

IMMIGRATION, INTEGRATION, AND A  
NEW TRANSATLANTIC GENERATION:  
GIVING VOICE TO DIVERSITY

# AICGS GERMAN-AMERICAN ISSUES

# 20

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American Institute  
for Contemporary  
German Studies

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

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## FOREWORD

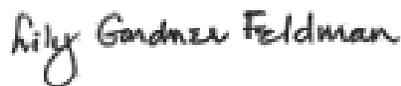
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AICGS is pleased to present two essays from the second round of the AICGS New Transatlantic Exchange Program: Giving Voice to Diversity. This innovative program establishes new connections between communities in Germany and the United States that have grown principally from an immigration background, and addresses common challenges of immigration and integration, such as discrimination, employment, political and societal leadership, education, and international engagement. The purpose of the Program is two-fold: 1) to deepen public understanding of the issues and concerns of the largest populations in Germany and the United States that have an immigration background; and 2) to build and sustain a network of young leaders committed to transatlantic relations.

Project participants included a core group of young leaders (ten from Germany and ten from the United States) for engagement in intensive discussions during seminars and site visits in Washington, DC (October 2016) and Berlin (May 2017), and a broader community of experts and advocates focused on issues of immigration, integration, and cross-cultural understanding. The authors of the two essays, Maria Alejandra Moscoso Rivadeneira and Mehmet Dogan, were part of this year's program. Their essays reflect the personal impact of the program, details of program activities, and the richness of the program's networking experience.

For more information about the program, please visit the AICGS website at <http://www.aicgs.org/transatlantic-exchange/>

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# THE NEW GERMANS AND AMERICANS: AN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE ON THE INTEGRATION OF YOUNG MINORITIES

MARIA ALEJANDRA MOSCOSO RIVADENEIRA

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What really separates us from one another? Our language? Our citizenship? Our leaders? What is used to unite us? Can the same dimensions apply? Anything can be used to separate or unite us; what marks the difference are our experiences. The American Institute for Contemporary German Studies' (AICGS) New Transatlantic Exchange Program introduced ten young Americans of minority backgrounds to ten young Germans of minority backgrounds to create an open dialogue on the theme of "Immigration, Integration, and a New Transatlantic Generation." This program provided a safe space to communicate and learn about the pressing issues that affect our respective societies today. These discussions, along with historical site visits and panel discussions with leading professionals, helped us understand that although living and coming from diverse backgrounds and countries, we each faced very similar issues and societal pressures.

Life in Germany and in the United States may seem like polar opposites when first noted. Our languages, cultures, and traditions seem to suggest that there are obvious differences in our societies. However, increased migration has promoted multiculturalism in both Germany and the U.S., where more people celebrate traditions, cultures, and ideas that originate from foreign lands. Through this program, our cohort of young professional leaders had the opportunity to engage and interact with leading experts from organizations related to immigration and integration, government, research institutions, and political foundations from both the U.S. and German perspectives. The purpose of this dialogue was to pinpoint issues that affect both of our communities and create long-

term solutions that will seek to unite our transatlantic worlds.

## Washington, DC, Experience

Our first interaction as a cohort began in AICGS' Washington, DC, office. This first welcome reception gave us the opportunity to get to know one another beyond our written biographies. It was hard to believe that we had just met one another a few hours earlier, instantly feeling a mutual comfort and invitation to share our stories freely with one another and realizing just how similar they were. Our families all came from a country different than our current country of residence, yet we all considered ourselves Americans or Germans. We learned to overcome stereotypes, limited opportunities, and discrimination due to our migrant backgrounds, and discovered that education, determination, and guidance is what led us to the current success we all share today. It took only a couple of hours to make us feel like we had already known one another for years.

Our discussions during the program were guided by leading experts in their fields and professionals whose passion for their focus was shown through their work and dialogue. From leadership trainings with the German Marshall Fund to a self-guided tour of the National Mall, the Martin Luther King Memorial, and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial, each day became an opportunity to learn about our transatlantic history and to expand our networks of solutions-seekers for issues that are currently relevant to both major countries and the future of this transatlantic relationship.

## An Undocumented Story

I felt incredibly safe with my new-found cohort. No matter what our stance was on a certain issue or how heated a debate may have gotten, we all shared a sense of respect and desire to only inform and not to impose our beliefs and ideas on anyone. However, not even my cohort and the intriguing discussions we were all sharing regarding the meaning of citizenship could change my feeling of discomfort when walking into the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Office at the Department of Homeland Security. This feeling did not have to do with the discussions we were sharing with our hosts, the Deputy Director of the Office of Citizenship and the Division Chief for Publication and Outreach. Instead, it had more to do with my past experiences as a former undocumented immigrant. This particular visit made me relive all of my fears of having my family taken by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and brought back feelings of anxiety and helplessness that accompany all of my thoughts on deportation.

It is understandable for an undocumented immigrant to fear ICE, especially given that those officers are known to barge unexpectedly into a workplace or personal home and take entire families to detention centers where they will most likely face deportation. However, why did I, a now legal resident who had just applied for U.S. citizenship only a few weeks ago, feel like any mention of my past could put not only my, but my entire family's life, in jeopardy? It had to do with the way our societies, both German and American, view undocumented and foreign migrants, often used as scapegoats and seen as the reason for economic instability and increasing unemployment. We often forget to see the other as humans who deserve equal opportunities to provide a better life for their families, and only see each other as the blame for most of our problems.

Having migrated to the U.S. at the age of six, I grew up as an immigrant in the U.S. However, the only thing that really differentiated me from my U.S.-born friends and family was the fact that they could travel at a whim and I had not been able to leave the country for more than a decade. As a DREAMER, an undocumented immigrant minor who could apply for legal status with a pathway to citizenship if the amnesty

bill, the D.R.E.A.M. Act, passed both the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, I held hope that one day my American dream would become a reality. After twelve long years of living as an undocumented immigrant, my biggest dream and highest level of achievement was graduating with a college degree. Walking down the stage of my university, hearing my name called and hearing my entire family, who flew thousands of miles just for this moment, cheer me on with screams and shouts, the way only Latinos seem to know how, felt too surreal. All those nights filled with tears, prayers, and wishes for some sort of miracle to turn my deportation notice into U.S. citizenship seemed so far away, almost dreamlike.

To this day, I still owe so much to a stranger for allowing me to live my life in America. Without her approval of my and my family's stay in the U.S., I might be living a completely different life in Ecuador. This judge saw my merits and potential, and gave me the biggest gift any immigrant can be given: a legal status and welcome into American society. One simple piece of paper gave me the power, strength, and confidence to drive down the same streets I used to evade growing up. Driving to school could be the most mundane task a parent has to do for her children, but for those living without proper documentation, it can mean risking your life every day in fear of being stopped and detained for driving without a license, a federal offense in the state of Florida.

However, my new power also means a new responsibility. Although I now walk with a heightened sense of security, there are still millions who are currently living in the same fear I was weakened by for so many years. Now more than ever, people are living with a sense of insecurity as deportations are at an all-time high with this current administration, and lives and communities around the nation are disrupted without any sense of discernment. I have always wondered what I would have done had I lived in a community taken over by Nazi Germany during World War II. Would I have had the strength, courage, and ability to defend those innocent members of societies whose sole mistake was belonging to a marginalized social group used as scapegoats? To many, drawing connections between our current political and social circumstances in the U.S. and the rise of Nazi power in Germany during WWII is too extreme. To me,

someone who understands firsthand the fear and feeling of powerlessness that a deportation notice can bring to a family, criminalizing an escape from violence, poverty, and persecution should be a crime itself. I will not stand silent as members of my community are used as scapegoats for all the problems that white Americans believe exist in this country.

As I looked around the oval table in this room, I noticed the thoughtful and questioning faces of my colleagues. These faces brought me back from those deportation nightmares and proved that I was not alone in this fight. They, like me, have learned to use their past experiences of oppression and misfortunes as a driving force to fight for justice and change in our respective societies. Their passions transcended through their comments and questions, and brought back my own voice and power, which had been previously lost the moment I set foot in this building. The AICGS New Transatlantic Exchange Program has given me connections and knowledge, but most importantly, it has given me the courage and inspiration to fight and defend those who feel helpless at this moment. Those whose families are being affected by the hate-driven speeches and actions that drove an entire political campaign filled with hate and racism into the most influential and respected political seat in the United States, and possibly even the world. I will defend my community, because they would have done the same for me.

### In Search of an Identity

During our meeting and discussions as a cohort, we touched on the idea of a national identity, and how our current diversifying societies are transforming this idea. However, it was difficult for me to describe my view of a national identity when I could barely distinguish my own. As a young migrant who left her home country at an early age, I often felt that my national identity was fluid. This fluidity depended on the country and circumstances that surrounded me, instead of feeling American while in the U.S. and Ecuadorian in Ecuador, I felt like an outsider in both. Growing up feeling like a stranger wherever I went proved difficult to endure. Even when I spoke, I could feel the hint of my American accent in my Spanish, and my Ecuadorian accent in my English.

Should my loyalty lie with the country I was born in or the one I was raised in? Growing up undocumented made this questioning far more difficult to answer with certainty. Not only did I grow up in a country that was foreign to my family, friends, and self, but I also had to endure the pain of living in a country that was not always welcoming to my kind, the kind that lacks proper documentation proving our legality in this country, and often our legality as human beings. We became the orphans that no one wished to be responsible for.

As migrants, sometimes all we have as evidence of former lives in our home country are the memories we bring with us. So what happens to those young migrants who migrated at a very young age, never having had the opportunity to make those memories and who really had no choice in picking what country they would grow up in? These are the youth who were brought to the U.S. as minors and learned to adapt to the new life they were given. They have learned to overcome the hardships that come with being in a foreign country, learning the language and traditions, sometimes even preferring the new ones to the old ones from their native country. They know little of the life they have left behind. If given the choice, many might consider themselves American over any other nationality from their past lives.

Many families migrate to the U.S. with the sole intention of providing a better life for their loved ones. That was the reason my own parents gave me whenever we asked why we were moving so far away from home, family, and friends. It was difficult for me to understand why my parents would voluntarily choose to endure so many sacrifices. Why choose to live in constant fear that any minor mistake could lead us to detention and deportation? Although I could not really remember my life in Ecuador, the way my parents always reminisced about the great memories they shared in that far away land made me wonder if this sacrifice was truly worth it. Wouldn't it be best to stop hiding in the shadows and return to the country that brought you so many great memories, sharing those same moments with your future generations for them to enjoy as well?

Now I learned that happiness does not belong only to individuals, but that it is more enduring when it is a community effort. My Latino culture and migrant experience taught me the importance of sacrifices for the well-being of others. We put family before ourselves. Our parents did not give us a choice when we moved here, but only because they hoped that this country could provide us with the opportunities we would never have in our former lives, because they never had it back home.

The U.S. is part of an individual-oriented society, while Latinos are traditionally a part of a collectivist society. In the U.S., families are structured to put individual needs above all, often prioritizing the well-being of oneself over the well-being of a whole family unit. In Latino households, these "individual over community" ideals do not reflect our customs and cultures. We are brought up by the golden rule of sacrificing our own comfort for the well-being of others, as we witness the great sacrifices our parents have made to provide a better life and opportunities to the younger generations.

We need to stop looking at ourselves as from neither here nor there, and instead, should learn to see the immense opportunities we have been given that some natives may never have. We have twice the traditions, culture, and language. We are determined and educated individuals from our time growing up in these advanced and developed countries, but are also humbled and hard-working from the examples our parents set for us each day. We share two great worlds, and together, we create a strong-willed, determined, and courageous society, one where diversity is not only tolerated, but also applauded.

Only by accepting our unique identities and understanding the fluidity that our background permits us to have, can we transform our changing nations' identities. As a society, we are still learning to understand the transformative role migrants will continue to play. It is our job to facilitate the integration of their cultures, traditions, and ideals to create a more progressive and inclusive national identity people can be proud of and eager to embrace.

## Leading Through Example

Each day of our program I was left feeling more motivated than the last. Our speakers, visits, and colleagues created a passion in me and reminded me that our work and presence were needed to create positive changes in our society. One of the greatest examples was the feeling of hope and excitement that I felt after meeting with City of Detroit Councilmember Raquel Catañeda-Lopez. During our Skype call, Councilmember Catañeda-Lopez explained what experiences in her life led her to run for office.

Like too many women I know, Councilmember Catañeda-Lopez never saw herself running for office. As a social worker with over ten years of experience in the nonprofit sector, she consented to her colleagues' plea to run for office only after she saw the need for change in her community. There were many moments of questioning whether she was prepared for this role, and she was close to turning back and canceling her candidacy when delivering her application. Luckily, Raquel was encouraged by the woman collecting her paperwork to take a chance and run, showing how sometimes as women, we are our own biggest obstacles.

Sometimes we need to hear the support of an entire village behind us before we can allow ourselves to believe in our strength, intelligence, and power. As women, and most importantly women of color, we need to stop trying to check every qualification before taking a chance and going after that job, promotion, or leadership role. We need to understand that sometimes not being prepared only means we have more room to grow and learn. We survive and rise when thrown into foreign situations because it is in our nature to survive unexpected challenges.

Raquel won her first attempt running for an elected position. Her 2013 election was historic, as she became the first Latina elected to the Detroit City Council. Raquel's election is significant and motivating for women of color nationwide, because we currently still face far too much discrimination, inequality, and lack of opportunities in every part of the world. Although there has been wide progress in gender equality in the work place, women are still

expected to stay home to look after the needs of the household and family members. In the U.S., Hispanic women are far more likely to be underpaid, earning 58 cents on the dollar in 2015,<sup>1</sup> and work in menial jobs due to lack of education and limited opportunities. However, even with their limited income and education, women are becoming heads of households at a growing rate, often taking the responsibility of providing income and taking care of all household responsibilities and members. Compared to men, women are more likely to use their household incomes for the benefit of the entire family as opposed to their individual needs. This community-first mindset is shared by many of the mothers, daughters, and sisters in my immediate community. This is the mentality that Councilmember Raquel Catañeda-Lopez ran with and won by.

When Councilmember Catañeda-Lopez raised the question of who in the room was planning on running for office in the future, she was pleasantly surprised by the response, and truthfully, so was I. A wide majority of our hands shot up, including the majority of the women participants. This served as another reminder of why my passion mattered and motivated my quest to run for office on a national level in the future. As a Latina and a minority, my voice is usually not the first, or even the last, to be called on to represent our community. We are seen as soft-spoken, timid beings that have a better fit as staffers and not leaders.

However, after recent electoral results, more women of color have decided to run for office at higher rates. Taking an example from my own group of friends, Elisa Morales is a young Latina healthcare professional who is currently running for mayor of a border town in Texas against a majority of older, white, male candidates. Win or lose, Elisa has contributed to society by setting the example that everyone deserves the opportunity to be heard. Her example, and that of all the courageous women who have decided to run for a leadership position to create a positive impact in our society, proves that our society is changing after all. A change that may come with disruption as we fight to alter the status quo, but one that is inevitable for the betterment of our nations and the world overall. I hope more women of color, and minorities of all types, continue to encourage them-

selves and others, and continue to insert themselves in positions of power to bring new voices, experiences, and diversity to the table. Even with their current faults when dealing with women's rights, such as unequal pay, job discrimination, and sexual harassment, our societies are still growing and adapting to populations that are predominately female and thus should be reflected in their government and leadership positions.

### The Elections That Changed a Nation

The seven months that transpired between our Washington, DC, and Berlin meetings were filled with life-altering events. On a national level, the U.S. witnessed one of the most divisive elections in the recent era. This election led the majority of conversations and discussions in our cohort, beginning with our first meeting in Washington, DC, and continuing on a digital platform through social media group discussions until our follow-up meeting in Berlin, Germany. As a cohort, we all felt a responsibility to understand where this nation, and potentially the world, would head and made it a point to all remain politically informed.

Throughout the months that led to the presidential elections, tensions between the Democratic and Republican parties seemed to rise. There was also a growing division even within the parties themselves. Rising support from the young millennial generation for the more progressive candidate, Senator Bernie Sanders, created a deep division in the Democratic Party. Secretary Hillary Clinton was seen as the most experienced and logical candidate, becoming quite popular among older voters, yet Senator Sanders was seen as a voice for change and a hero for Millennials.

Senator Sanders' supporters welcomed his stance on more affordable college education, lowered student loans, and an increased minimum wage, among many more issues. Many saw him as a symbol of change, away from the common partisanship beliefs that have driven both parties for many years, so when the Democratic presidential nomination was won by Hillary Clinton, many Millennials refused to vote for her. Many Independent and even Democratic voters opted to vote for a third-party nominee,

someone outside the two main political parties of Democrats and Republicans. Many of these third-party voters were Millennials disillusioned by the current political parties and process, all searching for a candidate that was far from the norm that Washington politics had set for so many years—votes that ultimately cost Secretary Clinton the election.

Although Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by almost 2.9 million votes, with 65,844,954 (48.2%) to Donald Trump's 62,979,879 (46.1%),<sup>2</sup> she remained a controversial candidate throughout most of the campaign. Due to controversies, including speculation over the reaction to the 2012 Benghazi attacks, use of an unofficial email server, and FBI investigations tied to both issues, Secretary Clinton was an unpopular nominee for many voters. With such strong dislike toward the Democratic nominee, many voters turned to an unlikely nominee to bring a new change to politics: Donald Trump.

The election of Donald Trump came as a surprise for many. The day of the election was like no other. The tension was felt within the first few hours of announcing the presidential winner. In my office, a global marketing firm that works as a hub for Latin America where about 90 percent of its workforce is of Latin and migrant decent, the air felt heavy and faces everywhere were full of gloom and even despair. Many described their emotions as a grieving process for their country and its uncertain future. This feeling of loss, confusion, and disappointment continues to linger for many.

The Trump administration began its presidential campaign on a basis of anti-immigration, discrimination, and even hate. During one of his initial campaign speeches, Trump made the bold and inaccurate statement that "Mexico is sending rapists and murderers [to the U.S.]," insinuating that Mexican, and Latino immigrants overall, were criminals in his eyes and thus should be treated as such. However, still too early in the campaign period, people did not take his words seriously. Many joked about his erroneous allegations and never thought he would be the presidential nominee for the Republican Party, let alone the President of the United States. I was one of them.

Coming from the eight-year presidency of the nation's first black president, many resented the fact that this new administration began with the whitest and most male cabinet since Ronald Reagan's presidency. This change was perhaps brought to represent the majority of Trump's voting base: white voters, which he won by 21 percent (58% to 37%).<sup>3</sup> With his "Make America Great Again" slogan, Trump's campaign trail promises were to build a wall bigger than the Great Wall of China and to dramatically change and tighten the vetting process for refugees, ideas that resonated with many who feared migration and a dramatic change in the status quo and privileged society they had been used to for generations. To them, Trump was not afraid to speak his mind and was often applauded for it, meaning his comments were rarely filtered, never caring who he offended or attacked.

However, the very promises made on the campaign trail that excited his supporters terrorized his opposition. Those who felt personally attacked by Trump's comments and ideas, either on the campaign trail or now as president, view a Trump presidency as a threat to the community and life they have worked so hard to obtain for themselves. These are the minorities, women, and migrants who have felt his harmful influence and who have felt mercilessly attacked by not only his comments, but also by his supporters who feel entitled to protect their privilege and power against those they view as threats, even if it means taking physical and violent measures.

This antagonism toward Trump's election was not limited only to those living in the U.S. The "America First" slogan that emerged from Trump's inaugural speech was met with wide international ridicule, demonstrating how little regard and will the international community has to the idea of a Trump presidency. However, it appears that the feeling of animosity and disrespect is mutual, as seen through the Trump administration's disinterest in mutual international collaboration as it proposed to drastically cut foreign aid by limiting assistance to developing countries and defunding various State Department programs in order to increase funding for the military and national security. What he may not realize is that these programs not only provide financial support to programs for disease prevention and food security

for developing countries, but also nurtures diplomatic relations with allied countries and are imperative for peaceful collaboration.

One clear highlight coming from this divisive election was the fact that political activism has grown nationwide, as many are rising up to speak against the Trump administration. The first and largest sign of opposition came from the record-breaking Women's March launched the day after the 2017 inauguration. This march was initially organized as a national protest against the election of Donald Trump, but transformed into an international protest with over three million participants around the world.

However, the growing division and tension created by this election still persists today. Although there will always be a mixture of support and opposition to any political party, there seems to be a large and growing opposition to the current American government due to its polarizing views and actions. Although it is still too early to predict how far this government will go to achieve its divisive and threatening campaign promises, it has become clear that the only way to create successful opposition to an authoritative government, or a foreseeable one, is to unite in numbers, defend one another, and stand up for those targeted as victims.

## Two Parallel Histories of Migration

Both the U.S. and Germany are nations in which those who are white and of European descent and features have enjoyed superiority in society for many years. Now both share a strong parallel history of migration separated only by their transatlantic division. Although a few conservative nationalists from both countries might attempt to deny this fact, both the U.S. and Germany are countries of migrants and multicultural societies.

Most of U.S. history has been shaped by migration, from its first European settlements in the 1600s to its influx of migrant workers from Latin America, Asia, and India in recent years. Germany, although not sharing the same historical presence of immigrants in its founding like the U.S., has also become a safe haven for millions of migrants over the years. Through its guest worker programs, migrants from not only

Western European countries, but also Middle Eastern and to a lesser extent African and other European countries have migrated to Germany. These workers, who were initially expected to return to their home countries, have now settled in German communities, and many have seen generations born and fully integrated into German society.

Our visit to Berlin allowed me to understand the transformation German society has had over the years and made me aware of the great similarities both countries now share due to their growing diverse populations. Walking around and learning about diverse areas of Kreuzberg and Neukölln reminded me of the great diversity seen in my own hometown of Miami, Florida. In the U.S. like in Germany, many migrant families, in particular those that have settled and integrated in American and German societies for at least one generation, have the benefit of speaking multiple languages, and if they have the ability of claiming German or American citizenship, can also benefit from increased educational and professional opportunities.

Even with this clear example of diversity and societal transformation, it also became apparent that many Germans have been slow to recognize that their country is a multicultural society, in particular those in states with limited interactions with migrant communities like those living in Bavaria and southern Germany. I would like to claim that the U.S. has a higher tolerance for change and acceptance of migrant communities, however, that would be deceiving and incorrect. We also share a strong history of discrimination against migrant communities not only in recent years with a growing discriminatory attitude against Mexican and other Latino communities, but in previous years to Eastern European and Asian communities as well.

Acceptance and tolerance of outside communities comes through a societal shift in perspective of who the "outsider" community is. During the 1800s, a large wave of immigrants from Ireland, Germany, and other parts of Central Europe came to the U.S. with the incentive of finding cheap farmland. At the time, it was the Irish and German immigrants that were targeted as the outsider communities, often being the target of nativism through political anti-Catholicism

directed mostly against them.

In recent years, the target and outside communities have shifted and are generally aimed against Latino immigrants. When our current president claimed that “Mexicans” [referring to Latino migrants in general] are migrants that are “bringing problems, drugs, and crime” to the U.S. during one of his initial campaign trail speeches, and later attempted to clarify his initial remarks by claiming that “some are good and some are rapists and some are killers,” he was promoting the negative stereotypes that currently plague our communities. These comments serve as proof of the amount of progress our American society still needs to achieve to truly become the land of freedom and opportunity that it claims to be.

Both Germany and the U.S. need to understand the key role that migration continues to play within their societies, and both must continue working on creating a more tolerant, accepting, and integrated society. Germany’s aging society and the U.S.’ deep dependence on foreign workers proves just how important migration has become for both countries. However, to achieve this level of acceptance and tolerance from both countries, we must first learn to understand and appreciate the great impact migrant communities have.

### Nations of Immigrants: Transforming Societies

In the U.S., most immigrants come from developing countries around the world, with an exceptional majority coming from Latin American countries. The extensive and growing migration witnessed over the years has created a shift in our societies. According to the most recent U.S. Census taken in 2011, 17 percent of the population is Hispanic,<sup>4</sup> a number that has grown in the span of six years since the last census was taken. As the largest minority in the U.S., Hispanic influence and impact has been noted in much of America’s changing society. Germany faces a similar growth in population and influence due to its largest migrant community: those of Turkish descent.

As an immigrant who grew up in one of the most culturally diverse cities in the U.S., I have witnessed firsthand the great impacts and benefits migrants can

have in a society. Aside from our great economic power, with Hispanic purchasing power expected to grow to nearly \$1.7 trillion by 2019,<sup>5</sup> Hispanics bring a rich history, culture, and language worth celebrating. We, like any other migrant group, create richness through diversity and if accepted and embraced, can create strong, positive changes to our communities.

During the Berlin portion of our program, I began to see strong connections between the sacrifices my parents, the 43.3 million migrants<sup>6</sup> living in the U.S., and the 8.7 million non-nationals living in Germany<sup>7</sup> were forced to make to reach a new life. As migrants, most of whom are entire families that have left behind possessions, friends, and families, they did not migrate to bring crime to our host societies. They did it as an attempt to escape crime and violence in their own homes, many willing to risk losing the ability ever to return. These difficult circumstances and the enduring example our parents and other inspiring members of migrant societies have instilled in us a strong sense of humility and a theme of servant leadership. The migrant experience helps us understand the need and importance of learning to serve others, because a community of servers see the significance of sacrificing individual needs over the needs of the society as a whole.

I realized that we also share a strong sense of determination and work ethic. Our determination—the drive that encourages us to keep fighting until we reach our goal—is a result of the example our parents have set for us. Watching them work two or three jobs at a time, yet still always come home ready to make sure we were fed, rested, and ready for the next school day, acted as a constant reminder that hard work is part of the equation to reach success. Witnessing the sacrifice my parents made and their determination to trade in their university education and comfortable lifestyle in Ecuador to give us a better education and future here in the U.S. proved to me that sacrifices, although difficult to overcome in the present time, are needed for our future and those of the generations to come.

My experience as an immigrant from a Latin American country is one that many migrants relate to, even if coming from a country outside of Latin America. This is because most migrants are escaping hardships

brought by developing societies, and thus typically share a sense of perseverance, will to succeed, and humility. My Latino traditions, culture, and lifestyle are a constant reminder that our life is a result of the hard work that the generations before us have sacrificed for our well-being.

### Living Between Two Worlds, Becoming the Best of Both

Our history, background, and traditions shape our lives each day and have the ability to teach us about ourselves. My Latino culture has taught me to embrace humility and to be proud of every job I may encounter, no matter what my role may be. My American culture has taught me that every goal and dream is possible through perseverance and dedication. As both a Latina and American, I have had valuable lessons passed down from both cultures and societies, and now see every task as an opportunity to grow and learn, knowing that each culture has an important lesson to teach.

Latinos are taught to take the role of the server even if they are the head of the household whenever a guest is welcomed into their home. Their needs, responsibilities, and wants all become secondary to those of their guests. This is because we are taught at an early age to follow the hierarchy of a family and community structure, always guided by the idea that age brings forth experience, value, status, and wisdom. We know to always respect our elders, whether it is our siblings, parents, or complete strangers. To my American self this servant-like behavior may seem almost submissive, but to my Latina self, I know this willingness to serve others is simply a sign of respect and care for others.

Through my experience living in the U.S., I have developed different priorities than those shared by my parents and older family members because of our different circumstances and opportunities. It was here where I learned that success can be exponential and self-made. The idea that we could “pull ourselves up by our bootstraps” was engrained in my mind at a young age, typically through the example of American self-made success stories like Oprah Winfrey, Bill Gates, and Mark Zuckerberg. It was also here where I learned that education leads to further opportunities

and is the key to reaching the high level of success I now saw possible for myself. The belief that education could lead to success was an idea shared by both cultures, but the limit of that success depended on what self I was aspiring with. For my Latina self, an education was needed to seek a good job that will provide a comfortable lifestyle for my future family and me, a concept enforced by the majority of the women in my family back in Ecuador. However, that lifestyle, one where I would have a simple 9am-5pm job at a bank or a lawyer’s office, as my mother always dreamed for me, was not the life I dreamed for myself. Every time I expressed my dreams to become a top CEO or to one day run for federal office to my Latina mother, it was always countered by the idea that such a job was too much responsibility and would be impossible to juggle with family responsibilities, which as a woman should always take priority. It was during those discussions that I sought my American self to give me the confidence and motivation needed to pursue my dreams and to remind me that I could go as high as I wanted, because my future could be limitless if I so wished.

After our trip to Berlin, I noted that it was not simply my Latino and American cultures that taught me these valuable lessons—it was actually my migrant experiences that shaped my character, determination, and drive to succeed. I, like every one of my colleagues here, have learned to see hardships as moments of learning, and obstacles as opportunities for growth. Through our experiences as migrants, we have learned to seek and take advantage of every opportunity in front of us because we know that opportunities are not always opened to us. I have learned to appreciate both of my cultures, and bring out the best of each, because each has life-long lessons waiting to be learned.

### Biases and Structural Discrimination

Within our own societies, there is a force we as minorities have been unable to combat, one that keeps preventing our advancement due to increasing obstacles thrown our way. Even with our great societal advances and progressive mindset, there continues to persist a structural discrimination dividing and limiting migrant communities both in the U.S. and in Germany.

Structural discrimination does not only occur to the benefit of the majority group of a society and at the expense of minorities, although in most instances this is the case. Structural discrimination can occur even within the same marginalized communities targeted in a society. This can be seen through the example of the migrant communities affected by the 1924 Immigrant Act, where a quota system that would limit the number of immigrants allowed in the U.S. was created through a national origins quota. This quota system benefited particular migrant communities, typically those from the British Isles and Western Europe, while discriminating against migrant communities from Asia and Southern and Eastern Europe. There is now a similar example currently occurring in Germany.

After the exponential increase in refugees seeking asylum that occurred during the 2015-2016 "Refugee Crisis," there was a shift in the asylum application process in Germany. The new process shifted from being individual-specific to country-specific, meaning individuals from specific countries are given preference over others and have a much higher probability of being accepted. For instance, Syrians, due to the ongoing civil war, are more likely to be accepted than refugees seeking asylum from "Safe States of Origin." This latter group will have a much longer process time and much lower acceptance rates. Surprisingly, Afghans have one of the lowest probabilities of achieving refugee status and high levels of deportation because their country is believed to provide "safe zones." However, can a country where there are current reports of gross human rights violations even among the highest-ranking leaders truly be considered a safe zone?

This policy was created to prevent asylum seekers with low protection rates—those with low possibility of having their claims granted—from making the journey to Germany in the first place, and at the same time to simplify the asylum process for those who are likely to be granted protection. Although meant to aid those most in need of help, this policy also acts to alienate and disadvantage those asylum seekers coming from countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran, where although there is no internationally-accepted political reason to flee, persecution and instability for many seeking a better life still exist.

During our visit to the emergency refugee shelter run by the organization TAMAJA and built in the Tempelhof Airport in Berlin, our host noted the German government's claim of not discriminating against nationality in the refugee application process, yet still supporting the very laws that follow this same structural discrimination when it comes to providing support and resources to asylum seekers. Due to the lack of administrative capacity, the Federal Office of Migration and Refugees (BAMF) was unprepared and unable to process the unexpected and exponential influx of refugee applications, creating a large and growing backlog still felt today. This has caused many refugees to prolong their stay in emergency shelters like the one ran by TAMAJA. Prioritizing Syrian refugees on their acceptance for refugee status and government programs provides them with the advantage to move out of these emergency refugee shelters much faster than the rest of asylum seekers coming from countries not prioritized. Those who were left most disadvantaged are those refugees coming from so-called "safe" countries. These are the cases of families and individuals that have remained in this emergency shelter not for the two to three weeks that were intended when the shelter was created, but instead have remained living there since its opening in 2015.

The federal government failed to set a national structure or protocol to follow as a response to the refugee crisis; instead, states and sometimes districts became responsible for providing refugee programs and accommodations. What was explained to us during this same visit was that the federal government knew what could happen and how fast the German refugee migration would grow at once, but due to its concern over public reaction and fear of retaliation, the government decided not to take preventative measures nor to begin preparations before the crisis began in 2015. Its only attempt in preparation for the foreseen refugee migration was to ask states to provide names of buildings that could be used for emergency shelters, like Tempelhof Airport in Berlin, and to start building permanent housing for future possible refugees. Unfortunately, these requests were not taken seriously, and the response was more reactive than preventative. Although some states and cities have progressively sought ways to accommodate the extensive number of refugees seeking

asylum, such as Berlin's attempt to build refugee shelters within city centers to facilitate the integration process, there are many others who have been unwilling to provide a safe and welcoming space for these new migrant communities, showing there is a strong need to improve and perhaps nationalize this process in the future.

### The Evolution of Two Nations

Immigration is always a sensitive topic for host communities to speak of, with hostility against foreigners being much higher in areas that have little contact with migrant communities. When talking about migration, people often forget to acknowledge the benefits the emersion of new cultures can provide, often accepting the new food, music, and trends brought by the new community, yet rejecting the very people that bring them. This is because immigrants, in particular those who arrive in large waves and who bring with them foreign customs, religions, and ideals, also bring a feeling of "overwhelming" the homogeneous societies. It is in environments like these, environments where people feel threatened by the change of their status quo, that racism and intolerance surface as a response to combat the possible removal of their privilege and power.

During our first official discussion as a cohort in Berlin, the topic brought up was: what makes a German "German"? If asked, most people would probably imagine a typical German as a tall, pale person with blond hair and blue eyes. But where did we get this impression? Perhaps the great genocide and atrocities created by the Third Reich as an attempt to create the perfect Aryan race has instilled in us the idea that this perfect race was achieved at some point, and that all Germans fit into this mold. However, German society was never this homogeneous. In fact, due to increasing globalization and migration around the world, very few societies have remained homogenous. Germany and the U.S., both growing increasingly diverse by the day as migration from around the world changes and diversifies their populations, have become the perfect examples of this transformation.

During the Germany-based portion of our program, we often touched on the subject of *Leitkultur*, trans-

lated as "leading culture." This German concept pushed forth a national political debate regarding national identity and immigration. It has been used by leading political figures to justify the rejection of multiculturalism, calling for the integration of immigrants through the acceptance and adoption of a clearly defined common culture to prevent the creation of isolated minority groups. The fact that any, let alone a high-ranking, official from the leading political party believes an entire national identity can be reduced to ten simple points is more of a resistance to multiculturalism than a commentary on modern society.

Many critics of the *Leitkultur* concept argue that it creates intolerance and demotes every person that does not follow the traditional German culture as inferior and thus, unable to be considered a true German. There is no denying that both German and American societies have diversified over the years as hundreds of countries can now be represented in both societies. Therefore, it is impossible to clearly define a "leading culture" due to the always changing and growing society we now enjoy. To believe that people should abandon their traditions and adopt those of the majority would be to ignore the changing society in front of them.

Integration is not equivalent to assimilation. It is not enough for a migrant population to adapt the language, habits, and processes of their host country because integration requires mutual cooperation. In order for a society to grow in a positive and progressive manner, both the entering community and the welcoming community must learn and adapt new customs from one another. The society must grow and acclimate to the changing roles and structures in order to advance and prosper as it changes.

As minorities and often as migrants, whether from Latin America migrating to the U.S. or the Middle East migrating to Germany, our communities are seen as one of the most uneducated, unproductive, and dangerous members of society. This is not because of a lack of drive or unwillingness to become prospering members of society. It is due to the limiting opportunities opened to us as migrants, and descendants of migrants. We are often brought up in the poorest areas of our districts, without proper educational resources, and little confidence in our abilities,

often due to the lack of encouragement from our own homes and closest support systems.

There seem to exist entire structures created to prevent us from improving our circumstances. As children of migrants, we are often bombarded with responsibilities outside of the average school and good grades. We are expected to take care of our household, our families, and even provide financial support to our families at an early age. It is not fair to judge our limited contribution to society without first understanding our hardships and acknowledging the additional obstacles we must overcome each day to reach the same level of success as our white counterparts.

We are forced to create our own paths, often learning to navigate systems like higher education and employment without guidance, as our immediate support system has little knowledge and understanding of these foreign structures. We have to be our own examples, as media representation of minority communities is often focused and limited to criminal coverage, with few success stories ever shown or acknowledged. Both in the U.S. and in Germany, the media often portrays migrant communities as violent, aggressive, and backward. The negative media representation of minority communities through the coverage of sensational news of violent and criminal acts reinforces the idea that we are unsafe for the society around us.

### Tackling Limitations on Integration

The most recent wave of increased migration seen in Germany before the Refugee Crisis of 2015-2016 was the influx of guest workers during the 1950s and 1960s. These workers, brought in after Germany faced the "Economic Miracle" that allowed it to rebuild at an accelerated speed after the war, primarily came from Turkey and West European countries like Italy, Spain, and Portugal and were not invited with the intention of remaining permanent members of German society. Rather, they were expected to work and return to their home countries once their jobs were done, but due to limited employment opportunities back home, many guest workers decided to remain and settle. However, due to the lack of policies and resources aimed at facilitating the integration

process into society, many of these guest workers continued to feel like outsiders and had limited opportunities of success. There were no comprehensive language courses offered by the state, making it difficult for immigrants to naturalize and feel welcomed as permanent members of society.

Coming back to the present day, the future of the new refugee migrants is still unclear, but there has now been a greater push to create policies and structures that would facilitate their integration into society. Beginning with the mandated language courses offered by the state, alongside the education and employment opportunities offered to those whose asylum application is accepted, these measures will provide refugees far greater opportunities than previously offered to guest workers. Nevertheless, basic language skills and employment opportunities are not the only obstacles that prevent integration into society.

Even those generations born into German society have limitations that have been passed on to them. Although they may have a better understanding of the language and culture than their parents, Germans born into migrant families may be limited in the sense of employment opportunities due to their citizenship or other forms of societal discrimination. Both the U.S. and Germany share the same discriminatory idea that only citizens of their respective countries deserve particular educational and job opportunities, not realizing that many foreign-born Americans and Germans are contributing members of society in every way, but simply lack a legal citizenship status proving it. Limitations due to citizenship can become a bigger problem in Germany. While in the U.S. those born on U.S. soil are automatically U.S. citizens, in Germany only those that can prove their parents' legal residency in Germany and are contributing members of society can apply for German citizenship after reaching the age of 18. These policies continue to prevent the next generations of minority communities from truly integrating into our societies.

In Germany, as in the U.S., there still exists a negative bias against minorities, especially when applying to the work force. A two-year study published in the *Administrative Science Quarterly* in September 2016 showed that companies are more than twice as likely

to call minority applicants to interview if they submit resumes that delete references to their race than those who reveal their race.<sup>8</sup> This bias against minorities shows just how much more difficult it is to get a job using an ethnic sounding name than it would be for an applicant who “whitens” his name in the resume/CV.

This brings the question of what next steps need to be taken to create true equal opportunities for these marginalized migrant communities, both in Germany as well as the U.S. It is not enough for companies to promote an “Equal Opportunity” work environment if the hiring practice has not been translated to its entire workforce, from the person who writes the job ad to the person who is screening resumes. Reaching true equality is a continuous process for all future generations to take part in; our role now is to begin the process by acknowledging the faults in our society when dealing with discrimination in the workplace.

### Turning Fear into Unity

Migration, or the movement of people from country to country in search of increased opportunities, has occurred since the beginning of humanity. It is not a new issue plaguing our societies, although many people might claim it to be. Migration will not stop as long as there still exist wars, famines, and lack of opportunities around the world. Instead of rejecting these newcomers who have left everything, including families, professions, and all of their worldly possessions behind, there should be an effort to better understand the circumstances that led these migrants to make such a decision. However, if migration is not the cause of social inequalities and economic instability, often attributed to the emergence of new migrants in society, then what is?

Foreigners are often seen as strangers and treated as outsiders thanks to the fear often felt by natives of being “taken over” whenever a new large wave of migrants comes to their home countries. It is this same fear that brings discrimination and even hatred, as the lives of nationals feel threatened due to the new customs and increased competition that migrants symbolize. However, as a migrant myself, I can attest that we do not come to a country with the intention of taking over and transforming our host

country with our traditions and culture from the country we have left behind. Yes, our presence may symbolize increased competition for jobs, but that is only because we are deserving and oftentimes prepared individuals who are simply seeking an opportunity to have a better life because we lack this in our own countries back home.

In our societies, there is a growing fear of outsiders, and this fear currently promotes discrimination and hatred in our communities. It is a fear that comes from the decision to focus on our differences as opposed to our similarities. In fact, if we decided to do the latter, we would notice that our customs and traditions have much more in common than we believe. For example, when comparing Christian and Muslim traditions, the hijab worn by Muslim women can be compared to the habit worn by Catholic nuns. Both are garments used by women to demonstrate respect toward their religions. Nor is Islam the only religion with food restrictions (*halal*): the Jewish religion follows the regulations of *kashrut* (Jewish dietary law); and during Lent and Advent the Catholic community is expected to follow periods of fasting and abstinence, similar to the practices of Ramadan in Islam. These simple similarities in religious traditions can act as a connection between people who are not so different after all. Once we learn to focus on these connecting factors instead of pinpointing our differences, we can learn to appreciate one another in a deeper and more meaningful manner. Instead of fearing their arrival, migrants should be accepted and appreciated for the contributions they provide host societies. Each day our food, music, and art are accepted more by our communities, but there still exists a stigma associated with the very migrants that have introduced this culture into society.

It is important to understand the great benefits that migrants bring society. Those first generation migrants, those who made the decision to move to a foreign country to seek employment, will contribute to society by participating in the national economy through the purchasing of goods and services. Those migrants who arrived at a young school age, and those who are born in the host country as second generation migrants have much more to contribute because, if given the proper tools and resources, their ability to speak multiple languages, ability to under-

stand and appreciate a diversity of customs and traditions, and the ability to appreciate diversity as a positive resource as opposed to a threat to the status quo, are all skills and tools that most young people raised in two different cultures have accomplished, even if it is on a subconscious level. Unity binds and empowers us. By focusing on our similarities as opposed to our differences, we will facilitate the transition of our changing societies and promote tolerance and inclusion into the lives of our future generations.

### Worlds Apart, Similar Obstacles: Lessons Learned

To change our future, we must first change our present. As explained by our hosts in JUMA, a project that through cooperation with mosques and Muslim organizations supports young Muslims and brings their opinions, wishes, and ideas into society, "Integration doesn't just mean the integration of migrants." We must learn to not only accept the customs offered by our transforming society, but also must teach this same society to accept our own customs and traditions as an exchange and compromise. In Germany, it is not enough for Muslims to integrate into Germany society; it is just as important for Germans to want to introduce themselves into Muslim society. Our biggest obstacle in integration is not our difference in culture and customs; it is our fear that drives lack of knowledge and understanding of outside cultures. Only once we acknowledge our ignorance, accept our differences, and identify our similarities, can we progress as a society and nation as a whole.

The AICGS New Transatlantic Exchange Program opened a new world and network of lifelong colleagues that, although raised on opposite sides of the Atlantic, have lived through similar experiences growing up as migrant minorities. Through my participation in this program, I began to understand that our values, experiences, and customs unite us more than our differences in religion, nationality, or language could divide us.

The U.S., like Germany, is a second chance for millions of migrants, people who are escaping persecution, violence, and other dangers that affect them

and their entire family for generations to come. One recurring theme I heard during my personal discussions with my cohort was the responsibility we felt as the younger generation of migrants to achieve the goals our parents sacrificed so much for. We grew up with a sense of obligation to succeed and give back to those who sacrificed it all for us. We carry the weight of all the years of struggle, fear, and sweat that accompanies each journey to a new land, but we carry it with pride, knowing that we are living up to the dreams our parents had for us. Watching my parents work multiple jobs and risk their own freedom to ensure we earned a good education that would pave the way to a life away from the instability and poverty we escaped from, made me aware of how fortunate I was to be a migrant in this land of opportunity. We grew up with the desire to give back to our parents, families, and communities and feel a sense of responsibility to do so because of all the opportunities that were opened to us just by arriving in this new home.

We each have individual reasons for why we care about the theme of "Migration and Integration," but as a cohort we now have an additional reason for why this topic is so relevant to our societies. Our discussions led us to the conclusion that injustices, discrimination, and biases against minorities still exist in our developed societies, but that we are never alone in facing them. We understand that for us, and for those children of migrant parents that have chosen to seek a new home in search of increased opportunities for their future generations, success is not just an option but a responsibility. Success becomes a responsibility for us because it means not only success for ourselves, but success for our entire community that sacrificed so much on our behalf. For this reason, I have promised myself, my colleagues, and my community that I will continue fighting the injustices facing our migrant community and will work to positively impact our leaders and policymakers to better understand the impact their views on migrant communities have on our societies as a whole. As migrants, we contribute to society through our work, our culture, and our customs. What we need to be a fully integrated community in our host countries is to feel accepted and welcomed by our host society. This is still a work in progress, but we are getting closer every day.

## NOTES

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# THE NEW GERMANS AND AMERICANS: A GERMAN PERSPECTIVE ON THE INTEGRATION OF YOUNG MINORITIES

MEHMET DOGAN

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I'm waiting in a room of the immigration service at an American airport, after I landed. The room is quiet. No one speaks. I ask myself: what just happened? I was standing in a line to cross the border control. I handed in my travel documents to the officer, who nicely smiled and welcomed me to the United States. Then he looked at my passport and I could literally see his expression change from a friendly smile to a more serious face. My name is Mehmet Do an and I am male. This is a sign for the officer that I had to be checked again. Afterward, I had to follow the officer to a separate room. After a while, another officer interviewed me. He asked standard questions like "what is the purpose of your trip to the U.S.?" and "where are you planning to stay?" Moreover, he asked very specific questions, like "is it correct that you don't have Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter?" I nodded. Also, he asked: "what do think about the migration policies of Angela Merkel in Germany?" I spoke about pro and contra points and concluded that this is a very difficult topic as there are many aspects one must look at. After being interviewed for an hour, I was free to go. I felt like I'd passed a university exam, and was just happy that I could attend the AICGS conference. When I met the participants of the conference for the first time in the hotel in Washington, DC, I started to forget my border control incident and realized that the conference would be a unique experience. Not only did I gain insights into the immigration and integration policies in the U.S., but I also made new German and American friends with different roots.

## My Story

I was born in a rural area of Turkey, where the mountains are high and the valleys are deep, as a boy with Kurdish roots. I grew up in the nicest part of Germany,

where the country has the most hours of sunshine. My family came to Germany as political refugees, when I was a young child. Hannah Arendt describes refugees as "a person driven to seek refuge because of some act committed or some political opinion held."<sup>1</sup>

My story starts in Turkey. The Kurds are the largest ethnic minority group in Turkey. When my family left Turkey, speaking Kurdish was not allowed. The Turkish government followed an assimilation policy for Kurds—a policy my parents didn't agree with. Put simply, they had a different political opinion than the government. Although this started to change in the early 2000s, when the Turkish government accepted Kurdish television channels (but with restrictions), we had already left Turkey many years earlier. Hoping for a better future for their children, my parents ended up near Freiburg, Germany.

At the beginning, my family lived in a refugee shelter, until my parents found jobs and could afford to rent a flat. As a refugee, I never felt a part of German society. My family lived with a degree of tolerance for more than ten years in the German state of Baden-Württemberg, and we had to extend our visas every other year. We were not allowed to leave Baden-Württemberg. This was very strange for me, especially when my classmates told me of their summer holidays in Spain, France, or Canada. My only big journey was from Turkey to Germany as a political refugee. In school, I felt ashamed when the teacher asked after summer break "what have you done this summer holiday?" I had nothing interesting to tell. I spent my holidays playing soccer with friends.

Another reason why I did not feel a part of German society was that all my friends were refugees and

immigrants with different backgrounds. Even when I played soccer in a club, I played mostly with immigrants. Only in school did I have contact with Germans. As a refugee, we lived with high uncertainty, and this made me feel weak. It also felt like my family could be deported at any time. Twice, my family had to live in church asylum, which means that churches temporarily accommodated refugees to prevent deportation. This works because churches in Germany have a special position: police officers do not enter houses of worship or their facilities to deport refugees. To live like this was and still is not very common because the churches first have to accept the refugees as well as have spaces available to accommodate them. This is not always easy.

In my first years of school, I lacked any big ambition to study. But when I saw people demonstrating to allow my family to stay in Germany, I understood that even though I'm not yet a part of German society, I can change that. There are people around me who are more than willing to help me and my family. This realization changed my life. My ambitions in school increased after realizing that I also have opportunities in German society. I started to study more and qualified for a higher level of school (*Gymnasium*) and earned my high school degree (*Abitur*). There are basically three types of schools after primary school in Germany: low (*Hauptschule*), middle (*Realschule*), and higher school (*Gymnasium*). When I had the possibility to change to *Gymnasium* due to my good grades, my teachers were not very willing to let me go. I was asked to stay and their argument was that it could be too difficult for me at the new school. I decided to go anyway.

After many years of waiting, my family's application for asylum was accepted. I got a Turkish passport with unlimited authorization to live in Germany and was authorized to leave Baden-Württemberg. It was an amazing feeling to have more rights and the possibility to travel around the world. It also felt that my life was starting just now. While I was very happy to gain the certainty to stay in Germany, I also felt very bad when I had to sign a paper declaring that I am not in a terrorist organization. I felt discriminated against and that the state was being prejudiced. I was just a teenager. In the end, I was just happy to travel in Germany and Europe. Our first family trip was to

London, and it was the first time that I flew in an airplane. It was a wonderful experience to fly; landing was especially exciting, because it shook up all the passengers—everyone was awake! My first time eating fish and chips made me realize that I have to try a lot of new food. All in all, this was an amazing feeling.

In 2009, after high school, I could (and did) apply for German citizenship. In the application procedure, I was asked to do an integration test. I felt confused that I was asked this—doesn't finishing high school show a person's willingness to integrate even better than an integration test? In the end, I didn't have to do an integration test because I could convince the responsible person in the agency that I already proved my willingness to integrate through my A-levels and my ambitions to study at university.

However, before I began my studies, I wanted to see more of the world. My whole life was changed by getting German citizenship. It felt good to have the possibility to travel around the world. I decided to take a gap year and traveled through Australia and Asia. I traveled with my German passport for the first time to Australia with a work and travel visa. I stayed for almost a year in Australia, where the backpacker culture didn't care so much about where you are from, but rather where you want to go. I appreciated this. I understood that some Australians identified me as European rather than German, Turkish, or Kurdish. When I explained that, as Kurds, my family moved from Turkey to Germany for political reasons, the conclusion was: so you are European. Others identified me sometimes as Italian, because I worked in an Italian boutique and had a bit of the look of an Italian with curly hair. Others identified me as French when I traveled with two friends from France. I came to understand that identity is not something always stable throughout one's whole life; rather, it is something changeable. Identity also depends a lot on how you see yourself, others, and everyone in between. On the one hand, I'm a German with Kurdish roots from Turkey and on the other hand, identity doesn't matter and we don't really need to care about it so much.

I began my university studies after my gap year, and it was here that I found both German friends and

friends from all around the world. I voted in an election for the first time in my life. I felt part of Germany, with the same rights as everyone else. I completed my Bachelor's degree in Political Science in Leipzig and studied as an exchange student in Paris. I am now pursuing a Master's in European Studies in Leipzig and am completing an internship at the Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany to the European Union in Brussels.

It is easier for me today to be in contact with Germans than it was before as a refugee in school. I'm still happy that I can travel around the world and have new experiences. I also see how privileged people are with German passports. A German passport makes it much easier to travel than with a Turkish passport, when you must pay for a visa, for instance, to travel to the United Kingdom. Moreover, it feels good to live in certainty. Out of experience I can understand very well refugees' feelings of uncertainty in Germany. That's one reason why I'm participating in a refugee mentoring program with my girlfriend. We are helping a refugee family from Syria with two kids. From my own experience, I can say that leaving your home as a refugee is very frustrating.

I heard about the AICGS New Transatlantic Exchange Program for Young Minorities from my sister, and because of this program, I have been given the opportunity to travel to the U.S. and discuss what has become my everyday life: identity, immigration, and integration.

### Leadership Training

Our program started on a Tuesday in October 2016. The sun was shining as the program participants walked from the hotel to the offices of the German Marshall Fund in Washington, DC. I spoke with a few participants about their backgrounds and the time passed by quickly. It was probably a fifteen-minute walk, but it felt like five minutes. At the German Marshall Fund, we were warmly welcomed by Lora Berg, who impressed me with her speech about having a mission in your own life, the importance of having goals, and the need to think about how to reach those goals. Every participant spoke about his or her own mission and goals. It was one of the special moments we had together as a group and

many others followed. I had never spoken with someone about such personal things, but it felt right and good to tell others about my goals and mission.

When we left the building, I felt very motivated. It was the perfect start to an exchange program—the ice between the participants melted in the morning sun. I was ready for the first panel in the afternoon, which was about integration and immigration issues in the U.S.

### Integration and Immigration Issues in the U.S.

The topics of integration and immigration are never easy, and are polarizing in the U.S. Probably today more than ever, we think about hate speech and fake news as seen on social media, where everyone has an opinion.

The first topic of our program in Washington was an overview of immigration and integration in the U.S., with a special focus on the role of the Hispanic population. It helped me to understand the attitudes toward immigration and immigration policy. We learned about the future demographic changes facing the U.S. and the changing immigration flows from Latin America. We also gained an overview of the history of immigration in the U.S.

I learned that immigration policy has changed a lot in the last forty to fifty years. In contrast to earlier decades, the people coming to the U.S. now are mostly from Latin America and Asia. This is very different to the two waves of migration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when most migrants came from Europe. That change completely shifted the composition of the immigrant community in the U.S. In the middle of the twentieth century, the largest group of immigrants in a lot of states was Germans and, to a lesser extent, Irish. It feels strange to me that so many Germans immigrated to the U.S., and yet people in Germany today are demonstrating in the streets against immigrants and refugees. Immigration from Germany to the U.S. reminds me of Hannah Arendt, who fled to Germany in 1933 and ended up in the U.S. As immigrant or newcomer, Arendt said, "we wanted to rebuild our lives, that was all. In order to rebuild one's life one has to be strong

and an optimist.”<sup>2</sup> That’s how I feel, too, even though I have lived for more than twenty years in Germany.

In most U.S. states today, the largest groups of immigrants are Mexicans, followed by a few Canadians in northern border states. The largest group of immigrants in Maryland and Virginia are Salvadorans. New York has many immigrants from a wide array of countries. While the U.S. has reached a record number of immigrants living in the country, the entire U.S. population has grown over the last century. This means that, as a share of population, immigrants today are the same as they were in the earlier waves of immigration. While the number of immigrants decreased in the early twentieth century due to the two World Wars, after 1965, it suddenly increased again. As a result, the population changed within a generation. The U.S. changed from a country that was mostly black and white in 1960, with a large majority of whites and a small minority of blacks, into a country in which Hispanics became the largest minority group in 2001. In 2016, it was estimated that the Hispanic population reached 57.5 million.<sup>3</sup>

I also learned that projections show that whites will no longer be the majority in the U.S. by 2060 and will be less than 50 percent of the population in under half a century from now. It feels very strange to me to hear about such projections. No one knows what will happen in ten, twenty, or thirty years. There are too many unknown variables in such projections. One variable is that immigrants may move back to their countries of origin, such that whites will not become the minority. For example, between 2009 and 2014, more Mexicans returned to their home country than came to the United States—something that has never happened since such movement started to be tracked in 1940. This made me think about brain drain. Highly educated immigrants who studied in the U.S. have much better opportunities in developing or emerging countries than they do in the U.S. Another unknown variable is that families are becoming increasingly diverse, with parents of different races and ethnicities. We can’t separate people into clearly-defined terms; there is also something “in between.” Talking about this made me sad that people think in strict racial and ethnic categories. This ties in with how we talk about people and the language that we use. For instance, I understand that the use of the term “black” is

common in the U.S., but I have not often heard it used to describe people in Germany. I use the term black instead of other terms here because it seems to be common and accepted, as I gathered from following the Black Lives Matter movement, which also uses this term. Still, I feel uncertain in using this term.

Another divisive term refers to undocumented people in the U.S. I learned that the choice of the terms “undocumented” or “illegal” depends to a large extent on the political background of the user. Using the term “illegal” indicates that one is probably against immigrants, while calling them “undocumented” implies that one is more sympathetic. A more objective term, and one with less political baggage, is “unauthorized” immigrants. For me, words matter a lot, and I chose to use more the term unauthorized because it is less derogatory. Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes in the U.S., which means that they are to a certain extent documented and integrated in society. The term illegal suggests that these people don’t have human rights because they are illegal. I feel bad that people call unauthorized immigrants “illegal.” This made me realize that there are immigrants who have it much harder than me and my family. I can’t imagine how it feels living as an unauthorized immigrant in a country, and I suspect that it is not a good feeling.

I also learned that the shifting population has produced some changes in attitudes toward immigrants. The panelist referred to research studies<sup>4</sup> in which people were asked to give their thoughts about immigrants. Some respondents said that they bring their skills and knowledge to the country. Others said that they are more of a burden, that they take away jobs and use public services. When asked in the mid-1990s, the U.S. public had a very negative outlook, with the majority calling immigrants a burden and the minority seeing immigrants as a strength. Today, this has completely changed; the majority tends to see immigrants as a strength and the minority tends to see immigrants as a burden. Furthermore, attitudes about immigration correlate strongly with party identity: Democrats are more likely to support immigration, to see it as strength, and to support a path to residency and citizenship for unauthorized immigrants, whereas Republicans, particularly the more conservative wing, have the opposite opinion about immi-

gration. Moreover, we see an increase in the number of people who think there should be a way for people that are in the U.S. unauthorized to remain. There is no agreement on whether they should get citizenship, but an increasing number of people do not want them to be deported. The panelist referred to opposition to building a wall at the Mexican border. Most of the American public believes it's a bad idea—particularly those who are Democrats, or Hispanic, or part of a minority group. But when asked about whether immigration should be increased, decreased, or stay the same, half of the public says it should be decreased. People do think there are too many immigrants coming to the U.S. When asked whether immigrants from different regions have a mostly positive or negative impact on the U.S., there are different attitudes depending on the immigrants' origin, with those from Asia and Europe receiving very good marks. People think their impact has been “very positive” or “positive” for the most part, whereas immigrants from Latin America and the Middle East have been viewed more negatively than other immigrants. This is something I find distressing. The causal links between immigrants' countries of origin and the public's attitudes are critical to see. The images of Latin Americans and immigrants from the Middle East are strongly influenced by the media and by films. Latin Americans and Middle Easterners are depicted as gangsters and murderers more than they are seen as educated or trustworthy individuals. This coincides with images in the news, where crimes committed by immigrants from Latin America and immigrants from the Middle East tend to be more visible than crimes of others. The narrative about immigrants from Latin America and the Middle East seems to me very different than other immigrant groups or non-immigrants.

At the end of the panel, our discussion then turned to immigrants' citizenship and identity.

Many immigrants in the United States never become citizens because they don't speak English and are afraid to take the tests required for citizenship. The citizenship test is also expensive, which can be a deterrent to taking it. Currently, one must pay \$680 to take the test—a lot of money for an immigrant who earns \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year. The fee doubled in 2007, and there was a rush of people to take the test prior to the increase.

However, I felt myself growing uncomfortable during talks about identity because it required me to think about my own identity. What is it? According to my documents, I am clearly German. Yet when I meet people and introduce myself, most don't think I am German—I don't have blue eyes and blond hair. So far it's fine. But when people ask me, “where are you really from?” it hurts, because the question suggests that I could not be a “real” German. More often than not, I am asked questions about Turkey and Islam rather than about Germany. I'm not very connected to Turkey and I am not a practicing Muslim, so it feels very weird to me when people ask me about my religion. I don't ask Germans about their religion when I meet them; it doesn't play a role for me. I know that people are interested in Islam and want to know more about it, but explaining and talking about religion can also be very difficult for me. Identity is something diffuse rather than clear for me, because identities change. I could identify as a refugee years ago, as a Kurd from Turkey, when I had a Turkish passport. Today I could be German, European, or simply Cosmopolitan

### Immigration and the Law in the U.S.

The second panel talked a lot about immigration law in the U.S. I learned that immigration law is one of the most complicated types of law in the U.S. (after tax law). It is complex, with many different categories. Any reform effort tries to restrict immigration based on criminal behavior: if an immigrant is involved in any criminal act, it has implications for his or her status or for getting immigration benefits. I remember my case. In Germany, I could apply for citizenship eight years after my asylum application was accepted. This meant I had to wait again and I would have to prove that I am an upstanding person in eight years. If I committed any crime within those eight years, I could be deported to Turkey or wouldn't be allowed to apply for citizenship. This showed me how restrictive the laws are for immigrants when they want to become German citizens.

However, it was also interesting that, unlike under criminal law, violators of immigration law do not have the right to legal representation. This is an immense problem because there is a lack of adequate access to justice for immigrants. The national security focus

can complicate certain applications in unknown ways. There is also a lack of transparency on some of the government's delays. Immigrants coming to the U.S. need to meet several criteria to apply for citizenship and there are a lot of administrative hurdles associated with work permits.

### Teaching English and Bilingual Education in the U.S.

On the next day, we started the morning with the panel on teaching English and bilingual education, during which the panelists gave insights into their work at schools in Washington, DC. One represented the Carlos Rosario International Charter School and the other the Washington English Center. Both schools are focused on teaching English language skills to immigrants. I liked the concepts of the schools and I wished that my parents could have had the possibility to attend a charter school when they came to Germany. The charter school is a very interesting concept for immigrants.

Founded in 1970 by Latino community leaders, the starting point for the Carlos Rosario International Charter School was teaching English to immigrants from Latino communities. The program of English instruction for Latin Americans later merged with a federally-funded program, and the school opened its doors to immigrants from all countries. Later, it added a citizenship program, followed by a job training program that was also federally funded. The largest group the charter school serves are Latinos, followed by Ethiopians. The students range widely in age range, from sixteen to over sixty, although most are in their 30s and 40s. Many are parents of school-age children. Seventy percent of students are from Latin America, about 20 percent are African or of African descent. More broadly, students come from ninety different countries and speak fifty different languages. It is highly diverse.

Carlos Rosario assesses the level of each student's English proficiency. Most applicants go to the school with their intrinsic motivation and goals, which is usually a desire to learn English. Once they are in the charter school, they start to learn about the citizenship program or the other career training programs, and so their goals advance. It is estimated that after two

semesters at the charter school—roughly ten months—students increase their incomes by 30 percent on average. That's even before they have finished school. They are also increasing the amount of taxes that they pay, their spending and buying power, and how they contribute to engines of the economy. One day, they may be able to buy a home. Moreover, they are starting businesses and employing other people, even students from the charter school. It is a cycle of immigrants who had opportunities helping other immigrants from the charter school, supporting each other, and motivating one another as mentors. This motivating environment is one of the most important things for immigrants, and reminds me of the mentoring programs in Germany, in which people can help refugees with tasks necessary for daily life.

Refugees need many years to understand the options and possibilities available to them, especially if they came from an emerging or developing country. One of the first things my parents learned was that they had to prove everything before they could work. This can be demotivating for refugees. What all immigrants must do as a first step is learn the language. This is one of the most important qualifications an immigrant can have, and yet can be quite difficult. It can be hard to learn a new language, especially for immigrants who never attended school in their countries of origin, and it is more difficult for adults than it is for children.

### U.S. Integration in Business: Corporate Responsibility

As we learned from another panel, the demographics in the U.S. are shifting. The Hispanic population has already become the largest minority group in the U.S. today and will almost double in size by 2030. It is projected that by 2030, Hispanics will make-up one-third of the population. What does it mean? Hispanics have a big buying power within the American economy—especially important if you are a consumer-based company—and women are largely the ones making the decisions on how to spend. Companies need to care about and pay attention to this segment of the market; in particular, they need to learn how to interact with Latinas. It is not only about translating advertisements into Spanish. They must create advertisements and campaigns that are cultur-

ally sensitive and broadly appealing. Companies assume that all Latinos speak Spanish, but that's not necessarily true. Companies then try to enter certain markets just by sending their products in Spanish, but Spanish is not always the preferred language. In Germany, it is uncommon to find advertisements in Turkish or other languages of immigrant groups.

The median age of the white population is 43 whereas the median age for the Hispanic population is 28. This means that half of the Hispanic population is under the age of 28 and half of the white population is under the age of 43. That is a huge gap. If you are a company in the U.S., and you are thinking about your future workforce, you should recognize that it is going to be increasingly diverse, with a larger role for people of color. This does not mean only Hispanics, but also African-Americans and Asians. Companies are paying attention to the numbers and to changing demographics, and some are starting to think about how to recruit and retrain their workforce. They are also thinking about the cultural aspect, i.e., that the cultural norms of the workplace were created based on the norms of white men. Going forward, that's not going to keep the workforce happy or keep people engaged and committed to what you are doing.

### U.S. Elections in 2016 and Immigration Communities

In the panel on the election and immigrant communities, the panelist introduced the need to bring more resources to the Hispanic community in the U.S. in order to enhance political participation and representation. Our conference took place a few weeks before the 2016 U.S. presidential election. The group discussed the possible outcomes of the presidential election, especially for the Hispanic community. We concluded that the complicated system of checks and balances is more likely to prevent immigration reform, regardless of the result of the election.

However, no one could imagine the outcome of the presidential election. After the participants watched the second TV debate between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton together, I felt certain that Hillary Clinton would win the presidential election. This was not the case. While there have been many articles about what happened, one interaction I had in

Washington stands out. During the program, I met an American woman (without an immigration background) who told me that she would not vote in the presidential election. This surprised me a lot. As a refugee in Germany, I would have been more than happy to vote and I see it today as a privilege. During my time in the U.S., I thought a lot about how, on the one hand, there are people who would like to vote and are not allowed to and, on the other hand, there are people who are allowed to vote and don't vote. I understand the people's frustration when they say they don't like either candidates, but still they should use their right to vote. Otherwise, they let other people choose for them and this can be much worse.

### Site Visits in Washington, DC

The group visited the Department of Homeland Security's Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS), where we learned how the process of becoming a U.S. citizen works and what the challenges are. Moreover, CIS shared with us their advertisement photos and explained their strategy for encouraging people to apply for citizenship. They also see challenges in the fee for the citizenship test and fear of the immigration test. Our group raised the question of why CIS is located in the department of Homeland Security and whether citizenship and immigration are thus mainly treated as a security concern.

We then visited the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany and gained insights into immigration and integration in Germany. Our discussion focused on the different definition of integration and shifted to political representation of immigrant communities in Germany, as well as the government's approach to making minorities more visible in Germany. It felt strange for me to discuss integration in Germany while we were in the U.S. Integration is my everyday life and speaking about it is also very private for me. The debate was also at some points emotional. When one speaks about integration, this is not something that is a one-way street. Integration only works when it is two-sided: the immigrants and the society.

At our visit to Congress we learned that Democrats and Republicans both agree that the U.S. immigration system is broken despite the 2013 efforts by the "gang of eight," four Democrats and four Republicans,

to write a bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill. Included in it were border patrol, enforcement, and paths to documentation and citizenship for the 11 million unauthorized people living in the shadows.

However, the group had the chance to have a Skype Call with City of Detroit Councilmember Raquel Castañeda-López, the first Hispanic woman elected to Detroit's city council, where we learned more about Detroit, Michigan, about her work in general, and about the work of minority representation in an elected office. We were impressed by her energy and life path. Councilmember Castañeda-López talked about barriers that immigrants face and introduced the triangle concept for developing new policies, a balance of policy, grass root organizations, and elected officials. Furthermore, she motivated the participants to engage in politics and, through that, embrace the chance to influence policies. It felt very good to hear about her work.

Finally, the group visited the Migration Policy Institute, where we compared German and American approaches to immigration topics such as the labor market and education. The U.S. has a "work first" approach, which offers immigrants employment but does not offer training. Germany follows a "train first" model, which allows immigrants to develop skills to be flexible, but the train first approach has a higher barrier to entry. Both countries are challenged to provide education to refugees. We learned that the education system is more statistics-driven in the U.S., while the German system has far less data on the immigrant population.

## Integration and Immigration Issues in Germany

On a rainy day in May 2017, the group visited the refugee shelter at Tempelhof Airport in Berlin. While one may think that an airport—and thus the refugee shelter—would be located outside of the city of Berlin, that is not the case. Opened in 1923, Tempelhof is an old airport located in the heart of Berlin. After World War II, the airport was used by the U.S. Army and is well known as the site of the so-called "Air Bridge" in 1948, when the Soviets blocked the overland routes and waterways to West Berlin for almost

a year. Although Tempelhof closed as an airport in 2008, the airport terminal building is under historic preservation, and today houses refugees.

Visiting the refugee shelter was emotional for me and for other participants. Some of us decided not to enter the hall where the refugees have their small cabins, because it felt like entering their private area. It would have made me sadder to see them living in these small accommodations, reminding me too much of my time as a refugee. At the end of the tour, I left the refugee shelter with a very sad feeling.

In Germany, refugees from Syria benefit from integration programs like German language courses. People from other countries, like Afghanistan, are not allowed to attend the integration program unless their asylum application is accepted. Germany is deporting refugees to Afghanistan, even while the country continues to be unstable.

However, the debate in Germany about integration is mostly about language, and it is very polarized. In Germany, the term "*Migrationshintergrund*," or "migration background" is used to describe immigrants and anyone not of Western descent. Second, discussions about integration are linked to topics like the headscarf, religious practices, immigrants' neighborhoods, and the perceived unwillingness of immigrants to integrate. It is still common in Germany that immigrants live in certain neighborhoods with others of the same background. It is there that you find the Turkish supermarkets, shisha bars, cafés, and restaurants. These districts have their own flair. Today, well-known Turkish neighborhoods in Berlin are nightlife destinations, and home to a large student population thanks to cheap rent.

## Immigrants and Politics in Germany

In the panel on immigration and politics, we learned about how the immigrant population is represented in the political process.

I learned that around 20 percent of the population in Germany has a migration background, but they are underrepresented in parties, parliaments, and political offices. The results of the so-called "Vielfalt sucht Rat" study<sup>5</sup> from the Heinrich Böll Foundation show

that the number of immigrants in German big city councils is increasing: Between 2001 and March 2006, there were 116 councilmembers who were German with a migration background. From September 2006 to March 2011, that number increased to 198.

Not only did the number of Germans with a migration background increase, but the number of city councils where Germans with a migration background were elected also increased. Only fifteen (eight in western Germany) out of seventy-seven big city councils lack a representative with a migration background. This is an improvement over the 2001-2006 period, when twenty-four city councils were without representation for Germans with a migration background. The trend is for an increase of Germans with a migration background in big city councils and in all political parties.

But still, all city councils are far from representative of the diversity of the population in the cities. Four percent of all 4,670 city council members are Germans with a migration background, yet more than one-quarter of the population in the big cities have a migration background. It is an underrepresented group of the population in city-level policymaking. There is no city in Germany in which immigrants are represented according to their share of the population. This reminded me of Raquel Castañeda-López from Detroit, because she motivated us to think about being politically active.

Furthermore, there are substantial differences between the big cities. Frankfurt am Main is in the lead among big cities in Germany with fifteen council members with a migration background. Cities like Stuttgart, Offenbach, and Duisburg are also relatively good at including minorities. However, it is notable that certain cities like Mannheim, Heilbronn, and Pforzheim, all with a large population of Germans with a migration background, have no minority representative.

In the case of the political parties, they have different attractions for Germans with a migration background. All big parties in Germany have city council members with migration backgrounds, but their numbers are different: while the Free Democratic Party (FDP) has eight city council members with a migration back-

ground, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) has sixty-eight. In a ranking of the parties' mandates linked to the migration background, the Greens and the Left Party each has the highest rate of immigrants at 8 percent, followed by the Socialist Party with 5 percent, while the Christian Democrats and the FDP have around 2 percent.

Taking a deeper look at migration background according to nationality, 38 percent have a Turkish background. The second biggest group is people from other member states of the European Union. There are also a number of Germans with a migration background from countries in Africa and the Arab states. Germans with a migration background from countries in southeast Asia are a rather low representation.

Most of the city council members with a migration background immigrated to Germany as children and nearly one-third were born in Germany. Immigrant workers have little representation in local politics. In addition, people who came as refugees are rarely council members. Generally speaking, city council members in big cities come from higher education. Their parents have mostly low or no school education. These people who are highly educated but whose parents have low or no schooling are called "Educational Climbers."

This study made me realize that migrants are underrepresented and probably not that important for political parties. As mentioned before, around 20 percent of the German population has a migrant background, but far fewer are members of the political parties. What does this mean? There is a lack of policies for those with a migration background because other representatives are not likely to advocate on behalf of migrants if they are not politically active.

## Immigration and Society in Germany

In the panel on immigration and society, we discussed building networks and the challenges and tools to communicate within society on the topic of immigration.

What do Germans think about immigrants? One approach segments society into three groups: 10

percent extremely anti-immigrant, anti-openness, and anti-inclusion; 10 percent very open, pro-immigrant; and 80 percent in between.<sup>6</sup> The 80 percent is the so-called “moving middle,” people who have not decided if they are for or against immigration. Experts assume that one half of the moving middle is favors and the other half opposes immigration. The core question is: how do we reach the moving middle?

During the program, I learned why alliance building and strategic communication are so important. It's not only people without immigration backgrounds that build alliances, it's also people with immigration backgrounds who are not convinced about new refugees. Immigrants and Germans with a migration background should say: this is our vision and this is how we think the country should look. To reach the moving middle, one must be tactful. For example, it is better to say that Germany or the U.S. have freedom of religion rather than accusing someone of being a racist. As soon as one say “racist,” the conversation will stop. Nothing has been won. I learned in the panel that it is about storytelling and I should tell people that I'm German with Kurdish roots from Turkey and that I want to practice my own culture, like speaking or cooking Kurdish or Turkish, and have the same rights as others in Germany. Furthermore, how do we create messages for those groups who are not open to immigration? People need to communicate with others, including those whose opinion differs or who you view as not open-minded.

Why is communication so important? If you twist the discussion about upper limits of immigration, then one can talk about a lower limit. How many people should Germany take? What is Germany's responsibility? This automatically turns the discussion around. It's a small thing, but it matters.

What can immigrants do to reach the moving middle? It's a big challenge to figure out what is the path for immigrants and what they want to achieve. If you just want to get through university, get your grades and later continue your education, it could be smooth sailing. Or do you want to change something within the university structure and you anticipate some opposition to this perspective? That should not stop you as a German with a migration background. If you are not part of the discussion, then you can't be part

of the solution. It's a powerful stage, because it's the right thing to do. If you want to change structures, you should be clear about your goals. What are they, what do you want? Figure out the tools. Find out who are the natural allies and the unusual allies. In addition, think about finding others who can also speak on the behalf of migrants. They may have better access to the people you want to influence. Sometimes migrants are not be the best messenger because others do not want to listen to them. Don't wait until you have a workplace or are in a higher position—you may lose people along the way. Network building is important and is the main thing. It's powerful. If you build your group of people, if you bring them together and say I'm not alone, then you will achieve something.

However, there is not a society that is open and welcoming toward newcomers when there is an “in group” and someone is coming from the “out group.” It's very rare that there is an open-arms approach. This is where it takes time, but it also takes this personal contact to immigrants. This is where it is powerful and important to make sure that people value Germans with a migration background through a meaningful contact. It takes time and it is painful. No one likes change. It is not easy to have your identity be questioned.

### Site Visits in Berlin

The group's first site visit was to the German Bundestag, followed by a visit to the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Murdered under the National Socialist Regime. The Memorial of the Murdered Jews of Europe is located next to the Brandenburg Gate and the U.S. Embassy, right in the center of the city. In school, we talked a lot about the Holocaust and I had the impression that the Americans were very interested in the topic. At the same time, we were all sad and emotional about the stories in the museum.

The group also visited the U.S. Embassy, where we discussed the role of the U.S. Embassy in Germany and German-American relations with the Chargé d'Affaires.

Finally, the participants met people from the JUMA Project (jung, muslimisch, aktiv – young, Muslim, active), with whom we shared our experiences and thoughts about immigration and integration in Germany. It felt good to talk with JUMA about our experiences after projects like JUMA were so helpful for me when I was younger. It is good to know that these kinds of projects exist. Moreover, the visit at JUMA was a great end to the exchange program, even though the group was tired from the intensive debates of the last days. I felt that we were all happy to have met each other and planned to stay in contact. It made me think about opening a Facebook account, but I am sticking to my principles.

## Conclusion

The conference was a unique experience for me. I gained both a lot of new friends and a lot of motivation. Moreover, I realized how important it is to network with young minorities. This is one way to open doors for yourself and for others. AICGS' Transatlantic Exchange Program: Giving Voice to Diversity is the best way to meet motivated immigrants, to learn more about the topic of immigration in the U.S. and Germany, and to use your voice.

I liked the title "Giving Voice to Diversity" because it emphasized that the participants always had the possibility to ask a lot of questions and to make comments. It even felt at times that the speakers could be influenced by us as young minorities. It made me realize the importance of asking questions, even if you do not share the same opinion. Dialogue is better than silence. Without talking, you lose the option to make your points clear and to lobby for your position. This is one goal I set for myself during the leadership training.

Immigrants in the U.S. and Germany can learn a lot from each other. The U.S. has a longer history with Immigrants, where discussion about race tend to be more open and common, while in Germany, the discussion about race is always connected to the Nazi era and very difficult to discuss. Moreover, the word "naturalization" is strange for Germans because it suggests that there are "unnatural" people in society who must be "naturalized" through the process of citizenship. In Germany, it is called "*Einbürgerung*,"

which can be translated in a broader sense as "becoming a citizen," and is a term I prefer to use.

The conference inspired me because I saw how far other immigrants with different backgrounds have come. It also showed that is not about where you come from, but rather where you want to go. One has to have goals—studying, working, or simply, as Hannah Arendt said, being "strong and an optimist."<sup>7</sup>

I have often asked myself whether it is more difficult for immigrants with a typical Hispanic or Turkish/Kurdish name, rather than a typical American or German name. While this is definitely the case, it does not mean you should give up your dreams and beliefs. It is difficult for immigrants because their starting point can be so different from that of a non-immigrant and the daily life. For example, it is harder for immigrants to find an apartment in Germany because owners prefer people with non-immigrant-sounding names. What this means for me is that the image of Hispanic or Turkish/Kurdish immigrants needs to be changed. We need to show that there are all kinds of immigrants, including some who study or work in higher positions.

I am very thankful for the opportunity to be part of the exchange program. It prepared me for my further career and showed me that I'm not alone. This already feels very good.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Hannah Arendt, "We refugees," *Menorah Journal* 31:1 (1943), p. 69. Ibid.

"The Nation's Older Population Is Still Growing, Census Bureau Reports," U.S. Census: Bureau Release CB17-100, 22 June 2017, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2017/cb17-100.html>

"U.S. Public Has Mixed Views of Immigrants and Immigration," Pew Research Center: 28 September 2015, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/09/28/chapter-4-u-s-public-has-mixed-views-of-immigrants-and-immigration/>

Karen Schönwälder, Cihan Sinanoglu und Daniel Volkert, "Vielfalt sucht Rat: Ratsmitglieder mit Migrationshintergrund in deutschen Großstädten," Heinrich Böll Stiftung *Demokratie* Band 27 (2011), <https://www.boell.de/de/content/vielfalt-sucht-rat-ratsmitglieder-mit-migrationshintergrund-deutschen-grossstaedten>

<sup>6</sup> Jean-Paul Marthoz, "How to communicate – Strategic communication on migration and integration," King Baudouin Foundation, 2006, <http://www.stes-apes.med.ulg.ac.be/>

Documents\_electroniques/MET/MET-COME/ELE%20MET-COM%208190.pdf

<sup>7</sup> Hannah Arendt, "We refugees," *Menorah Journal* 31:1 (1943), p. 69.



## APPENDIX

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### Immigration, Integration, and a New Transatlantic Generation: German-American Youth Exchange Program

AGENDA: WASHINGTON, DC, OCTOBER 16, 2016 – OCTOBER 21, 2016

#### **Day One: Arrival**

Date: Sunday, October 16

#### **Day Two: Arrival and Welcome Reception**

Date: Monday, October 17

Location: AICGS, 1755 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 700

This will be a free day for exploring sites and monuments in Washington, DC

4:00 – 5:00pm

Orientation

5:00 – 7:00pm

Welcome Reception and Light Dinner

Speakers: Dr. Lily Gardner Feldman, AICGS  
Dr. Jackson Janes, AICGS

#### **Day Three: Conference**

Date: Tuesday, October 18

Location: Johns Hopkins University, SAIS Rome Building 806, 1619 Massachusetts Avenue NW

9:00 – 11:30am

Leadership Training and Breakfast  
1744 R Street NW

Facilitator: Lora Berg, The German Marshall Fund (GMF)  
Adnan Kifayat, The German Marshall Fund (GMF)

11:30 – 11:45am

Walk to SAIS Rome Building 806, 1619 Massachusetts Avenue NW

11:45 – 1:15pm

Panel I: Integration and Immigration Issues

Speakers: Ana Gonzalez-Barrera, Senior Researcher, Pew Research  
Center  
Sayyid Syeed, National Director, Islamic Society of North  
America

1:15 – 2:00pm

Luncheon

2:00 – 3:30pm

Panel 2: Public Health and Law

Speakers: Liliana Rañón, Associate Director, AAPI & Latino Affairs, U.S.  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Kelly Richter, Georgetown University Law Center

3:30 – 6:00pm Free Time  
6:00 – 8:00pm General Discussion and Dinner  
DGS Delicatessen, 1317 Connecticut Avenue NW

**Day Four: Conference and Site Visits**

Date: Wednesday, October 19

Location: AICGS, 1755 Massachusetts Avenue NW

9:00 – 10:30am Panel 3: Teaching English and Bilingual Education  
Speakers: Mary Spanarkel, Director of Curriculum and Instruction,  
Washington English Center  
Allison Kokkoros, Chief Executive Officer, Carlos Rosario  
International Public Charter School

10:30 – 10:45am Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:15pm Panel 4: Integration in Business: Corporate Responsibility  
Speaker: Lisette Garcia, Senior Director, HACR Research Institute,  
Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility (BACR)

12:15 – 1:15pm Luncheon

2:00 – 3:30pm Panel 5: U.S. Elections and Immigrant Communities  
Speaker: Jose Gaona, League of United Latin American Citizens

3:00 – 5:00pm 1st Site Visit: The National Mall, the Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial and the  
Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial

6:00 – 8:00pm General Discussion and Dinner  
Firefly, 1310 New Hampshire Avenue NW

**Day Five: Site Visits**

Date: Thursday, October 20

Location: Meet at hotel

8:45 – 10:00am 2nd Site Visit: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services  
Address: 20 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
Hosts: Nathaniel Stiefel, Deputy Director, Office of Citizenship,  
Department of Homeland Security  
Kristina Carty-Pratt, Division Chief for Publications and  
Outreach

10:30 – 12:30pm 3rd Site Visit: Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Address: 4645 Reservoir Road NW  
Host: Dominik Mutter, Minister Counselor

1:00 – 2:00pm 4th Site Visit: Congress  
Address: Hart Senate Office Building, Room 528  
Host: Alice Lugo, Office of Senator Robert Menendez  
Andrew Geibel, Office of Senator Robert Menendez  
Daniel Stapelkamp, Office of Senator Robert Menendez

2:30 – 3:30pm 5th Site Visit: Skype Call with City of Detroit Councilmember Raquel  
Castañeda-López

3:30 – 5:00pm	6th Site Visit: Migration Policy Institute Address: AICGS, 1755 Massachusetts Avenue NW Hosts: Susan Fratzke, Associate Policy Analyst Julie Sugarman, National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial
5:00 – 7:00pm	Free Time
7:00 – 8:30pm	Reception at AICGS

## Overview of Organizations

**The German Marshall Fund of the United States** is a non-profit organization created through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance. The objective of GMF is to strengthen transatlantic cooperation on regional, national, and global challenges and opportunities in the spirit of the Marshall Plan. GMF does this through contributing research and analysis and convenes leaders on transatlantic issues deemed relevant to policymakers.

**The Islamic Society of North America** is a nonprofit organization that has served Muslims on the North American continent for over 40 years. Their goal is to be an exemplary and unifying Islamic organization and contribute to the well-being of the Muslim community and overall society. This is done through the development of the Muslim community, interfaith relations, civic engagement, and better understanding of Islam.

**The Pew Charitable Trust** is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization founded in 1948 that focuses on global research and public policy. Their mission is to improve public policy by conducting research and educating the public with useful data that illuminate the issues and trends that shape the world. Public policy issues that the Trust focuses on include the environment, state policy, economic policy, and health and human services.

It is the mission of the **U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS)** to enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans. HHS fulfills that mission by providing for effective health and human services and fostering advances in medicine, public health, and social services. HHS has eleven operating divisions, including eight agencies in the

U.S Public Health Service and three human services agencies. These divisions administer a wide variety of health and human services and conduct life-saving research for the nation, protecting and serving all Americans. The **Office of Minority Health** is dedicated to improving the health of racial and ethnic minority populations through the development of health polices and programs that will help eliminate health disparities.

**The National Immigration Law Center**, founded in 1979, is the primary advocacy organization that focuses exclusively on defending and advancing the rights and opportunities of low-income immigrants and their families in the United States. They firmly believe in a U.S. society in which people are treated equally regardless of their gender, race, or income and in which they also have equal access to education, government resources, and economic opportunities. The staff at the National Immigration Law Center has expertise on a wide range of issues that affect the lives of U.S. immigrants.

**Washington English Center** is a community-based program that has offered English and literacy training to low-income adult immigrants since 1993. The Center believes in providing education to immigrants so they can have the tools necessary to establish a better life for themselves and their families. Regardless of ability to pay, the Washington English Center makes it their goal to provide high quality educational services, access to technology, and life-skill programs using volunteer teachers.

Over the past 40 plus years, the **Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School** has transformed the lives of tens of thousands of immigrants by investing in and supporting their journey to achieve the American Dream. The School combines award-

winning education, life skills programs, and support services to create a holistic experience. Its curriculum merges research on regional economic realities with professional field standards and is tailored to explicitly meet the needs of the local immigrant community. ESL instruction is embedded in life and technology skills, health education, parenting, civics, and workforce training. The School celebrates a long established local, regional, and national reputation for excellence and its programs are recognized as high quality and impactful. Thanks to the School's programs, thousands of adults have obtained high school diplomas; passed the citizenship exam and become U.S. citizens; gained the English skills necessary to help their children with homework; entered into careers and climbed career ladders; paid millions of dollars' worth of taxes; purchased homes; and obtained college degrees and workforce certifications.

**Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility (HACR)**, founded in 1986, is one of the most influential advocacy organizations, representing over 16 national Hispanic organizations in the United States and Puerto Rico. The goal of HACR is to advance the inclusion of Hispanics in Corporate America at a level corresponding to their economic contributions. Specifically, there are four areas of corporate social responsibility and market reciprocity that that HACR focuses on: employment, procurement, philanthropy, and governance.

**League of United Latin American Citizens** is an advocacy organization that provides and serves all Hispanic nationality groups. It is considered the largest and oldest organization in the United States that focuses on advancing the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health, and civil rights of Hispanic Americans through community-based programs nationwide.

**National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy** is focused on educating society and others who seek to understand and respond to the challenges and opportunities today's high rates of immigration create in local communities. Services that the Center provides include policy-focused research, policy design, leadership development, technical assistance and training for government officials and community

leaders, and an electronic resource center on immigrant and integration issues with a special focus on state and local policies and data.

#### SITE VISITS

**The U.S. Citizen and Immigration Service** is the government agency that oversees the lawful immigration to the United States. Their mission is to provide accurate and useful information to their customers, grant immigration and citizenship benefits, promote an awareness and understanding of citizenship, and ensure the integrity of the U.S. immigration system.

**Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany**, located in Washington, DC, is the official representation of the Federal Government of Germany in the United States. Like other embassies, services provided include numerous consular and legal services for German citizens and U.S. residents.

**U.S. Congress** is the bicameral legislature of the federal government of the United States. It consists of two Houses: the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Congress meets in the Capitol building located in Washington, DC.

**Migration Policy Institute** is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank that focuses on analyzing the movement of people worldwide. Founded in 2001, they aim to provide local, national, and international levels of analysis of the development and evaluation of migration and refugee policies. They firmly believe that international migration must be actively and intelligently managed.

The **National Mall** is a national park in Washington, DC. Situated on the banks of the Potomac River, the National Mall is a two-mile swath of land bound by the U.S. Capitol to the east and the Lincoln Memorial to the west. Visitors to "the Mall" will find a wide, pedestrian-friendly, tree-lined boulevard with moving monuments and memorials, world-famous museums, and impressive federal buildings along Constitution Avenue. The National Mall welcomes millions of visitors every year, but it has also played host to many history-making events. This is where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech to

hundreds of thousands who marched on Washington. This is where protestors make their voices heard.

The **Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial** is a monument that represents the dedication of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his leadership in the civil rights movement. The monument, built out of solid granite, was established to further cement his legacy in the tapestry of the American experience. His leadership in the drive for realization of the freedoms and liberties laid down in the foundation of the United States of America for all of its citizens, without regard to race, color, or creed, is what introduced this young southern clergyman to the nation.

The **Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial** is a presidential memorial in Washington, DC, dedicated to the memory of one of the most beloved U.S. presidents, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Dedicated by President Bill Clinton in 1997, the memorial is a testament to President Franklin Roosevelt's four terms in office that included events that shaped the history of the U.S. such as the Great Depression and World War II. The structure is made out of red South Dakota granite and was the first memorial built to be wheelchair accessible.

## Immigration, Integration, and a New Transatlantic Generation: German-American Youth Exchange Program

AGENDA: BERLIN, MAY 7, 2017 – MAY 12, 2017

### **Day One: Arrival**

Date: Sunday, May 7

### **Day Two: Arrival and Welcome Reception**

Date: Monday, May 8

This will be a free day for exploring sites and monuments in Berlin

2:30 – 5:00pm	Visit to a Migrant Welcome Center TAMAJA Notunterkunft Flughafen Tempelhof, Columbiadamm 10-11
6:00 – 8:00pm	Welcome Reception and Light Dinner Langenbeck-Virchow-Haus, Luisenstrasse 58/59 Speakers: Lily Gardner Feldman, AICGS

### **Day Three: Conference**

Date: Tuesday, May 9

Location: Langenbeck-Virchow-Haus, Luisenstrasse 58/59

9:00 – 11:00am	Panel I: Political Institutions and Immigration Speakers: Michael Knoll, Director, Hertie Foundation
11:00 – 11:15pm	Social Media & Coffee Break
11:15 – 12:45pm	Panel 2: Immigration and Politics Speakers: Mekonnen Mesghena, Department Head Migration and Diversity, Heinrich Böll Stiftung Christina Krause, Coordinator for Refugees and Migration, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Dietmar Molthagen, Forum Berlin, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Annette Siemes, Friedrich Naumann Foundation

12:45 – 2:00pm	Luncheon and General Discussion
2:30 – 4:00pm	1st Site Visit: German Bundestag Address: Platz der Republik 1 Host: Andreas Nick (MdB, CDU) Julian Voje, Research Assistant to Andreas Nick Teyfik Karakucukoglu, Research Assistant to Manuel Sarrazin (MdB, Greens) Silvia Petig, Research Assistant to Dr. Karl-Heinz Brunner (MdB, SPD)
4:15 – 6:00pm	Tour of the Bundestag
6:30 – 8:30pm	Working Dinner Gaffel Haus Berlin, Dorotheenstr. 65 Participant Reflections Guests: Andreas Nick, Julian Voje

#### **Day Four: Conference and Site Visits**

Date: Wednesday, May 10

Location: Langenbeck-Virchow-Haus, Luisenstrasse 58/59

9:00 – 10:30am	Panel 3: The Challenges and Opportunities in Immigration and Integration Speakers: Ulrich Weinbrenner, Head of Department for Integration, Federal Ministry of the Interior Annalie Buntenschach, Member of the Board, German Trade Union Confederation (DGB)
10:30 – 10:45pm	Social Media & Coffee Break
11:15 – 12:45pm	Panel 4: Immigration and Society Speakers: Jona Krieg, Arrivo Berlin Astrid Ziebarth, German Marshall Fund
12:15 – 2:00pm	Luncheon
2:00 – 3:30pm	Panel 5: Integration and Communities Speakers: Cordula Simon, City Council of Neukölln, Berlin Anna Hermanns, City Council of Neukölln, Berlin Marc Altenburg, Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
3:30 – 4:30pm	Social Media and Coffee Break and General Discussion
4:30 – 6:30pm	Free Time
6:30 – 8:30pm	Dinner Clarchens Ballhaus, Auguststr. 24

#### **Day Five: Site Visit**

Date: Thursday, May 11

9:00 – 10:30am	2nd Site Visit: Free Democratic Party of Germany Address: Torstrasse 177 Host: Tim Stuchtey, Deputy Chairman, FDP Berlin Mitte
11:00 – 1:00pm	3rd Site Visit: Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Murdered under the National Socialist Regime Address: Cora-Berliner-Str. 1; Simsonweg
1:00 – 2:00pm	Lunch on the go

2:00 – 4:00pm	4th Site Visit: U.S. Embassy Address: Pariser Platz 2 Host: Charge d’Affaires Kent Logsdon
4:30 – 6:00pm	5th Site Visit: JUMA Project Address: Meet – Mitte, Chausseestrasse 86, Hofgebäude Host: Kofi Ohene-Dokyi, JUMA Project
6:30 – 8:30 pm	Dinner Final Reflections on Exchange Program

## Overview of Organizations

**The Hertie Foundation** is a foundation that focuses on promoting awareness in three main areas: Neuroscience, Democracy training and European integration. Within these fields, the Hertie Stiftung carries out operational projects and creates funding support.

**The Heinrich Böll Stiftung**, affiliated with the German Green Party, is a catalyst for Green visions and projects, a think-tank for policy reform, and an international network. It promotes the development of democratic civil society at home and abroad, and defends equal rights and equal opportunities regardless of gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, or nationality. The primary objectives guiding the Heinrich Böll Stiftung’s work are establishing democracy and human rights, fighting against environmental degradation, safeguarding everyone’s rights of social participation, supporting non-violent conflict resolution, and defending the rights of individuals.

**The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS)** is a foundation that operates as a think-tank and consulting agency, its soundly researched scientific fundamental concepts and current analyses are meant to offer a basis for possible political action. At home as well as abroad, KAS’ civic education programs aim at promoting freedom and liberty, peace, and justice. KAS focuses on consolidating democracy, the unification of Europe and the strengthening of transatlantic relations, as well as on development cooperation.

**The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)** is the oldest political foundation in Germany, named after Friedrich Ebert, the first democratically-elected president. As

a party-affiliated foundation, FES bases their work on the basic values of social democracy: freedom, justice, and solidarity. As a nonprofit institution, FES acts independently and wants to promote the pluralistic society dialogue on the policy challenges of the present.

**Forum Berlin** is an initiative seeking to organize civic education and communication as well as policy advice to the state by partnering with government, parliaments, academia, political parties, interest groups, and the economy. Forum Berlin desires to establish democratic discourse between citizens, policy, science, and practice, for the joint development of solutions for policy in terms of a social and democratic society.

**The Friedrich Naumann Stiftung for Freedom (FNF)** is a foundation for liberal politics that aims to promote the principles of freedom valid for the dignity of all people and in all areas of society. Both in Germany and abroad, the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung develops projects, such as civic education and dialogue, sponsorship of the talented, research and political consultation and archive-work, to promote liberal values.

**The Department for Integration of Germany’s Federal Ministry of the Interior** aims to integrate all people permanently and lawfully living in Germany into society and to grant them the related rights and duties. Along with asylum, refugees, the labor market, and the EU’s internal market, migration is one of the key issues of home affairs policy. Integration means living together as one society, not in separate worlds. German society should be characterized by respect, mutual trust, shared responsibility, and a sense of community.

The **German Trade Union Confederation (DGB)** is the umbrella organization for eight German trade unions and is the voice of working people in Germany. Together, the DGB member unions represent the interests of over six million people. This makes the DGB by far the largest confederation of trade unions in Germany and one of the biggest national confederations of trade unions worldwide. It unites and represents the interests of its unions and their members to politicians and other organizations at all levels: from local government to European and international bodies. As a political umbrella organization, the DGB is not involved in collective bargaining, does not organize strikes, and does not engage in union activities in workplaces; this work is carried out by its member unions. As enshrined in its constitution, the DGB represents the societal, economic, social, and cultural interests of workers. It also lobbies for further democratization of business, the state, and society; the growth and stability of the social and democratic constitutional state; an end to discrimination based on gender, racist stereotyping, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation; the independence of the trade union movement; a united Europe with a democratic social structure, and general and global controlled disarmament.

**Arrivo Berlin** is an initiative created by Berlin's local government and its chamber of commerce, to create conditions for migrants to stay in Europe and earn a living. It aims to train people who have fled their countries in skills which they can subsequently use to secure long-term employment.

The **German Marshall Fund of the United States** is a non-profit organization created through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance. The objective of GMF is to strengthen transatlantic cooperation on regional, national, and global challenges and opportunities in the spirit of the Marshall Plan. GMF does this through contributing research and analysis and convenes leaders on transatlantic issues deemed relevant to policymakers.

The **City Council of Neukölln** governs the eighth borough of Berlin, located in the southeastern part of the city. Neukölln has over 323,000 residents from more than 160 nations, as well as one of the highest

percentages of immigrants in Berlin. Neukölln has been selected as pilot city of the Council of Europe and the European Commission Intercultural Cities program.

The **Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (BMAS)** core functions are to create a strong framework for more jobs, promote social inclusion and maintain a stable social security systems. It seeks to identify interministerial solutions and liaises with the relevant states and municipalities when implementing its measures.

#### SITE VISITS

**TAMAJA** provides people suffering from war, famine, or persecution with protection and accommodation in Germany. These people in emergency situations require and need holistic care. The accommodation, care, and integration of fugitives is a task that can only be done with the involvement of all social forces. For this purpose, they see themselves as an interface between displaced people and actors from politics, the administration, welfare, and civil society's responsibility. TAMAJA works with representatives inside all areas in the development and organization of a people-centered infrastructure.

The **German Bundestag** is the national Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany. Its seat is the Reichstag Building in Berlin. In the current electoral term, Parliament is composed of 630 Members. This is the 18th electoral term since the establishment of the Federal Republic in 1949. The German Bundestag is elected by the German people and is the forum where differing opinions about the policies the country should be pursuing are formulated and discussed. The most important tasks performed by the Bundestag are the legislative process and the parliamentary scrutiny of the government and its work.

The **Christian Democratic Party (CDU)**, led by Chancellor Angela Merkel, is founded on the Christian understanding between people and their accountability before God. The CDU is open to anyone who supports the dignity and freedom of all people and their basic convictions. The CDU Germany stands for a free and constitutional democracy, a social and ecological market economy, Germany's inclusion in

the Western values and defense community, and the unification of the nation, as well as a unified Europe.

**Alliance '90/The Greens** is a Green political party that has been working in the Bundestag for nearly 30 years for environmental protection and sustainable development, democracy and human rights, social justice, peace, and multilateral international policies. Since the elections to the Bundestag in 2013, the Green parliamentary group consists of 63 members. Katrin Göring-Eckardt and Anton Hofreiter were voted co-leaders, succeeding Renate Künast and Jürgen Trittin who led the parliamentary group from 2005 to 2013 and 2009 to 2013, respectively.

The **Social Democratic Party (SPD)** is a social-democratic political party that is founded on freedom, justice and social solidarity as the basis of social democracy. The party strives for a strengthened coordinated social market economy and a fair distribution of its output. Since 2017, the party is led by Chairman Martin Schulz and has become one of the two major contemporary political parties in Germany.

**The Department for Cultural Relations with the Middle East and Intercultural Dialogue** seeks to stimulate discussion within the society of Islamic countries, provide impetus, and soften stereotypes through differentiated perceptions. The main focus stems from themes that interest a young audience. It is important that partners are involved that are not already Westernized. The exchange of values, views, and opinions may not omit controversy.

**The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe** in the center of Berlin is the German Holocaust Memorial honoring and remembering the up to six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Located between the Brandenburg Gate and Potsdamer Platz, the Memorial consists of the Field of Stelae designed by Peter Eisenman and the subterranean Information Center.

**The Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Murdered under the National Socialist Regime** was erected in 1992 to memorialize the murdered European Sinti and Roma who were persecuted as "gypsies." The

Memorial by artist Dani Karavan consists of a well with a retractable stone on which a fresh flower is placed daily. Panels present information on the persecution and mass murder of this minority under the National Socialist regime of terror.

**The U.S. Embassy**, located in Berlin, is the official representation of the U.S. federal government in Germany. Like other embassies, services provided include numerous consular and legal services for American citizens and residents of Germany.

**The JUMA Project** seeks to give Muslim youth a voice. The JUMA Project makes accessible encounters with politics and other areas of society. In cooperation with mosques and Muslim organizations, an interest in participation and democratic experience will be strengthened among Muslim youth, and they will be given an opportunity to participate in all areas of social life. Through this these youth can give other young Muslims in Germany a similar perspective.

**The RAA Berlin (Regional Centre for Education, Integration and Democracy)** is a non-profit organization that provides independent youth welfare services and school development programs. Since 1991, RAA Berlin has guided school and local development processes, advised pre-school and school staff, parents, community organizations as well as municipal officers, developed educational materials and organized professional training.



Cover images, top to bottom:

1. Refugees Welcome (graffiti in Vienna, Austria), November 22, 2015

Creator: edu aguilera

Credit: CC 2.0

2. Mission Makeover, Mural in Mission District, San Francisco, CA, February 23, 2014

Creator (photo): Franco Folini; Mural by Lucia Ippolito and Tirso Araiza (2012)

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3. Refugees Welcome means Equal Rights for all - Demonstration Hamburg 14.11.2015

Creator: Rasande Tyskar

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4. Elementary school students run out of school to Schoolyard

Creator: fotografixx

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American Institute  
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Located in Washington, D.C., the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies is an independent, non-profit public policy organization that works in Germany and the United States to address current and emerging policy challenges. Founded in 1983, the Institute is affiliated with The Johns Hopkins University. The Institute is governed by its own Board of Trustees, which includes prominent German and American leaders from the business, policy, and academic communities.

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