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STUDY & RESEARCH



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EDITORIAL



Manuel J. Hartung (Publisher), Deborah Steinborn (Editor-in-Chief), Julia Steinbrecher (Art and Photo Director), Jana Spychalski (Editorial Asst.), Anna-Lena Scholz (Advisor), Fiona Weber-Steinhaus (Asst. Editor). Not pictured: Haika Hinze (Creative Director)

Fun fact: A third of all foreign students at German institutions of higher learning came for low tuition fees. These findings of a 2018 poll may, at first, be a bit of a downer for Germanophiles. But it's actually good news. According to the poll, two thirds came for other reasons, including the outstanding global reputation of its universities, English-language programs, post-graduate job prospects, and an intriguing culture. In a nutshell, Germany is sexy abroad for a whole lot of reasons. ZEIT Germany sets out to shine light on this appeal, without neglecting the hurdles associated with the country's sometimes idiosyncratic ways. So discover Germany with us – and have fun doing so!

The ZEIT Germany Team

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OH! SO GERMAN!

One of the language's trickiest words of all is also one of its shortest



GERMANY

BY THE BOOK(S)

Munich's Juristische Bibliothek, or legal library, used to have colorful linoleum floors back in the early 1900s. Today, it has Wi-Fi

Photo: Conny Mirbach



German university libraries were hallowed halls for centuries. Now, they're bending old rules, designing new styles, and evolving as spaces for modern ways of learning and meeting. Students want it that way

BY DEBORAH STEINBORN AND FIONA WEBER-STEINHAUS

When Fabian Herriger decided to spend 24 hours at the Leipzig University Library, he was surprised to learn that socializing rules between the book stacks.

University libraries are “like analog Tinder,” says the freelance journalist, 26, who later wrote about the experience for *Vice*, a lifestyle magazine. “I saw lots of eye contact, people checking each other out, smiling at each other. The main advantage of the library is the social aspect. People study, fight, love, flirt, and have sex there.”

In the land of Johannes Gutenberg, inventor of the modern printing press, books – and the buildings that house them – carry a lot of historic weight. But university libraries today are much more than just places to borrow literature. They’re evolving into spaces for learning and meeting, both digital and analog. And a new generation of students – with a much different approach to studying and research than their predecessors – is driving that change.

This transition is particularly challenging in Germany, and the reason is twofold. There’s the myriad of rules, regulations, and peculiarities of the country’s libraries on one hand. On the other, there’s students’ increasing longing for the one thing that’s always been at a library’s core – concentration.

Back in the 19th century, libraries were “the homes of the treasures of human knowledge and of the memory of the world,” says Andreas Degkwitz, director of the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin’s library system and head of the German Library Association. “They were monopolies, because all existing knowledge was stored there.”

Indeed, the 1500s marked the start of the first libraries in German-speaking territory. The Leipzig University Library, where Herriger spent a full day

**9,569
LIBRARIES**

throughout the country

49

original Gutenberg bibles
still exist worldwide

**UNIVERSITY
OF
GÖTTINGEN**

has fully digitized
one of those bibles

and night observing the action, is one of the oldest university libraries in the country, founded back in the year 1543.

In the 20th century, libraries began to evolve beyond their roles as hallowed halls of enlightenment, just as universities did. In post-war Germany, the rise of liberal democracy was reflected in rising student numbers. Some cities built new universities on their outskirts, erecting big concrete blocks on green pastures. This trend “reflected ideas of democracy and egalitarianism as well as standardization,” the architectural critic Arnold Bartetzky writes.

The increased emphasis on higher education, over time, has made German universities much more attractive to top scholars. Today, research is one of higher education’s biggest selling points. According to U-Multirank, an analysis of 1,710 universities and universities of applied science in 96 countries, German institutions’ strengths lie in research, knowledge transfer, and international orientation.

Often, the library system is at the heart of research. And in recent years, architects have taken the egalitarian aspect that Bartetzky describes a step further, turning the library into much more of a meeting place for university students, researchers, and anyone who spends time there.

The Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus (BTU) was newly founded in 1991, right after German reunification. It was a time of great change, and university administrators wanted to hit the right tone both for the university and its surroundings. They hired the globally acclaimed Swiss architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron, which has since designed landmarks from the new Tate Modern in London to the Beijing National Stadium, to build the library.



The spiral staircase of BTU's library in Cottbus is six stories high



Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum in Berlin
houses 6.5 million books



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The architects wanted the building to be “a solitary landmark within the surrounding urban architecture that would communicate the new spirit of the university and relate to the environment in many different ways,” they explained in a design proposal at the time. So Herzog & de Meuron incorporated some wild ideas to address student needs: a fluorescent pink and green staircase, for one, that’s big enough for people to stand on and chat. What’s more, the library’s amoebic shape allowed for the creation of reading rooms in many different shapes and sizes.

University students today “view libraries more and more as learning spaces and meeting places,” confirms Anne Christensen, deputy head of the media and information center at Leuphana University of Lüneburg in northern Germany. Founded in 1946 on the grounds of military barracks built during the Nazi era, the public university has designed its information resources with an eye towards the future.

Indeed, the number of items checked out from Leuphana’s library, both remote and on site, have fallen in recent years, while the number of daily visitors has risen sharply, Christensen says. Learning and research is undergoing a tectonic shift thanks to the rise of the Internet, digital media, and smartphones. Students no longer delve into card catalogues or peruse hard copies of journals to do research. They go online.

“It’s the book paradigm that’s gradually disappearing,” says Jürgen Handke, professor of linguistics and web technology at Philipps-Universität Marburg. “Students don’t need books in the physical format anymore. They just need access to the content.”

Handke, known as a pioneer of digital teaching in Germany, says university libraries need to look a lot more like coworking spaces. Not because students need a more comfortable atmosphere; rather, because computers and smartphones will be supplementary learning tools in future classrooms. “The modern library will be a workspace for students to quickly access media,” says Handke. Much of what they need for their studies is just a few clicks or a Google search away, he notes.

However, the library’s core function as a space for concentration should remain, administrators and students agree. And in that respect, German rules and regulations could actually be an advantage. These days, many students visit the library to get a break from the daily digital deluge. Often, it’s a place with good old-fashioned boundaries and rules, a no-phone-no-food-no-drink kind of space that helps turn the focus to writing and thinking.

Max Dudler, 69, creates spaces to help people concentrate. The Swiss architect is currently design-

42,500

overdue-book reminders
sent out by
Humboldt Universität
each year

49 YEARS

most overdue book
in the university’s history

300,000 EUROS

in annual overdue-book fees
throughout its library system

UP TO 9,000 VISITORS

per day at Grimm-Zentrum
during exams



BTU's library has the look and feel of a coworking space

ing a new university library building for Justus Liebig University in Giessen. He has already done the same for libraries in Münster, Heidenheim, Essen, Speyer, and Augsburg.

Dudler is well-known for the Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum, Humboldt's central library, which opened in 2009. In this building, he has diligently ensured that students don't face any walls or look out of any windows while studying. Terraces face each other, and as a result, so do students. The possibility for occasional distractions created in such a space – to flirt, for one – is totally intentional, he explains: "Study breaks are very important for inspiration and relaxation."

The concept seems to be working. Grimm-Zentrum had planned for 3,000 visitors a day when it

10 MILLION VOLUMES

at the University Library Johann Christian Senckenberg in Frankfurt

471 MILLION

items borrowed from German libraries each year

Sources: Deutsche Bibliotheksstatistik, German Library Association, Gutenberg Digital, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, University Library Johann Christian Senckenberg, ZEIT Campus

opened ten years ago, but twice as many people visit on an average day. During exam weeks, a spokesperson says, that number climbs as high as 9,000.

Over the years, more and more students in Germany have flocked to the library. In order to find a seat, they have to be either creative or punctual. The *Parkscheibe*, a red parking disc on every workstation, has become a symbol of the onslaught. If someone strays away from his or her belongings for more than an hour, a staff member will confiscate the belongings to make room for someone else; they patrol the premises regularly. This is common practice at university libraries across the country.

This strict policy reflects a very German approach to dealing with problems. "Bureaucracy really is part of the library, and foreign students will come to regard it as a typically German experience," Leuphana's Christensen says.

She spent several months as a librarian at Brown University in the United States early in her career. The time abroad was an eye-opener, and she noticed that cultural differences really abound. "Here, people often think of the rules first," she says. Her German peers, she adds, really do have a hard time to bend the rules and develop a new mindset as enablers of learning. "There is still the attitude that these are smart students and researchers and they should try harder themselves," she says, and that attitude needs to change.

To be sure, university libraries have lost their monopoly on information in the age of digital information, Google, and social media. And though there are many hurdles, legal and otherwise, to regaining ground in this respect, university libraries in other countries, at least, have adopted quickly to such developments. Germans, by contrast, have struggled.

Sometimes, for instance, students and researchers have to visit the library just to look at digital documents that they aren't allowed to print or download due to one regulation or another. That's difficult to change, Christensen explains.

Even so, she sees great opportunities for university libraries to evolve, soon, into much more than dusty places for books. And libraries are even at an advantage in the digital age, she says. Librarians, after all, are known for their thorough research and reference skills. So, in times of fake news and uncertain sources, some university libraries are offering courses in fact-checking.

"There are a lot of undiscovered treasures," Christensen says. "We are seriously trying to discover them all."

Michaela Cavanagh and Christoph Farkas contributed to this article

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STUDYING TODAY ...

Norbert Lossau, vice president of the University of Göttingen, was the first director of the Oxford University Digital Library

BY UWE JEAN HEUSER

What's a typical experience like for a foreign student who visits a German library for the very first time?

German university libraries are quite good; they are in the top third in Europe. If a student comes from Oxford, Stanford, or Harvard, he or she may miss some of the literature offerings and, in some cases, the 24-7 access.

Aren't German library rules and procedures overwhelming, especially for foreigners?

Borrowing and returning books has become much easier over the last five years. In Göttingen, you can do it more or less all automatically.



Norbert Lossau, 57, studied philology at University of Göttingen

What's more important: that libraries digitize, or that they evolve as meeting and study spaces?

Really, both aspects are of great importance. Students are studying more and more on campus.

Have libraries lost their information monopoly?

Yes. The role of the library now is to ensure that all that information on the web still will be accessible in ten or fifty years.

What were your study habits like when you were at university?

That was back in the 1980s, and I studied a lot at home.

Photos: University of Göttingen/Christoph Mischke, personal submission

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... AND TOMORROW

Fabian Herriger, a freelance journalist, spent 24 hours in the Leipzig University Library and wrote about the experience

BY FIONA WEBER-STEINHAUS

Can people concentrate better at the library?

Not necessarily. The main advantage is the social aspect: You can go to the *Mensa* together, have a smoke. Even if you don't work at all, you'll feel better in the evening, because at least you got out.

Would banning Wi-Fi help students concentrate?

I think so. Wi-Fi kills all concentration. It brings your home into the library; you can shop, access your mail, plan your evening.

One reading room at Leipzig University is nicknamed the "room of lonely hearts." Did you see any successful hook-ups?



*Fabian Herriger, 26,
studied history
at Freie Universität Berlin*

No, but lots of people are checking each other out. And a friend met a girl in the library. They exchanged numbers and it looks as though it's something serious.

You've also written about spending 24 hours at a bar. What do the two spaces have in common?

In both places, not much happens, but the exciting thing is, theoretically, anything could happen.

What were your study habits like when you were at university?

I also studied in the library, and I also procrastinated a lot. ●

WHICH WAY?

DISCOVER THE WORLD
MAKE FRIENDS
MAKE PROGRESS
WORK FOR A BETT
FIGHT FOR JUSTICE
HELP PEOPLE. BUILD CONCEPTS
MAKE KIDS FIT FOR FUTURE
UNDERSTAND CULTURES
RETHINK. **STUDY.**



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THE STUDENTS

3

MILLION

enrolled at university

13%

international students

4th

most attractive study destination worldwide

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HAIL FROM**

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2. INDIA
3. RUSSIA
4. AUSTRIA
5. ITALY



WHY THEY COME

69% of foreigners come for post-grad job prospects

35% for low tuition fees

56% for high-quality teaching

20% for English-language program offerings

and **15%** are just curious about the country



FUN FACTS

Higher education in Germany has more to offer than just low or no tuition. For the record ...

BY MIRIAM KAROUT ILLUSTRATION BENE ROHLMANN

Germany is a popular destination for many international students. Tuition is often minimal or even free, and most university towns offer relatively affordable housing. What else should you learn before semester begins?

Did you know, for instance, that 13 percent of all students registered at German univer-

sities are from abroad? That the vast majority of international students lives in Berlin? That promenadology, the study of strolling, is a degree program? Or that most students cook for themselves? Come to your first campus mixer loaded with facts about student life and its surroundings.

THE SCHOOLS

GERMANS' MOST POPULAR MAJORS

1. MECHANICAL ENGINEERING
2. ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING
3. COMPUTER SCIENCE

FOREIGNERS' MOST POPULAR MAJORS

1. BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
2. LAW
3. MEDICINE

OLDEST STUDY PROGRAMS

ONOMATOLOGY
Leipzig University

APPLIED LEISURE STUDIES
Hochschule Bremen

PROMENADOLOGY
University of Kassel

CRYSTALLOGRAPHY
University of Freiburg

INTERNATIONAL WINE BUSINESS
Hochschule Geisenheim University

APPLIED SEXOLOGY
Merseburg University of Applied Sciences

THE LANDSCAPE

POPULATION

83
MILLION

7th
largest country
in Europe by land area

33%
of Germany is still
**FOREST OR
WOODLAND**

70%
of highways have no
SPEED LIMIT

2,000
“Flixbuses” traverse
29 European countries
each day

Reutlingen hosts the world’s
narrowest street:

SPREUERHOFSTRASSE
31
CENTIMETERS WIDE



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book nations, publishing
roughly
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“GOOD BYE,
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DRESDEN
University of Applied Sciences

BEST SCHOOLS FOR FLIRTING

Jacobs University
BREMEN

German Sport University
COLOGNE

Zeppelin University
**FRIEDRICHS-
HAFEN**

BEST DINING HALLS

University of
ROSTOCK

OSNABRÜCK
University

Zeppelin University
**FRIEDRICHS-
HAFEN**

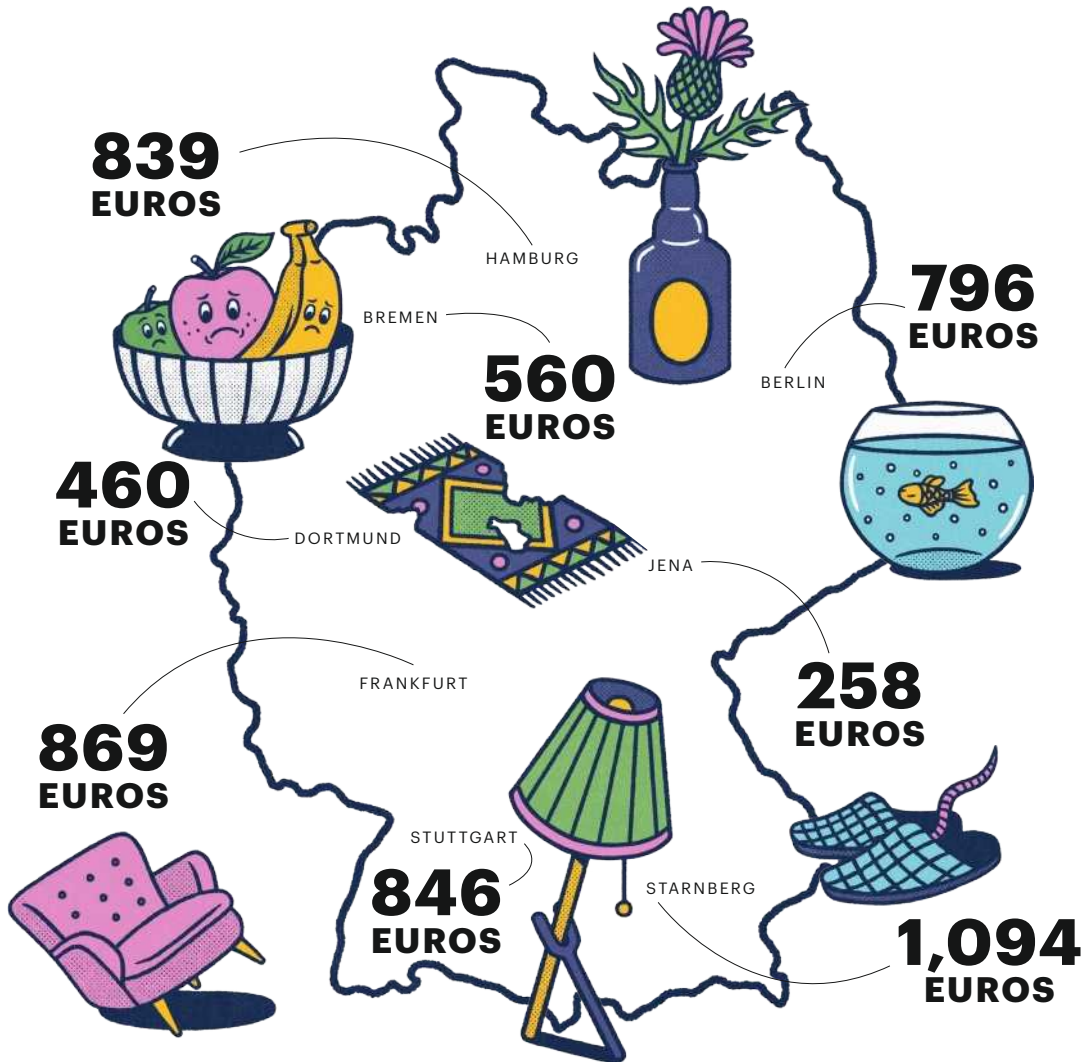
Technische Universität
DRESDEN

University of
GÖTTINGEN



* Based on a student poll

THE RENT*



*Approximate monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment located in the city center

Germany can be divided into five parts, according to a recent study by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. The findings are based on general living standards and other factors such as internet connectivity. (Hard to believe, but this isn't a given in parts of Germany).

In metropolitan areas such as Hamburg, Munich, and Berlin, employment is relatively high and social life is buzzing. But

you'll also find fairly high rents. Around these cities, you'll find the posh *Speckgürtel* (commuter belt). Starnberg, a Munich suburb, is one example. Here, both rents and quality of life are high. WGs, shared apartments, can cut the costs. About 33 million people live in what's often referred to as the solid middle: rural and small-town regions of Western Germany. Here, rents vary widely.

In rural areas of the former East Germany, wages are much lower and internet connections are weaker sometimes.

The fifth Germany includes cities in the former industrial belt, such as Duisburg and Dortmund. The region has struggled in recent years, and high poverty rates reflect that. On the flip side, you'll find more affordable housing and a nevertheless thriving student community.

THE REST

Students spend roughly
**170 TO 200
EUROS**
per month on groceries

A cup of coffee typically costs

**2
EUROS**

31%
of all students live in WGs,
or shared apartments

25%
live with their parents

2%
own their own apartments

56%
commute to campus
via public transport

35%
bike to campus

**500,000
BICYCLES**
in Münster, a university town
with just 310,000 inhabitants

Period: 2018-2019

Sources: Allgemeiner Deutscher Fahrrad-Club, Bundesanstalt für Straßenwesen (2015), CHE Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung, FlixBus, Forestry in Germany, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, IMDB, Meineuni.de, OECD, Stadt Reutlingen, Studycheck.de, Studium Ratgeber, Studying-in-Germany.org, UNESCO, World Atlas, World Population Review, Stadt Münster, Statistisches Bundesamt, U-Multirank



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Photo: Jewgeni Roppel

NICKOLET NCUBE, 27, BREMEN

EXPEDITIONS

From Bulawayo to Bremen

A doctoral student finds her path in chemistry at a private university in northern Germany. Outside the lab, she's fighting for better education for young girls on both continents

BY DEBORAH STEINBORN

ALL IT TOOK for Nickolet Ncube to catch the chemistry bug was a teacher and a textbook.

Science and math teachers in her secondary school in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, were all men, and Ncube just couldn't relate. But on her first day of chemistry class, a petite, soft-spoken woman appeared.

"She said she would be teaching us, and I thought, *What? This is cool!*," Ncube says. The teacher handed out a textbook "so big and heavy that we named it the chemistry bible. I took it home and I read it."

By the time she'd finished, Ncube was hooked. "That book told me how soap is made, how ammonia works, and why water can exist in three states," she recalls. "I realized that everything around us is chemistry, and I knew this was what I wanted to do."

Today, the 27-year-old is working on a Ph.D. degree in inorganic chemistry at Jacobs University, a private school in the northwestern German city of Bremen. She has a bachelor's and a master's degree in chemistry from there as well, and is researching polyoxometalates in the hopes of developing chemical compounds with antibiotic properties. She dreams big: Perhaps such research could lead to a cure for HIV or other diseases some day, she says.

Ncube's path into chemistry may have been clear early on. The road to Germany was circuitous. She left Bulawayo at 16 after receiving a scholarship to attend the Pestalozzi International Village Trust in the United Kingdom. The foundation sponsors teenagers from developing countries to study towards an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma in Hastings, England. Ncube got her IB in 2010.

At first, "the plan was to go to America after that, like everyone else," Ncube says. "But then I realized

that I was just following others." She explored options. Education in North America proved too expensive. Zimbabwe was still in the midst of an economic crisis, her mother was recently divorced, and funds were tight.

Ncube had never heard of Jacobs University before a representative visited Pestalozzi one day. She applied – despite the 20,000-euro tuition fee. "I thought a good education in Germany would lead to a good job, so it would work out in the end," she says.

It did. The first day on campus "was horrible," Ncube says. She arrived straight from the airport after a long flight from Zimbabwe, hungry, disoriented, and without a student ID due to a mixup. When she found the right office, practically in tears, the adviser simply snapped her photo.

It was a typically efficient German reaction, Ncube now says. Her ID card was ready promptly and she hit the dining hall. But culture shock had set in; it followed her for quite a while. And the shocked expression from the snapped photo remained on her student ID, she laughs. The day ended on a better note, though.

Her host parents, who soon became surrogate family, swung by to meet her and helped her settle in.

Things that had irritated Ncube about Germans that first day – the efficiency, for one – she now admires or even has adopted. "She works efficiently in the lab," says Ulrich Kortz, a professor of chemistry. "She performs a lot of experiments, she gets results."

Ncube's hard work has been recognized. At the end of her first semester, she received a letter in the mail: Deutsche Bank would cover the full cost of her bachelor's studies. The financial pressure was off and she could focus on her degree. And last year, she received a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) award for outstanding academic achievement and social engagement.

On campus, Ncube advises younger students from Zimbabwe, Kosovo, and Senegal. But her biggest passion is to improve educational opportunities for women in underprivileged regions of the world.

She is fighting for girls' educational rights in her homeland as co-founder of an initiative called Building Dreams Zimbabwe, which encourages young girls to attend school in practical ways. The association donates sanitary products to pupils in Ncube's hometown to keep them from missing school, and it plans to buy plots of land where girls can plant vegetables for sale in order to afford textbooks.

Her biggest dream of all may be the simplest: to encourage other young girls to learn by way of example. "It really is true that you need to see it to believe it," she says. The Jacobs chemistry department, while small, has no female faculty. "Imagine what just one woman at the front of the classroom could do," she says.



ALEXANDRE OBERTELLI, 41, DARMSTADT

Photo: Evelyn Dragan

From Paris to Darmstadt

Elsewhere, a French physicist is researching antimatter after winning the Alexander von Humboldt Professorship

BY EVA VON SCHAPER

ALEXANDRE OBERTELLI would have become an engineer if his father, a Parisian psychology professor who'd studied math, had had his way.

Engineering was a path to a safe job, one that would lead to a *grande école*, a bastion of French higher education, Obertelli Senior believed. Instead, Obertelli Junior first eyed architecture, and then he segued to physics.

The choice worked out well. Earlier this year, Obertelli earned one of the prestigious Alexander von Humboldt Professorships. The annual prize from the foundation of the same name aims to attract more budding superstars to German research and academia – both from home and abroad.

The professorship offers experimental scientists a whopping 5 million euros in research funds spread over a five-year period. The money will come in handy, says Obertelli, as he tries to understand the fundamental bricks that comprise particles. Right now, his project uses antimatter to investigate nuclei.

For his research, the 41-year-old travels between Darmstadt and Geneva. At the Geneva-based European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), one of the world's most respected centers for scientific research, Obertelli refines his protocols for trapping antimatter. Because antimatter has the largest energy density of all particles, it also could be used in medical applications, such as destroying cancer cells or fueling future space travel someday.

One of the things Obertelli enjoys most about his professorship is being thrown into a foreign environment, he says. As a doctoral student, he worked at the French Ministry of Energy, followed by a year at the National Superconducting Cyclotron Laboratory in Michigan.

He also spent a year at Riken, Japan's largest comprehensive research institution, which is based in the city of Saitama. "These experiences allowed me to meet the best experimentalists in nuclear

physics, and also provided unique opportunities to closely witness other ways of thinking," he says. "Changing environment from time to time, let's say every five years, is key to constantly questioning one's own practices."

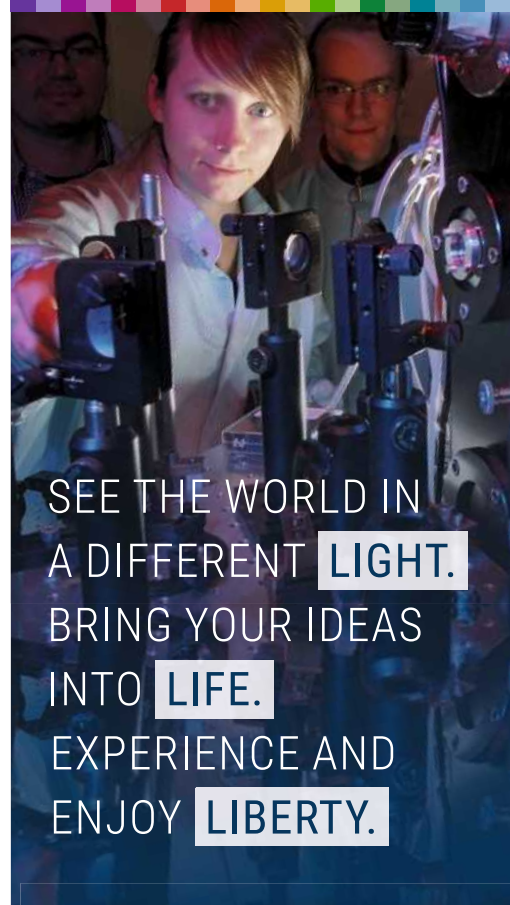
Darmstadt, nonetheless, came as a bit of a surprise, Obertelli admits. After he had held a lecture at Technische Universität Darmstadt, the university simply decided to nominate him for the Humboldt award. And he won it.

Darmstadt, a city of 150,000, is known for its proximity to Frankfurt's international airport. But it's also considered a mecca for nuclear physicists, as it is home to a number of research institutes.

The GSI Helmholtzzentrum für Schwerionenforschung, for one, has been key in creating some of the newest and heaviest atoms known to humankind.

"There aren't so many places in the world that have two chemical elements named after them," Obertelli says. Darmstadtium and Hassium, named after the city and the state of Hesse in which GSI is located, were both named by researchers at the institute.

Obertelli, meanwhile, has finally swayed his earliest critic, his father: "Just recently, he told me that my decision wasn't so bad after all." ●



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GLOSSARY

German academia is complicated.

Key terms to help cut through the jargon

BY DEBORAH STEINBORN ILLUSTRATION BENE ROHLMANN



BOLOGNA PROCESS *n.* (*Hochschulreform, Bologna-Prozess*)

1. a series of agreements between European countries to ensure common standards of higher education; named after the university where education ministers from 29 countries signed a declaration in 1999. 2. introduction of a two-tiered structure of bachelor's and master's degrees, and easy transfer of credits between institutions

DINING HALL *f.* (*Mensa*) a location that provides meals to university students and staff and is integral to social life on German campuses. Subsidized meals usually cost less than four euros

DUAL STUDY *n.* (*Duales Studium*) 1. a system combining apprenticeships in a company or non-profit organization and higher education in a field of study. 2. a program mostly found in business administration, engineering, and social services

ERASMUS PROGRAM *n.* (*Erasmus-Programm*) 1. a student-exchange program financed by the European Union, combining all

current EU schemes for education, training, youth, and sport. 2. acronym meaning European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students

EXAMINATION OFFICE *n.* (*Prüfungsamt*) a university unit that handles all matters related to student exams. In Germany, students must register to take exams. The office also issues educational certificates

EXCELLENCE STRATEGY *n.* (*Exzellenzstrategie*) 1. a long-term effort by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research to promote cutting-edge research conditions for scholars, better cooperation between disciplines and institutions, and the global renown of German universities and research institutions. 2. an initiative that awards special status to 11 German public universities. According to the Euro-

pean Commission, four of these so-called elite universities are among Europe's top ten: Technical University of Munich, University of Freiburg, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, and Heidelberg University

GERMAN ACADEMIC EXCHANGE SERVICE *n.* (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, DAAD*) 1. a federally and state-funded, self-governing



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OF TERMS



national agency of institutions of higher learning in Germany. 2. the largest German support organization for international academic cooperation. 3. a popular source of scholarship funding for foreigners studying in Germany. www.dAAD.de/en

GERMAN RESEARCH FOUNDATION *n.* (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG*) an organization that funds re-

search at universities and other institutions through a variety of grants and prizes. It's the largest funding organization in Europe. www.dfg.de/en

POST-DOCTORAL QUALIFICATION *n.* (*Habilitation*) 1. a qualification necessary for a professorship at German universities. 2. highest qualification issued through the process of a university exam

RESEARCH INSTITUTE *n.* (*Forschungsinstitut*) a research body independent of the university system. The top four, Fraunhofer Gesellschaft, Helmholtz Association, Max Planck Society, and Leibniz Association, employ more than 82,000 researchers

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY *n.* (*Technische Hochschule*) a university that specializes in engineering sciences in Germany.

Some have the ability to confer Ph.D.s, while others do not

UNIVERSITY *n.* (*Universität, Uni*) 1. an institution of higher learning with facilities for teaching and research, typically comprising an undergraduate division that awards bachelor's degrees and a graduate division that awards master's degrees and doctorates. On average, it hosts 16,500 students. 2. an educational body with the right to confer Ph.D.s

UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES *n.* (*Fachhochschule, FH*) 1. an institution of higher vocational education, often in areas such as engineering or business. On average, it hosts 4,500 students. 2. an educational body that usually doesn't confer Ph.D.s

UNIVERSITY RANKING *n.* (*Hochschulranking*) a ranking of institutions of higher learning, ordered according to various factors. The CHE University Ranking details German higher-education institutions based on assessments by students and faculty members. <http://ranking.zeit.de/chelen/> ●

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DEUTSCHLAND IN ELEVEN WORDS

Moving to a new country is always hard. Fortunately, beloved foreigner, the German mentality isn't as complex as it first appears. In fact, you can understand it in just eleven words, explains the British comedy writer and author of "How to be German in 50 easy steps"

BY ADAM FLETCHER



Photos: Tim Peukert, Bastian Thierry

D

DEUTSCH

Every nation has done things that are difficult to explain. Germans are no exception. You know what I'm talking about: their language.

Deutsch is an incomprehensible jumble of exceptions designed to trap non-native speakers and repeatedly flog them with useless grammatical devices that state in explicit detail who has what and what is done to whom, by whom.

Don't get disheartened. We've all been through it and come out on the other side. And you can't truly understand a culture until you speak its tongue. The German language reflects its people:

precise, honest, complicated, old-fashioned, and risk averse. Just remember, some of the smartest things ever written were authored in this language. So respect it, and later you can learn to like it.

E

EHRlichkeit

While many cultures value being nice over being honest, here it's the reverse. *Ehrlichkeit* (honesty) is the highest cultural value, no matter how much it hurts, offends, or blindsides. Germans have rightly realized that sugarcoating is best reserved for cakes. Once you've practiced getting to the point, you may find the way



WHILE MANY CULTURES VALUE BEING NICE OVER BEING HONEST, HERE IT'S THE REVERSE



THE GERMAN DREAM IS SECURITY AND ANONYMITY

to be short but very enjoyable. Here, honesty is the only policy.

U

UNSIKER

Even in times of total calm, prosperity, and really warm weather, the average German scans the horizon for icebergs. This has a lot to do with the country's his-

tory, having spent much of the last hundred years entering, or needing to rebuild from, one disaster or another. So it can feel like an insecure and pessimistic nation. While the American Dream is about being exceptional and having everyone know your name, the German Dream is about security and anonymity, about being left alone, in a house whose mortgage is paid, where neighbors don't know you and you can be ignored but also fully, fully insured. Everything else is *unsicher*.

T

TSSSSSCHÜSSSSS

Research shows that humans rate the quality of an experience not by its start or middle, but by its end. So, German may be hard to learn, but there's a hack: most conversations end with just one word. Say that word right and you'll be rated a polyglot, not a polynot. That word is *Tssssssschhhhhüsss* (bye). Ger-



SAY THAT WORD RIGHT AND YOU'LL BE RATED A POLYGLOT, NOT A POLYNOT

mans aren't famed for their hedonism, but with this special word they like to really let loose. I'm not exactly sure how many letters it has, but I'm certain you can't lay it in Scrabble. It should take you five seconds to say and be delivered in a voice you've borrowed from a better, more musical, pitch-perfect version of yourself. Got it? Tttttt tssssssccccchhhhhhhüsss

S

SCHIMMEL

Everyone has at least one irrational fear: perhaps heights (agoraphobia), clowns (coulrophobia),

spiders (arachnophobia), or investment bankers (swindlephobia). For Germans, it's *Schimmel* (mold). Mold disables them like kryptonite does Superman. Interestingly, the other national fear is drafts, which they think give them the plague, instantly.

There is, of course, a certain irony here. Drafts circulate fresh air and are, in effect, anti-mold. To fear both is like fearing heights and the ground at the same time. But don't point this out, *Ausländer*. Fears are rarely rational, unless they're of investment bankers. Just pretend to freak out when you see flecks of green on your wall or in your leftover sandwich. You'll fit right in.



IT'S ABOUT BLENDING IN, BEING PART OF THE GROUP



**“WHERE EVERYTHING IS BETTER”
THERE’S EVEN A WORD FOR IT: BULLERBÜ-SYNDROM**

C **CHOR**

Many cultures praise the individual over the collective. That’s fine for them, but that mentality will win you no friends here. In Germany, it’s not about standing

out. It’s about blending in, being part of the group. What kind of group exactly, you ask? Any group, really. Germany is full of them. *Vereine*, they’re called – small clubs and collectives that supervise each other’s allotments; that fish together; that do sports together; that shoot things to-

gether. More than forty percent of Germans are members of a Verein. And *Chor* (choir) is by far the most popular group, with more than 60,000 to be found across the country.

Ready to get started, to get singing and fishing? Good, because the group is waiting ...

H

HEIMWERKEN

Have you ever heard Germans say something is “hammer” (cool)? Do you know what Germans find the absolute coolest? The most hammer of all, so to speak? *Heimwerken* (DIY projects). They’re never happier than when they’re in a DIY store like Bauhaus or Obi, improving their homes while geeking out over thousands of types of *Dübel* (screw plugs; a brilliant German invention).

After all, if you’re going to do something, it’s of the utmost importance to do it properly. Germans don’t half-arse, bodge, or wing it. You’ll get no points for trying hard, or having good intentions, or hiring help. You’re expected to do it well, and to do it all by yourself.

L

LINDGREN, ASTRID

You might be conflicted about Scandinavia. It’s cold. A mug of tea costs 12.50 euros. And you have to take a psych test to buy a bottle of vodka. But you live in

DO IT WELL, AND DO IT YOURSELF





THE GERMAN HAPPY PLACE IS SWIMMING NAKED IN A LAKE OF APPLE JUICE SPRITZER

Germany now, and the German position on Scandinavia is clear. For them, it is Narnia, with children's author Astrid Lindgren as its furry Aslan. I wouldn't be surprised to learn that Germans think you get there through a wardrobe. "S-c-a-n-d-i-n-a-v-i-a ..." you'll hear Germans say in hushed tones, while wearing its outdoor clothing brands, watching its

noir TV shows, binge-reading its *Krimis* while sitting on DIY Ikea furniture, and comparing themselves (unsuccessfully) against its school systems, "where everything is better."

There's even a German word for this infatuation: *Bullerbü-Syndrom*, the belief of Scandinavian superiority. Only here, it's not a belief, it's simply a fact.

YOU MAY BE TEMPTED TO WIDEN YOUR EYES IN A DISPLAY OF JOY, WONDER, AND HAPPINESS



A

APFELSAFTSCHORLE

Remember the therapy scene in movies where the protagonist is asked to create his own happy place? A safe, tranquil spot he can turn to when the world gets big and scary? The soft embrace of a lover, an idyllic beach, or the rocking chair on the porch of a childhood home? Well, the German happy place is swimming naked in a lake of their favorite drink: *Apfelsaftschorle* (apple juice mixed with soda water).

Arriving at a restaurant after a long day of engineering, confronted with a 15-page long menu and an annoyed waiter's frown, they always retreat to their happy place, their default drink, their (fizzy) evergreen: their beloved *Apfelsaftschorle*.

N

NATIONALGESICHT

I would never say that Germans are less emotional than others. However, hear me out. While Germans have an emotional life just as dramatic, fantastic, and varied as everyone else, they don't always show it. They have a unified *Nationalgesicht* (national expression), and it's a pokerface.

It's not that they don't smile or gesticulate with their hands. It's just that when they do bring those tools of expression out of the bag, they want them to have an impact. So, they use them very sparingly. Since living here is awesome, you may be tempted to turn your mouth upwards and widen your eyes in a display of joy, wonder, and happiness.

Don't, Pokerface.



A COUNTRY OF POETS AND THINKERS?

D

DOKTOR UND DEUTSCHLEHRER

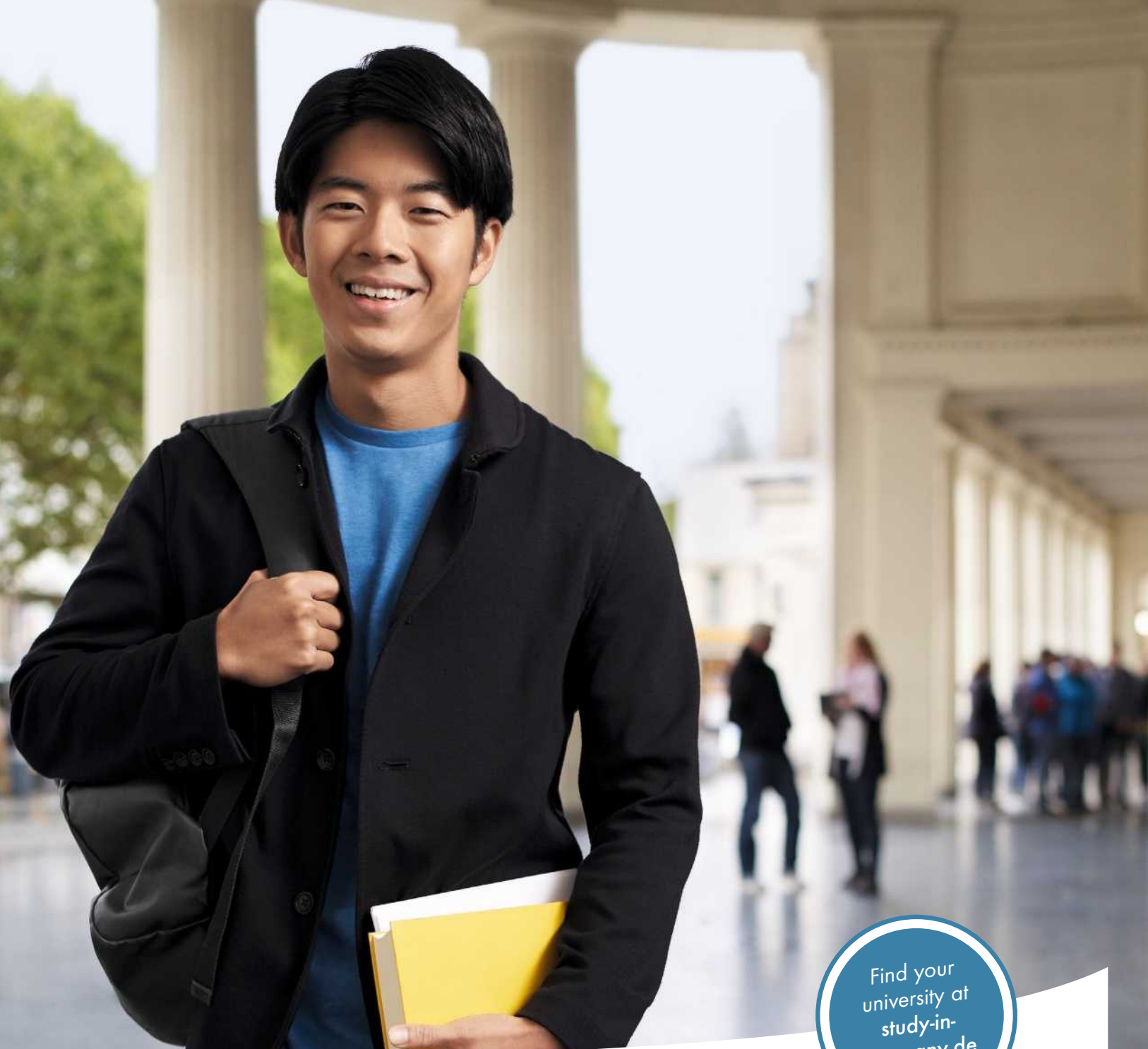
You made a wise choice coming here to study, dear *Ausländer*. Education is pretty much free; universities are fantastic; and the country has a qualification fetish, so it values its students highly.

However, what you study really does make a difference. For there are two types of jobs here: the real jobs and the not-real jobs. While Germans like to think of themselves as *Dichter und Denker* (poets and thinkers), secretly, they look down on those two professions as too vague, too impractical, with too little need to use a screwdriver to get the job done.

For a profession to count here, it must be at least a hundred years old and dense enough for half a lifetime of study. Ideally, it should also start with an *e* and end in *engineering*.

The good news is, there are a few other begrudgingly accepted professions: scientist, lawyer, doctor, teacher, and really anything at all that involves cars.

Dichter und Denker? Nein. *Doktor und Deutschlehrer*, ja! ●



**“This is where history meets the future.
I’m studying in Germany.”**

Daichi Sakai from Tokyo is studying at RWTH Aachen University.
He likes to visit the Elisenbrunnen, one of the city’s historical landmarks.

www.study-in-germany.de/student-stories

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“I DON’T EXPECT APPLAUSE”

The rapper Sookee is fighting for more inclusion in society. ZEIT Germany talks with hip-hop’s voice against the far-right

BY MILAN GAGNON PHOTOS MONIKA KEILER

For well over a decade, the Berlin-based queer feminist rapper Sookee has packed the house at nightclubs and festivals throughout Germany. The 35-year-old was born as Nora Hantzsch and grew up in West Berlin after her dissident parents fled East Germany in the 1980s.

Sookee’s music addresses all kinds of discrimination in her nation’s society. The song “Zusammenhänge” (“Connections”) for example, recorded in 2013, speaks out against right-wing extremism and hatred in often blunt lyrics. “They’re stirring up idiocy even without swastikas,” she raps, referring to far-right political movements. “So we fight with language, punches, parties, roadblocks.” Off stage, she fights for a more inclusive society, too. She regularly gives workshops and public speeches on anti-fascism or feminism.

Sookee, through your art you call attention to racism, sexism, and right-wing populism in Germany. How do you make such serious themes danceable?

Addressing these themes in my music is a strategy to get the point across; making them

“SO MANY PEOPLE EXPERIENCE SO MANY FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION DAILY”

danceable is a service that I offer. I don’t do it because I’m thinking: “Hey, I don’t want racism to be difficult for you.” I find it extremely problematic that so many people experience so many forms of discrimination on a daily basis. Our society has to address that. People need to take responsibility and examine their own role in everyday racism. At the same time, society can’t just turn political debates into entertainment.

How should Germans deal with discrimination in society? What can they do?

People who are not directly affected by discrimination need to understand the system. They have to be aware of their role in society; they have to underline: “We’re going to stand up for the people who are

affected.” People who are discriminated against already deal with it enough. It’s not their job to make everyone else finally catch on to the fact that discrimination is a problem.

What is your responsibility as a white German artist in the hip-hop world – a genre that historically has functioned as an outlet for marginalized groups?

Nowadays, all cultures and religions participate in hip-hop. But before it went global, hip-hop started off as part of black culture in the United States. I see it as my job and my duty to show respect for both of these worlds. I remind myself of my background: I’m a guest in this space; which is why I always ask how I can support people of color, how I can share the stage with them.

But how have you been received in this world?

I don’t do it because I expect applause. It’s always important to give credit where credit is due – and that’s exactly what I do.



Sookee, 35, in Berlin-Neukölln: "People need to examine their own role in everyday racism"

Over the past few years, you've shown your support for displaced people in Europe by performing at various benefit concerts. Why did you decide to do so?

It's actually really simple: I don't want to be treated like shit. So, guess what, I won't treat you like shit, either. Any of us could find ourselves in a similar situation; we could be displaced, we could be forced to flee; and we would wish for help. We will have other refugee waves in coming years, people fleeing not only from war or economically dire situations, but we'll also have climate refugees.

Apart from performing, you are known for trying to help in other ways. How?

There are initiatives in Germany that link refugees with people who have a spare bedroom. My roommates and I did that. Another example is: When I play a club show and have the opportunity, I always try and contact local support groups or organizations of refugees and say, "Here are twenty tickets. We'd be very happy if you came to the show." The thing is, everyone can participate in this so-called grand integration project. There are many small-scale initiatives that aren't part of the massive campaigns.

You were enrolled in a gender-studies program at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin from 2003 to 2009. Are the humanities in Germany really as stodgy as foreign researchers sometimes say?

Well, it's just time to overthrow this old conservative academic world. Be bold and self-determined in your approach. We can't wait for the academic world to finally become cool and arrive at the present on its own.

What cultural events or groups would you recommend to newcomers interested in hip-hop or in non-mainstream culture?

For example, *Parallelgesellschaft*, a slam-poetry and spoken-word collective of women of color. They reclaim the German terminology of migrant communities that form "parallel societies." The collective hosts a regular event in Berlin-Neukölln and occasionally elsewhere in Germany. They delve into themes ranging from heritage to racism. Online, there's *BlackRockTalk*, in which marginalized communities speak for



Sookee's music deals with racism in a very direct way

themselves. It's really smart and has brilliant guests. I love it.

Another huge topic in Germany is Islamophobia and hatred of Muslims. That's why there's *Datteltäter*; you can find it on YouTube. It's a play on the German words for attacker and date (the fruit). The group posts clever satirical video skits about Islam and racism. Really excellent. Diverse people are behind it; there are even two white Germans, one of Christian heritage and the other a convert to Islam.

And then there are these really special hip-hop parties organized by the DJ duo *Hoe_mies*. They operate from an explicit starting point, namely feminist, queer, and people of color.

Your own latest intervention is "Awesome HipHop Humans," a collection of essays on hip-hop by artists, academics, songwriters, and others that you assembled with Austrian activist Gazal Sadeghi.

These essays are not exclusively about female rap or defined identities. They're about humans; hetero males are also included. I understand that sometimes, for strategic reasons, it's important to exclude groups.

But that's not the goal here. Cisgender males are indeed in the minority in this book. But they are nevertheless part of it, and it was important to me to include them.

What can help German society to transform for the better? Art?

People always say that art can contribute to society and political processes. And, of course, it totally can. But let's shake up the perspective. Because right now, we're totally reactive, aren't we? There's a Nazi terrorist attack, and we react. A rescue boat is seized at sea, and we react. The right-wing political party Alternative for Germany (AfD) gets a double-digit result in a state election, and we react. The problem is: We're not being visionary anymore.

What is your vision?

I believe it would be so much more productive to let young people listen to music that makes them politically aware – songs that empower them and let them feel they're part of a diverse society. In September, I'm going to release a children's album, family music for adults, youth, and even really young kids.

But why should young children be interested in political songs?

It's about believing that they are capable of understanding what they are experiencing. There are songs that tell small people how to brush their teeth, and there are songs that tell small people that it's totally okay for two women to marry. And both songs are equally important. As a child, you have to learn how to brush your teeth so that you don't get cavities. But you can also learn that it's totally cool for two people who love each other to marry or not to marry. Otherwise, you don't get cavities. You get homophobia.

You're a regular speaker on academic panels and you offer arts and activism workshops for youth. Is all this work ever too much for you?

I have the wonderful privilege of receiving attention, of being able to help others spread their message, and of speaking into the microphone. I use it to do something cool, like many others do. So don't forget: I'm not the only one who is active. ●



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THE INSIDE TRACK



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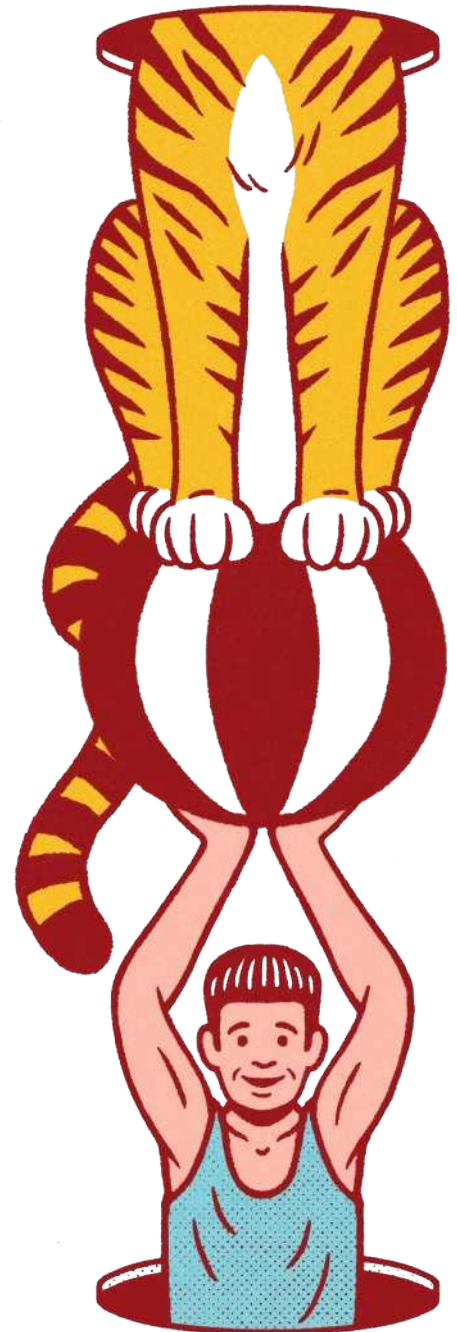
Acceptance letter from a German university in hand? Reach out right away to expats from your homeland. They can be sources, confidants, cheerleaders, or even surrogate family when you first arrive.

“You need somebody to guide you,” says Caroline Mwangi, chief executive officer and co-founder of the Kenyan Germany Career & Entrepreneurship Network. Mwangi, a Nairobi native, speaks from experience. In the late 1990s, after graduating from high school, she moved to a small village near Stuttgart to work as an au pair. In 2014, Mwangi enrolled in the Munich Studienkolleg, a one-year college-prep program for foreigners, and went on to obtain a degree in International Management from Augsburg University of Applied Sciences.

Mwangi combined her personal connections and IT smarts to develop KGCEN. The online network is packed with interviews of “Kenyans who understand how the system works,” she says. Germany hosts people from every nation in the world. Start networking from home.

CASE THE CAMPUS

Just about every university has an international office that acts as a hub for multicultural activities, from *Sprachabende* for conversational German practice to dance nights for local and foreign students. Stop by, but don’t stop there. “Connect with professors,” says Becky Taylor Hellwig, a first-time filmmaker from Silicon Valley. Three years ago, she moved to Chemnitz with her husband, a physics professor, when he nailed a job at the university there. Professors don’t just lecture,



It's hard to mingle and network with Germans? Not at all – if you learn how the system works

BY CAROLE BRADEN ILLUSTRATION BENE ROHLMANN

Hellwig says; they network. She tapped into Chemnitz's film community after chatting with a local professor of English literature, who was happy to introduce her to friends and acquaintances.

APP UP

Germans are obsessed with social media just like everyone else. So attend happy hours on Friday afternoons, but expand your digital network, too.

LinkedIn, the online network, can help you extend a digital hand to professors, lecturers, and influencers. Xing is a similar platform available in German. And Meetup is popular on campuses throughout the country.

Max Thake, a tech entrepreneur from Malta, came to Berlin in 2017 via Erasmus, a European Union-based exchange program. Now a co-founder of Advanced Blockchain AG, Thake says he and his partners post meetups to connect industry experts and recent graduates at events held regularly at their office. Apps can lead you to collaborators, mentors, and friends for school years and beyond.

TALK STRAIGHT

Those rallies, seminars, colloquiums, potlucks, and panel talks you're interested in? Attend them with a plan, says Shivangi Walke, founder of Thrive with Mentoring, a non-profit organization with chapters in Munich and nine other cities worldwide. Rehearse questions in advance, says Walke, a native of Mumbai who is now a Swiss citizen. Observe and adapt to Germans' direct conversational style. "They say what they think, and they think, 'What is the point?,'" Walke says. "Preparation and clarity work well."



MAKE IT HAPPEN

Born leader? Start a study group, found a sports team, or organize an event. You'll likely make valuable new contacts. Yuko Maeda, an American who studies applied data science at the University of Göttingen, connected with like-minded students and met the university's president when she and some friends brought the global March for Science to town in 2016. "When you have a cause, you have a reason to reach out," says Maeda.

GET IN THERE

It's true: Students in Germany can be cliquish. Win them over. "When you meet, Germans are initially very friendly," says Lihan Deng, a native of Enshi, China, who has lived in Augsburg, Paderborn, and Berlin over the past six years. But sometimes, she says, conversation can quickly fizzle. Deng, founder of HowApp, an educational platform for parents, studied communications and business in France. According to Deng, Germans look for real substance in friendships; she believes it's easier to connect with them through shared interests rather than small talk. So volunteer at the student parliament (just look up *ASzA*, its handy abbreviation). Save the environment with your campus chapter of Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland (Friends of the Earth Germany). Get a *Nebenjob*, a part-time gig, at the local butcher shop and chat with friendly customers while selling *Bratwurst*. Or simply ask to join German classmates for a beer after lectures. Be patient, but put yourself out there. And when you say you'll be in touch, do. Soon your contact list will be bursting with new names. ●



DRAFTING DEGREES

Beer has made a global comeback with the explosion of craft brewing. What better place to study the art of brewing than the land of Oktoberfest and Hefeweizen?

Photo: Max Slobodda

BY CAROLE BRADEN

The craft beer movement continues to grow, but the road to a coveted German brewing degree is particularly rocky for foreigners

One balmy spring evening at the Uferlos Festival, a beer-and-music shindig in the Bavarian city of Freising, young foreigners gather to revel and drink. Weissbier flows. This is a happy hour as much as a study session for these students, who have come to the TUM School of Life Sciences Weihenstephan to learn beer brewing.

“Germany is a beer country,” says Nina Anika Klotz, founder and editor of Hopfenhelden, an online craft beer magazine. “We have a profound knowledge of brewing technology.” And a precious few rigorous academic programs underline this.

The country has a strong tradition in the drink: It’s home to almost 1,500 breweries and more than 5,000 brands of domestic beer, according to the 150-year-old German Brewer’s Association. And of course, it is world-renowned for its annual Oktoberfest, the largest beer festival in the world. But just a few academic institutions offer *Brauwesen*, or beer brewing, as a course of study.

Weihenstephan, once home to the oldest brewery in the world, is also home to one of these schools. Rodrigo Wong, 28, is one of the few foreigners aiming for the well-reputed title of brewmaster – the supervisor of the entire brewing process.

The Chinese-Peruvian student sits with other members of the Club Ausländischer Weihenstephaner around the Weissbierkarussell that spring evening. The old merry-go-round, converted to a bar, is a popular hangout at festival time.

Wong earned a food engineering degree from the National Agrarian University in La Molina, Peru. He taught himself brewing with the help of internet forums, books, and “a lot of trial and error,” he says. He started Santos Demonios, a brewery in Lima, before applying to TUM’s Brewing and Beverage Technology program.

“Brewing is a mixture of science and art,” says Wong, who is in his first year of the master’s program. But the science aspect is more important, he stresses. “You first have to gain the knowledge and the capacity to apply it, and then have the imagination to make it.”

In the global beer market, TUM Weihenstephan’s brewing program is considered the best.



Rodrigo Wong learned the basics of brewing online back in Peru. Now, he’s working on a master’s degree at TUM

Among its students, however, it's known for grueling math and science classes, all taught in German. Two-thirds of the students enrolled in the bachelor's program drop out within the first year of study.

Bachelor's students take physics, inorganic chemistry, math, and molecular biology in the first of their six semesters. Elective courses include food technology and patent law. Those who make it to the two-year Master of Science track or more selective Ph.D. positions are considered the *crème de la crème* and are often hired by big breweries and industry suppliers.

The Technische Universität Berlin (TU Berlin) offers a similar trajectory and sponsors apprenticeships for both brewers and maltsters. The latter profession supervises grains being turned into malt – an essential component of beer making.

On a chilly day, winds whip through TUM's Weihenstephan campus. It's situated amid rolling fields near Munich's main airport. The brewing facility, with its steel-tank-packed lab, is housed near a former abbey where Benedictine monks began to brew beer back in the year 1040.

Industrial equipment may have made the workflow more efficient since then, but the actual brewing process hasn't changed much. The reason is that German brewers still maintain many aspects of the ancient *Reinheitsgebot* – a purity law that has prohibited ingredients other than barley, hops, and water in beer for more than 500 years.

Such regulations aren't so surprising in Germany, where many food industries are strictly governed. Paths of study vary, but generally, tradespeople must meet stringent qualifications to slaughter pigs, stuff sausages, or even bake bread for commercial sale. The Thüringer Meisterschule des Fleischerhandwerks (Thuringian Master School of Butchery) in Rohr is an example of a *Berufsfachschule*. This trade school teaches the essentials of butchery. In brewing, institutions such as the Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University of Applied Sciences offer a more practical, hands-on approach than the TUM Weihenstephan that lies just down the road.

Horst-Christian Langowski, the brewing program's dean, sits in a conference room at the TUM campus and sips a glass of *Sprudelwasser* while outlining the various brewing courses. "The study program is not easy," he admits. "Quite a few students leave in the first month." Freshmen have to attend three math and science lectures per day. Their first stab at actually brewing in the laboratory, according to the curriculum, isn't allowed until the fourth semester. Exams are tough, Langowski says.

The two-year master's program builds on the bachelor's curriculum. All but a few graduates of

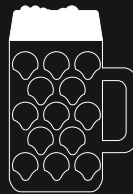
THE GLASSES



TULPE
Pilsner is typically served in this glass, which holds 0.3 liters



STANGE
Kölsch, a beer brewed in Cologne, is served in a thin 0.2-liter glass



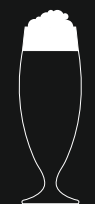
KRUG
or "Mass," for the metric for one liter, is often used in Bavaria



SCHALE
Used for "Berliner Weisse," a beer mixed with woodruff or raspberry



ALTBIER-GLAS
Düsseldorfers drink their famed dark beer out of this 0.2 liter glass



POKAL
Used for Köstritzer, a black beer brand brewed in the state of Thuringia

Photo: Roderick Aichinger; Illustration: Anne Gerdes

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the bachelor's program continue their studies; but for students who don't make the cut, TUM offers a practical track leading to a certificate known as *Diplombraumeister*. In this seven-semester program, students spend their first year gaining hands-on experience in a brewery.

Prerequisites for admission to TUM Weihenstephan include an equivalent of the *Abitur*, the German high-school diploma. And since classes are held in German, a B2 language-proficiency certificate is required for non-native speakers. Many verbs used in the brewing process – like *spunden*, the act of closing the valve on a pressurized fermentation tank – are simply untranslatable, Langowski notes.

Wong had started to learn German back in Peru. But he still needed to complete a four-month intensive-language course in Bavaria to get the needed certification. He enrolled in the master's program late last year, and has to complete five bachelor's-level courses in subjects such as fluid mechanics before starting the coursework for his master's degree.

Wong and a couple of other internationals comprise the foreign-student contingent in a program of



Veronica Menzel, a former flight attendant, is a rare female face in the brewing industry

82 students. “The cost of studying is not that high in Germany,” he says when asked about his motivation to study in Weihenstephan. Fees for the program total just 129 euros per semester. After graduation, Wong says, he'll work in a German brewery for at least one year before returning to his own Lima-based operation. By then, he will be well-equipped with beer-science expertise and global contacts.

Ian Pyle, an American from Philadelphia, earned TUM's *Diplombraumeister* in 2010. Now a brewmaster at Ratsherrn, a large brewery in Hamburg, Pyle confirms one advantage of the TUM program: “Networking is tight.”

Weihenstephan may be fertile recruiting ground for top breweries like Ratsherrn. But programs at TU Berlin and other institutions of higher learning in Germany's capital are attractive for many foreigners due to the city's appeal. It's also one of the reasons why Veronica Menzel, a former flight attendant from Brazil, came to *Versuchs- und Lehranstalt für Brauerei* (Research and Teaching Institute for Brewing). VLB, as it's simply referred to, is an association and research hub of the German brewing and malting

Photo: Rebecca Rütten

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»GOOD PLACE TO BE«*

industry in operation since 1883. Back then, the program was created to make brewing education in Germany more accessible. Nowadays, the certified brewmaster course in English is also a magnet for foreigners; 40 students from abroad are enrolled.

“Brewers aren’t always the best chemists,” says Menzel, who switched careers at age 29. And to her point, many small-batch craft brewers operate more like chefs than scientists. Menzel herself also struggled with chemistry. Looking back, she says, the compact six-month course was worth the 17,500-euro tuition fee. She learned a lot within a short period of time, and was able to transfer that knowledge into a career path she loves, she says.

Menzel stayed at VLB for five years after graduating. BRLO, a hip brewhouse whose name means Berlin in old Slavic, poached her in 2016.

Menzel has made her mark, not only as a brewer of award-winning beers, but also as a leading woman in a male-dominated profession. “She taught me a lot,” says Crystalla Huang, a VLB grad who is now head brewmaster at Singapore’s RedDot Brewery. On a rainy day in Berlin’s Wedding district, faculty,

THE COURSES

TUM School of Life
Sciences Weihenstephan
B.Sc., M.Sc., Diplom, Ph.D.

Technische
Universität Berlin
B.Sc., B.Eng., M.Sc.

Versuchs- und Lehranstalt
für Brauerei, Berlin
Brewing courses in English

Weihenstephan-Triesdorf
University of
Applied Sciences
B.Eng.

students, and alumni gather at VLB for an evening social. Sam Derby, a San Franciscan who didn’t pass the necessary exams at VLB to graduate, stops by, a mini keg of his own “crazy beer” in hand. Derby now runs his own microbrewery in Berlin, and says the program helped him to break into the field.

The crowd drinks drafts at the old Zunfthaus, a building that Burghard Meyer, the school’s head of international brewing courses, shored up along with some friends from the local brewers’ guild.

Meyer, dressed in a black brewer’s outfit, has been on the faculty for more than 14 years. His course, with three study modules that include raw materials, bottle hygiene, and a laboratory brew in the first week, is an intensive overview of brewing, he explains.

Meyer enjoys being a gatekeeper for foreign students. “Learning by traveling and exchanging knowledge are traditions in Germany,” he says. Foreign students are a logical extension of this. They share their knowledge with locals and take newly acquired skills back abroad. And a few, he says, “even decide to stay.” ●



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VOX POPS

University students in Berlin talk about their outfits, their studies, and their lives – on campus and off

BY CATHRIN SCHAER PHOTOS BASTIAN THIERY

Lena-Sophie
Adomeit, 25
and Nikolas
Brummer, 22

*fourth-year fine-arts students
from Berlin and Düsseldorf*

What do I like best about studying here? That's a tough question because right now, I'm only thinking about lunch! I do like the diversity in the city and the fact that there are so many possibilities for artistic exchange. And actually, I really like quieter places. Volkspark Rehberge in Wedding is so green and so peaceful, even though it's in the middle of the city. You can really submerge yourself in that. – *Lena-Sophie*

Of course, you're living in a bubble here, studying at a university with lots of left-wing students. But you can also go into other parts of the city and be exposed to different opinions. I work in catering. That is a totally different world, more conservative. Our work locations change all the time. For example, I worked in the Hoppegarten racetrack recently. There were a lot of people from Brandenburg there. You get to see the real city like that, the city that exists behind all the things that are supposed to only be so hip and cool here. – *Nikolas*

Lena-Sophie is wearing Dr. Martens and Nikolas is wearing loafers (not pictured). They found the rest of their outfits at flea markets around the city

Patrick
Anderson, 23

*second-year urban planning
student from Los Angeles*

When I was living in New York, I never felt like I had any peace. In my second year of university, I just thought, what the hell, I'm moving to Germany! And so far, it's been one of the best decisions of my life. I started learning German in my last year back home. I learned it mainly by watching "Tagesschau", the national news. Literally any word I didn't understand, I'd write down, then look up in the dictionary.

Patrick tie-dyed the shirt together with a friend in Washington, D.C. After it shrank in the wash, he cut it into a crop top so it wouldn't go to waste



Jasmin "Mini"
Halama, 30

*fifth-year fashion
design student from Berlin*

I always had an interest in fashion. And this course – experimental clothing and textile design – really drew me. It blurs the lines between art and design. I wouldn't call myself a fashion designer, though. I simply don't have any inclination toward the more commercial side of the fashion industry.

Jasmin buys all her clothes second hand. "Because it's sustainable, and also because you find things nobody else has. I can't even remember the last time I bought new clothes, except for underwear!"



Tom Weber, 23

*urban and regional
planning student from Leipzig*

I actually wanted to be a traffic planner. But since I'm really bad at math, I decided to do this course instead. City planning exists at the intersection of urban living, transportation, green spaces, ecology, and sociology. It's so interesting to work at a crossroads like this.

As a gay person, I feel like Berlin is such a great place to be. You can do what you want and you don't stand out. For a lot of students, it can be quite hard to meet people. I'd suggest joining a sports team, maybe even at the university because it's cheaper. But in the end, I do believe that everyone finds their people eventually.

Tom is wearing a crop top from Asos and jeans from Sandro. "I want to defy social convention a little. Women wear crop tops all the time – I think men can wear them and look just as good"



Naomi Boima, 21

*first-year fine-arts
student from Berlin*

The best thing about art school is how people are together in the ateliers. We support each other and get other perspectives on our own art, lots of new points of view. And you work with others. That's something you might not have had before, and it's really inspiring. There's a lot of freedom to do what you want. And you can work in these huge studios. Before, I did small pictures. Now I work on huge sculptures.

Naomi used to work in a second-hand store in Amsterdam. "I wouldn't say I deliberately get involved with fashion trends, but I like good style"

Julius Palm, 23

*second-year fine-arts
student from Hanover*

I make installations about aspects of Berlin you don't see every day. I've been building a sort of shrine, and I put different objects in it. I also use videos to create an atmosphere. Some of it is about the party scene in Berlin.

If you're new here, I'd probably advise you to start with smaller clubs, like Ziegrastrasse or Griessmuehle. Of course, things are always changing, and clubs come and go. But it's like that with every city.

Julius is wearing a second-hand shirt and 501s that he customized with zips and studs. He is holding foldable sunglasses from Carrera





Nina Voelker, 21

*third-year art history and
art science student from Berlin*

I'm doing a multi-disciplinary course where you choose between subjects like philosophy, communications, history of science, and art history. As part of my course, I'm working on a project at the Berlinische Galerie looking at art networks and the politics around exhibitions, asking about what they show and why they buy what they do. But I don't want to be an artist. I've thought about it. Would you spend 60 years trying to promote your art and possibly end up broke at the end of all that?

*Nina is wearing her mother's
T-shirt, velvet shorts she bought
in Rome, socks from
Peek & Cloppenburg, and shoes
she bought from a friend*




**Mathilda
Switala, 18**

*first-year drama student
from Berlin*

Getting into a drama course is really difficult: Sometimes there are hundreds and hundreds of applicants. They only choose ten students per year. It takes several interviews and you audition three times, with different monologues. I ask myself sometimes if this is what I should be doing, given all that is going on in the world. I do realize that I am in a privileged situation.

Mathilda is wearing her boyfriend's T-shirt, a ring from a flea market, a Topshop hair clip, and trousers she bought in Spain. "We have to move a lot in drama class, so you need relaxed clothing"

Jan Simon, 21

*first-year
mechanical engineering
student from Heidelberg*

Engineers have a big impact. Just think about what happened at Volkswagen with the diesel-emissions scandal. We engineers had a lot to do with it. But we don't learn enough about what to consider when making difficult decisions. That's why I think it would be great to have a mandatory ethics course as part of our studies.

Jan is wearing a new outfit. "I bought most things at the charity shop Humana. I used to shop at H&M back home. Now, I mostly wear second-hand; it's what everyone does. Oh, and I'm wearing a shoestring for a belt because I don't have one"



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VORGLÜHEN

Invited to your first party thrown by Germans? Great! If it's a *Vor-glühen*, though – literally, a pre-heating – don't arrive too late. The point of this event-before-the-night-out is to attain a solid level of intoxication within a short period of time while chilling on some sofas at home. Then, you'll stagger off to a club or another party. That is, unless you're invited to a *Spieleabend*.

SPIELEABEND

Sadly, this doesn't translate to fun and games. Rather, it's an evening of board games. Most probably, it will be you and three other people sitting at the kitchen table, hardly talking, mostly drinking, throwing dice and playing cards. Germans really adore board games. What to bring? A bottle of wine or a sixpack of beer work well.

ATTIRE

Getting ready to go out in Germany means putting on a fresh T-Shirt; if you really exert yourself, you may wash your hair, too. Strapping on high heels, squeezing into a cocktail dress, or waxing your chest hair aren't very likely; you'd probably be the only one who has gone to such an effort.

The good news: You can literally wear whatever you want to a party at the *Wohngemeinschaft*, or shared apartment. (It's better known as the WG). The height of German nightlife fashion really is dressing up and making sure you look as if you haven't made any effort at all. Only exception to this rule: *Mottoparties*, where you dress to a pre-determined theme.

SHOES ON OR OFF?

This really is a party question. For many, the shoes (as well as the open door) draw the line between a nice evening with friends

PARTY HARD

Invited to a German student party at a shared apartment and unsure what to wear and how to behave? Nine commandments

BY FIONA WEBER-STEINHAUS AND KATHARINA MEYER ZU EPPENDORF



The more alcohol consumed, the less powerful the host. If everyone is lit to the eyeballs, they'll smoke anyway

and a real *Hausparty*. If you're unsure, be fashionably late and check the *Fußabtreter*, the mat in front of the flat. If the door is open and no shoes are to be seen, then step right in, shoes, socks, and all. Some WGs even remove the furniture, transforming one room into a bar and another into a dance floor with a DJ.

SMOKING

The host decides whether this will be a balcony-smoking, kitchen-smoking, or non-smoking party. But as in most cultures, the more alcohol consumed, the less powerful the host. If everyone is lit to the eyeballs, they may just light up cigarettes, too.

FOOD

No matter who's inviting, eat beforehand. There won't be loads to eat. However, if you're lucky, you'll find a cold buffet in the kitchen, containing at least noodle salad, potato salad, crisps, or salt sticks.

DRINK

If you don't see a bar, hit the bathroom. At WG parties, bathtubs are almost always filled with ice and sticky beer bottles.

SEX

People don't really hook up at WG parties. If you meet someone you like, you could make out there without causing any problems. Or grab a *Wegbier*, a beer for the road, and leave together. This gives you two the option to toast alone in the twilight.

THE END

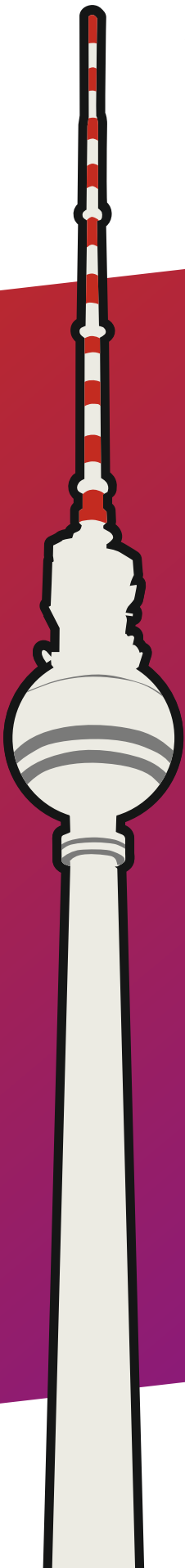
If the police have visited the party twice this evening to warn its hosts, beware. Depending on state law, you may have to pay a fine. And your ghetttoblasters might be confiscated. And then the party really is over. ●

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Researchers at the Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems in Tübingen

From climate change to after-work parties in the Stone Age: All over Germany, unusual research projects are underway

RESEARCH THIS!

CYBER VALLEY TÜBINGEN AND STUTT GART



Swabia promotes research in machine learning, robotics, and computer vision

What do hugging robots, deep data mining, and avatars have in common? They're all at home in the Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems (MPI-IS).

Based in Tübingen and Stuttgart, in the southwestern region of Swabia, the research institute combines theory, software, and hardware expertise in artificial intelligence (AI), the branch of computer science dealing with the simulation of intelligent behavior in computers.

In 2016, MPI-IS teamed up with local universities and industrial partners such as Daimler, Bosch, Amazon, and Porsche in order to create a hub for AI.

The idea is to combine traditional Made in Germany strengths in areas like automotive engineering with the vital backbone of German industry – *Mittelstand* companies – and propel these into the digital future. Or, as Winfried Kretschmann, federal minister of

Baden-Württemberg, phrased it in a speech: “Homeland, Hightech, Highspeed.” Without a doubt, AI and self-driving cars will become commonplace in the near future.

In Cyber Valley, both can already be seen in action. Researchers here have taught robots to hug. They have analyzed the motor skills of geckos to improve robots’ agility. And hundreds of Amazon employees will soon be at work in Tübingen improving the AI behind Alexa, the company’s language assistant.

Yet some local residents fear that the industry could begin to dictate which fields are worthy of research and which aren’t. At the end of last year, a small group of university students in Tübingen occupied a lecture hall to protest Cyber Valley.

MPI-IS also hosts a graduate school for AI, the International Max Planck Research School for Intelligent Systems.

BY MIRIAM KAROUT

CLIMATE, CLIMATIC CHANGE, AND SOCIETY HAMBURG



A research project on climate change analyzes nothing less than the future of humanity

Whether it's forced migration, the melting of polar caps, or the future of humankind – there is probably no topic as prevalent as climate change.

Since the Paris Agreement was signed in 2015, discussion in media and society has not only focussed on climate policy but also on climate research.

Now, Hamburg is home to the new Cluster of Excellence “Climate, Climatic Change, and Society” (CLICCS) to address the pressing issue.

The cluster program, launched in January 2019, is coordinated through Universität Hamburg's Center for Earth System Research and Sustainability (CEN). It collaborates closely with large research institutes such as Max Planck Institute for Meteorology (MPI-M), the Helmholtz-Zentrum Geesthacht (HZG), and the German Climate Computing Center (DKRZ). All of these are

based in or near the port city of Hamburg. The key question of the cluster research is to distinguish which climate futures are possible and which are plausible. At the same time, some researchers take sociology into account. For instance, they ask how citizens deal with climate change, and how it's affecting their daily lives, career choices, and even travel.

Students in the newly formed cluster hail from 28 countries on five continents. They do basic research, but they also work with economists and peace scholars; some also focus on how media cover the topic of climate change.

Climate research has received recognition in Hamburg: German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas visited the cluster recently. And Prince William and Princess Kate, on a visit to Hamburg in 2017, talked to students to learn how sea ice is being affected by climate change.

EXCELLENCE CLUSTER TOPOI BERLIN



The smallest of artefacts shed light on how society worked in the distant past

Sure, Berlin has a buzzing nightlife. But it also has a high density of museums and ancient history: The city's Museum Island is home to the Pergamon Altar, the Market Gate of Miletus, the Ishtar Gate, and more.

In 2007, the proposal of the Topoi Cluster of Excellence was approved: Two universities, four research institutes, and one large network project – the Formation and Transformation of Space and Knowledge in Ancient Civilizations. The research institutes are the German Archaeological Institute, the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW), the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, and the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

Research is diverse, ranging from the role of sheep in textile production to curse tablets that were used to ask gods or the deceased to curse a person or object.

Such artefacts can often give insight into how society and social classes were structured in ancient times.

Many researchers at the Topoi cluster make their work accessible through YouTube. In their videos, they illustrate what they're working on.

Today, more than 100 doctoral candidates study at the Berlin Graduate School of Ancient Studies. The cluster relies on interdisciplinary work between researchers from different backgrounds and nationalities.

To reach a wider audience, the cluster sometimes hosts antiquity slams, which are similar to science slams: Researchers present their fields of study to the public in a straightforward and hip way. One researcher shared evidence of after-work parties in the Stone Age: Construction workers of now-famous monuments were kept happy with beer and meat.

INSTITUTE OF BOOK ARTS
LEIPZIG



Don't judge a book by its cover? In Leipzig, researchers are encouraged to do exactly that

You should never judge a book by its cover. Or should you?

At the Academy of Fine Arts (HGB) in Leipzig, the Institute of Book Arts researches books inside and out. The institute is famous for its researchers' love of font, typography, and printing, as well as for its critical engagement with book content.

When the institute was founded back in 1955, its aim was to compete with publishing houses as an innovative lab for book art. Nowadays, the institute allows for research but also encourages the publication of books that later get sold. Its students also often collaborate with the Leipzig-based Spekter publishing house.

The digital age has changed the study of book art in recent years. Book designers are now often also graphic designers. They are responsible for the entire process, from conceptualizing a

design straight on through to the printing press.

In comparison to faculties of applied sciences, students here pursue their knowledge more as an artistic endeavour.

The institute also distinguishes itself in that it isn't limited to book-art students. Students of all degrees at HGB who want to work with books, collaborate, or publish their work in book form, can access help here.

Another aspect of digitalization: Analogue book art has become a successful realm for book connoisseurs. *It's a Book*, a publishing fair at the institute, takes place annually during the Leipzig Book Fair. Over the past twenty years, many books published by the institute have been awarded national and international prizes, including the "Golden Letter" for best book design and the Saxon State Award for Design. ●

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PASSING THE TEST

In Germany, test anxiety is so prevalent that there's even a word for it. But what exactly is *Prüfungsangst*, and how are universities helping students to cope?

BY MICHAELA CAVANAGH ILLUSTRATION BENE ROHLMANN

Jan Gottschalk* felt sick to his stomach. His palms were sweating, and his heart was racing.

The Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg bachelor's student was writing his final exam for an e-commerce course. It was his third and final try. If he didn't pass this time, he could be expelled. He panicked.

"It was the worst experience I've ever had," Gottschalk recalls. What seemed to be a panic attack was later diagnosed as a case of *Prüfungsangst* – test anxiety.

This compound word derives from *Prüfung*, a test, exam, or evaluation, and *Angst*, a feeling of deep anxiety or dread. This paralyzing cocktail of stage fright, fear of failure, and performance anxiety can develop as early as elementary school. But it is a growing problem on college campuses throughout Germany.

Indeed, nearly half a million students in the country suffer from depression, anxiety disorders, or panic attacks, according to recent data from Barmer, one of the nation's health-insurance companies. While these mental-health issues reflect a wider global trend and test anxiety has been a field of academic research since



the 1950s, there is a particular aspect that makes *Prüfungsangst* a specifically German fear.

Wilfried Schumann, director of Psychological Counseling Services at the University of Oldenburg, believes that two factors have contributed to the spike. Firstly, reforms to the education system in the early 2000s forced students to take exams earlier in their academic careers than ever before. Secondly, students have put increasing pressure on themselves to be unrealistically high performers.

The good news: More and more universities are addressing the situation head-on. They offer

counseling and workshops, and they advise students on how to deal with *Prüfungsangst*.

And students are making use of these offers. Annette Juchems-Brohl, a psychologist at the Universität Hamburg's Center for Academic Advising and Psychological Counseling, believes that the reason for this increase in demand "might be a better knowledge and certainly a higher social acceptability of psychological problems these days."

The first step to overcome that test anxiety, college counselors explain, is to understand what it actually is. "Physiologically, there is a massive stress reaction accom-

panied by sweating, increased heart rate, chest tightness, fast breathing, shaking, and nausea," says Juchems-Brohl. "And on a behavioral level, students with *Prüfungsangst* often struggle to prepare appropriately."

Marion Klimmer, a mental coach in Hamburg, says students can use technology to help find relief from this fear of test taking. Webinar programs offer lessons on how to prepare for your exam, how to maintain your motivation, and how to ease exam-related nerves. The Freie Universität Berlin offers online counseling via chat or email. And, of course, there are mobile apps: MindShift, one such app, promotes healthier study-related thinking. And Wingwave, another, is a short-term anti-stress training app.

For people looking for more comprehensive support, some student centers at German universities offer one-on-one counseling as well as workshops. The Universität Hamburg, for one, offers free *Prüfungsangst* seminars twice each semester. The seminars impart practical skills to deal with stress and anxiety by focussing on three straightforward subjects: relaxation techniques, thoughts, and learning strategies.

The Oldenburg psychologist Schumann suggests finding ways to take control of the situation. Set up a study plan, or seek support from other people. "You have to realize that it's only an exam," he says. "It's not a matter of life and death."

Two years after his terrifying experience, business student Gottschalk is about to finish his degree. He feels better equipped now, having seen an on-campus therapist. "Exam pressure is building up, but I'm forcing myself to be more disciplined," he says. So far, his technique is working.

*Name has been changed

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“A GREAT COMPLIMENT”

Monika Grütters, Commissioner for Culture and Media, talks with ZEIT Germany about the country’s history, her own sentimentality, and why Berlin is the new New York

BY MANUEL J. HARTUNG AND DEBORAH STEINBORN PHOTOS PATRICK DESBROSSES

Ms. Grütters, here we are, on the terrace of your office in the Federal Chancellery overlooking Berlin. If a foreign student comes to Germany, how do you explain the country and its capital to him or her?

Germany can be explained easily by the three domes that we can see from here. Directly opposite from us: the Reichstag. It’s one of the most visited parliaments in the world, with three and a half million visitors last year. The renowned architect Norman Foster placed the dome on that venerable building, making it both transparent and engaging.

Behind it, you see the next dome: the Humboldt Forum, a museum that we will be opening soon. It won’t celebrate our own culture, but rather non-European cultures.

The third, the golden dome back there, is the synagogue on Oranienburger Strasse, which stands for religion. These three domes reflect the politics, culture, and religion of Germany’s eventful history.

Which German sights should this student be sure to see?

In order to understand who the Germans are, you should first come to Berlin. The Brandenburg Gate stands for the division



The CDU politician displays a favorite photography book in her office

of the world, but also for regained freedom. So it symbolizes our history, with two dictatorships within one century and the way in which we dealt with them. The second dimension is the *Kulturnation*, “cultural nation:” the theaters, the opera houses ...

... so, from Berlin, that student should head straight on to Bayreuth in northern Bavaria, and listen to one of the famous operas of composer Richard Wagner there?

No. The Bayreuth Festival certainly has a global reputation. But one could just as well visit an opera house in, say, the city of Detmold, which also plays Wagner’s *Walküre*, among other works. There are many joyful cultural moments waiting in this country. It could even be as simple as visiting one of the 5,000 owner-managed bookstores all over Germany.

We have a dense network of intellectual petrol stations, as I call them, consisting of 6,800 museums, for instance, and 360 public and private theaters. This network of opera houses and professional orchestras has grown historically and is truly unique. Altogether, this comprises what we call the cultural nation.



Grütters, 57, on the top-floor terrace at Berlin's Federal Chancellery

So, Berlin is a must-see. The cultural nation should be experienced in many different parts of the country. And what else?

Made in Germany. The reliability and quality of German products are world-famous; the strength that arises from this; the virtues such as diligence and reliability that are associated with it. This can be seen, for example, in the many small- and medium-sized enterprises and family-owned companies all around our country.

What other sights should be taken in?

The forest. It signifies the German soul. The proximity to nature, the longing, the romantic principle. All this is represented by the German forest (which covers more than a third of the entire country).

On the one hand, we are a people of thought and reason. But on the other hand, there's this element of longing. Something deeply sentimental is inherent in the German being.

“CULTURE ISN'T THE RESULT OF ECONOMIC GROWTH, BUT RATHER ITS PREREQUISITE”

Reliable, but also sentimental. Would you describe yourself in this way, too?

Well, I am a Capricorn, and in accordance with my astrological sign, I consider myself reliable, thorough, and diligent. But I also feel this sentimentality every day. It starts first thing in the morning when I get up, hear the birds singing in the trees, and feel the urge to get outside. I can rave about what the arts mean to us. I can read a book

with almost the greatest reverence. And I can be completely enraptured by music.

Despite these self-descriptions as reliable and sentimental, many prejudices about Germans prevail in the world. Which stereotype annoys you the most?

That we are supposedly humorless isn't true at all. The prejudice that we cannot relax as well. But I am also really bothered by the image of the “ugly German,” or even the idea that all Germans are like that.

How would you explain the “cultural nation of Germany” in more detail?

The fact that we have such a dense network of cultural institutions has something to do with our history. For centuries, the German territory was fragmented into small states. The individual states' princes competed not only for military strength, but also in science and culture. And some great minds first formulated the unity of the nation at the



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beginning of the 19th century. Georg Herwegh, the Brothers Grimm, the great Heinrich Heine, and Georg Büchner all described this unity of the German nation in spirit.

That is history. Can you find this importance of culture and artistic freedom in everyday life today?

Absolutely. German theater is not about showing conventional and affirmative plays. There is a lot of experimentation. So many young visual artists want to live with us because they find a climate that promotes and challenges their productivity and creativity. In the 1970s and '80s, New York was a place to be. Then it was London. And for some time now, Berlin has been the desired destination.

Germany spends a lot of money on culture; often, it's high culture to which many citizens can't really relate. Is it worth investing so much in this area?



Grütters is an honorary professor of cultural management at Freie Universität Berlin

I am convinced that culture isn't the result of economic growth, but rather its prerequisite. Art precedes economic growth with its innovative and creative approaches.

That's why we don't just support the arts when times are good. We systematically promote culture with around 1.7 percent of our tax revenue per year. That's more than in other countries.

Imagine a foreign reader of our magazine who is ambivalent about Germany. She or he reads how you praise the open cultural nation, but also hears about social polarization, populism, and the electoral successes of the right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD) political party. How can she make sense of this? It isn't all fine and good here.

I'm afraid that's true. We Germans tried hard to come to terms with our past, with both the Nazi era and the Socialist Unity Party (SED) dictatorship. And we believed

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for a long time that we had a broad consensus that exclusion, racism, and anti-Semitism were simply taboo. And yet there are anti-Semitic developments and xenophobic populist parties again.

But there are also moments of joy. One was the welcoming culture created by the entire population when so many refugees arrived in 2015.

And look at how many young people come to Germany from all over the world today. That really is a great compliment to us as a nation. Many Israelis and Italians, for example, come to Berlin. But other places in Germany are cosmopolitan as well – the Ruhr area, for example, Frankfurt am Main, or Munich.

This issue of ZEIT Germany features an interview with the rapper Sookee, who argues that Germany is still a monoculture. All minorities, ethnic, religious, and gender, should be better integrated, she says.

I hardly ever experience anyone as marginalized or unwelcome here. For many years, there was a debate about whether Germany was a country of immigration or not. Today, it's a given, and we have just passed an immigration law that opens the door even more widely for skilled workers from abroad.

That a society is changing and, for example, had to become accustomed to accepting homosexuality in public – these are processes that every society goes through. And that men and women would treat each other incorrectly is not something one would encounter in Berlin, at least. That's why I can hardly share Sookee's thesis.

If a foreigner decides to study in Germany, what do you expect from him or her?

Germany is issuing an invitation to immigrants to be citizens of the world in our country. I am grateful for everyone who comes here. So first of all, please, be happy

here! I hope people live well here, with the best opportunities to gain knowledge at our universities or to enjoy Germany's rich cultural offerings. And I hope that they will stay long enough to learn a lot about our culture, lifestyle, and ethical standards. In that case, every decision they make will be the right one. Everyone who wants to stay here will be good for us, and those who return will hopefully do a lot of good in their home countries as well. ●



READ MORE

Full interview in the original German version at www.zeit.de/monikagruetters



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THE FIRST STEPS

Ausländeramt, Wohnungsgeberbescheinigung, Einwohnermeldeamt:
Moving to Germany involves a lot of bureaucracy. Students share how
to prepare in advance so you can hit the ground running

BY FIONA WEBER-STEINHAUS



THE HOUSING HUNT TAKES TIME, BUT YOU PROBABLY
WON'T HAVE TO SLEEP IN YOUR CAR

THE INTERNATIONALS



Ananya Biswas, 25, is a master's student of IT systems at TU Hamburg from Chittagong, Bangladesh



Patrik Pyykkönen, 23, is an Erasmus student at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich from Helsinki, Finland



Farnaz Dehkordi, 22, is a first-year medical student at Universität Hamburg from Isfahan, Iran

CHOOSE YOUR STUDIES

“Before starting medicine, I attended a so-called *Studienkolleg* in Hamburg. This course helps foreign students prepare for their studies. After this, international students often apply for their courses of study through the website *uni-assist.de*. Be aware that every bureaucratic step costs money and time.” – *Farnaz*

Tip: Check online whether your school diploma suffices for admission to your desired academic program via *anabin.kmk.org/anabin*

PREPARE, PREPARE

“Paperwork in Germany really means physical paperwork. I had to send my study applica-

tion from Helsinki to Munich by post, in a stack of papers. I also had to register in person at the university at the beginning of April, even though the course only started at the end of the month.” – *Patrik*

“When I was still in Bangladesh, I registered with the online bank Fintiba. They set up blocked accounts that students, who are not from the European Union, need for visa applications. I would also encourage everyone to learn German in advance; both aspects will make it much easier to settle in.” – *Ananya*

Tip: If you are from a non-EU country and already have been accepted at a German univer-

sity, you will have to apply for a student visa; if you are about to apply for a program, you'll need a student applicant visa. Both are available at German embassies, consulates, and some immigration authorities abroad. More information at *study-in.delen*

FIND SOME DIGS

“This can take some time, depending on the city you intend to move to. I lived with my relatives before I found my own flat. Brace yourself for the flat inspections: I was surprised to see that at all *Wohnungsbesichtigungen* (apartment showings) I attended, prospective students came with their parents. Thus, it is a good idea as an international student



SURE, PACK CLOTHES FOR ANY WEATHER. BUT GET ALL YOUR DOCUMENTS IN ORDER FIRST

to get a *Bürgschaft*, a surety from a guardian or parent.” – *Farnaz*

“I got a room in student housing via the university. Once you've found a room or a place to stay, the first real bureaucratic step begins: registration. Remember; just showing up doesn't work in Germany; you will have to make appointments for everything.” – *Ananya*

Tip: Explore all options. Browse the local newspaper, and look up initiatives such as *Wohnen für Hilfe*, which houses students in a barter arrangement with the elderly; students get free accommodations and assist their elderly roommates in day-to-day life. Other popular platforms for shared housing for students are *studenten-wg.de* and *WG-gesucht.de*. And above all, beware of scams: Don't transfer any funds to anyone before you have a signed lease in hand.

REGISTER

“You'll need proof of registration, the *Meldebesätigung*, for everything from bank accounts to health insurance. I went to the *Einwohnermeldeamt*, the registration office, at seven o'clock in the morning. At 10:30, I got an appointment. Check the website of the registry office for opening times and come much earlier. People will already be queuing outside.” – *Patrik*

Tip: Try to make an appointment online at the *Einwohnermeldeamt*. Otherwise, be prepared to wait. You will need to bring the following: 1. A valid passport. 2. The *Anmeldeformular*, or registration form. 3. A *Wohnungsgeberbescheinigung* from your landlord or the person you are living with. This is essentially a form confirming you are allowed to live there.

OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT

“For Iranians, this is a huge problem. It can seem almost impossible to open a bank account in Germany because of the sanctions. When I first arrived, I ran around town with 10,000 euros in my backpack. That’s because most foreign students need to show proof that they have more than 8,000 euros in a bank account to sustain a living here. But all the major banks declined to open an account for me. By pure luck, a nice accountant set one up for me. I still have problems with transfers and I can’t offer any solution. My only tip is to transfer smaller amounts of money and hope for a nice accountant to help you. And, take someone along to the bank who speaks German well.” – *Farnaz*

“Apart from the blocked account, you also will need a current account, a *Girokonto*. I opened one at the local branch of the *Spar-kasse*. I also brought hard cash for the first two weeks in Germany. This was quite helpful, as there are quite a few places here that don’t accept cards.” – *Ananya*

Tip: After opening a bank account, your next step should be to get some *Krankenversicherung* (health insurance).

INSURE YOURSELF

“I have an extra private insurance for my time in Germany; otherwise, there is always the option of the European Health Insurance Card.” – *Patrik*

“You need proof of health insurance to register at university. Typically, this costs around 90 euros per month.” – *Ananya*

“Generally, you aren’t allowed to be studying and solely have travel



NAVIGATING THE HURDLES OF GERMAN RED TAPE CAN BE EXHAUSTING

insurance. When you visit a Studienkolleg, you are registered at university, but you don’t officially count as a student. The problem is, you then have to pay private insurance, which is more of a hassle. I later got insured via the *Techniker Krankenkasse*, an option which many students take.” – *Farnaz*

Tip: To get insurance, you’ll need a passport, registration, proof of student status, and domestic bank-account details. Plan ahead, scan and mail completed forms, then visit a local office to show the remaining documentation in person once you arrive. You can find and compare all the different German health insurers online at: kranken-kassen.de

GET YOUR PERMIT

“At the *Ausländeramt* you should be prepared to wait. Check opening times before you go. I personally have to renew my permit every year and have to prove that I can finance my stay here.” – *Farnaz*

Tip: Non-EU students have to get a residence permit. If you are from the EU, however, you enjoy freedom of movement and will not need this extra document. What you need to take along differs depending on the type of visa. But as a rule of thumb, bring along the following: a valid passport; a biometric passport picture; a completed application form called *Antrag auf Erteilung eines Aufenthaltstitels*. You can download

this ahead of time. And be sure to bring along your lease; proof of registration; German health insurance; and 110 euros in cash. If you want a student visa, you’ll also need a university *Semesterbescheinigung* and proof that you can finance your stay.

FIND A MINI-JOB

“Always look for *Minijobs*. This term often is used for student jobs; it means you earn less than 450 euros per month for part-time work. The upside of these Minijobs is that you don’t have to pay taxes on what you earn.” – *Farnaz*

“I searched part-time jobs on *eBay Kleinanzeigen* and *Stellenwerk*. Before I started working in a restaurant, I had to go to the *Gesundheitsamt* to get a certificate that proves I know enough about food hygiene. The *Gesundheitszeugnis* costs 27 euros. For once, I didn’t have to make an appointment but could just pop by. I earn about 800 euros per month, and the taxes are deducted straight from my income.” – *Ananya*

HIT THE ROAD

“I can use all public transport with my semester ticket. I always take the U-Bahn in Munich. I love hiking. When I went to the mountains in Innsbruck, I spent about 160 euros on train tickets. Next time, I will check out the *Bayern-Ticket*.” – *Patrik*

Tip: Most federal states offer cheap group tickets or student discounts for train rides. Check bahn.de. There are also last-minute train bargains at ltur.com. And lost-property offices in large cities such as Hamburg and Munich auction off used bikes a couple of times a year. ●



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OH! SO GERMAN!

One of the trickiest German words of all is also one of its shortest: *Ach*. ZEIT's culture critic takes a stab at explaining it. And oh, we do our best to translate

BY ELISABETH VON THADDEN ILLUSTRATION BENE ROHLMANN

Ach is a sound beyond words, a short sigh, in German. The English "oh!" gets louder as words fail and is quite something as well. And there's little to complain about with the French "ah," that beautiful sound of astonishment emitted when reasonable people are left briefly speechless.

But *ach* is a veritable sound of the soul. Not least because of its rasping digraph *ch* – the summit of the unpronounceable. In the weighty German language, *ach* is a classic heavyweight. In 1797, Friedrich Schiller was the first to define in which way. "When the soul speaks, *ach!*, the soul so quickly speaks no more," he wrote, laying down the absolute impossibility of expressing what the German soul feels. Impossible in words! Only with an *ach!*

Ach lends Faust that note of helplessness right at the start of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's tragedy, published in 1808: "Ach! Now I've done philosophy." And it expresses the most superlatively unspeakable in Heinrich von Kleist's 1803 comedy "Amphitryon": "Ach" is all that Alkmene can say after she unsuspectingly sleeps with the god Jupiter, having mistaken him for her own husband. Now that could be called a super *ach*.

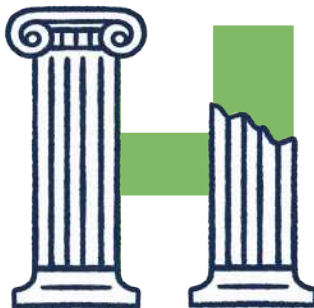
This tiny expression would be too burdened by heavy national history if two cartoon characters sitting together in, of all places, a bathtub hadn't given it a new lease on life over the past decades. Each member of the tub-soaking duo is the epitome of the witless German. And they were invented by one of the wittiest Germans in modern history, a comedian named Loriot.

Ah, now this is one comedic sketch that is hard to translate. Mr Müller-Lüdenscheidt sits across from his fellow bather, a Dr. Klöbner, in a blue-tiled tub. Suddenly, he says: "From time to time, I do enjoy taking a bath without water." To which Dr. Klöbner responds, simply: "Ach."

Müller-Lüdenscheidt counters: "What do you mean by 'ach'?" Dr. Klöbner: "Ach. You said you like to take a bath without water and I said 'ach'."

And that's the way it is. Regardless what it means, often there's nothing to say but *ach!*

THIS IS A ROUGH ENGLISH TRANSLATION



THIS IS THE POETIC GERMAN EXPLANATION

Ach, das ist ohne Worte, kurz geseufzt, auf Deutsch. Auch das englische „oh!“, das laut wird, wenn Worte versagen, ist gewiss nicht von schlechten Eltern; und gegen das französische „ah!“ lässt sich ebenfalls wenig einwenden, ein schöner Ton des Erstaunens vernünftiger Menschen, denen es beim Argumentieren kurz mal die Sprache verschlägt.

Doch was ein wahrer gehauchter Seelenlaut ist, ein echtes *Ach*, in welcher Sprache könnte es unsagbarer klingen als auf Deutsch? Zumal mit dem gutturalen *ch* zum Ausklang, dem Gipfel an Unaussprechlichkeit?

Das *Ach* ist ein klassisches deutsches Schwerkewicht. Der berühmte deutsche Dichter Friedrich Schiller hat 1797 im literarischen *Musenalmanach* als Erster bleibend gesagt, was es ist: „Spricht die Seele, so spricht, *ach!*, schon die Seele nicht mehr“, und das besagt, dass sich schlicht nicht sagen lässt, was die deutsche Seele empfindet. Nicht in Worten! Nur mit *Ach!*

Ach, das ist ja gleich zu Beginn der Tragödie der *Ton des ratlosen Faust*, veröffentlicht von Johann Wolfgang von Goethe im Jahr 1808: „Habe nun, *ach!*, Philosophie ...“

Und *ach*, das ist in Heinrich von Kleists Lustspiel *Amphitryon* von 1803 der Superlativ des Unsagbaren: „*Ach*“, sagt Alkmene nur, als sie ahnungslos mit dem Gott Jupiter geschlafen hat und dachte, es sei ihr eigener Mann. Ein Super*ach*, sozusagen.

Das *Ach* wöge zu schwer, allzu schwer, hätten da nicht zwei Herren in der Badewanne das *Ach* aktualisiert. Die zwei sind der Inbegriff des geistlosen Deutschen und wurden erfunden von einem der geistreichsten Deutschen, Loriot.

Da sagt in der Wanne Herr Müller-Lüdenscheidt: Ich sitze gern mal ohne Wasser in der Wanne. Es antwortet Dr. Klöbner: *Ach*. Müller-Lüdenscheidt: Was heißt „*ach*“? Dr. Klöbner: *Ach*. Sie sagten, dass Sie gerne ohne Wasser in der Wanne sitzen, und ich meinte „*ach*“.

So ist es. Egal, was es heißt: Mehr als *ach* ist oft nicht zu sagen. ●

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