



Demographic Change – A Security Issue

The structure of the population is changing – in Germany and in the world as a whole. The potential effects of this development on internal and external security, as well as on the future of the German Federal Armed Forces, were the subject of discussion at a congress hosted by the
MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE FOR DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH
and the Federal College for Security Studies in Berlin.

Niederschönhausen is worth a visit. A stressed-out Berliner getting off the subway in the suburb of Pankow and making his way on foot to the Federal College for Security Studies could be forgiven for thinking that he's entered another world. Beyond the hustle and bustle of Pankow's main street, on Ossietzky-Strasse, a bronze statue of Carl von Ossietzky, pacifist and publisher of the political magazine *DIE WELTBÜHNE*, suddenly looms on the right, seemingly fixing passersby with his earnest gaze. A little further on lies a park dotted with works of art.

PHOTO: 2003 BUNDESWEHR/MOPES

A narrow, bumpy road leads directly to a sentry-guarded compound. Since 2004, the assorted buildings in this area of the park, including Schönhausen Palace, which is currently undergoing restoration, have been home to the Federal College for Security Studies (BAKS), Germany's most important national interdisciplinary education and training center specializing in security policy. The feeling that Schönhausen is somehow a special place is intensified even further upon entering the conference hall of the BAKS. Furnished with glass lamps, heavy curtains and patterned carpets, the room unexpectedly exudes the discreet charm of the old East Germany. Most of all, this place has a very special history, which visitors are reminded of by various plaques mounted outside the building.

Despite being far younger than the adjacent palace of the Counts of Dohna, the main hall of the conference building has often been the setting for significant events: An important summit meeting of Warsaw Pact states was held here in December 1970. Following the collapse of communism, it

was the meeting place of the East German Central Round Table, which was instrumental in bringing the Citizens' Movement and the opposition into discussion with the Modrow government. The same venue was chosen for the June 1990 meeting of foreign ministers that became known as the Two Plus Four Talks, which settled the security policy status of a soon-to-be-united Germany, as well as border issues, the withdrawal of allied troops from Berlin and the end of the four-power status.

A SYMBOLIC LOCATION FOR DISCUSSION

In mid-December, the BAKS and the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Rostock invited an international cross-section of politicians, scientists, experts and practitioners to this symbolic location to discuss the issue of "Demographic change: A challenge to national and global security."

The congress examined the security policy dimensions of demographic phenomena, focusing on three central issues. First, there was the question of how the German Federal

Armed Forces, the Bundeswehr, should resolve the dilemma of how to play its part in future worldwide peacekeeping while demographic change makes it increasingly difficult to recruit personnel who are intellectually and physically suited to the task. Also on the agenda was an attempt to outline the extent to which evident demographic shifts on the international stage are likely to impact the security of the Western world in general and Germany in particular. Yet the conference did not concentrate exclusively on foreign and defense policy. Aspects of internal security that are likely to arise in an increasingly diverse society also came under the microscope. The consequences of immigration and inadequate integration of immigrants were a particular topic of discussion.

"The conference was a great opportunity for us. It was the first time we were able to sit down and talk directly with high-ranking politicians and experts in the field of security policy," remarked James W. Vaupel, Director at the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research. The institute in Rostock has recently set up a Laboratory of Population and Policy that is investigating the interaction between demographics and politics. With support from the Max Planck Society Innovation Fund, one of the Laboratory's tasks is to develop a database of information on politics, demographics and their ambient parameters. The aim is to enable comparisons to be made at all levels of state activity, from the federal government down to local authorities. Access to the database is also expected to be available via the Internet.

"The institute is strongly committed to communicating the results of its policy-related research to interested members of the public and politicians," explained Andreas Edel, Academic Managing Director at the institute. The researchers have set up their own website at www.zdwa.de for just this purpose. "We aim to pro-



PHOTO: NORBERT MICHALKE

Federal Minister of the Interior Wolfgang Schäuble called on Germany to seriously consider its role as a destination for immigrants.



James Vaupel predicted that the world population will grow from around four billion in 1974 to nine billion in 2045.

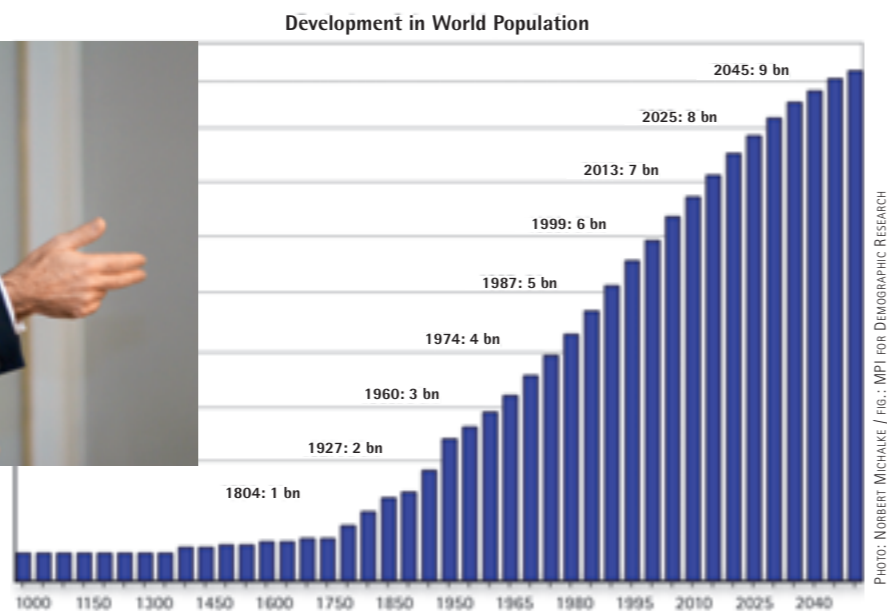


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vide decision-makers with reliable information, even if, as an institute engaged in basic research, we are not in the business of political consulting or recommendation,” Edel added.

The idea for a joint event was conceived in 2006 at the BAKS conference on “Demographic changes in the context of security policy,” which was also attended by Wenke Apt, a Ph.D. student at the institute in Rostock. She is studying for her doctorate under James W. Vaupel, focusing on the influence of demographic change on Germany’s future security policy. “Just a few years ago, public awareness of the issue was minimal,” says Wenke Apt. Demographic change in Germany has primarily been seen as a problem for the health, pension and social systems rather than as impinging on national security interests and the leeway in international politics. Politicians are only gradually turning their attention to the resulting scenarios.

In his opening address, the President of the BAKS, Rudolf Adam, argued that this “new dimension” in demographic change should be given wider consideration in the future, since it will “have a massive influence on the Western world.” At the same time, however, Adam also

warned against perceiving demographic change as just another element in an apocalyptic horror scenario – a plea that was strongly supported by Federal Minister of the Interior Wolfgang Schäuble.

SUSTAINED EFFECTS OF GLOBAL AGING

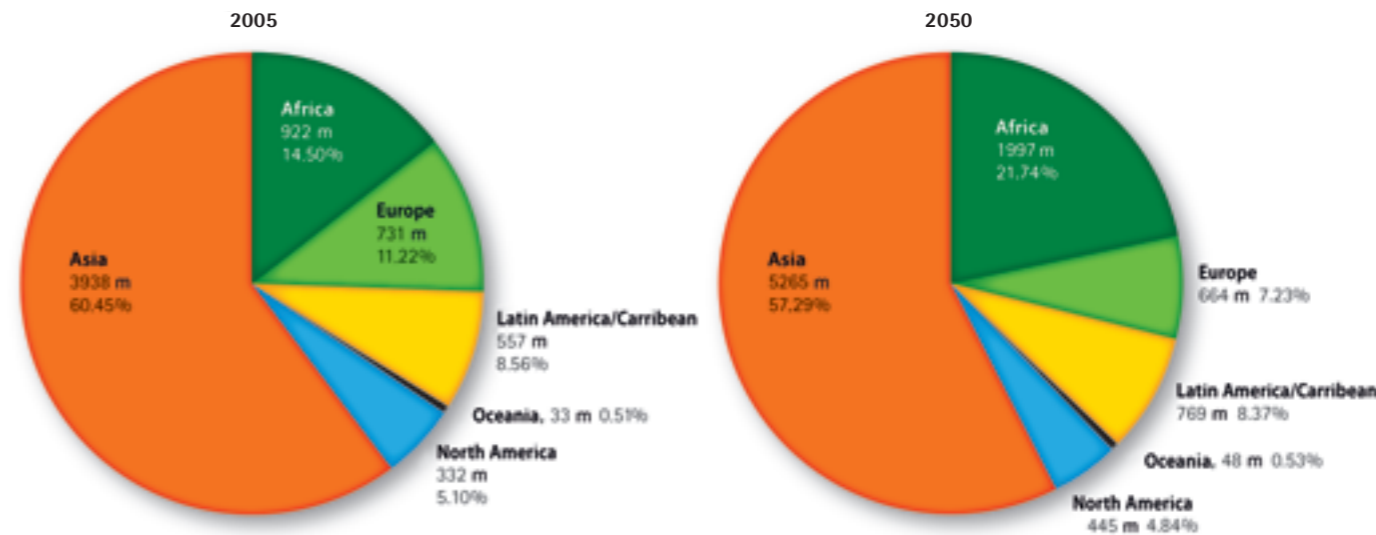
In his opening speech, Schäuble was strongly in favor of a “responsible immigration policy.” Germany, he maintained, had for decades failed to seriously consider its role as a destination for immigrants. As a result, individual groups of second- and third-generation immigrants are still living with the consequences of non-integration. Schäuble also made it unmistakably clear that immigration policies can succeed only if those who live in Germany illegally are systematically repatriated.

James W. Vaupel contributed his scientific expertise on the conference theme from a demographic perspective: the world’s aging population means that, globally, the rising number of older people contrasts with a decreasing number of children. However, while there are progressively fewer children being born in the industrialized countries of the northern hemisphere, where overall popula-

tions are in decline, populations in Africa and Asia are rising dramatically, and especially in unstable regions such as Pakistan, Burma, Nigeria and the Congo.

Out of the total nine billion people who will very likely inhabit the Earth in 2050, according to Vaupel, 57.3 percent will live in Asia and 21.7 percent in Africa, with just 7.2 percent in Europe and 4.8 percent in Canada and North America. Global aging will change the world with the same sustained effect as global warming, explains Vaupel. Even if people do not necessarily become more creative as they grow older, aging societies do have the advantage that, in his estimation, they exhibit a far lower propensity for violence. “An older world would be a wiser world,” says Vaupel with a smile.

However, differences in population development could have a noticeable impact on world politics, especially in association with the unequal distribution of resources. Joachim Krause, Director of the Institute for Security Policy at the University of Kiel, drew some stimulating parallels between the distribution of wealth, birth rates and the potential for conflict. Countries in which the introduction of a market economy also



The graph shows the distribution of the world’s population in 2005. According to these figures, 60.45 percent of people live in Asia, 14.5 percent in Africa and 11.22 percent in Europe.

By 2050, the world population is likely to grow to more than nine billion. The proportions living in Europe, North America and Asia will all decline, while Africa’s share increases.

benefited the broader population, such as China, India and South Korea, have been – or, as in the case of China, are now – able to get a grip on population growth.

On the other hand, Krause described countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, where children are born in large numbers, but only the elite have benefited from the economic boom, as “breeding grounds for ideologies.” Krause depicted a gloomy future scenario for almost every country in sub-Saharan Africa. It is impossible to predict the extent to which the much vaunted “clash of civilizations” may actually occur, but it is something that cannot be excluded.

In his presentation, Henrik Urdal from the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo also raised the question of how population growth and demographic shifts may affect the risk of armed conflict. “Generally speaking, a large youth population constitutes a social challenge and a security policy risk,” explained Urdal. “Youth bulges” – an unusually high proportion of young adults aged 15 to 29 within a population – increase the propensity for conflict. The fewer the opportunities available to the younger generation,

particularly in developing countries, the greater their willingness to use violence, if need be, to draw attention to their situation.

This view was shared by Steffen Angenendt of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, one of the country’s most prominent foreign policy think tanks. A shortage of water, the declining availability of land for cultivation, and stagnating incomes from agriculture would, he believed, merely intensify the challenges resulting from population growth in developing countries. Climate change could also have drastic consequences, including the spread of epidemics of, for example, malaria or flooding on a catastrophic scale.

PARALLEL TURKISH WORLDS

Both speakers estimated that there was rather little likelihood of uncontrolled migration to industrialized countries. In fact, this section of the conference left unanswered many questions that will require more intensive research. There may, for example, be a statistical connection between rising populations and the potential for conflict, but it is nevertheless not possible to infer any di-

rect causal relationship. Therefore, estimating the resulting risks has thus far proven difficult.

Christian Pfeiffer of the Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony and Turkish-born journalist Necla Kelek turned their attention to Germany and drew a rather dismal picture of failing integration policies and the particular plight of the younger members of even third-generation immigrant families. Reporting on her own experiences, Kelek explained: “There exists in Germany a parallel Turkish society that is controlled from within Turkey and maintains a discrete existence and continues to live in accordance with its own medieval Islamic laws.”

While half of the Turkish immigrants regard themselves as a self-evident part of the German population, the other half are unwilling to integrate, preferring to live by their own laws – with fatal consequences particularly for the victims of arranged marriages. The situation is poignantly described in Kelek’s best-seller, *The Foreign Bride*, which triggered a vigorous debate. Kelek consequently called for an explicit ban on forced marriage and argued in favor of obligatory German language courses for immigrants. ▶

“Juvenile crime is the central problem,” continued Pfeiffer. Little did he know that, no sooner than the conference had ended, this very subject would be thrust into the forefront of a war of words triggered by a brutal attack by juveniles on an elderly passenger on the Munich subway. “Out of every 100 youth of foreign origin, 25 percent of boys and 15 percent of girls leave school with no certificate,” Pfeiffer pointed out. “They become the clients of the social and employment services – or a case for criminologists to study.”

MUSTAFA AND MEHMET JOIN THE MILITARY

He also emphasized that, despite an overall decline in reported crimes, young immigrants are far more likely to be involved in acts of violence than German youths of the same age. In explanation, Pfeiffer cited a whole raft of causes, from high levels of media consumption, poor housing and poverty to a lack of access to education and the pronounced “macho culture” that still prevails in many Turkish families.

What should be done? Pfeiffer argued strongly in favor of social networking at an early stage between immigrant families and Germans, as well as for the rollout of educationally sophisticated all-day schools that would stimulate the desire to learn and compete. Education, in his view, is the key to successful integration. To support this view, he quoted from an interest-



PHOTO: NORBERT MICHALKE

Discussing immigration and national security: Christian Pfeiffer of the Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony (left), sociologist Necla Kelek, and Christoph Hauschild of the department dedicated to fundamental issues of immigration at the Federal Ministry of the Interior (right). Rafael Hoffmann of the BAKS chaired the debate.

ing survey of 6,000 fourth-graders that showed that the number of immigrant children who had experienced violence is lowest in schools where foreign children are most often invited to their German friends’ birthday parties. As Pfeiffer put it, “Mehmet must be given the chance to play in the sandbox with Max and Moritz – and not just be left alone with Mustafa and Igor.”

Mustafa, Igor and Mehmet – the military’s new recruits? According to Hans Hermann Paape of the Federal Ministry of Defense, the multi-cultural society has long since permeated the German Armed Forces. He reported that an increasing number of recruits come from families who have migrated from the former Soviet Union and southeastern Europe. The question he posed was how it can be ensured, for example, that German soldiers who are Muslims do not experience a loyalty conflict when on deployment with UN peacekeeping forces in Islamic regions of the world. Germany’s armed forces are faced with a difficult balancing act, given that, on the one hand, the German government is endeavoring to play a more active role in

foreign and security policy worldwide, while on the other hand, there are progressively fewer suitable new recruits who meet the necessary standards for sophisticated deployments in an ever more complex security environment.

The demands made on the German Armed Forces are even higher now that they not only have to provide soldiers to protect the German population and for national defense, but are also expected to participate in the rapid-reaction Nato Response Force, UN missions, stabilization deployments and rescue and evacuation operations. The Bundeswehr has a current total requirement of around 250,000 troops, meaning that some 70,000 new recruits must be found each year. In terms of quantity, there should be no problem meeting this demand through 2050. But quality is another matter – not just in terms of the compulsory intellectual abilities and educational standards, but also given the increasing health problems revealed in medical checks, including overweight, posture defects and allergies.

“The Bundeswehr must not turn into a fringe group military,” Paape con-

cluded. He also proposed a series of steps by which to counter demographic change in the German Armed Forces, including equipment that is easier to operate and is suitable for older users, fixed-term contracts for late entrants making a career change, training soldiers in attractive occupations, bonus systems, outsourcing certain duties, increasing the proportion of women, and guaranteed re-employment arrangements with industry. Thomas Will of the Department of Future Analysis at the Armed Forces Transformation Center presented various scenarios for the future of the Bundeswehr and the potential security policy environment in which it must operate. The armed forces are currently undergoing a process of transformation, influenced in large measure by demographic developments and the changing face of world politics.

This is precisely where Wenke Apt’s dissertation ties in, which considers the question of how demographic

change will affect Germany’s future security policy. “I see German security policy in direct relation to the development of society as a whole,” says Apt. Given the Bundeswehr’s changing mandate, which requires it to undertake an increasing number of peacekeeping duties worldwide, the armed forces have an increasing need for well-trained personnel. However, this is inconsistent with demographic developments and the foreseeable shortage of highly qualified young people.

THE COMPLEXITY OF THE SUBJECT

Wenke Apt intends to later make the results of her work available to the Federal Ministry of Defense. The doctoral student attaches great importance to linking theory with practice in the interest of policy-relevant research. This approach is also partly a product of her varied career: Wenke Apt completed her Master of Public Policy degree at the prestigious

Duke University in the US, where she majored in international relations and development policy. That was after she had studied for a degree in international business administration at the Wirtschaftsakademie Stuttgart and the Copenhagen Business School in Denmark, followed by a period working for the Robert Bosch Group in Paris and Chicago.

The results of the conference will go a long way toward helping Wenke Apt complete her dissertation, both technically and in terms of the improved public perception of her subject. Summing up, she says with satisfaction: “The conference highlighted the sheer complexity of the subject,” even if many questions naturally remained unanswered. Not least, the conference made clear what immense importance demographic change will have for all aspects of society and how strongly it will influence every nation’s future domestic and foreign policy.

FELICITAS VON ARETIN



PHOTO: PRIVATE

Wenke Apt is writing her dissertation on the consequences of demographic change for security policy.