

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

**GERMANY
D9 – Reutlingen Case Study Report
Anika Christina Albert
Annette Leis-Peters**

Table of contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Abstract | 2 |
| 2. The city of Reutlingen | 2 |
| 2.1 General information | 2 |
| 2.2 Minority presence in Reutlingen | 4 |
| 2.3 Brief presentation of the local welfare system | 5 |
| 3. Context and Timeframe | 9 |
| 4. Methods, sources and focus | 12 |
| 5. Findings | 15 |
| 5.1 Background information: old people in Reutlingen | 15 |
| 5.2 Examples of cooperation and/or cohesion between and within groups | 16 |
| 5.3 Examples of tensions/problems between and within groups | 21 |
| 5.4 The ‘grey areas’ – situations in flux | 26 |
| 6. Analysis: Emergent values and conceptions | 29 |
| 7. References | 34 |

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

1. Abstract

The welfare focus chosen through the case study of Reutlingen in south-western Germany is care for elderly people. About 15 % of the city's residents do not have a German passport. As an industrial city, Reutlingen has become an international city on the basis of working migration during the 1960s and 1970s. Among the many minority groups living in the city today the Turkish and the Greek community as well as German immigrants from the former USSR are the most numerous ones; they consequently play the most prominent role within the framework of the case study. The prism of the study does not only look at the welfare needs and expectations of elderly people, but also those of younger generations and intergenerational issues. Working migration influenced the city and lives of migrants strongly. Neither the migrants themselves, nor German society and the welfare system seemed to be prepared for the (social) effects of migration that they are experiencing today. Key concepts in the case study are age, family, family cohesion, inter-generational relationships and the transfer and maintenance of traditions. The material shows that it is not mainly the conceptions (or these values), that differ between different groups in society, but rather the way how these conceptions or values are related to actions or practices

2. The city of Reutlingen

2.1 General information

Reutlingen is a city of approximately 112,000 inhabitants in the relatively prosperous federal state of Baden-Württemberg. The town is situated between the region of "Mittlerer Neckar", one of the economic motors of Germany, and an agricultural highland region called "Schwäbische Alb". Several large firms (such as the Daimler Corporation, the Porsche Corporation or Robert Bosch GmbH) as well as many middle size firms supplying them are based in the "Mittlerer Neckar". Reutlingen is an attractive place of residence for many commuters who work in this industrial region and in the capital of the federal state, Stuttgart, which is a 50 km journey away.

With origins in the 11th century the town became a centre for the south western German Reformation movement during the 16th century. In 1524 the citizens of Reutlingen forced their government to officially introduce and maintain the new teachings of the Reformation (Brecht 1995). In 1530 Reutlingen was one of the two German towns, which signed the *Confessio Augustana*. A strong notion of being a Protestant city can still be found in

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

Reutlingen though the figures tell a different story. After World War II the city became increasingly denominationally mixed. Many refugees from former German areas in Eastern Europe and many working migrants who moved to Reutlingen were Roman-Catholics. In 1950 still 83.5 % and in 1970 66.5% of all residents were Protestants. Today Protestants are still the most numerous religious group. But with 43.8% of citizens belonging to the Evangelical-Lutheran church this is no overwhelming majority. Up to 23.9% of all residents are Roman-Catholics. Over and above these two groups, public statistics only include another third group, the so-called “others” (33.3%). This group comprises other Christians such as Orthodox Christians or members of the Christian Free churches, Muslims, Jews, Buddhist and Hindus, but also people who do not belong to any religion at all. The latter are the most numerous among “others”. This is illustrated by a noticeable growth of this group after the fall of the wall, when many East Germans moved to the Western part of the country to find a job. In 1990 the group of “others” constituted 21.1% of the residents, in 1995 it was 26.5% and in 2004 33.3% (Stadt Reutlingen 2005d, 58). With regard to the non-Christian religions, there are approximately 4,000 Muslims (most of them of Turkish origins) and about 120 Jews (most came recently from the former USSR) live in Reutlingen.¹

Reutlingen has been and still is an industrial city. From the middle of the 19th century Reutlingen underwent an early industrialisation. Today, Reutlingen is not as beautiful a historic city as its early past might suggest. Destruction of the war and an early economic upswing in the 1950s and 1960s, which saw the replacement of many remaining old buildings with modern buildings, has left traces in the townscape. It is the structure of the city with its pedestrian precinct and its huge market place in the city centre, which is most reminiscent of the long historic tradition of the town.

Politically, Reutlingen was as an industrial city, a stronghold of the Social-Democrats within the traditional Conservative federal state of Baden-Württemberg. Today, the town has an independent female mayor with a city council that is dominated by Conservative and Liberal parties. The political balance of power has led to a quite open and positive policy when it comes to involvement of church-related actors in the field of welfare (WREP interviews: SA 1, m; SA 2, f; SA 3, m; SA 6, m; SA 7f).² At the same time integration policy toward migrant residents may be characterised as quite modest and cautious compared to other German cities of the same size (WaVE ii 1, f).

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

2.2 Minority presence in Reutlingen

About 16,541 (or 15.2%) of Reutlingen inhabitants do not have a German passport. They come from 125 different countries all over the world. The largest groups among these residents are of Turkish (more than 3,000 people or 2.7%) and Greek nationality (almost 3,000 or 2.65%) (Stadt Reutlingen 2005d, 55f). In general most of the residents with a foreign passport in Reutlingen have European origins. About 2,000 residents are Italians, 1,600 are Croatians and 1,100 come from Serbia and Herzegovina. The largest non-European group in Reutlingen are the Iraqis (300) followed by the Pakistanis (170). All other non-European residents (2,500) are included in the group “other foreign residents”. This group consists of more than 100 different minority communities, which all have a share of less than 1% of the total foreign population in Reutlingen (Stadt Reutlingen 2005d, 50f.).³

Concerning migrants in Reutlingen one has to also mention the community of immigrants from Eastern Europe and the former USSR with German origins. Most come from Asian parts of the former USSR as many of the ethnic Germans were deported to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyztan during the Stalin area. Since the end of the Cold War many thousands have moved to Germany. According to the German citizenship legislation they have German passports and therefore they are hidden in the statistics. The statistical agency in Baden-Württemberg points to the dilemma that the statistics on foreign residents cannot mirror the existing migration process within German society. Citizenship statistics indicate that 12% of all residents in Baden-Württemberg do not have a German passport. But the statistics related to the PISA study in 2000 reveal that 29% of all 15 year old pupils have at least one parent, who was born in another country and for 20% of these pupils both parents were born in another country (Jäger/Leschhorn/Stutzer, 2004, 40f.). Citizenship issues affect not least access to the welfare services. Compared to other immigrants the Germans from the former USSR have been treated generously, for example when it comes to language courses or entitlements to the pension system (Deutsche Rentenversicherung, 2007, 4ff.) At the same time they make up a community that has come to the city most recently facing similar problems concerning language and integration as other immigrants.

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

The rate of residents holding a foreign passport or with an immigrant background differs a lot from city district to city district. In the city centre and in the northern parts of Reutlingen 38% of the residents do not have a German passport. In the districts, where the more affluent residents live and in the villages that were incorporated into the city of Reutlingen after World War II, only 3% to 7% of residents have a foreign passport (Stadt Reutlingen 2005d, 55f.). In one of the districts where there are very high numbers of residents from a migrant background (Tübinger Vorstadt) a cooperation project has been developed. The international associations present in the district (there is a Turkish, a Greek, a Serbian and a Croatian association) have formed a so called “Colourful Table”. They meet regularly and plan common cultural and social events. Both the Protestant parish and a Muslim organisation are involved in the cooperation as well. The project is financed by the municipality, the Federal Ministry of family, elderly people, women and youth and the European Social Fund. It is also part of the LOS (Local Capital for Social purposes) programme.

2.3 Brief presentation of the local welfare system

Public responsibility for welfare provision on the communal level is mainly divided between the local government (municipality of Reutlingen) and the regional level (district of Reutlingen). Together with the social insurances (pension insurance, accident insurance, health insurance, unemployment insurance and compulsory long term care insurance), the municipalities and the district are the most important funding sources of welfare benefits and services in Germany, supported and complemented by federal and national payments.

The public responsibility for welfare provision does not only imply the funding, but also the control and the governing of the welfare services delegated to non-public providers. As German history during the 20th century was formed by two totalitarian political systems German citizens are still sceptical of a strong state with comprehensive welfare services. One strategy to guarantee democracy and citizen’s rights in the welfare sector is to include different independent welfare actors and providers in the welfare system. When it comes to welfare provision the social authorities on the communal level tend to delegate the social services to independent non-profit and for-profit organisations. Due to historical reasons, the two big folk churches (Roman-Catholic and Protestant) and church-related welfare organisations (Caritas and Diakonie) play an important and self-evident role in this context,

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

in the western part of the country in particular.

Even for insiders it is very hard to figure out which area of welfare the municipality is in charge of and which one is covered by the district. To draw some general lines: the districts are responsible for the health care system, help for handicapped people, for homeless people and for stationary services for children and young people; the municipalities are responsible for help for elderly people, home care and nursery services, general social assistance, day-care services for children and young people and general-education schools. In our study we will concentrate on the interaction of majority and minority communities on the level of the municipality, not least because our focus (care for elderly people) suggests this perspective.

Reutlingen is a typical west-German case as the churches and one church-related welfare organisation in particular have a strong position in the local welfare system. The BruderhausDiakonie, a diaconal institution founded in the 19th century is based in the city (www.bruderhausdiakonie.de). Through the development of the German welfare system after World War II it has become a major provider of social services in the region with about 3,500 employees (Leis-Peters 2006, 74f.).

To illustrate how complicated the mix of welfare providers can look like we will sketch the local distribution of welfare services among different actors within two areas: services for immigrants and refugees and services for elderly people (the focus of our study). When it comes to immigrants the local Caritas organisation (<http://www.caritas-fils-neckar-alb.de/20698.html>) and the local Red Cross (<http://www.drk-reutlingen.de/>) offer counselling for migrants and German resettlers⁴ from Eastern Europe and the former USSR, while the diaconal centre of the church district of the local Protestant church is responsible for counselling refugees and asylum seekers (<http://www.kirchenbezirk.reutlingen.elk-wue.de/cms/startseite/werke-und-einrichtungen/diakonieverband/diakonisches-werk-rt/>). In addition Caritas coordinates an international women's group (<http://www.caritas-fils-neckar-alb.de/24445.html>). The BruderhausDiakonie runs several integration services for young immigrants (<http://www.bruderhausdiakonie.de/hilfebereich/jugendhilfe/Jugendmigrationsdienste/index.php?h=4&s1=23&t1=1206>), among them integration and language courses. For the integration

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

and language courses the BruderhausDiakonie is competing with several non-profit and for-profit providers.

When it comes to care for elderly people, the division of work gives another picture. In the area of home care and nursery services it becomes more visible that the German welfare system has been opening up to for-profit providers since the mid 1990s. The municipality is no longer a service provider itself. Its home care service has become part of a new non-profit company offering services for elderly people (RAH, Gemeinnützige Altenhilfe mbH Reutlingen). In addition to these home care services, there are four other non-profit providers in the field: the home care services of the local Catholic and the Protestant church, the home care service of the BruderhausDiakonie and the home care service of the German Red Cross. These five non-profit providers formed a working group to cooperate instead of competing. One of the results of the cooperation is that they divided Reutlingen into five geographical parts of about 20,000 residents. Each of the non-profit home care services is in charge for one of the parts, while the others don't compete in this specific area (WREP, SA, 6 f). As there are six private for-profit home care services they find themselves in a situation of competition (Stadt Reutlingen 2007, 66f.). Another aspect is the fact that a growing number of families employ women from Eastern Europe (mostly Poland) to care for their elderly family member 24 hours a day. This kind of home care is organised privately, without public coordination or control, often on the basis of an illegal working contract (without taxes and social contributions). Everybody knows about this, but this grey area is not regulated publicly (WaVE gi 6).⁵

As regards to nursing homes for elderly people the picture is less diverse. Altogether four non-profit providers run ten nursing homes for elderly people: the RAH (2), the BruderhausDiakonie (6), the German Red Cross (1) and a foundation related to the Catholic Caritas (1), which also runs the local hospice (Stadt Reutlingen 2007, 70f.).

The examples of the two welfare areas above illustrate that the two folk churches and the diaconal institution in particular are strongly engaged in the local welfare provision. Both for welfare users and the local population it is often impossible to distinguish between the different church and church related actors. In Reutlingen, the perception of church related welfare work is strongly formed by the BruderhausDiakonie which is - in contrast to actual

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

circumstances - seen as a part of the Protestant church (Leis-Peters, 2006, 99ff.).

The role of minority associations in the local welfare system is not easy to grasp as it is not comparable to the role of the folk churches and the other traditional non-profit welfare organisations. Nevertheless, there are numerous local associations related to national minority communities or religious communities. Among them are religious associations, such as Free churches, religious communities linked to Christian traditions (like the Jehovah Witnesses or the New Apostle Community), Muslim associations, a Jewish community and a Buddhist Centre. In addition, a great variety of national minority associations (such as Turkish or Greek associations) are present in Reutlingen. Some of them target explicitly women, like the Greek women's group. The national minority communities are also organised in political groups competing for the city council of immigrants (Council for Residents with Foreign passport) (<http://www.reutlingen.de/ceasy/modules/cms/main.php5?cPageId=799>).

There are national minority associations focusing on culture (such as the *Federazione Italiana Reutlingen*, *Griechischer Tanzverein "Orphas" Reutlingen e.V.* or *Türkischer Kultur und Anadolu Sportverein e.V.*) and notably religious organisations (such as the *Ahmadiyya Muslim Gemeinde*, *Muslim-Gemeinde Reutlingen e.V.* or *Kroatische Katholische Gemeinde "Sveta Obitelj"*). But the field studies showed that the activities of many of the associations cover cultural, social and religious activities (as for example in the case the *Griechische Frauengruppe* or the *Türkische Gemeinschaft Organization im Raum e.V.*).

Nevertheless, there is only one international association that has become a regular provider of welfare services: the Ridaf (*Reutlinger Initiative für deutsche und ausländische Familien/Reutlingen Initiative for German and Foreign Families*). The association was founded in 1981 to further meetings between native families and immigrant families. Its most important aim was and still is to improve the situation of migrants and disadvantaged Germans. Most of the welfare services the association runs today relate to this aim: social work for young people, truants and street children, language and integration courses and activities to help disadvantaged residents find an occupation. The fourth and the fifth fields of activity, a catering service and home help services for elderly people, are the result of efforts to help disadvantaged migrants and Germans into the working life (<http://www.ridaf.org>). Becoming a welfare provider also meant for the Ridaf developing into a professional and

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

specialised organisation. Organising and experiencing meetings between Germans and foreigners, which was the original aim of Ridaf, no longer belongs to the major activities of the association, explains a representative in a telephone interview (WaVE, 2, f).

National minority associations and religious associations contribute to the local welfare. This is strongly expressed by all the interviewees. In addition to the very obvious function as meeting places, where they can exchange experiences, members can also reinforce their traditions and religious, cultural and moral education of the young generation; this is perceived as another major task among Muslim and Turkish associations in particular, but also among some of the Germans coming from the former USSR. These associations thus focus on educating children and young people. They want the young generation to know their culture, their religion and their traditions. The traditions passed on through this education are viewed as helping young people to get on with life, to complete school successfully and to find a job. Some representatives state directly that they consider their work as prevention of delinquency and drug abuse (WaVE, gi 2).

The national minority associations in particular are becoming more self-confident in being important actors within the field of local welfare. They are about to establish welfare services on their own instead of being “only” the clients of other welfare providers. The most prominent examples in Reutlingen are services aimed to help pupils with school difficulties with their homework. As pupils from migration background often face this kind of problem parent organisations of national minority associations want to take responsibility for these services. Their arguments are that they know the need of their children best and that they can assess most competently if the service works successfully (WaVE, ii 1,f and gi 2).

3. Context and Timeframe

The timeframe of the field study in Reutlingen was August 2006 to July 2007. The mapping was conducted between August and September 2006. During October and November 2006 first contacts with possible informants were made. In November 2006 the series of interviews started. Intensive periods of fieldwork took place in November and December 2006 and in January, March, June and July 2007.

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

In the following paragraphs we point out developments, events and public discussions on the national and the local level that occurred and/or started during our field work period and that are reflected in the material.

National level

- Unemployment has been and still is perceived as the major problem both for German society in general and for the welfare system in particular. Reutlingen is situated in an economically prosperous region of Germany and has a comparably low rate of unemployment. According to the Statistical Bureau of Baden-Württemberg, the unemployment rate in Reutlingen was only 5.3% in 2005 (<http://www.statistik.baden-wuerttemberg.de/SRDB/Tabelle.asp?99025020GE415061>, 10.01.2008) compared to 7.0% for the federal state of Baden-Württemberg (http://www.statistik.baden-wuerttemberg.de/ArbeitsmErwerb/Landesdaten/AL_JD.asp, 10.01.2008) and approximately 12% for Germany as a whole in the beginning of 2006 (<http://www.destatis.de/jetspeed/portal/cms/Sites/destatis/Internet/DE/Content/Statistiken/Zeitreihen/WirtschaftAktuell/Arbeitsmarkt/Content75/arb210a,templateId=renderPrint.psml>, 20-01.2008). Since then both the national federal state and local unemployment rates have dropped slightly. Nevertheless, unemployment was mentioned in almost all our interviews.

- In October 2006, a school in Hamburg and in Berlin decided to introduce a requirement for pupils to speak German, not only in the class room, but also in the school yard (<http://www.spiegel.de/schulspiegel/0,1518,397429,00.html>). This was very controversial, as it was viewed both as a prohibition of foreign mother tongues in school and as an important step towards better integration. Several of our interviewees mentioned this debate, especially representatives of the Turkish community.

- The membership of Turkey in the European Union is another political issue that representatives of the Turkish associations were very engaged in. In the media the issue was discussed intensely and in controversial terms during autumn 2006 (for example: <http://www.euractiv.com/de/erweiterung/verheugen-befurwortet-eu-mitgliedschaft-turkei/article-158587>).

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

Local level

During the recent years the municipality of Reutlingen conducted two exhibitions related to the focus of care for elderly people and intergenerational relationships in families from migration backgrounds. Both exhibitions are part of larger projects focusing on people from migration backgrounds and were organised by the migration officer of the city. Several of our interviewees referred to these exhibitions. This indicates that the exhibitions had some influence on the local perception of immigrant issues.

The perspective of elderly people

The title of the first exhibition was “In the foreign parts: HOME. HOME: in the foreign parts”. It is based on interviews and photographs of people, who came in the 1960s as guest workers from countries, like Turkey, Greece, Italy or Portugal to Reutlingen. The exhibition tells in the form of portraits 14 different life stories of first generation migrants who came to Reutlingen and who are now growing old, but still have plans for the future in Reutlingen – even if their plans look very different in comparison to their original objectives. What do they think about growing old in a foreign country, which at the same time somehow has become their home? What does their situation look like? What are their problems and concerns? (<http://www.reutlingen.de/ceasy/modules/cms/main.php5?cPageId=797>).

The perspective of young people

The second exhibition with the title “Whom I admire” has its focus on seven young people in the age of 14 from a migration background. They all live in Reutlingen and go to different schools. In interviews and photographs they show their favourite places and first work experiences in Reutlingen, talk about plans for their future and present their role models, who are often members of their own families. The exhibition asks: What questions are these young people preoccupied with? How do they perceive themselves? How is their relationship to the older generations? What gives them their orientation? What future plans do they have? (<http://www.reutlingen.de/ceasy/modules/cms/main.php5?cPageId=798>).

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

4. Methods, sources and focus

The following research methods and sources were used:

- Collection of statistical material published by the municipality, the statistical bureau of Baden-Württemberg and the national statistical bureau;
- Collection of documents, such as guidelines and information material, published by the municipality and different local associations;
- Observation of regional newspapers and other regional media;
- Participant observation (both by taking part in group meetings and informal gatherings of different minority communities and by reflecting on our communication and interaction with different actors and communities);
- Individual interviews and group interviews (seven individual and eight group interviews were conducted).

The individual interviews were conducted with:

- Two representative of an international association providing welfare activities (both of them are female, one is an employee and in working age, the other a member of the board and a pensioner);
- One representative of the municipality (female, working age);
- One representative of the local Protestant church (female, working age);
- One representative of an association of Germans from the former USSR (female, working age);
- One representative of a Turkish association and local mosque (male, working age);
- One representative of a Greek association (female, pensioner).

The group interviews were conducted with:

- A men's group of a Turkish association (14 interviewees, male, working age);
- A women's group of the same Turkish association (4 interviewees, female, working age, all mothers of school children);

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

- A group of men from a Mosque association (7 interviewees, male, of working age and pensioners);
- A mixed group from another Mosque association (mixed male and female, all of working age);
- A group of elderly women from an association of Greek women (about 30 interviewees, all female, all pensioners);
- A Russian language and culture association running a Russian school on Saturdays (2 interviewees, female, of working age);
- An association for the integration of immigrant citizens and development aid founded by immigrants from the former USSR (7 interviewees, mixed male and female, most of working age and one pensioner);
- A group of female employees within the municipal office for care for elderly people (3 interviewees, female, all of working age).

As the group interviews mostly took place in the localities of the international associations they were open and public to the visitors of the association. Because of this they often had the character of an open discussion, in which a new discussion member came and others left. Because of this it was difficult to relate certain statements to a specific individual. Therefore, we chose to refer to the group interview in general.

The case study focused on the following three national minority communities:

- Turkish
- Greek
- Germans from the former USSR

These communities cover the following religious groups:

- Muslims
- Orthodox Christians
- Protestant and Catholic Christians (among the Germans from the former USSR)
- Jews (among the Germans from the former USSR)
- Non-religious people (mostly among the Germans from the former USSR).

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

Focusing on the Turkish and Greek minority community was almost self-evident because they represent the two largest minority communities in Reutlingen. Many Turkish and Greek men and women came to Germany in the 1960s and the 1970s in order to earn money and to go back to their home countries after a few years. Many of them are still living in Reutlingen. They brought their families with them and are growing old now. Today, third or even fourth generations of people with Turkish or Greek background are living in Reutlingen.

The Germans from the former USSR are specific to the German case and because of this of special interest for our study: on the one hand they are German passport holders; on the other hand, they share many problems with other immigrants, for example concerning language and integration. They often live in two worlds, more so than other migrants because in the countries where they lived before they were “Germans”. But in Germany they often feel like strangers and are perceived as “Russians”. They are Germans both on a formal (having a German passport; being part of the statistics) and on an emotional level, but in everyday life they are often perceived and treated very differently from other Germans, i.e. the majority population. In addition, they are the group of immigrants who arrived most recently in Reutlingen.

Focus of the case study: care for elderly people and intergenerational relationships

As mentioned before the Reutlingen case study focuses on care for elderly and relationships between the generations. When starting the case study we compiled a long list of arguments for selecting this focus. After having conducted the case study the following argument or starting points proved to be most relevant:

- Ageing is a very pluralistic and at the same time unifying phenomenon, concerning the majority, as well as, minority groups.
- The ageing of society is a major (welfare) problem in many European countries, which will even increase in the coming decades.
- There may be different expectations of elderly German people and of people from a migration background that are growing old.
- Ageing involves the whole family. There may be different pictures of what a family is or should be like.

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

- The need to care for elderly people may reveal conflict and cohesion between the generations, both in the majority population and in the minority communities.
- Care for elderly people is a highly gendered issue.
- Intercultural care has in fact become a practical problem.
- Care for the elderly is an area where the churches as religious actors are very much involved.

5. Findings

5.1 Background information: old people in Reutlingen

More than 19,000 people who are over 65 live in Reutlingen. Of those 1,000 do not have a German passport (Stadt Reutlingen 2005d, 26) and there are some more people from migration backgrounds among them, who meanwhile have obtained a German passport. Most of the old people living in Reutlingen are, despite of their age, able to live an independent life. Others need help in different situations of life; some have to rely completely on the help offered by other people or professional services. There are a variety of social services and networks for elderly people in Reutlingen run by different public and private suppliers (see 2.3). An overview of all useful contacts for old people and their relatives is provided in a booklet published by the city council of Reutlingen (Stadt Reutlingen 2005c).

Municipal services for elderly people

The social administration of Reutlingen has a special “Department for Elderly people” with seven offices in different districts of the city. They are places for information, contact and mediation. Their function is to support the development of diverse services, groups and networks for elderly people in the city. This could be a good starting point for the national minority associations. The “Department for the Elderly” provides information and counselling to all institutions supporting elderly people and tries to coordinate the different suppliers. Furthermore, it tries to strengthen volunteers working with elderly people and contacts between volunteers and elderly people, for example by putting rooms at their disposal. An interesting project initiated by the “Department for the Elderly” is a project

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

called “Every Day Companion”, in which volunteers spend a few hours a week together with an elderly person doing activities like going for a walk or visiting concerts.

For its work the “Department for the Elderly” has established some principles in a mission statement (Stadt Reutlingen 2005b). In this paper the philosophy of work and the understanding of “age” are explained. The paper puts emphasis on perceiving “age” from the perspective of abilities and resources rather than from a perspective of deficiency, infirmity, neediness and poverty. Age is understood as a stage of life, providing a great variety of individual situations and personal positive or negative experiences, including an independent lifestyle or community with others. Against this background a vision is developed: Reutlingen is to become a city in which people of all ages have good chances to participate in the social, economic, cultural and political life according to their special situation. The “Department for the Elderly” tries to reach this aim by including the special interests and needs of elderly people into a plan for developing community work in the city: “our work helps to shape and to preserve the social cohesion, the community of generations and the cooperation in our city” (Stadt Reutlingen 2005a).

In addition to the “Department for the Elderly” there is a “District Council” for elderly people, which represents the interests of elderly people on the level of the district. This forum tries to collect and coordinate the services for elderly people as well (<http://www.ksr-reutlingen.de/cms/index.php>). Another important actor is a foundation for “Services for Elderly People” (<http://www.ksk-reutlingen.de/7c06d9f9b1b2dcc4/index.htm>) funded by the district bank of Reutlingen. The foundation rewards people being engaged in activities for elderly people every year.

5.2 Examples of cooperation and/or cohesion between and within groups

Cohesion within the family

In the general public discussion in Germany the issue of care for elderly people is without doubt related to conflicts and power struggles. Both the practical and the economic provision of care for elderly are considered to be major tasks of German society that are challenging the existing welfare system and overburdening the younger (and smaller) generations. Books,

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

such as the “The Struggle of Generations” by the theologian and sociologist Reimer Gronemeyer, stimulate the discussion (Gronemeyer 2004). Within the national and religious minority associations the issue of care for elderly people was perceived in very different ways. The subject seemed to be not at all conflictual or of any major interest. Instead, unemployment (or the difficulty to find a proper job), integration of the young generation into German society or reforms of the German health system were subjects of interest. But when it comes to care for elderly family members there was not much to discuss. Most interviewees stated that this can be taken care of by the family. It may be important to note that this is not only an inside perspective. The local officials who work with elderly confirm this self-perception. Families from migration backgrounds are clearly under-represented among those who contact the municipality, asking for help to care for their elderly relative in need (WaVE gi 6).

In other words, it seems to be easier (and more natural) for families from a migration background to organise the care of elderly members within the family and without professional help. But how do they manage to do this given the fact that both the majority population and minority communities live within the same framework, this means in an increasingly individualised society demanding more and more flexibility in the field of occupational work? When asking these questions in minority community interviews we met a certain lack of understanding. What do they mean? At the same we felt that we did not really understand as we were for example often told that women in a working age (who are often still perceived as the natural care-givers) actually were working or were really eager to work.

All interviewees from the minority communities stress that family is an important factor in their lives. Family stands for cohesion and mutual support. According to many interviewees it is mostly their families who create cohesion in often fragmented lives. This was described in several ways:

The main reason for old people from a migration background to stay in Germany is the fact that their social network has become more solid in Germany than in their home countries. This means that the children and other family members live close by. Many of the elderly migrants we met had mainly one argument explaining why they live in Germany: “*My children are here, so I will stay as well.*”

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

(<http://www.reutlingen.de/ceasy/modules/cms/main.php5?cPageId=797>) This corresponds to the results of the exhibition on migrants growing old in Reutlingen.

The exhibition “Whom I Admire” about young people from migration backgrounds shows that the family bonds are still very strong in the young generation as well. It is very interesting that four of the seven young people who were interviewed presented their fathers as their role model, one boy his grandmother, one girl her aunt and another girl a friend of the family. Although this is not a representative survey, a careful conclusion can be drawn that the role models of young people from migration backgrounds are closely connected to their understanding of the family. In this context the role models can be male or female, but particularly often the father is a decisive figure, for sons, as well as, for daughters. The people we interviewed appreciate what their parents and grandparents have done for the family. Family and the care of family members seem to be important ideals even in the younger generations. Family traditions are kept up. Many young people try to maintain the connection to the home country of the parents, some can even imagine going back there, even if they are born and well integrated in Germany. Being asked about their visions for the future, many respondents answer that they want to finish school, to find a good job and their own way of life, while also keeping the close family bonds. At the same time, they see both the advantages and the disadvantages of living between two cultures. This can be exemplified with two quotations: *“it is hard to live in a foreign country, because in the beginning you feel like a stranger and all the friends and relatives live far away in the home country”* (<http://www.reutlingen.de/ceasy/modules/cms/main.php5?cPageId=798>). *“It is a great chance to live in a different country as your home country. You can choose to live in both countries and you can get to know both cultures”* (<http://www.reutlingen.de/ceasy/modules/cms/main.php5?cPageId=798>). We met the same ambiguity about moving to and living in another country in many of our interviewees.

Both the Germans from the former USSR and the Greek women emphasise the decisive role of women for the strong cohesion of families. The power and the importance of the family, which many interviewees are proud of, presuppose extensive women’s’ work and involvement, something which some female interviewees in particular were critical about. Some of the elderly Greek women think that the women of the younger generation are not willing or not able to take over the same responsibility within the family as they themselves

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

did. Many younger women from migration backgrounds have started successful careers and demanding jobs. In this respect, a different agenda for family may become a source of conflict within the minority communities as well.

Cohesion within the minority network

Some of the male representatives of the Muslim and the Turkish communities experience as well that the strong family bonds are threatened by an adaptation to the surrounding German society. Not all the families within their minority community want to or are able to put the same emphasis on passing on the (family) traditions. According to their perception, these families – and young people in particular – get lost between the cultures. They consider this situation as a genuine challenge that mosques and international associations must respond to. Actually, several of the interviewees underline that this is the most important task of their communities and associations, namely to transmit the traditions to the next (third and fourth) generations. Among these traditions family cohesion plays a key role. The importance of family has to be explained and transferred both in terms of culture and religion (WaVE gi 1, gi 2, gi 7). Representatives who are of working age emphasise that the older (first) generation is expecting them to have family cohesion function like it was in their home countries. As they realise that the members of the third or the fourth generation do not always support (or even know) these traditional family values, they think that the mosques and minority community associations should strengthen their educational activities. To guarantee future (family) cohesion the minority community associations have to focus on cohesion and cooperation within their network (WaVE gi 2).

Cooperation with the majority population

The need and willingness to cooperate with the majority society is expressed primarily in these areas that are experienced as problematic. For example there are visible problems of some young people from migration backgrounds to integrate into German society and to find a job. The growing juvenile delinquency and the emergence of youth gangs are alarming to many of our interviewees in different minority communities. Several representatives of Muslim communities were happy that the local police has contacted them to discuss the

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

situation of young people in Reutlingen and they are happy to cooperate in this matter (WaVE gi 1, gi2). According to them the educational activities and the open meeting places that the minority communities offer can be a contribution to prevent juvenile delinquency among young people from migration backgrounds. Because of this they want to intensify these activities and hope that the support of the majority society will be able to do so.

This is also an area of concern among the Germans from the former USSR. During their own youth they were integrated in a system of leisure activities organised by the Soviet state. In Germany it is the responsibility of the parents and the young people themselves to organise leisure activities in the afternoons as many schools still finish in the early afternoon. Many young people coming from the former USSR end up doing nothing at all in the afternoon. As one of the interviewees describes it: *“in our neighbourhood I see many of the boys just hanging around [...] because they are bored. [...] some parents send their children somewhere, but 60-70 % of them hang just around, as I can see it. 10 to 12 to 40 people just stand together at one place in the street. From doing nothing, nothing good can emerge. [...] In this area something more has to be done.”* (WaVE ii3, f). In this matter they express the wish to get support by the majority society.

Another area in which the minority communities express a strong wish to cooperate are services for pupils from migration backgrounds who have difficulties in school. Many surveys and studies make quite clear that pupils from migration backgrounds do much worse academically in German schools than majority population pupils. Because of this, the representatives of the minority communities are eager to change this situation and to get the best possible support from the majority population. The international parents' organisations which are often a part of the international associations are particularly involved in this matter. Their growing involvement also leads to more self-confidence, as some of them are thinking of running some services themselves (WaVE gi 2, ii 1, f).

Another field of cooperation is religion. Several minority communities said that they have quite good and vivid relationships with the local parishes. Within the districts contacts and mutual visits are taking place on a regular basis. Some think that the parish representatives have a better understanding of the situation of the minority community than the officials of

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

the municipality (WaVE ii 3, f). They respect their religious celebrations and traditions and they show up when invited to some events (WaVE gi 2).

One of the representatives of the Muslim community told us about building a mosque in Reutlingen when we asked for examples of cooperation. Being part of the Muslim steering committee for the building plan he was quite enthusiastic about the course of the project. There were no problems, neither with the administration, nor with the population of Reutlingen. When we visited the mosques ourselves the imam showing us around told us about all the local firms that were involved in the building project. Building a mosque in Reutlingen obviously contributed to coherence in the city (WaVE ii 6, m).

The Greek women describe their relation to German society in terms of giving and taking. They are explicit that they have contributed to the development of Reutlingen, by doing their share of the work, by paying taxes and by bringing Greek culture and hospitality to Reutlingen. But they also think that they have learned from the Germans. Some examples that they give include the ability to save, to keep everything tidy and clean, and to appreciate punctuality (WaVE gi 4, ii 7,f).

5.3 Examples of tensions/problem between and within groups

Inner conflicts

Some of our interviewees were quite outspoken about inner conflicts, as being a migrant and growing old in Germany implies a feeling of living between two different cultures. In each of the countries they somehow feel at home and like strangers at the same time. They still long for their home countries and often go there on holidays, but – as one woman expresses: “*when I am for quite a long time in my home country I feel homesick of Reutlingen.*” (WaVE ii 4). On the one hand, they try to keep their native cultural identity, on the other hand, they have to deal with the German way of life and be integrated in society. Most of the interviewed people solve this problem in the following way: “*I accept people the way they are, but I won’t forget my own culture.*” (WaVE, gi 4). In practice this can mean that they somehow mix the cultures, for example by celebrating Ramadan and Christmas⁶, by organising themselves in cultural associations that are connected to their home countries in

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

order to strengthen their native traditions (WaVE ii 6, m; gi 2). Taking into consideration the broad range of international organisations in Reutlingen, some of the interviewees had the feeling that contacts between Germans and migrants could be intensified in some ways (WaVE ii4, f; ii 6, m).

The most outspoken about their “inner” conflicts were the elderly women from Greece. They gave examples of questions they are struggling with: “*where is my home, in Germany or in Greece?*” “*Where are my roots?*” (...). The answer is mostly provided by the children. Home is where the children live and find work. The lives of the elderly Greek women in Germany have been and are still formed by this difficulty to decide. One woman describes it in the following way: “*we swing to and from like a wall clock.*” (WaVE gi 4). They live in Greece for some months (during the long summer holidays) and the rest of the year they live in Germany. Airplanes make distances shorter today than some years ago. Still, they are living in two worlds; feeling Greek in Germany and German in Greece. At the same time, this way of life is only possible as long as they are healthy. Some elderly Greek women believe that they will live only in Germany when they become older and less healthy because the provision of medical care is better in Germany. (WaVE ii 4, f; ii 7 f). The difficulties to decide even made them take the wrong decisions. Many of them have built a house in Greece, but live in small rented apartments in Germany though they live most of the time in Germany. According to some of the women it is too late for them to change the situation though they are not satisfied with it. Today they think that they should have made a decision earlier in their lives on where to stay and they should have built houses in Germany in order to feel at home there (WaVE, gi 4).

Conflicts with the majority society

Many of the interviewees are concerned about their future in Germany. But among the elderly interviewees unease about who will take care of them when they become older and more dependent is not their primary concern. Instead they are more afraid that for example they will lose the contacts with their (German) colleagues after they are retired. Working life seems to be an important part of feeling integrated into German society and they feel scared of the idea that their abilities will not be needed any more in society. Without contact with work they sometimes even have the feeling of forgetting the German language (WaVE, ii 4, f).

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

A rarely discussed issue is the economic situation of retired people from migration backgrounds, mostly women and men who were working in Germany for more than 35 years. But although they were working all their lives they often received very low pensions. Guest workers had very low salaries compared to native workers, thus leading to low pensions. This becomes especially difficult when they have to pay for medical care, as additional payments in the German health care system have become more usual for some treatments (as in the area of dental care) (WaVE gi 4). Many retired guest workers feel that they are treated in an unfair way. What is most frustrating to them is the fact that no one in among German general public seems to be interested in this question or even perceive this problem (WaVE gi 2, gi4, ii 4, f). A precarious financial situation seems to be a problem of elderly women from migration backgrounds in particular. In comparison to men, their wages are even lower (WaVE gi 4).

Even though working life seems to be an important factor for integrating into German society, it also can be a factor of exclusion and conflict. This is especially true for all interviewees who have difficulties entering the labour market themselves or have relatives and friends in this situation (WaVE gi 2, gi 7). These problems may be related to the fact that some of the migrants have arrived quite recently (like the Germans from the former USSR). Others experience that German employers are more hesitant about employing persons with their particular cultural background. This was mostly mentioned by the Turkish and Muslim interviewees (WaVE gi 1, gi 2, gi 7).

Sometimes different cultural characteristics can be a hindrance for succeeding in the German labour market. One of the German women from the former USSR involved in education work within her group told us about an interesting observation she made when it comes to men that have been shaped by the Russian culture. She told us that in the Russian culture men are – as a sign of authority – not used to speak and communicate very much. The more silent a man behaves the more authority he has. This is true in family life, as well as, in working life. In working life men define themselves by the work they are actually doing, not by presenting their work in nice words. Therefore it is a real problem for many men with Russian backgrounds to find a job in Germany because self-presentation is a natural part of the application process for a German employer, something contradictory to the Russian idea of being a valuable man (WaVE gi 8).

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

The cultural patterns for women from the former USSR are different, including more communication. This is one reason why it may be easier for women from the former USSR to find a job, to make contact with other people and to integrate in the German society. This often leads to conflicts within the families, as the men still feel as outsiders, while the women already have started to integrate (WaVE gi 8).

Related to these issues are conflicts on the German education system and schools. As mentioned above most interviewees were most concerned about the future perspectives of the young generation and their worse chances when entering the German labour market. Some interviewees were quite critical of German schools and their abilities to prepare young people from migration backgrounds for working life. They have a feeling that their children are disadvantaged in comparison to children with German parents (WaVE gi 2, gi 7) or that the education and school system does not encourage and challenge children and young people as much as it could. According to their viewpoint young children can perform a lot more and should be encouraged to do so (WaVE gi 3, gi 8). Representatives of the Germans from the former USSR in particular express the opinion that the teaching style and the methods are too liberal and permissive. As one mother of school children put it: “[...] *when it comes to school, too little is done. The school system just wears on [...]. In kindergarten children are not expected to perform anything. They only participate if they are in the mood of doing so. If not they [the personnel] just let them go. It should not be like that.*” (WaVE ii 3, f).

When it comes to social contacts German society is described as cold by all of the interviewees. In several interviews it was pointed that Germans lack hospitality, which is an important part of their own culture and tradition (WaVE gi 7). According to the interviewees it is most easy for children and most difficult for elderly people to overcome this lack of social contact. Among the Germans from the former USSR and among the Turkish people it was mentioned that it was most difficult for the old (first) generation to get used to the German society. Representatives of the working age generation in particular think that the elderly people still live very strongly in their traditional home culture without connecting to German society. It is the task of the younger ones, the second generation, to build bridges between the cultures (WaVE gi 2;ii 3, f). The working age interviewees from the former USSR illustrate the difficulties: the elderly Germans from the former USSR in particular

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

were expecting another society when coming to Germany. They thought that they were coming home, but now they are shocked about what German society looks like. They don't feel welcome in Germany and miss the social contacts with neighbours that were quite natural for them in the former USSR (WaVE ii 3,f; gi 8).

Another issue of dissatisfaction are the poor facilities and finances of most of the religious and national minority associations. In comparison to other local associations and the churches many of the representatives feel in a very disadvantaged position, for example concerning the (financial) support by the municipality. This is true for all national groups that we are focussing on. A strong need for bigger and better localities is expressed in several interviews (WaVE gi 1, gi 2). These localities are needed to meet and to sustain home cultures. But without public support the minority communities are not able to realise their plans. In this respect, they feel abandoned by the German public authorities since the municipality gives very little support. At the same time, they feel unsure about strategies and routines on how to push their own interests in the local community. Several times, we, as interviewers, were asked to put pressure defending their interests (WaVE gi 2, gi 4, gi 7).

The Muslim associations in particular were quite upset about the picture the media draws of Islam. In this respect they mostly referred to the national media, not to the local media. They stated that attitudes in society towards Muslims have changed for the worse since the September 11th attacks. They feel that people are more distanced since then and they think that this may partly be due to the way German media cover Muslim issues. The unbalanced and sometimes offending reporting of the media is a recurrent subject in the interviews with most Muslim representatives making them feeling angry and defenceless. In general, media debates were very present in some of the interviews. Examples were the debate about a prohibition of foreign languages on school yards or the controversial debate about Turkey becoming a member of the European Union (WaVE gi 1, gi 2).

Conflicts within and among minority communities

When it comes to care for elderly people a future conflict can be sensed in some of the – sometimes contradictory statements during the interviews. As the family bonds in minority communities are still very strong, expectations to care for elderly relatives are quite

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

outspoken. Many interviewees emphasise that the traditions are quite clear and stable in this area. As one of the interviewees said: “*when the children are young, the parents care for them; when the parents are old, the children care for the parents. The more children are in one family, the better is the providing when people are old.*” (WaVE gi 2). An interviewee in the exhibition put it like this: “*old people’s homes are just for Germans. My children will care for me, when I am old.*” (<http://www.reutlingen.de/ceasy/modules/cms/main.php5?cPageId=797>). Against this background the question of how to take care of elderly people in need of care seems to be a great challenge for the members of the different generations: whereas many old people expect their children and grandchildren to care for them, this is often quite difficult for the young generation. On the one hand, they are expected to integrate into the German labour market, and, on the other hand, they are expected to take care of the family. These two tasks become harder to combine taking into consideration the demands of the labour market. In addition, some interviewees hint that not all migrant families are willing or able to put the same emphasis on transmitting cultural and religious traditions. Still, German homes for elderly are not considered to be an alternative (WaVE gi 2, gi 7). At the same time institutions for elderly people often do not know very much about the special needs of elderly people from migration backgrounds as they do not have very much experience in this field (WaVE gi 6). It is hard to make any predictions. The situation seems to be quite open: “*the large number of elderly migrants will be new chapter in German history.*” (WaVE gi 6).

It also has to be mentioned that there seem to be some conflicts between the minority communities as well. Some representatives of the minority communities distance themselves from other minority communities accusing them of being less willing to integrate. Some of them mention also that they do not feel accepted by other minority communities. (WaVE, ii 3, f; gi 1; gi 4; ii 7, f; gi 7).

5.4 The ‘grey areas’ – situations in flux

The ambiguity of personal situations is illustrated very well by the biographical reflections of some of the elderly interviewees. Many of them realise that they themselves are growing old and their surroundings have completely changed: again the Greek women are most outspoken about this. They do not work anymore, they get quite low pensions, they miss the contacts

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

with their colleagues and they have given up their dreams to go home to their country. One of them formulates it like this: “*we have come with a suitcase full of dreams and are now travelling with a suitcase full of medicine.*” (WaVE gi 4). Almost all the elderly Greek women in the interview group agree that the transition from working life to retirement has been very hard for them: in financial terms, but also in terms of social contacts with colleagues. Looking back, they realise that work has been an important factor for them and their self-definition during many years (WaVE gi 4; ii 4, f; ii 7, f). The break off is even harder when their life partner has died.

At the same time they acknowledge that the working situation in Germany has changed fundamentally and that their children have to struggle with this. One woman puts it like this: “*some years ago work came to us – now the situation has changed and it is hard to find any work*” (WaVE gi 4). A few decades ago young people were invited to work in Germany. They were able to support financially their families (especially the parents) in Greece. Now parents have to support their adult children because it is very hard to find good jobs (WaVE gi 4; ii 7, f).

Some women point also to the fact that the relationships to native tradition decrease from generation to generation. Some of their children are married to Germans. Their grandchildren often do not speak their own language very well. Some are sorry for this development. Others stress that their feeling of being European is stronger than being German or Greek (WaVE gi 4).

One of the Turkish respondents describes a similar development. He points to the fact that the third generation has become more self-confident. An example for this is that young Turkish people do not organise national sport clubs any longer, but are involved in the local associations (WaVE ii 6, m). Another interviewee indicates that Turkish minority communities are more eager to organise their own welfare services instead of accepting welfare services that are offered by others (like the municipality or the churches) (WaVE ii 1, f). However, this development is not clear as other Muslim representatives think that the third and fourth generation has more difficulties to integrate socially. They refer to problems in the school and to problems in entering the labour market and to the growing juvenile delinquency (WaVE gi 2).

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

Another important field of ambiguous encounters between the majority population and the minority communities is the neighbourhood. German neighbours get both positive and negative evaluations by the representatives of the minority communities. Often they are perceived as not very friendly, warm or hospitable. At the same time, many German neighbours are pitied for their social situation and loneliness (elderly Germans in particular). On the one hand, this can be explained by the low cost housing areas where many members of the minority communities live. It is possible that many of the German neighbours they meet really live in precarious social situations (WaVE gi 7, ii 7, f). On the other hand, there are also interviewees who refer to their neighbours as friends and important sources in strengthening contacts with the majority population (WaVE ii 4, f; gi 4).

A very special perspective of Germans from the former USSR was provided in an interview with two young women who organise a parents' initiative on Saturdays to teach children Russian language and culture in a playful way. Their goal is to support integration in German society by making children self-confident because of their special German and Russian identity and giving them the feeling that they do not have to hide their roots. Their intention is to give their children the best they can: this is – especially because of their Jewish background – a form of education in a very broad sense, containing skills beyond language, such as culture (mainly music), sports and religion. According to their perception the German school system does not promote all the talents that children have in a satisfactory way. Therefore, they organise activities in their leisure time in order to compensate for this deficiency. Here they adapted to the German structure of voluntary organisations, a system which was very strange to them when they came to Germany. In Russia any kind of education was offered by the state. In this context it was quite astonishing for us how uninhibited they feel when dealing with the ambivalence of the Soviet system by stressing the positive aspects and leaving the negative sides behind. Doing this is a conscious choice; *“the world has become so complex, that we have to make decisions all the time – why should we choose the negative side?”* (WaVE gi 8). They understand their task in transmitting the best of their own experiences onto their children: *“the rest is history and you have to keep it in distance; you just should know about it without emotion.”* (WaVE gi 8). Here it can be seen that the situation is in flux indeed: the young generation seems to be very self-confident and able to use the positive aspects of both cultures in a productive manner. This becomes evident

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

in the way the children see themselves: as “*Jewish children, born in Germany by parents who speak the Russian language at home*” (WaVE gi 8).

6. Analysis: Emergent values and conceptions

Within the German debate “value” is a dazzling term which is frequently used. One would not have any problem finding literature on the values keeping German society together and on the ongoing value changes. Though resonant throughout Germany, the term is rarely defined. Only few of those dedicating themselves to the broad field of value discussion actually focus their attention on defining their key term. This is not at all a new phenomenon. Already in 1969 the German sociologist Rüdiger Lautmann tried to construct a more precise sociological definition of the terms “Norm” (norm) and “Wert” (value) by analysing their use in existing sociological literature. As a result of his inquiry he stated that there is an inconsistency in the usage of these two terms and a certain indifference among sociologists towards using them in a more precise and reflected way (Lautman, 110f.).

The usage of the term “value” is even more complex because it is not only used in social sciences, but also in other disciplines, such as ethics and philosophy. The German equivalent to value “Wert” has its origins in economy, economic science and mathematics and is still used within this context. German philosophy and social sciences did not adopt the term until the 19th century. In philosophy it became a key term during the first third of the 20th century. An updated handbook on ethics defines “Wert” (value) in the following way: “... *values can be identified as conscious or unconscious orientation directives for human achieving. The human being as a subject is marked by this relation to values. They are directives for the creation of herself/himself and of her/his world. ...In relation to the subject the value is a kind of being supposed to, something, that the human being is subjecting herself/himself to and is identifying herself/himself in accordance with; ...In that the value gives the human existence meaning and direction; ...*” (Krijnen 2006, 528f.; Übersetzung A.L.).

Against this background it seems adventurous to use just the term “value” to classify, interpret or analyse statements, opinions, positions or narratives of our interviewees, even though the term is sometimes explicitly used by themselves. At the same time it would be a much too ambitious project to give a scientifically subtle definition within the framework of

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

this case study. To ignore the problem by replacing the term “value” by a more neutral term like “conception” is not satisfactory either. This would dilute the bonds to the other case studies in the WaVE project. A compromise could be to relate to the term “value”, but not to use it in a way that contradicts the results of our analysis.

The analysis of the material of the case study suggests that the usage of the term “value” can at least be as disguising and as illuminating. We will try to illustrate this by means of two key conceptions in our case study: “family” or “family cohesion” and “age” and/or “respect for elderly people”.

Within the framework of the above named discussion it would be easy to introduce the conceptions of “family” and “family cohesion” as values. Even more, it would be easy to place them as core values offering a common ground for society. There is evidence for doing so. Within the framework of our case study it would be impossible to find any representative not supporting the statement that it is good, important and meaningful to have “family” and “family cohesion”. In this respect there are no differences between the majority population and minority communities. This leads to the question: why not define family as a core value of society since all groups in society can share it? To draw a conclusion like this would be stating a quite outward consensus. Furthermore, it would ignore that it is obvious (not least in the material of our case study) that not all forms and expressions of “family” and “family cohesion” are as valuable as others within all groups in society. Actually, the evaluation of forms of “family” and “family cohesion” differs considerably between different groups. In this respect the case study material is full of examples:

Minority community representatives are often proud that their families stay together well, probably better than the families of the majority population. Some of them are quite explicit in distancing themselves from German majority society and culture when it comes to family matters. One aspect that our interviewees were very critical about is that majority population families do not care for their elderly people themselves, but hire professionals to do that (WaVE gi 1, gi 2, gi 7). Another criticism was that the younger generation within the majority population lacks respect for the parents and for the older generation in general (WaVE gi 3, ii 3,f). There is no such thing as a common concept of family among the representatives of the different minority communities included in the study. Even though

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

elderly people within German families from the USSR are still often taken care of by their families, professional care services are becoming more and more accepted among them. Nevertheless, all minority community representatives agreed that they do not want to adapt to the forms and expressions of “family and “family cohesion” that they perceive as those of the majority population.

Does this mean that the minority communities feel more obliged to the core values of “family” and “family cohesion or do they succeed better in realising them in their daily life (not at least in the areas of welfare and care)? There is surely some evidence to support this hypothesis. Again, to stop the research process here would mean to give simple and very obvious answers, even though there may still be important reasons to take the questioning process even further. Possible questions could be: why do majority population representatives refer to “family” and “family cohesion”, but do not live these conceptions in the same way like minority communities tend to? Have “family” and “family cohesion” become abstract ideals with little reference to everyday life in the majority population context? Or are there some crucial misunderstandings between the majority population and minority communities when it comes to “family” and family cohesion”?

All three questions (and many more that are not stated above) would be interesting to investigate closer. The material of our case study has offered some reflections on the last question. For us as researchers (who represent the majority population perspective) it became more difficult to understand what is implied when the interviewees told us that the family takes care of an elderly relative. Sometimes it was quite clear from the narrative that, neither sons or daughters, nor the sons or daughters-in-law, were actually doing the daily work as all of them had fulltime jobs. But as family they were fulfilling of their duties by using a (possibly quite distant) family relative who provided this type of care work. An arrangement like this seemed to perfectly fit into the “family” conception of some minority groups, while majority population representatives, who unconsciously equate family with close family, would not necessarily think in this direction. From this perspective it is quite natural to consider having children as a direct retirement provision. Muslim interviewees in particular were very explicit about their concept of family-building and their moral and religious education aims at being cared for when becoming old (WaVE gi 2, gi 7). That the importance of children for elderly care provision is not taken into consideration may be as hard to

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

understand for many minority community representatives as it has become unfamiliar to many majority community representatives to link children to a lifelong obligation that they cannot choose for themselves.

The intention of these reflections is not an evaluation of different models, ideas, narratives and practices related to the conception of “family” and “family cohesion”. It is rather an argument for being cautious when defining values (or even core values) as there is a risk of missing the subtext (read: models, ideas, narratives and practices) behind the term. To improve the cooperation between minority communities and the majority population a deeper understanding of the content of values is needed, not an outward agreement on common values.

This approach seems to be even more relevant as the case study also shows that there are some fundamental changes going on. It is obvious that the plurality of family structures and life styles is growing. This may be related to the integration of women in the labour market or to the changing conditions of a globalised economy. The same developments question both the welfare system in general and those institutions that the welfare system is offering for elderly care provision in particular. Certainly, these changes affect both the minority communities and majority population. As it is more difficult to find a job some of the minority community interviewees expressed a growing willingness to compromise family obligations. But at the same time the same interviewees emphasise that “family and “family cohesion” is a substantial part of their religious and cultural identity. Religious and cultural traditions and religious and cultural education seem to be even more important in a situation where these obligations are at risk or threatened. The threats for the majority population are the shrinking resources of the welfare system which may possibly (in the long run) lead to a rediscovery of family obligations (WaVE gi 6).

Age

Another interesting aspect of our case study is the concept of age. In general, it is obvious that the perception of age is changing in society. Many official papers and public statements claim that existing conceptions of age should be reconsidered. Elderly people should be seen as active and independent members of society. They have been discovered as financially

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

strong customers by the industry and the service sectors. To be sick, needy and dependent on others is only one (very limited) aspect of being old. Approaches like this can be found in the case study material as well, in particular among the elderly people themselves and in the statements of the municipality.

The sociologist Irmhild Saake is quite critical to approaches like this. She has studied German research about age since the 1960s. Her conclusion is that all generalising theories about age and aging are not applicable as they do not take into consideration the contextuality of each aging experience (Saake 2006, 255f.). This may be true for the generalising value of “respect for elderly people” as well.

When distinguishing between elderly people and very old people, the majority population connect the latter group in a more outspoken way to more need of help. As mentioned above, public documents and majority population interviewees focus on the abilities and resources of different age groups during the ageing process. They draw a picture of old age as an active and independent period of life. But when it comes to public statements, there may be a hidden agenda behind this focus during a time of shrinking welfare resources. When stressing independence and ability such statements are bound to miss some important aspects of the individual and contextual situation of age. At the same time, minority community representatives may have generalising ideas about the elderly as well, not taking different contexts and experiences into consideration. According to most of the working age interviewees the maintenance of traditions and traditional role models is most important for the elderly, while second and third generation representatives said that the representatives of the third or fourth generation are not as dependent on these traditions. In other words they expect the elderly to be traditional. Moreover, the same interviewees mostly focused on their obligations towards and their support of the elderly as their task within the generational contract. Unintentionally they make the plurality and contextuality of age invisible by only focusing on the need for care. Relating elderly people to traditions and to family obligations they did not leave any room for individual and contextual experiences of and attitudes towards age.

Again, this is not about evaluating conceptions and perceptions. Both the majority population and the minority community representatives may have their reasons for focusing on certain

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

aspects. One of the motivations may be their own fears related to age as a future phase of life, regardless whether they express these or not. In this case undifferentiated references to “values” or “concepts” related to age are not helpful. To strengthen mutual understanding and to build cooperation and cohesion between and among the minority communities and the majority population it would be better to understand each other’s very personal and contextual models, ideas, narratives and practices related to age. This would not only do more justice to the individual situation of age, but it would also further awareness of the effects of wide-ranging international trends (such as internationalisation, changes in working life, transformed gender roles and migration) on the ageing process as part of life. Based on such a dialogue, new flexible welfare solutions for elderly people, adapted to a range of individual and contextual situations, could be developed.

7. References

Brecht, Martin (1995), ‘Matthäus Albers Theologie’ [The Theology of Matthäus Alber], in: Martin Brecht, *Ausgewählte Aufsätze IV: Reformation* [Selected Articles IV: Reformation] (Kohlhammer: Stuttgart), 237-268.

Deutsche Rentenversicherung (ed.) (2007), *Rente für Aussiedler* [Pension for Resettlers], (Berlin: Deutsche Rentenversicherung).

Gronemeyer, Reimer (2004), *Der Kampf der Generationen* [The Battle between the Generations], (München: DVA).

Jäger, Alexander, Leschhorn, Harald & Stutzer, Erich (2004), *Migration und Migrantenfamilien in Baden-Württemberg, Familienbericht 2004 Teil 2* [Migration and Migrant Families in Baden- Württember. Report on the Situation of Families Part 2], Familienwissenschaftliche Forschungsstelle im Statistischen Landesamt Baden-Württemberg (Stuttgart: Statistisches Landesamt Baden-Württemberg).

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

Krijnen, Christian (2002), 'Wert' [Value], in: Marcus Düwell, Christoph Hüenthal & Micha H. Werner (ed.), *Handbuch Ethik* [Compendium on Ethics] (Stuttgart/Weimar: Verlag J.B. Metzler), 527-533.

Lautmann, Rüdiger (1969), *Wert und Norm. Begriffsanalysen für die Soziologie* [Value and Norm. Analysis of Terminology for Sociology], (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag).

Leis-Peters, Annette (2006), 'Protestant Agents of Welfare in Germany – the Case of Reutlingen', in Anne Yeung & Ninna Edgardh Beckman & Per Pettersson (ed.), *Churches in Europa as Agents of Welfare – England, Germany, France, Italy and Greece. Working Paper 2:2 from the project Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective* (Uppsala: Uppsala Institute for Diaconal and Social Studies), 56-122.

Saake, Irmhild (2006), *Die Konstruktion des Alters. Eine gesellschaftstheoretische Einführung in die Altersforschung* [The Construction of Age. An Introduction into Age Research from the Perspective of Society Theory], Hagener Studentexte zur Soziologie (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Soziologie).

Stadt Reutlingen (2007), *Leitfaden für ältere Menschen und deren Angehörige* [Guidelines for Elderly People and their Relatives], 6th edition (Reutlingen: Abteilung für Ältere).

Stadt Reutlingen (2005a), *Bericht über die Gemeinwesenorientierung in der Altenarbeit* [Report on the Community Work Orientation within Work for Elderly People] (Reutlingen: Abteilung für Ältere).

Stadt Reutlingen (2005b), *Grundsätze der Arbeit für Ältere* [Principles for Work with Elderly People] (Reutlingen: Abteilung für Ältere).

Stadt Reutlingen (2005c), *Leitfaden für ältere Menschen und deren Angehörige* [Guidelines for Elderly People and their Relatives], 5th edition, (Reutlingen: Abteilung für Ältere).

Stadt Reutlingen (2005d), *Reutlingen im Spiegel der Statistik* [Reutlingen in the reflection of Statistics], 15th edition (Reutlingen: Amt für Wirtschaft und Immobilien).

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

Websites

www.bruderhausdiakonie.de (12.12.2007)
<http://www.caritas-fils-neckar-alb.de> (12.12.2007)
www.czr.de (21.12.2007)
<http://www.destatis.de> (10.01.2008)
<http://www.drk-reutlingen.de> (12.12.2007)
<http://www.euractiv.com> (10.01.2008)
<http://www.kirchenbezirk.reutlingen.elk-wue.de> (12.12.2007)
<http://www.ksk-reutlingen.de> (12.12.2007)
<http://www.ksr-reutlingen.de/cms/index.php> (12.12.2007)
<http://www.reutlingen.de> (10.01.2008)
<http://www.ridaf.org> (10.01.2008)
<http://www.sinti-roma-bawue.de> (21.12.2007)
<http://www.spiegel.de> (10.01.2008)
<http://www.statistik.baden-wuerttemberg.de> (10.01.2008)

¹ There is a Pentecostal parish in Reutlingen called the “Christian Centre Reutlingen”. According to the external view it offers, its website (www.czr.de) and material from the WREP study it is a quite established parish in the town. In some of the WREP interviews, it was mentioned that there is an interest in new charismatic parishes among young Christian people in Reutlingen. But mostly, these young people go to Stuttgart where some charismatic youth churches have started to establish (WREP CR 5, f; WREP CR 10, m).

² The study is mainly based on interviews conducted for the WaVE case study. There are two categories of interviews: individual interviews (ii) and group interviews (gi). Within these categories the interviews are numbered in a chronological order. In addition, the case study includes some interviews that were conducted during the earlier European research project “Welfare and religion in a European Perspective” (WREP). All the interviews used are individual interviews and comprise two categories: representatives of the social authorities and local politicians (SA) and church representatives (CR). Within these categories the interviews are numbered in a chronological order. For individual interviews, (f) indicates a woman and (m) a man.

³ Public statistics do not include figures for the Roma and the Sinti. The Sinti are a subgroup of the Roma who are until today the most numerous group of Roma living in Germany. Their name refers to their language and it is a name they chose for themselves. In the German context statistics refer to both the Sinti and the Roma, not to either the Sinti, or the Roma. Not including Sinti and Roma in public statistics is due to historic reasons as Sinti and Roma were one of the persecuted groups during the Nazi-regime. Representatives of the statistical bureau make it quite clear that public statistics in Germany should never make it possible again to define Sinti and Roma (in order to prevent risk of persecution). Because of this the statistical officer in Reutlingen can guess that there must be some Sinti and Roma in Reutlingen, maybe among the residents coming from Eastern Europe. According to the German Association of Sinti and Roma in Baden-Württemberg about 10,000 Sinti and Roma are living in Baden-Württemberg today. The task of this association is to coordinate education work, culture, public relations and welfare work for Sinti and Roma. The association points to the fact that many Sinti and Roma still suffer from persecution during the Nazi regime, ongoing discrimination when reparations were paid and insufficient social, cultural, economic and political reintegration (<http://www.sinti-roma-bawue.de>).

⁴ These Germans coming to Germany have never lived in Germany before. Their families have been living in Russia and the USSR for generations.

⁵ We chose not to pay close attention to this area within our case study as it did not seem to be as relevant to the minority groups we were focusing on.

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

⁶ On Christmas we received a Christmas card from one of the groups; it was from a Muslim association.