

# CARNEGIE COUNCIL *for Ethics in International Affairs*

## A Global Look at Migration

Just Business

**Anna Hofmann, Stephen Rusczyk, Noora Lori, Julia Taylor Kennedy**

### Transcript

**JULIA KENNEDY:** Welcome to Just Business. This week on the podcast we're doing something a little bit different. Instead of featuring just one interview, we have three for you.

Global migration is a key part of our economic future and one that is often overlooked. Together with Hamburg-based Bucerius Foundation [[ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius](#)], the Carnegie Council is partnering to take a look at the shifts in global migration and their impacts. Over the next half-hour, you will hear from three experts with very different takes on migration, identity, and our economic future.

Let's start with Anna Hofmann, program director of Bucerius Foundation's [Settling into Motion](#). She has an interesting take on Germany's migration issues and began by telling me about [Settling into Motion's](#) roots.

**ANNA HOFMANN:** We started the program in 2008. It supports today 43 research projects done by Ph.D. students in migration studies, coming from 18 countries. They have to study current migration issues in different parts of the world. They are all social scientists, in a broad sense. They concentrate on comparative studies. They concentrate on an interdisciplinary approach to migration.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY:** Why does Bucerius see this as such a key issue to be focusing on and supporting?

**ANNA HOFMANN:** We think that migration changes the world today. It's very important to deal with its causes, with its changing patterns, with the effects of migration, in order to understand better what's going on and how our society has been affected through those changes.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY:** Why is this a vital issue in Germany?

**ANNA HOFMANN:** Germany, I would say, is a special case in Europe. We are a country of immigration, but Germany needed some time to admit that it is a country of immigration. We started the wider debate on immigration, integration of immigrants, and political incorporation of immigrants only a few years ago.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY:** Even though you had a [guest worker program](#) for many decades.

**ANNA HOFMANN:** Yes. As the guest worker program was constructed, it was supposed to finish by people going home after having worked in Germany for a few years, going home to their home countries. Now I think that on the political level, but also in the society, it's quite admitted that Germany is an immigration country, and it has to have mechanisms in order to integrate people who are living in the country.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY:** I think "integration," the term, is something that is used a lot in Germany when talking about migration, but it's not something we are as familiar with in the States. Can you sort of expand on that and what integration means and why it's a difficult concept for some Germans?

**ANNA HOFMANN:** It's a concept that's widely used in the political debate, but also in the general discourse. It is also a kind of fuzzy concept. You cannot really say what integration means and how we measure that, who is well integrated, who is non-integrated. There are so many perceptions of those situations that it's difficult to make it explicit.

But looking at the migration research and maybe more progressive parts of the political life, we tend to start to talk in terms of "participation." It's a new term, which is widely used, for example, for the whole discussion on the participation of children of immigrants in the educational system.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY:** So that's a further version of integration, a more involved version of the term "integration."

**ANNA HOFMANN:** Yes, it's more involved and more neutral, assuming that participation is a kind of thing which affects migrants but also the receiving society's process.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY:** I went on a study tour in Germany that focused on migration, and it seemed in some of the conversations we had there that there was this sense from the term "integration" that the onus was on the immigrants to insert themselves into German society and perhaps let go of some of their cultural heritage from their home country—or even, if they are third-generation immigrants, their grandparents' home country.

Is there more of a sense that there can be more diversity in terms of someone who identifies as a German, but might have a different religion or different cultural practices than someone whose heritage is German-German?

**ANNA HOFMANN:** Absolutely. I think "diversity" is a key word for today—diversity and participation, political participation, economic participation from labor, et cetera. It's changing a lot.

The interesting field to see the change is cultural production. Usually artists are the first to make some experiments in the society. So we can observe an interesting artistic discourse on being a German person, and including people of color, including children of immigrants, second-generation, and others coming from outside to the mainstream discourse on being a German, which can be sometimes difficult for the mainstream society.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY:** I'm curious about what you have learned from the students that you have brought into this program, who look at migration across the world, which has such a variety of challenges and policy insights. How does it affect the way you view immigration in Germany?

**ANNA HOFMANN:** Personally I have learned a lot about diversity in different settings, comparing countries who have a long history of immigration, like the United States or the UK, maybe also with countries who have very recent immigration, or more recent immigration, like Turkey, changing from a country of emigration to a country of immigration, or even countries like Bahrain, which is studied by one of our fellows, which is a very specific case of immigration based on the huge number of guest workers living in the country, not being integrated to any political rights or to any political schemes in this country.

If you place the German or the European case in this context, you can somehow see what can happen if you adopt political incorporation schemes, if you make efforts in order to make people feel like being at home in your country, and what can happen if you just try to make a separation between citizens, people just living and working in your country, the new guest workers. It's interesting to have both dimensions in order to better understand what would be important on a political level in their own country.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY:** That's an interesting point. I come from the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, so I'm wondering, when you think about the role of responsibility—does it lie mostly with government? I would assume yes—for how immigrants are treated. But are there other parties that are responsible for making migration as smooth or as fair as possible?

**ANNA HOFMANN:** I think the whole society is responsible for that. Of course, as a person working in a foundation, which is a nonprofit organization, I think this part of the society—the NGOs [non-governmental organizations], the foundations, and think tanks—has a very special responsibility in investing in such questions.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY:** It's a fascinating discussion, Anna Hofmann. Thank you so much for sharing your insights with us.

**ANNA HOFMANN:** Thank you for inviting me.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY:** That was Anna Hofmann, program director for Bucerius Foundation's Settling into Motion, which supports Ph.D. studies in migration.

As Hofmann pointed out, migration experiences vary widely from country to country. Settling into Motion scholarship recipient Stephen Ruszczyk is looking to capture a comparative view. He's working on a sociology Ph.D. at the City University of New York, and he compares how youth adapt to undocumented status in the U.S. and in France. An extended stint as a teacher in the New York public schools sparked Ruszczyk's interest in the subject.

**STEPHEN RUSZCZYK:** I began teaching with the [Teaching Fellows](#) program in New York. I was actually assigned—I didn't choose it, but I was assigned—to be an ESL [English as a second language] teacher. I began working with immigrant kids. That was in 2001. From then, I had ten years in the New York City public schools working with immigrant kids. It gave new meaning to my life, I think, to have so much time and experience with children from different places in the world.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY:** The Teaching Fellows program is similar to [Teach for America](#)? Is that right?

**STEPHEN RUSZCZYK:** Yes, it's similar in that it's looking to place new teachers in high-needs areas. This program is specific to New York City. The aim is not to have two years of service, but actually to have a long-term career in teaching.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY:** What started standing out to you and made you say, "Oh, I need to study this further"?

**STEPHEN RUSZCZYK:** The school I was teaching at, the EBC School for Public Service-Bushwick, had sort of a unique community approach, where it had a lot of associations from the neighborhood working with the school. I would say it was more than just education. I started coaching soccer on

the side. Part of that came out of understanding that the mainstream students tended to be Puerto Rican and Dominican, and they were on the baseball team. There was no similar equivalent for Mexican and Ecuadorian students.

As you are trying to support the students, whom you have grown to become very close to, I think you naturally are analyzing the situation and looking for solutions. Going back to school and trying to really investigate things more in depth is a good way to do that.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: So now, as a sociologist, you look at youth with undocumented status. Do you focus on a certain age group?**

**STEPHEN RUSZCZYK:** Yes, I do. I started focusing on high school students. My design had students who were starting and finishing high school. I follow those students over—this is the fourth year of an ongoing ethnography. That means that I'm able to see the transitions of these students through high school and then out of high school. My study now is comparative between undocumented students in Paris and undocumented students in New York.

There's really a crucial juncture that occurs at the age of 18, or just around that age, where students move from being in the more protected status of being a minor, full participants in institutions of education, to a sort of slap in the face when they turn 18 and they realize all the different ways that their participation in different activities, normal activities, is really limited.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: And is that a realization that happens in the same way in the States and in Paris?**

**STEPHEN RUSZCZYK:** I would argue that it's different because of the different context of illegality in each place. I should say that life is very difficult in both places for undocumented people. It's just full of struggles to have a normal daily life, many times.

But in France there is a much greater flexibility. The *préfecture*, the local municipal government, actually has some control over according legal status. Because it's happening at the local level, there's much more discretion involved. In a city like Paris, that means that many people are able to be regularized in a way that just doesn't exist in the United States.

There are national guidelines, of course. It's not completely based on local discretion. France, for example, has bilateral accords with many different countries, especially its former colonies, which lay out exactly how people can be regularized. It's different by country. Oftentimes, people, if they have ten years of residence, are able to legalize.

So it's a completely different criterion for legalization than we have in the United States, where residence doesn't make any difference. Some of the people I have been working with have been in the United States for 20 years, and yet they have no clear future of regularization.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: You've been working on your comparative Paris-New York study. Now you're part of the Settling into Motion program and interacting with migration scholars who are looking at all kinds of different international issues. What has that been like?**

**STEPHEN RUSZCZYK:** There are many different sides to it, I should say. Part of it is just suddenly being faced with lots of people who are working on similar issues. It can be really exciting.

Just today, in a casual moment when we had a coffee break, I was speaking with one other fellow

who does work on unaccompanied minors in South Africa. Part of my research touches on that, and it's something that we can perhaps plan together to write a grant and look at together in the future. So it provides things like that, which happen sort of informally. The informal workings of having a group of scholars like this together may be the most valuable part of it.

It's, of course, very nice to have funding to be able to go do field work, which is just very challenging to do without funding.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: Great. Well, I think that's pretty much it, Stephen. Thank you so much for joining me on Just Business.**

**STEPHEN RUSZCZYK:** Thank you so much for having me.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: That was sociology Ph.D. student Stephen Ruszczyk talking about his work in global migration.**

**Let's move on now to Noora Lori, a political science Ph.D. student at Johns Hopkins University and a Settling into Motion grant recipient. In her research, Lori is tackling the thorny questions of racism and political and economic development that arise in nations, like the United Arab Emirates, which have more migrants than citizens living within their borders. Lori began where Ruszczyk left off, starting her migration studies as an exchange student in Paris.**

**NOORA LORI:** I was looking at North African migrants in Paris, and it eventually turned into a more extended research project. It kind of took on a life of its own. I realized I really enjoyed it. Then I reflected upon the fact that I am from Bahrain in the Gulf, and in four out of the six GCC, Gulf Cooperation Council, states there are more noncitizens than there are citizens. So migration is a huge issue, not only for the noncitizens, but also what does that mean for the citizens when they are minorities in their own countries? How do those dynamics impact each other?

So it turned into a more extended research project, and I can't let go of it yet.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: There are fascinating issues in that part of the world, as you noted. I'm wondering if you can explain for people who are less familiar how the guest worker program works there and how it differs from programs that are in other regions.**

**NOORA LORI:** You have a kind of unique situation in the GCC that emerges once we have independence in the 1970s—so, 1971 for the United Arab Emirates [UAE], which is where my research is primarily based. You have a situation where you have the capital, but you don't have labor. So you start importing massive amounts of labor. At the same time, the citizenship system was based on these tribal lineages and families that had to be maintained. You have an extremely expansive guest worker policy with an exclusionary citizenship regime. That has been the combination across the Gulf.

I try to work within those contradictions and what it means, and what it means for expatriates. The idea of the guest worker system is that you always have a sponsor. You are there on fixed contracts and you leave. It's really loaded to call it migration, even.

The debates have been about what to call these populations, because they don't necessarily see themselves as migrating. A lot of people come in for two years, for three years, they make money, and they leave. There are other people who stay over generations on these contracts and find

informal ways of building their lives there. You have a huge range of different experiences that all get lumped into this one thing, which is the guest worker.

It's extremely heterogeneous. The UAE, for example, has 220 nationalities, which is more than member-states of the United Nations. When you walk down the street, it feels a little bit like New York, actually.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: A very diverse experience.**

**NOORA LORI:** It's a very diverse experience.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: You look also at how that impacts the state and political agency. You can imagine, when you talk about there being more guest workers than there are citizens of the nation—**

**NOORA LORI:** Ninety percent of the population of the UAE today is made up of noncitizens.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: Incredible. So if you have that kind of situation, immediately you think there could be a sense of fear or danger there—that we have this structure in place to govern our state, but there's enormous power in those numbers.**

**NOORA LORI:** Right.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: Does that exist?**

**NOORA LORI:** Absolutely. I think you picked up on something really key. Actually, even when I was going in from outside, it seemed like there was this spoiled, tiny minority of nationals, and everything gets done for them.

The reality is that it's a lot more complex. There are, for example, patterns of consumption that they are not allowed to partake in—the clubs, the alcohol, et cetera. That's not for the citizens, technically. A lot of them have a really hard time competing in the labor market. The unemployment rate within the national citizenry is much higher because all the business is done in English. It attracts, in many ways, extremely ambitious people from around the world.

It's structured as a microcosm of the world economy—even, for example, wage differentials. Your wage is informally and formally determined by your national origin. The idea is that you are always making more when you are there based on what you would be making in your home country, and it's not taxed. That's the incentive for people to come in.

But the local population is having a hard time competing with people coming out of Harvard, people coming out of Princeton, people coming out of Stanford, who are obviously a lot more fluent in English, who have these skills that they have developed in New York and London. They stop by Dubai, for example, on their way to Singapore or somewhere else—I'm characterizing it a little bit.

What I wasn't expecting was this side of the nationals. Actually, when I first went in, I was primarily interested in studying the expatriates. Then I realized the minority was the nationals. So my work has shifted to look at what this means for citizenship, what citizenship means in this context where you have a different kind of state formation.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: What do you think the future holds? Do you think there will be a path to citizenship or there will be better support services for the actual citizens themselves?**

**NOORA LORI:** Actually, this is something that the UAE in particular has been really trying to work on. They have just established something called the Federal Demographic Council to really start studying how sustainable this is. There's a really strong push for education, for leadership programs, for supporting citizens to compete outside, so that they can then come back and compete in their own local economy.

But I don't think that the way that this situation is going to be solved is through mass naturalization because it would be extremely unpopular.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY:** And it would be a shock to—

**NOORA LORI:** It would be a shock to the system, right.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY:** A political shock, I'm sure.

**NOORA LORI:** Right. And we have seen, actually, other situations in that region where mass naturalization has led to extreme instability.

But I think they are trying to work towards a third way, where there's something like permanent residency that ends up actually being a legal category as opposed to long-term migrants—or expats, depending on what you prefer to call them—having to find these kinds of informal mechanisms of staying.

You also have people who helped to build the country. Armenians, who are Christians, so they wouldn't be naturalized even under the extremely exclusionary citizenship laws, who, after they have raised their kids, their grandkids, suddenly they're in their 60s and 70s, and they don't have another place that they can call home.

You also have a lot of minorities from the Caucasus, from Asia, who come from different sects or ethnicities that wouldn't be able—and they marry and can live in Dubai because it's neutral. For those families, where do they go?

These are serious questions that have to actually have a more structured, systematic framework. I have seen definitely a political will to do that.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY:** When you come to a conference like this—Anna Hofmann was one of the first people I talked to about integration and now participation and Germany's approach to dealing with having moved away from a guest worker program—does that give you ideas about how it could work? What has that exchange been like in the conference?

**NOORA LORI:** The funny thing is, this is one of the only opportunities that scholars like me have for thematic discussions, because you are either in disciplinary boundaries, so I'm only talking to political scientists, or I'm only talking to area specialists. So this is a way of looking at migration globally and thinking about questions of global capitalism and labor flows and rights and citizenship.

You see in every case—every case gives me ideas. Also, I get ideas from—I have to say, when we go on these field trips, I don't sleep, because after the conferences, you are just so interested in talking to your colleagues that you end up in your pajamas talking until 3:00 in the morning and then waking up to go to the next conference. That's when I come up with—for example, my new title for my dissertation was concocted at 2:30 am between me and two of my female friends here, who are also doctoral students.

It's those kinds of conversations that give you the best ideas, because you can see, for example, in Germany what happened, or the space between these different policies—in the U.S., immigration policies structured in one way, but labor policies in another. It shows me how outcomes are different.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: Terms are so loaded when you're talking about immigration. What you always hear in the U.S. is "undocumented" versus "illegal" alien. But then you're talking about participation versus integration. You mentioned a couple of loaded terms in the UAE. Why do you think, particularly in this migration space, vocabulary is so personal?**

**NOORA LORI:** Because it's about boundaries. It's about who's inside and who's outside. Calling someone something—if you call someone an immigrant, for example, then it opens up the dialogue for things like settlement, for things like residency, naturalization. That's extremely loaded, in a context where the entire structure of the state, the entire way in which the state has developed institutionally is to prevent that.

That's what's fascinating about that case for me. If we think of states as developing to settle mobile populations—because people have always moved. Modern states are what's new.

Migration is nothing that hasn't existed for as long as humans have existed. But when you make those boundaries and you start developing rights, or citizenship has the right to rights or privileges, economic rights, political rights, then calling someone a migrant or saying that they are not places a moral and political imperative for action. You have to act a particular way upon them, based on what they are called.

So it becomes extremely loaded.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: You are defining a piece of their or all of their identity.**

**NOORA LORI:** Yes.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: Great. Well, I could keep going, but we're out of time.**

**NOORA LORI:** Thank you very much. I feel like you read my dissertation.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: No. I just read the topic, and I'm interested in these issues.**

**Noora, thank you so much for joining me.**

**NOORA LORI:** Thank you very much.

**JULIA TAYLOR KENNEDY: That was Noora Lori, political science Ph.D. student at Johns Hopkins University and Settling into Motion grant recipient.**

Thanks to Bucerius Foundation's [Nina Smidt](#), Anne Schuermann, and Anna Hofmann for making this episode possible. Thanks also to Just Business' own technician, Terence Hurley, for his weekly wizardry, and thanks to you, our listeners, for joining us. We're happy to hear from you. Please send questions and comments to [jkennedy@cceia.org](mailto:jkennedy@cceia.org).

**Audio**

Global migration is a key part of our economic future and one that is often overlooked. Three experts offer very different takes on migration, spanning Europe, the USA, and lastly the Gulf States, where migrants make up the majority of the population and citizens are in the minority.

Together with the Hamburg-based Foundation, ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius, the Carnegie Council is partnering to take a look at the shifts in global migration and their impacts.

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