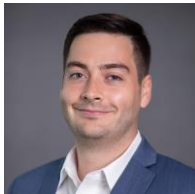




Social Divisions and Questions of Identity in Germany and the United States: Consequences for Politics and Society

Participant Biographies



Alex Baker
Atlantic Council

Alex Pieter Baker is a Project Assistant with the Atlantic Council's Future Europe Initiative. His work centers on transatlantic digital policy, European Union politics, Germany, and transatlantic relations. Prior to joining the Future Europe Initiative, he served as Executive Assistant to the Executive Vice President at the Atlantic Council. He brings a strong understanding of German culture and politics to the program. As an undergraduate student, he lived in Dessau, Saxony Anhalt, during which time he interned in the Mayor's office. As a graduate student, he spent a year studying at Freie Universität Berlin. Mr. Baker is also a regular contributor to Bloody Hell Magazine, where his articles examine the intersection of politics and soccer in Germany and beyond.



Marcela Barrientos
New York Civic Engagement Table

Marcela Barrientos is a proud immigrant born in Honduras and raised in New York City. She grew up in a household where art and politics went hand-in-hand, resulting in her love for theatre and activism. Ms. Barrientos is currently the Director of Training and Leadership Development at the New York Civic Engagement Table (NYCET), a coalition organization working with over 70 community-based partner organizations across the state. She oversees NYCET's statewide leadership program, develops all field curricula including voter registration, voter mobilization, census and political education.

Ms. Barrientos also has an extensive background working in the labor movement as a strategic campaigner, organizer and trainer. Prior to joining NYCET, Ms. Barrientos was hired as the first Director of Organizing for the AFL-CIO's Latino Constituency Group, where she traveled throughout the country, meeting with Latino union members, students, and allies to organize around issues impacting their communities.

She earned her undergraduate degree at NYU Tisch School of the Arts and her Master's degree in Applied Theatre at CUNY's School of Professional Studies. Ms. Barrientos is also a recipient of NYU's Hemispheric Institute EmergeNYC Fellowship.



Dillon Cathro

University of Michigan School of Social Work

Dillon Alexander Methven Cathro currently works as Community Research Coordinator for the University of Michigan School of Social Work. He has a strong interest in education and immigration reform, particularly concerning pedagogical reform in foreign language teaching, and the improvement of resettlement services for immigrant and refugee populations. He aspires to become a university-level Social Work professor, with a research emphasis on immigration and asylum processes, as well as the use of translation within the field of social work. In the future, Mr. Cathro would like to teach in an undergraduate Social Work program, either in the US or in Scotland, and to serve as an advocate for students that hold historically marginalized sociocultural identities.



Matthias Diermeier

German Economic Institute

Matthias Diermeier is the personal scientific assistant to the director of the German Economic Institute (IW), Prof. Dr. Michael Hüther. His research focus is in political economy and voting behaviour. The goal of his research is to provide solutions to bridge gaps within societies and to answer the rising threat to liberal democracy from the populist right. Mr. Diermeier is a PhD Student at the University of Duisburg-Essen in Political Science. He holds a Master's degree in economics from the University of Zurich, with specialization in Political Economics, and a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of St. Gallen. He has also studied at the Sciences Po Paris and Universidad de San Andrés, Buenos Aires. Mr. Diermeier is fluent in four European languages.



Teresa Eder

ZDF German Television

Teresa Eder is a TV producer for German Television's ZDF, and is based in Washington, DC. In this capacity, she pitches, plans, and films human-interest and political pieces for ZDF's main news-shows and magazines. Her producing, writing and research frequently focus on societal divisions, identity, and extremism. Before moving to the United States in 2015, Ms. Eder worked in several different positions for the Austrian newspaper Der Standard, including Deputy Head of the Foreign Affairs Department. She broadened her experience at the World Bank, the Atlantic Council and Human Rights First. Ms. Eder holds Master's degrees in International Relations, Political Science, and Journalism from Georgetown University, the University of Vienna and the University of Applied Sciences in Vienna, respectively. She is an avid violinist, performing regularly with orchestras and chamber music groups in the DC area.



M. Talha Evran

University of Cologne/Altinbas University Istanbul

M. Talha Evran is a third-year law student pursuing a double-degree from the University of Cologne-Germany and Altinbas University Istanbul-Turkey. He holds a scholarship from the German Academic National Foundation (*Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes*). Mr. Evran launched “Campaign Refugee Child” in 2014 to draw attention to the unpleasant circumstances of refugee children in Germany. The same year, he was named a UNICEF Youth Ambassador of the Year by the German Committee for UNICEF. Moreover, he volunteers as a Junior Coach on behalf of the social initiative “180° Turn.” Mr. Evran’s international experiences include participating in a summer seminar in San Antonio, Texas, sponsored by the German-American Fulbright Commission.



Terron Ferguson

YANCY, Inc.

Terron Ferguson is an entrepreneur from Miami, Florida. He runs YANCY, Inc., a network-based firm that offers a variety of services and produces projects on important topics. His background consists primarily of public service roles, including but not limited to: special education teacher, political organizer, and human rights attorney. Mr. Ferguson moved to Leipzig, Germany as a German Chancellor Fellow with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, where he researches the Holocaust, World War II, denazification, and memory culture. He plans to open a multimedia exhibition to present his findings. This project will offer insights on how a country heals and moves past a difficult era in its history.



Elizaveta Firsova

Institute for Didactics of Democracy

Elizaveta Firsova is a research associate and PhD student at the Institute for Didactics of Democracy at Leibniz University of Hanover. Ms. Firsova holds a Master of Arts in Education Studies from Freie Universität Berlin and has focused on the role of education in combatting social division, especially regarding immigrant communities. After her graduation, she worked for "PROOF: Media for Social Justice" in New York City, on curricula in the field of social justice. Currently, Ms. Firsova is a project coordinator for initiatives funded by the European Union to tackle social divisions on different levels. In one project, she focuses on bringing digital media literacy to schools with predominantly disadvantaged students, and in her second project, she is designing a program to target extremism and conspiracy theories in adult education institutions. In her PhD thesis, Ms. Firsova researches the impact of the Israeli-German youth exchange program on participants' political views regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



Fiona Harrigan
University of Arizona

Fiona Harrigan is a sophomore at the University of Arizona (UA), where she is double-majoring in Political Science and Economics. She is a member of the UA Honors College. Much of Ms. Harrigan's interest in international affairs stems from her time as a participant in the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange, through which she lived in Erfurt, Germany during the 2017-18 academic year. Professionally, Ms. Harrigan has experience in photography and in policy research. She has been engaged in various photography assignments focused on border issues in the greater Tucson area. Ms. Harrigan is also a political writer, and has been published in outlets such as The Washington Examiner, Inside Sources, and the Arizona Daily Star.



Juliane Jelinek
Chemnitz University of Technology

Juliane Jelinek works as a lecturer at the University of Technology in Chemnitz, Germany. She received her Master's degree in adults' education, majoring in English and French, in 2011. Since 2012, Ms. Jelinek has been teaching English, French, and German as a foreign language at university and in schools. She also worked as a project coordinator in the department of Electrical Engineering and Information Technology at her university. In 2005 and 2006, she was a language assistant in France for 14 months; and, since 2007, she has volunteered as a "buddy" for international students at the University of Technology in Chemnitz. Through her travels and stays abroad, Ms. Jelinek is interested in new cultures, languages, and people and strives to sensitize her community to the chance of multiculturalism, strengthening the "culture of communication" and finding compromises for a better understanding.



Katharina Kiefel
Amerika Haus North Rhine-Westphalia

Ever since her time in Atlanta, GA (2009-2011), Katharina Kiefel has been dedicated to fostering and promoting transatlantic relations both personally and professionally. Her first such endeavor was through her Master's degree in North American Studies, with focuses in International Relations and Economics, from the Friedrich-Wilhelm University of Bonn. Ms. Kiefel then became Program Manager of Amerika Haus North Rhine-Westphalia in Cologne, which was formerly part of the U.S. Mission to Germany's Public Affairs section. Today, Amerika Haus North Rhine-Westphalia is an independent, not-for-profit organization with 50+ transatlantic events and projects annually, exploring the intersection of politics, culture, business, and education.

Ms. Kiefel is part of the Aspen Institute Next Generation Network on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and she is Co-Founder of the Transatlantic Female Forum. Before her professional engagement, she volunteered extensively in a transatlantic context, e. g., working with an organization of students and Prof. Dr. Sielke, Chair of North American Studies, a transatlantic conference.



Markus Lohse

Hochschule Mittweida/Technical University of Dresden

Markus Lohse is a social worker and educator, affiliated with one of the largest non-profit organizations in Chemnitz, Saxony. His professional expertise lies in the management of Germany's nationwide volunteer service, the Social Voluntary Year (*Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr*, or "FSJ") and the Federal Voluntary Service (*Bundesfreiwilligendienst*, or BFD), which is a platform for both Germans and international participants. Mr. Lohse holds a Diploma in Social Work and a Master's Degree in Social Science. Currently, he is working on his European Union/Federal State of Saxony-funded PhD-project at the Hochschule Mittweida, University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Social Work in cooperation with the Technical University of Dresden, Faculty of Education.

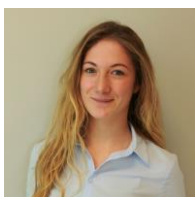
In his academic work, Mr. Lohse explores the interaction which takes place in supervision and coaching. Taking an in-depth qualitative approach, he investigates and aims to be able to provide scientific answers to the "what"s and the "how"s of communicative interactions. In particular, he is interested in those moments of insight and realization and wants to better understand the intervention-reflection-continuum generating knowledge during professional counseling.



Simon Morris-Lange

Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (SVR)

Simon Morris-Lange is Deputy Head of Research with the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration (SVR), a leading, non-partisan think tank devoted to migration and the integration of first- and second-generation migrants. Before joining SVR, Mr. Morris-Lange served as an analyst with the Illuminate Consulting Group in the San Francisco Bay Area and as Chief Operating Officer with *iversity*, a Berlin-based edutech company. Mr. Morris-Lange has gained extensive experience in comparative research and evidence-based policy advice through research and leadership development projects in Europe and North America. Mr. Morris-lange writes regularly on immigrant integration, and educational inequalities. He was educated in Germany, the United States, and Singapore.



Bianca Neumann

University of Münster

Bianca Derya Neumann is 23 years old and was born in the Sauerland-Area in western Germany. After completing an internship at the United Nations Economic Commission of Europe, she decided to study politics and economics in Münster to further develop the skills and experience needed to analyse and influence the difficulties many societies will face in the future. During her studies, she has gained experience in international and social relations by working for international and national organizations like the European Federation of Geologists. By taking part in the project "Social Divisions and Questions of Identity in Germany and the United States" Ms. Neumann hopes to become a part of a team of people with different backgrounds and interesting ideas to be able to contribute to the goal of Social Cohesion, especially in Akron and Chemnitz.



Sara Shokravi

Robert Bosch Fellow

Sara Shokravi lives in Berlin, Germany where she has spent the last year focusing on the experience of women in Germany's refugee integration process as part of the Robert Bosch Foundation Fellowship. Through her work with the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration and Kiron Open Higher Education for Refugees, she was able to examine integration approaches in Germany, ranging from labor and economic empowerment to the use of sport as a means of integration, through social networks of support and exchange of information. Prior to this, Ms. Shokravi spent over a decade working in both the private sector and non-profit organizations providing sociocultural and geopolitical expertise on leading foreign policy issues. Ms. Shokravi attended American University for her MA in International Politics and California State Polytechnic University for her BA in Political Science and History.



Francis Troyan

The Ohio State University

Francis John Troyan is Associate Professor of World Language Education at The Ohio State University. In his teaching, research, and work, he is the faculty coordinator of the World Language Teacher preparation program, an affiliated member of the Bilingual Education endorsement program for practicing teachers, and an affiliate of the Department of French and Italian. He partners with Fulbright Germany (See Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Classroom) to work with teachers and pre-service teachers from Germany to prepare them to address issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion in German educational contexts where the cultural and linguistic landscape of classrooms is becoming increasingly diverse. This work is informed by Mr. Troyan's research in multilingual classrooms in the United States and his Fulbright-funded research in France, where he investigated immigrant student experiences in a public, urban primary school classroom in southern France.