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Article

Welcome City: Refugees in Three German Cities

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Abstract
Since late 2015, the authors have studied the refugee crisis in Europe. In this article, we analyze local factors that are significant for urban planning to include in an integration plan through case studies in three cities in Germany. We have chosen to study Germany because of the country's touted Willkommen Kultur (welcome culture), which was prompted in large part by Chancellor Angela Merkel's "Flüchtlinge Willkommen" ("refugees welcome") stance. Now, three years after Chancellor Merkel's declaration to the world, although international and national policies set many parameters for refugee integration, responses to the uncertainty of the situation are fundamentally informed by local contexts. Germany has adopted a policy of distributing refugees to communities throughout the country according to the so-called "Königstein Key", which sets quotas for each state according to economic capacity. We have selected case study cities and a county that are at different scales and regions: Borken in Hessen (13,500 people), Kassel County (200,000), and Essen, a larger city (600,000). Here we investigate the ways in which German citizens and refugees interact and integrate, with a focus on the social-spatial aspects of refugee experiences and the impacts on urban planning policy, urban morphology, building typology, and pattern language formation. Beyond crisis, we are looking at how refugees can and will try to integrate into their host countries, cities, and neighborhoods and start a new life and how host communities respond to refugee arrival. Urban architecture projects for housing and work opportunities that help the process of integration are part of this study. Particularly, in this article, we investigate the reality on the ground of the positive Willkommen Kultur and the high expectations and implied promises that were set in 2015 by Chancellor Angela Merkel and German society.

Keywords
building projects; pattern language; refugee acclimatization; urban design; urban transformation; welcome city; welcome culture

Issue
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1. The Willkommen Kultur (Welcome Culture) and Its Implied Promises on the Ground

The United Nations estimates that there are about 250 million migrants in the world, of which more than 65 million people are refugees (United Nations, 2015). This means that every two seconds another person is displaced by war, violence, and persecution (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2018). Although the rate of refugee arrivals in Europe has slowed since 2015, newcomers continue to join the hundreds of thousands of earlier arrivals, particularly in Germany, where more than 300,000 asylum seekers arrived in 2016 alone (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2018a). These forced migrants joined the nearly one million who arrived in Germany in 2015, many still in limbo awaiting asylum approval or appeals. In Europe and in the United States, migration issues are divisive and at the fore of public debate and protest. How the world responds to this global crisis will arguably impact the trajectory of peace and well-being on this planet for generations to come.

In 2015, in response to the ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis in Syria, German Chancellor Angela Merkel welcomed refugees into Germany with a wide-open door to help them in a direct and humanistic way. At the time she calmed down the concerns of the German people with the now famous expression "Wir schaffen das!" ("We will manage that!"; Merkel, 2015). Merkel's Willkommen policy has generated a large number of positive reactions and activities in Germany at all administrative levels of federal, state, county, and municipality, as well as an overall positive response by civil society with its social, religious, and private associations and organizations, families, and individual citizens. Initially, a Willkommen Kultur emerged in communities throughout Germany. Communities took on the role of "arrival city" (Saunders, 2010), and collectively generated an atmosphere of "making Heimat" (Figure 1). "Heimat" is a meaningful German term that describes the place for one's own life, feeling, well-being, and belonging, embedded in the history and community to which one belongs (Schmal, Elser, & Scheuermann, 2016). In 2018, help and support continues in a pragmatic fashion after three more years of up and down events and experiences.

The American-based Portland Urban Architecture Research Lab (PUARL) at the University of Oregon has begun preliminary research by developing a set of focal areas situated within the broader context of this international crisis. These focal topics are also referred to as building blocks within this larger study of refugee escape, assimilation, integration, and return to original home country. Initial versions of this research were presented at the PUARL Conference in San Francisco in 2016, at the ISUF Conference Valencia in 2017, and at the PURPLSOC Conference in Krems in 2017.

In this article, we investigate the local experiences of the Willkommen Kultur and the high expectations and implied promises that were set in 2015. Our discussion and findings are drawn from field research conducted by the authors in Germany in August 2016, as well as preliminary visits undertaken by author Dr. Neis in December 2015 and March 2016, as well as follow-up visits in December 2016, in the spring of 2017, and in the summer of 2018.

Here we refer to the people who arrive in Germany in response to Chancellor Merkel's Willkommen policy as refugees; we recognize that many distinctions can be drawn between categories of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and those whose asylum has been denied and who are now living illegally in a host country. Our choice to use the term refugee is an effort to acknowledge that whether circumstances are solely political, largely economic, or a mix of many factors, the majority of people arriving have been in some way forcibly displaced from their home countries and are in a situation in which they must rely in some way on the host country for help in reestablishing their lives. To illustrate, in our visit to Germany in 2016, when asked if he had a sense of how people then living in refugee camps felt about being referred to as refugees, one Syrian collaborator responded with the simple statement: "They have no other word with which to call themselves".

Our research focuses on the ways in which the invitation for refugees to come to Germany is playing out in communities in regard to primary immediate needs for refugees and in regard to the initial impacts on the German citizens and social-spatial aspects of German communities. To this end, we selected three German cities that serve as case studies: the small town of Borken in the state of Hessen, the larger city and county of Kassel, and the much larger city of Essen (see Table 1).

Our initial research included informal interviews with German officials at various levels. Given Dr. Neis'

Figure 1. Syrian refugees reach Munich with trains from Austria on Sunday, 6 September 2015. ©UNHCR/Gordon Welters.

Table 1. Case study cities and data.

Case Cities	Population	Region	Refugees in 2016
Borken	13,500	Central Germany	200
Kassel County	200,000	Central Germany	1,500
Essen	600,000	Western Germany	20,000

German citizenship and wide network of contacts in Germany, we were also able to meet with a number of German citizens working in the private and volunteer sectors, as well as university faculty members. Professor Alexander Schmidt and doctoral candidates at the University of Duisburg Essen provided a number of meetings and tours of refugee facilities in Essen, and they also shared the final report from a masters' degree planning seminar (Wehling et al., 2015). We spoke informally with refugees at various camps and group housing facilities, and Dr. Neis and Mr. Furukawazono met with Syrian, Afghan, Pakistani, and Iraqi refugees for detailed conversations. However, we note that this first round of case study research was an initial investigation, and our findings and evaluations are suggestive, rather than exhaustive. From these interactions, we have identified a set of relevant local factors that might be important for urban planning and urban policy to include into an integration plan for local communities.

Figure 2. Map of Germany and three case study communities: Borken, Kassel County and Essen in red, and the city of Bautzen as comparative city in orange.

In the following sections, we provide a series of enquiries, observations, short vignettes, and brief discussions that illustrate how these three communities are working to address the more immediate, basic needs of refugees. Specifically, we examine the following factors in each of the three cities or county: a. overall support structure for refugees, b. refugee shelter and housing, c. communication and acclimatization, d. work opportunities for refugees, and e. the formal, legal asylum application process and structure. We end the article with a series of initial findings and evaluations and a brief outlook for the near-term future of refugee integration in Germany. We also connect our findings to a major planning and design method called the pattern language method (Alexander, 1979; Alexander et al., 1977; Neis, Ledbury, & Wright, 2014).

2. Detailed Topics of Investigation in the Welcome City

2.1. Help and Support Structure at the Local, County, State, and Federal Levels

While several authors make a clear distinction between refugees in cities and refugees in the country-side, the latter quite often as part of a nation's refugee dispersal policy (Darling, 2017, p. 182). The term city in Germany often applies to small towns that have old city rights, but from today's perspective may count as towns or villages and part of the countryside. It can be argued that the countryside in Germany is relatively well urbanized with its own opportunities of living together with refugees. Germany has adopted a policy of distributing refugees to communities throughout the country according to the so-called "Königstein Key", which sets quotas for each state according to economic capacity (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, 2018b). Distribution is roughly organized in three to four levels of supporting and administering refugees. Refugees are first registered at the federal level and they are then distributed to the different states. The state government then places refugees in particular counties, cities, towns, and villages. After their initial placements by the government, refugees' daily lives become largely local events in which refugees and citizens of the towns, villages, and neighborhoods must exist together.

It is worthwhile to emphasize that the work of the government at the federal, state, and local levels has been substantially aided by a wide variety of non-governmental initiatives. In Germany, a well-functioning civic structure has been very supportive. In addition to the city administration, religious organizations, non-

governmental organizations, and a number of volunteers and partially paid helpers, there is a very strong structure of "Vereine", which are associations for all kinds of purposes, from sports clubs to historical associations to garden associations. Many of these associations tend to be extremely helpful in supporting refugees in various ways through encouraging social interactions between refugees and Germans. For example, in Dr. Neis' town of Borken, a number of young male refugees have joined local sports clubs that facilitate the refugees and locals getting to know each other.

2.2. Refugee Housing in Essen, Kassel, and Borken

While in the global South large camps resembling large cities are typical for housing refugees, in the global North, camps are typically much smaller and only temporary (Darling, 2017, p. 180). As in much of Germany, the number of migrant and forced migrant arrivals in the larger city of Essen in 2015 and 2016 surpassed the amount of available built spaces in which to house refugees even temporarily. During the height of refugee arrivals from 2015 through the end of 2016, the City of Essen operated thirty-two temporary facilities throughout the city (Figure 3). Due to the large number of arrivals in 2015, Essen, like other places in Germany, moved to a system of small modern tent camps in order to provide basic shelter for new arrivals. Other permanent structures, such as underused hostels and hotels and empty apartment buildings were retrofitted for temporary refugee housing. Even old and unused airport buildings were transformed for housing refugees in large numbers as in the case of the Calden airport in Landkreis Kassel, or the disused Tempelhof airport in Berlin (Figure 4). In con-

Figure 3. Map with different kinds of shelters and small camps for refugees in use for a limited time in the City of Essen in 2015-2016. Source: Der Westen (2015).

Figure 4. Refugees being housed in disused Tempelhof airport in Berlin, 2015. ©UNHCR/Ivor Prickett.

trast to Landkreis Kassel, where the Landkreis (county) oversees and manages all aspects of refugee support, in Essen, management of the tent camps has been contracted out to a private firm, European Home Care (EHC). EHC managed all aspects of the temporary housing, including distribution, operations, meals, and security.

By the end of 2016, most of these temporary camps had been closed and refugees had moved to other temporary accommodations, but this time in permanent structures. During a visit in December 2016, Dr. Neis re-visited two of these camps—Altenberghof and Bamlerstrasse—and found only the paved floor plan remnants with gravel still in place, which had been formerly occupied by tents and paths in August 2016 (Figure 5). We were told by university researchers that some refugees from one of these camps were moved to the city's edge in a location with poor transport connections.

Essen has been working with a challenging situation of accommodating these thousands of new arrivals in their own housing stock in a city with very low vacancy rates for apartments (only 3% vacancy according to the City; Essen City, 2017a). The City places refugees whose asylum has been approved in their own apartments, but asylum approval can take months or even longer than a year. In addition, the City advertises to landlords to rent to refugees on a voluntary basis. Refugees are eligible to find their own apartments after achieving asylum status, but in the meantime, they most often live in dormitory style housing with other refugees of nationalities from around the world.

During the past three years, the City of Essen, like any other city in Germany, has had to work with constantly changing forecasts for the number of refugees who will arrive. At the end of 2016, arrival rates slowed substantially and plans to build additional dormitory style facilities or to retrofit existing buildings were placed on hold or canceled. In the meantime, the City is still working to allocate apartment placements and to manage the needs of thousands still housed in dormitory style facilities.

In the town of Borken, with about 13,500 inhabitants and about 200 refugees (the exact number changes frequently because of new arrivals), refugees are located in the core part of the town, but also in neighboring villages that are part of the municipality. Most of the young male population lives in the core town in the Bayernkeller, a former restaurant with a hotel (Figure 6). In the village of Kleinenenglis (a few miles from the town of Borken, but part of the same administrative structure), a number of families are housed in a four-story apartment building, and in the village of Gombeth, a former community building now serves as a shelter for unaccompanied minors. Distributed in prefabricated "Plattenbauten" (buildings for social housing), a number of refugee families live in the core of the town in individual apartments rented out by the City.

2.3. Acclimatization, Assimilation, Communication, and Living in a New Local Culture

Some groups of migrants and refugees, as well as guest workers, partially tend to gather around same national populations, or similar ethnic and religious groups, sometimes creating what is called counter or parallel cultures. With a liberal attitude, the German government has previously allowed 'parallel cultures' of non-German cultures to emerge in separate neighborhoods in cities. Historically, Germany has sometimes encouraged migrant communities to settle in particular cities and neighborhoods, such as during the guest worker policy era in which migrants from Turkish people were encouraged to migrate to Germany as a means of addressing shortages in the work force. The government has even celebrated this as what is loosely called a 'multi-kulti' social co-existence model. Apparently, the German government—and other European governments—have

Figure 5. Temporary tent camp structure in Altenberghof, Essen; the tent in use in 2015 (left), and after removal one year later in 2016 with researcher Aurelio David from University Duisburg-Essen (right).

Figure 6. The restaurant and hotel Bayernkeller used for refugee housing in the town of Borken (left); conversation with refugees inside the hotel in 2016 (right). On the right, Kemal (name changed) from Pakistan was later not accepted for refugee status and therefore continued his flight to another European country.

taken on new policies of dispersing refugees and forced migrants throughout the countries, possibly to avoid development of new parallel cultures. As Jonathan Darling (2017) notes: "Urban dispersal programs are in place in Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK". These dispersal programs take away an important source of keeping communal identity among refugee populations, which could make acclimatization to a new society a more difficult endeavor.

In practical terms, all refugees are taken care of by the government according to European Union regulations and the German Constitution. Upon arrival in Germany, all refugees are provided shelter in some form. They each receive a monthly monetary stipend for their personal use and expenses, and they are taken care of by a number of institutions, as well as private helpers and volunteers. They have arrived in a place where some fundamental life necessities are provided for them, at least for a while. After going through the federal and state arrival facilities in a new country, refugees finally reach the local city, town or village arrival places, where they will live for quite a while and get used to local life and culture to reach their objective of obtaining safe asylum status.

Refugees face a number of challenges in navigating everyday life. Many are first faced with communication issues due to language barriers, as well as the challenges of learning new social customs, getting around in a new place and neighborhood, completing article work, and dealing with trauma from experiences in conflict zones and serious problems on their escape route. There are also events of coming together and just enjoying a moment of relief and understanding each other. On Christmas, in December of 2015, the Protestant Church in Borken organized a live music event with modern music within the church as part of its ongoing ecumenical efforts. Dr. Neis attended and experienced local residents and Islamic women, children, and some young men coming together to participate, clap, and sing to modern mixed music in a Protestant church. In particular, small children running around with happy red faces made one think quite positively about the future of living together.

Language skills are critically important to support even the most basic interactions between refugees and locals in host communities, and these skills are also key to opening possibilities for employment in the host country. In 2015 and 2016, during the height of refugee arrivals, government emphasis understandably focused first on meeting basic needs of safety, housing, food, clothing, etc. Providing non-skilled work and language training has since developed in various forms according to the capacities, regulations, and options of various government institutions, but with language training in particular. Much of the municipalities' efforts are well supported by the private sector through charities and informal volunteer programs.

For instance, in the town of Wolfhagen, part of the Kassel County (Figure 7), retired citizens, particularly former school teachers, were eager to put their skills to work and so started up a variety of German language classes for the refugees residing at the Pommernanlage facility near the town. As a way of further encouraging everyday interactions, municipal buses service the Pommernanlage with regular stops between the camp and the town. Language classes are typically offered in town to encourage people to mix outside of the camp and to become more part of the community. Ms. Elena Beck, a social worker at the camp, explained the importance of these informal programs in helping refugees and Germans interact and connect (Figure 8):

Figure 7. Map of Kassel County with various individual municipalities and locations, including the community of Wolfhagen and the Pommernanlage, the old airport buildings in the municipality of Calden that served as a federal refugee camp, and the main Social Department Headquarters location in Kassel County.

> It is important not to make a parallel world here in the camp. It is important for people to have structure and purpose, and to feel that they have some involvement. That is why there are no groceries here [at the camp], and why the German course is offered in town.

In Essen, language classes are also provided by various charities and volunteer groups, such as the Diakonisches Hilfswerk. Classes offered in various parts of the city provide refugees a chance to get out of the camps or refugee-only facilities. One young adult male who had arrived as a refugee from Syria explained that although the German lessons were critical for him in learning the basics of the language, he had really learned to converse through actual informal conversations with Germans, such as those he had while volunteering at a clothing donation center:

> The most important thing is to help people get better integrated. For example, to learn a language, people need to speak it, not just have lessons then go back to

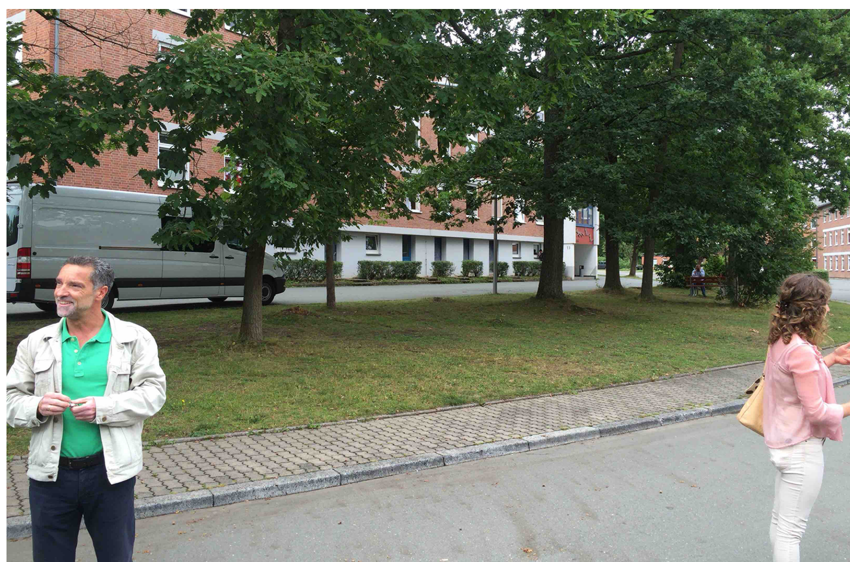

Figure 8. Social workers Mr. Zeuch and Ms. Beck at the Pommernanlage, a former military barracks for a tank battalion near the town of Wolfhagen, now used as a peaceful camp for refugees.

the camp. We got so much contact with German people through working together at the Kleider Kammer. We succeed in language without going to any school by practicing the language with our friends.

2.4. Work and Work-Learning Related Activities

In a meeting with Mr. Rossberg, director of the Kassel County department of social affairs in charge of refugee matters, he emphasized that the two major issues for refugees are housing and work. While housing is part of the refugee package according to German laws, work is less readily available (see more in Section 3.1.5 about the legal structure of work). Still, there are kinds of work that refugees can and will do if offered (Figure 9). These include short term help, practical internships, apprenticeships, and other kinds of support and learning operations that also help refugees to acclimatize, learn technical terms, and get to know the work culture in a particular society or a particular trade or craft.

Our experience in the town of Borken shows that the young men there appreciate work of any kind, even if the additional amount of money is minor. Being needed, doing something useful, and learning a trade are in themselves of value; work experience is also considered to help in attaining asylum status. In the Bayernkeller Restaurant and Hotel in Borken where twenty or so young men are living, having work or a job is considered very important, and if one of them can attend the university in a close by city, that counts as great success. For regular work, the City of Borken employs a number of young asylum seekers in their “builder’s yard and repair facility”, with outside park, garden, and streets work and repair operations. Some refugees also work in the private sector. One young man works in a painting shop, he proudly explained to us, and another young adult works in a car repair shop, a job he had occupied in his home country. Another works as a kitchen helper in the Italian restaurant, Dal Circulo. This is a good start, but more work needs to be done to create legally sanctioned work opportunities for refugees who have not yet obtained official asylum status. The new integration law ratified in the later part of 2016 did indeed improve the work situation for refugees, as we will see later.

2.5. Asylum Application, Approval, or Denial by Authorities

While they were not initially among of our main points of investigation, the legalities of the asylum process became the fifth point in our investigation because they are intrinsically related to major issues of housing, work, and a host of other issues of refugees living in a local community or neighborhood. While refugees and responsible and responsive Germans are addressing and helping with housing, work, and overall acclimatization issues, refugees must also apply for legal asylum if they wish to stay in Germany, at least as long as their country is considered unsafe to return to and live in.

Germany is not a traditional immigration country; there are only two mechanisms through which migrants and refugees may apply for legal residency in the country. First, Article 16a of Germany’s 1949 Constitution includes provisions for asylum seekers. Second, federal law includes an “exception” policy, which states that the country does not allow immigration, except as appealed on a case by case basis (for example, for people who have married German citizens or for those with special work in Germany; see Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2018; S. Scherer from the County of Kassel gave us a thorough introduction to German asylum policy on August 1, 2016). Refugees apply for legal status through the asylum law. Asylum application processing can take from a few months to more than a year. During the interim period

Figure 9. Refugees and local people renewing the sports field at Pommernanlage. Source: Müller (2016).

between their arrival and the asylum decisions, refugees are very limited in their abilities to find self-rented permanent housing and paid employment.

Asylum denials may be appealed, but the appeals process again can go on for many months to a few years. Asylum has recently primarily been approved for migrants from Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Eritrea (now also for Somalia in 2018); these countries have been designated by federal policy as unsafe countries. However, the asylum applications of many others—precarious migrants from places like Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Ethiopia and other African countries—are being denied on the basis that these countries are deemed "safe" countries. Formal refugee asylum denials are increasing now that a few years have passed since the first large waves of refugees arrived, and growing numbers of people are now in precarious positions as migrants without legal status in Germany and Europe, but who are also not able to return to their home countries. This poses a serious dilemma for many of the refugees after so many days, weeks, and even years of hardship. Many of these migrants are forced migrants, real precarious refugees, in difficult situations, but without any legal recognition.

3. Findings, Evaluation, and Patterns: The Willkommen Kultur's Reality and Its Future on the Ground

One very positive comment from a critique of our work notes that insights of the kinds included here are only attainable from actual field research such as that which we undertook. It is also true that our initial research into these three towns and five major topics for understanding the refugee welcome culture in Germany focused on mapping the general situation facing these communities as a precursor to more targeted and extensive research and towards planning and design projects. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to look into these detailed preliminary findings and evaluations for possible further action, policies, design, and planning. These first visits allowed us to collect material in our initial field study cases that helped us to find research supported answers to our questions and sufficient data to reach some findings and accomplish evaluations with regard to our main question of how the implied promises of the Willkommen Kultur are working on the ground.

From this research, planning and design efforts can also draw some insights for action and for creating a framework in which a future of living together might be formulated. Here in particular we are referring to the planning and design approach called pattern language, which promises help in this respect (Alexander, 1979; Alexander et al., 1977; Neis et al., 2014). A pattern is simply defined as a solution to a recurrent problem in a particular context. Furthermore, the pattern does not only provide a singular mechanical solution but provides the flexibility to apply and express this solution in thousands of different ways. The simple pattern of "helping people in need" can obviously be applied in thousands of ways. Therefore, we have added one pattern (or at least a pattern problem formulation) to each of the findings in terms of a suggested application to planning. Toward the end of the article, we also briefly introduce the larger framework of a pattern language, and we suggest how patterns together can form a consistent system of cooperation and interdependencies.

3.1. Findings

3.1.1. Finding 1: Keeping up Help and Support Structure

The German help and support structures are seemingly working well, but are also becoming overwhelmed by ever increasing refugee numbers in 2015–2016 and beyond.

The support structure in the three German communities we investigated was organized at the administrative, public, religious, and institutional levels, at the business level, and also at the level of private initiatives such that the immediate needs of providing basic care to refugees had been met. Our conversations did make it clear that our visit in August of 2016 came months after what several agency workers referred to as the 'refugee arrival tsunami' had passed. We did not observe the kind of chaotic intensity noted by authors such as Häberlen, who were present on the ground during the first days and months when tens of thousands arrived in late 2015 (Häberlen, 2016, p. 58). Overall, at all administrative levels, and in each community, we encountered a generous attitude and desire to help.

The overall helping attitude can be seen as a positive sign of the enduring Willkommen Kultur. For example, when refugees began to arrive in Borken, the Free Protestant Church soon established a place and time for refugees and locals to meet every Monday for coffee and cake to talk about issues and problems, but also to just enjoy each other's company. This event and space is called Cafe Hope. Mr. Furukawazono participated in the Cafe Hope events on various occasions and at one point was asked if he himself was a refugee, albeit from Japan. In the City of Essen, Pastor Achim Gerhard-Kemper represents one of numerous neighborhood "Round Tables", public stakeholder groups that address how refugees can be integrated at the local neighborhood level (Essen City, 2017b). The extent of these groups is laudable; however, we did hear some criticism that the groups were composed mostly of Germans, and that refugees were not well-represented as members or participants.

In 2016, as more and more refugees reached even the smallest villages in Germany, city officials and residents started to wonder how they could actually handle and help more and more incoming refugees. Mr. Rolf Waldeck, the head of the City of Borken ad-hoc committee on refugees, was quite confident that with a number of about 100 refugees in the town, he and volunteers could handle this crisis. But when the number reached more than 200 refugees for a town of 13,500 inhabitants, Mr. Waldeck reported that he started to won-

der whether they could continue to successfully support all refugees. Similarly, the Pommernanlage facility in Wolfhagen opened for refugee placement in about 2013. During our 2016 visit, social workers explained that after nearly three years of participation, some of the town's volunteers were beginning to experience a sort of volunteer fatigue, wondering how much longer they could meet the needs of the camp.

These sentiments also reflected a growing national sense of the difficulty of sustaining refugee assistance over time. As people continue to live in a sort of legal and social limbo, the Willkommen Kultur continues to be tested locally, as well as nationally. While the agency representatives we spoke with did not report personal experience with violence against or by refugees, certainly the Willkommen Kultur has been met with disapproval and dissent since Merkel first opened the borders. By summer of 2016, though, the agency representatives with whom we spoke conveyed more of a sense of resolve to carry on than expressions of either naive hope or serious pessimism. Our August 2016 tour of a soon-to-open temporary refugee housing facility managed by Landkreis Kassel illustrated the ambivalence in which the agency worked. Although the so-called 'tsunami' of refugee arrivals had by then slowed, the agency workers were thoughtfully anticipating future arrivals and how best to accommodate their initial integration with the community. For example, numerous refrigerators and communal cooking areas were being installed, which would provide options for newcomers to prepare familiar foods and to express some sort of agency in making their own food in a situation in which they were otherwise faced without much ability to make their own decisions.

One pattern problem or question in this current situation might be formulated: "How to accept and support refugees in a new atmosphere of mistrust, doubt, and national populism, in general, but for our purpose in particular at the local level of cities, towns, and neighborhoods?"

3.1.2. Finding 2: Housing Design and Pattern "Visitor Room"

Housing is obviously a key element in the care for refugees. The large number of refugees, and their rapid rates of arrival in 2015 and 2016, often created serious accommodation challenges at the local level. While refugees are first housed in relatively large federal arrival camps, it is really the local level where refugees are housed for the longer term and in a more open and connected way to the local community.

While the general tendency in Germany is to provide housing for refugees within the existing building stock, there are also a limited number of new building structures provided for refugee housing (Schmal, Elser, & Scheuermann, 2017). The unwritten policy is to provide the same kind of low-cost housing for refugees and local citizens alike so that there is no indication of special, preferential treatment of refugees. In order to test more options, one of our architectural design studios took up a live-work design exercise at the edge of the central city in Essen and the University of Duisburg-Essen to explore socio-economic integration. Professors Howard Davis and Hajo Neis prepared and carried out a successful live-work (housing and working under one roof) design studio for Syrian refugees in the winter quarter of 2017 at the University of Oregon, Department of Architecture in Eugene (Figure 10). Student projects in this design studio class incorporated some general elements of a Syrian apartment floor plan, such as a "vis-

Figure 10. Photo of a design studio class titled "Refugee Live-Work Design Studio in the cities of Essen (Germany) and Portland (USA)", taught by Professor Howard Davis at the University of Oregon, Architecture Department, in the Winter of 2017.

itor room" that could also be used as a children room. This live-work project also raised the progressive question of next steps through which housing and work can complement each other and help refugees to develop small businesses and shops, and thus help with socio-economic integration.

The pattern "visitor Room" is apparently very important even in a small Syrian household. Therefore, this pattern was successfully applied in the Oregon and German design studio projects in various versions and modern adaptations including flexible uses, so that it also could work for a regular German or American household for a different function, such as a kids' room or working space.

3.1.3. Finding 3: Acclimatization and Friends

Acclimatization requires communication; language learning and mobile phone access are key.

Daily life for refugees includes a large range of practical matters and activities, from learning a language, to health issues, to connecting with the local community and city administration. The mobile phone acts as a critical tool for daily life and for communication back home. A phone is essential for keeping connections with family and friends still living in their original home countries and cities. A mobile phone is also critical for staying in touch with fellow refugees locally and in other cities in Germany or other host countries. Smart phones and Internet connection are critical tools refugees use to navigate new communities, learn the language, and keep up to date on their paperwork and asylum application processes.

Melissa Wall and Madeline Otis Campbell have made a strong argument for why a smart phone should be considered a basic need for refugee escape and integration in a host country (Wall, Otis Campbell, & Janbek, 2017). Their research has demonstrated the high levels of what they term "information precarity" in which many refugees live; research participants reported that mobile phones were almost always included among the few objects people fleeing would bring with them in even the most perilous journeys. In addition to the communication the phones provide, they also serve as an archive of personal documents, and they often serve as the only remaining repository of family photos. In our visits to the Pommernanlage and other camps, the wi-fi hotspot areas were important places for camp residents to gather. The Internet connections, often accessed with mobile phones, allowed the camp residents to communicate on their own, rather than needing to rely on agency representatives or other helpers.

One of the key challenges concerning communication among refugees and with local citizens is that it can be difficult to commit to the level of investment required for teaching and learning a new language while it is still uncertain if refugees will be able to or will wish to stay in the country. In addition, refugees are often coping with high amounts of stress, so it may be difficult to encourage social interaction with the pressure of learning a new language. Given the ongoing stresses facing refugees, the informal programs we encountered served a crucial role of making language easier to learn by combining it with play, work, shopping, and other daily activities.

Informal programs such as the volunteer work at the Kleider Kammer in Essen allow refugees and Germans to interact as relative equals through shared work and exchange. These everyday encounters demonstrate a level of integration beyond the formal structures of laws and work. Joachim Häberlen describes these informal interactions as part of the process of "making friends". As Häberlen discusses, much emphasis within integration discourse in Germany falls within the realm of laws and the role of the state; however, friendships—and we would add, informal interactions in general—are crucial for developing "mutual trust" (Häberlen, 2016, p. 69). Our experiences in each of these three case study communities add support to Häberlen's personal reflections.

"Making friends" also might be the title of a pattern that may need to be developed from the ground up, possibly negotiating and complementing loaded notions such as refugees, migrants, foreigners, and even locals.

3.1.4. Finding 4: Formal and Informal Work

Work experience is critical for assimilation and integration, but it is difficult to obtain during asylum application processing or otherwise.

Next to housing, work is the biggest issue for refugees in terms of a regular daily life and in terms of security and outlook for a good economic future. One could say that refugees are generally provided for by the German government in terms of housing, health care, monetary support, and other needs for daily life. In terms of work, there are a number of measures that are taken in cities and towns, such as internships, practica, and job learning, in the public as well as in the private sector. However, these activities are not regular jobs with standard pay, insurance, and other benefits, such as retirement. Even for refugees with recognized asylum status, there is no definite right for work with benefits. Here the promise that Chancellor Merkel made is incomplete in its results.

The welcoming invitation for refugees needs to include provision of regular jobs and support for private start-up enterprises by refugees. Socio-economic assimilation, and especially integration, depend largely on working and job opportunities in all kinds of forms, including self-help, start-ups (such as food-related businesses), and regular paid jobs. In this area, a lot of work needs to be done to successfully help refugees become more integrated and part of German society.

The younger people who arrive as minors and change their status to adults when turning eighteen years of age have better chances to fulfill the precondition of completing a primary school degree as a prerequisite for the right to even get a regular job. However, the question remains of how to support the next elder generation of

young adults who did not have the benefit of a regular German primary education.

A pattern here could be formulated along the lines of: Young people between twenty and thirty years old need a strong education to better achieve the precondition for regular job qualification.

3.1.5. Finding 5: New Laws for Integration and Immigration

The asylum law and the German residence law are not sufficient to effectively deal with the refugee crisis at the local level.

One of the main reasons for a number of the difficulties and complications with refugees being fully welcome in Germany is the current legal structure regarding foreigners from outside the European Union. The two laws dealing with foreigners are the asylum law and the residence law. The asylum law grants one the right to apply for asylum and be provided for until a decision has been determined about refugee status. The residence law states that non-citizens cannot live in Germany unless there are strong reasons for doing so. The United States is theoretically better able to receive refugees quickly due to the existence of immigration laws that allow for quicker processing of applications.

Special laws need to be introduced in Germany to solve some of the problems for refugees, including the right for more work opportunities; a solid comprehensive immigration law should be established by the parliament in order to provide more options for refugees to participate and become part of the host society in a faster, less troublesome, and more productive way. The new integration law that took hold at the end of 2016 and early 2017 became a major step forward in helping to speed up asylum processes, and also eased the way for refugees to get work more quickly. This law, known as "fordern und foerdern" (challenge and support), attempts to improve the situation and coordination between national and local coordination by combining the national work-related agency, Bundesagentur für Arbeit, with the needs of the various local communal social agencies in counties and municipalities in what is called the "job center".

A county social worker from the Schwalm-Eder County, where Borken is located, shared with us that this development is seen as a positive step forward in dealing with the needs of refugees at the local level with regard to actual support and integration. However, the question of a larger national immigration law that is in the works was seen with some skepticism. If the new law only follows the same principles as most other immigration laws, with emphasis on qualifications of people from other countries who want to live and work in Germany, it would not help many of the refugees who continue to come to Germany. How to develop an immigration law that can be coordinated with the refugee laws seems to be the more relevant question at this point, especially regarding keeping up a realistic welcome attitude.

4. Next Cycle in Progress: An Outlook

In the process of investigating the Willkommen policy's direct or implied promises on the ground in these communities we were able to find and analyze factors that are significant for refugees' life, but also relevant for urban planning to consider in refugee support improvement and in an integration plan for refugees and citizens. We can say that German society initially accepted the challenge, especially on the local level of towns, cities, and villages. In the city of Borken, county of Kassel, and city of Essen, the administrations, public and private organizations, and private citizens alike managed various challenges, such as housing, connections to refugees, providing work related opportunities, as well as helping with asylum matters, and helping refugees to learn the language.

However, it is also true that with the arrival of more tens of thousands of new refugees over the past few years, the situation on the ground has become more and more difficult in these three towns and in German society in general. People started to feel overwhelmed and were uncertain how this ever-increasing refugee population could be taken care of sufficiently, as expressed for example in Mr. Waldeck's concerns. The increasing refugee population and duration of the situation seems to take us to a second cycle of refugee crisis in Germany, Europe, and our three case study cities. Recently, however, the rate of refugee arrivals has decreased, so that in this year, 2018, the refugees coming to Germany are estimated at about 80,000 (in August 2018).

Within Germany and internationally, negative news of hate crimes continues, such as reports of attacks on refugee shelters with fire bombs and other horrible events that have taken place. For instance, one disturbing event occurred inside the county of Kassel at the former airport of Calden, where a large number of refugees from different ethnic backgrounds had a huge fight among themselves in the dining hall; the instance was reported all over the world (Deutsche Welle, 2015). However, it is also appropriate to note that this large camp is a national federal and state camp, not part of the responsibility of the county itself.

The choice of the three German cities was made to allow comparison across scales, and it was based on our own private, professional, and academic connections to supportive people, municipalities, and universities. However, in a discussion with Mr. Claus Muller from the renowned news article "Frankfurter Allgemeine FAZ", Mr. Muller correctly pointed out that all of our case study cities are located in the western part of Germany, and none is in eastern Germany, where conditions apparently are dramatically different (Knight, 2016). Consequently, and on the suggestion of Professor Ralf Weber from the Technical University of Dresden, we have decided to look at the city of Bautzen, close to the Polish border and the city of Dresden (Figure 2), to obtain a more complete picture in a different

and also more difficult context. In the summer of 2018, Dr. Neis visited Bautzen and the burned remains Hotel Husarenhof, which had been retrofit for refugee housing, but was then set on fire, allegedly by right wing opposition (Figure 11). A local community worker confirmed the two different tendencies of "help and hate" in this lovely historical city.

Figure 11. The burned out Husarenhof Hotel in Bautzen, originally intended for refugees. Photo taken by Hajo Neis, August 2018.

Finally, since early 2017, we continue to hear and read more about young refugees who were not accepted with refugee status, but were rejected and in fact deported by police cordoned airplanes to their home countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, and African countries (Vyas, 2017). For example, during Dr. Neis' December 2016 visit to Borken, he found out that Kemal (name changed), one of the Pakistani refugees with whom he had met the previous summer, had received notice that his asylum application had been rejected and had fled to another part of Europe to avoid deportation. This latest development in the refugee saga reminds us of the incomplete attempt for an improving world. One refugee cycle has been completed with migrants and refugees forced return to where many had started their difficult journey, but now they have nothing to show at home that was worth the effort (Avenarius, Kastner, & Heidtmann, 2017). For others who were accepted with asylum status, a major step forward was achieved that continues to promise more success and the start of a new life in the welcome city.

In a recent development, fueled by several calls and comments by critics for a more basic and comprehensive approach for understanding the refugee situation (InzentIM, 2017), as well as helping and providing guidelines and advice for support and integration, we have started to develop a "refugee pattern language", with the more descriptive subtitle of "A Design Framework for Refugee Support and Integration", with the real possibility of a contribution to the next phase in the ongoing refugee narrative.[1] As explained earlier, patterns are individual solutions to recurrent problems. In addition to individual patterns, pattern languages can be understood as systems of patterns that tackle larger, more complex themes and clusters of issues than individual patterns, such as the difficult issue of refugee help and integration. In order to try to help to solve actual contemporary problems, the refugee pattern language will address the urgent challenges in this current period and beyond, including the key issues of improved refugee acceptance, improved refugee-support, and the function of the press in these complicated processes.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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[1] Read more about our project at: refugee.uoregon.edu

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