

IMMIGRATION, INTEGRATION, AND A
NEW TRANSATLANTIC GENERATION:
CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING
AND JOINT ACTION

AICGS GERMAN-AMERICAN ISSUES

21

Juan Carlos Gomez
Safiye Sahin





American Institute
for Contemporary
German Studies

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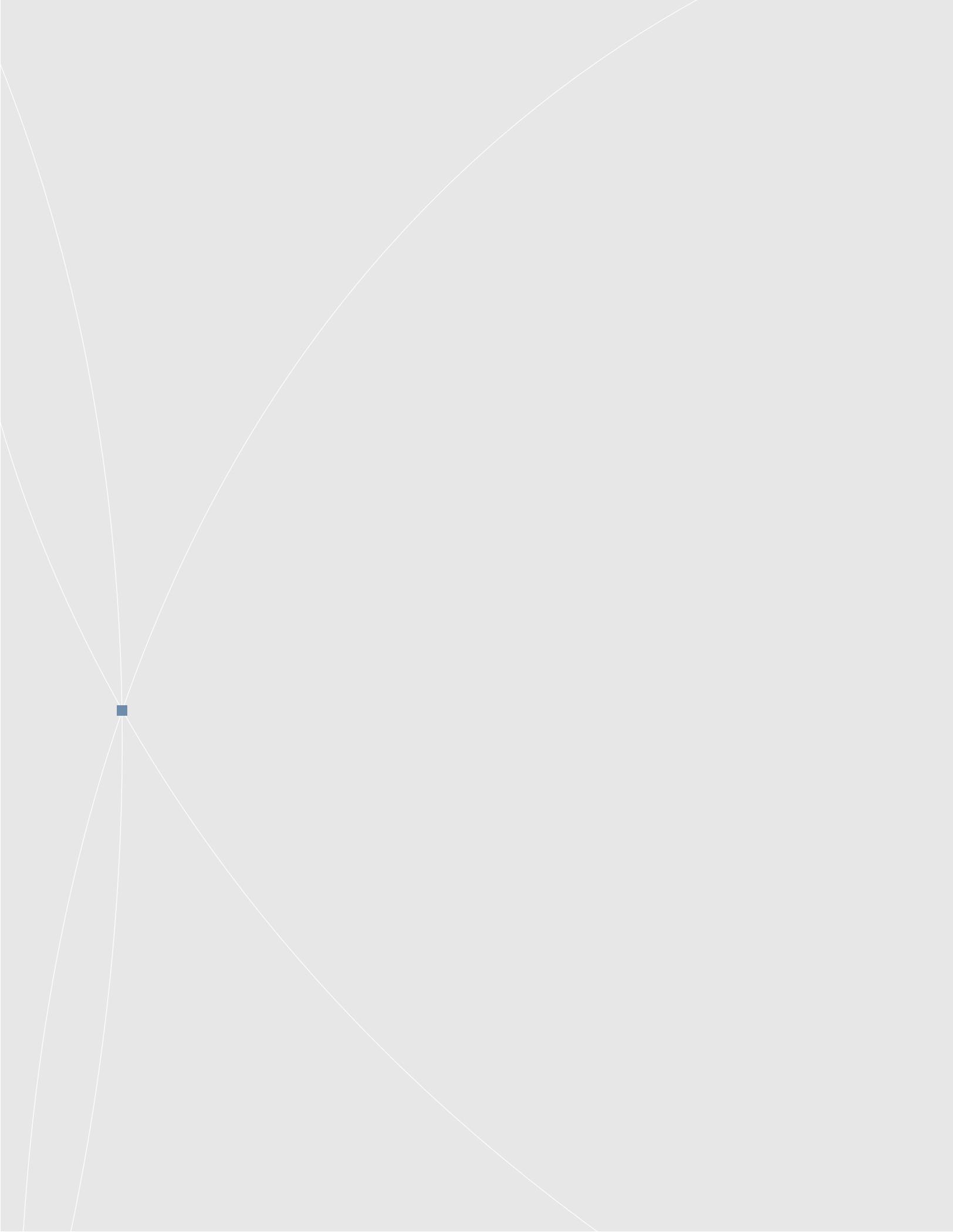
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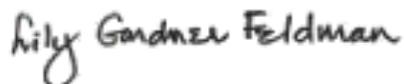
FOREWORD

AICGS is pleased to present two essays from the third 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 2017) and Berlin (May 2018), and a broader community of experts and advocates focused on issues of immigration, integration, and cross-cultural understanding. The authors of the two essays, Juan Carlos Gomez and Safiye Sahin, 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 <https://www.aicgs.org/project/transatlantic-exchange-program-for-young-minorities-2017-2018/>

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Dr. Lily Gardner Feldman
Harry & Helen Gray Senior Fellow
Director, Society, Culture & Politics Program
AICGS

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Juan Carlos Gomez serves as the Healthcare Legislative Correspondent for United States Senator Cory Booker. Juan is particularly interested in finding ways to address health care disparities and increase access to mental health care. Through the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, he was able to intern in the House of Representatives for his local New Jersey Congressman. He also has experience interning in political campaigns, nonprofits, and lobbying firms. Juan earned his B.A. in Psychology and Political Science with a minor in Public Administration from Montclair State University.

Safiye Sahin is pursuing her Ph.D. and working as a research assistant at the Refugee Law Clinic of the Humboldt University of Berlin. She studied Law at the Free and Humboldt universities, specializing in International and Constitutional Law, with study visits in Barcelona, Budapest, and Istanbul. She completed her legal clerkship at the German Department for Foreign Affairs, at a Co-Plaintiff of the NSU case in Munich, and at the Chair for Constitutional Law at the University of Istanbul, among others. She also volunteers for vulnerable groups, such as children, youth, and refugees.

CULTIVATING NEW PERSPECTIVES: REFLECTIONS ON THE TRANSATLANTIC EXCHANGE PROGRAM

JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ

For the third year, the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies (AICGS) assembled twenty young, inspiring professionals for a transatlantic exchange program. The 2017-2018 AICGS fellow cohort consisted of ten Americans with Latino migrant backgrounds, and ten Germans with migrant backgrounds, mainly of Turkish descent. Together, we discussed the plethora of immigration and integration issues affecting each of our home countries. We came to understand that these global matters not only intersect across various industries, but also have a trickling effect on our everyday lives. During these two weeks spent in Washington, DC, and Berlin, I was able to collaborate with nineteen of the most intelligent and hardworking individuals I have ever met. Throughout this life-changing experience, we explored, compared, and contrasted the struggles and successes of our seemingly similar communities.

As a group, we discovered the confounding differences which are generally attached to this misconception. Although our American cohort—Aliza, Anna, German, Gilberto, Guadalupe, Felipe, Francisco, Rocio, and Shabel—understandably shared many like experiences due to our Latino immigrant backgrounds, it is important to note the intersectionality that comes along with the other identities that play a role in our lives. Gender, sexual orientation, race, immigration status, and economic profile are just a few ways that our personal life experiences have differed. Additionally, our families arrived in the United States from various places including Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Mexico. We were raised and have lived all around the United States in places such as California, Colorado,

Florida, Idaho, New Jersey, New York, Utah, and Washington, DC. Our jobs also place us in several different fields including health care, law, academia, community organizing, foreign affairs, and immigration. Our German cohort—Berhan, Dildar, Enes, Oussima, Ozan, Saad, Safiye, Seycan, Talha, and Tayyib—were similarly diverse in experiences. They lived across Germany in Stuttgart, Cologne, Hamburg, and Berlin and worked in law, academia, nonprofits, government, and private industry.

This diversity allowed for a strong, well-rounded group and cultivated an atmosphere for new perspectives.

However, it is impossible to speak about these two cohorts without discussing the drastic changes that have occurred around the globe. For the Americans, it has been a difficult two years adjusting to an administration that has been openly hostile toward our communities and loved ones. During our fellowship in Berlin, Donald Trump called immigrants “animals,” a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer questioned a woman for nearly an hour just for speaking Spanish, a video went viral of a New York lawyer harassing individuals for speaking Spanish in public, ICE formalized a policy to separate families, and it came to light that the Office of Refugee Resettlement lost track of nearly 1,500 children. This all occurred within a span of one week.

It should not be surprising that these actions take place when an individual like Donald Trump has emboldened and supported policies and groups who scapegoat immigrants. Trump’s previous statements about Mexicans being rapists and drug dealers and his pardoning of Joe Arpaio, the

Arizona sheriff notorious for racial profiling and running “tent city”—an inhumane concentration camp by his own admission—are just a few examples of his rubber stamping xenophobic attitudes.

It has become a frightening time for communities of color, especially with the increase in hate crimes across the country. Data from the Federal Bureau of Investigations confirms that there has been an uptick in hate crimes for the second year in a row. Of the 6,100 hate crimes that took place in 2016, about 60 percent were racially or ethnically motivated attacks.¹

And it's not just communities of color. The number of hate crimes committed against LGBTQ+ individuals and people of Jewish and Muslim faith have also increased. While the presidency of Donald Trump emboldened hateful people to act on their beliefs, it is the policies of his administration which have reaffirmed his tendency to being crass. His administration has attempted to strip away the rights of LGBTQ+ people by telling them they can be denied service for who they love; limited who can serve in the military by how people identify; attempted to ban an entire faith of people from entering the nation, twice; and spread anti-Semitic propaganda. It is no surprise that some of his supporters feel that they can get away with hate crimes when Trump's own Department of Justice works to chip away the rights of minority communities.

Certainly, life in the United States was not perfect for immigrant communities before Donald Trump. President Barack Obama was given the nickname “Deporter-in-Chief” for his record-breaking number of deportations during his administration.² Many believed he was attempting to appear more moderate by being tough on border control, but the decision to do so left immigrant advocates, particularly Latinos, critical of the president, especially after he failed to live up to his promise to pass legislation to reform the immigration system.

Despite his inability to pass meaningful immigration reform, however, President Obama did not verbally disparage the immigrant community for political gain and for use as a scapegoat. I could never

imagine President Obama asking a room full of supporters if there were “any Hispanics in the room?” only to be met with “boos” like Donald Trump did at his own rally.³ Donald Trump has put a target on the back of immigrants, and by extension all communities of color, but particularly Latinos, and he did so in order to boost his own popularity and cast this country's own failings onto others. Whenever possible Donald Trump presents lies in an attempt to encourage resentment. He says immigrants bring crime, when the data shows immigrants are less likely to commit crime than native-born Americans.⁴ He says millions of immigrants voted illegally, but all experts claim that is demonstrably false.⁵ He says immigrants are a drain on the economy, but undocumented immigrants contribute over \$11 billion in state and local taxes and \$13 billion for the Social Security fund, despite not being eligible for almost any of the benefits they pay into.⁶ Additionally, immigrants account for more than 50 percent of entrepreneurs and 30 percent of small business owners in the United States, significantly higher than the percentage of immigrants in the United States—13.5 percent.⁷ Donald Trump's lies and blaming have spurred resentment among his supporters and created a mob mentality against immigrants.

Two years ago, prior to the U.S. general election, I remember being scared that someone might attack my father, who only speaks Spanish. This was the first time in my life I had ever experienced this fear, and I will never forget the look of sadness on his face when I told him he should be more careful where he spoke Spanish when he was in public. I still have that fear in me today. And this fear of mine would prove to not be unfounded. In the past two years numerous videos have flooded the internet of individuals being harassed in the streets for speaking Spanish and the number of hate crimes has risen.

Nevertheless, to think these issues only affect those old enough to vote is naive. The week after the election, my girlfriend, a second-grade elementary school teacher, told me stories of children chanting “build a wall” to Latino students. Later that morning, several of the students spoke to her visibly upset, worried their homes would be taken

away from them. Though these stories are poignant, they only further highlight the fact that the election of Donald Trump emboldened a hatred in the United States that had been present, but dormant, in the past.

And Germany is not faring much better. The rise of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party has signaled that the xenophobic, nationalistic mentality is not unique to the United States. It has also had the unfortunate effect of pushing the moderate, center-leaning government further to the right. Recently, in an effort to appease conservative voters, the state government of Bavaria enacted a law that requires public buildings to display a cross.⁸ Hate crimes in Germany have likewise increased, as high as ten attacks per day on migrants, since the influx of refugees in 2015.⁹

The wave of populism has spread across Europe. We now stand at an important junction in time where it will continue to spread or be stopped.

Giving Voice to Diversity: The Immigrant Experience

To come from an immigrant background means to exist in multiple worlds. That can be beautiful if an individual recognizes the strength in diversity. It can also be exhausting to constantly have to prove yourself and your identity.

The very first day I arrived in Germany I struck up a conversation with a stranger and very quickly the conversation turned to where I was from. “I’m American, and you?” “Ah interesting, I am German. But where are you really from? What are your roots?” This is not a question I am unfamiliar with. Nearly every time someone hears my name I have been asked, “but where are you really from?” This was not a question I expected outside of the United States. Perhaps it was credulity, but I expected that at least outside of the United States, I would be viewed as American without a doubt. After all, when I visit my family in Costa Rica or Spain, they refuse to view me as their own, but only as an American. Nonetheless, I had to explain to this stranger that I was indeed born in New Jersey and spent my entire life in the United States, which means I’m an

American. Still, he insisted to know “what” I truly was and with a sigh I let him know where my parents immigrated from.

Though some frustration in these situations is warranted, the essence of it stems from elsewhere; I do not suspect the stranger I spoke to had ever been questioned about his own roots. When he said he was German there was a sense of definitiveness in his voice. That’s the awkward dance people with immigrant backgrounds put up with each day—not just having to answer, “where they are really from” to strangers, but having to answer questions about their identity to themselves.

Since I was a young, I remember constantly hearing about how my town, Kearny, New Jersey, had become a much worse place to live; coincidentally, it became a “much worse place to live” around the same time primarily Latino families began moving in. I internalized that at a young age and always felt out of place within my own town. When I look at my town’s government, board of education, fire department, or police department, I do not see my family or the other Latino families, who make up almost 40 percent of Kearny’s total population, represented.

Coming from an immigrant background can sometimes leave you with that feeling of being an outsider—like you crashed a party and have overstayed your welcome. And it feels even more alienating when you do not have other people to look up to who look like you or your family not in your government, nor your television shows, nor your professors. It’s a feeling that is often recurring, and whether out of malice or not, people have a habit of reminding others when they are “different.” It is not a rare occurrence for me to tell someone my name, and then be responded to with an “hola” or be solicited information about the last time they went on vacation to Mexico or Puerto Rico, two areas I have never visited and I have no family from. It is constant little things that build up over a lifetime, begging you to recognize that you do not fit in.

However, I have come to realize that coming from an immigrant background can also be beautiful. An

immigrant background brings the opportunity and freedom to create your own path. Often, we are the firsts. The firsts in our family to attend university, travel the world, and choose our own career. The sacrifices of our parents made evident in each success we gain along the way.

My mother came to the United States from Costa Rica when she was fifteen years old. She had spent the previous couple of years as the primary caregiver of her three younger siblings while her older brother went to work to help support the family. My grandparents had left to go to the United States. My grandfather joined the military in order to more easily bring the entire family over later, and my grandmother went with him. It was no easy feat. Her older brother, three years older than her, worked as a house painter to provide money for his siblings. My mother was in charge of making sure her three younger siblings went to school and had food to eat each day. Despite this, my mother was able to attend school and then go back to their dirt floor home to complete all the responsibilities of a mother with four children.

At fifteen, my mother and her siblings would finally join my grandparents in New Jersey. She often reminds me of the story of what it felt like to leave home for the first time and arrive in a country where you do not know the people or the language. When she arrived at the airport, she had no concept for the English language—she would eventually master the language through listening to Rolling Stones songs and watching “The Munsters.” Tired and exhausted from the flight, she and her brother approached a hot dog stand and then realized they had no way of asking for one, so they just pointed and handed the man their money. That small moment in time had a tremendous impact on her. I like to think that when she looks at all she was able to accomplish since then, she recalls that event to remember where she started.

Since then my mom has never stopped working. She usually works two, sometimes three, jobs at a time, in addition to still being a pseudo-parental figure for her three younger siblings. Eventually, she met my father while they were both cleaning office buildings at night as a part-time job, and soon

after they married and had my siblings and me. Together my parents, my older sister, my younger brother, and I lived in Kearny, the working-class suburb of Newark, New Jersey. Thankfully, I cannot remember ever going to bed hungry. My parents, with their four to five jobs split between the two of them, spent almost every waking hour working so they could provide us with the opportunities they did not have. My siblings and I went to Spanish school, played soccer, played instruments, and took swimming classes. If there was anything else we were interested in doing, they would find a way to come up with the money to make it happen. I did not recognize it until I was older, but my parents never bought new things for themselves, often wearing the same old clothes and shoes for years, even if they had holes in them, so that they could buy new clothes for us instead.

There is a strong sense of empathy and community that I believe comes with being an immigrant. My parents knew how difficult it was to arrive in this country with nothing and so in addition to taking care of their three children, our family also hosted many of our family members and family friends that came to the United States. I affectionately referred to our home as “Hotel Gomez” for many years. Often, we were the first stop for close friends, cousins, aunts, and uncles who were either moving to the United States permanently, or visiting for an extended period of time. They would stay in our “guest room,” a small walkway in between our kitchen and the backyard. We had people stay with us anywhere between three months to two years, but anytime someone would leave, we would quickly have the spot replaced within a few months. As a teenager in an already crowded home, I was not always pleased with the situation, but now I recognize the sacrifices that my parents made for others.

If it meant helping others in need, my parents had a sense of sacrifice where they would give and give, until they had nothing left to give.

Those are the values imbedded in me because of my parents—empathy, hard work, sacrifice. It is hard to believe that just a generation later my family went from going to bed hungry, sleeping on a

mattress on a dirt floor, to having a member work in the United States Senate. That is what drives people to this country. Opportunity and the ability to achieve one's goals no matter what you look like nor what your name is. The ability to succeed, whatever that means to you, is available here.

Washington, DC, United States

Our program began in Washington, DC, where the twenty participants of the exchange program, as well as the AICGS staff, were finally able to meet and get to know one another. During the welcome reception, we learned the basics about each other—name, majors at university, and where we live now. The group felt very comfortable to begin with and it was easy to flow from one conversation to another. Little did we know over one week, our cohort would find many common shared experiences.

The actual program began the following morning at the German Marshall Fund. We participated in an icebreaker in which we shared our goals with one another and the tools we possessed to achieve those goals, such as networks and skills. The experience allowed us to gain a better insight into our drives and passions and helped us become more comfortable with one another. For this activity, I was partnered with Saad, one of my colleagues from the Germany cohort. He spoke of his ability to use his network to achieve his goals of creating an app. When we reconvened in Germany just a few short months later, Saad and our other AICGS colleague, Dildar, would inform us that the initial steps to begin this project had begun.

They thought of their very initial idea while realizing that minorities and low-income households often lack the education about the advantages of living a healthy lifestyle and purchasing fair-trade, despite being a big purchasing power. Searching for the ingredients of a product in the digital era of 2018 still proved difficult. Their concept implements new block-chain technology and empowers the public and consults businesses, through giving them access to information about healthy and affordable products which would improve overall health drastically. The most remarkable aspect of this project

would be the fact that both of the participants met through the exchange program, and without this connection being formed Dildar and Saad might never have begun the project.

After breaking the ice with one another, we began a day of speaking to different panelists from a variety of places, including Cultural Vistas, the Mexican American Legal Defense (MALDEF), and the Center for American Progress. The panelists gave general overviews of the immigration process in the United States to our German colleagues, and what had changed or stayed the same under the Trump administration. Specifically, they went over the differences between the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA, referred to as “Dreamers”) and the Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (DAPA) and the status of both programs today. Doing their best to save at least as many people as they could, Democrats pushed to save the DACA recipients, a more politically palatable group that some Republicans would be willing to support, and left DAPA and other undocumented immigrants out on their own. It was not a decision respected by all advocates and it remains to be seen if the efforts made will, in the end, protect Dreamers. So far, Donald Trump has revoked the DACA program, but thanks to federal courts, Dreamers have been able to continue renewing their status for the time being.

The Trump administration had also prioritized the deportation of all undocumented immigrants in the United States, regardless of criminal record, despite his claims to deport the “criminals” and “bad guys” first. A new initiative under his administration also calls for the separation of children from their families if they enter the United States illegally. Not only is this policy needlessly cruel and traumatizing, it is wholly inefficient, leaving the United States to care for even more children without guardians, on top of the thousands the country already has difficulty fostering.

Later, we spoke with representatives from the Washington English Center, the Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School, the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility, and the United States Small Business Administration about

initiatives to assist English-language learners in Washington, DC, and to help immigrants start new businesses.

Both the center and the charter school offer classes for adult English-language learners that are effective, but also flexible. The flexibility is a key component since most of the students are adults with families who work one or more jobs at a time. Having access to evening and weekend programs allows for adult immigrants to cultivate and improve their English language skills, while providing them with the opportunity to become more civically engaged.

Since the United States is fairly unique in that there is no official language, this means no one is technically obliged to learn English. However, speaking it helps tremendously when it comes to acquiring a well-paying job and allows individuals to communicate with others in their community. As I would learn later on in the program, Germany, which does have an official language, seems to make a more stringent effort than the United States in ensuring people who immigrate or seek asylum in the country know German. Language courses are significantly incorporated into the integration modules that Germany hosts. There is an underlying expectation that migrants adapt to Germany by learning the language, seeking employment, and thereafter contributing to the economy. This differs from the U.S, where immigrants must be individually proactive and interested in learning English.

Our final panel took place with a staffer of a Detroit Councilmember who discussed the importance of local politics. The entire week we spoke about policy mostly at a federal level, so it was refreshing to hear from the perspective of someone working at the local level and how much more quickly, and intimately, local policy impacts citizens. The staffer spoke about initiatives the city of Detroit has taken to assist immigrants in integrating in the community and giving them the tools to succeed. One initiative in particular created a municipal ID which immigrants, regardless of status, were able to receive. The benefits of the ID included being able to present identification to police, schools, and banks

without having to show proof of citizenship.

Speaking with the Councilmember's representative was a good reminder that a lot of the policy change we seek begins at the local level and works its way up to the federal level, not the other way around. Local solutions are also able to be implemented much faster than federal programs, which often take years to launch.

Our first site visit was with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) office. Walking into that office building that morning was especially difficult. What was originally the office that was supposed to welcome and assist immigrants has become a weapon turned against them by the administration. Barriers were enforced everywhere possible to make visas and citizenship even more unattainable than before. This was Trump's wall before he could erect the real one. USCIS continues to chip away at our history, hoping that Americans will not realize that they have erased "nation of immigrants" from their mission statement, replacing it with "protecting Americans, and securing the homeland"—as if immigrants inherently pose a threat to Americans or the homeland.

So it was difficult to listen to the USCIS staff speak about how much they were doing to welcome immigrants into the country, when the reality pointed to the contrary. For an office that is supposed to encourage legal immigrants to obtain citizenship, they have done all they can to slow down and obstruct that process. When Donald Trump began speaking out about family-based immigration, or "chain migration" as he calls it, USCIS followed his lead. Fiscal year 2017 saw the lowest number of approved family-based visa applications since fiscal year 2003.¹⁰ For that reason I found it insincere that the office presented itself as maintaining it's same commitment to immigrant services.

During our site visit with the Migration Policy Institute we discussed the role language has in how we speak about our migration policy issues and how that might differ internationally. It had not dawned on me until this discussion that there were many words that our German counterparts did not use when discussing immigration. Words like

“deportation” and “race,” which are regular words in the American vernacular, were tainted by World War II for our German friends. People are not deported in Germany, they relocate or self-deport, and “race” is a word that is almost entirely erased from usage.

It is interesting to me how a word like “race” can mean something so different in two countries. When we shared that nearly every form we fill out, be it for services provided from the government, schools, health care providers, or private companies, included questions regarding race or ethnicity many of our German counterparts were shocked and uneasy. In Nazi Germany, categorizing individuals and collecting data on them was used for the horrendous and unconscionable act of murdering millions. But in the United States categorizing individuals and collecting data provided us with the tools to combat prejudice, especially during the civil rights era. That data would be used in court cases and to draft legislation that examined why Black children were not being admitted to the same schools as White children, or why Black families were not able to live in the same neighborhoods as White families, or obtain bank accounts, or get fair loans. The injustices are systemic, and the use of this data proved essential in addressing them.

Even within the health care industry, it is incredibly useful to collect information on race and ethnicity to examine whether certain communities are disproportionately impacted by specific diseases. This past year new research reports indicated that while Black and Latino individuals are more likely to develop asthma, they were less likely to react positively to asthma treatments. That is in large part because a majority of the test subjects used when these treatments were being developed were White. Because that data is collected, researchers were able to clearly identify the issue and develop solutions to address the low number of Black and Latino test subjects for asthma medications.

On the other side, there were words our German counterparts used that we did not. “Integration” for example, was a concept that I had difficulty using to speak about immigrants. Often the word integration in the United States has the connotation of

whitewashing an immigrant’s past. To integrate in the United States means to strip a person of her or his history, language, and culture, and present them with new ones. The aversion to “integration” led to metaphors like America as a melting pot or a salad, where different communities and cultures come together to create something new, instead of trying to force someone to be something they are not.

On our final day together we also had the opportunity to visit the German Embassy, which would prove to be a good preview of what was to come in Berlin the following year. It was almost immediately apparent to me that this conversation would be much different than ones we had with American government officials. There was a transparency present that was very refreshing and our time there proved fruitful in getting a glimpse into contemporary German politics.

Berlin, Germany

It was wonderful to reunite with the entire group after what felt like a year apart. We spent the first afternoon of the program catching up on each other’s lives—after just a few short months, many people within the group had graduated from their master programs, were preparing to begin their master’s programs, and transitioning to new jobs or new cities. Despite this, what stayed consistent was the drive. As I spoke to people in the group, I could see the passion in their eyes as they spoke about their next big project—the dreams and determination were stronger than ever.

We began the official program the following day at the Migrant Arrival Center (*Ankunftszentrum für Asylsuchende*), located within sections of the old Tempelhof airport in Berlin. Immediately I noticed the distinction between what Germans thought of the refugee process as opposed to in the United States. This was a “welcome” center, not a detention center, like asylum seekers in my own country would have been placed. Although overwhelmed by the sudden, increased need to provide assistance, our German tour guide that day, as well as the rest of the panelists we spoke to, seemed to truly understand that these asylum seekers were

fleeing danger and seeking shelter, and were able to empathize and claim responsibility. That has not been my same understanding of the United States, where families are torn apart, held in detention centers, and sometimes not even allowed to enter the country to claim asylum. The Migrant Arrival Center we viewed that day was by no means perfect, but I certainly had a difficult time being critical given my own country's lax system for refugee support.

Our tour guide began by explaining the dissimilarities between seeking refuge in Germany in contrast to the United States, and the history of migration patterns over the past few years. The starkest difference is that those who seek asylum in Germany actually enter the country and go through the entire process there. In the United States, applications can be in process for up to two years before an individual can even set foot in the country. Because of this, the entire security and clearance process is completely disparate.

The commitment to assisting refugees in the United States also pales in comparison to Germany. In 2015, the United States resettled over 1,500 Syrian refugees and later that year President Obama declared that the United States would increase the nation's commitment from 2,000 Syrian refugees to 10,000 Syrian refugees the following year.¹¹ At the time, that was seen as a drastic increase and was accompanied by public outcry. To some, allowing in that number of refugees meant breaches in security and an exhaustion of resources we were perceived not to have. All of this protest came about despite having one of the most secure vetting systems for refugees in the world and more than enough resources. The issue was politicized and many governors began refusing to take in Syrian refugees, including my own governor in New Jersey. Meanwhile, Germany took in nearly half a million Syrian refugees to be processed in 2015 alone. By 2016, the United States resettled over 12,000 Syrian refugees, while Germany resettled over 160,000. In just one year—2015—Germany took in more refugees than the United States had in an entire decade.¹² Those numbers are staggering given that the United States has the economic capability, four times the

population, and far more space than Germany to assist an equal number, if not more, individuals seeking asylum. The future of refugee assistance seems even bleaker under the Trump administration where, as of April 2018, only eleven Syrian refugees have been resettled in the country.¹³

Overall, our visit to the Migrant Arrival Center left me with conflicted feelings. On one hand, I was happy these families were able to find shelter, but on the other hand it felt strange to see so many people hunkered down in a defunct airport hangar, even if it was only temporary. I think it was important for our group to see the facility, but the entire time there I could not help but feel like our tour guide was showing us an exhibit, instead of a place where real human beings were living. The language used felt so removed and analytical; meanwhile, in the background I can see the faces of families and children. It was odd to hear experts in the immigration field continue to refer to the situation that occurred in 2015 as the "migrant crisis," but when speaking about it, it almost always seemed like they felt the entity in "crisis" was Germany, which was struggling to find an efficient solution, and not the millions of displaced individuals seeking shelter.

At the same time, a trait I appreciated about the Germans we spoke with was their candor. They were generally less guarded with their language than Americans in their positions would be. This allowed me to acquire a sense for how some people in the country may think. Throughout the tour I picked up small phrases from our guide that illustrated some of the difficulties of integration. For instance, at one point our escort pointed and referred to himself as "German German," which to me indicates he perhaps feels there are different levels of being German, and that some people are somehow more German than others. This was further exemplified moments later when he referred to my AICGS colleagues as Turkish, instead of German. Identity is a complex issue and one that sometimes takes generations for the general public to make adjustments to, but it was discouraging to hear the leader of someone in the integration space make that mistake; a slip of the tongue that points to a larger issue.

More worrisome still was later on when a colleague in our group questioned the use of psychologists and other mental health professionals in the arrival center. This comment was dismissed because, according to our guide, the refugees did not know about psychologists. I find terribly misguided this idea that people from countries beyond the western scape live in the stone age and could not possibly comprehend what a psychologist is. It is an extremely troubling mistaken belief that many people in these societies hold and is indicative of a mentality that people who look and speak differently are primitive. The nations these people are arriving from have universities and access to internet—they know what psychologists are, and I am sure that refugees, many of whom have experienced trauma, could benefit from mental health services.

Still, it was heartening to see the children at the arrival center just being children, innocence present despite facing hardships. One child approached our group with curiosity, first speaking in German, and then in English when he realized some of us were American. He was no older than nine or ten years old and already fluent in three, possibly more, languages. Immediately he started showing us what tricks he and his brother could do on their bikes. It was an important reminder to me why our governments' policies must be based on compassion for others—the world is a better place because this child is safe and has opportunities.

The second day of the program we attended an assorted set of panels where we were able to speak with experts in the immigration field. First, we spoke with representatives from the Ministry of Defense and the office of the Commissioner for Integration and Migration of the Berlin Senate regarding diversity issues. We explored the issues of diversity and integration in Germany, specifically the hardships that people with migration backgrounds face in finding employment and being represented. One example presented was a recent court case in Berlin, which ruled that women wearing headscarves could be banned from teaching in primary schools due to the assumption that women who wear headscarves cannot be “neutral” when teaching students.¹⁴ I was

completely unfamiliar that this was happening in Germany, but I was familiar with the tactic of xenophobic policy and nativist sentiments. In the United States, we have seen an uptick in these types of policies, whether it is the more direct “Muslim travel ban” or slightly more covert “religious liberty” policies, which give states and individuals the ability to discriminate against women or LGBTQ individuals. However, my German AICGS colleagues declared that before this court case, many women worked as custodial staff. This reveals the issue was not women wearing headscarves being in primary schools, but that these women sought a higher position of power as a teacher.

One crucial facet around diversity in the workforce we discussed during this panel, and nearly every panel and site visit this week, was data collection. It is impossible to recognize or solve a problem without having the data to support your argument. It is much easier to convince an industry that they have an issue with their hiring process when there are statistical facts, rather than anecdotal stories. That is exactly what we did in the United States Senate. After years of lobbying efforts by many affinity groups and staffers of color, including our AICGS colleague Francisco, the Senate Democrats finally issued a survey to gather data on the diversity in their offices. While there are still flaws with the survey in that it is optional and it does not distinguish diversity among senior-level and entry-level staff, it is still a great start that has brought about solutions to solve the issues.

The data showed that diversity among the staffs of Senate Democrats was abysmally low, and not depictive of the states they represented. With that data, groups were able to make suggestions on how to improve diversity among Senate staff including the creation of the Democratic Diversity Initiative, an office within the Democratic leader's office whose sole purpose is to disseminate resumés of diverse applicants to Senate offices. These actions also prompted many Democratic offices to establish the “Rooney Rule,” which simply states that when hiring, especially for senior-level positions, individuals with diverse backgrounds will be interviewed for those positions.

However, whenever we presented this success story on gathering data to improve diversity, nearly every German we spoke to expressed some reluctance about implementing such an initiative. It was a favorable solution in the United States, but unlikely to be incorporated in Germany. This position was the first time I noticed how deeply Germany today is connected to its history, and how policy decisions are made by conferring with their past.

Later that day, we met with representatives from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and the Heinrich Böll Foundation. It was interesting to learn how these foundations work, as there is no true equivalent type of organization within the United States. To my understanding, these foundations serve as think tanks linked to political parties, funded by taxpayers. Each foundation presented the views of its corresponding political party, in this case the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Social Democratic Party (SPD), and the Alliance 90/The Greens, respectively. The three foundations that were in attendance represented politics from center-right to center-left, and it was interesting to hear some of the political positions of these parties that mirrored moderate Democrats and Republicans back home. Coming from an educational background with very little in foreign affairs, it was surprising to me how moderate and conservative the leading parties in Germany were. I had always pictured Europe to be generally more progressive than the United States, but aside from the basic social-democratic policies in their education and health care models, my week in Berlin left me feeling that Germany was far more conservative than I had imagined.

Again, the issue of diversity in the workplace and the importance of representation within political parties and assisting foundations was brought up. Almost immediately we received pushback from one speaker, who stated that we should not depend on quotas, and instead hire the most qualified people based on “German values.” The first point was one I have heard from most conservatives when this subject matter is raised. To begin with, no one in the AICGS program suggested quotas. It

is also troubling to say that only those who are most qualified will be hired for a position, and then to have nearly no women or people with migration backgrounds represented. To me that seems to indicate that the organization hiring does not believe women or people with migrant backgrounds are as qualified for the same positions as White men. Every single person has biases—this is not a fault of an individual, just a limitation in our humanity. Study after study have demonstrated that people have been taken out of consideration for jobs because of their gender, race, or for having a “foreign-sounding” name. This is further exacerbated in Germany, where I learned it is a requirement to submit a photo when applying for a job. It is crucial that those in a position to hire others recognize that they have personal biases, and use methods, such as the “Rooney rule” or bringing in others to be part of a review committee, to offset those biases.

I owe my own career to programs and initiatives that recognized the playing field was not fair for all and gave people with minority backgrounds the ability to compete and succeed. While in university, I was selected for an internship program for Latinos which provided us with a stipend and placed us in a Congressional office. Without that program, I would never have been able to afford moving to one of the most expensive cities in the United States, especially since nearly all internship opportunities in Congress are unpaid. Unfortunately, many of the interns in Congress are there because their parents have a personal connection to the office and can afford to pay the cost of living for their children to intern for a summer. Because Congressional jobs often require internship experience in an office, these are often the pool of applicants offices select from for their staffs. The little diversity in Congress that exists is there largely because of programs like the one I participated in, creating a pipeline. This was not a quota, it was recognizing that certain groups were being disadvantaged and doing something to let those communities participate.

Furthermore, the thought of hiring individuals with “German values” led us to ask what exactly those values were. What is German? Unfortunately, the

question proved difficult to answer. Nevertheless, when none of those terms is defined, a great deal is left up for interpretation on who gets to be German or not.

Similar conversations have taken place in the United States, but it felt very different than those in Germany. The United States, after all, was built by immigrants, and has a long history of people immigrating to the country from all over the world, with each new group having to prove that they are American as well. In the United States, I have always perceived the xenophobic sentiment as treating certain groups as “second-rate” Americans, but at the end of the day someone that was Black, or Latino, or Muslim could also be American. Germany is a nation that also has immigrants, but has historically been more homogenous than the United States. I am of the opinion that there may be a harboring sentiment—that there are German people and then there are people who will never be German, no matter if they abide by “German values” or not.

I saw that idea reflected by the way a specific news story about two of Germany’s national soccer team players kept coming up during each panel. The week that we arrived in Berlin, a report broke about two of Germany’s soccer players who presented the President of Turkey with signed jerseys that read “with great respect for my president.”¹⁵ I do not want to discuss the politics of the Turkish president, and whether presenting the jerseys to him was wrong or right, because I do not think that is the reason this story was so pervasive in the news that week. I think it inadvertently gave Germans who opposed the thought of becoming a country of immigrants a means to point at two individuals and say they are not loyal to Germany so perhaps neither are any of the other Germans of Turkish descent.

The logic is ridiculous, and often minority communities are the only ones subject to it. Why should an entire community be lumped into a group because of the actions of two individuals? Why do certain Germans have to prove they are German and their allegiance, while others are just assumed to be German by the way they look?

We see the same situations occur in the United States. When there is a violent attack perpetrated by Muslims or Latinos, the news cycle lingers on whether all Islamic people or immigrants can be trusted, but when the attacker is White, the entire White community does not have to speak for that person. There are never news cycles for the dozens of mass shootings in the United States perpetrated by White Americans asking if White people can be trusted anymore. In the United States, it often feels as if people of color are put into boxes, where they have to prove that they are “exceptions” to stereotypes portrayed of them, but White people all start off by being exceptions. They do not have to fight against harmful stereotypes in the same way.

Additionally, we also had the opportunity to speak with a representative from AT&T and a German news journalist about media coverage and the impact it has on political discourse. It was, and still is, heavily disputed that the news media in the United States had a profound impact on the 2016 elections. Mostly everyone agrees that media outlets played a part in the election of Donald Trump, but differing views exist of why that might be the case. Some feel as though news channels should not have given him the attention he was seeking and gave him a platform to speak. Others feel that he was not taken seriously enough throughout the entire campaign. It is difficult to say what the correct way to cover someone like Donald Trump would be, and now Germany is facing that exact predicament with the AfD. Do you ignore populist figures and risk playing into their narrative that the media will not cover them? Do you cover them, thereby giving them a platform to a larger audience than they might have been able to reach without that coverage? From our conversations, it does not seem as though the United States has a solution to stop the spread of misinformation. It appears as though that burden has fallen onto nonprofits, companies, and private citizens. In Germany, some efforts have been taken to halt hate speech online. In October 2017, a new law took effect, which would fine social media companies like Twitter and Facebook for not removing hate speech in a timely manner. While this addresses the issue of hate speech, it still leaves

the public vulnerable to the misinformation campaigns spread online.

Our final panels consisted of representatives from the Federal Ministry of the Interior, SINGA Deutschland, Arrivo Berlin, and the German Marshall Fund with whom we discussed immigrants integrating into their communities. Again, language plays an important role in how effectively individuals are able to engage in their community, and lays the groundwork for how immigrants are perceived. One example provided was a German television advertisement that displayed the slogan “Germans helping refugees integrate.” While the sentiment was kindhearted, it promotes a white-savior mentality and could also lead to resentment building from Germans who feel that they are not receiving assistance while refugees do. A better option would be to feature an advertisement where Germans and refugees are coming together as equals, each bringing something to the table.

One of our panelists began their speech by saying “please forgive me and correct me if I do not use the correct terms when speaking.” It was striking to hear someone speak with humility in that way and recognize that they might not have the answers to everything. It was also a way of giving us, a community with migrant backgrounds, back power over the language that describes us. It was a quick statement, but it meant a lot and is just one example of the importance of selecting the right words when speaking with others.

We also spoke about what communities were best to engage with to make positive change. One speaker left us with this advice when campaigning for a person or initiative: “empower the base, reach out to the middle, and exclude the others.” Often activists spend too much of their time fighting their opponents, when they could be strengthening their base and reaching out to the “undecideds” in the middle. We also spoke about the importance of using community resources to enact change, namely using “businesses, bibles, and badges.” Businesses, places of worship, and police officers hold a tremendous amount of clout in communities, and collaborating with them often ensures that the community will become engaged.

One of our final site visits was with a member of the Bundestag, where we spoke about the future of Germany and if it sees itself as a world leader. I believe Germany’s past weighs on the country more heavily on this issue than others. Despite, from an outside perspective, Germany being the foundation that is holding Europe together, there seems to be a real hesitancy to claim that role. However, I think that is beginning to change, apparent by a recent speech by Chancellor Angela Merkel, who said that Europe must take its fate into their own hands.¹⁶ I think there is a real desire to be less reliant on the United States for direction, and instead be able to lead. It remains to be seen how the current tumultuous relationship between the United States and Germany will proceed, and if this will be what pushes Germans to step out of the shadow of the United States and the European Union, and chart their own path.

We also had the opportunity to visit the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, which left a chilling and memorable impact. From a distance, the stones that comprised the memorial resembled a sea of tombstones. Each stone placed randomly at varying heights, and slanted in slightly different directions, but all still in orderly lines, seemingly a metaphor for the chaotic but calculated murder of millions during the Holocaust. When at eye level, it is impossible to ever see across to the other side of the memorial because of the differing heights of the stones, a symbol of the extent of the countless lives taken.

Walking through the memorial left one feeling isolated. Leaving no space for people to comfortably walk side by side, people quickly lost sight of one another as they began walking further into the memorial. The further toward the center I walked, the taller the concrete blocks became, until I could not see outside the memorial anymore, except for small slivers down each aisle of blocks. The composition of the memorial gave the illusion that those exits were just out of reach. The slants of the pathways throughout the memorial and the way the stones muffled sound and blocked light as you walked further in created an uneasy feeling. The memorial is a physical reminder of the atrocities that took place during the Holocaust, that uses

nearly all of the senses as a means of reflection. It is by far the most impactful memorial or monument I have ever visited, and not an experience I will soon forget.

Our final site visit took place at the U.S. Embassy, where we continued our discussion on the current relationship between Germany and the United States. Going through security and having to confront the portraits of Donald Trump and Mike Pence hanging prominently in the embassy might be my least favorite moment of the entire week. For just a few days, I was a little removed from the United States and all of its disconcerting politics, until these pictures dragged me back to reality.

The representative we spoke with was incredibly affable and was able to speak extensively to his experiences in both Germany and the United States, dating back to the tearing down of the Berlin Wall. When asked about the difficulties of working under the Trump administration he dodged the question with an American charm that almost made me homesick. However, I recognize the position he is in and the limits he has on what he can say.

Still, it was confounding to meet with such an experienced and intelligent staff member who works beneath an ambassador who is already building a notorious reputation. In his first week in office, the ambassador suggested what actions German businesses should take based on the United States placing sanctions on Iran, and even more recently suggested that he would help to empower right-wing leaders throughout Europe.¹⁷ Although he was too kind to admit it, I think the entire staff has their work cut out for them under this administration and ambassador.

As we wrapped up our time at the embassy, the representative asked us about our observations of one another and what cultural differences stuck out. One German colleague explained their observation of how Americans can speak aimlessly without saying much of substance, citing the own representative as an example. After catching our breaths from laughing, “directness” was what came to mind for the Germans’ most distinguishing cultural difference. Despite the small differences in

how we communicate (or whether we like ice in our drinks or not), I think we share a lot more similarities than differences.

As our week drew to an end our final panel took place with a group called JUMA, of which our very own colleague Saad. is a member. JUMA seeks to join Muslims of all different sects together to find a sense of community and understanding. The organization also serves as a hub for young Muslims in Germany to become empowered and engaged in their communities. It was begun by the founders going from mosque to mosque asking young people to join their group, and slowly but surely, the group grew. JUMA serves as a testament on what can be accomplished through community organizing, and the appetite of communities to be involved.

It was the perfect conclusion to our program. We spent much of the week reflecting on the barriers to integration and immigration and ended with a success story of what could be accomplished when those barriers were overcome.

Conclusion

The first year of the Trump administration was spent in shock, and the rise of populist, nationalistic, and xenophobic groups has been numbing, but now we must collect ourselves and take action. I see the determination to make a difference in the eyes of my colleagues—there’s a fire that burns brighter than ever before. One thing we learned from this program is that Germans cannot rely on the United States to be the leader of the free world and Americans cannot rely on Germany and the rest of Europe to lead in the absence of our president. Instead, we must rely on one another as individuals and communities. With populism, nationalism, and white supremacy on the rise in both nations, we cannot expect our countries to function as they normally have. We must stay vigilant against populism rooted in hate and misinformation, and fight against complacency.

We have taken our transatlantic relationships for granted, and now threats have arisen from those wishing to sever ties and turn once allied nations

against one another. Programs like the AICGS Transatlantic Exchange Program must continue and be strengthened in order keep these lines of communications open and strong. Information must continue to be accessible and shared across the Atlantic in order to speak out against mistruths.

I would like to thank AICGS for the opportunity to partake in this life-changing program. Thank you to Lily Gardner Feldman, Susanne Dieper, and Liz Caruth, and to the rest of AICGS for putting together all of the wonderful panelists and site visits for us and for understanding the importance of beginning and continuing these important conversations. Thank you as well to the panelists and other speakers who took the time to speak with our group. It is not always easy to have these conversations, but the fact that you were willing to and did so graciously is very much appreciated.

To be an immigrant means to have hope. I believe that to be true of immigrants from all corners of the world and all walks of life. It might be hope for different things: a hope for peace, a better life, achieving one's dreams, prosperity for the next generation, or maybe just an exciting change of pace. When someone leaves her or his home to go somewhere else, they are hoping for something better. While the world may seem dark today, Martin Luther King, Jr., reminds us that "we must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope."

That hope will be critical in the times ahead, but it must be matched with action if hate is to be stopped, if communities are to be protected, and if progress is to be made.

Notes

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IMMIGRATION, INTEGRATION, AND CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING IN GERMANY AND THE UNITED STATES

SAFIYE SAHIN

“Well, if one really wishes to know how justice is administered in a country, one does not question the policemen, the lawyers, the judges, or the protected members of the middle class. One goes to the unprotected—those, precisely, who need the law's protection most!—and listens to their testimony. Ask any Mexican, any Puerto Rican, any black man, any poor person—ask the wretched how they fare in the halls of justice, and then you will know, not whether or not the country is just, but whether or not it has any love for justice, or any concept of it. It is certain, in any case, that ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.”

- JAMES A. BALDWIN, 1972

These timeless words by American novelist and social critic James Baldwin describe very well the approach of the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies' (AICGS) exchange program for young minorities. Initiated by Dr. Lily Gardner Feldman, the program aims to give voice to “diversity” in order to deepen public awareness of the common concerns and challenges of communities primarily of immigrant background in both the U.S. and Germany. The intention is to motivate young minorities to play an active role in the future design of their societies, both of which are becoming increasingly diverse. Thus, twenty young Americans and Germans mostly of Hispanic and Turkish descent from academia, media, business, politics, and society came together to discuss the complex and dynamic issues of immigration, integration, identity, and cross-cultural understanding with leading experts and advocates in Washington, DC, and Berlin, Germany.

Our first interaction as a cohort began in Washington, DC. After getting to know each other, we reflected on our visions and passions and how

to reach our goals by being active stakeholders in our home societies. It was fascinating to meet with such passionate and hard-working individuals, most of which are the first in their families to attend university. Our similar backgrounds of facing social concerns, having to support the family while pursuing our education, and being from a minority background, fostered our passion for social justice issues. This atmosphere of sharing similar stories about what matters to us for an equal society was incredibly inspiring and empowered us in our beliefs.

The immigrant background is an enrichment, but it also implies many sacrifices. Similar to the other participants of our exchange, I realized very early on the importance of education. My minority background played a very special role in this path to my personal awareness, giving me the necessary impulses to work hard at school and university in order to become an equal part of society as a woman and as a minority. While pupils from German households tended to be less confronted with social and domestic issues, I developed the passion to improve and use my intercultural skills.

At the same time, the question of identity followed me. During my youth I could hardly define myself as either Turkish or German. Having a Turkish name made me always a foreigner in Germany, but being born and raised in Germany made me alien in Turkey, too. These experiences gave me my sense of responsibility and interest in socio-political issues. I decided to be a legal activist to use my law degree to help others in need, especially children and youth from socially-deprived backgrounds. I wanted to be a role model for them, showing that nothing is impossible, that every child deserves the opportunity to live up to her or his potential.

We all, the participants within the exchange program, have followed similar paths, struggling to achieve a better life than our parents' generation and actively contribute in our societies. This brought us together and enabled us to form a strong connection even though we live in different countries separated by the Atlantic. Listening to the same stories caused by the same patterns and structures in society and state institutions, shaped by an asymmetric power relationship between the privileged and the non-privileged, made us feel like we are not alone. The given frames prove that if you do not question the structural dimension of social justice issues, there will be no change achieved toward more equality.

Shifting Narratives: Nations of Immigrants?

Today, global migration movements are changing the world. The number of international migrants worldwide has continued to grow rapidly, reaching 258 million people in 2017.¹ Many migrants are seeking better living conditions because they have been affected by globalization's unjust distribution of goods and opportunities, while many others are being displaced by conflicts within their home countries. At the same time, populist politicians are instrumentalizing the current situation by politicizing migration and blaming migrants for socio-economic problems, and even trying to change the narrative. After Donald Trump was elected president in 2016 with an anti-immigration campaign, he declared that the U.S. is no longer a nation of immigrants.

Currently, his administration is implementing a "zero tolerance" crackdown on families who cross the U.S.-Mexico border undocumented. Intended as a deterrence strategy, in most cases this means separating parents from their children. The parents are put in federal jails while their children are sent to shelters run by the Department of Homeland Security. This harsh shift in immigration policy contradicts the historical precedent. The United States was unquestionably built by immigrants, making it one of the most diverse countries in the world—a melting pot of different cultures. It is the country with more immigrants than any other in the world. In 2015, almost 50 million people living in the U.S. were born in other countries, accounting for around one-fifth of the world's migrants.² While the majority of immigrants to the U.S. from the 1600s to the mid-twentieth century came from Europe, and many from Germany, this has shifted in the past fifty years. Now, the majority of immigrants coming to the U.S. are from Latin America and Asia. Hispanics are the largest minority group in the U.S., with an estimated 55 million people, making up approximately 17.8 percent of the total population. By 2060, the Census Bureau projects that the Hispanic population will reach 119 million, over 28 percent of the total population.³ Furthermore, 3.3 million Muslims of diverse backgrounds live in the U.S. (about 1 percent of the U.S. population).⁴ Thus the U.S. has changed from being a country with a majority of white immigrants from Europe and a minority of African-Americans into a more diverse society in terms of ethnicity and religion.

In Germany, however, the official narrative was for a long time quite the opposite. Until the early 2000s, Germany declared that it was not a country of immigration. This started to change in 2000 when, after realizing the urgent need for migration due to a low birth rate and an aging society, a paradigm shift was set into motion by changing the law. Now, similar to the U.S., the citizenship law allows individuals to become a citizen by birthright, even if born to non-German parents. There was a further change to the immigration law in 2005 aimed at supporting migration. However, there is more to Germany's approach to migration than these two laws. Indeed, Germany has been historically

shaped by migration: If we also consider all of the displaced persons (*Vertriebene*) and returning ethnic Germans (*Aussiedler*), half of today's German society immigrated to Germany only after World War II. The country's postwar economic miracle required a larger workforce and resulted in the migration of the so-called "guest workers," the majority of which came from Turkey in the 1960s. Today, 22.5 percent of German society, or 18.6 million people, has an immigration background. Half of these are from other European countries, and almost 5 million are Muslims (around 5 percent of the total population), 2.8 million of which have a Turkish background. Diversity continues to grow, with almost 40 percent of all children under the age of 5 having a migration background.⁵

The official narrative of Germany as a nation of immigrants simply recognizes historical and empirical facts and finally implies that people with an immigration background are active stakeholders in society, who should be considered when negotiating the future of the country and its "identity." In the course of this shift, certain controversial topics have come up concerning how integration should work and what it means to be German. Is there a specific German "Leitkultur," or leading culture, that everyone has to follow in order to be fully integrated as a German? Since the natives themselves do not have a universal definition of what it is to really be a German, the current debates about these questions are shaped by a narrow and exclusionary approach toward immigrants, especially Muslims, that does not match the reality of German society or cultural history. Even within Germany, there are different regional cultures. Today in Europe, we have a much more pluralistic society with a huge migration of populations. This movement of people away from their traditional communities—a trend more common in the U.S.—is linked to globalization and the growing influence of mass media. Increasing pluralism in this way requires the definition of what it is to be German, to have a joint vision that holds the population together. Pluralism requires defining common values based on the German constitution and its institutions, and a movement toward a more progressive and inclusive national identity.

This would also be a step forward with regard to integration, which has typically been seen as something only concerning "foreigners," "migrants," or "people with an immigration background" and their involvement in German society. This approach of asking what the original native culture demands of the immigrant to be German is short-circuited: The so-called integration paradox refers to the phenomenon of the economically more integrated and highly-educated immigrants turning away from the host society instead of becoming more oriented toward it.⁶ In working-class areas with fewer immigrants, where people are not accustomed to other identities apart from their own, the visibility of people with an immigration background can be confusing. Due to being the focus of political debates and the media, especially those with a Turkish or Muslim background are often confronted with negative stereotypes. Individuals are seen as spokespeople for all others with the same origin. They have to defend themselves against these stereotypes, thus becoming advocates for their background and frequently being probed on their identity as Germans. They are perceived as non-Germans due to their appearance or their non-German sounding names, despite in many cases having been born and raised in Germany. In the end, those who feel as though they belong to Germany very often had to try twice as hard as their native counterparts to "pass" and achieve success. They end up facing a second barrier by the native society. This so-called "glass ceiling" is an unseen yet impenetrable barrier that keeps minorities from rising to the upper rungs of the success ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements.⁷ Women of minority backgrounds experience the most difficulty in overcoming this glass ceiling because they are at the intersection of two historically marginalized groups: Women and people of color.⁸

As a result, after being labeled as "foreigners" despite being perfectly "integrated," these minorities often start to look for their identity in their ancestral culture, frustrated by the realization that they will never be accepted as full citizens, no matter what they do. This "othering" through the native society also fosters in second and later generation "immigrants" a sense of belonging to

two cultures and allows them to develop a “hybrid identity” without renouncing the culture of their parents.⁹ Whereas in the U.S. it is normal to talk about “hyphenated identities,” being African-American or Hispanic-American, developing an identity as a cross between different cultures, this is a newer practice in Germany. In the recent past, homogenous societies have become more and more heterogeneous. Hence, it is a very natural process to be in a different culture and blend in with that culture while still preserving one’s own individuality, as influenced by one’s origin.

It would be more constructive to include every part of society if the receiving country were more relaxed regarding a person’s background and would first recognize them as human beings. In the U.S., the notion of being a diverse country allows that if you work hard, you earn respect in return; that your actions are more important than your cultural background. Many do not worry about what it is to be a “real” American. The host society cannot simply demand that someone has a sense of belonging since this feeling develops if and when the society accepts these people as full citizens. This proves that integration is a mutual process, a shared social responsibility.

Unfortunately, the current political debates determined to win votes are taking one step forward, two steps back in this sense. Will it just be a matter of time until the native German population accepts the presence of a hybrid identity and the question of a *Leitkultur* loses importance? Aren’t the questions that native Germans struggle to answer about their own identity the same questions they pose to Turkish-Germans? A shift in mindset is crucial! This shift is a process; it needs time and does not change overnight. Due to a lack of interaction with people with an immigrant background, there is a narrow perception of a diverse group that has been mostly shaped by the media and negative stereotypes. Prejudices are negatively-connoted generalizations not based on facts or experiences in our brain. If there is a situation in which a prejudice is not affirmed, our brain registers that situation as an exception and nonetheless confirms the existing prejudice. Thus, if a person of immigrant background does not fit the stereotypes of the native

population, specifically in appearance and social status, these people will remain invisible to the whole society. When facts don’t fit with the available frames, people struggle to adjust their way of thinking. The inherent prejudice affects the experience of encountering minority groups, rendering even a positive experience less so.¹⁰

Finally, since integration is about mutual acceptance, participation in public life, and having access to equal opportunities, the host country must try to see the migrant perspective. For example, migrants often do not have an equal starting point, they may possess great responsibility for the family and socio-economic concerns, and they likely confront barriers added by the host society. It should become more natural to live and work together in a diverse environment, and also in terms of the democratic representation of society in all areas of life. In the long run, this would lead to more acceptance and to forming a common identity.

Populist Uprising: Right-Wing Momentum in the U.S. and Germany

It is a global phenomenon that as diversity grows, right-wing movements are also on the rise. During the elections, Trump’s most developed proposals focused on immigration issues: deportation of all undocumented immigrants, the construction of a border wall with Mexico, and a travel ban on Muslims entering the U.S. These proposals found resonance with certain demographic groups, especially white men with low levels of education who suffered a decline in their incomes in recent years.¹¹ They supported Trump’s economic message and his appeals to their patriotism with his promise to make America “great again.” At the same time, surveys showed that a significant number of those Trump supporters hold negative views of immigrants, Muslims, and African-Americans.¹² In fact, low education and income may have helped Trump to push voters toward these racist views, blaming immigrants for social grievances.

Similar to Trump, the German right-wing party the Alternative for Germany (AfD) used anti-immigration slogans to help win 13.3 percent of the votes

in the 2017 election.¹³ The AfD entered the German parliament as the third strongest party, and the largest in opposition. It is the first time since World War II that a right-wing party has entered the parliament. The AfD was able to do so by using anti-European and racist slogans, instrumentalizing the current refugee issue, and playing into fears of losing one's culture and values. Ultimately, they received almost twice as many votes in eastern Germany as in western Germany. Since fewer immigrants live in eastern Germany, this election behavior supports the idea that racism mainly occurs when people are not accustomed to identities different from their own. These prejudices against foreigners are exacerbated by the media, which mainly reflects on what the majority fears. The focus is often on Muslims representing a serious threat to society. The same can be seen in the U.S., where the media tends to portray negative or criminal stereotypes of Hispanics fueled by Trump's repeated description of Mexicans as members of drug cartels, rapists, and animals who bring crime to the United States.

The AfD received many votes as a protest against other parties, especially against Chancellor Angela Merkel and the CDU's refugee policy, which even mobilized previous non-voters. For example, polls show that 89 percent of the AfD's voters believed that Merkel's refugee policies ignored the concerns of their "own" people, meaning native Germans.¹⁴ Studies show that in eastern Germany, some regions feel lost, not benefiting from the system and not given solutions for their problems by politicians and policymakers.¹⁵ Comparable with the situation in the U.S., this feeling of being less valued can potentially turn into racist views; immigrants and refugees become the scapegoat.

In order to tackle this right-wing uprising, attempts to reach out to right-wing voters should be made at every level of society: by getting out of our echo chambers, by looking at the perspectives of people through in-depth interaction, by gaining back trust, by caring about everyone's concerns, and by fostering infrastructure and education for more equal access to opportunities. Despite not being affected by racism but still harboring racist views, today's citizens from eastern Germany also face

social marginalization similar to people with an immigrant background. This comes from being separated from western Germany for nearly three decades and living in a less-developed eastern Germany. After almost thirty years of unification both parts of Germany still struggle to come together and form a common identity. In the long run, a cohesion exercise of those from eastern Germany with all other marginalized groups of society could be a solution to tackle right-wing movements and could work toward a more just and inclusive society. The same applies to the U.S., where people with the same social concerns, regardless of whether they are white or non-white, should seek social justice together instead of blaming others for one's problems or "ethnicizing" social issues.

Hate Speech, Hate Crimes, and (Re-)framing the Migration Debate

The U.S., known as a country of freedom and opportunity for everyone who dreams big and works hard, has its strength in its diversity, experienced a shift after 9/11 in the name of security. These two faces of America exist in a kind of complex dance. According to Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) statistics, after 9/11 a rising wave of hate speech and crimes against Muslims occurred, with a jump in hate crimes from 28 in 2000 to 481 in 2001.¹⁶ A similar spike occurred after Trump's election as president in 2016. Non-whites are facing a rise in hate speech and hate crimes, which are reaching post-9/11 levels¹⁷ and include white students screaming "build the wall" at their classmates who are Mexicans or Muslims.¹⁸

Similarly, in Germany, we can observe an increase of both hate speech and hate crimes in the aftermath of the entry of over one million refugees to Germany in 2015. For example, while there were 199 arson attacks on refugee camps in 2014, this number rose to almost 1,000 in 2015.¹⁹ How words can translate into violence is demonstrated by studies on the anti-refugee sentiment of the right-wing AfD party on social media.²⁰ This research by the University of Warwick used data from the AfD's Facebook page and statistics on

incidents against refugees collected by local advocacy groups. The results show that for every four additional anti-refugee posts on Facebook, there was one additional incident against refugees.

As a reaction to this development, a new law intended to tackle hate speech, the Network Enforcement Act, came into effect in January 2018. It targets online criminal offenses including defamation, incitement, and sharing unconstitutional symbols such as the swastika. The law states that private operators of social networks are responsible for deleting “obviously illegal” content within 24 hours of being notified; in other “grey area” cases they have seven days to delete such material. If they fail to delete the offending content, operators can face large fines of up to €50 million. Thus, the state has privatized one of its key duties to enforce the law, which entails the risk of censorship due to the imposition of high fines if the law is not abided.

Although this first attempt by politicians to fight hate speech could be welcomed to a certain degree, to tackle hate in society effectively it is important to get down to its roots. Since the rise of Pegida (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West) and the AfD, we have witnessed a political force that is fully mobilized around opposition to immigrants, Muslims, and refugees. Even if policy-makers and observers are upset about the AfD becoming so strong in Germany today, we should not forget that all of these discourses had been part of the political debate represented by mainstream parties, albeit in a more subtle and civilized manner. Therefore, this hatred surfacing now is nothing new, but a structural problem of our society. One example is social-democratic politician Thilo Sarrazin and his 2010 bestselling book, which offended Muslims by describing them as being “genetically” less intelligent, among other things.²¹ Despite his racist views, he was not excluded from the Social Democratic Party and criminal proceedings against him were unsuccessful. The Office of Public Prosecution concluded that Sarrazin’s statements are considered as a “contribution to the intellectual debate in a question that [was] very significant for the public.”²² On the other hand, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) decided in 2013 that his

statements were hate speech and that Germany didn’t guarantee an effective domestic investigation against it.²³ The handling of the Sarrazin case in Germany tells us about the extent to which racism is in the mainstream of our society, and how it is ignored and narrowly interpreted by state institutions.

The importance of language, the power of the media, and reactions to hate speech in this regard were also topics during our exchange program. At one site visit, we reflected on the role of language when dealing with migration issues. There is a general mindset that if someone does not intend to be offensive or does not use specifically racist language or words, one cannot be racist. This approach of trivializing racist language when it is used unconsciously or unintentionally is one of the obstacles to having an open discourse on racism. Racism is as much about its impact as it is about its intention; harm can also occur irrespective of intention.²⁴ Thus, language is a complex issue, and sometimes even carries political implications. Therefore, when using a word, it is important to consider the history, the origins, and the current colloquial usage of it. Depending on these factors, words can bring an underlying and implied meaning. Language has a great power by influencing the way we think about certain topics. In Germany, for example, there are many politically-loaded words related to the Nazi era. While it is common to use the word “race” in the U.S., in Germany there are debates about not using it as it implies that some people are superior to others. The German word “Heimat,” which roughly translates to home, heritage, or homeland, is also a politically-loaded word, as seen in the controversial debates emerging after the recent creation of a “Heimat ministry” within the interior ministry. During the Nazi regime, “Heimat” was the central building block of the Nazis “blood and soil” ideology. No party has leapt on the concept as much as the far-right AfD party, which in the last elections used the slogan “Our Country, our Heimat.” The foundation of this Heimat ministry was justified by the mainstream parties to reclaim the term “Heimat” from the extremists. Unfortunately, the current Heimat ministry only consists of white males, which does not reflect the diversity in our society.

The media also has a great responsibility in the social discourse. The loaded debates on migration, refugees, and Muslims set the parameters for the political agenda. These public discussions of migration issues need to head in a new direction, with the media being more sensitive in selecting its topics and more discerning in its headlines about minorities. For example, in terrorism cases, the media needs to avoid portraying the perpetrator as typical of the community. The focus should be that every perpetrator is an individual who should be responsible for what he has done, without blaming the whole community. One should not ethnicize the issue and use double standards for minorities versus for white people, as has been often the case in mass shootings or right-wing extremism attacks in both Europe and the U.S. When the perpetrator is a white person, it is nearly always framed as an individual mental health issue, not as terrorism. Since right-wing extremism is currently on the rise, we need a serious debate about it, otherwise we are liable to miss combatting those very ideas. The media's focus on Muslims leads to a distortion of facts, highlighted by a survey that revealed that most countries think their population is much more Muslim than it actually is and that their Muslim population is increasing at a dramatic rate.²⁵ In Germany, respondents believed that Muslims made up as much as 21 percent of the population when it actually is only 5 percent—16 percent higher than the reality. The U.S. is also inaccurate: the average guess was 17 percent against actual figures of 1 percent. This false perception results in the fear of the natives losing their country and culture, which in turn often leads to racism. We can even say that Islamophobia has become the “normal” racism today. As a consequence of the current rise in hate crimes, Germany in 2017 started to recognize Islamophobia as a sub-category in hate crime statistics.

In addition, more civil engagement would be also one step toward a change in the narrative and mindset of the mainstream society. As we discussed in Washington during our exchange program, an active framing—not just as a reaction but as an action—is crucial to set positive narratives in motion. By using one's own frame and not by just rejecting the given negative frames of

others, we can move forward. Dialogue is key to winning trust for a constructive debate; to listen and not just speak; to counteract hate speech by using “love” speech.

Structural Racism: The NSU Case as an Example

The increase in hatred today is a reminder of the 1990s in Germany, when the refugee influx from the former Republic of Yugoslavia produced hate crimes against refugees and immigrants in Hoyerswerda, Rostock-Lichtenhagen, Solingen, and Mölln, where many people died. These occurrences were also in the wake of German unification in 1990 when people from the less developed East Germany blamed migrants for their social concerns such as unemployment.

The 1990s saw the socialization of members of the extremist right-wing National Socialist Underground (NSU) terrorist group, who—according to witnesses—committed arson attacks on refugee camps in the early 1990s. The NSU killed migrants and carried out several bomb attacks in areas in which migrants were predominant between 2000 and 2007, acting with the motto that it was not enough just to practice hate speech, but that it was time to kill minorities in order to prevent the death of the native German society.²⁶ The NSU case revealed that there are structural problems within state authorities. The investigations in this case were, to a substantial degree, determined by institutional racism rather than by neutral investigations by the police. Institutional racism can be seen in processes which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudices and racist stereotyping that disadvantages minorities.²⁷ It is structural in that this behavior does not occur in simply one case but mostly in all similar cases. In the course of the investigations, several victims and their relatives, as documented by the records, expressed the suspicion that the crimes may have had a racist motive. A number of hints indicating this motive were ignored, with the investigations focused almost exclusively on the position that the perpetrators were migrants, involved in organized crime; even the victims' family members were accused. As a result, the victims had to live with this crimi-

nalization for many years, a view further reinforced by media and society, until the NSU role was finally revealed, unintentionally, after thirteen years.

This example emphasizes that it is important to initiate reforms to tackle institutional racism in specific areas, such as the police. Even after the mistakes in the investigation were revealed, all the policemen who were involved showed a lack of awareness of the negligence in their testimony before the NSU court. This demonstrates that it is crucial to address institutional racism as the cause of the investigation's failures. Racism needs to be publicly condemned without simply being reduced to politically organized racism. Otherwise, if we ignore racism or interpret it too narrowly, we prevent a constructive and targeted approach to resolving the problem.

In addition, it is of great importance to enact mandatory regulations for the police that would impose the obligation to carefully examine a potentially racially-prejudiced background in cases where the victim has a migrant background. Furthermore, it is crucial to implement independent complaint committees for police misconduct for victims. Only a complaint committee, independent of the police, could guarantee an unbiased prosecution.

Finally, in addressing the problem of institutional racism, one of the main problems is the lack of people of color in state institutions.²⁸ Therefore, it is important to foster diversity by supporting the job applications of people of immigrant backgrounds to ensure that the society is appropriately reflected within state institutions. However, that is not enough to effectively combat this structural problem. As institutional racism is unintended racism, but applied routinely, those with a migrant background working for the police can also become guilty of this while investigating a case. As unconscious bias is human nature, to change oneself is not enough; it is important to change the system. Structural changes, such as creating regulations for mandatory annual participation of police staff in anti-racism workshops, need to be set in place. This is seriously required as without putting oneself in the role of the victim, it is impossible to fully understand what it is really like to be a victim of

racism.

Today, institutional prejudices still exist even in the immigration field. While discussing asylum policies during our program in Berlin, in response to a question of whether refugees receive psychological aid, one interlocuter answered that refugees don't need a psychologist since they come from countries where they don't have such services. This answer revealed one way of thinking about people outside the western hemisphere, almost as if they come from an uncivilized world. But it is exactly those refugees who have experienced trauma who need such services. It is also an issue of integration: their mental health is significant for the whole society. This lack of knowledge and prejudice against people from beyond Europe's borders and pejorative way of dealing with refugees can later translate into racist views, and a feeling that some people are superior to others. Thus, it is crucial to reflect on bias against less-familiar minority groups to avoid any racist mindset. Finally, we must not forget that migration, and refugees in particular, are caused by historical and global power structures due to colonialism. We must ensure that we reflect on the privileges enjoyed by majority groups in western countries that in part result from this history.

Conclusion

The subject of social justice has appealed to me from a very early age and in my youth, I was especially inspired by the African-American civil rights movement in the U.S. to end legalized racial segregation and to fight for social justice. When in Washington, I made sure to visit the newly opened and first-ever National Museum of African-American History and Culture, which is dedicated to seeing American history through the African-American lens 150 years after abolishing slavery in America. Subsequently, speaking with the participants from the U.S. in the exchange program, they commented on the supposed lack of a "culture of remembrance" (Erinnerungskultur) in the U.S. and how Americans face what experts call "national tragedies," i.e., slavery in America and the history of segregation.

The participants found the way Germany deals with its own “tragedies,” i.e., the Holocaust, through museums and memorials and public education, is very different. I was really shaken upon realizing this omission in the U.S., which led me to reflect on the current rhetoric of the right-wing AfD party in Germany, with members even tackling taboo topics such as trivializing the Holocaust by referring to Berlin’s Holocaust memorial as a monument of shame. The increase of right-wing movements and political debates around the topic of hatred fosters what is important when dealing with history in Germany—a culture of remembering, in order for mistakes not to be repeated. As Sartre wrote in his essay “Anti Semite and Jew,” the reasons behind anti-Semitism are not related to experience or historical facts about Jewish people, but to an irrational hatred that exists for itself and feeds on itself.²⁹ While this view is focused specifically on anti-Semitism, we can also apply it to the general racism of the right-wing movements against ethnic minorities and Muslims today.

The central question for the future is how to cope with the challenges of global migration movements to liberal democracies considering legal, political, but also moral aspects. This “cultural defense” of majorities cannot be reconciled with liberal values. Due to international agreements the U.S. and Germany have the responsibility to respect the rights of refugees and migrants as universal human rights, but at the same time they must also cope with exclusionary attitudes domestically, where nationalistic and anti-immigration movements and political parties have been mobilizing.

Cohesion building and a dedicated effort to fight against hatred and support human rights worldwide is important. In the U.S., diverse minorities and marginalized groups are working together in different areas of civil right movements, responding to a long history of legal segregation. In Germany, the picture is somewhat different today; it would be an important step to fight against current developments as a whole with all parts of society. Facing similar societal concerns, despite being separated by the Atlantic, the participants of the exchange program were brought together as the biggest minority groups in the U.S. and Germany. This

empowered us in a way to strive toward positive impact on the fight for justice and effective changes in our home countries. Beyond these experiences, we hope to be able to address minority issues in our parents’ countries of origin.

Today the struggle for social justice of African-Americans continues and new groups are joining the effort. In the U.S., Hispanic-Americans are the focus today, while in Germany it is people of color, the descendants of the guest-worker generation, and refugees. Minority concerns in different countries prove: The struggles for social justice are universal—just time, place, and people change.

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- 25 Ipsos, "Perils of Perception Survey 2016," Powerpoint Presentation, slide 4; <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/2016-12/Perils-of-perception-2016.pdf>
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- 28 Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), "Concluding observations on the combined nineteenth to twenty-second periodic reports of Germany," May 2015, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/DEU/INT_CERD_COC_DEU_20483_E.pdf
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APPENDIX

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

AGENDA: WASHINGTON, DC, OCTOBER 15, 2017 – OCTOBER 20, 2017

Day One: Arrival

Date: Sunday, October 15

Day Two: Arrival and Welcome Reception

Date: Monday, October 16

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

- 4:00 Orientation
- 5:00 Welcome Reception and Light Dinner

Day Three: Conference

Date: Tuesday, October 17

- 9:00 Leadership Training and Breakfast
- 11:45 Panel 1: Integration and Immigration Issues
- 1:15 Luncheon
- 2:00 Panel 2: Public Health and Law
- 3:30 Free Time
- 6:00 General Discussion and Dinner

Day Four: Conference and Site Visits

Date: Wednesday, October 18

- 9:00 Panel 3: Teaching English and Bilingual Education
- 10:30 Coffee Break
- 11:00 Panel 4: Integration in Business: Corporate Responsibility
- 12:15 Luncheon
- 1:15 Panel 5: Immigrant Communities
- 3:00 First Site Visit: The National Mall, the Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial
- 6:00 General Discussion and Dinner

Day Five: Site Visits

Date: Thursday, October 19

- 8:45 Second Site Visit: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
- 11:00 Third Site Visit: Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
- 1:30 Fourth Site Visit: Congress
- 3:30 Fifth Site Visit: Migration Policy Institute
- 5:00 Free Time
- 7:00 Reception at AICGS

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Overview of Organizations

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.

Center for American Progress is an independent nonpartisan policy institute that is dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans, through bold, progressive ideas, as well as strong leadership and concerted action. Their aim is not just to change the conversation, but to change the country. They believe America should be a land of boundless opportunity, where people can climb the ladder of economic mobility. They develop new policy ideas, challenge the media to cover the issues that truly matter, and shape the national debate. With policy teams in major issue areas, Center for American Progress can think creatively at the cross-section of traditional boundaries to develop ideas for policymakers that lead to real change. By employing an extensive communications and outreach effort that they adapt to a rapidly changing media landscape, they move their ideas aggressively in the national policy debate.

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.

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 HACR focuses on: employment, procurement, philanthropy, and governance.

Founded in 1968, the **Mexican Legal Defense (MALDEF)** is the nation's leading Latino legal civil rights organization. Often described as the "law firm of the Latino community", MALDEF promotes social change through advocacy, communications, community education, and litigation in the areas of education, employment, immigrant rights, and political access. MALDEF strives to implement programs that are structured to bring Latinos into the mainstream of American political and socio-economic life; providing better educational opportunities; encouraging participation in all aspects of society; and offering a positive vision for the future. Unique to MALDEF is an approach that combines advocacy, educational outreach, and litigation strategies to achieve socio-economic change.

The partners of **Montagut & Sobral** have decades of immigration law experience. Their firm specializes in immigration law and has helped tens of thousands of immigrants to become lawful permanent residents of the United States. They have also helped thousands of clients to become United States citizens. Montagut and Sobral also handles all types of non-immigrant visa cases, deportation

defense for undocumented clients and legal permanent residents, appeals, waivers, motions to reopen, political asylum claims and applications for the diversity lottery program. Their firm also handles uncontested divorces, child custody, adoption cases and some traffic and criminal cases in Virginia. Their attorneys are admitted to the Bars of Virginia, Maryland, Washington D.C., New York, Kentucky and California. Most of their staff and attorneys are fluent in Spanish, and they can also help those who speak French.

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 policies and programs that will help eliminate health disparities.

Founded in 1953, the **U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)** has delivered millions of loans, loan guarantees, contracts, counseling sessions and other forms of assistance to small businesses. The SBA was created in 1953 as an independent agency of the federal government to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation. They recognize that small business is critical to economic recovery and strength, to building America's future, and to helping the United States compete in today's global marketplace. Although SBA has grown and evolved in the years since it was established, the bottom line mission remains the same. The SBA helps Americans start, build and grow businesses. Through an extensive network of field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations, SBA delivers its services to people throughout the

United States, Puerto Rico, the U. S. Virgin Islands and Guam.

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.

Site Visits

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.

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.

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.

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 **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.

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.

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

AGENDA: BERLIN, MAY 13, 2018 – MAY 18, 2018

Day One: Arrival

Date: Sunday, May 13

Day Two: Arrival and Welcome Reception

Date: Monday, May 14

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

- 2:30 Visit to a Refugee Arrival Center
- 6:00 Welcome Reception and Light Dinner

Day Three: Conference

Date: Tuesday, May 15

- 9:00 Panel 1: Political Institutions and Immigration
- 11:00 Social Media & Coffee Break
- 11:15 Panel 2: Immigration and Politics
- 12:45 Luncheon and General Discussion
- 2:00 Panel 3: Integration and Communities
- 3:30 Social Media & Coffee Break and General Discussion
- 4:30 Free Time
- 6:30 Dinner

Day Four: Conference and Site Visits

Date: Wednesday, May 16

- 9:00 Panel 4: The Challenges and Opportunities in Immigration and Integration
- 10:30 Social Media & Coffee Break
- 10:45 Panel 5: Immigration and Society
- 12:15 Luncheon
- 3:00 First Site Visit: German Bundestag
- 5:00 Working Dinner
- 8:00 Tour of German Bundestag

Day Five: Site Visits

Date: Thursday, May 17

- 9:00 Second Site Visit: Federal Foreign Office, Commission for Refugees and Migration
- 11:00 Third Site Visit: Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Murdered under the National Socialist Regime
- 1:00 Lunch on the go
- 2:00 Fourth Site Visit: U.S. Embassy
- 4:30 Fifth Site Visit: JUMA Project
- 6:30 Dinner, Final Reflections on Exchange Program

Overview of Organizations

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 **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 **Commissioner for Integration and Migration of the Berlin Senate** is responsible for the inter-ministerial integration of migrants in Berlin. The main task of the representative of the Senate for Integration and Migration is to help shape the migration and integration policy of the Senate of Berlin and to coordinate it with other administrations in the state of Berlin. Since integration is a cross-sectoral task, and therefore all Senate administrations are equally responsible for their area, the Integration and Migration Commissioner is responsible for the strategic management of the entire integration policy of Berlin. The Berlin Senate supports the legal and social equality of immigrant groups through a variety of integration-specific measures. The Commissioner for Integration supports migrants' organizations whose radius of action extends across the whole of Berlin with the aim of strengthening the participation of migrants. This includes the promotion of national associations in migrant work and associations, including the provision of financial assistance.

The **Federal Ministry of Defense** is the central command and control instrument of the Minister of Defence in exercising her function as commander in chief of the armed forces in peacetime and as head of the defense administration.

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 **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.

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 **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 **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.

SINGA strives for an inclusive society that embraces diversity, and for an innovative economy that allows everyone, regardless of their background, to realize their professional and social potential. Their mission is to bring locals and people from migrant and refugee backgrounds together to engage collaboratively in social, professional and entrepreneurial projects. The first SINGA organization was founded 2012 in Paris. Since then SINGA France has successfully established an international network of engaged people. Today local SINGA organizations can be found in France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Great Britain, Canada and Switzerland. All local organizations share common values but are tailoring their work according to local needs. SINGA Deutschland was founded in 2016. Their portfolio includes the SINGA Business Lab, Professional Mentoring, Language Café and Living Room Events. Their activities are taking place in Berlin and the surrounding area. At the same time we support organizations and initiatives all over Germany in implementing innovative projects that lead towards an inclusive society. 'SINGA' is a word in the Lingala language spoken in Congo and means 'connection'.

Site Visits

The **Auswärtiges Amt** (German Federal Foreign Office) represents the interests of Germany in the world, promotes international exchange, and provides Germans abroad protection and assistance.

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.

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 **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 **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.

Top:

U.S. Border Patrol agents conduct intake of illegal border crossers at the Central Processing Center in McAllen, Texas, Sunday, June 17, 2018. 180617-H-BP911-635. Photo courtesy of U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

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<https://www.flickr.com/photos/cbppphotos/42831734412/in/album-72157697598808824/>

Middle:

Mural, "Gewachsen auf Beton," 2013, Badstraße 53, Berlin-Gesundbrunnen, Germany. Photo taken April 22, 2013 by OTFW, Berlin. The mural is a reference to the three Boateng brothers' backgrounds growing up in the immigrant quarter in Berlin-Wedding.

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[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wandmalerei_Badstr_53_\(Gesbr\)_Gewachsen_auf_Beton_United_2013.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wandmalerei_Badstr_53_(Gesbr)_Gewachsen_auf_Beton_United_2013.jpg)

Bottom:

CBP Acting Deputy Commissioner Ronald D. Vitiello visits the Border Wall Construction Site near the Otay Mesa Port of Entry as eight different prototypes of the Border Wall were unveiled at the U.S. border with Mexico, October 26, 2017. Photo taken by Yesica Uvina. Photo courtesy of U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

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