

Ludwigsburger Hochschulschriften

Band 22 der Reihe TRANSFER

Herausgegeben im Auftrag der Pädagogischen Hochschule Ludwigsburg von Rosemarie Godel-Gaßner,
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© 2022 wbv Publikation
ein Geschäftsbereich der
wbv Media GmbH & Co. KG, Bielefeld

Gesamtherstellung:
wbv Media GmbH & Co. KG, Bielefeld
wbv.de

Titelgestaltung: Bild- und Theaterzentrum (BTZ),
Pädagogische Hochschule Ludwigsburg

Titelgestaltung/Titelillustration:
Catherine François; Christiane Zay

Bestell-Nr.: I21922
ISBN Print: 978-3-8340-2192-2
ISBN E-Book: 978-3-7639-7260-9

Printed in Germany

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie;
detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

Migration: political, educational, gender & cultural aspects

edited by Jörg-U. Keßler, Adi Binhas, Peter Fenn
& Liat Yakhnich

One of Us? – Social Membership until Recall

Helmut Däuble & Stefanie Rhein

Abstract

For the last twenty years there is a genuine German debate on what it means to be a full and good member of the national community. This debate is beyond the question of citizenship and is labelled as the “Question of Integration”: What is it and what does it need to be a fully accepted member of the “German People” which is – according to our constitution – the sovereign of our democracy?

One recent event triggered a new discussion on that issue: The failure of the national football team in the world championship 2018 and the question of guilt for the early elimination from the tournament. This brought up a heavy public dispute not only among the soccer fans but among a broader community on how the behaviour of two players of the team with Turkish roots might be related to this “national catastrophe”. Especially one of them, Mesut Özil, was put into the focus of attention. He is a German-born Citizen with a German passport, was awarded with a prize for being a good example for integration in 2010, but has also been very often criticized for not singing the German Anthem before an international game is starting. And he – together with İlkay Gündogan – met the Turkish president Erdogan in London just some weeks ahead of the championship. Pictures of this meeting were interpreted widely as advertisement or as a backup for Erdogan’s election campaign to transform Turkey into a stricter form of presidential autocracy. This immediately started a very intense and heated public debate on whether the loyalty of a German national Football player should not

strictly be concentrated on German Institutions – and whether he could be “one of us” if he did not show this loyalty. After the early kickout of the team a heavy shitstorm in the social media started, claiming that especially Özil would bear the main responsibility.

This discussion can be interpreted within a broader framing. We assume and want to present ideas in our article to why the social affiliation of new members to the German society (especially those that are not seen as ethnic Germans) is often/in some cases seen as only a conditional one. Our thesis is that many ethnic Germans take a permanent perspective of sceptical suspicion on migrants or people with what is called a “migration background”: Are they really fully loyal? Can we rely on them in serious questions? Which side are they on? These two “sides” are socially constructed as the ethnic group of the migrants or the people whose family have a migration background on the one side and the German society on the other side. As soon as this loyalty seems in question the affiliation to our society seems challenged, too. Thus the new members may have a German passport but still do not necessarily get the full trust to be one of us. They are here and they are co-citizens but they are seen as part of our society just “on parole”. We suggest to use the terms “Conditional Affiliation”, “Membership on Probation” or “Membership until Recall” for that and want to reflect on – focussing on the Özil-debate – what reasons can be found for such a particular mode of integration and what this means for the process of social integration in our society in general.

“I am German when we win and I’m an immigrant when we lose.”

Mezut Özil on 25th July 2018

1. Introduction

For the last three decades there has been a debate in Germany on what it means to be a full and positive member of the national community. This debate has gone beyond the question of citizenship alone and has been labelled the “question of integration”: What is meant by this exactly, and what does it take to be a fully accepted member of the “German people”, who are – according to our constitution – the sovereign power behind our democracy?

In 2020 German society has been confronted with the question of “who is one of us?” – as the question of membership can be phrased – in a radical way. On 19th February nine people “with a migration background” were killed in Hanau, a small town in the federal state of Hessen. They were killed by an ethnic German born in Hanau, who shortly afterwards committed suicide. The investigations showed that he had developed racist fantasies which had been expressed in a pamphlet. Yet since he was not conspicuous as a radical right-wing extremist in public the authorities did not check on him very closely. He was member of a gun club and had easy access to weapons. His victims were aged between twenty and thirty-seven.

This event was a further trigger for a broader public discussion on the questions of shared identity: Are there certain criteria that decide whether immigrants and their descendants are more likely to be accepted (or not accepted) as self-evident and full members of German society? The journalist Dunja Ramadan mentioned three days after the shooting in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, one of the two biggest German daily quality newspapers, that migrants and their progeny are still seen as “foreigners”, although their belongingness to German society is obvious. She argues: “And so politicians and some elements in the media again speak with exposing thoughtlessness of Hanau's right-wing terrorist's ‘xenophobic motives’. In

doing so, they ignore reality – but adopt the right narrative. People with a history of migration have long been part of it, they belong to the middle of society and also are questioned by it. They become alienated – and increasingly feel foreign in their own country” (Ramadan 2020)¹⁹.

Dunja Ramadan is describing a paradoxical situation. On the one hand it is absolutely obvious that immigrants and their descendants are a “normal” part of German society. Yet on the other hand it is equally obvious that a part of German society does not accept this social fact as self-evident.

In this article we try to contribute to an explanation of this supposed paradox. We attempt to sketch a broad outline on a central question: Is there a dominant self-conception in the German society of belongingness?

And actually, we do think there is one. We assume and want to present ideas to why the social affiliation of new members to German society (especially those that are not seen as ethnic Germans) is not seen as an unconditional one.

This discussion can be interpreted within a broader framework, but before we get to that point we will start out with another tangible event from the recent past: the “Özil case”. In our view an interpretation of this case study affords good insight into the status quo of the “question of integration”.

2. A second starting point: the “Özil affair”

Mesut Özil, born in 1988, is a German professional footballer whose family is of Turkish origin. His grandfather immigrated to Germany in the 1960s as a so-called “guest-worker”. Early in his career Özil, who had had a Turkish passport up to then, decided to play for the German national team

¹⁹ All quotations are our own translations except the ones by Mesut Özil that were published on twitter in English.

instead of the Turkish one – which was also very keen to gain his services as a player. He took German nationality in 2007 (Soboczynski 2018).

He became part of a very successful German national team that seemed perfectly to reflect the cultural diversity of German society. In 2010 he was awarded a media prize for being a good example of integration (Focus Online 2010), and in 2014 he was part of the German team that won the World Cup. At the same time his career in the national side had also constantly been accompanied by public criticism, for example for him not singing the German national anthem at the beginning of each match. In 2018, after having played in the world championship, he resigned from the German national team (Tagesschau.de 2018a). His decision was closely connected to the German side doing poorly in the 2018 World Cup and with the question of responsibility for Germany’s early elimination from the tournament.

The early knockout caused considerable public dispute, not only among soccer fans but also in the broader community on how the behaviour of two players in the team with Turkish roots – one of whom being Mesut Özil – might be related to this “national catastrophe”: Together with his team mate İlkay Gündoğan he had met the Turkish president Erdoğan in London just a few weeks ahead of the championship. Pictures of this meeting, which both players showed on their Twitter accounts, were interpreted widely as an advertisement or as a backup for Erdoğan’s election campaign to transform Turkey into a stricter form of presidential autocracy. This incident immediately started a very intense and heated public debate on whether the loyalty of a German national footballer should not strictly be concentrated on German institutions – and whether he could be “one of us” if he did not show this loyalty. Whereas İlkay Gündoğan reacted to this criticism quite promptly and confirmed his loyalty to the German institutions via Twitter, Mesut Özil himself kept more or less silent, although he did participate in all

the activities of the German Football Association (DFB) to de-escalate the situation in the run-up to the tournament (for example the two players visited the German Federal President) (Tagesschau.de 2018b).

Nevertheless, after the early knockout of the team a heavy firestorm in the social media started, claiming that especially Özil bore the main responsibility, as he had allegedly caused a massive (and public) background noise that may have distracted the whole team. In Özil's open resignation letter (Tagesschau.de 2018a), which he published via Twitter a couple of weeks after the World Cup, he showed his deep disappointment and anger at not having been publicly backed up and supported by the head of the DFB and the media. He accused the president of the DFB and his supporters of a lack of respect towards himself and his achievements for the German team, and – last but not least – of racial discrimination. Özil strongly sees himself as having been put into a kind of scapegoat-position for Germany's early knockout. From our perspective, the letter contains several key sentences that on the one hand reflect Özil's perception of the specific situation, but on the other hand may contain hints that point to a more general problem:

“In the eyes of Grindel [president of the DFB] and his supporters, I am German when we win, but I am an immigrant when we lose. This is because despite paying taxes in Germany, donating facilities to German schools and winning the World Cup with Germany in 2014, I am still not accepted in society. I am treated as being ‘different’. [...] Are there criteria for being fully German that I do not fulfill? My friends Lukas Podolski and Miroslav Klose are never referred to as German-Polish, so why am I German-Turkish? [...] I was born and educated in Germany, so why don't people accept that I am German?” (Özil 2018).

We assume that the specific case of Özil can serve as an example for a general phenomenon in German society to some extent: His perception of

being accepted as “one of us” only “until recall” is something that seems to apply not only to this specific case. Therefore, we want to reflect on (1) whether there are what Özil calls “criteria for being fully German” and (2) whether people with a specific migration background are more at risk of being refused full acceptance or of being constantly “on probation” as regards their social membership in German society.

3. A look back on integration

3.1. From a “foreign-worker society” to an immigration society

In order to get a better understanding of our thesis we need to take a retrospective view, along very broad lines, of an important historical process (Herbert 2019):

In 1955 West-Germany started to attract immigrant workers to their freshly booming post-war-economy from different European countries. The first immigrant workers recruited came from Italy, soon followed by immigrants from Greece, Spain, Portugal, Marocco, Tunisia, Turkey and Yugoslavia in the 1960s. From 1955 to 1973 more than 14 million immigrants came to work in German factories or on farms. And more than 11 million of them went back to the countries they came from. That is why during the first three decades of the Federal Republic's existence, the question of whether the migrants were “one of us?”, as the question of belongingness can be put, was answered by the Germans as well as by the immigrants as “of course not”.

In reality this question was not even asked. Germans still thought of themselves as a nation of ethnic Germans, divided at this time into two separate political states. So ethnic homogeneity was the only basis of the idea of belongingness.

Immigrants were seen as so-called “guest workers”, which implied that immigrants were here for a restricted period of time to fill low-income jobs leftover from a German workforce which was successfully entering into the white-collar economic sectors. None of these foreigners were asked to consider the possibility of permanent immigration, i.e. none of them were seen as potential citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany. To put it bluntly, they stayed without an explicit invitation to do so in the long term (Däuble 2000).

The idea that Germany was an immigration country and that there were such a thing as “new Germans”, did not come up until the 1980s. In the last thirty years German society has undergone – and is still undergoing – a rapid and fundamental change in its collective identity.

It is widely accepted today that the German society is an immigration society, as opposed to being a mere “foreign worker” society, which provided the dominant perspective during the first decades of West German society’s existence.

3.2. Migration, integration and the problem of “othering”

The idea of Germany as an immigration society necessarily gives rise to a stronger focus on the question of integration – and the question of integration again is closely linked to the acceptance of people as “one of us”.

Esser (2009, 7) describes four types of social integration, as displayed in fig. 1. From the perspective of the so-called majority society (the “receiving country”), integration means either (individual) assimilation or multiple inclusion. Used in this sense, the concept of assimilation means fully adapting to the values, norms, language, culture, etc. of the majority society. Multiple inclusion refers to a type of integration that entails both integration into the majority society and at the same time retention of integration in the ethnic

community of origin. According to Esser, assimilation to the standards of the majority society is an integral part of both types. Without at least some extent of assimilation there is no integration (Esser 2003, 8f.; Hans 2016, 33).

		Social integration in the German society	
		Yes	No
Social integration in the ethnic community	Yes	Multiple inclusion	Separation
	No	Assimilation	Marginalisation

Fig. 1: Types of social integration (Esser 2009, 7)

At first glance, it may seem as if integration therefore relies mainly on the will and the capability of immigrants and their descendants to assimilate. However, we would like to emphasize that integration must be understood as an interactive process. From this perspective, the majority society has to create opportunities, structures and – putting it simply – a welcoming social atmosphere to support and enable the integration of immigrants and their descendants.

Especially in the public discussion on integration, integration tends to be seen as full individual assimilation only. Multiple inclusion in comparison often seems to be less appreciated and accepted. To put it simply, pure assimilation is presumed to count as successful integration, whereas for multiple inclusion this seems to be strongly questioned by public perception.

Multiple inclusion is in fact often even (mis)interpreted as potential reluctance to achieve (“real”) integration. Even without regard to the fact

that German society is in itself heterogeneous (raising the question of what exactly the potential adaptors should adapt to)²⁰, for a large number of immigrants and their descendants, full assimilation to the majority society is a goal that is almost impossible, or at least very difficult to reach: they often feel a very strong connection to their family's home country as part of their family culture and history, especially so as at least parts of their socialisation take place in an environment that may be – mildly or strongly – shaped by their family's cultural background. And this point may be additionally emphasized by the fact that an integral part of their socialisation process took place in another country. This means that for many “new Germans” multiple inclusion is probably the more realistic, achievable and desirable type of integration. A lot of immigrants and their descendants seem to feel at home in both cultural contexts at the same time, even developing what has been called a hybride identity (Hall 1999; Fürstenau/Niedrig 2007), enabling them to switch between both contexts with great virtuosity. Others may feel drawn to one of the two cultural contexts and communities more than to the other, or even feel caught between “two stools”.

Up to this point we have been focussing on the self-identification of the immigrants or their descendants with one and/or the other context. However, there is also another very relevant perspective, and one which can foster or seriously jeopardise their cultural and social self-positioning, their self-concept and, eventually, their integration process (Müller et al. 2013, 216). If their so-called migration background is somehow visible or in other ways perceptible, they may in everyday social interaction regularly be seen as strangers (“not from here”, “not one of us”), regardless of their own self-positioning and identification (Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftungen

²⁰ More about the critique of the concept of assimilation and its further conceptual developments can be found in Hans 2016.

2018). Indicators for applying this category to someone else may be for instance: foreign-sounding names, speaking German with a non-German accent, displaying non-Christian religious symbols (like wearing a head scarf), looking “foreign” in any way (e.g. colour of hair or skin), and so on. This “othering” (e.g. Riegel 2016), and all the further ascriptions that come along with it, work without any reference to the actual citizenship of the person. So, even if an individual is German born, has a German passport or has been living in Germany for most of their life, they might still be asked where they “really” come from – and are therefore marked as a stranger, as part of a socially and ethnically constructed “them”.

This “them” potentially includes everyone with an actual so-called migration background, but also people who are only interpreted as people with a migration background – regardless of whether this really applies to them or not. The relatively new term “person with a migration background” was first of all a statistical category (Will 2019). By the definition of the Statistische Bundesamt (2019a) it is applied to a person, “if s/he or at least one of his/her parents did not acquire (the streichen) German citizenship at birth” (Will 2019). Therefore, someone can have a migration background even if he or she is a German citizen – as long as they acquired the German citizenship only later in life or as long as their parents did not acquire the German citizenship at birth. As a statistical category it is nowadays very often used as a substitute for the – much narrower – category foreigner, which refers to the actual citizenship only. At the same time “person with a migration background” is far from being a statistical category only. It has become a widely used social category in everyday life, and is part of the social construct of an ethnically defined “them” in our society.

As a very commonly used social category it seems quite problematic in various ways:

- 1) It is applied to a very heterogeneous group (e.g. from refugees to people permanently living in Germany because of their jobs, people from different countries, people who immigrated themselves or people whose parents or grandparents immigrated) (El-Mafaalani 2016, 10).
- 2) The category often comes along with assumptions and ascriptions that centre around problems: People with a migration background are widely seen as people who are generally more likely to have problems (e.g. low achievements at school) and to cause problems in society (e.g. criminality). This relatively strong connection leads to the phenomenon that people who in fact have a migrant background by definition (e.g. whose Danish parents have immigrated to Germany) are in everyday interactions and in the public perception often not associated with this social category (Munsch 2019, 69) by virtue of the following factors: they may show only very little of the commonly used social indicators of a migration background; this attributed background does not effect their lifestyle in a noticeable way, i.e. they are perceived as quite similar to “us” and our lifestyle; and furthermore they are not as much perceived as a potentially problematic (ethnically defined) social group. This implies that there is a kind of hierarchy hidden within this social category and within its use in everyday social interaction. It excludes people that are included by the formal definition and focusses on the (ethnically constructed) groups that are perceived as “very different” from us and as potentially problematic; in Germany the latter is often applied – amongst others – to Turkish immigrants and their descendants (Munsch 2014, 69).
- 3) The social category may stick to a once-labelled person or group perpetually, even if they are successfully integrated, and even if they and

their parents already had German citizenship at birth. Therefore, the term may even contribute to a life-long social “othering” of them and jeopardise their achievements in terms of integration. In this sense, it may even serve as a stabilising factor for the socially constructed differentiation between them and us.

We therefore suggest that for some of the people who have a migrant background or are perceived as having one, it may be systematically much more difficult to achieve acceptance as “one of us” than for others: depending on the perceptibility of their real or suspected migrant background, on the extent of perceived difference between “our” and “their” lifestyles and values and on the social ascriptions to the particular ethnic group.

Whereas up to now we have mainly focussed on exclusion and discrimination that arise with the problem of othering, there is also another phenomenon: People with a so-called migration background who show high self-identification with German society and/or contribute to it very successfully are often seen as part of a German success story. They serve as good examples of successful assimilation. At the same time they confirm the host society’s relatively new self-conception as an immigration society. In a way, they are thus accepted and presented as “one of us”, because they are at the same time potential “others”. This success story, for the individual and for German society, becomes even greater if the person is from a group that is not necessarily expected to be successfully integrated. Özil being awarded the prize for integration may be interpreted in this way. But the pressure to constantly fulfil expectations is very high and the status as “one of us” remains nevertheless fragile.

Taking all this into consideration, we suggest that especially for the groups that are generally perceived as very different from us and/or whose “otherness” is obvious in whichever way, full acceptance as one of us is very difficult to reach – and very difficult to keep: it requires a very high identification with German society, its cultural self-concept and with all the achievements the Germans are proud of and believe to be essential constituents of “being German”. Serious external aspirants to full German cultural status basically have to convincingly represent and actively contribute to these factors. Their identification is constantly under observation and must be proven permanently, their social membership status is – even to a greater extent than for the other groups – granted only on probation and can be lost quite easily. This is put in a nutshell by Özil’s statement: “[...] I am German when we win and I’m an immigrant when we lose” (Özil 2018).

In the following, we would like to investigate these ideas in further detail. We will hereby focus on some of the self-narrations the Germans presently see as essential constituents of being German and that seem to work as particularly effective gatekeepers for the acceptance of immigrants “as one of us”.

3.3. Successful or failed integration?

At first glance one can briefly summarize this development as follows:

The broad majority of citizens are nowadays prepared to accept the fact that immigration is irreversible and that integration matters are a permanent feature of the political and social landscape that must be dealt with accordingly. The past myth of Germany’s being a homogeneous ethnic

nation has lost ground, and the idea of the country as a multi-ethnic republican and democratic immigration society is becoming more and more mainstream.

This first glance seems to be borne out by many examples of seemingly successful integration. The following are a few such examples of how “people with a migration background” are integrated or integrated themselves into German society:

- There is no tv news broadcast without an anchorman or anchorwoman who has an immigration history: One flagship of evening news on television, the Tagesthemen, is presented by Pinar Atalay, a daughter of Turkish immigrants, and Ingo Zamperoni, who has an Italian background (Tagesschau.de 2020).
- Navid Kermani, the son of Iranian immigrants, was asked to do the celebratory speech in the Bundestag to commemorate the 65th anniversary of our constitution (Deutscher Bundestag n.d.).
- In the national German parliament, the Bundestag, 58 representatives out of 709 (8 %) currently have a “migration background” in 2020, compared to only 21 in 2009. A strong increase – though not yet fully representing the immigrant proportion of the complete population, which is 22,5 % (Mediendienst Integration 2017).
- The average number of naturalizations has increased from 20.000 (in 1990) to around 100.000 per year for the last ten decades (Statistisches Bundesamt 2019b).

However, these successful examples are what one sees only at first glance. A closer look seems to reveal exactly the opposite. Here again are a

few examples, this time seeming to demonstrate that the integration of immigrants has failed.

- The number of people with a migration background that have had experience of discrimination is much higher than in the rest of the population (SPIEGEL Panorama 2014).
- A person with a name that sounds Turkish needs seven applications for a job interview as a car mechanic, compared to only four for a person with a name that sounds German (Sachverständigenrat deutscher Stiftung für Integration und Migration 2014).
- A person of obvious Muslim background or with a black skin still has enormous problems renting an apartment (SPIEGEL Wirtschaft 2020). Many landlords put forward flimsy ostensible reasons as to why they prefer some other person as a tenant (Zeit Online 2020).
- Being a person with a migration background means that your chances of receiving a higher education or getting a university diploma are drastically reduced (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2008).

The situation seems to be a paradox. On the one hand integration looks as if it is working out well in Germany, but on the other hand the Mesut Özil case and the examples of discrimination given appear to contradict this, showing that inclusion seems to work only on a superficial level.

4. Attempts to explain the paradox

We will now try to give some tentative answers to the question of how such an obvious paradox can be explained. And although we do believe that there are good arguments for our thesis, this is meant purely as a cautious approach that should be taken as a basis for further fruitful debate.

4.1. Membership until recall

To start with, most Germans have indeed given up the idea that German society should or ever will be ethnically homogeneous. “Who is ‘us’?” is nowadays no longer answered by the statement “We are ethnic Germans”. The idea of Germany’s being a multi-ethnic republican and democratic immigration society has indeed become normal to a certain degree. Yet this westernization of German society does not completely replace the concept of inclusion on a “common blood” basis. The normative idea of “German ethnic homogeneity” is still alive in a sense that the blood-based-concept is not just seen as a social construction but as a natural fact.

So, the idea that all human beings could be categorized in different ethnicities is still existent even in the idea of multi-ethnicity. It is as if everybody in Germany could be naturally defined by an original ethnicity they were a member of. Yet the idea has been transformed and augmented by another deep belief: Natives should be privileged. Or to put it differently, there is an exclusive membership-card for ethnic Germans, a sort of VIP-Card.

We will now give a short insight into how this idea of being privileged is legitimized these days in Germany, at least in our interpretation. As a broader framework for this, we assume that social affiliation of new members to German society (especially those that are not regarded as ethnic Germans) is often seen as only a conditional one – especially under the conditions described in section 3.2.

Our thesis is that many ethnic Germans adopt a permanent perspective of sceptical suspicion towards immigrants or people with what is called a “migration background”. Questions like “Are they really fully loyal?”, “Can we rely on them in a serious crisis?” or “Which side are they on?”, although not openly manifested or expressly stated, can nevertheless

be assumed as an underlying concept of distrust held by a broad majority of ethnic Germans.

The consequence is a distinctive dichotomy: on the one side there is a group of people with a migration background and on the other there are the ethnic Germans. And although these two "sides" are socially constructed, they have effects on social reality.

As soon as loyalty of the "newcomers" seems to be in question their affiliation to German society seems challenged. Thus (Komma weg) the new members may have a German passport, but still do not necessarily get full trust as being "one of us". They are here and they are co-citizens, but they are not seen as an unconditional part of German society. In a sense they are viewed as being here just "on probation". This "conditional affiliation" could also be called "membership on parole" or "membership until recall", which is the term we prefer further on.

4.2. The concept of national pride

In order to understand what "until recall" might mean, we have to look at what (ethnic) Germans are really proud of: What do most of them think is their exclusive collective achievement?

Belongingness in our interpretation is strongly linked to the concept of pride. No in-group, no team-spirit can be found that is not based on the question of what makes a group special. This is not only true for small sports-groups but also for greater units, like nations.

After a basic concept of national pride has been constructed, conditional affiliation has to be understood as linked to success or failure in increasing such pride. That is, migrants belong to German society only if they are able to identify, to strengthen or improve what most ethnic Germans are fond and proud of. Yet if they fail in doing so, they have not fulfilled the

condition of belongingness and the membership on probation has to be revoked. That is what many ethnic Germans really believe in.

In our understanding the core of national German pride can be found in economic, political and socio-cultural achievements. To put it simply, these are first and foremost the economic strength in a globally competitive world and the successful implementation of a representative liberal democracy. But there are further sources in fields like those of culture or sport.

On an economic level:

On the basis of these beliefs, questions like the following are directed at people with a migration background: "Will immigrants and their descendants be capable of building the best cars in the world?" or "Will they be able to stand up adequately to Chinese competition and eventually emerge victorious?" These are examples of this popular mistrust.

If immigrants are seen as useful in backing national economic competitiveness, they have in a sense passed one test and have fulfilled one condition for being regarded as "one of us". However, the downside of such a common-bond-concept based on economic competitiveness is obvious: should the "newcomers" not be economically successful, there is a high risk of their not being offered a membership card.

This, incidentally, is one of the main reasons why the immigration from Syria, Irak and Afghanistan in recent years has been suspiciously opposed by many Germans. The lack of confidence as to whether they really can be integrated into the economy of the world export champion is widespread. Furthermore, right-wing populists fuel these anxieties that increasing groups of immigrants will fail to become economically integrated.

It was Tilo Sarrazin, a former banker and social-democratic politician, who expressed such populist scepticism in a widely read book called *Germany Abolishes Itself*. In a racist manner he stated that a huge number of

Arabs and Turks would not have any other productive function but to organize the trade of fruit and vegetables (Sarrazin 2012).

On a political level:

Another widespread suspicion is that “newcomers” might not fully accept the German constitution, known officially as the Basic Law. Questions like “Haven’t the ethnic Germans built a democracy that can be considered exemplary in the world - and this after two dictatorships in Germany?”, or “Will they really be good democratic citizens?” are typical of such popular distrust.

Many Germans are very sceptical that the new Germans, and especially the non-European immigrants, will be able to adapt to fundamental human rights as they can be found in the German constitution. That is why sexual violence by immigrants finds its way into public and social media very often, as opposed to similar crime perpetrated by ethnic German violators. Steffen Mau, a sociologist, even argues that we find an ethnic re-interpretation of democracy in Germany, suggesting that newcomers have to be put on probation for quite a long time.

On a socio-cultural level:

We are reluctant to add one thing many ethnic Germans are proud of, but we will give it a hesitant try: It is the well achieved remembrance culture with respect to the civilisation break in the period of the Third Reich and the Shoa. The broad majority of Germans are proud of having overcome the dark times of national-socialist history, and of having done so, as many believe, in an exemplary manner.

There is a broad consensus that (ethnic) Germans have learned the lesson better than everybody else in the world, that anti-semitism has to be prevented on all social levels. The big Shoa memorial in Berlin, reminding

people never to forget what happened, is interpreted as an indicator of this belief.

So many ethnic-Germans see themselves as the world champions in compensation and redemption. Hence central questions like “Are the ‘new Germans’ and all the other newcomers that are not of German origin, really able to adapt to this exemplary remembrance culture?” are directed towards immigrants. And again: the suspicion that migrants might fail in this respect is widespread.

On a sports-level:

Last but not least there is a pride in having a good national football team that is thought to be at least among the top five in the world, if not number one.

The failure of the national football team in the World Championship of 2018 and the question of responsibility for the early elimination from the tournament, has led to considerable public dispute, not only among football fans but also in the broader community on how the behaviour of two players in the team with Turkish roots might be related to this “national catastrophe”.

Especially Mesut Özil was placed in the focus of attention. What are his faults? Well, he obviously fraternized with a Turkish President who is an autocratic political leader – and thus failed to behave appropriately on the political level: that is, as a public personality, he did not fulfill the political requirements for being a good democratic citizen.

Certainly, this would have been accepted if he and the national team had achieved World Cup success. However, this is not the way things turned out. And although other football stars of German origin made exactly the same democratic-political faux pas (for example with Putin), they were not censured for it.

So, Mesut Özil was accused of having failed as a good democratic citizen and as a good footballer. This was reason enough to scapegoat him as the one responsible for Germany's disappointing World Championship performance. The revocation of his conditional probation thus seemed logical to many Germans.

Özil, who was loved by many Germans and who was honoured in 2010 with the "Bambi Award for Integration" (Focus Online 2010) put this experience of being othered in his own words: "I feel unwanted and think that what I have achieved since my international debut in 2009 has been forgotten". And he added: "Despite paying taxes in Germany, donating facilities in German schools and winning the World Cup with Germany in 2014, I am still not accepted in society. I am treated as being 'different'" (Pearson 2018).

5. Conclusion

We suggest that full acceptance as "one of us" is more likely to be granted to someone

- who obviously identifies him-/herself fully and ideally exclusively with German society,
- who not only identifies with all of what represents German culture and the essential German narratives but who also represents these factors as convincingly as possible and actively and successfully contributes to them.

However, a certain leap of faith seems to be given here to people with a migrant background

- who are perceived as not too different from us, especially in terms of values, religion and lifestyle,
- who do not belong to one of the ethnic groups that are stereotypically assumed as "potentially problematic".

As we discussed above, the question as to whether there is a perceivable and convincing identification with German society, culture and what ethnic Germans are proud of, serves as a very effective gatekeeper. If this is believed to be true for someone or a specific group, acceptance as "one of us" is possible – but in most cases only until recall. This means that the "full and true" identification has to be proven permanently and is basically permanently under observation.

We hope to have shown that there is a widespread belief among ethnic Germans that people with a history of immigration are required to be successful in stabilizing what ethnic Germans allegedly have built up and what they are proud of. And till the broad majority of the ethnic Germans accepts that immigrants are really reliable the latter will have to wait for the status of membership on recall being given up. One generation is not always long enough. Probation can last for several generations to come.

For this reason we also see the risk of a short cut to the legitimation of racist discrimination: Many ethnic Germans seem to have no problem to legitimizing privileges accorded to their "own" group: They simply appear to be more reliable than non-ethnic-Germans in terms of the essential "German narrations" as described in section 4.2. Thus, many ethnic Germans may shrug their shoulders if they are confronted with their practical forms of

racial discrimination, just as if it were natural to prefer ethnic-German natives.

Özlem Topcu, a journalist of the prestigious weekly magazine Die ZEIT, summarizes the effects of such particular forms of othering by describing how immigrants are always pressured to be the “better Germans”: “An A-level qualification [Gymnasium/Abitur], studying at a University, having a prestigious job, paying taxes, and having a maximum of two children. They should be diligent and successful so that they can be presented. The migrant should always walk around with an unwavering commitment to Western values, including a confident rejection of authoritarian regimes. (...) Eternal gratitude and loyalty to Germany do not need to be mentioned specifically. The migrant is an everlasting projection surface, for he is supposed to be the super-German, which the natural born German is not and never was” (Topcu 2018).

And there is almost no relief in being naturalized: even if the immigrant is not an immigrant at all, but born in cities like Berlin, Munich or Ludwigsburg, brought up here, speaking a regional dialect like Swabian much better than a supposed Turkish mother tongue and last but not least having German citizenship, such attributes in most cases offer almost no escape from being targeted as a “foreigner”, as somebody who is repeatedly asked where they really come from (Ataman 2019), a person who is quite often characterized as a “Passdeutscher”: “... Özils, (who) must prove themselves to be worthy of their German citizenship on a daily basis”, as Jörg Häntzschel puts it, carrying on: “The concern for their integration serves as a justification for putting them under increased verification. How successful are they at school? What occupations do they take? They need support but also control. They have been granted a German passport, but because they lack German genes, there is always the risk of relapse into the behavioral patterns of the

society of origin. Whatever they do, it is seen in the context of their origins. If they are successful in school or at work, they receive paternalistic praise. Great, with that background. If they fail, or they become criminal, their suitability for German society is called into question” (Häntzschel 2018). He finally concludes: “Whoever is German is it forever, whoever has become German, it is only on probation” (ibid). This seems perfectly reflected by Özil’s statement (Özil 2018), that we have put in the focus of this paper: “*I am German when we win and I’m an immigrant when we lose.*”

In his article Häntzschel draws, in summary, the following conclusion: “The inability to find a concept of oneself emanates from the delusion of definition and differentiation with which the foreign should be enclosed” (ibid). It is due to this purely ideological schema that fellow citizens who are from here in every sense (born here, socialized in German schools, speaking German as their primary language of communication, and so on) could be considered foreigners just by the fact of their descent from immigrants who are not seen as “Bio-Germans”. This social construction of supposed radical difference can be seen in many societies, but in Germany it seems to be practised in a particularly radical way. Özlem Gezer argues: “There is no longer any room for doubt, certainly not for apostates, not in these times when there is a competition about who has the supposed stranger under control” (Gezer 2018).

And in such a negative social climate it is easily explainable that ethnic Germans who have experienced an extreme right-wing radicalisation should entertain fantasies of a Germany that would be better off without people of migration background. Racist killings like those that occurred in Hanau therefore seem closely linked to the phenomenon of membership until recall.

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Part II

Educational Perspectives