



**THE UNIVERSITY OF AZUAY**  
**FACULTY OF LEGAL SCIENCES**

**"INTEGRATION OF THE SYRIAN REFUGEES IN GERMANY  
SINCE THE YEAR 2014 - OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES"**

**Graduation work prior to obtaining the title of Bachelor in  
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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my parents, my husband and my children who always support me.

### **Acknowledgement**

I want to thank all those who contributed to the completion of this work; I thank my tutor Dr. Ana Isabel Malo Martínez, for her great help during the research process, Gabriele Kamundi, Ulla Kleibrink, Dagmar Knipp and Sophie Schröder for sharing their knowledge with me, my parents for giving me the necessary moral and economic support and my husband for always being by my side.

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## **Resumen**

El presente trabajo de investigación tiene como objetivo el análisis de la integración de los refugiados sirios en la sociedad alemana. Para este propósito se examinan los antecedentes históricos, políticos y económicos en Siria antes del comienzo de la primavera árabe, el curso de las protestas, las reacciones del gobierno y la guerra civil resultante, que ha contribuido a la fuga de millones de sirios. Este trabajo se enfoca principalmente en la situación de los refugiados en Alemania, examinando las condiciones de vivienda, educación, acceso al mercado laboral, y el marco jurídico en el cual se encuentran los recién llegados. Para un mejor entendimiento de las circunstancias de vida en Alemania, se exploran las opiniones de científicos de las áreas correspondientes, y de profesionales que trabajan con los refugiados. Por último este trabajo analiza las opiniones de sociólogos y psicólogos que jugaron un papel importante determinando el debate público acerca de los desafíos implícitos y explícitos de la integración, así como las oportunidades que pueden resultar de este cambio social.

Palabras clave: refugiados, Siria, Alemania, migración, integración, guerra civil, islamismo, Estado Islámico, política, economía, Angela Merkel, Bashar al-Ásad

## **Abstract**

The objective of this research is to analyse the integration of Syrian refugees in German society. For this purpose the historical, political and economic background in Syria before the beginning of the Arab Spring, the course of the protests, the reactions of the government and the resulting civil war, which has contributed to the flight of millions of Syrians, are examined. This work focuses mainly on the situation of refugees in Germany, examining the conditions of housing, education, access to the labour market, and the legal framework in which newcomers are located. For a better understanding of the circumstances of life in Germany, the opinions of scientists from the corresponding areas, and professionals working with refugees are explored. Finally, this paper analyses the opinions of sociologists and psychologists who played an important role in determining the public debate about the implicit and explicit challenges of integration, as well as the opportunities that may result from this social change.

**Key words:** refugees, Syria, Germany, migration, integration, civil war, Islamism, Islamic State, policy, economy, Angela Merkel, Bashar al-Assad





## **Introduction**

"We can do it!" This phrase of the German Chancellor Angela Merkel has become a symbol in a phase of the policy of open borders for the refugees of the war in the Middle East. As the phrase was often repeated, it played and plays a prominent role on the media when it comes to the implicit and explicit challenges of migration.

Mainly it is Syrians who constitute the majority of the people who came to Europe on the path of the Balkan route or across the Mediterranean Sea fleeing the war and the threat of hunger.

This research work aims to analyse, among other aspects, the causes of this mass flight. In this context, the so-called Arab Spring will be mentioned as a trigger for multiple revolutionary changes in North Africa and the Near and Middle East only to the extent that there is a reference to Syria. Syria itself is briefly described in its political, economic and social conditions before the start of the Civil War in 2011, for a better understanding of the socio-cultural background of the refugees arriving to Germany. The second and third part of this paper are devoted to questions of integration, as, in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany, no similar integration challenge has been presented to the German government since the Second World War.

In addition, it should be mentioned that 5 million Muslims with an immigration background live in Germany; and that almost all Syrians are Muslims. Therefore, the question arises: can society and politics learn from the experiences of the history of foreign workers who arrived to Germany since the 1950s and from the mistakes that have been made?

With this, the second part tries to examine, through specific local measures, the ambivalence of German society regarding the treatment of asylum seekers. On the one hand, there are arson attacks on homes of refugees and on the other, altruistic help, which implies a consideration of the diverse protagonists, such as: churches, political parties, community colleges, institutions, offices, schools; and also a commitment that comes from civil society itself.

It is worth mentioning that there are few who are against immigration, and who are willing to demonstrate their hatred publicly through abuses.

The basis of this empirical part relies on my own research in the district of Paderborn, a city with almost 150,000 inhabitants, located in the east of North Rhine-Westphalia. So, through a direct approach with the relevant institutions and through shared information materials and with the use of interviews, basic information was obtained that is relevant to the problem described above.

The third part of the study aims to demonstrate and analyse the points of view of several experts selected for their academic experience and importance in the current debate. It is those experts who analyse the ambivalent reactions within German society and politics through a historical retrospective of fascism, German reunification and Islamic terrorism that came to Europe.

## **Chapter 1**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter will deal with the Arab springs that represent the most important upheaval in the states of North Africa and the Middle East in contemporary history. Beginning with the suicide of a Tunisian salesman in the year 2010 the revolts and protests spread throughout the Mashrek and Maghreb shuddering the autocratic systems throughout the region. In some countries, such as Jordan and Morocco, the regimes reacted to social protests and stabilized their situation. The Moroccan king, Mohammed VI., announced drastic changes in the constitution, such as, for example, the renaming of the country in "constitutional, parliamentary, democratic and social monarchy", as well as, in a change in the king's status from "holy" to "sacred".

The regimes of Morocco and Jordan allowed the protests of the year 2011 under massive surveillance, giving the impression of being open to reforms. In this way the people did not pursue a change of government (Bank, 2011). In other countries the rebellions led to devastating civil wars. The Arab springs had and continue to have extensive consequences in a political, economic and geostrategic manner; nowadays, it is rather an Arab autumn, because, only Tunisia successfully emerged from the process of democratization, Egypt remains a dictatorship and Libya, after the fall of Gaddafi, with thousands of refugees from Africa, became a failed state.

The emphasis of this work is the analysis of the situation in Syria; therefore, this section describes the political, economic and social antecedents in Syria before the rebellions, the violent reactions of the government and how that led to civil war. The next part of this chapter describes the situation of refugees in Syria, in neighbouring countries and of those who took the long journey to Europe via the Balkan route.

### **1.2 History prior to the Arab Spring**

In 1516 the Ottomans, who included this region in their empire, which was divided into the provinces Aleppo, Damascus and Tripoli, conquered the region of Syria. With reforms in the 19th century the provinces were reorganized and Jerusalem and the Lebanese mountain range were added. The command of the Ottomans ended with the

defeat and subsequent destruction of the empire at the end of the First World War. In April 1920, the powers agreed at the San Remo conference to distribute their territories of interest in the form of mandates without the delegates of the Arab countries, although they fought together with the allies against the Ottoman Empire. In July of the same year Syria was occupied by French troops and came under French administration.

From 1919 there was a series of armed uprisings, which included the so-called Great Syrian Uprising from 1925 to 1927, which was crushed with great military rigor. The Middle Eastern colonies fought again with the allies against Nazi Germany during the Second World War for their freedom, in order to obtain their own freedom and independence, which they were denied.

In May of 1945, there were again hard-fought confrontations during which Damascus was bombarded by French planes. The United States and the UN (Syria was one of the founding members) joined the British pressure, with the last French troops leaving Damascus on April 15, 1946, and two days later, the Independent Syrian Republic was proclaimed.

Syria's 20th century history is characterized by imperialism that hindered the development of a national identity, due to a lack of territorial integrity and state unity (Lange, 2013). According to Lange, rapid modernization processes led to permanent and abrupt social changes that led to the emergence of struggles about social justice, and political and economic participation.

Among the political parties that were formed during the 1940s the Baath party can be found, of which President Bashar al-Assad is a member; a party that represented the idea of nationalist pan-Arabism, which had much influence in this era, and whose program was secular and anti-imperialist (Lange, 2013). The President of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, supported this ideology.

On the other hand, Háfes al-Asad, president for three decades until his death in 2000 (president of Syria from 1971 to 2000 and father of the current president), managed to consolidate his power becoming not only president, but also, general commander of the army and chief of the executive power. Any important position was covered with a loyal follower or a relative, which led to a strong nepotism that helped to further consolidate their presence and power. The persistent conflict with Israel served to legitimize the continuous increase in military spending. Military expenditures in Syria

belong to the highest in the world. Since the seventies, critical voices towards the government began to be heard due to the worsening economic situation, corruption, and abuses by public forces (Lange, 2013).

### **1.2.1 Political system**

The Baath party characterizes the political system of the last decades in Syria; Bashar al-Assad's seizure of power was carefully planned, establishing him as a sophisticated modernizer, open for democracy. During the inauguration ceremony, he asked the entire population to participate in the process of development and modernization (Yassin-Kassab, 2016). However, shortly after, the Assad regime began to restrict access to the Internet, impose travel bans on human rights activists and interdicted the Kurdish language. In addition, Assad continued to establish state security institutions to control, imprison and torture people who were critical of the regime. Concerning this, those deprived of liberty are often detained for weeks or months without anyone knowing and without trials (Yassin-Kassab, 2016).

Opposition groups, composed of nationalists, Marxists, liberals and Islamists, focus merely on a political change and not on the development of a new economic system that the country desperately needs. According to Yassin-Kassab, the opposition failed to build a broader popular base (Yassin-Kassab, 2016).

### **1.2.2 Structure and economic conditions**

The labor force has risen around six percent annually in recent years, while participation ratios remain low, especially for women (Zartman, 2015). Since Bashar al-Assad took power in 2000, the country experienced extreme changes, due to the different way of governing; his father implemented a state capitalism, in which state institutions offered basic services, meanwhile, al-Assad developed new policies that can be characterized as "friends' capitalism", in which the members of the president's family took over of the most profitable industries, among them, the oil sector, mobile telephony, real estate, etc.; while, state institutions such as universities, schools, health services, etc., were weakened due to their privatization.

Finally, high levels of corruption, nepotism and bureaucracy weakened economic reforms. According to Transparency International, Syria ranks 173 out of 176 countries analysed. The president's cousin, Rami Makhlouf, came to control about 60% of the

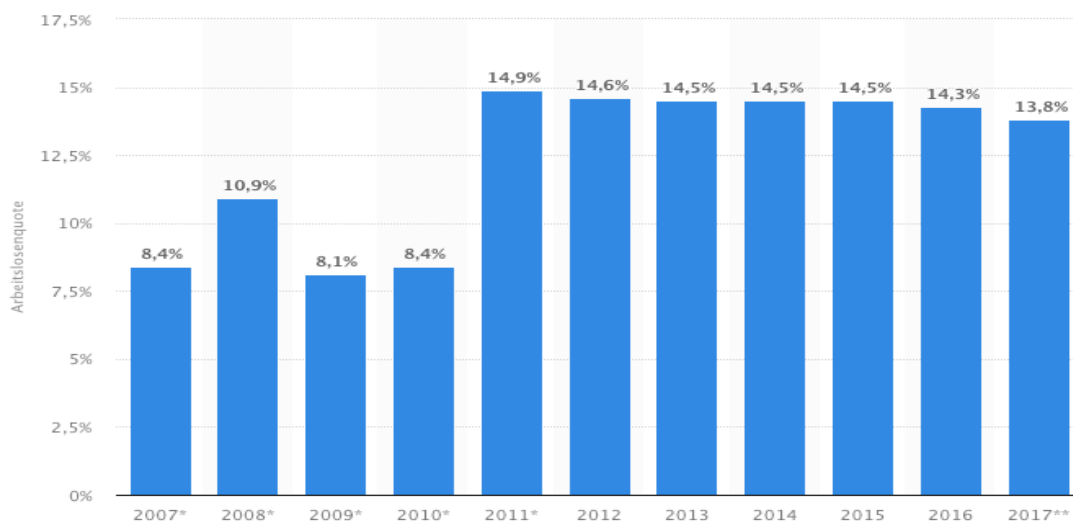
Syrian economy. Neo-liberal reforms were accompanied by the abolition of safety nets for the lowest socio-economic class, since 50% of the wealth belonged to 5% of the population; considering the high rates of underemployment and above all low wages, 30% of the people lived in poverty in the year 2004; with more than 10% of the population living in extreme poverty (Yassin-Kassab, 2016).

About 16% of all workers work in agriculture and industry; 65% are in the service sector. Since his inauguration, President Bashar al-Assad has been particularly involved in the construction of a private or semi-privatized economic sector and in the facilitation of foreign imports and investments. Since then, Syria has officially been in the "transformation" stage. However, the country is far from being a "social market economy" inspired by Rhenish capitalism, and the standard of living of many Syrians has diminished more and more in recent years (Mattes & Bender, 2016).

Syria's most important natural resource is oil, although production has declined in recent years, oil remains the most important export product, less significant are natural gas, iron ore and phosphate (Syrien, 2018).

**Figure 1:** Unemployment rate in Syria from 2007 to 2017

### **Syrien: Arbeitslosenquote von 2007 bis 2017**



**Source and elaboration:** Statista

<https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/238126/umfrage/arbeitslosenquote-in-syrien/> Screenshot HDI

As can be seen in Figure 1, the unemployment rate rose from 8.4% to 14.9% since the civil war began in 2011. Since then, it has fallen to 13.8% by 2017. The CIA World Fact Book calls the unemployment rate 50% in the years 2016 and 2017. The contradictory information results from the lack of reliable data, as well as from the different definitions of when a person is unemployed.

According to the CIA data, Syria ranked 215 in the global comparison, it should be noted that it is not possible to determine on what the different numerical values were based and to what extent the escalation of the civil war situation is responsible for the differences.

#### **1.2.2.1 Human development Index**

According to the human development report of the United Nations Development Program, Syria ranks 147th with an index of 0.536; with an average in the Middle East being a rating of 0.7. Thus, the Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievements in the key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living (Reports, 2016). The World Fact Book estimates that 82.5% of the Syrian population lives below the poverty line.

#### **1.2.2.2 Gross domestic product**

The GDP of Syria shows a war driven economy, which is causing the disappearance of national statistics of quality, hence no more reliable recent values can be found. In 2014, it was \$ 24.6 billion USD.

The GDP according to its composition by the sector of origin is composed of:

- Agriculture: 20%
- Industry: 19.6%
- Services: 60.4%

The main agricultural products are wheat, barley, cotton, lentils, chickpeas, olives, sugar beet, beef, lamb, eggs, poultry and milk. The industrial products consist of

petroleum, textiles, food processing, beverages, tobacco, phosphate rock extraction, cement, crushing oil seeds, and automobile assembly. The export commodities are mainly\_ crude oil, minerals, petroleum products, fruits and vegetables, cotton fiber, textiles, clothing, meat and live animals and wheat.

Among the main export partners are Lebanon (34.6%), Jordan (11.6%), China (9.4%), Turkey (8.2%), Iraq (7.7%), Tunisia (4.9%), as of 2016. The basic products that are imported by Syria are machinery and transport equipment, electric power machinery, food and livestock, metal products, chemicals and plastics, yarns, paper. The main import partners are Russia (22%), Turkey (20%) and China (11.3). 2016 (CIA, 2018).

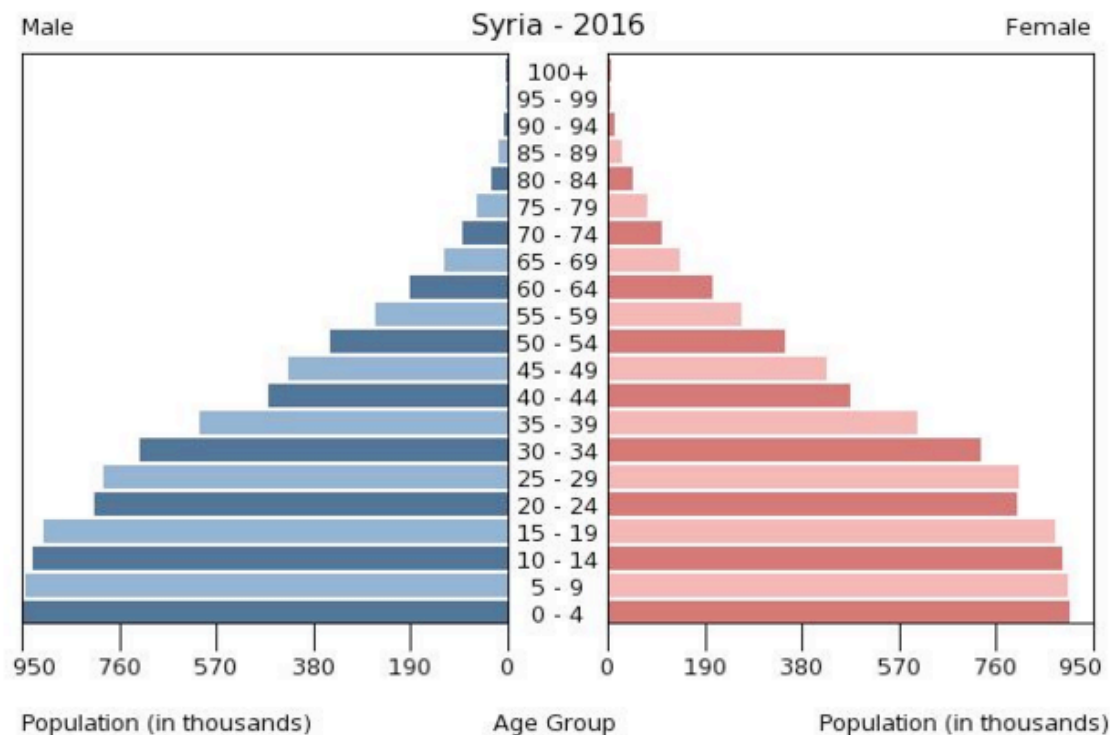
### **1.2.3 Conclusion of the economic situation**

Syria's economy has deteriorated profoundly in the ongoing conflict that began in 2011, declining by more than 70% from 2010 to 2017. The government has struggled to fully address the effects of international sanctions, widespread damage to infrastructure, the decrease in domestic consumption and production, and high inflation, which have caused the decrease in foreign exchange reserves, the increase in budget and trade deficits, a decreasing value of the Syrian pound and the fall in the purchasing power of households. In 2017, some economic indicators began to stabilize, including the exchange rate and inflation, but, economic activity remains depressed and GDP almost certainly fell. During 2017, the ongoing conflict and continuing unrest and economic decline worsened the humanitarian crisis, requiring high levels of international assistance, because more than 13 million people remain in need in Syria, and the number of registered Syrian refugees increased from 4.8 million to more than 5.4 million (without taking into account the people that are internally displaced). Before the turmoil, Damascus had begun to liberalize economic policies, cutting interest rates, opening private banks, consolidating multiple exchange rates, raising the prices of some subsidized items and establishing the Damascus Stock Exchange, but the economy remains very regulated. Long-term economic constraints include barriers to foreign trade, declining oil production, high unemployment, growing budget deficits, increasing pressure on water supplies caused by intensive use in agriculture, rapid population growth, industrial expansion, water pollution and widespread damage to infrastructure (CIA, 2018).



### 1.3 Social structure

In many states of the Middle East the great majority of the population is less than thirty years old, which imposes great challenges to society. In Syria, half of the population is under 25 years of age, compared to the aging societies in industrialized countries.



**Illustration 1.1:** Syrian Social Structure

**Source:** World Fact Book (CIA, 2018)

The infrastructure (such as educational institutions, health, housing construction, etc.) has to be continuously proportioned to the growing population, while at the same time there is a lack of tax revenue, since most of the population is not economically active. The population growth is due to high birth rates during the seventies with an average of seven children per woman (Lucas, 2016). The population will continue to grow due to the demographic transition, which makes the establishment and modernization of the educational and health infrastructure necessary. Although the universities were opened under the Assad regime, many students did not find work after graduating, the universities were so full that many students could not attend classes but merely memorized classes to pass the exams (Yassin-Kassab, 2016).

Syria has a population close to 20 million, which is composed of a Muslim majority (87%) by Sunnis (74%) and several other Muslim groups such as Shiites, Druze and Alawites (López-Jacoiste, 2015). The Syrian president belongs to the religious group of the Alawites, which is a branch of the Shiites, although the majority of the population is Sunni. Assad belongs to a minority religious group but that does not reflect negatively on his policy, since he tolerates members of other branches of Islam and other religions (Wimmen, 2011).

Regarding the ethnic distribution, more than 90% of the population is Arab, the second largest group is the Kurds who came to Syria from Turkey in the 1920s and 1930s and settled near the Turkish border. In Turkey they had been discriminated against politically and economically. It is estimated that they represent 8% to 15% of the population and mostly belong to Sunni Islam. The Kurds represent the largest stateless ethnic group in the world, because they were not considered during the redistribution of land after the First World War.

## **1.4 Arab spring in Syria**

### **1.4.1 Start and causes**

In January of 2011, the protests of the Arab springs arrive in Syria as a rebellion against the Baath party of President Bashar al-Assad, with the purpose of fighting against political corruption and human rights abuses. The protests began in the periphery of the country in which the lack of economic reforms of the last decade led to more serious social consequences (Wimmen, 2011).

In these regions, social inequality was more pronounced due to the neglect of the rural population that has had even less chance of participating in political processes. This discontent was spread, especially among young people and through the Internet. Thanks to the drastic increase in access to information, young Syrians are no longer willing to endure the daily frustrations and humiliations of systematic corruption. Although, the solidarity of the Protestants allowed the collaboration without taking into account the social and cultural barriers, it was not possible to overcome the religious borders (Wimmen, 2011).

Shortly after, on March 15, 2011, demonstrations began to escalate, initially in the city

of Daraa, sometimes called the "Cradle of the Revolution" (revolutionaries burn the headquarters of the Baath party), and later throughout Syria (Yassin -Kassab, 2016).

#### **1.4.2 Reactions to civil protests in Syria**

President Assad believes in the foreign conspiracy and begins to violently oppress the insurgencies with his troops, as the first critical reactions of the world and the UN<sup>1</sup> emerge and in Syria emergency laws caused by the protests are suspended. Emergency laws allowed security forces to arrest people without explanation. The government also decided to dissolve the infamous State Security Court, which was primarily responsible for the prosecution of charges against political prisoners (Focus Online, 2011). At the same time, the Cabinet approved a law that allows peaceful demonstrations. Under the emergency laws in force since 1963, public meetings of more than five people were prohibited.

The government admissions did not satisfy the demonstrators, who fought for political, economic and social reforms, so they continued their protests; their resolve to fight on was also strengthened by the successes of the revolts in other Arab countries and by the international support that was communicated through the media. The president bloodily suppressed these revolts by tanks directed against the protesters. This led to the death of approximately 70 people. In May 2011 the United States reacted with an arms embargo, and as a result Assad announced reforms. In July hundreds of thousands of people protest in the streets and 130 people die in Hama through government troops.

President Assad makes formal concessions and allows parties other than his own. In August 2011 the previous president of the United States Barack Obama, joined by David Cameron, former French president Nicolas Sarkozy and German chancellor Angela Merkel, as well as the EU, demands Assad to immediately resign. Obama declared that the "sustained onslaught" of Assad's regime against pro-democracy protesters had cost it all legitimacy and several Arab States withdraw their ambassadors. In September the EU implements an oil embargo as a sanction to weaken the Syrian economy. Accounts and economic resources of Assad and other high officials are frozen in the US.

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<sup>1</sup> The UN Security Council could not issue a binding resolution to restrict Assad's power over the vetoes of Russia and China.

In October the UN cannot intervene, since Russia and China are vetoing the resolution. In 2012 the government begins to bomb its population and to use toxic gas. Until then, hundreds of thousands of people have lost their lives and millions are fleeing. As a result, the Arab League and the UN choose Kofi Annan as special delegate, the Security Council reaches an agreement and Syria accepts the peace plan, but does not stick. The plan calls for a collaboration between Syria and Annan to address the legitimate concerns of the Syrian people within a political process, an end to the struggle, a daily humanitarian pause of two hours to be able to evacuate the wounded and bring relief supplies to the areas affected, increase the pace and scope of the release of arbitrarily detained persons, ensure that journalists can move freely, and respect the freedom of peaceful associations. (Sydow, 2012) It can be presumed that Assad only agreed to this plan to buy time with no intention of sticking to it.

The UN observers decide to stay although they are threatened. In August the sanctions of the UN Security Council fail because of Russia's veto. Government and opposition troops continue to fight; thousands of civilians are killed, among them many children. In December 2011, NATO sends defense missiles to Turkey to avoid Assad attacks. Since then, the civil war has not stopped, but continues to claim many lives and puts to flight millions of people.

### **1.5 Civil war in Syria**

Syria, as well as Egypt and Libya, is one of the losers of the Arab Spring. It changed from an actor to an arena for political-regional competition, that is, the internationalized civil war has led to a humanitarian catastrophe with approximately 500,000 deaths, more than 12 million refugees and the total destruction of the country. For its survival the authoritarian regime of Bashar al-Assad depends essentially on the regional support of Iran, Hezbollah and, extra regionally of Russia. Central aides of the opposition are Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Qatar, and the United States. Thus, this conflict consists of two subsidiary wars: on the one hand, it is about the regional hegemony in the Middle East and on the other hand the global predominance between the influential States outside the region (Bank, 2016).

The conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia has also escalated in Yemen where the powers struggle for regional hegemony. Likewise, a power vacuum arose due to the

military withdrawal from the US from the region after the frustrating experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq. Russia is trying to fill this gap and regain influence in the region.

The provocative discourse of Damascus towards the great Western powers and some Arab countries has led Syria to an international diplomatic isolation and to an approach to the most radical Islamists, to the detriment of their economic reform projects (López-Jacoiste, 2015).

Due to the prohibition of entry of foreign journalists and the incomplete information offered by the Syrian media, a reliable assessment of the situation is complicated (Wimmen, 2011).

Religious minorities, including the Alawites to whom the current president's family and about 10% of the total population belong, fear the growing impact of the religious forces that can result from the fall of the Baath regime (Wimmen, 2011). Therefore, the government continues to be supported within the country despite the human rights violations.

## **1.6 Refugees**

### **1.6.1 Refugees in Syria**

According to the official website of the European Union about Syrian refugees, which uses data from the Migration Policy Centre project of the European University Institute in Florence, the majority of the refugees are internally displaced. These 6.6 million people still in Syrian territory depend on humanitarian aid from the UNHCR (Migration Policy Centre, 2016).

Non-governmental organizations such as Médecins sans Frontières try to help civil society, but their effort is complicated through lack of government authorization, lack of medicine and materials and the on-going civil war. The international president of Doctors Without Borders, Dr. Joanne Liu, comments on the way the organization in Syria proceeds and explains that until 2014 they had the possibility of making agreements with opposition groups and also with the Islamic State to operate hospitals in the areas controlled by them. She explains that when members of the Islamic State kidnapped several doctors they had to withdraw their international teams (Liu, 2015). Under these circumstances, the situation for internally displaced persons is extremely

difficult since humanitarian aid goods do not reach many regions, especially those controlled by the government and the Islamic State.

### **1.6.2 Refugees in neighboring countries**

Approximately 4.8 million people have sought asylum in neighboring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq. (Migration Policy Center, 2016) In proportion to its population Jordan is the country that has received the highest number of refugees, most of them live in cities; the government does not want to build refugee camps because of the fear that ghettos may be favoring rebellions or extremism can be established. Those refugees who cannot afford expensive accommodation live on the streets (Breuer, 2016). Due to this lack of organization, it is very difficult to send them the financial assistance proposed by the United Nations through the UNHCR (\$ 21 per person per month). Although countries allow minors to attend public schools, more than half of the children do not go to school, in fact, many have to work to support their families (Dhala, 2016).

All of Syria's neighboring countries have closed their borders and about 12,000 people are waiting in "no man's land" between Syria and Jordan, without drinking water, medical services and food. Among them are children, senior citizens and pregnant women who have to wait for weeks until they can enter Jordan. The situation in the border regions is so difficult that thousands of refugees return to Syria voluntarily (Dhala, 2016).

About 2.5 million Syrian refugees live in Turkey without a work permit and without the prospect of improvement; 80% of Turks are against the nationalization of refugees (according to the HUGO study, Center for Migration and Political Studies). Their status makes them take poorly paid jobs and thus become a competition for the low socio-economic class, data reveal that only 25% of the 800,000 school-age children attend a Turkish school, since\_ most of the Syrian parents are hopeful that they can return to Syria soon; and this is why children should not learn Turkish; furthermore most families depend on their children's workforce to survive (Gottschlich, 2016).

The Turkish government does not implement language learning or integration courses, and Syrian parents cannot afford the school for their children. Moreover, they do not have knowledge about the education system and, in effect, many do not send their children to school. (Kormbaki, 2016)

Due to the drastic increase of refugees in Syria's neighbouring countries and the lack of work permits, many of them depend on humanitarian aid and irregular work, causing an attitude of rejection and a tense atmosphere among the citizens of the welcoming countries (Rahman, 2016).

## **1.7 Migratory Routes**

### **1.7.1 The Balkan Route**

Most of the refugees from Syria who arrived in Europe in 2015 used the Balkan route that takes them from Turkey by boat to Greece and from there through the Balkan countries to the north and west of Europe. The refugees who managed to reach Turkey travel by boat to Greece, many of them arrive on the Greek island of Lesbos, where they are registered and sent to reception camps where it is decided how to continue\_ depending on their nationality and other factors. With the new refugee agreement, the European Union and Turkey agreed that all refugees arriving in Greece will be sent back to Turkey and a re-entry is prevented (Angelopoulou, 2016).

The mayor of Lesbos, Spyros Galinos, fears there will be a revolving door effect, in which the refugees will try to reach Europe until they are successful, which is very dangerous and makes it difficult to receive refugees in Greece. Moreover, this pact favours the traffickers, since the refugees will continue paying high transport rates. Galinos points out that it would be more feasible to register the refugees directly in Turkey to save them from the dangerous trip by sea and to put an end to the business of the traffickers that increasingly place irregular migrants and refugees on cheap and completely unseaworthy inflatable boats that have no prospect of ever reaching the shores (Angelopoulou, 2016).

According to a study by the World Organization for Migration (IOM) about 10,000 people died in the Mediterranean Sea since January 2014 (Eisenreich, 2016). Galinos mentions that although Frontex, NATO and the pact try to prevent refugees from reaching Europe, refugees are people who flee from bombs and have nowhere to return, therefore, they will continue to try (Angelopoulou, 2016).



**Illustration 2:** The Balkan Route

**Source:** UNHCR

## 1.8 Conclusion

Five years after the protests of the Arab Spring the situation in many of the affected countries has not changed much. Although, civil society managed to overthrow the autocratic presidents in some North African countries, most regimes managed to stay in power through minimal reforms and maximum oppression. In other countries such as Syria the protests resulted in a civil war, which due to the interests and interventions of regional and international players remains difficult to solve (Rosiny & Richter, 2016).

## 1.9 Comparison between Syrian refugees and Turkish migrants

### 1.9.1 Causes for migration

The cause for migration of Turks to Germany in the sixties is due to the migration agreement between Germany and several countries in the south and east of Europe; with this, on December 20, 1955, the Federal Republic of Germany celebrated the first contracting agreement with Italy. This was followed by agreements with Greece and Spain (1960), Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965) and the former Yugoslavia (1968) (Trost & Linde, 2016).



Due to the economic boom and full employment during this time, the industry required young and healthy workers. The migratory agreement established a limit of stay of two years to prevent young migrants from staying in the Federal Republic of Germany, migrants and their employers resisted this time limit and were allowed to bring their families.

### **1.9.2 Integration in schools and day care centres**

Many of the children of the migrants attended their own schools where they did not teach German, because they were supposed to return soon to their country of origin. Currently, the main emphasis is put on integrating all children and adolescents in day care centres and public schools to ensure that they learn the language quickly and avoid that they feel isolated.

### **1.9.3 Labour market**

The aim of the migration agreement was to attract young, healthy and low-educated workers for work that Germans no longer wanted to do, such as in mining, factories, industry, etc. The limits of stay were revoked due to the protests of the industry that did not want to lose its incorporated workers; as a result of the so-called petroleum crisis since 1973, the multiplier effect and the accelerating effect occurred, which are negative for the political economy, associated with higher price levels due to imported inflation, the liberation of labour and the fall of economic activity. Especially it was the less qualified workers who lost their jobs.

Due to the oil crisis the federal government decided to stop hiring and since 1982 the conservative government, composed of the parties CDU, CSU and FDP, under the then Chancellor Helmut Kohl sought to encourage the return to the countries of origin. With a stoppage of recruitment and various incentives, the government aimed at reducing the number of foreign workers, but paradoxically it turned Germany into a country of immigration.

In the short term, it reduced the number of foreign workers. However, the majority of workers decided to stay permanently. Had they returned to their respective countries of origin under the legal conditions modified as originally planned, they would never have been able to return to work in Germany.

In their home countries, there were still no prospects for many of them, especially in the case of Turkish migrants, and they had become accustomed to life in Germany. Therefore, the majority established themselves and brought their families, and the workers became immigrants (Bade, 2013), at the time, there was still no talk of a multicultural society or an immigration society.

#### **1.9.4 Housing situation**

Ghettos were formed, especially in cities with industry, since, at the beginning, migrants could not choose their place of living, and instead it was assigned to them. In addition, the situation of migrant workers often gave landlords the opportunity to rent damaged apartments. By comparison, refugees, once they are economically independent, are free to rent or buy a home where it suits them.

#### **1.9.5 Acquisition of language**

The federal government never pursued the acquisition of language, as the stay was limited. Moreover, a good knowledge of the German language was not necessary for the simple jobs of the migrants. The great number of Turks who came to Germany at that time and their work in shifts also hampered the acquisition of language. Frequently, there are problems with the German language even in the second and third generation; many children with a Turkish migrant background do not speak German correctly. In this regard, the lack of knowledge of German results from many Turkish families' habit of speaking Turkish at home. Additionally, young men with Turkish migrant backgrounds often prefer to marry a Turkish woman they bring from Turkey. Due to the traditional assignment of roles, in which women take care of the home and the education of their children, integration and language acquisition are neglected and therefore cannot be transmitted to children.

While the number of immigrants is still low, alignment with the majority society is almost inevitable, especially with respect to language. A certain group size is a prerequisite, both social and economic, for the emergence of "ethnic colonies". They have a negative impact on integration if people have a low social status. The Turkish group arrived to the Federal Republic of Germany and as one of the last large groups of foreign workers, therefore, could only access jobs and apartments that had not yet been occupied by the previously arrived (Luft, 2014).

Three million ethnic Turks, descendants of foreign workers, live in Germany. In the nationality law of 1913 it was determined that Germany uses the *ius sanguinis*, but, in the year 2000 the law was supplemented by the principle of the place of birth on the initiative of the Red Green Federal Government<sup>2</sup>: if a parent has lived in Germany during the last eight years at least and enjoys an unlimited right of residence, the child acquires German citizenship. This change in the law benefited the Turks in particular. However, since another reform in 2008, naturalization candidates must demonstrate sufficient skills in the German language and pass a naturalization test.

Turkish-Germans with two passports can vote both in Germany and in Turkey. Turks without a German passport, unlike EU citizens, for whom special rules apply, are not even allowed to participate in local elections; 1.5 million of them do not have German citizenship, but a permanent residence. Around 800,000 Turkish people only have a German passport. Currently, less than a fifth of people with Turkish immigration background in Germany have two passports (Sydow, 2016).

Although many Turks have German citizenship, they feel more like Turks than Germans; National solidarity applies to the Turkish state and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who, despite his de-democratization of the state apparatus, has contributed to economic growth. The support of Erdogan is reflected, above all, in the conservative electoral behavior of the Turks living in Germany, an attitude resulting from the fact that Turkish society in the diaspora has not developed further in contrast to the processes of modernization in Turkey.

Although Turkey hosted German refugees during the Second World War, the German population had a lot of reservations about foreign workers, especially the Turks, who were disparagingly referred to as *cumin-Turks*. Apart from obstacles to integration such as culture and language, there was also the challenge of a different religion.

Conflicts in the Middle and Near East, through terrorist attacks, can be felt in Germany and other European countries. The social motto, since the first refugees from Syria arrived in the summer of 2015, is to learn from the mistakes made in the 20th century to prevent history from repeating itself.

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<sup>2</sup> SPD (social democratic party) and green party

## **Chapter 2: Integration into German society - Legal foundations of integration and concrete measures**

### **2.1 Introduction**

To clarify what is meant by certain sociological concepts, the technical terms that are important for this topic are defined nominally. In a second step, this chapter will focus on legal issues related to migration, with a hierarchy from the UN conventions to European measures to German legislation regarding immigration and asylum law since the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany.

### **2.2 Migration and Integration**

Refugee Studies are an important part of migration research, since asylum laws and policies are constituted in their own law and are separated at the national and international level from migration policy and of integration. Leak migration refers to non-voluntary and forced migration. A person that, because of war, coercive political measures or emergency situations that endanger the existence of the person, must leave their country temporarily or permanently is called a refugee (Six-Hohenbalken & Tošić, 2009).

The Convention on the Status of Refugees, adopted in 1951 and entered into force in 1954, establishes the terms according to which it is determined whether a person is recognized as a refugee in the legal sense. Article one of the convention defines as a refugee "A person who, due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a social group or political opinion in particular, is outside his country of birth and is unable, or, due to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or of whom, because he has no nationality and is out of the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable, because of such fear, to be willing to return to it "(Convention on the Status of Refugees, 1951).

Although this convention came into force more than 50 years ago, it remains the basis of international refugee law. One of the points criticized is the fact that the definition of

refugees excludes people who are internally displaced, despite the fact that they constitute the largest part of refugees worldwide (Six-Hohenbalken & Tošić, 2009).

Then again, it is important to mention that the term integration is not a clearly defined term and depending on the culture or the scientific context different connotations exist. It can generally be said that integration is a process, not a state, which occurs at economic, political, social, and cultural levels (Six-Hohenbalken & Tošić, 2009). Integration, according to its definition, can even include \_assimilation, which is generally defined as adopting the ways of another culture and fully becoming part of a different society, which implies the complete renunciation of ones cultural and religious identity, whereas integration is typically defined as incorporating individuals from different groups into a society as equals. The difference is subtle but significant and for liberal politicians the acceptance of the constitution, knowledge of the language and professional participation is sufficient.

Enculturation is the process of growing in one's own culture, while acculturation means the change to another culture, which is characterized by language, the social system, the world view and the geographical space (Rothe, 2014).

### **2.2.1 Dimensions of Integration**

There are different ways to define the parts and the steps necessary for integration. Esser describes four dimensions of social integration: the cultural dimension of the acquisition of knowledge and competences (acculturation), the structural dimension of positioning in society and access to resources, the social dimension from contact making to social relationships (interaction) and the emotional dimension of identification (Esser, 2001).

Heckmann differentiates between four levels of the integration process: structural integration, which refers to the acquisition of rights and access to the labour market and central institutions; cultural integration refers to changes about attitudes and behaviour; social integration, which takes into account social relations and involvement in associations and clubs; and the identifying integration, which demonstrates the feelings of pertinence and identification (Heckmann, 2003).

Integration is understood as an interactive process between migrants and society, although society is the part with power and prestige. Compared to this definition, there

is also the conception that the responsibility for a successful integration process falls only on migrants and therefore they must be fully assimilated to the new society and abandon their cultural identity.

Equality of rights and possibilities is only possible when migrants have full access to resources such as employment, education and housing, as well as political and social participation (Strasser, 2010).

### **2.3 European Union**

A particular problem in Germany is the refusal of other EU countries to host refugees. In spite of the corresponding vote, especially the Visegrád Group, composed by the countries Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, denies the reception. Thus the Hungarian President Victor Orbán has carried out a national referendum in October 2016 spending millions on advertising to achieve a democratic rejection of the refugee policy imposed by the European Union. This behaviour demonstrates a lack of unity in important issues such as migration within the European Union. "We all knew that Europe has problems with its unit about refugees. But nobody thought that they would be so incapable of dealing with the current situation "(Fleming, 2016).

A more detailed analysis of the causes of the negative attitude of European states is not possible at this time, but scientists give economic and historical reasons, especially in Eastern Europe. In addition, radical nationalist tendencies are shown in many European States, which is explained by scientists with people's fear of globalization and the glorification of time before the opening of borders when the world was divided into three parts. During the cold war, highly industrialized countries in Western Europe and the United States joined together in the capitalist Western bloc, also known as the First World, while the Communist countries of Europe and Asia, located behind the Iron Curtain, joined forces in the eastern block, called Second World. Those non-alienated countries that could not be assigned to either the First or Second World in the East-West confrontation were originally called Third World.

Here we must mention the criteria of accession or Copenhagen criteria, which establish the conditions that must be respected by a State that wishes to become a Member State of the European Union. These criteria were established in Copenhagen on June 22nd 1993. There are three groups of criteria: political, economic and legal. The criteria

were agreed upon before the first eastward enlargement of the European Union in 2004 to ensure that new members are incorporated into the given standards.

Although the heads of state then had to accept the criteria, there are now repeated discrepancies with respect to the restriction of democratization and the unwillingness to implement closed agreements, for example, the distribution of refugees, which were agreed by a double majority. The attitude of Poland and Hungary, for instance, is due to the fact that there was a foreign determination until the fall of the Iron Curtain, and allegedly, now they do not want to be determined by the European Union. For one thing national identity and for another the understanding of democracy is pointed out.

In the Lisbon treaty it was agreed with a double majority how the refugees would be compulsorily distributed, but many countries are opposed to this legislation. On the one hand, these countries enjoy the privileges that the EU membership brings, like subsidies, and protection of the NATO, as a sign of the demarcation of the aggressor Russia, formerly USSR. On the other hand, clearly nationalist tendencies are shown in several European states, called "fear of globalization" by scientists.

However, reference is made to the high rate of unemployment in Europe, especially among young people; the debt crisis, which led to public deficits of the countries much higher than 60% of the gross domestic product determined in the criteria of the Maastricht agreement. There is an increase in movements and populist parties that increasingly win more votes in the elections. Great Britain has opted for the BREXIT and allowed for years the so-called Hell of Calais, in which thousands of refugees waited for a crossing opportunity.

The very responsibility of the refugee crisis and the previous strengthening of the Islamic State, first in Iraq, and later on in Syria, was not perceived by the European Union, and there is no effort to find a solution in terms of an agreed key to the distribution of refugees among the members of the Union to facilitate the reception, provisioning and integration of such a large number of refugees. (Roth, 2016)

Issues surrounding the burden of receiving refugees lead to a softening of the stability pact, which Germany insisted on, to avoid an economic crisis like the one in 2008/09 in the future. Another achievement of the EU, the open borders within the Schengen area, is also failing. The term of Fortress Europe, with the support of the border fortifications of Eastern European countries and the successor organization of Frontex

with its far-reaching powers can be found every day in the media. Putting the word "Europe" frequently in context with the term "fortitude" implies that European countries must isolate themselves and protect themselves from the rest of the world and its inhabitants. This can increase the anxiety in the population and increase the opinions of the extreme right

## **2.4 Germany**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said she would not welcome refugees the same way she did in the summer of 2015. "The situation on the Greek-Macedonian border is not comparable to that in Hungary in September 2015. Today there are refugee camps in Greece. "According to the UNHCR, the refugee jam can become a humanitarian catastrophe, since around 24,000 people are trapped there (Neue Westfälische, 2016).

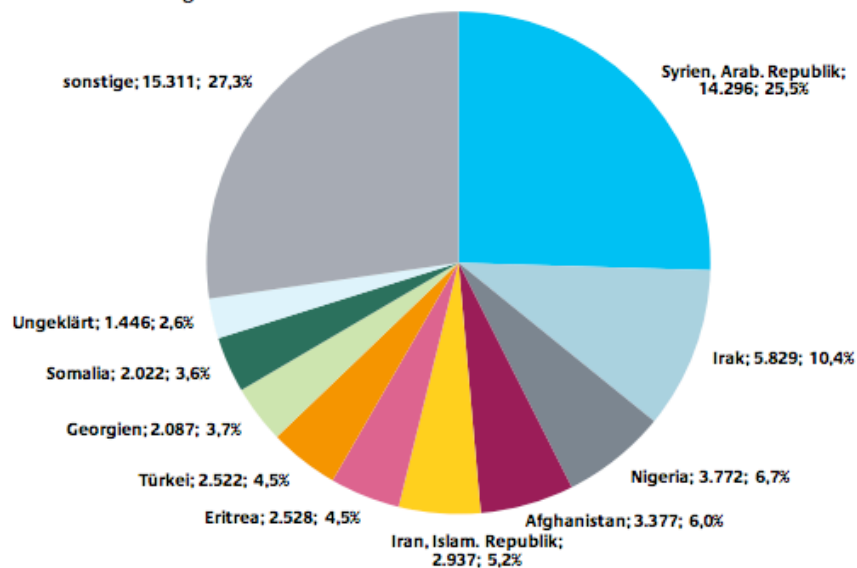
Indeed, she received much criticism from her own ranks for her decision, especially from the CSU and its chairman Horst Seehofer. She was blamed for being responsible for the loss of votes to the AFD and thus benefitting the right-wing populists. Seehofer, as well as the second parliamentary director of the AFD, Jürgen Braun, speaks, with reference to the opening of the border, of a "rule of arbitrariness and injustice", since the federal government has violated the participation rights of the federal parliament (Bundestag) in its immigration policy. Therefore, the parliamentary group AFD filed a complaint with the Federal Constitutional Court to obtain Merkel's resignation as German chancellor. (Die Zeit, 2018)



**Graph 2:** Main nationalities of asylum seekers in the period January - April 2018

### Hauptstaatsangehörigkeiten im Zeitraum Januar - April 2018

Gesamtzahl der Erstanträge: 56.127



**Source and Elaboration:** Bundesministerium für Migration und Flüchtlinge

This graph shows the composition of the main nationalities of people who asked for asylum in Germany in the first quarter of 2018. More than 25% of people come from Syria, followed by Iraqis (10.4%). Other people come from Nigeria, Afghanistan, Iran, Eritrea, Turkey, Georgia, Somalia and other countries. The current composition represents the distribution of refugees since the beginning of the migration wave in the summer of 2015.

## 2.5 Public measures

### 2.5.1 National measures

In order to facilitate and accelerate the integration of refugees, compulsory integration and language courses are offered for immigrants at the federal level. These courses have an extension of 4 hours a day for six months and end with a B1 language exam, which is equivalent to a medium level of proficiency in the language. Although the number of positions increased from 190,000 to 300,000 from 2015 to 2016 and the budget was doubled from 269 million euros to 559 million euros, there is still a lack of personnel to cover the demand. The ravine of personnel for the courses is due to the bad payment, so the teachers prefer to work in the schools. The great spectrum of previous knowledge that goes from illiteracy to a university degree is an added

difficulty. The chairman of the Social Christian Party (CSU) Horst Seehofer demands coercion for the participation of the refugees in the courses, without taking into account that the problem is not the lack of disposition but the scarcity of courses (Bartsch, 2016).

### **2.5.2 Local measures**

Refugees, once registered at the German border, are assigned to the different initial receptions. Since December 2015 there are 230 refugees from Syria and Iraq living in a former administrative building in Paderborn. They are mostly families, only 30 of them are men who travel alone. The administrator of the reception says that it is a very quiet reception. Before arriving at this reception, most of the refugees were accommodated in the university gym. On average, families spend three months there, before moving again. In each room there are 8-14 beds, so two or three families have to share it. Although many people only arrive with what they have, most have a cell phone, since it is the only possibility to communicate with their relatives in their countries of origin.

When the refugees arrive at the initial reception, they get sheets and hygiene items, and once a week the clothes shop managed by volunteers is open, which provides free donated clothes for refugees.

To facilitate communication, special attention was paid to employing people with knowledge of Arabic and Farsi. 26 people work in a three-shift system. Apart from the professional attendants there are administrative, security and cleaning staff. The reception provides three meals a day, and apart from this the adults receive € 30 and the children € 15 of pocket money weekly. In total there are 3,600 refugees in Paderborn, 500 of them living in publicly owned buildings. In addition, there are 69 individual properties, five group accommodations and five container locations (Berbüsse, 2016).

### **2.5.3 Volunteers and honorary positions**

"Volunteering in assistance to refugees is perceived as a social task. The assistants care for the contact with the immigrants" says the coordinator of the assistance to the refugees of the city of Paderborn, Verena Kopp. Between 500 and 600 volunteers are committed to helping refugees, about 300 people help sporadically. Individual willingness to take honorary positions such as volunteering varies quite regionally.

There are very xenophobic places and others where each refugee has a volunteer and one-on-one care is given. Many volunteers are interested in sponsorship and language development. If one does not understand the language very well, it is extremely important that the city is shown or that the refugees are accompanied to authorities and doctors. The majority of volunteers are women over forty, but the number of men and students in voluntary positions also rose (Neue Westfälische, 2016), which shows that there is a greater willingness in the entire population to help refugees.

The German Agency for Child Protection has launched a sponsorship project in which volunteers, as sponsors of the family, support the children who fled and their parents in their daily lives in Germany. The godmothers receive training and can participate in supervision groups. In addition, financial expenses are offset for leisure activities and there is comprehensive insurance coverage. Families from Syria, but also from other countries are part of the project. The coordinators Julia Bobe and Christiane Frank estimate that the success of the project is due to the way of uniting family with godmothers, in which emphasis is placed on the individual interests of each party. Apart from spending free time with the children, the godmothers support the parents to read and fill important documents or accompany them to institutions or doctors.

Eva Burchard talks about her voluntary commitment and that she likes to meet people from another culture and discover that there are many more similarities in the interpersonal realm than differences.

## **2.6 Daily situation of refugees**

### **2.6.1 Housing**

The large number of refugees arriving in Germany presents a challenge for cities and communities in terms of planning and distribution of housing. The first solution implemented by the State was the use of public gyms, since they have the necessary sanitary facilities and provide enough space for many people. Owing to the winter temperatures in Germany, it was necessary to find large spaces quickly; however, in large cities such as Berlin and Hamburg refugees had to persist in tents during the winter. The philosopher and publicist Wolfram Eilenberger criticized this public measure by using two arguments. Firstly, he states that the use of gyms as housing is counterproductive for the integration of refugees since people do not have a sphere of privacy, which raises levels of stress and also aggression. Secondly, he explains that

these gyms are occupied mostly by public sports clubs, since private clubs have more resources and therefore their own gyms. There is concern that feelings of competition between refugees and people from lower social classes arise, which can be fuelled by the confiscation of gyms. Moreover, schools needed their gyms again after the summer holidays.

As a solution, he proposes a Willkommenssport program (welcome sport), which invites refugees to participate in sports clubs. It would be an economic and sustainable integrative measure (Eilenberger, 2016).

The long-term goal is to house the refugees permanently. Municipalities have learned that it is financially much cheaper to house refugees in private homes than in shared shelters.

The Refugee Council of North Rhine-Westphalia and the German Alliance of Tenants (Deutscher Mieterbund) recall that it is important to ensure that residential areas are mixed to avoid areas where only immigrants live (Bungeroth, 2016). If neighbourhoods are formed only populated by immigrants, or in this case the refugees, there is a danger of the appearance of ghettos. Which inhibit a successful integration as it hinders the learning of the new language, because the children will visit day care centres and schools in their neighbourhood where German is not spoken and therefore they will have problems in the future of accessing the labour market.

"We must avoid the existence of ghettos," says Veronica Rosenbohm, president of the tenants' alliance in the Detmold region. "A problem for city planners is not knowing how many refugees will stay in the future" (Rosenbohm, 2016).

Gregor Moss of the construction department in Bielefeld adds, "There is a political order which requires mixing throughout the urban area." "Only if I feel at home I can integrate into urban society." When leases are high, the refugee crisis could be a boost for social housing. The congress of municipal delegates demands that the federal governments and the state governments invest more money in social housing with low leases. Support programs are needed with a volume of at least one to two billion euros. This could also benefit the Germans. Because the congress of municipal delegates explicitly demands that apartments be built for all socially weak groups, so that there is no competition with refugees. (Marquardt, 2015) A maximum of 25% of the living space may be built as social interest housing, therefore, more container plants will be needed, at least for the next three years (Moss, 2016).

"There is a danger that low-income housing will accumulate in certain parts of the city," warns Birgit Naujoks, director-general of the North Rhine-Westphalia refugee council. In 2015, 231,000 refugees were assigned to North Rhine-Westphalia and it is estimated that around 65-70% will stay in Germany and possibly in the region (Naujoks, 2016).

The ability to act in the short term requires binding agreements, faster coordination processes between all levels and less bureaucracy (Kornemann, Voigtländer, Lay, Groß, & Liebing, 2016). In this debate among several speakers of the housing policy of some political parties, the question arose whether ghettoization can be avoided through a residency obligation. According to the participants of the debate, the allocation of housing can contribute to a more equitable distribution of immigrants and thus avoid bottlenecks.

Scientists argue that refugees should be directed to regions where there is a shortage of workers and available housing. However, experts caution against using this method undifferentiated. For example, politicians have already asked to lodge refugees in East Germany, because in particular there are many empty apartments. However, unemployment is significantly higher than the German average and people have worse employment opportunities, according to a report by the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW). "A greater accommodation of the refugees would aggravate the economic problems there in the short term," warn the experts with respect to eastern Germany. (Marquardt, 2015)

At the same time, the residency obligation can be an aid if jobs, social infrastructure and integration measures are taken into account. Prof. Voigtländer points out that there is not enough living space for the growing demand, but at the same time it would be fatal to build satellite cities for immigrants only (Kornemann, Voigtländer, Lay, Groß, & Liebing, 2016).

The result is an image of empty rural areas without jobs, while in the cities people of low socio-economic class are evicted due to gentrification. This term refers to the socioeconomic structural change of certain metropolitan areas in terms of an increase in attractiveness for a new clientele and the subsequent influx of rich owners and tenants. The disappearance of economically weak groups is linked to this development.

### 2.6.2 Labour situation

A determining indicator for social and economic integration is the right and the possibility of accessing the labour market in the welcoming country. In Germany there is no right to work. Asylum seekers who have lived in Germany for at least three months can be allowed to work. As a matter of principle, asylum seekers and tolerated persons can only take a job if approved by the Aliens Department of the relevant district.

From an economic perspective having a job is fundamental since it allows the migrant to secure his income independently of the State, and gives him the possibility of escaping the stigmatizing economic dependence of receiving State payment transfers. In addition, it has a positive psychological effect since it improves the self-esteem of the person and creates a feeling of belonging to the welcoming society, especially in a knowledge society focused on individual performance.

Apart from the individual advantages, collective advantages come with the integration of migrants in the labour market because they help to decongest the communal budgets and the social insurance systems<sup>3</sup>. These measures can lead to a circuit to improve the economy, creating new jobs and encouraging consumption, which can help to dissolve the resentments felt by the welcoming society.

In countries like Germany, access to the labour market is extremely difficult since there are almost no non-formal jobs, as is the case in the US. Although the State only issues residence permits after a thorough investigation of the case, it poses legal and bureaucratic obstacles that for some groups of refugees are impossible to overcome. Those refugees who have a work permit continue to be inferior employees without priority to be hired. The same goes for people who were born in Germany, but do not have citizenship. (Butterwegge & Hentges, 2006)

The integration of refugees into the labour market is just beginning, due to the legislation that determines that the placement offices will be responsible from the end

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<sup>3</sup> The benefits of the Asylum Applicant Benefits Act (AsylbLG) are granted to foreigners who do not have permanent residence in Germany and, therefore, are not entitled to social assistance (SGB XII) or basic benefits for people seeking employment (SGB II). The Asylum Seekers Benefits Law regulates the benefits requirements of asylum seekers, which is based on the amount of social assistance under SGB XII. After a 15-month stay in the Federal Republic of Germany, there is a fundamental right to benefits, which is based on the full scope of Social Code XII.

of the asylum procedure when the right to remain in Germany is granted. Only among the group of refugees there are more people looking for a job than people who have a job. For the majority of refugees seeking employment, only assistant jobs are available, such as pawns, assistants in automated production, help in gastronomy, etc.

As of August 2016, 100,000 of the refugees have already obtained employment with social security, while 411,000 people obtain unemployment benefits, including 242,000 Syrians. Data from the federal employment agency show that the number of Syrians who already found a job increased by 71% percentage points. In general, the quota of people with immigration background that obtain unemployment benefits increased from 19% in the year 2011 to 26% in the year 2016. (Creutzburg, 2016)

One of the main challenges for the integration in the labour market is the lack of professional qualification among the refugees, according to economic experts. The Ifo Institute<sup>4</sup> in Munich estimates that there will be an excess of costs of around 10 billion euros (not including future education expenses) for housing, unemployment benefits, medical attention, insurance, etc. To prevent the refugee crisis from continually overstrain taxpayers, it is necessary for immigrants to accept a paid job in the shortest possible time. The institute advocates lowering the minimum wage of 8.50 euros per hour, as the productivity of the refugees is too low.

The lack of qualification is also caused by the high illiteracy rates in the countries of origin. "In Afghanistan more than 50% of people between 14 and 29 years old can not read or write. The share of university graduates in Syria is 6%, although it is one of the most developed countries in the region. Furthermore, many certificates are not equivalent to those in Germany "(Ifo-Institut, 2015).

The president of the Ifo institute Clemens Fuest reports that Germany, like most industrialized countries, suffers from a lack of qualified employees. Many were hopeful that with the arrival of the refugees this problem could be solved, but the economist of the education of the same Ifo institute Ludger Wößmann explained that two thirds of the Syrian refugees do not have any professional qualification.

According to Fuest, it cannot be expected that this wave of migration will have a positive effect on the German economy. Although there are cases in which the

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<sup>4</sup> The Ifo Institute - Leibniz Institute for Economic Research of the University of Munich e. V. is a research organization based in Munich, which is engaged in economic research in Germany with the analysis of economic policy and monthly determines the Ifo index of business confidence.

immigration of people has been positive for the economy, as the migration of 20 million Eastern Europeans who came to Western Europe since 1990, which has had a positive effect for the European Union, says the deputy director of the European division of the international monetary fund Jörg Dercressin (Ifo-Institut, 2016).

The director of the Employment Research Institute (IAB), Joachim Möller, said that the potential of refugees for society and the labour market is greater than what their levels of education say. The great opportunity lies in the fact that most of the refugees are very young. "That means we can still move a lot" said Möller.

Language and culture barriers were identified as the main challenges for integration in the labour market. Therefore, it is important to provide professional qualifications and the language "on the job". (Ifo-Institut, 2016) Policies is required to facilitate the entry into the labour market since it is the German legislation that keeps refugees away during all their asylum procedures and that makes it difficult to found companies through tedious bureaucratic processes (Ifo-Institut, 2016).

The economist of Migration of the Institute for investigation of the labour market and professions, and professor of the Bamberg University Herbert Brücker gives a macroeconomic perspective in an interview of the newspaper Die Zeit. According to the expert, Germany will benefit from refugees in the long term if they work. Though there is still no complete data on the qualifications of immigrants, Brücker speaks of a polarization in terms of education levels of refugees. With reference to the data cited in the interview, 46% of refugees who have a chance to stay in Germany went to school or to university, while 30% do not have any type of school education. Nevertheless, the greater demand for skilled workers is in the middle of this range. Those refugees who did not attend a school do not have the necessary qualifications to do training<sup>5</sup> in Germany, while those who have already gone to university will want to continue their studies.

Although he still cannot say how likely the refugees are to find a job, it can be derived from past data. In the 1990s refugees from the Balkans and the Middle East arrived and after 15 years 70% of them were employed, which corresponds to the German

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<sup>5</sup> The training includes the transfer of skills and knowledge through an authorized institution, such as a public school, a university or a private company. Normally at the end of an institutional training an exam is given and the graduate receives a document that certifies the completion of the successful training and that demonstrate their acquired skill. In general, the training lasts three years, during which the apprentice earns a percentage of the salary.



average. To conclude, it can be said that refugees find work, but the process is delayed. Compared to the situation of the 1990s, Brücker states that the political framework is much more favourable nowadays but that the number of refugees who arrived must be taken into account, which in itself represents a greater challenge. When asked how refugees can be trained, he responds that perhaps a vocational training is not optimal for the situation of many of them because they want to earn money as quickly as possible because they have to pay off their travel debts. Moreover, it is evident that someone only begins a long-term education or training if he can be sure that he can complete it and sees a future for his family in Germany.

Brücker also argues that there will be no competition between refugees and German employees, as Germans are increasingly withdrawing from simple jobs. Among migrants already living in Germany, the unemployment rate could increase. Brücker explains that more than 60% of migrants in the past found work through ethnic networks, where family and friends arrange a job. The assignation of housing for him is a no-go, because that way the refugees will be in regions where there are departments, but not work, which delays the search for employment. The current economic situation in Germany is good, but if the situation declines it will be the refugees who will feel the first impacts, since they often work in sectors that depend more on the economy, such as gastronomy. (Brücker, 2016)

The evaluation of the financial scientist of the European Centre for Economic Research (ZEW for its acronym in German) Holger Bonin comes to a similar conclusion. If the vast majority of immigrants manage to find a well-paid job, the German state will benefit from the migratory flow, since the sum of the taxes can exceed that of the costs they caused previously. Bonin explains, "The cost of hosting refugees can not be an argument for isolation, but rather is the cost for humanitarian values." However, the scientist estimates costs of around 150 to 200 billion euros, distributed among several years. (Bonin, 2016) The balance may worsen as 60% of refugees are men and will want to bring their families. Women and children work less frequently and therefore will pay fewer taxes (Bonin, 2016).

Deutsche Bank's chief economist, David Folkerts-Landau, also advocates for the active integration of immigrants into the labour market to ensure future growth. "If nothing changes, we expect a future with fewer workers and lower growth rates," he warned. Without immigrants, the number of people employed in Germany would decrease by

4.5 million in the next ten years, the economist predicted. "Economic growth will fall from the current average of 1.5 to around 0.5 percent." (Marquardt, 2015)

Referring to the migration scientist of the institute for labour market research and profession (IAB Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung) Herbert Brücker, the number of people seeking asylum fell in 2016 to 300,000 to a maximum of 400,000 people. The IAB expert indicates that within the group of refugees the percentage of academics is four times higher than in the population of their country of origin. This is related to the costs of the escape that are approximately € 5000, a price that can usually only be afforded by the economically stronger population strata (Öchsner, 2016).

### **2.6.3 Education**

Most students with migration experiences have a different first language than the one used in their country of destination. Many times greater emphasis is placed on learning the new language without taking into account the advances they have had in their mother tongue. For students it is extremely important that the educational institutions, also for a successful learning of the new language, recognize their knowledge of the first language. If the first language becomes a private matter and is only spoken with the family, cognitive problems can occur in the children since the vocabulary used within the family nucleus is limited in comparison to the use of the language in daily life.

Not only for children, but also for society in general, it can be beneficial to encourage the bilingual growth of the children of migrants, because it will be an advantage in the labour market and for the country itself. For affected children the recognition of their mother tongue has positive psychological effects, since it prevents them from feeling inferior due to their lack of knowledge of the new language they have not mastered yet (Binder & Gröpel, 2009). It is also beneficial for the country if it has multilingual adults.

Foreign workers, especially from Turkey, were said to be illiterate in two languages as they were not offered the opportunity to learn German and because of their low socio-economic background, they did not speak Turkish well either. Often, the main focus today is the acquisition of German, but it is important not to discredit the native language, since the mother tongue is part of the cultural identity and the maintenance of the native language can be important for a possible return.

Children and adolescents should not feel inferior due to the lack of language skills in the new language.

## **2.7 Juristic framework and legal status**

International law draws a clear dividing line: people who are forced to flee are called "refugees". People who leave their country on their own account are considered "migrants". People who have applied for asylum but have not yet been decided upon are called "asylum seekers". The Dublin Convention is an international treaty that determines the State responsible for examining an asylum application filed in a Member State of the European Union according to the Geneva Convention. At this moment, the Dublin III regulation that was agreed in 2013 is in force. One of its main objectives is to prevent a person from seeking asylum in more than one State at the same time. Therefore, the convention postulates that the EU State that allowed a refugee to enter the EU is also responsible for them. EU regulation thus transfers responsibility for the protection of refugees to the border states of the EU, which are generally the economically weakest and have to fight against xenophobia and right-wing tendencies.

These mind-sets further the wish to protect themselves from refugees in the most effective way possible, through mesh and border controls, or to treat refugees in such an unworthy manner that they flee to other EU states, which for their part usually try to push back the refugees. The result: refugees are roaming Europe and are being pushed back and forth like assets. The majority of refugees from Syria aim to reach an economically strong country like Germany, France, Sweden or the Netherlands.

Around one million people have requested asylum in Europe, Germany, with more than 300,000 applications, and Sweden with 100,000 applications, are the two European countries that have received the most refugees (Migration Policy Center, 2016).

Once in Germany, the refugees have to notify the German authorities requesting asylum. Then they are assigned to the federal States according to certain quotas, the Königstein code. In North Rhine-Westphalia, they are initially housed in the so-called initial reception facilities, which serve as the first home for refugees. People seeking protection must apply for asylum in the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). The federal authority, based in Nuremberg, operates close to 50 branches throughout Germany, each located near initial reception facilities, for example, in Bielefeld.

The decision to grant the asylum request is made by BAMF staff based on the interviews and additional information, such as the situation in the country of origin. Until the asylum procedure is completed, asylum seekers must remain in the assigned municipality.

If the asylum application is granted, the newcomers will normally receive a residence permit of one to three years, which can be extended or become a permanent permit. They must find their own apartment, so they are no longer linked to the assigned place. Under certain conditions, they can also bring their family to Germany. They also have free access to the labour market and are entitled to social and unemployment benefits. Anyone who is not recognized as a refugee and does not receive asylum can receive temporary subsidiary protection, for example, if there is a high risk in their country of origin, such as torture, etc. Then a residence permit is issued for one year. The foreigners' authority can extend this residence permit for another two years.

Tolerance suggests that departure or deportations are not always possible. The reasons for this may be the inability to travel, a missing passport or the lack of means of transportation to a country devastated by war. While the affected people cannot be deported, they will be tolerated in Germany.

In response to the migration wave of summer 2015, the German government decrees an intensification of the asylum law. The then federal minister of interior Thomas de Maiziere (CDU) thinks that this is inescapable, since in September 2015 more refugees arrived in Germany than ever before. The amendment of the law includes the determination of the Balkan countries, such as Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro, as safe States of origin, to facilitate the deportation of refugees from these countries. In the future, refugees will stay longer at initial receptions where, if possible, they will only receive benefits in kind, as food, clothing, medicine, and educational material.

In certain cases there will also be drastic reductions in benefits. In return, improvements are planned for refugees from regions in crisis.

According to data from the Ministry of the Interior<sup>6</sup>, about 7% of migrants come from the Balkan States, while more than half of the refugees come from Syria. Politicians from other parties (including Ulla Jelpke (Die Linke), Katrin Göring-Eckardt (Die

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<sup>6</sup> Data of the federal registration system "EASY" (Erstverteilung von Asylbegehrenden) for the month of September 2015

Grünen) and Boris Pistorius (SPD) criticize the changes, stating that it will lead to more conflicts if the refugees have to spend too much time in the initial receptions in confined spaces (Neue Westfälische, 2015).

To regulate the flow of refugees, the CSU demands an upper limit of immigration. In an interview with the newspaper Der Spiegel, Horst Seehofer says that his party wants to solve "the problem of immigration." As an upper limit he determines 200,000 immigrants per year, although it is difficult to agree on this limit with the fundamental right of asylum (Seehofer, 2016). This position and the opposite position of Merkel have led to a permanent dissidence and the final result benefited the most xenophobic party, the AfD, because voters, according to electoral investigators, prefer to choose the original.

The issue of the upper limit took an important role in the German federal election in September 2017, as the right-wing AfD party was propagating its populist ideas while parties like the CSU included populist aspects in their electoral manifesto so as not to lose votes. At this time (February 2018) the future SPD and CDU coalition that will form the government decided that 1,000 people may enter each month, but there is still no comprehensive decision that defines whether refugees with subsidiary protection can bring their families.

In many cases Syrian families sent one person to Germany hoping that this person will be able to find work and bring the rest of the family. Due to the large number of people who arrived, family reunification was temporarily suspended, but also to calm people who were afraid of the arrival of large families as well as to show the refugees that it is not planned for them to stay forever. The suspension of the regrouping was very difficult for the refugees who arrived without their families because they were condemned to wait without being able to do anything to help their relatives who remained in the civil war.

There were cases of refugees who returned to Syria to be with their family because they could not help them from Germany. This raises the question of whether this is a barrier or an incentive for integration, since it can also be a motivation to integrate quickly in society to have better opportunities to bring their families. However, it must be taken into account that in many cases those affected are children who suffer the most from a separation from their family, which prevents any integration effort. The chairman of the CSU party, which is part of the current government, Horst Seehofer, presented a proposal stating that in the future no more than 1000 relatives of

subsidiary beneficiaries will be allowed to come to Germany per month. The "subsidiary beneficiaries" include many refugees from the civil war in Syria. The selection of newcomers should also be influenced by the financial situation of the relatives who already live in Germany, in addition to the anguish of the applicants (Der Spiegel, 2018).

The federal states, North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) and Schleswig-Holstein, are preparing (May 2018) an initiative of the Federal Council to regulate legal immigration beyond the asylum procedure. The Minister of Integration of North Rhine-Westphalia, Joachim Stamp (FDP), wants to exhaust all legal possibilities to create a uniform framework for a permanent right of residence for immigrants. From now on, a new decree is in force in NRW, according to which immigrants who have completed vocational training and then work for two more years in a company will receive a right of permanent residence.

In addition, NRW aims at the right of residence for foreigners who have been tolerated for a long time and who have been in Germany for at least three years and have not committed any crimes during this time. Other prerequisites for the residence permit are that those affected do not depend on transfer payments and that they master the German language. First, the appropriate permits will be issued on a trial basis and, subsequently, permanently. According to the Ministry of Refugees, there are 42,000 refugees tolerated in NRW.

The priority of the Minister of the Interior, Horst Seehofer, on the other hand, lies in the fastest possible return of those refugees who have no legal right to asylum, through the so-called Anker Zentren (Centres of anchors, in German the acronyms represent the following steps: Arrival, decision, return). (Schmalen, 2018)

A possible return to Syria has been hampered since April 2, 2018 by a new decree of the Syrian president. The decree has the potential "to fundamentally change local conditions in favour of the regime and its supporters and make the return of a large number of Syrians more difficult," says the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin. The "Decree 10" gives the Syrian government the right to create development plans for the destroyed areas. Local governments must establish lists of owners of affected areas within 45 days. The owners have 30 days to prove and confirm their property rights. If they do not comply with the deadline, the areas become the property of the State. The decree could expropriate millions of Syrians. Although those affected could send

relatives to claim their property and land, it is unlikely that most will seek contact with a state apparatus from which they fled. Tens of thousands of refugees are wanted by the judiciary with arrest warrants because they participated in demonstrations against the al-Assad regime.

In addition, only very few refugees can prove their claims. According to a study by the UNHCR agency, only nine percent of internally displaced persons in Syria have property documents. Among Syrians abroad, according to a second study by the Norwegian Refugee Council, it is 17 percent. And in many other cases, there is simply no evidence of ownership, because the houses are located in the so-called informal settlements, which were built in recent decades, without being officially registered.

The law has serious consequences, also for Syrian refugees in Germany. "The decree of al-Assad is the continuation of its war against its own people," says Omid Nouripour, the foreign policy spokesperson of the Green Party in the Bundestag (German federal parliament). "It makes the road to a pacification of the country almost impassable, because people have no place to return, even if they wanted to." It does not seem to be in the interest of the government, that the people who were expelled from the old rebel strongholds in Aleppo, Homs or Ghuta, near Damascus, return to Syria. Instead, the strategically important areas in the cities will be populated with Syrians who are loyal to the regime.

This is a problem especially for Germany, because it reduces the chances of hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees in the Federal Republic of being able to return to their homeland in the near future. "Such a cynical request would have to be prevented," said Deputy German government spokesman Ulrike Demmer. "The UN Security Council should take care of this issue." (Sydow, 2018)

## **2.8 Psychological situation**

It is important to examine the influence of individual and collective traumas on the psychological health of migrants and refugees. It focuses not only on traumas that may occur during the flight, but also on those that may occur before leaving the country of origin, for example, due to systematic torture by the government, as was the case in Syria. One of the socio-political consequences of torture is the appearance of subcultural groups of tortured persons and their families. (Egger, 1999)

The experience unites them, and their suffering represents what could happen to everyone. Wicker speaks of a culture of terror that questions life itself and implies the dissolution of social order (Wicker, 1993).

Syria has a long history of extremely brutal dictatorships. Under Bashar al-Assad, as well as under his father, the secret services arrested and tortured people arbitrarily and rebellions were brutally repressed. Before the Arab Spring there was a sepulchral silence in the stable dictatorship, people were cautious and behaved discreetly so as not to attract attention. According to Amnesty International every week, up to 50 inmates are hanged in complete secrecy at the Saydnaya Syrian military prison. Up to 13,000 prisoners were killed in this way, along with thousands of deaths that died of starvation, thirst or torture and maltreatment. Most of those imprisoned are people connected with demonstrations against the regime in 2011/2012: demonstrators, journalists, and humanitarian workers. (Amnesty International, 2017)

The mental situation of refugees in Germany is difficult to estimate because, on the one hand, there is a lack of professional help and, on the other hand, experience is often kept secret. Therefore, it is often unclear who has been traumatized by torture, and what the consequences for the individual and for the Syrian refugees in general could be.

The Grinberg authors focus their studies on the conflicts that can arise during the migratory process, among which are the psychological processes that are promoted by the loss of the language, the impact of migration on the feeling of identity, the relationship that is maintained with those people who stayed in the country of origin and the possibility or impossibility of returning, among others (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1990).

Apart from the traumatization that may occur in the country of origin or during the flight, psychological problems can occur in the welcoming country. Especially children suffer if they are separated from their family, as is the case of minors who travelled alone or with only part of their family. The case of the Syrian family Haj Ali, who have not seen each other since October 2015, could serve as an example. The parents did not have enough money to travel to Europe together. Maher Haj Ali fled with three children to Germany, his wife stayed with the four youngest in Turkey. One of the daughters was born during the escape. A doctor diagnosed the father with severe depression and his children also suffered from nightmares, could no longer concentrate and had a constant headache.



In elementary school, the situation intensified: "The three children show a provocative behaviour and express that they no longer want to live like this," says a report from the principal. They exposed themselves to dangerous situations, climbed on sills or stairs to emphasize their demand. "They say they want us to bring their mother to Germany," the report says. The family tried to legally apply full protection, but failed in the Superior Administrative Court and only received subsidiary protection. Family reunification is suspended until August 2018 for refugees with this status. The Haj Ali family managed to get permission because the Consulate General in Izmir relied on Clause 22 of the Residency Law, which states "A foreigner may be granted a residence permit for the admission of the foreigner for reasons of international law or urgent humanitarian reasons."

This refers to humanitarian emergencies. There must be an "urgent danger to life and physical integrity." Karim Alwasiti of the Lower Saxony Refugee Council is happy that the family can meet next week. "This case is an excellent example of what it means to separate families." In this case applying paragraph 22 was successful, nonetheless, such individual cases cannot replace the legal right for family reunification (Scharpen, 2018).

## **2.9 Interviews with people who work with and for refugees**

### **2.9.1 Interview with Dagmar Knipp**

Interview with social worker Dagmar Knipp, who works with abused and traumatized women and girls, including some refugees. In an interview I asked her opinion about forced marriage and child marriage, which is still common in the Middle East.

According to her, no forced or child marriage should be allowed in Germany. There should be a law that ensures that affected girls and adolescents are housed separately from their husbands once they arrive in Germany. Any marriage contracted before the age of 16 has no legal validity in Germany.

By law, in most Islamic countries, marriage with minors is prohibited and the minimum age for marriage is between 16 and 18 years of age for women and for males of 18 years. However, legal regulations are often not respected due to traditional religious, cultural or social reasons. According to the terms of orthodox Islamic law schools, nine-year-old girls are already allowed to marry.

Along with the language-learning course, they must be informed about the rights of children and women in Germany.

Arranged marriages are often contracted before or during the flight. They are designed to protect girls from rape, abuse and forced prostitution. She gives the example of a 16-year-old girl who was married at the age of 13 to her cousin by an imam during their escape from Syria. The cousin, her husband, raped and mistreated her daily. In Germany, she was sheltered in a protected place, since she had told in her language course that her husband wanted to have a child, because she was already a woman (she was 14 years old). She was lucky and her family could also come to Germany and did not insist on the fulfilment of the marriage. Now the family is trying to move to another city to prevent the daughter from running into her cousin, as each encounter provokes traumatizing experiences again.

To help these young women, it is very important to have enough places of protection, which means places only for women and girls where they can freely talk about their experiences. In addition, rapid processing of asylum applications is required, since during the proceedings women do not have the security of being able to stay and live in fear, fear of honour killings or rejection of their own family. It is essential that professionals trained in trauma therapy care for them.

Finally, it is most important that girls and young women attend schools and colleges to make friends and thus acquire stability and normalcy. Only then can they find the strength to develop coping strategies. Germany prohibits child marriages, but with one exception. If the young people were between 16 and 18 years of age at the time of marriage, the family court, after a hearing of the minors and the youth office, can decide if the marriage will be valid or not. Child protection organizations demand that each case be checked. If not, the United Nations Convention on Children and the German Constitution are violated. The German Association of Lawyers advocates an individual evaluation of cases, arguing that a ban patronizes minors and does not take into account the wishes and will of those affected.

The organizations of women's rights "Terre de Femmes" and the International Society for Human Rights are against this exception, since child marriage is always a violation.

In Europe there is no uniform practice, all governments treat marriages contracted abroad among minors differently; Sometimes they are recognized, sometimes cancelled. Denmark, for example, decided not to recognize these marriages and

separate the spouses, also if they already had children. After the attempted suicide of a couple of minors this practice was revised and these marriages are recognized again. A separation violates the right to family life of the European Conventions for the Protection of Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on Children. Child marriages represent only one aspect among many of the cultural differences that exist in the two countries (Syria and Germany). This situation shows that integration can be hindered by many peculiarities of both nationalities.

### **2.9.2 Interview with Gabriele Kamundi**

Interview with Professor Gabriele Kamundi who has been teaching students in Bielefeld for two years. In her course there are 16 students from 14 to 17 years old. The majority of teenagers come from Syria and Iraq, others come from Bulgaria, Kosovo or Bangladesh. According to her, the prerequisites vary a lot. Some parents from Syria and Iraq are illiterate and cannot support their children as far as school and life in another country is concerned. The families of all students depend on social assistance and, in some cases, will continue to do so, due to the lack of career opportunities. Some students have only irregularly or even never attended a school.

This is a problem in more than one way; older students cannot catch up as fast as they need to in order to attend a regular class in general basic education<sup>7</sup>. At the age of 17 at the latest, students must take a level test at the vocational school.

Students who pass the vocational school test can obtain their high school certificate and receive training there. The vocational schools are well positioned and offer several internships.

Those students who fail the test can go to specialized schools\_ where the focus is more practical. For further professional training, level B1-B2 is assumed. In these cases, this is difficult to achieve because the deficiencies not only extend to language skills, but also lack of mathematics, foreign languages and general education. For her and her colleagues the biggest problem is in the families, which often belong to the social strata most distant from education.

Students obtain books free of charge from the school. For all three classes of refugees, a social worker was hired to handle all the issues, like help with applications,

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<sup>7</sup> minimum school education that comprises between 10-16 years of age

appointments with psychologists, etc. For special events such as Parents' Day interpreters are in charge and in some cases, even after two years, it is still necessary.

What could help young people would be contact with young Germans outside of school. However, many times teachers or social workers are the only ones who are responsible for the organization of leisure events with Germans, since the initiative of young refugees is lacking.

The course that is taught by Gabriele Kamundi was organized for the newly arrived refugees. Therefore, the students in this school should have finished the language course after 2 years and then change to the regular class or another school.

In vocational schools, the rules are stricter. If students arrive late several times, the employment centre will be notified and funds will be cut. This method seems to be effective.

She states: "In my class, only a few students learn voluntarily. Apart from a few exceptions, German is not spoken after school and nothing is practiced."

### **2.9.3 Interview with Sopia Schröder**

Interview with the student Sophie Schröder who helps at the International Café for refugees in the Dössel village, near Warburg. Since the beginning of the wave of refugees the old barracks in Dössel were used for housing. In the peak time, up to 300 refugees lived in the reception camps in the district, which has only 650 citizens.

In December 2017, 112 people, including many families with children, lived in the barracks, where the Café International is organized every Friday. My cousin, Sophie Schröder is dedicated to playing with children and adolescents while adults can talk with other refugees and with social workers that help with bureaucratic processes and other organizational aspects. The minors that Ms Schröder attends are between 2 and 13 years old and come from several countries, including Syria. According to her, all children of school age go to an educational institution, since in Germany there is compulsory education from six years of age and most of them are fluent in German. She says that the knowledge of children's language is usually higher than that of adults, although they take part in integration courses. She mentions the positive effect for children of having to speak German on a daily basis and that courses for adults are not so effective.

She did not have much information about the circumstances of the escape because the children do not talk much about it. She also told me that it is very difficult to talk to them about the future since many do not know what will happen. Although Syrian refugees will not be deported, as it can happen to those who come from countries that were declared as a safe country of origin, they do not know if the family reunion will be allowed.

She later mentioned that she realized that sometimes children are not allowed to come when it rains and that fewer and fewer women come to international café.

Dössel is a good example of the important role that volunteers take in the integration process. For instance, there is a bicycle workshop that is organized by people from the village, where refugees are taught how to repair donated bicycles. Besides being the only means of transportation in this rural area, it is also a good activity to pass the waiting period during the asylum process.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

Most refugees aspire to earn money as quickly as possible; either to pay debts incurred for the flight or to be economically independent enough to be able to bring their family members. Without a work permit in Germany it is only possible to work in precarious conditions, which puts them in direct competition, at least in the perception of those affected, with more than 10% of unskilled workers who also live in a highly industrialized country with an educational explosion in which many professions, which do not require education, were rationalized and subcontracted.

## **Chapter 3: Challenges for migrants and society**

### **3.1 Introduction**

There are factual and measurable indicators of integration, such as the provision of housing, the labour market, the financial burden of social systems, integration in educational institutions and staffing, which deals with issues of integration such as the BAMF (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge) and teachers, and the greater need for security forces, from border patrols, to policemen as well as security personnel in refugee houses; and the costs arising from these challenges that must be borne by society.

But there are also aspects that are more related to the psychosocial field, which play a role that should not be underestimated when it comes to the question of integration opportunities and risks. To approach this area experts from the fields of psychology and sociology are presented who place quite different emphases on this issue and draw conclusions about opportunities and risks based on their personal experience.

### **3.2 Terrorism and radical Islam**

According to most studies, the majority of Muslims living in Germany are religious, but not radical believers, and fight for successful coexistence. However, it is important to deal with the radical tendencies of Islam in order to understand the ambivalent attitudes of the German society towards Islam.

#### **3.2.1 Facets of Islam - between belief and radicalization**

From a large number of studies on Salafism, the research of the journalist Hubert Gude (Gude, 2016) is presented here, illustrating with the example of the rural area of Lower Saxony how the path towards Islamist extremism can take place.

The Salafists are considered as an ultraconservative flow within Islam, which aligns their way of acting and thinking to the pious ancestors, corresponding to the first three generations of Muslims in the centuries VII to XIX d.c.

It is important for Salafism in Germany that Allah for them is the only legitimate legislator whose will is determined in the Qur'an and the Sunnah forever. For this

reason, they reject all norms based on human logic and rationality, such as the German constitution (Grundgesetz). Consequently, all non-Salafists and members of other religions are qualified as unbelievers or polytheists.

Salafists are directed against Western culture, so not only military action in Islamic countries but also the global influence of the so-called Western culture is seen as an attack on Islam and as an attempt of moral degradation. According to the Salafists, true Muslims must help each other and unbelievers must be considered as enemies from whom one must separate. The anti-Semitism and the anti-Israel positioning is particularly problematic for Germany, due to German history and the persecution of Jews in the Third Reich.

The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and other experts describe the Salafist scene as the current with the broadest growth within the great spectrum of Islamist groups. The Protection of the Constitution approximates that 10,800 people throughout the country are Salafists (in December 2017). In the year 2011 there were around 3,800 people (Pfahl-Traugher, 2015).

The significant increase in the number of followers is due, in particular, to intensive propaganda, through a professional combination of the physical and the virtual world to elaborate a unified reality of life. Salafism is particularly attractive to young people.

Supporters of jihadist and terrorist Salafism believe that their goals can only be achieved through violence. Under the impression of the conflict in Syria, there is a remarkable change from the preachers and followers of the political Salafism towards the jihadist arguments. As a result, more and more people from the periphery of Salafism are being promoted for jihadist activities in Syria and Iraq. However, it can be observed that the increase in the Salafist spectrum is slowing down, according to security experts from the federated authorities for the Protection of the Constitution.

Stagnation or even a decline is not yet in sight. One possible reason for the somewhat reduced attraction could be the military defeats of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (Neue Westfälische, 2018).

The Salafists are fundamentalists since they aspire to Islamize society. Its objective is to restructure society in an absolute, dogmatic and fanatical way. Salafism can be divided into three styles of action: purist Salafism (non-Islamic elements are excluded from religious self-understanding), political Salafism (a reorientation of society is claimed offensively) and terrorist or jihadist Salafism.

The latter sees the use of force as a legitimate means of making one's own religious conceptions social reality. Physical violence, even against other Islamic currents (for example, Shias) is considered legitimate. The fixation on an Islamic theocracy means that the Salafists reject the democratic and constitutional State and the principle of popular sovereignty.

The security agencies see the Salafist ideology as a means of cultivation for the Islamist radicalization, which can propel the supporters of the terrorist attacks or fight for the Islamic State. Especially in a secular state like Germany, this interpretation of Islam can be very dangerous because it often goes unnoticed.

Even among the refugees, who have come to Germany with high hopes and who, meanwhile, are frustrated by prolonged demands and bureaucratic processes, the Salafists promote followers. Even in the quiet and picturesque Hildesheim it happens that young people, in search of the meaning of life, not only convert, but also become radicalized in bars, cafés and mosques that are being watched by the intelligence services. In such a way the story of a young man with no migration background becomes "a lesson about transitions flowing into radicalism, at first simply to the Muslim faith ... then a Salafist fundamentalist - and, finally, war ... "(Gude, 2016).

Germany has become one of the countries of which most young people (with and without a migrant background) have decided to join the battle of the (Brinkbäumer, 2016) Islamic State, including some minors) (www.zeit.de, 2014).

### **3.3 Islamophobia and populism**

#### Populism in Europe as a challenge to traditional political parties

Under the title of "postfaktisches Regieren" (govern post-factually) the German journalist Klaus Brinkbäumer commented in this editorial on the causes of the loss of voter support for the CDU<sup>8</sup> and other established parties, especially in the regional elections in Mecklenburg –Vorpommern (one of the 16 Federated States of Germany, located in the northeast of the country), in which the AFD<sup>9</sup> could unite the votes of a

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<sup>8</sup> Christian Democratic Union is defined as a "centre party, Christian Democrat, liberal and conservative."

<sup>9</sup> Alternative for Germany, rightist and nationalist party that criticizes the integration of Germany in the European Union and is against the reception of refugees.



fifth of the voters. These right-wing populist parties are based on the fear of immigrants, although almost no foreigners live de facto in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

He compares Germany to a company, and calls the process of change a structural transformation, which was not perceived correctly by Chancellor Angela Merkel. He also accused her of "capricious lurching", since after a decade of lack of interest in migration, Merkel became emotional in the summer of 2015 and decided to follow her feelings. In winter, her actions became colder, while her words continued to defend the decisions of the summer. This course "is not coherent and remains unexplained" (Brinkbäumer, 2016).

Brinkbäumer expressed a favourable opinion on the state of mind in the summer of 2015, but criticizes the *selfies* of the chancellor with the migrants and their consequences. He concludes that "governing intelligently presupposes clarity over objective, strategy and tactics, as well as the mediation of all that" (Brinkbäumer, 2016).

Governing post-factually refers to a way of governing without taking into account the data and facts, but based on your emotional situation. Although Angela Merkel's behaviour is understandable from a humanitarian point of view, it is still necessary to rely on political and economic reality before making a decision of such magnitude.

Consequently, she was responsible for the loss of control and state impotence for eight weeks. Then came the attacks in Paris and Brussels, the New Year's Eve in Cologne, the attacks in Nice and Ansbach and the amok in Munich. Here is not necessarily a connection with the refugees to be seen, "but they prevent a return of peace and feed the fear of the unknown" (Brinkbäumer, 2016).

#### The conflict about the Burka as an example of an integration obstacle

Under the title "keeping the house rules" Rohe gave an interview in the magazine Der Spiegel (Rohe, 2016) and in this conversation, he referred to the discussion about the ban on the burka, which 70 percent of the Germans approved in September 2016, as a symbolic discussion. But he can understand that there is a concern that radical Islam is expanding. "Many things were added in the last year: the movement of the refugees, the borders, which were out of control for a time, the Muslim radicalism, which can now

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be seen even in the province, in Ansbach and Würzburg, the disaster in the Cologne cathedral square on the eve of the New Year, all this had a huge effect, and even at the centre of society there are massive fears that we cannot put under control (Rohe, 2016).

The professor of legal science specialized in Islamic law, a former member of the German Conference on Islam<sup>10</sup>, who often serves as a reviewer for several state governments, said that he had not seen any burka in Germany to date. But he identifies the burka and the niqab as "catastrophic garments" that violate the conventions of our country (Germany, author's note) There is a horrible image of gender behind it, not only that the women must be hidden and belong to men but also that men can no longer contain themselves once they see a woman (Rohe, 2016).

Chancellor Angela Merkel states, "From my point of view, a woman completely veiled in Germany has almost no opportunity to integrate." The meaning of the burka as a garment is to hide it from the views of other men, which results in an impossibility to participate in daily life. However, it is not certain that the ban on the burka will facilitate the integration of affected women. What could help is access to education, especially for girls and the empowerment of women to help them make their own decisions regarding their clothing. In addition, a prohibition would again dictate to women what clothes they should wear or not wear.

He only supports a prohibition when it comes to identity checks, audits, testimonies in court and in the university system, since it makes communication impossible. Rohe analyses several other aspects perceived as obstacles to integration and he concludes that Germany now also experiences the problematic consequences of globalization. It is important to refer, with all integration efforts, to the legal system as house rules and to require that all citizens in Germany subject themselves to it. That is why it is important, for example, that the German divorce law and the prohibition of child marriages should be considered as a strong line, because "our country has a strong State to protect the weak".

He recognizes great problems in the lower social classes, which still partially have patriarchal structures and that have a common attitude towards Islam as the only value system, particularly in prisons, and in the culture of parallel justice of the superiors of

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<sup>10</sup> The German Conference on Islam (DIK for its acronym in German) marked the beginning of a long-term dialogue between the German state and Muslims living in Germany.

the families. But here the interviewee advises serenity and refers to the vast majority of Muslims who want to live in peace in Germany.

To his mind it is positive that Islamic religious teaching that is offered in schools and colleges in Germany is propagated. Also, he questions the formation and payment of the Imams that has not yet been clarified, as well as the fact that the Turkish President, Recep T. Erdogan, through the DITIB<sup>11</sup>, takes influence and control in the German mosques (something that also applies to a Turkish mosque in Paderborn). Here it must be mentioned that, because of the German federal system, education is a matter of the federal States and their own decisions. In some states, such as Hamburg or Bremen, religious and moral education is taught for all students inclusively.

Catholic teachers, by contrast, also receive a permit from the church, the Canonical Mission of the competent diocese after completing a theological study at a university with a master's degree. The Pope, as head of the Catholic Church, provides the universal doctrine. In Islam, there is no common doctrine, so the question arises which content is taught in schools to Muslim students.

The editorial in the magazine *Der Spiegel* entitled "Kulturkampf um den Schleier" (cultural struggle for the veil) by Christiane Hoffmann, publicist and German correspondent also treats a ban on the burka (Hoffmann, 2016). She sees in the burka no security risk, besides that "the number of women fully veiled in Germany is in the rank by a thousand", but the burka is a gift for simplifiers, dissembles determination that show the fear of AFD, but also to the "limits of our tolerance" (Hoffmann, 2016).

### **3.4 Current political situation**

#### Ambiguous classifications of Angela Merkel's role in the political spectrum

Under the title "Autumn of power" by the group of journalists Friedmann et al., Angela Merkel, after eleven years of government, is compared with other chancellors of the Federal Republic of Germany and the question about the "end of an era" is presented.

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<sup>11</sup> The Turkish-Islamic Union of Religious s. V. (Turkish Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği, DITIB) is an organization that coordinates the religious, social and cultural activities of the Turkish-Islamic mosques affiliated in Germany.

"(Friedman, 2016). At this time Angela Merkel is in her fourth term as German Chancellor.

Her decision of the night of September 5<sup>th</sup> 2015, to open the borders for refugees who were in desolate conditions in Hungary, is described here as a "touch of heroism", to which "everyone paid respect". At that time she was the most powerful woman in the world for Time magazine, she was practically the head of Europe. But she could not find any viable solution for the refugees and therefore angered people in Germany and throughout Europe.

Even within the CDU, but especially the sister party CSU<sup>12</sup>; Merkel is blamed for the loss of votes. In federal Germany, with frequent elections, the prime ministers criticize Merkel as they see the successes of the right-wing populists as a result of her policy in Berlin (Friedman, 2016).

So, it is not only the surveys conducted by the Spiegel, but also the trends shown by the ARD<sup>13</sup> on a weekly basis, which show the movements of the voters. The political spectrum is changing with a rapidity not previously known and the concern of a further strengthening of the AFD is reflected in the base, in the municipalities, the federal states, the federal government and in the media as a daily issue.

### **3.5 German Perspectives - Between Welcoming Culture and lit Refugee Homes**

#### Interpretations of the ambiguous attitudes of German citizens from psychological and sociological perspectives

The director of the institute for interdisciplinary investigation of conflicts and violence (IKG), Andreas Zick, expresses in a positive and empathetic way the situation of the refugees, taking into account their positive attitude towards Germany.

He rejects a negative attitude of the Germans without concrete encounters with refugees as stereotypes and prejudices. "If you firmly believe in migratory waves, illnesses, anxieties and terror, that is what you will see" (Zick, 2015).

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<sup>12</sup> Christian Social Union of Bavaria, forms a joint parliamentary group with the Christian Democratic Union.

<sup>13</sup> The ARD is a consortium of regional public broadcasters in Germany

To the question when and how a personal feeling becomes racism and xenophobia, he responds from a social-psychological point of view and calls the identification with the social group itself and the simultaneous devaluation of the foreign group as a reason. The PEGIDA<sup>14</sup> movement is defined as a receptacle for the prototype of the "concerned citizen" (Sorgenbürger), fundamentalist Christians, far-right groups, confabulation believers, asylum opponents and right-wing populists (Zick, 2015).

The above-mentioned groups have the ideologies about the authoritarian policies, criticism of the elites and the media in common. Zick recognizes that this polarizing movement is slowly becoming a mainstream, as political parties also take these approaches to gain votes on the right bank. The scientist argues that the results of investigations on this subject demonstrate that the damages done to the migrants are not only an expression of concern but also an aspiration for power. (Zick, 2015) Here he mentions the term "concerned citizen" (Sorgenbürger), with whom must be communicated as they feel forgotten by the politics.

The former minister of economy and foreign minister Sigmar Gabriel was criticized for doing so, since public consensus fluctuates between ignoring them and addressing their concerns.

To the question whether the moral value that the statecraft solicits from the citizens is enough to combat racism, or if it aims to free itself from responsibility, he responds that he is not sure if the statecraft has a "concept against the contempt of humans".

Zick identifies three levels of moral value:

- Be attentive to the anguish of people who are exposed to hostility
- Choose the corresponding strategies
- Act

Here, he refers to the studies and theories of the American psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg, who identified six stages of the development of morality, which are developed in three levels, the pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional levels. During the development of children and adolescents, human beings, regardless of their culture, go through the first stages of development without skipping any stage.

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European Patriots against the Islamization of the West (in German: Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes, PEGIDA) is a right wing, German anti-immigrant group founded in Dresden that opposes the islamization of the country.

The stages of the moral conscience correspond to the different stages of a development of the cognitive processes with which a person responds to conflicts and moral questions. The last, sixth stage, is only reached by less than 5% of the population. The correct action, in this case acting against xenophobia and racism, is reconciled with self-chosen principles, so that it is no longer concrete moral rules, but abstract principles (categorical imperative).

Zick also mentions that moral value must be learned, given that politics builds the framework, through legislation and education. It is also important to mention that the work of the civilian population has already "outstripped politics" in terms of the integration efforts of the refugees (Zick, 2015).

Regarding the question if parts of society, such as schools and companies can be overburdened, he names integration as a solution and he is surprised that those companies that hired foreign workers in the sixties and now complain about the shortage of skilled workers, fail to recognize the potential of the situation. (Zick, 2015) Here he invites politics, industry and universities to act. He also asks for protective shields like that of the Amadeu Antonio Foundation (Author's note: Amadeu Antonio, the namesake of the foundation was killed in 1990 by young people of the extreme right because he was black, he was one of the first victims of right-wing extremism violence since the fall of the wall) and preventive work against the damages to sensitize the population to the consequences of stigmatization, and also legal measures that allow a better way to proceed against hate crimes (Zick, 2015).

Hans-Joachim Maaz, psychiatrist, psychoanalyst and German author, takes a different approach to assess the situation. Concerning the current situation of refugees Maaz believes that Merkel's policy plunges Germany into a deep crisis. To him, the events of the Sylvester night in Cologne represent a "point of incision in the social debate about the refugee policy". Maaz refers to the information that went around the world, which, in Cologne, among other places, on the eve of the New Year of 2016 hundreds of women were sexually harassed by men mostly from North Africa and that the police reacted very late and in a contained way (Maazhinm, 2016).

Attacks against women have "significantly moderated the welcome culture." That must be recognized by the Greens, the leftists and feminists and they must "accept the concerns about uncontrolled immigration." Here Maaz addresses groups that represent a positive view of refugees (Maaz, 2016).

Next, Maaz vehemently criticizes "Mutti" (mommy) Merkel, especially with the use of the acquisition of an ambivalent denomination of a little maternal and childless woman, specifically because "you can not take her maternal care seriously anymore". "Her solitary decision" to welcome refugees from Hungary "in an uncontrolled manner" without debate in the EU, the federal parliament, with cities or unions, was celebrated as a humanitarian gesture without equal.

Merkel had allowed no criticism of herself. "And affiliated criticisms such as moral imperialism (Victor Orbán) or Tugendterror (Terror of Virtue) (Thilo Sarrazin) have been dismissed as absolutely indisputable opinions." Here Maaz refers to Sarrazin's<sup>15</sup> statements, in his controversial book "Germany suppresses itself", where the member of the social-democratic party (SPD<sup>16</sup>) Sarrazin even assumes a genetic inferiority of Muslims. Muslim women are called headscarf girls, a term that is also used by the Co-chair of the parliamentary group AFD and leader of the opposition in the Bundestag (federal parliament), Alice Weidel, in the current debate about immigration and integration of Muslims in German society.

Victor Orbán, the Hungarian prime minister, to whom Angela Merkel and the Austrian prime minister came to help when he was completely over-demanded by refugees and sought support, is positively connoted here, in terms of its refugee policy that represents the opposite of Merkel's efforts.

Orbán himself has launched a multimillion-dollar campaign in October 2016 to hold a vote for Hungarian citizens on EU refugee policy. In Hungary there are de facto almost no refugees and this country receives 4.5 billion euros annually as a net receiver, and EU funding programs turn out to be almost exclusively the main source of financing of infrastructure projects in the country. (Bundesamt für politische Bildung, 2016)

However, he refuses, like the other countries of the Visegrád Group, to welcome the corresponding refugees from Greece as it was democratically agreed in the EU. Therefore, the statement of Orbán, Germany and Merkel were committing moral imperialism, should be viewed critically.

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<sup>15</sup> He was criticized for his controversial comments on German immigration policy in his book *Deutschland schafft sich ab* ("Germany suppresses itself"), which was published in August 2010

<sup>16</sup> SPD defends center-left positions and is part of the European Socialist Party

The reasoning of the countries of the Visegrád Group<sup>17</sup> is based on the position that their citizens oppose the inclusion of Muslims in their societies. The self-determination of citizens is used as an argument to justify their position. On the other hand, both in Poland and in Hungary, hostile unidirectional reports about the European Union and refugees are broadcast from a media outlook increasingly restricted by governments.

The moralizing aspect was attenuated by the events of Cologne, as there were "unwanted and aggravating truths" relating to migration issues. Merkel's policy of "We can do it" and "No limits" were a "wrong suggestion and practical calculation error". The term integration then refers not only to primary care, through "housing, language teaching, care of health, employment, nurseries, schools and cultural and legal education ", but it extends far beyond (Maaz, 2016).

Here Maaz shows the abundance of tasks to be solved with the intention that the reader, who knows the difficulties of the German institutions to provide only basic services and the registration of refugees, becomes more sceptical. He underlines that "about two-thirds of the world's population would also have the right to asylum in Germany" taking the dispute ad absurdum. Merkel is mistaken, that "we all know" and her policies lead "a tendency to the national crisis". He even goes so far as to wonder why there were no emphatic calls for her resignation (Maaz, 2016).

To his mind, it is a mistake to call the opponents of Merkel's position right wing, populist and xenophobic, and thus marginalize them and prevent a discussion regarding content. Being concerned means for him that a large number of "people are afraid of uncontrolled development, of foreigners and of criminal threats". For Maaz, that is completely normal. "The fact that many people do not want an imposed change, that opposes parallel societies, that do not want cultural and religious conflicts, is not xenophobic nor radically rightist, but their right". To morally evaluate those who have another opinion as enemies of the Democracy is "a mark of a weak democracy" (Maaz, 2016).

Maaz speaks of our time as a "highly explosive social crisis" and refers to it as "narcissistic normopathy". He explains that, if the poor development of the individual

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<sup>17</sup> The Visegrád group is an alliance of four Central European countries: Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.



becomes a mass phenomenon, then the "false life" appears as a norm. Today, narcissistic disorder has become almost a condition for success.

Hence, this means that a naive Angela Merkel "through *selfies*, which demonstrate their need for recognition, has established an irresponsible message" and that "the actors of the Willkommenskultur" are not responsible for their consequences. All this is set in the context of a silent majority "that complains, provokes and above all worries, but does not dare to protest openly" (Maaz, 2016).

Maaz affirms that urgent measures must be taken, since the theory and practice of the asylum law no longer satisfy the changing global situation. In addition, "people with failed developments that are highly problematic and culturally and religiously anchored" cannot "go in a democratic liberating direction instantly," for which "cycles of bloody battles with millions of losses" have taken place (Maaz, 2016).

Maaz sees the inability of the refugees to integrate into German society due to their origin in dictatorial countries. He does not mention that the protests of the Arab springs were mostly an uprising for democracy and that to date there are liberal forces fighting for their right to self-determination in the affected countries. The corresponding movement in Tunisia, for example, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015.

Germany, on the contrary, obtained democratic constitutions imposed after the first and second world wars. The resistance of the citizens of the German Democratic Republic, against reinforced specifications of the directed economy and restrictive laws of freedom, was overthrown in the year 1953. Until 1989 the East Germans lived in real existing socialism under dictatorial conditions.

Maaz insinuates a "reactionary defence of the crimes for which the Germany is responsible" by the German society. Here the author refers to the crimes of Nazi Germany against German and European Jews and the Second World War. He also suggests a connection with the Frankfurt School of the 1960s and 1970s and its critique of capitalism. In short, he implies that a "nation of criminals" now has the opportunity to compensate by receiving one million refugees and welcoming them. Ironically, he adds, "the most criminal society became the most virtuous society" (Maaz, 2016).

As a matter of fact, he enumerates the consequences of our "destructive" lifestyle: "climatic catastrophe, the extinction of species, the pollution of air, water and soil,

human exploitation, unfair distribution, which causes a significant part of wars, poverty and social conflicts and therefore also migration in millions. "Although we know these factors, we are neither willing nor able to have the insight nor to "make the necessary changes due to narcissistic reasons".

For the author, the "main difference depends on whether we let our society be destroyed by the unresolved problem or if we do everything possible to fight the causes of wars and poverty and thus reach the people in need in their place of origin". That, of course, would also change our life of prosperity, but actively and deliberately, rather than passively and involuntarily. We have to raise billions, either to solve the growing needs and conflicts in Germany without a good and realistic perspective, or to effectively improve the living conditions of the disadvantaged by our way of life.

The German Minister for development, Müller (CDU), supports refugees living in Syria's neighbouring countries through the payment of salaries in the areas of agriculture, construction and waste disposal. The former Secretary of State Steinmeier (SPD, since March 2017 federal president) shows, through the hundreds of thousands of kilometres travelled per year and negotiations in crisis areas, especially in the Middle East, a beginning of what Maaz requires.

However, it must be acknowledged that Germany belongs to the main exporters of arms to Saudi Arabia, a country that beacons the wars in Syria and Yemen, and that does not respect human rights and that oppresses its own population.

In this moment of his analysis Maaz invites the statecraft and the citizens to act in a correct way, from his point of view. Finally he demands again that the borders are controlled, that refugees are rejected, in addition a new asylum law adjusted to the current situation and a critical discourse in society.

"We must also accept our own guilt for the global situation." Maaz's view can be criticized, as it does not distinguish between the legitimate concerns of citizens and ideologically hardened right-wing extremism. Though he is not in favour of PEGIDA, he says that we should not demonize this movement.

The social researcher Wilhelm Heitmeyer has been studying since 2002 with his team from the Interdisciplinary Research Institute of Conflicts and Violence the development of prejudices against weak and minority groups. According to the publication of its long-

term study that began in 2010, "a worrying increase in uncertainty and discontent among the population" can be observed (Heitmeyer, 2010). This has been aggravated by the economic crisis in 2008. "Anger against those responsible is mixed with the increase of anxiety to social descent" (Heitmeyer, 2010). This study, prepared before the arrival of the refugees, shows that xenophobia in present society is caused by negative forecasts for the future:

- 90% of respondents fear "more social declines and poverty",
- 75% believe that "the threat of declining living standards reduces solidarity with the weak",
- About 33% think that "due to the economic crisis we can not afford to give all people the same rights",
- 61% believe that "in Germany too many weak groups must be supported" (Heitmeyer, 2010).

Heitmeyer concludes that "fundamental norms such as justice, solidarity and equity are becoming less popular at the centre of society, there is a risk that the democratic base erodes." He feared already in 2010, long before the movement PEGIDA and the strengthening of the AFD, a sharp increase in "enmity related to groups." (Heitmeyer, 2010) Already in 2010 the "feeling of political impotence" lead to an "angry apathy", which "mainly benefits right-wing populism." He also makes a comparison with similar developments in other European countries. A solution for him is a stronger mobilization of people in the democratic process and social participation.

The author Jörg Schindler describes in his article "In times of turmoil the alarmists have conjuncture - but they are wrong" (Schindler, 2016) that after the attacks in Cologne on the eve of the New Year the media talked about "compulsive killers". Reactions, such as the emergence of civilian militias, issuance of permits for small arms and the massive sale of defensive sprays, occurred increasingly. Schindler calls the people, who came to Germany since the middle of 2015, who had come especially from Syria to Iraq and Eritrea, the "exodus of the miserable," who escaped the "barrel bombs and fanatical assassins." He asks rhetorically whether the Germans were already insecure before or only now see the refugees as a threat (Schindler, 2016).

According to the R + V Insurance surveys, one of the largest insurance companies for private and corporate clients, people's fears have never soared so much. Schindler also cites the US institute for opinion studies, PEW. According to their study, the fear of

refugees has mixed with that of terror. "Only the Hungarians and the Poles are more fearful than the Germans." This benefits the AFD. Schindler quotes former party chairwoman Frauke Petry: "We need the fearful to move the majorities" and concludes that "Fear has become eligible", and therefore determines the electoral behaviour (Schindler, 2016).

Then he asks rhetorically if you can blame people and lists the crises that "almost leave us without air to breathe": "Terror in Paris, Terror in Brussels, Ebola in West Africa, the threat of national bankruptcy in Greece, severe turbulence in the Deutsche Bank (National Bank of Germany), terror in Tunisia, hundreds of thousands of refugees on the way to Europe, the scandal of Volkswagen, terror in Turkey, a kind of coup in Poland, a double coup d'état in Turkey, terror in California and now also: terror in Würzburg and Ansbach. The state of alarm has become the normal state "(Schindler, 2016).

In his essay "Fear of others" the Polish sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman states that even if the integration of refugees is not easy, we cannot avoid this thorny path. Otherwise, we will break with all Christian and moral principles. Zygmunt Bauman's essay is extremely important, because no other subject is debated as energetically and exasperatedly throughout the world as is migration. How serious Bauman evaluates the situation becomes clear when he does not say: "We can do it!" as Angela Merkel said, but rather expresses it more succinctly: "we have to do it!"

Of course, the sociologist knows that currently the simple proposals are those on the discussion table, such as the demand for an upper limit for refugees. The proposals will probably win the elections more easily than suggesting that it will be a "thorny" way to integrate the refugees. But from a moral point of view, there is no other possibility.

But before answering the question of humanity, Bauman remembers the causes of the current drama of the refugees. Due to "erroneous fatal judgments" and "catastrophic military interventions", in the face of crises that generate profits for the defence industry, many people had no choice but to flee from the violence unleashed in their countries of origin.

However, the standard of living they crave is far from being true in the countries they go to. Poverty, misery and contempt are now part of daily life in the supposedly rich

countries. And those who are forced to exist at the lower stratum of the society are the first to face the refugees who are perceived as a threat.

Bauman sees the cause of xenophobia, which is intensifying in European countries, as if it had already reached a bifurcation, "where one road leads to collective well-being, the other to collective annihilation." He demands a political rethinking. The challenge we face has just begun with strangers at the gates of Europe. They are the messengers of a crisis that must be solved all over the world. When people in distress continue to be rejected at the borders of Europe, it is accepted knowingly that camps are set up to "park" unwanted people. The moment one accepts that there is a "remnant" that does not belong, one breaks with all Christian and moral principles (Baumann, 2016).

### **3.6 Conclusion**

The different points of view of the experts in the analysis of the capabilities of the host society are due to the establishment of priorities in terms of German history and the current situation, which is also characterized by the psychological consequences of the financial crisis, fear of losses due to globalization and new challenges and crises.

Some experts argue from an economic point of view, while others focus on sociological and psychological aspects. The different perspectives are also due to the realities of life of the aforementioned experts, Baumann for example, is influenced by his experiences as a persecuted, which allows him a humanitarian attitude to the situation, while the evaluation of Maaz's situation reflects his own biography as a former citizen of the GDR, a dictatorial state at the end of which all current values were questioned. Maaz polarizes with his demands to close borders and deport refugees who come from supposedly safe countries of origin. Analysing Maaz's interviews, it can be concluded that it is a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you do not expect something to work, in this case the successful integration of refugees will not work.

Heitmeyer and Schindler agree that the refugee crisis helped right-wing parties and movements, but that the solution is not to stop the flow of refugees, which would be impossible, but it is necessary for society and the political class to adapt to new developments and challenges.

A situation like the current one is always a social experiment, without the possibility of being rehearsed and repeated. One can try to learn from the own history and the efforts and mistakes of other countries. However, the situation in Germany, with the demographic change, the shortage of skilled workers and the economic boom, is favourable for a successful reception in German society, although the refugee situation is often not structurally appropriate to the German society, as many of the refugees lack education, including literacy.

## **Conclusions**

From the Arab Spring to the Arab autumn, from the rebellion against the dictatorship to a country almost destroyed, from a struggle for democracy to a civil war marked by jihadists and warlords, influenced by the interests of foreign groups and states, towards a cold War; Syria is and continues to be the scene of an endless civil war with innumerable participants. Among them are, apart from the rebel groups in the interior, neighbouring States and hegemonies, such as the USA and Russia. Each of them has the objective of enforcing their individual interests.

Turkey primarily wants to prevent the Kurds from gaining or consolidating a state of autonomy abroad. The Turkish state wants to prevent the creation of a Kurdish sovereign state in northern Syria that may become a territorial threat to Turkey. Russia, the old hegemony of the region, wants to return to its previous influence and power lost after the collapse of the Soviet Union, filling the vacuum left behind by the United States when Obama withdrew his troops after the failed wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as a result of September 11. Iran, with a Shia majority, and Saudi Arabia, with a Sunni majority, fight in deputy wars in Syria and in Yemen for supremacy in the region. Israel is fighting Iranian influence by bombing Iranian positions in Syria.

The goal of the US government is, among others, to distract from domestic problems and support the arms lobby after the current president was generously supported by it in the election campaign. In Britain and France old memories of the mandate are waking up, so they do not avoid military intervention to continue securing the support of the United States.

At the moment it seems that Assad, like a puppet of Putin, is winning the war militarily, but especially in the western world there are voices that demand to put him before the war tribunal in The Hague.

Experts estimate that the war could be finished soon, but foreign groups do not because they seem to be benefitting from the on-going war. Although ISIS is successfully fought and lost almost all its territory, other jihadist groups appear, but they are also destroyed militarily.

The entire region is a zone of crisis and an end is not in sight, even after 7 years of war. Hundreds of thousands of people have already been killed in attacks by various groups, especially civilians. Many children are also affected. Millions of Syrians currently live in refugee camps in neighbouring countries or have fled along dangerous roads to Europe.

In total 11.5 million Syrians are fleeing, 6 million of them are internally displaced, 5.5 million sought refuge in neighbouring countries. There is still money missing for refugee camps in the region.

Assad's followers and their opponents accuse each other of being responsible for the great violence and suffering of the people. The possibilities of a political solution to end the war are deficient. Several times a truce was negotiated, but apparently the fire cut is not respected and in many places, the fight continues. Although the troops of the government of Assad have recovered many areas and cities of the fighters of the so-called Islamic State, the country is far from having a stable peace.

Many Syrians see their only chance of survival in an escape to Europe. At the same time, the EU is struggling with its own problems.

Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, said in 2015 and recurrently in 2016 that Europe lacks this Union and that there is no Union in this Union. He speaks of an existential crisis in Europe, evoked and aggravated by "high unemployment, social inequality, large state debts, the immense challenges of the integration of refugees and the real threat to our security nationally and internationally. Each member state is affected by the crises of our time" (Juncker, 2016). Europe is considered a failure, since it does not take a clear and unified position concerning nationalism and selfishness of many European countries and the lack of a common foreign policy of the Union.

In Germany there is no unified strategy either, because it was thought freedom fighters were supported at the start of the Arab Spring, but the resistance structure has shifted to groups dominated by jihadists. This also causes a certain feeling of defencelessness with respect to a coherent strategy of the Federal German Government. It has not supported the US bombing, which has the support of France and the United Kingdom, as revenge for renewed accusations of a poisonous gas



attack on the civilian population by Assad; Merkel thought it was correct, but she did not support the military action.

Not surprisingly, Macron was received in the United States with great pomp and Merkel was treated in a reserved manner. Everything is set in a context close to the controversial dispute between the US and Europe, especially Germany for the large surpluses of the trade balance and Trump's desire for more financial contributions from Germany to NATO. And therefore it cannot be considered separately.

The role of the UN is also questionable, since the Charter of the United Nations assigns to the Security Council the duty to guarantee peace and security. But the council is blocked in Syria, especially by the veto power of Russia, while people are suffocated by poisonous gas, bombed in their homes or flee to millions.

Meanwhile, Germany is reinforcing humanitarian aid to prevent more refugees from leaving the region. At the donor conference in Brussels, Germany's foreign minister, Heiko Maas, promised an additional 1.3 billion euros for Syria. The worry that a wave of refugees from summer 2015 will repeat itself is very present, especially for political reasons. Angela Merkel's decision to accept the refugees left her very deteriorated and partly gave rise to the success of right-wing parties that can be observed not only in Germany, but throughout Europe.

Despite the negative attitude of right-wing parties towards refugees, the fact remains that hundreds of thousands of people must be integrated into German society. Here the question arises whether integration can be a success. What is expected of the refugees? Although the tasks and processes are set by the State, the refugees' own initiative is demanded. Once registered, refugees lose the freedom to make many decisions. It is decided where and with whom they will live, how they spend their time (integration and language courses), what they eat, etc.

As an additional difficulty a completely different understanding of the allocation of the roles of men and women, among other cultural differences, can be named. People come from a dictatorial state with torture chambers to a liberal democratic country, where a woman is chancellor and another is a defence minister. Germany has a knowledge society, post-industrialized and highly bureaucratized. Therefore, the change for the Syrians is at several levels very difficult and significant.

It is easier for the more educated than for the less educated. In addition, the Koran for Muslim believers has a more important role than the Bible for German Christians. The discussion on whether Islam belongs to Germany has been revived. Many conservative politicians insist on our western Christian culture, which must be protected from alienation. In doing so, they forget that charity is a central value of Christianity that could become a reality in helping refugees. Of course, Germany should remain a liberal, secular country with great individual freedom. And that is why successful long-term integration is immensely important. To achieve this goal, ghettos must not be created, prejudices, on both sides, must be eliminated, the German language must be learned and the Constitution must be accepted unconditionally (German Constitution approved on May 8, 1949 in the former capital of the Republic, Bonn).

The obstacle to integration are not the Muslims. Islam itself, with its political dimension, can become a problem, because the Islamist groups seek followers among the refugees. There are German-Turks, who already live in third generation in Germany, and who classify the Koran, with its sharia law as superior to national legislation. There is a struggle for the interpretation of the Qur'an among the Salafists and the moderate and tolerant Muslims.

Although, moderate Muslims are the majority in Germany, their lifestyle is discreet, unlike the comparatively few radicalized, that attract medial attention through attacks. Each terrorist attack is reinforced by the permanent coverage of the media so that the perceived fear of the population for their security increases, in spite of the fact that the real number of crimes falls. At the moment Germany has the least number of crimes since its reunification (Neue Westfälische, 2018).

In general, crime has decreased in terms of violence and theft; indeed, the amount of anti-Semitic attacks has recently increased. According to former State Rabbi Henry Brandt, although the situation has begun slowly, it has been driven by the massive immigration of young people from Arab countries (Brandt, 2018). However, these figures have not been statistically validated, but it can be assumed that both anti-Semitic Germans and Arabs who hate Jews carry out the attacks. In every society there is a certain percentage of people with a xenophobic attitude. The question arises whether this is aggravated by fear of globalization and the increase in social inequality.

In Germany, the income gap has widened significantly, more than in most OECD countries, and consequently social inequality rises. This trend is reinforced by the reforms of the unemployment subsidies, because the new concept (Hartz IV, in 2005) establishes that those affected first have to exhaust their reserves and assets before being able to claim the transfer payments.

Traditionally, women are more affected by social inequalities, as they tend to work part-time because of family and children, or stay at home during their parental leave, and people in precarious jobs that are being used by those with inadequate education. Low education and many children result in a higher risk of poverty in Germany. Without enough language skills it is difficult to find a job and the refugees, unlike the foreign workers at former times, often suffer from traumatic experiences, so they can be pushed to the margin of society more easily. And what is more, it is very likely that migrant women will be confronted with the most extreme social inequality.

Although the discrepancy between the partially euphoric expectations of Germany and the current reality of life has proved very high for many immigrants, many of the Syrian refugees want to stay in Germany, even when the war is over, because the country is devastated and some may face persecution upon return.

It is not the first time that a large number of people arrive in Germany; 1.4 million refugees after the Second World War, millions of foreign workers from southern and eastern Europe, from Turkey, Yugoslavia and North Africa, millions of returnees from the Soviet Union, one million people from the GDR after the opening of the border, refugees as a result of the war in Yugoslavia, and now the refugees from the battle zone in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition, there are also a lot of asylum seekers and refugees from poverty and environmental destruction of Africa. The push and pull factors are certainly different. A guest worker that is offered a job opportunity is certainly not comparable to a refugee in a boat who had to leave his loved ones in the war.

However, different cultures, ways of life and languages come together. This is not easy to solve in any host country. There are many experiences that could be used in Germany. The situation remains a great challenge to migrants, but also to the various people involved in the host society. Here it is of little help, if, for example, politics and economy pass on to each other the responsibilities of integration measures.

Like other "old" industrial nations, Germany is affected by a demographic change that undeniably affects the social system. Experts have been asking for immigration for years to avoid huge increases in taxes or cuts in pensions or longer working lives for the German population.

A concerted action of empowerment of those who are already here would be an important step, a win-win situation for all participants. Integration, which is not assimilation, which allows people to be dignified and empowered, and which at the same time protects what has been achieved in centuries as the values of a free society, is the task of all people involved.

Integration is and remains a two-way process, but the requirements are good in many ways. An economic bonanza for many years, the lowest unemployment rate since German reunification, a balanced state budget and a high export surplus make Germany one of the world's leading economic powers. For several years the so-called Wirtschaftswunder (economic wonder) demanded immigration due to the demographic change in Germany with a low birth rate and an aging population. In addition, a new awareness of being open to the world, the special promotion of people with a migratory background and a positive attitude towards Europe cause that immigration is understood as a benefit and globalization as an opportunity.

Germany has done it before and can do it again.

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