Grace DeBusschere

***WILLKOMMENSKULTUR* FOR SCEPTICS**

I know about flooded infrastructure. Originally, Josh, Tyler, my sister, and I were the sole occupants of our 3-bedroom Seattle duplex… until Tyler's girlfriend installed her toothbrush in the bathroom. Shortly, Josh's ex-girlfriend Alex moved in after her Narcotics Anonymous community dissolved, leaving her homeless and in a precarious situation for her own recovery. And how could I deny my friend Sarah an air-mattress under the stairwell, when her cross-country move temporarily fell through? Over two months, we've gone from four people sharing one bathroom to seven. *Wir schaffen das.* We'll manage.

Meanwhile, Germany is chafing under its dedication to resettle over a million refugees from the Middle East and North Africa, while the rest of Europe largely looks away. Many Germans harbor a growing resentment toward the refugees, blaming them for elevated crime, especially rape --although in reality, despite a refugee population increase of 440%, crimes associated with refugees have gone up a disproportionately small 79%, and only 1% of these refugee-related crimes are comprised of sexual offences.

Nonetheless, to bring things back to flooded infrastructure, I understand some Germans' frustration, honestly. I, too, get frustrated with piles of dishes, hair in the bathroom drain, and making repeated requests of my unexpected roommates to respect our shared space.

But if I visit the east coast, Sarah will show me around. In Alex's case, the value of capacitating someone to recover from addiction is inestimable. Just last Tuesday, Tyler's girlfriend fixed the long-broken sink that wouldn't drain, while all the rest of us were away from the house at work. Call me calculating, but not only is hosting my friends in a pinch the right thing to do, it opens pathways into the future. Similarly, the ageing population of Germany may receive from refugees the infusion of youth it needs to maintain its labor force and pay into its enviably successful welfare state. Though Germany may be *managing* the influx now, it will be *thriving* soon. Perhaps if Germans were reminded of this, while reassured that a culture of respect and integrity is a national priority, then they'll remember that they mostly feel as I do --sometimes through gritted teeth-- about my unexpected roommates: these are my fellow humans and they need me right now.