balkan route, reaching agreements with the Libyan authorities to prevent migrants from leaving their coastal area, an increasingly restrictive Frontex (the EU border management organisation) policy to prevent access to Europe from the sea and negotiations with the Erdogan government in Turkey to repatriate Syrians who reach Greece. From a humanitarian perspective – enunciated clearly in reports over the years by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR, 2007) – the policy of „pushback“ of asylum seekers was clearly in contravention of the principle of *Non Refoulement*. Moreover, the Frontex strategy denied migrants in need the internationally-recognised chance to make an application for asylum.

In 2016-19 the humanitarian dilemma presented by migrant movement in the Mediterranean was put into sharp perspective by the missions of civil society initiatives from Germany such as the ships *Sea Watch* and *Sea Eye* to rescue migrant boats in distress. The vessels were frequently denied the right to dock at European ports – a policy promoted most vocally by the Italian populist politician Matteo Salvini – and indeed (in a grotesque juridical twist from a human rights perspective) faced with charges for „human smuggling“, potentially leading to sentences of many years imprisonment for the ships captains, such as Carola Rackete of *Sea Watch 3* following her mission of June 2019 in which she rescued 53 migrants on the high sea (Rackete, 2019).

On the other hand within Germany there has been innovative development of educational and apprenticeship programmes for newly-arrived immigrants. In the following section we shall focus on the particular educational and training needs of young refugees and the evolution of vocational training approaches in Bavaria to enhance skilled entry into the labour market.

*Refugee Migration to Germany since 2014-15, Vocational Training and Access to the Labour Market. Vocational Integration Classes in Bavaria*

**Hauptherkunftsländer im Jahr 2016**

Gesamtzahl der Erstanträge: 722.370

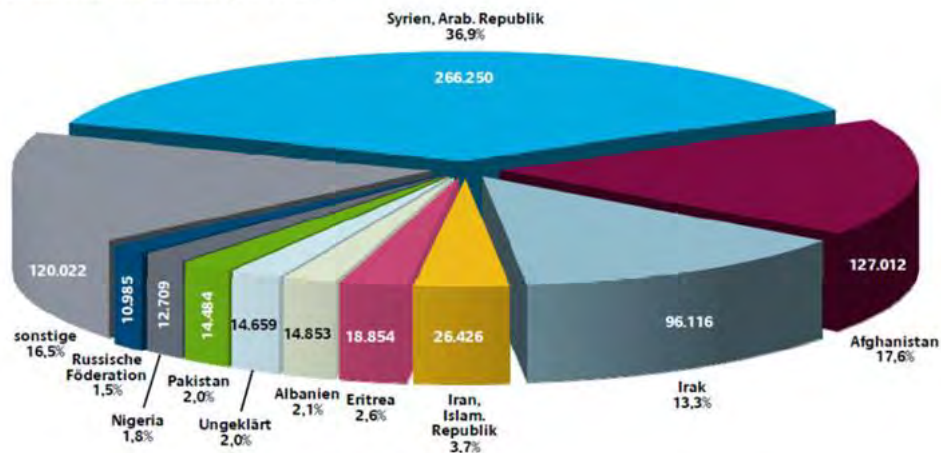


Table 2 Countries of Origin of Asylum Seekers in 2016

2015-16 may in retrospect be viewed as the exceptional year for immigration to Germany. Above we see a graph showing the distribution of asylum seeker applications in Germany according to nationality, which shows the preponderance of applicants from Syria, 36.9% of the total.

The author's interviews and research form the basis of the following observations on the situation of the unaccompanied minors in Germany (Anderson, 2016). The research was conducted on the basis of the method approach of *Grounded Theory*, hypotheses were developed and refined in the course of the empirical phase. Apart from young asylum seekers themselves, expert interviewees/interlocutors included teachers, social workers, therapists, administrative workers, local politicians and others.

One of the most interesting developments with the hugely-increased influx of asylum seekers from 2015-16 has been the development of state-supported access to vocational training, in particular the so-called Dual System, an established apprenticeship programme enabling systematic technical and commercial qualification for the German labour market. This specific innovation for the new immigrant generation has been particularly pronounced in Bavaria in southern Germany, not least because the need for qualified personnel in manufacturing and production is so great in this part of the country. A key feature has been the development of Vocational Integration Classes (VIC) specifically designed to provide asylum seekers and refugees through a two-year course with a school qualification concentrating on vocational orientation. This subsequently enables them to go on to do an apprenticeship in any one of dozens of potential crafts and trades which are traditionally part of the German manufacturing, commercial and services system.

The driving force for the introduction of these training classes was the intermeshing of two factors influencing the readiness of the German small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) to

mobilise resources for the qualification of this target group: demographic change (i.e. an ageing population) and a chronic skills shortage in a huge range of trades.

With the immense rise in asylum seekers entering Germany in the period of 2014-2016 these classes have expanded enormously, from a few hundred students in the principal cities of Munich and Nuremberg in 2011-12 to a total of 1,150 classes with places for 22,000 pupils in the 2016-17 school year (Kultusministerium/Bavarian Ministry of Education, 2018). The numbers then reduced due to the diminished entry numbers of asylum seekers so that in the school year 2018-19, some 10,500 pupils were attending these classes (ibid, 2019.).

In this context training courses on developing intercultural skills have increased enormously in the last few years to meet a drastic increase in demand from a whole range of professions in the social, health and educational sectors – from social pedagogues via child and adolescent psychiatrists to teachers in schools/classes of every type and grade – providing the wherewithal to enable young refugees to stay the vocational training course successfully.

Professionals working in particular with asylum seeker families or unaccompanied refugee children have to be aware of the dangers of “culturally-tinted spectacles” as the German expression has it. Thus the ability to question one’s culturally-determined perspective (*What is the other person’s take on this situation?*) is an essential element in developing culturally sensitive skills and minimising potential sources of conflict (Erll, Gymnich, 2013).

On the one hand it is important not to ignore one’s own values and concepts; on the other to display a readiness for culturally-sensitive dialogue and exchange. This is all the more true when dealing with refugees who have entered Germany in recent years who – in contrast to the generation of those with a migration background who have grown up in Germany – have experienced social conditioning outside the European context. The great majority of those entering the country as asylum seekers experience a “steep learning curve” in the course of a process of forced migration. They encounter, and must come to grips with, people with differing cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds on a daily basis and in varied contexts. This is particularly true of unaccompanied minor refugees.

Unaccompanied minors under 18 years of age are absorbed into the youth welfare service system and after an initial *clearing phase* are allotted a place in a residential group for unaccompanied minors – assuming there are no adult relatives in the EU with whom family reunion can be initiated (BAG Landesjugendämter, 2014). The first goal of the newly-arrived is to get their bearings, in the comprehensive sense to actually “arrive” in the here and now. In this context the broad range of supportive networks for refugees which sprouted everywhere in Germany in the period 2014-2015 are very important. Voluntary helper groups in larger and medium-sized towns as well as in rural villages provide often sustained longer-term support both for refugee families and unaccompanied young people. This mobilisation of local policy-makers, administration and professionals, especially in the educational, health and social sectors – together with civil society engagement – , has enabled absorption and day-to-day integration of refugees. It has also turned their reception into a “mainstream” topic in German public discourse and policy-making.

If we examine the lives of the newly-arrived unaccompanied minors we get an idea of the range of challenges they face. The top priority is learning the language, but they have to cope with the challenges of strange cultural surroundings, homesickness, grief and a sense of loss of their loved ones. Then there is the issue of trauma. Studies proceed from the assumption that at least 50% of unaccompanied minors suffer from some degree of traumatisation

(Berger, 2015, Hargasser, 2014). One of the important tasks facing social workers, teachers and other professionals is recognising the symptoms: sudden outbreaks of fright, blackouts, aggressive outbursts – but also apathy, pronounced sensitivity to light or loud noises, insomnia or acute withdrawal behaviour. In the Bavarian context the special training courses and professional counselling offered by the *Refugio* organisation, based in Munich, are of great value. This psychotherapeutic institute has specialised in the treatment of traumatised refugees and the victims of torture for over twenty years and has developed considerable expertise in therapeutic sessions conducted in tandem with specially-trained interpreters (Refugio, 2020).

Practitioners emphasise the importance of enabling access to language courses as soon as possible. The legal terrain is complex here, as access to courses is dependent on the intermeshing constellation of the individual asylum application, residential status and availability of courses on the ground. In practice local voluntary networks often work in tandem with residential unit care workers to enable participation in a language course as soon as possible. Over time – and especially with the drastic reduction of new entries from 2017 – provision of language tuition has been made possible on a comprehensive basis.

The group of refugees that has entered Germany in the last few years is extremely heterogeneous. This fact was emphasised repeatedly by expert interviewees, and herein reside the educational and vocational training challenges. Their social and educational backgrounds vary enormously and these factors intermesh with intellectual and experiential elements to determine levels of performance and achievement. Some unaccompanied minors will begin by wrestling with the basics of literacy in order to begin to learn the (German and native) language. At the other end of the spectrum there will be pupils who have had 9 or 10 years of schooling, speak good English, have a grounding for an academic course in the foreseeable future – and may well have thought ahead to save their certificates in their cell phones before taking flight.

Soft skills are an essential part of the picture in terms of social acceptance, especially by their central European peer group: the young Syrian from Aleppo who speaks good English, has varied contacts on *Facebook* and *Instagram*, followed the latest Hollywood films and is conversant with Hip-Hop culture, will establish contact much more easily than, say, the young Afghan from a mountainous region with very little schooling, possibly a long and stressful period of forced migration because of lack of funds – as well as little experience of young women of his age who do not wear the veil. The latter will feel much more inhibited by the notion of *Do's and Don'ts in the German Disco* than will his Syrian counterpart.

It is natural for young people to want to feel free and autonomous. After a time of insecurity and the tribulations of the migration process these young people need a time to get acclimatised, to *just be*, in order to recover something of their lost childhood (as a therapist put it). The need for support and for role models is an essential element in this, and the social workers in residential units or teachers and social workers at school are often key figures who can assume this role.

From a (social) pedagogic point of view it should be borne in mind that these young men (more than 80 % are men) have an “assignment” to fulfil: they have been chosen to have the chance to get a good qualification and find a job in Western Europe in order to earn a good income. This is why the family of origin “invested” a considerable sum in the form of payment to the human smugglers. In an age of virtual communication these familial expectations are much more ever-present (in the classroom, wherever the adolescent is living,

in their contacts with other young people from their home area) than, say, 20 years ago. The social media, the tweets or the mobile phone messages mean that family members are consistently in the picture – sometimes, so teachers report, almost to the extent of being invisible presences in the classroom.

The accommodation situation plays a vital role in success or failure at school or during an apprenticeship. In residential groups for unaccompanied minors the young people have as a rule a) the peace and quiet to do their school and homework, b) the resources to get extra tutoring if required and c) most important, the professional guidance and support to enable them to navigate their way among the 550-odd trades and vocations available in the German system. Thus they can be in a position to make informed choices about a potential apprenticeship or other venues of qualification.

The situation is very different for those over 18 years – and thus outside the youth welfare system – who are likely to be in a much more difficult position, because they may well be living in a hostel, maybe sharing a room with 3 to 4 other people, mostly adults and often with considerable burdens and stresses of their own. There will be little space and scarcely the requisite peace and quiet to do their homework, after-school tutoring may well not be available, advice on vocational training and apprenticeships will be at a premium. Moreover, there is the “social space” aspect: the young refugees will be acutely aware that they are in a social no-man’s land. The hostel (mostly located in less desirable parts of town) is not the kind of place you invite your school class friends to for a party or to impress your new European girlfriend. Young refugees have to learn to deal with feelings of exclusion, embarrassment or shame in this context.

Searching for security and a sense of belonging, these young people are constantly undermined by a lack of secure residential status or recognition as a refugee in the narrower legal sense. Professionals pointed out in the interviews that the fear of an impending deportation order – even if unlikely to be enforced – can undermine their charges and render them incapable of concentration on their studies and everyday lives for weeks at a time.

As regards taking on an apprenticeship, the young refugees are faced with different types of pressure. There may be the economic burden of having to pay back the debt to the human smuggler – who might well be tightening the screw on the home family to receive the money. The relatives will in any event be expecting some kind of “payback” from their sponsored charge soon and they may find it hard to grasp why training over three or more years should even be necessary (“*What do you mean sales training? You’ve been a salesman in our shop for years!*”).

In addition to this, certain types of profession may be regarded as less prestigious, for instance in some cultures, working in the building trade is looked down upon as “dirty work.” The issue of working with one’s hands in any context may well be problematic for a young man who has been told by relatives that he *must* attain a university qualification. This is in turn a challenge for the social workers or teachers who have established a trusting relationship with their charges. The aim is keeping them on course for an apprenticeship. For, as the latter come to realise how long and stony the path to well-paid work in a qualifications-oriented society like Germany can be, there is the danger they may simply give up in frustration or turn to apparently “easier” but more fraught, and possibly illegal, ways of making quick money.

It is important for the receiving society in general to realise that these processes take time. Young refugees are (or should be viewed) as candidates for life-long learning. Resources

should be made available so that they can have a second (or third) attempt at learning a trade. Once they have learned how things function in Germany, have mastered the language to the extent of comprehending the nuances of specialist terms and have a broader awareness of the range of vocations that they might choose from, the playing field begins to become level. Under these circumstances stable and trusting relationships with experienced and caring professionals (as role models) will be the essential bricks and mortar to motivate the refugees to stay the course for the long haul into the world of work, and not to succumb to a sense of resignation or failure (Scharrer, Schneider, Stein, 2012).

Once students have completed their two-year course in the VIC, they hope to have found a place for an apprenticeship. Experience has shown that, if possible, some form of *mentoring* is advisable during the initial phase of vocational training. The linguistic and specialist challenges both at the workplace and at vocational school are considerable. In addition to this, whereas the refugees have enjoyed intensive tuition in the (smaller) VIC classes to date, at “conventional” vocational school they are faced with the challenge of specialist language terms relating to their field as well as front-on classroom teaching with limited or no resources for support teaching in smaller groups. In rural areas the pupils may also have to wrestle with the additional difficulty of the strong regional (Bavarian) dialect the teachers may speak. Linguistically and socially, it may well be hard for them to meet the challenges of the different “life worlds” of small-scale business and vocational school (ISB, 2014).

Nonetheless, there has over the last few years been a coordinated development of supportive labour market integration instruments at the local level for this specific target group. For example the local Labour Offices provide resources for measures like the Assisted Training Program, whereby a young asylum seeker is given language and vocational guidance by a social worker on a one-to-one basis as part of the apprenticeship programme. Problems arising at the workplace can also be dealt with, the social worker acting as intermediary, if required. Training supervisors at work, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) are often grateful for culturally sensitive advice regarding their charges, such as information on aspects of Arab custom, culture and Islam or advice on how to detect signs of trauma. Professional bodies such as the Chambers of Trade and of Industry have supported integration at the workplace over the last few years by appointing Refugee Ombudsmen who advise and organise courses for training supervisors from the SME s.

One of the greatest challenges facing the adolescents is the lack of secure residential status and the uncertain prospect of remaining in Germany. This is particularly true if students come from “countries of safe origin”, such as Balkan states like Kosovo and Montenegro, but most controversially from Afghanistan. Policy has become much stricter regarding this group since 2016. The number of Afghani UMs has consistently been among the highest among all unaccompanied minors. Many young people facing potential deportation have been in Germany for a number of years and are either in training or already have jobs. They dread receiving the “*yellow letter*” from the Aliens’ Office, stating that they must leave the country voluntarily, failing which they face deportation.

Practitioners complain of a constant sense of underlying uncertainty, which undermines the students’ ability to concentrate on school, become adjusted to life in their new surroundings and to plan for the future. This is why employers have consistently called for a guarantee that asylum seekers who have not attained recognition as a refugee or another form of secure residential status will be able to remain at least for three years’ training plus an additional two years as qualified workers, the so-called *3+2 rule*. In practice this principle has – after much criticism of restrictive policy on the part of the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior (responsible

for issuing training/work permits enabling UMs to begin apprenticeships via the Aliens Offices at local level) – been conceded (Chamber of Trade and Industry, 2018).

There is an ongoing need for access to good quality language teaching from as early as possible after arrival in the country. Professionals argue that learning German is the key to integration and essential even for those asylum seekers whose prospects of remaining are uncertain. They need to lead their everyday lives in Germany; language skills are essential for this and even in the case of removal/deportation, knowledge of German may well be regarded as a recognised skill in the home region.

Social participation is a valuable dimension in developing a sense of belonging. Here the voluntary sector is of great importance. One of the striking facts about the influx of refugees from 2014 onwards has been the degree of civil society engagement. Rural areas in particular, with the long-established tradition in Germany of people being involved in Clubs (*Vereine*) of all kinds, have provided a basis for community involvement. Whether it is the local choir, music and sports clubs or the local (voluntary) fire service, these social spaces allow people to get to know each other and share activities and interests in this broader interactive context and good language skills are not necessarily a prerequisite. But these shared activities are a great motivator to learn the language. Particularly for young asylum seekers soccer is an ideal way to get to know one another and promote uncomplicated inclusive processes with one's peers (Bunt kickt gut, 2020).

Good intermeshing cooperation on the part of local actors at the municipal level is of particular importance. Some cities have much more experience than others of development of intercultural policies to prevent conflict between communities and enhance quality of life for minorities, e.g. Munich or Nuremberg. Professionals in the social, educational and health sectors in cities like Munich working in government offices, local government, grass roots initiatives or campaigning groups have developed networks over the years and meet regularly in workshops and seminars. This has helped bridge ideological gaps, overcome conflicts and promote a sense of a shared search for practicable, professional solutions to problems. Good, regular communication, as well as mutual respect for differing institutional roles and interests, are essential elements in this.

Structures of the youth welfare service need to be flexible and needs-oriented. This means it is important to implement *transitional structures* for those 18-year olds who have lived in residential units and have to move out into hostels or their own accommodation. They still require counselling on vocational training and jobs as well as support in dealing with the demands of everyday life. The German youth service has good models for promoting independent living for young people who have lived in care. These can be amended for the needs of this target group.

Then there is the need for broad-based *psychotherapeutic support* (for traumatised clients) and training courses and supervision for professionals working with them. These courses should be made available for volunteers as well as the professionally-trained. Beyond this there has been a steep rise in the need for supplementary training for child and adolescent psychiatrists as well as for out-patients departments of psychiatric clinics. The issue here is: how do psychiatric professionals deal with asylum seekers who go into psychosis as a result of their experiences during forced migration? Equally important is the need to provide for qualified interpreters who can meet the challenge of therapeutic translation in a crisis-induced context (BZTM, 2020).

In summary linguistic, social and educational integration processes take time. Helping young people with a refugee background adapt to the needs of the vocational training and job market requires a targeted and well thought-out use of resources, and these should be employed on a sustainable basis. Quite apart from the humanitarian-moral dimension of this commitment, it is a long term “investment” in societal and economic development that will prove to be well worth it for all concerned.

### *Racism, Anti-Discrimination and Right Wing Extremism in Germany*

Racism and discrimination have always been highly sensitive issues in the German post-war context. One of the many aspects of the legacy of the National Socialist period 1933-45 is an awareness that ethnic-cultural-religiously orientated prejudice are no-go areas in the German mainstream body politic and society. One possibly puzzling feature of this nigh-on taboo is the fact that for a long time there was little in the way of focused legislation and regulatory structures to address discrimination issues.

A comparison with other European countries is instructive in this regard. In the UK for example anti-discrimination legislation and institutional development of watchdog bodies such as the *Commission for Racial Equality* were established (now under the successor organisation the *Equality and Human Rights Commission*, EHCR, 2020) in the Seventies of the 20th century, influenced by the civil rights movement in the United States. This led to the creation of judicial structures enabling legal redress for discrimination at the workplace, in housing, education or in civil society daily life. There were similar institutional developments in the Netherlands and in France.

Undoubtedly, this can be traced back to the respective post-colonial traditions of these former „imperial“ nations. Their immigrant communities came from the former colonies to the „mother countries“ in the postwar period as citizens, i.e. with the legal rights of those holding the respective national passports. They nonetheless experienced racism and discriminatory social and economic exclusion on account of their skin colour and origin. Into the 1970s it was not uncommon for boarding houses with rooms to let in English cities to have a sign in their windows stating „no blacks“. Against this background community awareness and resistance to denigration and exclusion of this kind developed, not least through popular movements such as *Rock against Racism* against rightwing groups promoting a white supremacist view, such as the British National Front. This led to political campaigns and increasing parliamentary support in order to establish the statutory instruments mentioned above to combat racism from the Seventies onwards.

There was no comparable development of this kind in Germany. As the expression „*Gastarbeiter*“ suggests, the immigrant population entering the country from the late 1950s – while facing similar structural discrimination to that in other European countries – were treated as „guests“ in the sense of not belonging: they were not entitled to stay and were thus denied the civil and social rights of citizens. In addition, those migrants who remained in Germany faced constant insecurity as non-citizens because the Aliens Offices could determine – in often quite arbitrary fashion – whether they might remain in the country from year to year (Bade, 2002). Decision-makers and large parts of society in Germany maintained the fiction that it was not in fact „a country of immigration“ until the late 1990s.

It was with the change of government after Helmut Kohl’s long chancellorship that processes of modernisation in the migration field were finally set in motion, as indicated above in the



section on migration history. Nonetheless, anti-discrimination remained the neglected poor relation in this policy context. It was not until 2006, under the compunction of a European directive, that the Federal government introduced an anti-discrimination law, the *Allgemeine Gleichbehandlungsgesetz*, which at least indicated a preparedness to address racist and discriminatory issues.

There was intense civil society debate at this time around the introduction of anti-discriminatory measures. The business world and employers' associations in particular were afraid of a potential „avalanche“ of cases claiming discrimination at work or in the job application process. The barriers enabling ethnic minorities to seek redress were accordingly set high, and the numbers of cases taken to court – in contrast to expectation – low. Experience has shown that institutions have only gradually come to grips with the demands of addressing discrimination issues in a neutral manner. The Federal Anti-Discrimination Office (within a European network) has, nonetheless, over the years won greater acceptance for its professional, academically-validated approaches to the issues (Berghahn, Klapp, Tischbirek, 2016).

In the context of racism and the role of the the extreme right there have been persistent, if numerically limited, incidences of violence against foreigners, which have flared up as a broader societal threat at times. There have been semi-underground terrorist groups, such as the *Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann*, which in the 1970 s were notorious. The group was tainted by association with the Oktoberfest bombing of 1980, carried out by one of their members, killing 13 and injuring many more people. This led to the prohibition of the group. There has been substantial, well-researched criticism of the want of investigative rigour on the part of the Bavarian police, security forces and indeed of the *Länder* government under the right wing conservative politician, Franz-Josef Strauß, in terms of leads not followed up, background networks ignored and professional forensic expertise all-too-evidently lacking (Chaussy, 2016).

After reunification in 1989-90 xenophobic violence appeared to flare up and there were widespread incidences of deadly violence towards foreigners (infamous arson attacks on Turkish families in Mölln and Solingen) and asylum seekers, the most notorious of which was probably the attack on a hostel for asylum seekers in Rostock-Lichtenhagen. The primarily Vietnamese inhabitants were subjected to a two-day long siege, culminating in an attempt to burn the building down. The most shocking aspect was the spectacle of hundreds of local residents watching and applauding the terrorising activity and providing enthusiastic vocal support and applause. These horrifying televised images went around the world.

As a reaction to this, on the other hand, there were many civil society demonstrations in the early Nineties showing solidarity with asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable foreigners, the most celebrated of which were the „light chains“ (*Lichterketten*) of hundreds of thousands of citizens standing silently in numerous towns across Germany, hands joined and bearing candles, expressing a collective yearning for peaceful, intercultural coexistence and a rejection of xenophobia – attempting to shed a warm aura of light in the darkness (Katsiaficas, 2006).

There has, nonetheless, been a tenacious persistence in antisemitical behaviour, attacks on synagogues and violence towards people of Jewish faith being infamous examples. Equally, there is a continuing, iniquitous tradition of anti-muslim and anti-foreigner violence. One of the darkest chapters of racist violence and ongoing institutional failure related to a neo-Nazi underground organisation, the *Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund* (NSU) in the early years of

the new millennium. This group of three fanatically xenophobic East Germans with a network of support in neo-Nazi circles across Germany were able to carry out a series of targeted assassinations of migrants for over a decade. It was only after the two men in the group, Uwe Bönhardt and Uwe Mundlos committed suicide shortly before their capture and the confessional video they left behind was made public by the third, surviving, member Beate Zschäpe, that the extent of their hate crimes became apparent. They had been responsible for the murder of nine immigrants and a German woman police officer as well as bombings and assorted bank raids to secure funds over their decade-long terrorist campaign.

The most disturbing aspect in retrospect was the degree of institutional failure, incompetence and even a suspicion of complicity on the part of the police and state security services – some of which had long known about and intermittently observed the group, based in the Eastern state of Thuringia, and their wider supportive network. There has been much ongoing controversial discussion about the ramifications of the consistent „victim blaming“ which appears to have been ingrained in the police and state investigative culture, preventing the discovery and apprehension of the NSU. The framing by the media of the apparently indiscriminate killings from early on was to term them the „Döner murders“, throwing suspicion on migrant milieus and the clan violence based on a construed stereotype of a „Turkish mafia“ (the majority of victims were of Turkish origin) behind the crimes. Thus a grotesque inversion of the machinery of justice took place: families of the victims themselves were, instead of being supported, dogged for years by suspicion of having committed the killings through the police investigations – without a shred of solid evidence, it later emerged (Frindte, Geschke, Haußecker, Schmidtke, 2015).

Discriminatory racial stereotypes impeding professional objectivity in institutional settings became evident here. Investigations revealed that occasional calls within the police and intelligence services to look into possible right wing extremist connections and networks behind the terrorist attacks had been ignored over the years. Ongoing enquiries were made all the more opaque by the dubious role of secret service *agents provocateurs* infiltrated into right wing extremist groups under observation. What role had these shadowy figures played, who was manipulating whom, and to what end? What may be termed an ethnic German monocultural mindset in the institutions fomented an unwillingness to take up leads which might have led to the tracing of the NSU, years before their stage-managed, self-destructive leap into the public realm.

This sobering episode in recent German police and juridical history points up a troubling structural feature. Deep-seated institutional barriers to reducing discrimination have remained problematic, in public discourse there has often been reference to the German security services being prone to „blindness on the right eye“. A further aspect of this, attesting at the very least to a singular lack of sensitivity on intercultural issues, relates to the role of the police and the endemic practice – abandoned in theory – of *racial profiling*. The discussion around the „stop and search“ approach of the German police vis-a-vis people of colour took on a new dynamism with the world-wide anti-racist protests following the death of the Afro-American, George Floyd, in Minnesota in the summer of 2020. While there has for some time been trenchant academic and civil society criticism of the practice of checking people's papers as suspects on the basis of skin colour and a hierarchy of presumed ethnicity (Cremer, 2013), it was not until the controversial media and civil society debates around the 2020 protests against police violence and stop-and-search practice, and the knock-on effects such as the „dethroning“ of historically controversial civic statues, that the issue attained a higher national profile.

Related to this is the fact that in Germany, as compared to many other western European countries, many of the established institutions (and sectors of employment) representing core societal power and prestige remain comparatively monocultural, i.e. overwhelmingly peopled by Germans of ethnic white, central European origin. Whether one looks at the ethnic-cultural composition of offices of government and administration – at local authority, *Länder* or Federal level – or the institutions of law and order or the armed forces, the financial sector, business/corporate management, insurance, academia or even traditionally more „porous“ sectors like the arts and media, Germany gives the impression in the higher and even the middle echelons of being – not to put too fine a point on it – impeccably white.

This fact immediately strikes corporate or institutional colleagues at higher qualification/pay levels from European neighbour countries in their dealings with their German counterparts: where are the ethnic minorities?<sup>2</sup> While there has been much progress in recent years in addressing the injustice of the gender gap and reducing the rigour of the „glass ceiling“ preventing women from rising to higher positions in business, politics or civil society leadership positions, in Germany the advance of ethnic minority representatives has barely moved beyond the stage of much-criticised „tokenism“ (Coester, 2018). In this sense intersectionality discourse on structural exclusion in Germany remains an academic, and largely a fringe, issue (Roig, 2018).

One area where there has been some progress in reducing ethnic-culturally defined structural exclusion is the education system. The longer term effects of the PISA, IGLU and other comparative international educational studies have seen the German central and *Länder* governments react with differentiated and effective strategies. The first PISA study, in 2000 had a powerful impact, concluding that of all the OECD countries Germany was the one which most systematically disadvantaged children in schools from migrant and educationally poorly-resourced families. For a nation which has always prided itself on the quality of its educational system this was an unsettling shock. Measures since taken, particularly in kindergarten and primary school, have aimed to improve linguistic skills in German at pre-school age, develop intercultural pedagogic approaches and to improve teachers' intercultural skills in general – with some success. The numbers of young migrants leaving school without a qualification have been significantly reduced, the socially-determined educational divide according to ethnic origin has diminished. There is greater awareness, too, of the need to reduce socio-economic disadvantages heightening inequality (PISA, 2018/Nohl, 2015).

*In summary: Germany and Migration Policy for the 21st Century. Quo vadis?*

In this essay we have examined Germany's stance on migration, looking at aspects relating to the United Nations treaties, the history of German emigration and immigration, the development of asylum policy, programmes for vocational training aimed at young refugees and the specifics of racism in Germany and anti-discrimination policy.

There are a number of main tendencies which can be discerned, particularly if we are to consider what might be the way forward for migration in a European context and future trends. First, we may assume that a greater European coordination of concepts and a more dynamic practice in migration regimes will develop on account of demographic change, the consequences of an ageing society for the economy, the resulting skills shortage in many

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<sup>2</sup> The not-entirely-facetious answer in the offices concerned might be: they are here, cleaning and clearing up in the evenings.

areas of life – with all of the attendant knock-on effects for the welfare state and for the everyday mechanics of social and civil society cohesiveness.

But in this regard we are not just talking about Germans on average living longer – and the according need to fund their long term economic and social security. The dynamics of population change through increased mobility around the planet, the universal need for higher levels of qualification/lifelong learning, urban populations being vastly more varied, all these factors mean that cultural diversity in all manner of relationships is rapidly becoming a norm.

In other words, there are far more bi- and multi-cultural partnerships and thus more „multi-ethnic kids“ with a middle-class, better educated background; and they are far less prepared to accept their family members being treated as second-class citizens (Ott, 2020). The ramifications of the global *Black Lives Matter* movement give a presentiment of this new self-awareness and resultant critical vocal protest. The monocultural, „white ethnic German“ bastions of economic, social and working world power are thus more likely to be questioned and undermined in the course of the next generation – by more self-confident, better-qualified, professionally successful people of multi-ethnic background in many walks of life. The urban/urbane creative professions and social media figures, influencers etc. already give an indication of this new, diverse and talented demographic.

This process may well be enhanced by the effects of the culturally-sensitive educational reforms of the last two decades in elementary and primary school education which have been referred to here. This dynamic has, moreover, been boosted by the raft of measures of the last few years enabling language training for, as well as vocational and academic integration of, asylum seekers – with an unprecedented mobilisation of resources to make these younger generation immigrants „fit for labour market purpose“. In this article we have examined one aspect of this in the form of the courses aimed at developing language skills, attaining school certificates and promoting vocational training for refugees and „new migrants“.

The end result may well be that within a generation German society and the world of work will have become far more diverse *at all levels and in virtually all sectors of business, administration and civil society*. Equally there could, by contrast, be a massive, pro-ethnic-purity backlash in the sense of the policy goals of the populist right wing party *Alternative for Germany*, fighting back against all the tendencies described above. The aim of this movement would be to entrench monoculturalism and a latter-day form of German white supremacism. Under present-day circumstances it is difficult to imagine democratic majorities emerging in modern Germany for this kind of radical xenophobic *volte-face* in mainstream debate and policy-making. But one never knows.

Thus by conclusion we return to the role Germany is playing and will play in the future. The Merkel years, which are sure – at the latest – to come to an end in autumn 2021, have been characterised by an awareness of Germany’s international mediating role as a constructive member of international organisations. This has entailed commitment in funding, professional engagement and support of a spirit of international cooperation to solve the challenges facing the planet in the 21st century, of which the constructive solution of complex, intermeshed migration issues is but one dimension.

One of the most difficult of these policy threads will be the harmonisation of migration policies across Europe – entailing the various target groups of expert/academic, student, labour, refugee, family reunion, school educational, elderly migrants and many more. The disparate interests and diverse national migration traditions within Europe will continue to

prove hard to reconcile with one another, Eastern and Western Europe tending to pull in different directions. Germany can aim to be a voice and actor advocating constructive social and human rights-oriented solutions within the frame of an open European migration policy toward those from third states. At present the Polish and German governments find themselves at different ends of the political spectrum regarding their approach to these key issues of migration and integration.

We may, finally, conclude that Germany has been an active supporter of many parts of the UN agenda, but that migration and refugee policy approaches have often been and remain ambiguous. On the one hand asylum seekers with little chance of recognition face a harsh regime restricting access to society and resources which might enable integration – they are often set on a trajectory toward removal. On the other immigrants with a perspective to remain are provided with resources and given chances.

It is in the areas of social, educational, vocational and labour market integration of newly-arrived migrants and refugees that in recent years meaningful steps forward have been taken and the resources made available to encourage long-term integration processes. In these areas Germany has taken up the gauntlet thrown down by the *Global Compact for Refugees* as well as the *Pact for Migration* and shown a readiness for the creation of innovative parameters to enable dynamic empowerment of the latest generation of „new immigrants“.

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**Table 1** p. 8: Asylum Application Statistics, 1991-2019. Source: BAMF, Mediendienst Integration.

**Table 2** p. 10: Source: Archbishopric Munich and Freising: Migration – Chancen und Herausforderungen. 2020