Welfare and Values in Europe:
Transitions related to Religion, Minorities and Gender (WaVE)

Germany:
Overview of the national situation

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1. Introduction

The German Constitution gives emphasis to the social character of the state, but the term 'welfare state', which is used in the international debate, has a negative connotation in Germany. It is linked to a powerful state, which provides for its citizens from birth to death. After the experiences of the national socialist regime and the socialist regime in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) a strong state with comprehensive knowledge of its citizens is considered to be dangerous for democracy and citizenship rights (Alber and Schöllkopf). During the second half of the 20th century the German social state was formed, expanded and differentiated. Its growing effectiveness and comprehensiveness contributed to establish and deepen the confidence of the citizens in the state, especially in the periods after the political dictatorships. Because of this, the current need to adapt the system to changes in society is perceived as a crisis of the German welfare system both by the media and by the citizens. One concerns the changing life concepts of women in a welfare system that is traditionally based on the male breadwinner model.

1.1. Characteristics of the German situation

The two big folk churches, the Roman-Catholic Church and the Protestant Church, and the welfare organisations related to them play an important role in the welfare sector. They provide many of the welfare services and are critical markers of the German system, especially with regard to political and social matters. In the field of welfare in particular, values are still influenced by the majority religion that is by the two folk churches.

Another specificity is German post-war history, which implies the existence of two separate German states, the Western Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the socialist German Democratic Republic (GDR). Even though the two states have been socially reunited for 17 years now, the social conditions shaped by the different political systems still influence the situation of gender, minorities and religion. The West German welfare system has become the dominating model in the country as a whole. It was and still is more common and natural for women in the former GDR to combine work and family. For economic and historic reasons the number of residents without German passport is lower in the Eastern federal states, while the unemployment is still higher. East Germany is one of the most secularised parts of Europe, where only between 35%
and 20% of the population is a member of the two folk churches. At the same time it is important to stress that due to economic and structural developments there are considerable regional differences not only between Eastern and Western regions, but also between the Northern and the Southern part of the country.

For the term ‘minority’ different definitions can be found in the German context. There are many minority groups present in the country, e.g. ‘national minorities’, ‘ethnic minorities’ and ‘religious minorities. Many of the minority groups have their own values, which they express in their practices. The different values and practices of the majority and the minorities are a source of tension in the German society. German policy tries to direct the interaction between majority and minorities towards more cohesion and solidarity. At the same time it becomes more and more obvious that minority groups influence and challenge majority values. This is for example illustrated by different perspectives on welfare provision and gender issues.

1.2 Review of literature and research related to WaVE

There is a multitude of publications, empirical studies and research on welfare, values, gender, religion and minorities in Germany. In this report we can only select important examples of some of the research areas: the works by Allmendinger and Ludwig-Mayerhofer 2000, Schmidt 2005b or by Butterwegge 2005 provide a review of the current challenges and developments of the German welfare system. As the social changes also imply changes for religious agents and their position within the welfare system they have become of increasing interest to researchers since the 1990s. Areas of interest include the organisation of church-related welfare organisations and their interaction with the churches (Boeßenecker 2005, Schmidt 2005a, Falterbaum 2000, Broll 1999), the identity and motivation of Christian welfare workers and welfare services (Haas 2004, Degen 2003, Ziebertz 1993), the links between church-related welfare organisations and the state and its legitimacy (Frerk 2005) or studies questioning current church social work in the light of growing poverty (Flessa 2003).

structure of Germany by comparing it to other countries. The anthologies of Edgardh Beckman (2004) and Yeung (2005) explore the role of majority churches in European welfare systems (German case study by Leis, Leis-Peters), Schmid (1996) and, Fix and Fix (2005) map the role of (church-related) independent welfare organisations in European welfare systems and Strohm (1997 and 2000) presents different models of church social work in Europe.

There are several publications discussing the relationship of the majority state, the majority population or majority religion to minority groups: Markefkas (1995) offers a sociological introduction into how prejudices emerge and how to work against them, Mintzel (1997) compares different concepts of multicultural societies in Europe and Northern America, Tibi (2000) discusses the crisis of multicultural societies in a European perspective, Rommelspacher (2004) describes the problems and achievements of multicultural society in Germany applying amongst others a gender approach, and Meier-Braun and Weber (2005) argue from the perspective of a prosperous federal state that Germany has become a country of immigration. Starting from the majority religion Heimbach-Steins and Eid (1999) try to define the task of majority churches in a multicultural society. The anthology of Barth and Elsas (2005) gives topical perspectives on religious minorities and Baumann and Behloul (2005) explore the existing religious pluralism in Germany and Switzerland. A useful source is the registered association REMID e.V., a media and information service for the study of religion (http://www.remid.de).

A growing number of welfare studies pay attention to gender issues: the anthology of Pfau-Effinger and Geissler (2005) examines European societies from a care regime perspective, Abrahamson, Boje and Greve (2005) map the changes in the field of welfare and family, Daly and Rake (2003) analyse the relationship between the welfare system and gender by examining the areas of care, work and welfare, Hammer and Lutz (2002) explore the question of why women are socially disadvantaged both on a theoretical and empirical level and Fix (2001) shows the connections between family policy and majority religion in four European countries.

Presently there is a strong research focus on minorities, emigrants and immigrants in Germany, on Muslims and Jews in particular. Numbers and data on migration are provided by the European Commission (Eurostat) 2004, by the Federal Department for Migration and Refugees 2004 or by the Representative of the Federal Government for Migration, Refugees and Integration 2004. The Federation of German Trade Unions has created a website on migration issues (http://www.migration-online.de). Oltmer and Schubert have compiled a bibliography of historical
research on migration. Van Deth (2004) links the issues of migration and minorities to European social and values studies, Allmendinger and Ludwig-Mayerhofer (2000) and Treichler (2002) study migration and minorities in the context of the changing welfare system. In addition to these more general approaches there are many studies on individual minority groups within German society, e.g. on migrants with German origins coming from the former USSR (Peitzmeier and Kaiser 2005, Bade and Oltmer 2003) or about migrants from Turkey (Pütz 2004, Sökefeld 2004). Other studies explore the intercultural communication in welfare institutions such as hospitals (Dreißig 2005) or the specific connections and problems of migration and sickness (Marschalck and Wiedl 2001). Both minority and gender-related research indicate difficult situations, tensions and conflicts within the German welfare system and German society in general.

Another research area is the image of migrants and minorities in the media and the public debate. Beck-Gernsheim (2004) reviews how migrants and minorities are perceived by the media and the public, while Geißler and Pöttker (2005) study the role of the mass media in integrating ethnic minorities.

Furthermore, there are a variety of research projects and research institutes dealing with the respective issues. Again, we only can mention a few selected examples. The faculty of educational science at Hamburg University currently hosts the project “Religion in Education. A contribution to Dialogue or a factor of Conflict in transforming societies of European Countries (REDCo)”. At Osnabrück University there is an interdisciplinary “Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies” (http://www.imis.uni-osnabrueck.de). Oldenburg University has founded an “Interdisciplinary Centre for Formation and Communication in Processes of Migration” (http://www.uni-oldenburg.de/ibkm/).

The examples above illustrate that there is a lot of research on welfare, values, gender, religion and minorities, but at the same time the review points to a research gap. Neither existing studies, nor ongoing research projects, bring together all of the above mentioned issues. In this respect the WaVE project is an important contribution to new knowledge on German society within a European context.

2. **Characteristics of the German welfare system**

With reference to Esping-Andersen, the German welfare system is often described as
conservative and corporatist (Esping-Andersen 1990; cf. e.g. Schmid 2002; Poole 2001). Having its origins in the Bismarck social insurance laws of the 1880s it combines today various independent schemes of social insurance\(^1\) and state responsibility for welfare. In a European comparison the social state gives German residents a comprehensive social protection. This is for example indicated by high expenditures on social protection (30.2 % of GDP in 2003) or the risk of poverty rate after social transfers (16 % in 2004), which is below the average of the poverty rate after social transfers of the EU 15 (17 % in 2004) (www.europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/). As the different schemes of social insurance were and are (partly) still organised according to different occupational groups the welfare system tends to maintain or exacerbate economic-social differences and be open to pressure groups (Esping-Andersen 1990, 60f.; Baumert and Schümer 2001). Another feature of the welfare system is that it is employment-centred. Being employed is a precondition to becoming an independent member of the insurance system (Bussemaker and Van Kersbergen 1999; Strohm 2000). Furthermore, the welfare system is shaped by a strong family orientation. It takes for granted that families, namely women, do (unpaid) welfare work, educate young children and care of the elderly in particular. Accordingly, the system does not aim at the individual, but at the individual within her or his family context. Many social laws and regulations presuppose a male breadwinner who provides for the wife and children (Poole 2001). Therefore, Germany has been labelled as a male breadwinner regime (Sainsbury 1999, Silius 2002). However, the social reforms of the past years have started to change these characteristics. The reformed laws on funding and support of disabled persons are one example of this trend. They focus on the individual person and aim at giving as many individual choices as possible (Jerg 2005, Schädler 2003).

2.1 Cooperation of public and independent providers in the field of welfare

Another specificity of the German welfare system is the cooperation of public and independent providers in the field of welfare (Olk 2001). As in the different schemes of social insurance, this cooperation has historical roots in the 19\(^{th}\) century and the first democratic state in Germany, the Weimar republic (Kaiser 1998, Leis 2004). After the experience of the totalitarian National Socialist regime, policy makers wanted to avoid any form of centralisation and streamlining of society. The churches, which were almost the only intact organisations left, and the welfare organisations related to them, became important partners in the emerging German social state. During the 1950s and the 1960s, the legislation and social reforms dominated by the ruling conservative Christian Democratic Party, gave independent welfare organisations in general and church related organisations in particular a privileged position, often in the face of opposition from
the Social Democrats. The principle of subsidiarity, with origins in Catholic social teaching, became a guiding principle for German social policy. This meant in practice that the legislation gave non-commercial independent welfare providers precedence over public providers whenever a welfare service was to be established or to be run. Public providers should only run services if no independent provider was interested. This does not mean that the state, the federal states and the municipalities have handed over their responsibility and obligation of social warranty. Rather they delegate their social tasks to independent welfare organisations and reimburse them the costs of providing these legally guaranteed services (Neumann and Schaper 1998, 244f.). This tendency in legislation and practice is called the “privilege of associations” (Verbändeprivileg) or “relative priority” (bedingter Vorrang) of independent welfare organisations (Campenhausen 1982) and was applied until the middle of the 1990s in the area of welfare provision.

During the 1990s social policy started to integrate commercial welfare providers and to gradually introduce a social market. By establishing a controlled competition between commercial and non-commercial independent welfare providers the public authorities hoped to reduce welfare costs. The adoption of the law on care insurance in 1994 is considered to mark the change (Lange 2001).²

Due to state-church-legislation in Germany, independent welfare organisations related to the churches have a special position. Legally, they are regarded as belonging to church bodies. But organisationally and financially, they are autonomous. The German Constitution guarantees religious freedom not only to the individual, but also to associations and organisations and applies the positive right to exercise religion to organisations such as independent church related welfare organisations. This means that social work conducted by these organisations is approved by law as a way of exercising religion (article 4 and 140 GG). Through being members of the regional umbrella organisation of Caritas and Diakonie (private-law), church-related welfare organisations can be legally recognised as a part of the Roman-Catholic or Protestant church. This status gives them special rights and freedoms: the right of the state to interfere in their internal affairs is limited, which has for example noticeable effects in the field of labour legislation. (Campenhausen 1996).

2.2 Current changes in German society and social system

German society is going through considerable changes at the moment. Quite apart from
internal causes, this development is affected by international trends such as globalisation, European integration, ageing societies and a general change of values. The German social state is in principle based on full employment (at least of the male citizens). Because of this, the rate of unemployment, which has been between 8% and 10% for almost 20 years (in some regions up to 25-30%), is experienced as major social problem. The financial situation of the various schemes of social insurance is worrying as their construction – and as a consequence – their financing is called into question by unemployment, the costs of German reunification and the ageing of the population. These demographic developments challenge both pension and health insurance in particular as they rely on a contract between generations. Growing life expectancy along with low birth rates from the 1970s onwards result in overextending future working generations (Landsberg 2003). In 2004 the average life expectancy in Germany was 75.7 years for men and 81.4 years for women. This is below the average life expectancy of the EU 15, which is 76.0 years for men 81.7 years for women (in 2003) and above the average of EU 25, which is 75.1 years for men and 81.2 years for women (in 2003) (www.europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/). There are also ideological changes. Solidarity, as an inherent value of the welfare system, becomes less important due to growing individualisation. The motivation to contribute to the welfare system declines because its sustainability is increasingly questioned (Deufel and Wolf 2003, Keupp 2000). At the same time there is a vivid public discussion on labour costs weakening the competitive position of German companies on the European and global markets. It is often argued that fundamental cuts in the welfare system increase competitiveness.3

The welfare system has to adapt to these changing conditions. The most debated current reform is legislation, which changes the system of unemployment benefits and aims at reducing unemployment (Hartz IV). In 2005 social assistance and benefits for long term unemployed people were combined. Now, unemployment benefits fall much faster to the level of social assistance. The reform affects the middle-class, as it has become more difficult to maintain social status under longer periods of unemployment. Experts expect a visible growth of poverty within society and an increasing number of families and children living on social assistance (Butterwege, Klundt and Zeng 2005).

Hartz IV implies a fusion of the social welfare offices and labour exchanges, which means centralisation. At the same time initiatives are made to decentralise the public administration on all levels. This includes the decentralisation of welfare services. There is an intense debate among professionals about this decentralisation: will it make the provision and quality of the
welfare services more unbalanced as they will be affected by the financial situation of the respective local and regional entity (Grözinger and Haas 2004)? Other currently debated issues are political initiatives to support women combining professional work and family (see below) and reforms to reduce costs in the healthcare system. On the one hand, public opinion seems to agree on the need of reforms in the welfare sector. On the other hand, experts question whether the German welfare system in principle is capable of reform because of its federal and corporatist character and the strong influence of interest groups (Opielka 2003; Metzler 2003).

2.3 Women and men in German society and welfare system

The roles of women and men within the welfare sector indicate that traditional gender roles still exist in Germany. While men manage the welfare sector within the public sector, churches and other independent welfare organisations, the actual welfare work is conducted by women. This is for example illustrated by figures on employees within the healthcare sector. Altogether approximately 75% of all healthcare employees are women. But men have 2/3 of all occupations with higher incomes and managerial responsibilities (such as physicians). The distribution of women and men among voluntary welfare workers is similar. About 75% of all welfare work is done by female volunteers, while male volunteers often direct and manage these activities (Kirchenamt der EKD 2006, 21, Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 1999). If the welfare work conducted within the family is taken into consideration as well, then the prevalence of women in welfare work becomes even more clear (Stark and Regnér 2001). It is more difficult to provide a consistent picture of men and women as welfare users. There are for example more women who are using care services or family counselling, but more boys than girls engage youth care services.

The changing life concepts of women are less and less in line with the traditional division of work. Because of this many current reforms attempt to “soften” the existing male-breadwinner system. The introduction of a new model of parental benefits and parental leave in January 2007 was vividly debated. The model is inspired by the Swedish system, which includes the feature that the state pays two extra months if the father takes parental leave as well.

Another important discussion is the increasing social exclusion in society. Certain groups have a much higher risk of reaching a marginal position. In addition to migrants, there are
young people and single parents to be added to these groups. Approximately 10% of all children and young people – and their parents – have only limited access to all the opportunities society has to offer, among them an important percentage of children of single mothers. Against the backdrop of their particular family situation it is very difficult for single mothers to find a regular employment with an income above the poverty line. Poverty thus becomes young and female. This does not only affect the individual lives of the persons concerned but also the future of society (Butterwegge, Klundt and Zeng 2005).

Statistics show that many young people from migrant backgrounds have low educational levels or do not graduate from school at all. As a consequence, their possibilities for unemployment increase. In comparison, young migrant men fare worse than young migrant women. This is viewed as a failure of the German educational system (Beauftragter der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration 2004, Baumert and Schümer 2001).

A complex issue of public debate is the care of elderly people at home. Women are highly affected by this as both the majority of caretakers and of caregivers are female. Care insurance (1995) has made it possible to be reimbursed for home-care within the family. If certain family members are unemployed a growing number of families use this possibility to earn extra money by caring for family members. But the women involved in the care work find themselves in an isolated situation, which can result in personal crisis and family conflicts. At the same time, professional home care services lose clients and have to dismiss employees who are also almost exclusively women. Families who want professional home care, but cannot afford professional services, employ women from Eastern Europe to care for their elderly both legally and illegally. The women live in the family for some months caring for the elderly person all day. Because of the wage differences and their working hours this is cheaper for the family than a professional German home care service. In this respect the EU is influencing the home care situation in Germany. Public opinion is split. On the one hand, this makes life much easier for many families who have to take care of an elderly relative. On the other hand, there is a fear of losing regular jobs and declining wages in the comparatively badly paid field of home care. In addition the consequences for the living conditions of women from Eastern Europe and their families are debated (Caritasverband der Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart & Diakonisches Werk Württemberg, 2005).

Other controversial issues include domestic and public violence against women (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 2004). There is also the issue of
violence against young immigrant women in the form of “honour killings”, especially after the case of a young woman in Berlin, who was murdered by her brother in 2005 (http://www.migration-info.de/migration_und_bevoelkerung/artikel/050903.htm), and trafficking and prostitution, especially in the context of the Football World Championship in Germany (http://www.ekd.de/efd/index_559.php3; www.kok-potsdam.de), which received a great deal of attention by the mass media.

School is an important source of conflict and debate related to welfare provision since all people who live in Germany are obliged to send their children to school. Well-known cases are the “crucifix case” and the “veil case”. In the “crucifix case” parents sued the federal state of Bavaria, which – according to its own school law – puts up crucifixes in every schoolroom. The parents considered the crucifix to influence their children in terms of the Christianity and to violate their personal beliefs (Bundesverfassungsgericht 1997). In the “veil case”, a Muslim teacher sued the federal state of Baden-Württemberg for not employing her as teacher and civil servant because she was wearing a veil while teaching in school (Bundesverfassungsgericht 2003). Other conflicts related to religion, minorities and gender concern the instruction itself, such as co-educational physical education.

3. Religious composition in Germany

There is no majority church in Germany, but two large folk churches, which have almost the same size. The following table presents the numbers of churches and religious groups in the beginning of the 21st century:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Churches and religious groups</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roman-catholic Christians</td>
<td>26,165,000</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant Christians (EKD)</td>
<td>25,629,524</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Christian churches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptists</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodists</td>
<td>63,150</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pietists</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churches and religious groups</td>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox Christians</td>
<td>ca. 885,100-905,100</td>
<td>1999-2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>ca. 189,000</td>
<td>2003/2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>ca. 3,300,000</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>ca. 92,500-97,500</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhists</td>
<td>ca. 64,000-74,000</td>
<td>2004/2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.remid.de](http://www.remid.de)

The most exact numbers are those of the Roman-Catholic and the Protestant Christians (EKD) as their member statistics are published because they are connected to the church taxes that are collected in Germany.

The evolution of folk churches has been characterised by a decline of members, while the Muslim minority is growing: among the Muslim minority only 732,000 hold a German passport. Altogether 64.9% of German inhabitants are members of a Christian church. The smaller Catholic and Protestant denominations, a high number of smaller Christian free churches or special communities and the different Orthodox churches are not included in the table. There are more Hindus than Buddhists in Germany. Regarding the Jewish community it should be mentioned that about 80,000 Jews live outside of parishes and 5,000 Jews belong to a union with a liberal Jewish orientation. The number of Jews is growing since the 1990s as many Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union come to Germany. Among the religious communities, which are not officially registered as a church, the New Apostolic Church (about 388,000 members) and Jehovah’s Witnesses (about 164,000 members) have the most members. Current studies presume that about 800,000 persons in Germany have close contacts to or belong to smaller independent religious communities, philosophical communities or new religious movements. Legally, the two folk churches and Jewish parishes have privileged positions. There is a risk that the other religious communities consider themselves in a disadvantaged situation, the numerically strong Muslim communities in particular.

The distribution of Roman-Catholics and Protestants among the population differs considerably among different regions depending on the church history of the area ([http://www.brockhaus-enziklopaedie.de/be21_article.php?document_id=0x17f0e1a7@be](http://www.brockhaus-enziklopaedie.de/be21_article.php?document_id=0x17f0e1a7@be)).

Historically, Roman-Catholics, Protestants and Jews lived together in the same territories at least after the Napoleonic Wars. The Jewish population has almost been annihilated by the National Socialists. The fact that the Jewish community is currently growing is warmly welcomed and considered a sign of hope in the German society. After reunification, the German population can be divided into three major religious groups: about 26 million are Roman-Catholic and Protestant respectively and about 23 million inhabitants do not have “any confession” (konfessionslos), that is they are not officially registered as members of any religious organisation. Most of the church members live in the Western part. Only about 1 million Roman-Catholics and 3.53 million Protestants live in the Eastern federal states. The third group represents both the multi-religious character and the secularisation of society as it embraces, other Christian denominations, other religions (such as Islam) and the sizable group of atheists, agnostics and unaffiliated. Though the peaceful revolution of 1989 emerged mainly from church related circles (Lindner 1998, 15-24, 63-83), it is still normal in the Eastern federal state not to be affiliated to any of the churches or religious organisations. Unlike most of the other post-communist countries, the majority of the population in the Eastern part of Germany is indifferent towards the churches (Gabriel 2003). There is a growing number of research on this issue (for example Schneider-Flume 2006, Domsgen 2005, Roßner 2004).

4. Characteristics of the two German folk churches

The formal relationship between the folk churches and the state is based on state church law as found in German Constitution, the constitutions of the German federal states and the contract law (Protestant Church contracts and Catholic concordats). The Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches, syndicated in the Evangelische Kirche Deutschlands (EKD) are corporations under public law to ensure the institutional independence of both church and state. An important interface is the area of religious education (schools and universities) and the area of welfare (see section 2).

The first democratic constitution in Germany, the Weimar Constitution, separated state and churches, established state neutrality in the field of religion and world views, and guaranteed the citizens freedom of religion. The traditional government of the Protestant Churches by a secular sovereign came to a sudden end. The Roman-Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches
remained corporations under public law, but became autonomous in relation to the state (Campenhausen, 1996, 29ff.). After World War II the folk churches were integrated in the reconstruction of the destroyed country. The preamble of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany refers explicitly to God. This was a consequence of the experiences of the totalitarian National Socialist regime. On the one hand, the constitution maintained the separation of church and state, introduced by the Weimar constitution, but at the same time it confirmed the churches as corporations under public law and defined them as an integral part of the democratic society (Winter, 2001, 51f.). The strong social position of the churches is also exemplified by the fact that religion as a compulsory subject in public schools is taught in accordance to the principles of the folk churches in most of the federal states (Campenhausen, 1996, 238-248).

The development of the churches in the Eastern part of Germany was different. Church employees and church members experienced ideological pressure, personal threats, spying or arbitrary arrests from the 1950s onwards. The youth organisation of the Protestant Church was an early target of the oppressive socialist church policy (Greschat 1997, 273ff.). As a consequence of this type of pressure, people left the churches and stopped baptising their children. At the same time, the churches became meeting places for critics of the socialist regime and followers of alternative ideologies. The civil rights movement grew strongly within the churches during the 1980s. Since the reunification, the numbers of church members in the Eastern federal states have not increased and the numbers are still in decline (Schneider-Flume 2006). This was a disappointment for many church members.

4.1 Religious practice, organisation and finances

Baptism is required to become a member of the Roman-Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches. Baptism as a sacrament and religious burials are still important rituals for all Christians in Germany. In 2004, 200,635 people were baptised and 256,678 people were buried in the Roman-Catholic Church. The same year, 227,189 people were baptised and 309,179 people were buried in the Protestant Church. Only a few years before, in 1998 the number of baptisms and funerals was clearly higher both in the Roman-Catholic Church (248,014 baptisms and 275,721 funerals) and in the Protestant Church. Church marriages are less important to the church members and their number is decreasing fast: in 1998 there were 69,102 church marriages in the Roman-Catholic Church and 73,763 in the Protestant Church. In 2004, the number dropped to 49,178 in the Roman-Catholic Church and 54,910 in the Protestant Church. (Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz
As shown above it is still more natural for Roman-Catholic and Protestant Church members to have baptisms and funerals than to have church marriages. This is illustrated by the following percentages. In 2004 73.7% of all children with at least one Roman-Catholic parent and 77.9% of all children with at least one Protestant parent were baptised within respective church. The percentages for funerals are even higher. The percentage of Roman-Catholic funerals among Roman-Catholic deceased was 91.9% and the percentage of Protestant funerals among all Protestant deceased was 86.2% in 2004 (Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz 2006/ Kirchenamt der EKD 2006). Nevertheless, both the Roman-Catholic Church and the Protestant Church experience a development of decrease, which has consequences for structure, finances and for the position they have in society. Statistics on baptisms, confirmations, church weddings, funerals and church activities indicate that both German folk churches, the Protestant Church in particular, face the problem of becoming an aging organisation (http://dbk.de/daten/in_daten-05.html, Kirchenamt der EKD 2006).

The basic organisational structure of the Roman-Catholic Church on the national, regional (for example, Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria) and local level (for example, Reutlingen and Schweinfurt) can be described as territorial as far as the parishes and the umbrella organisations for the independent organisations (for example, the welfare organisations) are concerned. The Roman-Catholic Church is hierarchically structured with the Pope as the head, bishops, priests and lay persons. In Germany the conference of bishops is an institution, which has an influence on the Roman-Catholic Church at national level, making decisions for the local dioceses and coordinating the pastoral and church-related social work of the dioceses. The Roman-Catholic Church is territorially structured according to provinces, (arch-) dioceses and parishes.
There is no Protestant national church in Germany, but 23 regional churches, which are independent in their organisation and decision-making:

Figure 1: Provinces and dioceses within the Roman-Catholic church in Germany
(Source: Brockhaus - Die Enzyklopädie 1997, 583)
The Protestant regional churches reflect the historical territories (dukedoms and kingdoms), which shaped Germany for centuries. They are organised in provinces and parishes. (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland 2004). Denominationally, the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) can be called a mixed cooperation. It is a union representing Lutheran churches, so-called “united churches” (combining Lutheran and Reformed traditions), and the Reformed Church. The EKD is a voluntary union and can be compared to an umbrella organisation working for all Protestant Churches in Germany. Its tasks are public relations, lobbying and public statements on a national level, guidance of the regional churches and administration of the common international
activities of the Protestant Churches. Apart from very limited areas the EKD has no legislative responsibility. Church legislation is the responsibility of the regional churches. They can decide to delegate certain limited areas of church legislation to the EKD. This means that the Protestant church is characterised by regional rather than central power (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland 2004, articles 6-20; Broll 1999, 194-209).

The general financial situation of the Roman-Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches is linked to church taxes. Almost 70% of their income comes from the church tax. In addition, they receive money from public contributions, as reimbursements for teaching religion in public schools, and from investments and real estate property. The church tax is linked to the public income tax and amounts about 8 to 9% of the total income tax payments (Campenhausen 1996, 262f.). Church taxes are mainly used to pay the salaries of the priests and other church personnel in parishes and organisations and to support services provided by the church (for example, welfare services). Since the middle of the 1990s the income from the church taxes has been declining. As almost 80% of the expenditure is made up of direct and indirect expenses for personnel (often with long-term contracts like the ministers) it is difficult for the church to make short-term savings. If the number of members belonging to the Roman-catholic Church and the Protestant Churches continues to decline, the church tax will decline as well. Therefore it is necessary for both folk churches to downsize staff and reduce services. In addition they are in direct need of additional donations to maintain their current activities, e.g. by foundations or fund raising.

4.2. The role of the folk churches in the area of welfare

The Roman-Catholic Church, the Protestant Churches and church-related welfare organisations are important partners of the German social state (see section 2). They take care of pastoral and social issues, including pastoral care for people speaking other languages, integration work in the parishes, migrant services, youth, family work and work with elderly, healthcare services, work with people with disabilities and educational and social institutions. These different services are syndicated in umbrella organisations. The Roman-Catholic umbrella organisation is Caritas and the Protestant one Diakonie. Caritas and Diakonie cooperate closely with the umbrella organisations of the other independent welfare services, 'workers' movements' (Arbeiterwohlfahrt) the German Red Cross, the Deutscher Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband (DPWV, German equality welfare organisation), which is the umbrella organisation for all ideologically independent welfare organisations and the Jewish welfare organisation (Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in
Deutschland e.V.). As independent welfare organisations Caritas and Diakonie play the most important role. In some areas, for example in the field of care for elderly or disabled persons, Caritas and Diakonie run between 50% and 60% of all social services and institutions (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freien Wohlfahrtpflege 2002).

Often the work of Caritas and Diakonie is equated with the umbrella organisations or with larger independent welfare institutions, which resemble companies that offer social services. But the involvement of the folk churches in the field of welfare is more heterogeneous. It varies from the welfare work of parishes, self-help groups and grass root initiatives, to the work of church districts, church provinces, dioceses and religious orders, to the work of large independent institutions, which are related to the church (Schmidt 2005a).

In 2005 there were 24,989 institutions and services run by Caritas (Deutscher Caritasverband 2005). In 2002, Diakonie ran 27,301 institutions and services (Schmitt/Kellermann 2003). With regard to welfare provision for minority groups, Caritas and Diakonie provide the following services for asylum seekers, immigrants, emigrants and foreigners:

- social counselling in residential accommodations for asylum seekers and refugees,
- social counselling in accommodations for immigrants of German origin,
- social services for young migrants,
- cultural and leisure centres for migrants,
- social services for migrants,
- psychological counselling for migrants,
- legal counselling for migrants,
- social and pedagogic services for children, young people and parents from immigrant backgrounds,
- special schools for children of immigrants with German origins.

There are also special services for migrant women:

- social counselling for women from non-European countries,
- social counselling for women who are victims of trafficking.

On the grass root level Roman-Catholic and Protestant parishes host a variety of voluntary groups aiming to meet and support immigrants and refugees. With regard to the welfare services offered by the churches one has to consider that the churches are responsible for the well-being of
everyone because of their Christian spirit and religious motivation. Schavan (1999) explains that faith and church have to be more than just “welfare” and “therapy”.

The Christian churches are linked to society through its problems and conflicts and work together with the state and the citizens to find appropriate solutions. The official theological and ethical statements of the Roman-Catholic Church concerning issues related to welfare, minority religions or gender policy are connected to Christian social teaching (*Christliche Soziallehre*) (Hilpert 2004). These statements are part of the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the Synod of Wuerzburg.

One of the last instructions of Pope John Paul II entitled *Erga migrantes Caritas Christi* (2004) refers to the situation the migrants and the Roman-Catholic responsibility for their problems. The first Encyclical *Deus caritas est* by Pope Benedict XVI (2005) explains and summarises the programme of the Roman-Catholic Church: Roman-Catholic Christians have to be open towards all people that need hope and help. Human rights and love must lead religious dialogue and interactions in future. The Roman-Catholic Church, Christian lay persons and organisations have responsibilities with regards to economic, social, legal and institutional support for every person's well-being (40f.).

There are also documents by German bishops. With regard to questions of orientation in society bishops write about “Social Values and Human Happiness” (*Gesellschaftliche Grundwerte und menschliches Glück*) (1976). There are two additional related documents: a pastoral letter under the title “Values need Positions” (*Grundwerte verlangen Grundhaltungen*) (1977) and another statement refer to the “Christian Responsibility in a Changed World” (*Christliche Verantwortung in veränderter Welt*) (1990). Bishops give emphasis to a Christian value structure including the acceptance of other cultures and religions and the integration of other perspectives. There are also statements by German bishops with regard to the relationship between the majority church and religious minority groups, church welfare provision and services especially for minorities, for example “The Position of Church Organisations” (1990), “One Mission – Many Services” (2000) and ”Supporting Integration for Living together” (2004) (*http://dbk.de*).

There are various statements on social welfare published by all levels of the Protestant Churches and of church related welfare organisations within the *Diakonie*. In addition to the

These numerous statements make it difficult to obtain a general view and to grasp the essence of the Protestant Churches’ point of view. Common statements of two or more churches or welfare organisations receive the most attention by public opinion, for example the common reports Diakonisches Werk and Caritasverband on the social situation of people in the Eastern part of Germany Menschen im Schatten (Diakonisches Werk der EKD & Deutscher Caritasverband 1997) or the much discussed statement by both the Roman-Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches on the social and economic situation in Germany Für eine Zukunft in Solidarität und Gerechtigkeit (Kirchenamt der EKD & Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz 1997). Quite recently several discussion papers on the relation between Christian churches and other religions and on living together with different religious and cultural backgrounds were released by the EKD: “Clarity and Good Neighbourhood. Christians and Muslims in Germany” (2006), “How to Deal with Persons Without a Residence Permit” (2006), “Positions, Activities and Contacts of the EKD with Regard to Islam. An overview“ (2006), “Christian Faith and Non-Christian Religions” (2003), “To Create Coexistence” (2002) (http://www.ekd.de).

Both the Roman-catholic Church and the Protestant Church have relations with religious minority groups, which have been present in Germany for a long time, for example Jews. German Roman-Catholic and Protestant Christians are engaged in an ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue with Orthodox Christians, Jews and Muslims. Many towns have intercultural and interreligious working groups or forums working together to solve religious, cultural and social problems and tensions between different groups. But this cooperation doesn’t work with all religious minority groups. Some of the new religious communities are not interested in dialogue and
exchanged. These groups can be found in every denomination and religion.

4.3 Folk churches and gender

In the past the Christian religion and the majority churches, especially the Roman-Catholic Church, influenced the role of women and men in society. Until today only men are admitted to the priesthood in the Roman-Catholic Church. It was the duty of the wife to support her husband, to be responsible for the home and to raise the children. The Roman-Catholic Church has a strict position on gender issues. With regard to women and their position in the church, comments can be found in the texts of the Second Vatican Council and the Synod of Wuerzburg. On the one hand, emphasis is given to women’s’ dignity, but on the other hand they maintain traditional religious and social rules in terms of gender. In the Encyclical Mulieris dignitatem Pope John Paul XIV (1988) describes the vocation of women by comparing it to 'Mary' as the ideal Christian woman.

The traditional family model is deeply rooted in the Protestant Church. This is partly due to the prominent role that the pastor and his family used to play in the Protestant parish. Trying to resemble the model of Martin Luther and Katharina von Bora the pastors and their wives aimed to become model families – and were expected to do so by the parish. According to this model the man was working in the public sphere, while the woman was organising the household (Schmidt 1998). There are still many within the Protestant Church who consider this to be the ideal family. Although women can be become priests in all member churches of the EKD and although the Protestant Churches have three female bishops at the moment, opinions on this issue diverge. They vary from those advocating more equal treatment of women and men (for example, the Evangelische Frauenarbeit in Deutschland, http://www.ekd.de/efd/index.php3) to those who prefer the traditional family model (for example, the Christliches Infoportal Idea 2006, http://www.idea.de/startseite/nachrichten/sv-ss-rubriknews/article/43846/128/).

Violence against women, the difficulties to combine work and family obligations and the small number of women in management positions are currently important topics of publications on gender issues. In 2000 a report on violence against women was published by the EKD (“Violence against women as an issue of the church”). In 2005 a documentation was published, which discussed the general conditions and the challenges of living with children in a flexible working environment (Frauenstudien- und –bildungszentrum der EKD/Männerarbeit der EKD 2005).
regional churches and church related organisations (such as the *Diakonie*) employ representatives for equal treatment and equal opportunities, who publish smaller discussion papers. To activate young women to aim at management positions in the church the EKD and eight regional churches started mentoring project for women in 2002 (Frauenreferat der EKD und Burckhardthaus e.V. 2002).

5. Welfare, religion and gender

In Germany, the right for everyone to vote and the eligibility to stand for election were introduced in 1918. The German constitution gives men and women equal rights (Article 3,2 GG), but experience shows that there are still gender differences and discrimination. Diane Sainsbury describes the relationship between men and women in German society as a male breadwinner regime (Sainsbury 1999) (see also section 2). According to this model labour is divided between women and men. Men are expected to act in the public sphere providing for their wives and children, while women are expected to take the responsibility for the household and the children (Fix 2001). To do the housework and to be responsible for the household was a legal obligation for women until the reform of the family law in 1977. This is still indicated in the labour market, in taxation and in the welfare system. Women’s work is paid less and the representation of women in managerial and leading positions in society is low in all areas of society (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 2002). With 65.4% in 2005 the female employment rate is higher in Germany than the average of the EU 15 (65.1%) and the EU 25 (63.8%) (www.europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/). But a high percentage of these employments are part-time.

Unlike in other European countries, part time work in Germany is considered to improve the position of women in the labour market. Because of this a bill on part time work was passed in 2001 in order to guarantee the right of employees to work part time, including employees owning managerial positions.

Statistics show that it is still more likely and self-evident for women in the Eastern federal states to combine a full-time employment and family. In 2004 49.3% of women with one child and 48.3% of women with two children had full-time jobs in the Eastern part of the country; in contrast, only 24.6% of women with on child and 16.4% of women with two children in the Western federal states had full-time jobs (Statistisches Bundesamt 2005, 33). At the same time the female unemployment rate is still much higher in the Eastern federal states (19.3% in 2004) than in the Western federal states (8.9% in 2004) (Statistisches Bundesamt 2005, 71). The female
unemployment rate for the country as a whole is 10.3% (in 2005), which is higher than the average of the EU 15 (8.9%) or the EU 25 (9.8%) (www.europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/).

The taxation system mirrors the male breadwinner model as well. The incomes of the spouses are combined for taxation. According to the *Ehegattensplitting* (splitting of the spouses) the partner who is earning more is granted a reduction, while the partner who is earning less pays comparably high taxes. This means that it is less attractive for the partner who earns less to have a job and, as a general rule, these are women. At the same time this taxation system plays an important part in the public benefits to families, which are much more important than child allowances (Stark and Regnér 2001). Being influenced by the principle of subsidiarity social entitlements of the welfare system do not aim at the individual, but at the individual within the traditional family, presupposing that there are women who are taking care of the family. Correspondingly, the provision of day care for children is only fragmentary, especially in the federal states in the Western part of Germany. In 2002 nurseries were for example available for 3% of all the children between 0-3 years in the Western part and for 37% in the Eastern part (Statistisches Bundesamt 2004, 5f.).

Susanne Schunter-Kleemann has compared modern European welfare states by studying the following dimensions: women’s’ labour market positions, their position within the family and different social insurance schemes, family policy, the culture of the welfare system, the progress of women’s’ emancipation and democratisation in relation to national and international policy (EU). She demonstrates that all welfare systems are based on a type of patriarchalism marginalising women and the reproductive work they do. Germany – along with Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland – is characterised as an example of “marriage-related patriarchalism” (Schunter-Kleemann 1992). This is confirmed by newer studies, which point to the fact that women who are not married are in a clearly weaker position within the German welfare system, e.g. single mothers, divorced women and young people in general (Poole 2001, Butterwegge, Klundt, Zeng 2005).

The traditional male breadwinner model in Germany is challenged by equality policies and regulations abroad. Germany had and has difficulties in implementing EU guidelines for the equal treatment of women and men into national laws and regulations. Widely shared “collective understandings of differently gendered identities” seem to be hard to overcome. (Kodré and Müller 2003, 83). This is illustrated by the fact that the law on equality of rights was passed as late as 1957 and a paragraph about the promotion of equal rights for women was not inserted in the German
Constitution until 1994. These traditional understandings are not only questioned by EU policy, but also by other international conventions, such as the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination of the United Nations. The fifth report for this network compiled by the Federal Ministry indicates fifteen areas of anti-discrimination policy. They vary from the elimination of role stereotypes and the elimination of trafficking to equal treatment in the labour market, in the healthcare sector or in marriage and family matters (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend 2002). The report states that there is still lot of work to be done even though there has been some progress. In 2001 a new federal law on equal treatment was introduced. Both parental leave, parental money and the provision of day-care for children will be reformed in order to improve the preconditions for women to combine family and work (see also section 2). But this is also against the background of low birth rates in Germany. In the field of healthcare the first “Report on the Health Situation of Women in Germany” was not published in until 2001. In March 2006 a law against prostitution was introduced. Its purpose is to strengthen the position of the – mainly female – prostitutes in relation to their clients and to provide them with certain social security benefits. The number of initiatives and bills indicates that the issue of gender seems to be high on the political agenda.

6. Overview of the minority presence in Germany

The aim of the following overview is to offer an insight into the extent to which minorities are perceived to challenge the values and cultural identities of local majorities. The term 'minority' can be defined in terms of 'ethnic minority' or 'religious minority'. Minority' can be: (1) a group with a small number of members, (2) a less powerful group with a small number of members, or (3) a powerless group with many members (Polm 1995 in: Schmalz-Jacobsen and Hansen, 340). Scherr (1998) refers to 'minorities' as groups that are a part of society, for example poor people, the unemployed, the homeless, illegal immigrants, drug abusers, alcoholics or the mentally ill (Schäfers and Zapf, 525). Markefka (1995, 25f.) conceives of 'minority' as a social and institutional reality, distinguishing between 'social minorities' in terms of the body, intelligence, mind, rights, sexual orientation, economic or social matters, and 'ethnic minorities' in terms of race, nationality, religion and culture.

A 'national minority' is defined by the German state as a group within the nation, having the same rights in the state as its citizens. German 'national minorities' are the Danish, the Sorb, the Roma, the Sinti and the ‘Friesen’ (Second report of the Federal Republic of Germany according to
article 25 para. 2 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National minorities, 2004). The social sciences mostly think of national minority groups in a broader way and opt for the term 'ethnic minorities'. An 'ethnic minority' can be described as a group of people from another country that have from the majority perspective different cultural and religious practices and not the same national rights as the citizens (Polm 1995 in: Schmalz-Jacobsen and Hansen, 341). In this report we are interested in both ethnic and religious minorities.

6.1. Germany as a country of immigration

In 1995 Schmalz-Jacobsen and Hansen gave an overview of ethnic minorities in Germany over the last decade. The ethnic minority groups with the highest number of persons given by the state for the year 1993 come from: Turkey (1,918,395), former Yugoslavia (929,647), Italy (563,009), Greece (351,976) and Poland (260,514) (Statistisches Bundesamt 2004 in Polm 1994 and ibid, 556f.). In the process of European unification the German state started to control immigration through European legal measures. As a consequence the number of immigrants declined since the end of the 1990s. To give an example: the number of asylum seekers allowed to stay in Germany is controlled by the Dublin procedure. This measure allows the authorities to check if an asylum seeker coming to Germany has asked for an asylum application in another EU country at the same time. Since only one EU state can be asked for asylum at once and since it has become more difficult to get to Germany directly, less people are seeking asylum in Germany today than in the beginning of the 1990s.

As of December 31, 2004 the foreign population according to the German Federal Office of Migration and Refugees is as follows:

**Table 2: German foreign population by nationality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>1,764,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>548,194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Yugoslavia/Serbia and Montenegro</td>
<td>507,328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>315,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>292,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>1,764,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>229,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other states</td>
<td>3,060,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>6,717,115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2004, 75.

Another group to consider are immigrants with German passports from Eastern Europe and mainly from the former USSR. Since the end of the Cold War thousands of people of German origin have come to Germany. They have German passports and therefore are not included in the statistics on citizens with a foreign passport. At the same time, many of them face similar problems concerning language and integration as other immigrants.

More data on foreigners, migrants and other groups of the German population in comparison to other EU states are provided by the European Commission (2004). EU politics influence migration movements: for example the number of immigrants in 2005 given by the EU has risen to 7,3 million including the new Eastern EU member states (Dälken 2005). With regard to the data one has to consider the difficulty in obtaining an accurate number of minority groups because of definition problems and data based on different examinations.

In 1955 the first application for the recruitment of foreign workers (Gastarbeiter) was made by the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and Italy. The German labour shortage was the reason for recruiting unskilled foreign workers. Their number rose when labourers from other countries followed, for example the first immigrants from Greece and Spain arrived in 1960. In 1961 the first Turkish labourers began to work in Germany. Between 1965 and 1967 the German Democratic Republic (GDR) also recruited workers from Poland and Hungary. The intention was that foreign workers should stay for the time they were needed and then return to their own countries. However, employers continued the contracts with semi-skilled workers who then brought their families to Germany. The government introduced a family reunification programme in order to make it possible for foreign workers to live together with their families in Germany. By 1973 when 4,1 million foreigners were already living in Germany recruitment of foreign workers was stopped. Today the second generation children born in Germany from immigrant parents have grown up and have children on their own. They do not want to return to the countries their parents came from but rather to transform their own cultural and religious traditions and identity. (Bundesamt für
Today migrants live together in specific sections of large German cities, for example in Berlin, Frankfurt or Munich. Different religious minority groups can be identified, including Jews and Muslims. The Jewish communities in large cities account for nearly half of the Jewish population in Germany (Kugelmann 1995 in: Schmalz-Jacobsen and Hansen, 259); the same situation applies to various Muslim groups. For example in Frankfurt every third citizen has a personal migration experience. Many migrants have lived in this city for years, but socially they are not well integrated (Straßburger 2001). Their cultural and religious life styles belong to different traditions and practices (Römhild 2003). This is a source of tension between the German population and the migrants and minority groups, not only in Frankfurt (Beck-Gernsheim 2004). The percentages of residents without German passport is highest in the city states Hamburg (14.1% in 2004), Berlin (13.4% in 2004) and Bremen (12.8% in 2004) and lowest in the Eastern federal states, for example 2.0% in 2004 in Thüringen and 1.9% in 2004 in Sachsen-Anhalt (http://www.statistik.baden-wuerttemberg.de/Indikatoren/01_002.asp). At the same time these federal states and other regions with economic problems are still experiencing emigration. Young, well-educated people move to prosperous regions Western part of Germany to find work (cp. for example http://www.menschen-fuer-ostdeutschland.de).

6.2. Immigration in policy, research and media

German integration policy offers social possibilities and welfare provision to different groups of migrants, including immigrants, emigrants, asylum seekers and fugitives. But their social rights and their formal access in public welfare differ. They depend on their status of residence. The report of the Federal Office of Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2004) gives an overview of the different groups and the provision and possibilities available to them. The folk churches have established social services for these groups as well (cp. section 4). But it is not easy receiving support, since immigrants, asylum seekers, etc. have to explain the reasons for coming to Germany in a lengthy administrative process. Therefore, foreigners who are new in Germany often look for help within their own minority group since they neither speak German, nor understand German laws.
German minority research is focused on questions of migration, asylum and ethnic identity. There are a lot of open questions and problems especially with regard to political and social integration (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Sozialordnung 1997; Allmendinger and Ludwig-Mayerhofer 2000; Treichler 2002; van Deth 2004; Pfau-Effinger and Geissler 2005). In a multicultural perspective Mintzel (1997) thinks of 'majority, minority and minority security' as key terms, which are connected to integration or discrimination (ibid., 208). With regard to all minorities living in Germany 'minority security' is motivated by human rights, but only for the 'national minorities' that are protected by the constitutional law of the state. Multiculturalism is a concept often mentioned in politics and social sciences, for example in presenting special problems or conflicts (ibid. 455). The German state and its federal states are working together to find solutions with regard to cultural pluralism and actual integration politics in Bavaria or Baden-Württemberg where the two German cases take (Meier-Braun and Weber 2005).

In the German media immigration and integration are key issues in public debate. For example, the asylum question is regulated by German law but in many cases it comes in conflict with the individual situation of asylum seekers. The media report on special asylum cases giving emphasis on the tension between state regulation and individual needs. There are social, cultural and religious conflicts between the majority population and (religious) minority groups, especially Muslims. The different cultural and religiously motivated values of Islam and the Arabic world became more public over the last years, especially after September 11, 2001, the war in Iraq or the conflict over the Muhammad cartoons in early 2006. Debates related to migrants and Muslims still go on and the media tend to underline the view of the majority on discrimination and tension (Geißler and Pöttker 2005), rather than focus on the perspectives of the minorities. For example the media debate of dual nationality was following the majority perspective not asking what it means for an adolescent Muslim immigrant born in Germany, or if he or she has to chose whether to become German or have a passport of the country of the parents at the age of 18. Another example is the media debate on the culture and language test, which was introduced by the government of Baden-Württemberg in 2006. All residents with foreign passport in Baden-Württemberg have to pass this test if they want to become German citizens (http://www.landtagswahl-baden-wuerttemberg.de/themen/einbuerger.php3).

Over the last years the number of foreign media has risen. In Germany there are Turkish (e.g. 'Hürriyet', 'Türkiye', 'Milliyet', 'Sabah'), Russian ('Russkaja Germanija') and Serbian ('Vesti') publications, also the Greek 'Makedonia', the Italian 'Corriere d'Italia', the US "Stars and Stripes'
and European editions of international newspapers, e.g. 'International Herald Tribune', 'Wall Street Journal', 'The Times' and 'Le Monde'. Foreign media offers immigrants their own information and communication platform in their native languages. This stands in tension with the German integration politics expecting that immigrants learn and speak German. At the same time the knowledge of and the connection to one’s origins and cultural or religious roots are preconditions for integration.

7. Religious minority-majority relations

This report uses the term 'religious minority' to designate a religious organised group, which is not connected to the majority religion in the country, or a Christian denominational group with only a small number of members in comparison to the folk churches. Religious studies and theology also refer to religious minorities in terms of religious groups that have for example an anthroposophist, astrologic or esoteric background (Barth and Elsas 2004). Schmalz-Jacobsen and Hansen (1995) gives an overview of the religious minority groups in the encyclopaedia of ethnical minorities in Germany.

With regard to the world religions represented in Germany, Muslims and the Jews are the largest religious minority groups (Markefka 1995; Rommelspacher 2002; Braun and Weber 2005). Roman-Catholics and the Protestants are the main Christian denominations. The Orthodox Christian minorities follow, but there are more Muslims than Orthodox Christians in Germany.

7.1 Christian minorities

Religious minority communities are organised in denominations, associations or other forms. Only a few Catholic minorities can be found in Germany: the Old Catholics (25,000 members in 2000), the New Charismatics (11,000 in 2001) and the Free Catholics (412 in 2005) (http://www.remid.de). With regard to the German Protestants the free Christian churches, for example the Methodists, Baptists, Pietists, and the Pentecostal and Christian assemblies, can be characterised as denominational minority groups. They have their own ecclesiastical structures and follow slightly different Christian interpretations and ritual practices.
The different Orthodox churches, including the Orthodox churches belonging to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Antioch or Kiev, the Serbian-Orthodox, the Romanian-Orthodox, the Syrian-Orthodox, the Russian-Orthodox, the Armenian-Orthodox and Ethiopian-Orthodox churches, are considered religious minorities in Germany. There are a lot of other special religious groups, as well as, “new religious movements” present in Germany.9

The Arbeitsgemeinschaft christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland e.V. (ACK; Working Group of Christian Churches in Germany) is an organisation promoting ecumenical work. It was founded by the Protestant Church, the 'Old-Catholic Church', the 'Baptists', the 'Methodists' and some other Protestant Churches. In 1974 other churches became members as well, including the Roman-Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches in Germany (www.oekumene-ack.de).

The Orthodox Churches are not very visible in the public discussions on welfare, religion, gender and minorities in Germany. Their regular members are well integrated into the German society. There are only a few international humanitarian organisations to mention, e.g. the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) founded by the American Orthodox bishops in 1992 and the Finish Ortaid relief organisation. In 2000 the Russian Orthodox Church passed a social document called Foundations of the social conception of the Russian Orthodox Church (Grundlagen der Sozialkonzeption der Russischen Orthodoxen Kirche) (vgl. Oeldemann 2006, 176-182).

7.2 Non-Christian minorities

There are about 78 Jewish communities in Germany organised in regional associations. They are placed under the Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland (Central Council of Jews in Germany), the Jewish umbrella organisation that supports Jewish religious and cultural life in Germany as well as Jewish political interests in German society (Kugelmann 1995 in: Schmalz-Jacobsen and Hansen, 257-259; Bundesministerium des Innern 2006). Today 105,000 Jews belong to a synagogue and 80,000 Jewish persons live in Germany without being members of any synagogue (http://www.remid.de).

The following Muslim groups are present in Germany: Sunni Muslims (2,200,000 in 2001), Alevits (340,000 in 2000), Iranian and Turkish Shiites (170,000 in 2000), the 'Ahmadiyya' (50,000 in 2003), the Ismailis (12,000 in 2000) and the Sufi (10,000 in 1997). In the German state Islam is
not organised as a public corporation. Since Muslim groups are not structured like German churches they are organised in different forms. The central associations are the Zentralrat der Muslime (Central Council of the Muslims) and the Islamrat (Islam Advice Council) and the Türkisch-Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion (DITIB; Turkish-Islamic Union of the Institute for Religion). All of them are engaged in a dialogue with representatives of both German society and the churches, e.g. members of parliament, local politicians, church leaders and priests, but they are also connected to their country of origin. The DITIB (110,000 in 2000) is also a very important mosque association. Other organised mosque groups are the Islamist Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüş (Islamic Community Milli Görüs) (26,500 in 2003), the Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren (Federation of the Islamic Cultural Centres) (20,000 in 2000), the Turkish-Islamic Union (ATIB) (11,000 in 2000), the Islamische Gemeinschaft Jama’at un-Nur (Islamic Community Jama’at un-Only) (5,000-6,000 in 2000), the Muslimbruderschaft (MB; Muslim brothers) (1,300 in 2003) and the Kalifatsstaat (Kalifat State) (800 in 2003), linked to terrorism (http://www.remid.de).

The Hindus are divided into the Tamil Hindus from Sri Lanka (45,000 in 2003), the Indian Hindus (35,000-40,000 in 2003), the 'Hindus of Western origin' (7,500 in 2003) and the Afghan Hindus (5000 in 2003). Some Hindus are organised in associations, for example the Indischer Kulturverein (Bharat Samiti) e.V. (Indian Culture Association) in Köln, Bengalische Vereinigungen (Bengali Associations) and the Kamadchi Ampal Tempel e.V. (Kamadchi Ampal Temple). There are also several “new religious movements” and groups with different Neo-Hinduist backgrounds in Germany, e.g. Integraler Yoga (Integral Yoga), Sri Chinmoy and Hare Krishna (http://www.remid.de).

Characterised by their country of origin there are German Buddhists (13,000 in 2004), Buddhists from Vietnam (60,000 in 2003), Thailand (25,000 in 2003) and other Asian countries (20,000-30,000 in 2003) in Germany. There are different Buddhist groups, for example belonging to Theravada, Mayahana, Zen, Japanese or Tibetan Buddhism. They are organised in the Deutsche Buddhistische Union (DBU; German Buddhist Union) (for the data and the numbers cp. http://www.remid.de).

Among European and German public debates Islam seems to raise issues of gender discrimination, political danger and social conflicts (Barth and Elsas 2004). Current debates ask if and how the Islamic ‘shariah’ can agree with human rights and civil laws in general and with regard to women in particular. In public discussions gender questions are often connected to the family and
role models that are represented by immigrants living in Germany. Women with a Muslim background wearing a headscarf are regarded as symbolic of female oppression. Consequently, prohibiting headscarves in certain public contexts is considered by some groups to be an act of women’s’ liberation. Just these few aspects indicate that the gender question is far from being a thing of the past in Germany.

The main gender-related issue specific to Islam is that men are considered to be in a position of power. According to the traditional Muslim tradition the man is typically the head of the family and responsible for earning money, while the woman generally stays at home looking after the home and children. If she goes outside she sometimes has to wear a headscarf. This is related to her religious and cultural identity. Some Muslim women in Germany advocate more women’s’ rights and offer information and social support to Muslim women. They are organised in associations such as the Huda – Netzwerk für muslimische Frauen e.V. (Huda - Network for Muslim Women), the Muslima aktiv (Muslima Active) and the local associated group Muslimat – Islamische Frauenbewegung Dresden e.V. (Muslimat - Islamic Women’s Movement Dresden). These associations offer information and social services as well as education and special support for women in particular.

In Orthodox Judaism a women is characterised as religious and ‘orthodox’. She looks after the home and the children. Conversely, the progressive Jewish woman can be described as liberal and secular. Some Jewish women are organised in groups, including the Bet Debora e.V. in Berlin, an organisation that promotes democracy and women’s’ rights, the Jüdischer Frauenbund in Deutschland (JFB; Jewish Woman Federation in Germany), founded in 1904, a charter member of the Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland e.V., the Rosch Chodesch Gruppen (Rosch Chodesch groups), ritual groups, and the Women’s International Zionist Organization (WIZO). These organisations are mainly offering social services and educational support (e.g. nursery-schools, schools, special institutions for women) especially in Israel.

7.3. Religious minorities and welfare provision

Religious minority groups have established their own institutions. There are explicitly welfare providing institutions and also other alternative organisations dealing with welfare needs. The Jewish welfare institutions are organised very similar to the Christian organisations in the
social sector. Their umbrella organisation is the Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland e.V. (Central Welfare Office of the Jews in Germany), an independent (non-profit) welfare organisation, which offers social services in different areas of welfare provision (Boessenecker 2005; Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der Freien Wohlfahrtspflege 2002). Other organisations are the Gesher (Gesher), responsible for Jewish culture and tradition, the Keren Hayesod – Vereinigte Israel Aktion (Keren Hayesod - Associated Israel Action) supporting Jews in Israel and the WIZO, a women’s organisation described above. Some other Jewish organisations offer social support, too. The Jewish communities in large cities also serve as community centres where all generations can meet. They take care of old people and organise kindergartens and primary schools for Jewish education. (Kugelmann 1995 in: Schmalz-Jacobsen and Hansen, 266f.).

Muslim social support and services of religious minority groups exist, but few people in the German population know about them. A mapping of Muslim welfare-providing institutions or social organisations dealing with welfare indicates that their alternative networks are differently organised and focused, e.g. regarding support for immigrants arriving in Germany. Muslims have to give some of the money they earn as ‘Zakât’ (Armensteuer/Task for the poor) to poor people they know. They are mostly engaged in their mosque community, which is offering social, health and education support.

Welfare-providing networks by Muslims are also established. There are umbrella organisations like the Türkisch–Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion e.V. (DITIB; Turkish-Islamic Union of the Institute for Religion), which a number of Muslim mosques are connected to and influenced by. Every mosque community is responsible for both Muslim religious and social belonging on the local level. There are also some Muslim social organisations on the national level, e.g. the Muslimischer Sozialbund e.V. - Cenanze Vafki (Muslim Social Federation - Cenanze Vafki) or Kauf und hilf (Purchase and Help), an institution of the international organisation Muslime helfen e.V. (Muslims Help).

With regard to worship different religious minority groups want to express their own traditions and rituals. Therefore they have established their own places for worship in the cities where they live. German Muslims (most of them from Turkey) have about 2,200 houses or places of worship (including 70 mosques). Over 320,000 Muslims are members of mosques or other Islamic organisations. The highest number of members can be found with about 200,000 Muslims in Berlin. Jewish synagogues have about 102,500 members. In Berlin there are over 11,100, in
Munich about 8,900 members, in Düsseldorf about 7,200 members and in Frankfurt about 7,000. Buddhists have 200 centres and groups. Approximately 25% belong to the umbrella organisation called Deutsche Buddhistische Union – Buddhistische Religionsgemeinschaft (DBU; German Buddhist Union - Buddhist Religious Community). The German Tamils in Hamm built a Hindu Temple in 2002, which is considered the largest in continental Europe.

German reactions to building non-Christian places of worship are different especially regarding Jews and Muslims. The German population is accepting of Jewish synagogues; this is indicated by an article on the opening of the synagogue in Munich. In this article recent Jewish life in Germany is illustrated by presenting their synagogues and their umbrella organisations. The Jewish progressive movement called the Union progressiver Juden (Union of Progressive Jews), is mentioned as well as the relation between the Jewish community and the German state (Bundesministerium des Innern 2006, 4-7). Most German people realise that Christianity originates in the Jewish religion and there are still feelings of guilt over the shoah.

Islamic cultural and religious life has also been established in Germany. For Muslims it has been more difficult to build mosques because of a high degree of public resistance towards Islamic religious practices and rituals. Therefore quite a few conflicts over the building of mosques have taken place over the last few years (Beck-Gernsheim 2004). In Köln building a central mosque for the 100,000 Muslims in the city took a great deal of time and effort. In Schüchtern a citizens’ decision for building a mosque was needed in 2002 before the construction work could be started. Many conditions had to be met by Muslim associations before starting the construction of a mosque in Berlin-Kreuzberg. Other similar problems and conflicts erupted in the cities of Darmstadt, Frankfurt, Hannover, and Bad Salzuflen.

At the same time it is important to mention that there are attempts by the German state as well as by engaged groups and individuals for integration through dialogue with religious minority groups, including Jews, Muslims and the other groups mentioned above.

8. Conclusions

Germany is a society undergoing change. It has to adapt to internal developments and international trends. In some respects German society and the welfare system have been shaped by
post-war conceptions, which do not correspond to the current situation. After a long period of continuity in the Western part of the country, citizens, pressure groups and politics are preparing for fundamental changes both in the field of welfare and in society in general. The Eastern part of the country experienced a paradigmatic shift 17 years ago. In both parts of the country the forthcoming changes evoke strong feelings. This is illustrated by the vivid public discussions on welfare reforms, family models and migration policy.

The challenges are diverse and we have selected four aspects. First, German society in general and the welfare system in particular have to adapt to a variety of factors including a globalised economy and the European market, a workforce and citizens with international working careers and profiles, an ageing population and a growing individualisation and diverse forms of family configurations. Second, fewer and fewer women have traditional roles and new family models need more and new types of welfare services. Third, statistics show that German society is shaped by immigration. Against this background, current concepts of integration have to be analysed in order to examine whether and how they relate to the social reality and to the minorities present in the country. Fourth, social exclusion and poverty are both rising. Neither the mechanics of exclusion, nor the strategies of counteracting poverty, have been explored sufficiently. But it is obvious that complementary actors are needed as the state and the municipalities are beginning to limit their welfare engagement.

Even though the membership numbers of the folk churches are declining, Germany is still a religious country. Almost 2/3 of the population are Christians and almost ¾ belong to one of the world religions. These numbers illustrate that the churches and other religious communities remain important actors in society and in the welfare system. Nevertheless, the exclusive position of the folk church no longer corresponds to the reality of the country as the religious situation has become more complex and pluralistic. The prisms of welfare and gender reveal many unanswered questions about the values and religion of minorities in Germany. How do other religious communities and churches relate to German society? How do they perceive and use the welfare system? How do they evaluate the changes in traditional roles and family models? How do they define and deal with poverty and social exclusion? Which values can they contribute or feel connected to? Which values do they resist? This is of special interest with regard to Muslims in Germany, the most numerous religious minority. As society is in constant change it is also in search of a new consensus and it is important to gain more knowledge on the groups present in society. Because of this it is important to fill in the many gaps at the intersections between minorities, values and religion.
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The German discussion tends to emphasise the advantages of independent schemes of social insurance in comparison with uniform system of social insurance, such as para-fiscality or self-administration (cp. for example Neumann and Schaper 1998, 143 et seqq.).

On the independent welfare organisations see section 4 as well.

As an example for this discussion see Hans-Werner Sinn, ‘Arbeit für alle’, in Die Welt, 1 March 2006, 9.


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It has to be mentioned that there are critical positions among the German population and among church representatives towards the organisation, orientation and influence of some of these groups. Through critical eyes they stand in conflict with the human rights and the freedom of worship because of their authoritarian structure and ideological premises (see Reller/Krech/Kleiminger 2000).